



Hinckley Yacht Charters Cruising Guide

With over 3000 islands and 3500 convoluted miles of coastline, Maine offers a lifetime of cruising possibilities. One of the best things about sailing our waters is the vast number of coves and harbors available for exploration. This allows the freedom to take long or short hops with a harbor almost always within reach. We have found that our most enjoyable cruises were ones in which the distance traveled during the day was limited to give us plenty of time to enjoy the scenery and to explore the many coves, islands, and harbors along the way. Maine had a rich history of outer island life around the 1900's so don't be surprised to find a long forgotten cellar hole on a seemingly deserted island. Take some time to pick blueberries, go for a hike, do some bird watching (ospreys, eagles, cormorants, etc.) and, if you're lucky, spy a whale, some white-sided dolphins, or harbor seals.

Check out time at Great Harbor Marina in Southwest Harbor is 1 p.m. Your check out will take from one to two hours depending on the size and complexity of your boat. It will take about an hour to load and stow, so let's say you plan on leaving Southwest Harbor at 4 p.m. and see what your options are?

Day 1 Assuming your breeze is in its prevailing southwest quarter, you might choose to round Clark Point and head north up Somes Sound, a majestic fjord and the only one on the eastern seaboard. Valley Cove on the western side of the Sound is your destination for the night. Feel your way toward the southern shore and anchor in 25 to 30' of water at low tide. If Valley Cove is too crowded you can continue up the Sound to Jock William's boatyard on the western shore or Abel Yacht Yard on the northeast side (both have rental moorings). Right next to Abel's Yacht Yard is *Abel's Lobster Pound*, a pretty spot for dinner ashore. Somes Harbor, at the northwest end of Somes Sound is another possibility for the evening's anchorage. If you choose Somes Harbor, row ashore in the morning to the float on the west side and walk into town to explore the wonderful bookstore, *Port in a Storm*.

If you prefer to head west from Southwest Harbor, go out Western Way and spend your night in Bass Harbor (try *Seafood Ketch* or *Mainely Delights* on the east side or *Thurston's Wharf* on the west side of the harbor for some real downeast cooking) or, if time allows, continue to Pretty Marsh (on the western side of Mount Desert Island) a tranquil harbor with plenty of swing room. The best spots to anchor are in either the northern end in eight feet at low water or in one of the two coves (Somes or Sawyers) on the southwestern side past Folly Island. You can row ashore to the east side of Pretty Marsh Harbor and climb the wooden stairs to Acadia National Park's picnic area amidst a regal grove of spruce and cedar. This is a wonderful spot for a sunset barbecue, so be sure to bring your dinner along.

Day 2 Continuing westward the next day, you will sail up Eggemoggin Reach with Buck's Harbor as your night's anchorage. If you get away early from Pretty Marsh you can go around the north end of Long Island and then south-

southwest to the mouth of the Reach. Eggemoggin Reach is often clear of fog even when it is thick elsewhere, and as it's name implies, you can usually reach either up or down. If you fancy classic wooden boats, swing by Center Harbor and check out the beauties that are usually floating about in close proximity to Joel White's yard. If you are lucky enough to get a mooring here consider staying the night and calling *The Brooklin Inn* for a ride to their restaurant and partaking in "real food, classically prepared." Or continue on to Buck's Harbor and enter on either side of Harbor Island. There is one protected anchorage on the northeast side or alternatively check with Buck's Harbor Marine on channel 9 to see if they might have a mooring for you. Try the *Bread and Water*, a short walk from the dock, for an informal dinner ashore.

Day 3 If you are ready for a town bustling with activity, the Camden area is the direction to head. Camden Harbor is quite crowded in the summer, but a berth or mooring can usually be found by calling Wayfarer Marine on channel 9. There are many shops and restaurants near the waterfront and stores for provisions. *The Waterfront Restaurant* is a popular place with a deck overlooking the harbor. Or stroll to the upscale bistro *Atlantique* at Bayview Landing. The town of Rockport around the corner is quieter. Moorings and/or dockage are available at Rockport Marine on the northeast end of the harbor. *The Helm Restaurant* or the *Breakwater Café* are good places for dining ashore in Rockport.

Day 4 After leaving Camden/Rockport take a bit of time to explore Penobscot Bay, either sailing down towards Owls Head or across to Islesboro Island. For the evening your goal is Pulpit Harbor, one of the prettiest and most protected anchorages on the coast. A tremendous osprey nest perched on Pulpit Rock marks the entrance to the harbor. You can anchor along the eastern shore and in the northeast cove.

Day 5 The fifth day head out and into Fox Island Thorofare. North Haven is to port where supplies can be obtained if needed and the *Coal Wharf* has great seafood. Or explore Vinalhaven and spend the night on a mooring off Zekes Point with delicious warm muffins and coffee delivered to you in the morning (207-479-5484). After proceeding east through Fox Island Thorofare, head a bit south of east to the area called Merchant's Row that is south of Deer Isle. There are many islands here with beautiful small coves to lie in for the evening. One of our favorites is between McGlathery's and Round Island. There is also a good cove on the north side of McGlathery's. Both islands are owned by Conservation Groups and are fun to explore.

Day 6 Leaving McGlathery's, head east again toward Marshall Island and the south side of Swan's Island. If weather and time allow, you can lunch in Sand Cove on Marshall Island or sail over to Long Island and into the harbor at Frenchboro. This is a classic Maine island town built around the harbor. The island abounds with wildlife. Lunt & Lunt have a few moorings. Pick one up and row in to pay. While you're ashore, buy some lobsters from the local fishermen and treat yourself to a real Maine supper aboard your boat or eat ashore at the local lobster wharf. You can also anchor outside the mooring area or on the 15 foot bar east of Harbor Island, although it tends to roll.

Day 7 The last night out should be spent relatively close to Southwest Harbor since check in time is 11 am. Some choices, providing you get an early start, are Burnt Coat Harbor, Buckle Harbor, or Mackerel Cove on Swan's Island; Bass Harbor is closer and Valley Cove in Somes Sound even closer. Best yet, come back to Southwest Harbor the night before and dine and be entertained at *The Deck House & Cabaret Theater* (207-244-5044 for reservations) directly above our offices.

Listed below are some good alternative harbors if weather or whim dictate:

- Day 1 **Burnt Coat Harbor** (south side of Swan's Island)
Mackerel Cove (north side of Swan's Island)
Buckle Harbor (west of York Narrows by Swan's Island)
Great or Little Cranberry Island (southeast of Southwest Harbor)
Southwest Harbor, stay right here and enjoy one of many fine restaurants located a short walk into the town of Southwest Harbor.
- Day 2 **Blue Hill** is home to a few great restaurants and Kollegewidgwok Yacht Club (channel 9 for moorings). Try the *Westcott Forge* or *Arborvine* for truly fine dining and ambiance.
Castine (north of Cape Rosier) is a town bursting with history. Try to arrange a guest mooring or dock space at *The Castine Harbor Lodge* (207-326-4335) and enjoy their extensive wine bar and scrumptious appetizers. *The Manor* (207-326-4861) sits high on a hilltop overlooking Castine Harbor and is an excellent choice for dinner, as they will chauffeur you back and forth from the Town Dock, Eaton's Boatyard, or the Castine Yacht Club. *The Castine Inn*, *The Pentagoet*, and *Dennett's Wharf* are other good dining choices.
- Day 3 **Tenant's Harbor** on Penobscot Bay is an attractive working harbor with supplies available. It has good holding ground and some moorings. *The East Wind Inn* on the north shore serves breakfast and dinner. A quieter anchorage is **Long Cove** to the north of Tenant's Harbor.
Rockland, south of Camden, is a wonderful town with a great mix of the traditional waterfront and new shops. Try the *Café Miranda* for eclectic dining at its best, *Contes* for REAL Italian dining, or *Amalfi's*, my personal favorite, for a Mediterranean treat. Check out the Farnsworth Library and Art Museum while you're there for a glimpse of works by three generations of the Wyeths and many other fine American artists.
- Day 4 **Isle Au Haut**, is a terrific place to stretch your legs with over 30 miles of hiking trails belonging to Acadia National Park.
Butter Island, west of Deer Isle, is a great day stop for a beach picnic or a walk up Montserrat Hill to a wonderful view of surrounding islands. The island is owned by the family of the late Tom Cabot, a leader in preserving the islands of Maine. The Cabot family welcomes cruisers, but asks that you only access the island from the eastern facing beaches (Nubble & Orchard). Please note that the Barred Islands named Bartender and Escargot are no

longer open to the public. For an overnight anchorage try **Northwest Harbor** on the western coast of Deer Isle. In your approach, beware Gull Ledge between the can and nun.

Day 5 **Northeast Harbor** (channel 9 for a mooring or dock space). Treat yourself to a picnic with take out food at the local grocers just a short walk up from the harbor. Or try *Bassa, Tan Turtle Tavern, Full Belly Deli, Blackboards, Docksider, or Colonel's Deli* for light fare. **Little Cranberry Island**. Try the *Islesford Dock* for great food and sunsets. Be sure to visit the Islesford Museum close to the docks.

Day 6 **Hancock Point** in Frenchman Bay. It's a bit of a sail, but well worth it. There are 3 guest moorings that belong to the Town of Hancock on the east side of the point. *The Crocker House* is an elegant country Inn with delicious dining (and the best jazz piano in town if you are fortunate enough to be there on the right night). **Sorrento Harbor** in Frenchman Bay has beautiful views of Cadillac Mountain and Mount Desert Island. There is an excellent French restaurant, *Le Domaine*, in Hancock. If you make reservations (207-422-3395) they will pick you up or send a taxi.

Day 7 Same choices as Day 1. However, we would be remiss not to mention our neighbors *Westside Grill* and the new creative cuisine found right here at Great Harbor Marina. The town of Southwest Harbor (a short walk from here) also has a lot to offer with many fun shops and some great restaurants. Try *Café II* on Main Street (next to *Eat a Pita*), the *Red Sky*, on the Clark Point Road (right at the blinking light), *Fiddler's Green* (between Great Harbor Marina and town) for innovative contemporary cuisine, or the wine bar, *Sips*. Try *The Dry Dock, Eat a Pita, Quietside Café, and Little Notch Café* on Main Street for tasty informal meals. *Maddy's Diner* has more hot dogs than you would probably care to imagine. On the Manset shore, if you don't mind a row and a walk, *XYZ* has authentic Mexican food, great ambiance, and "knock your socks off" margaritas and is just a short jaunt up from the Manset town dock.

Other places worth seeing if you can find a mooring are **Monhegan Island** (majestic with lovely hiking trails) or **Matinicus** (the outermost Maine Island inhabited year round).

For the more adventuresome, there is always a cruise Down East. A sail past Schoodic Point heading east will introduce you to the rugged and somewhat isolated coast of Maine.

The cruising grounds surrounding Mount Desert Island are spectacular. Take your time to explore the islands, fishing villages, resort towns, and remote coves. You will not be disappointed as this is a sailor's paradise. A Cruising Guide to the New England Coast by Duncan and Ware, A Cruising Guide to Maine, Volume II (Rockport to Eastport) by Don Johnson, and A Cruising Guide to the Maine Coast by Taft, Taft, and Rindlaub are invaluable reference guides and we will be sure to have one aboard for you. Enjoy your cruise!