



## Forget the Hamptons. Why In-the-Know Travelers Are Road-Tripping in Nova Scotia

Curious about Canadian wine? Want dramatic coastline views? Looking to hop between charming fishing villages? You can find it all on these road-trip routes through Nova Scotia.

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VACATIONERS WHO return every summer to holiday hubs like the Hamptons and Nantucket might want to look a little farther north. Nova Scotia, with its dramatic coastline and sparse crowds, beckons.

The Canadian province has seen a spike in interest since the Covid-19 pandemic. To best experience it, rent a car in Halifax, pick a direction and drive. Here, four road trips you can take individually or string together for one mega adventure.

### The Southwest Coast

For this trip, start on the Lighthouse Route, a scenic byway that hugs a craggy shoreline, at Peggy's Cove, the most photographed lighthouse in the province.

Then head to Lunenburg, considered by Unesco to be the best surviving example of a planned British colonial settlement. [Lunenburg Walking Tours](#) offers a tasty introduction to this town's culinary tradition, which combines a New England-like knack for seafood with a dash of Celtic and German influence.



A lobster roll from the Old Fish Factory Restaurant, a stop on a food tour hosted by Lunenburg Walking Tours. PHOTO: TOURISM NOVA SCOTIA/DASHBOARD LIVING

To the southwest, you'll find Shelburne, first settled by the Mi'kmaq 13,000 years ago. Over successive centuries, it's seen a variety of residents including Acadians, a Francophone cultural group originating in this region. The [Shelburne County Museum](#) provides a thorough overview.

As sunset approaches, check into [PEBs by the Sea](#), a set of geodesic glamping domes in Clark's Harbour. Drift off while taking in views of the Gulf of Maine from your bed.

A short drive the next day will bring you to Yarmouth, a hub of Acadian culture. On Mondays, Thursdays and Sundays in July and August, local fishermen offer "[Living Wharves](#)" demonstrations that will have you tying knots, banding lobsters and setting traps in no time.

### The Annapolis Valley

Another bounty awaits in the fertile Annapolis Valley—namely, crisp Chardonnays and Rieslings. Use the [Inn at Grand Pré Winery](#) as your base camp, but also make stops at [Benjamin Bridge](#) for sparkling wines, and [Lightfoot & Wolfville Vineyards](#) for the rosé.

Highway 101, the "Harvest Highway," leads to Greenwood, a launchpad for unconventional pursuits like goat walks (even more fun than it sounds) at [Tipsy Toad Grove Farm](#), or forest bathing sessions with [Soft Pine Wellness](#). At the end of the valley, visit the province's largest outdoor farmers market at [Annapolis Royal](#).



A visit to Kejimikujik National Park can be combined with an exploration of Nova Scotia's winelands. PHOTO: ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

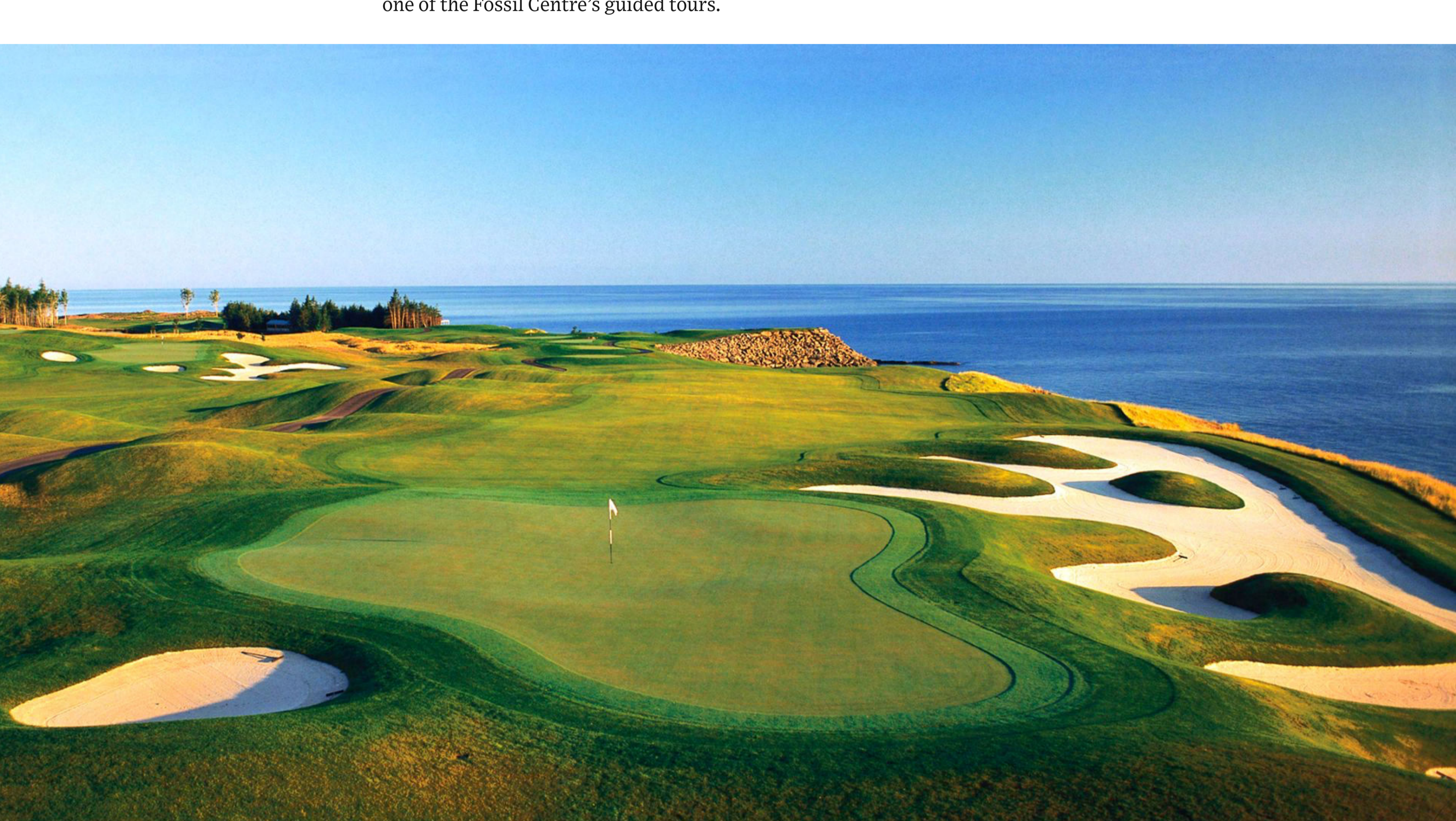
From there, the Trunk 8 highway veers southward into the province's forested heart, where [Kejimikujik National Park](#) hosts the region's best hiking and paddling, but also guided tours of ancient petroglyphs and stargazing workshops that integrate indigenous storytelling.

### The North Shore

If you choose to head northwest from Halifax, you'll hit the Bay of Fundy, which experiences some of the world's highest tides. For a three-course meal [served on the seafloor](#) during low tide, book in advance with Food Fantastique in Burntcoat Head Park. Spend the night at the [Gravity Luxury Domes](#) in Maitland, space-age structures on a cliff overlooking the Shubenacadie River.

The next morning, make a stop at Five Islands Provincial Park, where 300-foot cliffs plunge into the water, before reaching [Wild Caraway](#), a much-lauded restaurant where the menu is designed around ingredients procured at local farms. New for this year are three for-rent cottages next door.

Your next checkpoint should be [Joggins](#), one of the most paleontologically significant sites in all of Canada. Look for prehistoric fossils on the beach, or join one of the Fossil Centre's guided tours.



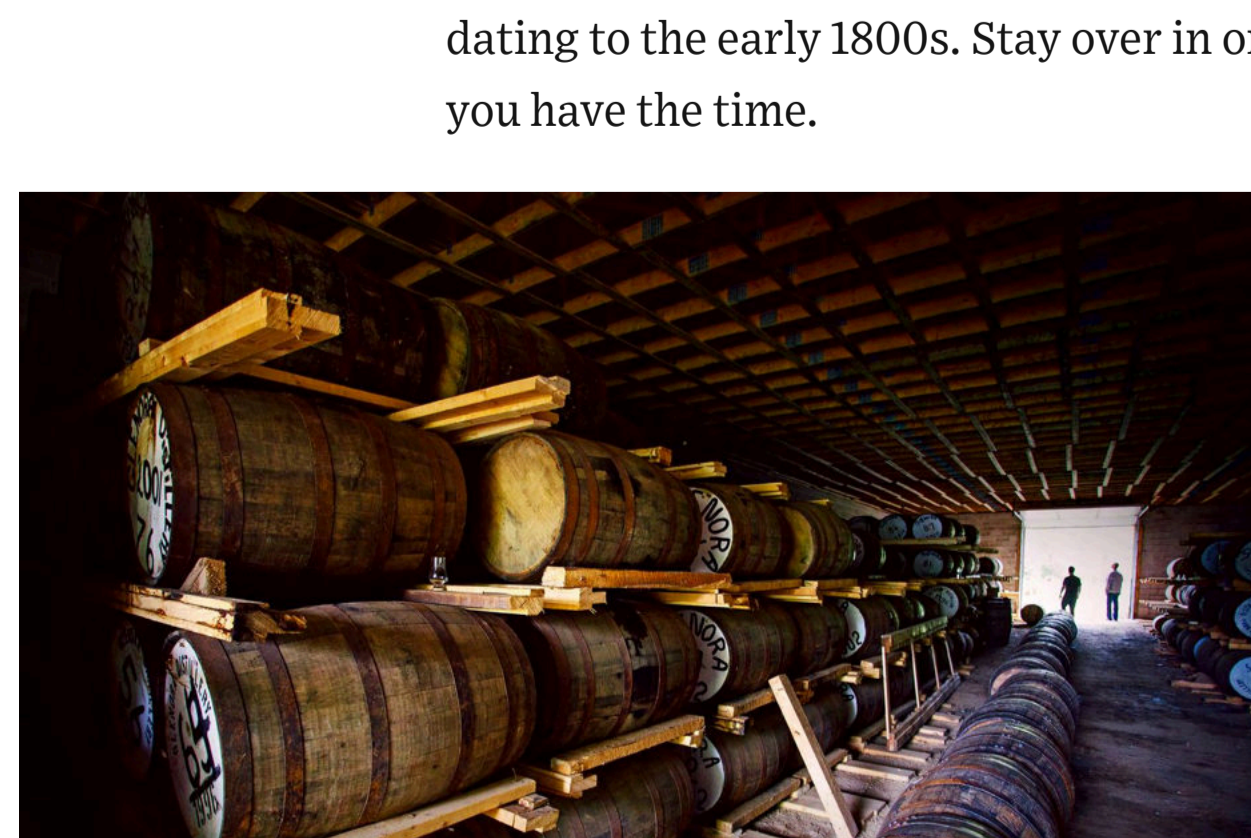
The seaside golf course at Fox Harb'r Resort.

The waters of the Northumberland Strait, which can hit 72 degrees in summer, are said to be the warmest north of the Carolinas. Northport Beach Provincial Park, where green, open fields meet a red sand beach, is an ideal spot for a dip.

End your drive at [Fox Harb'r](#), a sprawling 1,100-acre resort that has hosted the likes of Bill Clinton and Tiger Woods over the years. Golfers might want to spend a few days here.

### Cape Breton Island

Crossing the Canso Causeway onto verdant Cape Breton Island on Nova Scotia's eastern end, it's immediately clear why colonists dubbed this land "New Scotland." And what would an island with Scottish ties be without a distillery? [Glenora Inn & Distillery](#) is North America's first single-malt whisky distillery, dating to the early 1800s. Stay over in one of the distillery's rooms and chalets if you have the time.



From left: Whisky barrels at Glenora Inn & Distillery; North Star, a hotel by the sea in the town of Louisbourg. GLENORA INN & DISTILLERY; DESTINATION CAPE BRETON

Driving northeast from the distillery will take you to the Cabot Trail, a 185-mile loop around the northern tip of the island, encompassing Cape Breton Highlands National Park. The Cabot Trail can be driven in five hours in a hurry—but block off a few days to visit villages like Chéticamp and Dingwall, and spend the night at [Groovy Goat Farm](#) in Ingonish, where you'll wake up to the crowing of roosters.

Before leaving Cape Breton Island, stop at Louisbourg, home to one of the best-preserved French fortresses in North America. You can camp inside the fort, but indoor types might prefer the [North Star](#), an inn run by HGTV hosts Colin McAllister and Justin Ryan. They can often be found behind the bar swapping stories with visitors—a level of down-to-earth hospitality you'd be hard-pressed to find in more tourist-clogged summer hot spots.