



*An Adventure for the Whole Family*

## Discover fun in the outdoors

Memories that last a lifetime start with a fishing rod, a tackle box and the beautiful clear waters of Maine. Whether you stand on the banks of one of our 6,000 lakes or ponds, in the shallows of our dancing streams and rushing rivers, or cast a line from our more than 5,500 miles of coast, fishing in Maine is a great escape from everyday life. And it's surprisingly easy to do. Because of its simplicity and the beauty of Maine's natural environment, and since the state has been visited for centuries for its abundant fishing opportunities, a fishing excursion is easy and accessible for everyone in the family. Whether you fish from a canoe, a wooden dock, the shores of the ocean or a scenic lake or pond, a day spent wetting a line can be one of the best ways to relax, enjoy the view and spend time with family and friends.



## Fishing with the family

Reeling in a wriggling fish on the end of a line is a thrill enjoyed by people of all ages. The variety of fishing available in Maine is what makes the sport so easy for everyone in the family.

Local outfitters offer basic fishing gear and instruction to equip you and your family for a Maine fishing adventure. No experience is necessary! Since fishing does require patience, children might appreciate occasional planned games, activities and snack breaks throughout the day. Keep in mind that warm-water fish (see "Where to Fish") are the easiest to catch, and might offer children and beginners the best opportunity for excitement and action.

## Where to see fish

The **Downeast Fisheries Trail** offers opportunities to learn about the coastal waters of Washington County and the fish that are harvested there. Visit [www.sunrisecounty.org](http://www.sunrisecounty.org) or call 800-377-9748.

The **Marine Resources Aquarium** in West Boothbay Harbor showcases a variety of the many species of fish that live in Maine's coastal waters. It also offers use of free fishing equipment. The Aquarium is operated by the Department of Marine Resources: [www.state.me.us/dmr/](http://www.state.me.us/dmr/) or contact the Aquarium at 207-633-9559.

The **Maine Wildlife Park** in Gray offers a pool with large trout that can be fed, as well as access to a fish hatchery. Call 207-657-4977 or visit [www.mefishwildlife.com](http://www.mefishwildlife.com).

**Fish ladders.** Many fish species spend part of their lives in both salt and fresh water. In cases where dams block rivers, fish ladders provide migration access for these species. See the map for specific locations or contact the Department of Marine Resources for more information.



# Different styles of fishing

The key to successful fishing in Maine involves a basic knowledge of when, where and how to go after certain species. Of course a stroke of that elusive fisherman's luck is needed as well. Not all fish act alike, but most respond to daily and seasonal temperature changes. Outfitters throughout the state offer equipment and can provide helpful advice on local hot spots and proven methods. A review of the basic styles of catching fish will be helpful in determining the best method for your level of skill.

**Bait and bobber fishing** is the simplest way to go fishing. All that is needed is a basic rod, simple reel and line, a plastic or cork bobber, some hooks, a few feet of monofilament line for use as a leader and perhaps a few light sinkers. Bait and bobber fishing can be enjoyed on the coast or on freshwater, from a dock, the shore or by boat.

**Casting** is another simple form of fishing. Using either lures or bait, casting is done with



spin-cast, open-faced spinning or baitcasting gear; in other words, just about any simple rod and reel will do. This method is most effective when smallmouth and largemouth bass or pickerel are in freshwater shallows, and even for mackerel and pollock along the coast. Live bait, swimming lures and surface plugs may be used for casting.

**Trolling** is when live bait or lures are trailed behind a moving boat, sometimes on the surface, sometimes at great depth. An effective and simple rig to use when fish are near the surface is an open-faced spinning reel loaded with 8- or 10-pound test line and a light spinning rod that is 6-7 feet in length. A tiny swivel should be tied to the line to prevent twisting, and a streamer fly or small lure is attached to the line and trailed about 25 yards behind the boat. These lightweight rigs are used for brook trout and salmon in spring and fall and for bass and pickerel in summer.

**Fly-fishing** is a classic method of enjoying fishing. While fly-fishing involves a certain level of skill and an understanding of the rhythm and processes of nature, the reward is worth the effort. Maine outfitters are well versed in providing beginners with instruction and supplies. Fly-fishing can be enjoyed in both saltwater and freshwater.

**Ice fishing** is a great way to enjoy a day of fishing even when the lakes and rivers are frozen, and it's as easy as taking out the ice auger and rigging a line through the ice. Local outfitters and Chambers of Commerce can provide information on ice safety and fishing hot spots.

**Catch and release** is a good practice for fishermen of all ages and skill levels since it offers the excitement of fishing with little harm to the fish population. One way to "keep" your catch is to photograph your fish before returning it to the water. If you are releasing the fish you've caught, please take care to gently remove the hook and return the fish to the water. Keep in mind that you should wet your hands before handling any fish. When at all possible, fish that are being released should remain in the water.



## Saltwater fishing

The coast of Maine presents unlimited fishing for anglers of all ages and skill. All the methods of fishing are possible in Maine's saltwater.

Opportunities available along Maine's coastal waters vary – you can choose to jig for mackerel close to shore or spend a day trolling or casting for larger species like striped bass, bluefish or the powerful bluefin tuna on a charter fishing boat.

Mackerel are perhaps the best target because of their abundant population.

No license is required to fish along Maine's seashore, but there are restrictions in effect. Striped bass can only be caught within certain size limits



and in certain areas and times of year; contact the Department of Marine Resources or check with local tackle and bait shops for current regulations.

Atlantic sturgeon are a protected species and cannot be taken, and lobsters and crabs cannot be harvested without a permit and traps. Remember that even those lobster pots and buoys washed up on the beach should not be collected or tampered with – it's against the law!

Outfitters everywhere along the coast can offer advice on saltwater fishing, and can provide you with the appropriate gear and basic instruction on the fishing style that best suits your interest.

## Freshwater fishing

The streams and rushing rivers of Maine flow through one of the largest and most pristine wilderness habitats in the continental United States.

Maine's lakes and ponds are surrounded by dense green forests and bold mountains that beckon anglers of all skill levels. Maine's waters are home to several species of fish that can provide exciting action for those willing to try their luck.

Fishing in Maine's freshwater is surprisingly easy to do. Registered Maine Guides are in the business of helping you find the best places to fish, and can even provide you with a boat (if necessary) and gear. Friendly locals are also great sources of information on the best fishing spots and where to get gear. In addition, Maine's many sporting camps cater to the visiting angler by providing access to boats and gear of their own; some might even share the location of their favorite fishing spot with you!



Please note that adults require a fishing license to enjoy freshwater fishing in Maine; licenses are available through outfitters, and at local drug and sporting goods stores, information centers and convenience stores throughout the state.

# Resources & helpful hints

## Resources

- **Maine Sporting Camps** offer legendary hospitality, home-cooked meals and a choice of boats to use for fishing and exploring nearby lakes and rivers. Visit [www.mainesportingcamps.com](http://www.mainesportingcamps.com) or call 207-723-6622.
- **Registered Maine Guides** know the best fishing spots and which tackle to use for each species – and they are well-trained professionals who can explain fishing rules and regulations. Visit [www.maine-guides.org](http://www.maine-guides.org) or call 207-751-3797.
- **The Maine Department of Marine Resources** manages Maine's saltwater resources, and they publish *Maine: Saltwater Angler's Guide*, available at Visitor Information Centers. Visit [www.state.us.me/dmr/](http://www.state.us.me/dmr/) or call 207-633-9500.
- **The Department of Conservation's Bureau of Parks & Lands** offers fishing adventures at Maine's state parks. Visit [www.state.me.us/doc](http://www.state.me.us/doc) or call 207-287-3821.
- **The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife** manages freshwater fish populations and offers a weekly fishing report, which is available at [www.mefishwildlife.com](http://www.mefishwildlife.com) or by calling 207-287-8000.
- **L.L. Bean® Outdoor Discovery Schools** in Freeport offer fly-fishing courses you can sign up for on the spot. Call 1-888-552-3261 or visit [www.llbean.com/outdoorsOnline/odp/](http://www.llbean.com/outdoorsOnline/odp/)
- **Chambers of Commerce** provide the best link to local services like guides, outfitters and accommodations. For a listing of Chambers of Commerce, visit [www.visitmaine.com](http://www.visitmaine.com) and refer to "Visitor's Resources."
- **The Maine Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association** is a valuable resource for everyone interested in saltwater fishing. Visit [www.ccmaine.org](http://www.ccmaine.org) for more information.

## Helpful hints

**Licensing.** Freshwater fishing licenses are available throughout the state. Your license comes with a regulation book, as well as information about the number of fish you can keep in a day.

**Fishing equipment.** A good rule of thumb is to keep your selection simple: a rod and reel, hooks, weights, live bait or artificial lures and perhaps a bobber or two. Most tackle shops and stores offer fine, inexpensive combination sets.

**Private land.** While some Maine waterways are on private land, many landowners allow public access. Please treat all areas respectfully and obey posted signs.

**Boat launches.** Many towns and cities offer free boat launch access into rivers, lakes or the ocean. Local Chambers of Commerce can direct you to the nearest facilities and explain any relevant rules.

**Ask the locals!** Don't forget that one of your best resources for information on a day of fishing is the local innkeeper, shop clerk or Visitor Information representative. Many can provide excellent advice on fishing "holes," bait and tackle, as well as the best places to gear up.

# Where to fish

Maine is a vast state, and the fishing opportunities are seemingly endless. The interior of this guide provides basic information on which fish are typically available in each region of the state.

Maine has two kinds of freshwater fish: those that survive best in waters that are cold all year, and those that prefer the warmer, shallower waters of some lakes and ponds – like bass, pickerel, sunfish and perch. Typically, warm-water fish are the easiest to catch, and are the best targets for children and those adults who are new to the sport.

Some of Maine's best-known fishing lakes include Sebago, Rangeley, Belgrade, Moosehead and West Grand Lake, which each offer a different variety of fish,



including salmon, trout and togue (lake trout).

Maine's streams and rivers abound with trout and bass. Fishing along Maine's coastline can be done by surf casting from shore, fishing from a small boat near shore or offshore in a deep-sea charter boat. No license of any kind is required to fish in saltwater. Good-size tuna, shark, pollock, haddock and cod can be taken on the end of a line on an offshore fishing trip. Near shore and from the beach, bluefish and striped bass offer a thrilling fight for anyone, while mackerel and pollock can be caught from a dock.



### FRESHWATER

**WHITE PERCH** • freshwater (warm) • average size is 6-12" • in summer, caught in deeper water during day, on surface in evening • feast on insects, small crustaceans and baitfish • live bait, spinners, spoons and plugs work well



### FRESHWATER

**BROOK TROUT** • freshwater (cold) • grow to over 20 inches and over five pounds • abundant in clear, cold streams, cold-water ponds and lakes • worms, spinners, spoons, streamers, as well as wet and dry flies work well • Maine's most sought after fish

## AROOSTOOK COUNTY

Vast by any standard, this region of Maine is larger than Connecticut and Rhode Island combined, with 6,600 square miles of woods, fields, lakes and streams. In Maine, it is known simply as "The County," and its scenic countryside is filled with friendly towns and villages famous for their warm welcomes. At the heart of this magnificent region is the Allagash Wilderness Waterway, which flows for 92 miles and offers some of Maine's finest fishing grounds. Many of The County's numerous lakes, ponds and streams are alive with some of the state's largest salmon and trout. Many lakes also contain togue. Anglers with an interest in canoeing or kayaking will delight in the paddling opportunities in Aroostook County, known throughout the world for its natural beauty.

## DOWN EAST & ACADIA

The bold, seaside mountains of Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island offer unparalleled natural drama. The island's primitive beauty has drawn visitors from all over the world for hundreds of years, who come to enjoy the landscape and the exciting offerings of the region's hub, Bar Harbor. The inland lakes of Acadia offer fine fishing opportunities, and the Park's 57-mile network of beautiful carriage paths offers great hiking, biking and horseback riding opportunities. The waters of the surrounding region, from the clear waters of West Grand Lake to Alligator Lake and Great Pond, offer trout, togue and salmon hot spots as well as white perch, pickerel and trophy smallmouth bass.

## KATAHDIN/MOOSEHEAD/PENQUIS

New England's largest lake and Maine's tallest mountain are the gleaming centerpieces of this pristine part of the state: forty-mile-long Moosehead Lake, a mecca for anglers, campers, boaters and moose-watchers; and Katahdin, the crown of 201,000-acre Baxter State Park and the beginning of the Maine-to-Georgia Appalachian Trail. In this vast interior region are innumerable streams, rivers, lakes and ponds in which to wet a line, as well as generations-old sporting camps which cater to visiting fishermen. The region's waters abound with salmon, wild trout, togue and smallmouth bass, and several waters also host the hybrid splake, an exciting, easy-to-catch fish that is a cross between the brook trout and togue.

## KENNEBEC & MOOSE RIVER VALLEY

Maine's Kennebec and Dead Rivers are among the best whitewater rafting, canoe and kayak rivers in America's East. These and numerous other rivers, streams and brooks in the region offer outstanding trout and salmon fishing. And the Belgrade area's six beautiful island-dotted lakes have drawn families back year after year for exciting boating and fishing vacations. The Belgrade Lakes have been noted for their extremely fine bass fishing (both smallmouth and largemouth), as well as for providing some of the most beautiful brook trout catches anywhere. In addition, some notably-sized northern pike can also be found in the lakes.



### FRESHWATER

**LARGEMOUTH BASS** • freshwater (warm) • up to 10 pounds • found in southern part of state • prefer small, shallow, weedy ponds and river backwaters • feed on live bait, artificial bait, lures, spoons and plugs • similar to smallmouth bass in appearance, except upper lip extends beyond eye



### FRESHWATER

**SMALLMOUTH BASS** • freshwater (warm) • average 1-3 pounds • found in rocky areas in lakes, streams and rivers • any bait or lure • fish close to cover such as boulders, stumps, drop-offs and ledges

## FRESHWATER

**CHAIN PICKEREL** • freshwater (warm) • average 14-19 inches, in the 2-3 pound range • love shallow, quiet water close to weedbeds and lily pads • live bait, shallow running lures and weedless spoons are excellent choices



## FRESHWATER

**LAKE TROUT (TOGUE)** • freshwater (cold) • reach lengths of 18-24 inches, and 2-4 pounds (can live for 30 years and weigh more than 20 pounds) • deep, coldwater, below 60 degrees • dwell near the bottom of lakes, feeding on smelts, sculpins and suckers • in early spring, lake trout can be caught near the surface on streamers or bait, but fish deep during warmer months



## MAINE LAKES & MOUNTAINS

Here Maine's quaint, mountainside villages, 4,000 foot peaks and two of its largest lakes afford a paradise for boaters and anglers. Sebago, Maine's second-largest lake, and Rangeley, itself more than nine miles long, are two of the best-known lakes for fishing in North America. Thousands of anglers throughout the country await word that the ice is out on Sebago and Rangeley, heralding a new fishing season and some of the best salmon and togue fishing anywhere. There are also 112 smaller lakes and ponds in the Rangeley Lake area. This region's countless streams and waterways offer perhaps the finest wild brook trout population in America. Smallmouth and largemouth bass as well as perch and sunfish are also available in this region. Some of the waters in the southern-most part of the region offer the few remaining opportunities to land 10-pound-plus largemouth bass.

## GREATER PORTLAND & CASCO BAY

A picturesque, small city sitting atop a hill that looks across a bay dotted with islands, Portland is a city whose heritage comes from the sea. A fleet of boats serving summer fishing enthusiasts operates out of the city's downtown waterfront. Inland, landlocked salmon fishing is best in spring and fall, and in summer, bass fishing provides the best action on inland waters. There are also excellent opportunities to catch white perch and trout. Along the coast are lively populations of striped bass and bluefish, which can be caught by surf casting or by small boat. Offshore anglers can be served with the challenge of landing shark, cod, haddock, pollock and even the awesome bluefin tuna.

## MIDCOAST

The long, finger-like peninsulas that define the coast from Casco Bay to Penobscot Bay are the reason why Maine's coastline is longer than California's. Glacially carved peninsulas are havens of serenity and beauty, dotted with welcoming seaside villages offering wonderful amenities for visitors. Here harbors and fishing villages have remained largely unchanged during the last century or so. Saltwater angling is a big focus, with striped bass, bluefish and mackerel the primary targets. Charter boats offer offshore shark, bluefin tuna and groundfishing trips. Inland, this region offers a large white perch population, with abundant chain pickerel, largemouth and smallmouth bass fishing opportunities.

## SOUTHERN MAINE COAST

Classic oceanside villages interspersed with broad, beautiful beaches of pure white sand and winding rivers that flow to the sea: this is Maine's southern coast, where, from May through October, you can enjoy outstanding angling opportunities for striped bass, bluefish and flounder. Charter services offer fly-fishing for striped bass, mackerel and bluefish. Offshore angling is world-class, with sharks, giant bluefin tuna, cod, haddock and pollock. Coastal rivers also offer excellent brown trout action throughout late fall and through the winter months. The Saco River winds its way from the White Mountains to the ocean at Biddeford/Saco, and along the way, brown trout and smallmouth bass are plentiful. Many lakes and ponds offer premier smallmouth and largemouth bass fishing.

## FRESHWATER

**LANDLOCKED SALMON** • freshwater (cold) • 16-18 inches and 1.5-5 pounds • prefer deep, cold lakes and swift streams • topwater fishing with flies and trolling streamers or smelts is effective early and late in the season, fish deep during mid-summer



## FRESHWATER

**YELLOW PERCH** • freshwater (warm) • from 6-12 inches and weigh up to 1 pound • found in lakes, ponds and slow-moving rivers with shallow areas and weeds • minnows, worms and lures such as spinners, spoons and small plugs work well





### SALTWATER

**BLUEFIN TUNA** • can weigh up to 800 pounds • travel in large schools near surface • larger fish are solitary • built for speed and are powerful fighters on a line • appear off coast by early summer • use tackle for 80 to 130 pounds • troll and bait-fish with herring, butterfish, mackerel and squid



### SALTWATER

**RAINBOW SMELT** • measure 7 to 9 inches • prized food fish in Maine • move in spring to freshwater where fishermen catch in nets (license required) • can be hooked in coastal waters by hook and line, particularly in fall • use marine worms for bait • popular target fish for ice fishing



### SALTWATER

**ATLANTIC COD** • can weigh up to 80 pounds • popular species for hundreds of years • use jig (10 ounces and up) or couple with teaser (plastic worm) • use 50-pound test line • fished off the bottom with jerking motion



### SALTWATER

**BLUEFISH** • can weigh up to 30 pounds • appear in mid-summer • use live bait or spoons, plugs or tube lures • use 20-pound test line • steel leaders necessary due to sharp teeth and powerful jaws • use caution when handling live bluefish

## Calendar of events

### FEBRUARY

**Windham Rotary Ice Fishing Tournament** Windham. Maine's largest tournament for amateur fishermen; proceeds benefit local charities and the Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife. Cash prizes. 1-866-375-FISH(3474).

### APRIL

**Fisherman's Festival** Boothbay Harbor. Trap hauling, codfish relay, old-fashioned fish fry, lobster crate race, contests, Blessing of the Fleet and boat parade. 207-633-2353.

### MAY

**Running of the Alewives** Newcastle/Damariscotta Mills. Throughout May see thousands of alewives (members of the herring family) "running" upstream over fish ladders to their spawning grounds in Damariscotta Lake. 207-563-8340.

### JUNE

**Blessing of the Boats & Seafarer's Memorial Day Festival** Bar Harbor. Celebrate the traditional opening of the sailing and boating season. Games and events. 207-288-5571.

### Free Fishing Weekend

Statewide. Anyone whose fishing license has not been revoked or suspended can enjoy one weekend of fishing for free (without a license). All other fishing regulations apply; Fathers Day weekend. 207-287-8000.

### JULY

**Annual Bailey Island Tuna Tournament** Bailey Island. Cash prizes, trophies and sponsor prizes will be awarded. 207-833-8199.

**Grand Lake Stream Folk Art Festival** Grand Lake Stream. Features canoe building, quilt show, juried artisans, Native American basket weaving, music and much more. 207-796-5011.

**Free Sport Fishing & Rod Loaner Clinic** Marine Resources Aquarium, West Boothbay Harbor. Free rod and reel loans available every weekday (July through August). 207-633-9559.

### AUGUST

**Maine Lobster Festival** Rockland. This world-famous summer event features fresh lobster, maritime displays and demonstrations, arts & crafts, harbor cruises, contests, live entertainment, a parade and much more. 1-800-LOB-CLAW.

**Outdoor Sporting Heritage Day** Rangeley. Fishing programs, demonstrations and events at Town Park in Rangeley. 207-864-5647.

**Annual Bluefish Tournament** Bath. Try your luck at landing the largest bluefish at Waterfront Park in Bath. 207-443-9702.

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### SALTWATER

**HADDOCK** • weigh up to 11 pounds • bottom feeders from 100 to 500 feet of water • use jig with teaser, similar to cod • more active on line than cod



### SALTWATER

**AMERICAN POLLOCK** • can weigh up to 40 pounds • most active members of the cod family • make strong, powerful runs when hooked • bait includes shrimp, herring, squid, clams and marine worms • methods include jigging, trolling and casting



### SALTWATER

**PORBEAGLE SHARK** • can weigh up to 450 pounds and grow to 10 feet • strong, fast swimmers • excellent sportfish that put up tremendous fight when hooked • best methods include trolling or bait fishing while chumming • use herring, mackerel or squid for bait



### SALTWATER

**ATLANTIC MACKEREL** • under one pound • appear in late spring in state's harbors, coves and coastal rivers • ultra-light to light spinning rod outfitted with 10- to 12-pound or less test line provides the most action • use spoons, spinners, weighted buck-tails, jigs and tube lures