

Prince Edward County

— An Exploration by Bike

You'll find Prince Edward County halfway between Ottawa and Toronto, and just south of Belleville. The county borders the north shore of Lake Ontario on the Bay of Quinte. If you're driving on Highway 401 and blink, you might miss the exit.

This is much more than just farm country. You'll find long, sandy beaches on Lake Ontario, historic towns with beautiful old stone buildings, an Arts Trail which will take you from one delightful gallery to another, a Taste Trail that will point you to local wineries, farm stands and cheese makers and first rate easy biking on mostly quiet back roads.

There's a variety of accommodation to keep travel-

ers on any budget happy. You can rent houses for a week, stay in a B&B, choose a modern inn or a historic hotel, stay at a spa or a winery.

The County's charms have been appreciated by the locals for years. Increased media coverage is bringing more tourists, especially from the Toronto area. The best time to visit is spring, summer and fall though many of the wineries stay open year round. The shoulder seasons offer better value and better chances of nabbing a reservation at a coveted restaurant, especially on a weekend.

Come for a day, a weekend or a week. There are enough activities to keep the whole family happy.



Prince Edward County & Area Highlights

- Visit over **20 wineries** with some award winning vintages.
- Check out the **Taste Trail**. Road signs guide you to 31 locations - from cheese makers to coffee shops and from the Buddha Dog in Picton to fine dining to wineries. Don't miss the Carriage House Restaurant in Bloomfield, recommended by Where to Eat in Canada. (www.tastetrail.ca)

- Rent a bike in Picton or Bloomfield and head off with one of their bike maps to explore quiet back roads. Also look for the Waterfront Trail which will keep you close to the waterfront.
- For those of you who love spas, head to **Claramount Inn and Spa** and enjoy the pampering.

- Take a cooking class at **The Waring House**. They offer classes on Sundays from 10:30am to 1:30 pm. Try Indian Cuisine, the Mexican Taco Stand or Sushi Basics. Check out their online schedule for lots more offerings.
- Birding is excellent especially during the spring migration. You'll find lots of birds at the **Prince Edward Point Bird Observatory** — waterfowl, raptors and song birds.
- Look for the signed **Arts Trail** which takes you to 27 artists around the county. You'll find potters, painters, sculptors, glassblowers, jewelers, blacksmiths and photographers as well as many multi artist galleries. Be sure to visit La De Dah Sculpture Studio, the Mad Dog Gallery and the Oeno Gallery. (www.artstrail.ca)
- Head for **Sandbanks Provincial Park** with some towels and a picnic basket. Sand dunes, long sandy beaches and sparkling water beckon. Try some windsurfing or sailing too.
- Take a side trip to **Kingston**, home to Queen's University. Take a walking tour of the historic downtown or rent a bike and head over by ferry to Wolfe Island and spend the day exploring.
 - Drive to **Gananoque** and rent a kayak to tour some of the 1000 Islands or bring your bike and cycle the 1000 Island Parkway.



Getting to Prince Edward County

The easiest way to reach Prince Edward County is driving by car. From Highway 401 get off at the Brighton, Trenton or Belleville exits. If you're coming from the east you can also get off at the Marysville South exit. Highway 62 out of Belleville is the major north-south road that bisects the county while Highway 33 traverses the county in an east-west direction.

Another quieter option to the busy Highway 401 is Highway 33 if you're coming from the Kingston area — good for both bikes and cars. It's not too busy, it's scenic and for the most part there is an excellent paved shoulder. It ends in Adolphustown where you can pick up the Glenora Ferry. The ferry is free and runs every 15 minutes in the summer and every 30 minutes in the other seasons. The ferry departs from Glenora on the hour and half hour and from Adolphustown at quarter to and quarter after the hour. The ride takes only about 10 minutes.

You can also take the train to Belleville and in fact this year there will be a few trial runs out of Toronto where you can bring your bikes onboard for an extra \$20. They are hoping to develop this route to make it easier for cyclists to explore Eastern Ontario and the St. Lawrence Parks System. The train station in Belleville is conveniently located a few kilometers from the bridge that takes you to Prince Edward County. (www.biketrain.ca/)

Accommodation

There is abundant accommodation choice from Prince Edward County through to Kingston and Gananoque. The bigger towns have the usual chain hotels. I always prefer the boutique hotels and B&B's and have listed a few of them below.

You can also check out the following websites for more information: www.ontariosfinestinn.com or www.bbcanada.com/ontario.

PICTON ACCOMMODATION

THE WARING HOUSE

www.waringhouse.com/
Highway 33 and County Road 1, Picton
Ph: 800-621-4956 or 613-476-7492



Waring House

The historic Waring House has a few well appointed bedrooms upstairs. Other rooms are in newer buildings – and from the outside they are totally lacking in charm. Inside they are fine. The hotel is many kilometers from downtown Picton though it has a pub, fine dining restaurant and cooking school on site. Rates are \$149 to \$299 per night on a year round basis.

MERRILL INN

www.merrillinn.com/

343 Main Street East, Picton

Ph: 866-567-5969 or 613-476-7451

The historic inn is only blocks from downtown. Enjoy fine dining on site. Rates are \$170 to \$299 per night in high season.

CLARAMOUNT INN & SPA

www.claramountinn.com/

97 Bridge Street, Picton

Ph: 800-679-7756 or 613-476-2709

Rates are \$175 to \$225 per night but weekend stays in the summer require three night minimums. If you're visiting the spa then try the chocolate truffle and champagne body wrap or a beer pedicure if you're a guy. Enzymes leftover from beer making soften the feet.

PIERCE MARTIN HOUSE B&B

www.piercemartinhouse.com

352 Main Street Ph: 613-471-1619

Three well appointed rooms are available from \$135-\$160 per night.

ISAIAH TUBBS

www.isaiahtubbs.com/

1642 County Road 12 Ph: 800-724-2393

The resort is located on the shores of West Lake. You can choose from the inn, the lodge or a beach house suite. Rates vary from \$99 to \$209 per night.

BLOOMFIELD ACCOMMODATION

ANGELINE'S

www.angelinesinn-spa.com/

433 Main Street, Bloomfield

Ph: 877-391-3301 or 613-393-3301

You can't miss Angeline's as you drive through Bloomfield. It's a beautiful building with a fine restaurant too. Rooms have recently been redecorated. High season rates are \$115 to \$300 per night.



Merrill House

THE INN AT HUFF ESTATES

www.huffestates.ca/

NW corner of County Road 1 and Highway 62 South

Ph: 866-484-4667 or 613-393-1414

The inn sits on the winery estate but you'll have to drive into Bloomfield or Picton for a meal. You get a complimentary wine tasting and tour with your stay. Rooms are \$179 per night in high season with breakfast.

WOLFE ISLAND ACCOMMODATION

WOLFE MANOR

www.wolfemanor.ca/

This inn is THE place to stay on the island. The building alone is worth a visit and it's only a short distance from the ferry. The price is \$250 per night or \$400 for two nights.

THE GENERAL WOLFE HOTEL

www.generalwolfehotel.com/

This is an old hotel which looks like its seen better days. It's had bad reviews on Trip Advisor and the price isn't cheap either - \$155 per night. It is only a short walk from the ferry.

DREAMCATCHER'S INN

www.dreamcatchers-inn.com/

1277 Main Street Ph: 613-385-2635

Enjoy views of the St. Lawrence River and Kingston. Prices start at \$110 per night.

KINGSTON ACCOMMODATION

Several chain hotels are conveniently located on the lake close to downtown. For a more intimate experience try one of these centrally located B&B's.

ROSEMOUNT B&B INN

www.rosemountinn.com/

46 Sydenham Street South

Ph: 888-871-8844 or 613-531-8844

The inn is a member of Ontario's Finest Inns and spas. Choose from 10 bedrooms. Expect gourmet breakfasts and afternoon tea and cookies in the parlour. Rates vary from \$179-\$299 per night in high season.

GILLIAN FISHER B&B

www.bbcanada.com/1777.html

38 Clergy Street East, Kingston

Ph: 613-549-3569

Only two rooms are offered in this historic limestone house, both with private bath. Rates are \$65 to \$95 per night.

SECRET GARDEN INN

www.thesecretgardeninn.com

73 Sydenham Street

Ph: 613-531-9884

Look for 7 well appointed rooms in this fully restored and historically designated inn. Rates vary from \$129 to \$192 per night.

ABBAY MANOR INN

www.abbeymanorinn.com/

181 William Street, Kingston

Ph: 866-723-1872 or 613-545-0422

The inn is a little less grand than the Secret Garden Inn (it has the same owners) as it was once the home of the church rectory. Still rooms are large and most bathrooms have been updated. Rates start at \$162 per night in high season.

Prince Edward County Restaurants

There's lots of restaurant choice but in the shoulder season be prepared for Sunday or Monday closings. Many of the wineries offer patio dining in the summer months in lovely settings. Wineries that offer lunch or dinner include: County Cider Company & Estate Winery, Grange of Prince Edward Vineyards & Estate Winery, Huff Estates Winery and Waupoos Estate Winery. A few also have picnic areas set aside.

Here is a sampling of some Prince Edward County restaurants.

THE BLOOMFIELD CARRIAGE HOUSE RESTAURANT

www.bloomfieldcarriagehouse.com

260 Main Street, Bloomfield

Ph: 613-393-1087

If you're in the area for lunch or dinner then you must try this place. At lunch, choose from assorted cheeses, artisan breads and delicious pastries. The dinner menu looks very interesting. The restaurant is recommended in *Where to Eat in Canada*.

ANGELINE'S RESTAURANT & INN

www.angelinesrestaurantinn.com

433 Main Street, Bloomfield

Ph: 613-393-3301

Look for fresh French inspired food.

BUDDHA DOG

www.buddhafoodha.com

172 Main Street, Picton

Their hotdog has been called the best in Canada by Reader's Digest.

AMELIA'S GARDEN

www.waringhouse.com

Hwy. 33 and County Road 1, Picton

Ph: 613-476-7492

Look for regional cuisine and a fine dining experience in Amelia's garden and a pub type atmosphere in the Barley Room.

THE PAINTED PEPPERCORN

172 Main Street, Picton

Ph: 613-476-8225

You'll find creative lunches and dinners, many of them vegetarian plus great desserts and a seasonal patio.

BLUMEN GARDEN BISTRO

www.blumengardenbistro.com

647 Highway 49, Picton

Ph: 613-476-6841

The menu is modern with an eye to locally sourced ingredients.





Trillium

THE RESTAURANT AT THE MERRILL INN

www.merrillinn.com

343 Main Street East, Picton

Ph: 613-476-7451

Fine dining, local produce and a recommendation from *Toronto Life and Wine Spectator* are reasons to visit.

There are several good places to grab a coffee as listed below:

MISS LILY'S CAFÉ

289 Main Street, Picton (beside the bookstore)

They have free WiFi.

BEAN COUNTER CAFÉ

172 Main Street, Picton

Look for homemade gelato.

CHESTERFIELDS HOMEGROWN CAFE

126 Main Street, Picton

Look for homemade breakfast with names like The Belch plus favourites like cinnamon rolls.

TALL POPPY CAFE

298 Main Street, Wellington

They have a good selection of salads, sandwiches and baked products.

Wineries of Prince Edward County

There are now more than 20 wineries in the Prince Edward County appellation. This is limestone country, the same magic rock formation found in France's famous Cote d'Or region of Burgundy. The grapes here are grown on limestone with a mix of clay and loam. Like the Niagara wine region, they enjoy the effect of temperature moderation from Lake Ontario. You won't see endless fields of vines here. Holdings are smaller so less wine is produced; In fact many of the wineries grow grapes in the Niagara region but craft the wine in Prince Edward County. The wineries are part of **Prince Edward County's Taste Trail** – and you can download a map with their locations before you come. (www.tastetrail.ca)

Just recently, Jancis Robinson – THE celebrated wine author for *London's Financial Times*, wrote "that Ontario alone can produce a vivid array of chardonnay, some of which can hold their own with the world's finest." Some of her top choices were from Prince Edward County and included Huff Es-

tates South Bay Vineyards 2007 and Closson Chase South Clos which unfortunately are both very hard to find.

Take a trip to one of these wineries.

HUFF ESTATES

www.huffestates.com

NW corner of County Road 1 and Highway 62 South

Ph: 613-393-5802

This winery is open 7 days a week year round. Huff Estates has 45 acres of vines, a winery and tasting room with a seasonal outdoor patio. Also in separate buildings look for their country inn and the Oeno Art Gallery. Beppi Crosariol of Canada's Globe and Mail has recommended their 2008 Pinot Gris and their 2007 off dry Riesling.

CLOSSON CHASE

www.clossonchase.com

629 Closson Road Ph: 613-399-1418

Over 30 acres of vines provide the grapes to make wine that sells out really quickly. In fact, on my May visit there was no Prince Edward County wine to sample – only the wine grown from Niagara grapes was available. Get on their mailing list if you want to be able to get some of their delicious chardonnay.





Pretty House in Kingston

RED TAIL VINEYARD

www.redtailvineyard.com
422 Partridge Hollow Road
Ph: 613-394-3243

Look for Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris from the only off grid winery in Canada. Keep an eye out for a pair of red tailed hawks that have a nearby nest.

WAUPOOS WINERY

www.waupoosewinery.com
3016 County Road 8, Picton
Ph: 613-476-9339

These folks were the first on the ground in the county and opened their winery in 2001. They enjoy a beautiful location with lovely grounds overlooking Prince Edward Bay. They're well known for

their Maple Ice Wine – which contains their own locally made maple syrup. From May 15-October 15 enjoy lunch and dinner in their gazebo restaurant.

THE GRANGE OF PRINCE EDWARD VINEYARDS & ESTATE WINERY

www.grangeofprinceedward.com
990 Closson Road, Hillier
Ph: 866-792-7712 or 613-399-1048

A refurbished barn houses a dramatic tasting room with a floor to ceiling limestone fireplace. Sixty acres of vineyards provide the grapes for a large assortment of reds and whites. Try the Trumpours Hill Riesling – a great value at about \$12. Check out their Loft Gallery too – a showcase for local artists.

The Artists & Galleries of Prince Edward County

Artists and galleries are everywhere in Prince Edward County. Pick up a free copy of the *Arts Trail* magazine which you'll find in any gallery, B&B, restaurant or browse the website before you come. The Arts Trail takes you to 27 artists and galleries scattered around the county. All forms of art are represented – sculptors, jewellers, glassblowers, painters, photographers, blacksmiths and potters. (www.artstrail.ca)

Most studios are one artist affairs but you will also find eight multi-artist galleries.

Here are a few of my favourites.

OENO GALLERY

www.oenogallery.com
2274 County Road 1, Bloomfield
Ph: 613-393-2216

The gallery sits next to the Huff Estates Winery overlooking the vineyard. They have a large and very interesting selection of outdoor art. In addition they feature monthly exhibits of paintings, sculpture and photography from over 30 Canadian artists. Artist's talks and opening events add to the wow factor of this place.

FAD

www.shopfad.com
3 Corey Street and 285 Main Street, Bloomfield
Ph: 613-393-5235

Over 50 Ontario artists are represented. You'll find lots of functional art in clay, glass, metal and stone.

MAD DOG GALLERY

www.maddoggallery.ca
525 County Road 11, Picton
Ph: 613-476-7744

The gallery is housed in a beautifully refurbished old barn. A few outside pieces welcome you, including a giant bird's nest. Inside find traditional and contemporary art by local artists from Prince Edward County.

In mid September there's a weekend studio tour. Many more local artists open their doors over this weekend – which is nicely timed to coincide with the grape harvest. (www.pecstudiotour.com)

More Tasting In Prince Edward County

Prince Edward County has lots of farm fresh produce, roadside stands and specialty foods. Check out the exact locations on the *Taste Trail Map* which can be downloaded from their website. (www.tastetrail.ca/)

Make sure to include a visit to **Fifth Town Artisan Cheese Company**. They craft cheese from locally sourced goat and sheep's milk and this summer the plan is to offer a goat's milk ice cream. Make a reservation for their wine and cheese pairings which occurs on Saturdays from July to September. (www.fifthtown.ca/)

Other county wide celebrations include the **Maple in the County** festival on the last weekend in March featuring a pancake breakfast and fiddlers and **TASTE!**, a one day foodie experience on the

last weekend in September where you can try wine, beer, cider and locally produced artisanal products.

Biking Prince Edward County

Prince Edward County is an ideal biking destination. It's crisscrossed by miles of country roads – most of which are quiet. Pick up a \$2 bike map at the bike stores to help you plan your route. The map shows six routes between 30 kms and 66 kms in length and covers all the best sections of the county. Avoid Highway 33 and 62 as much as you can as these are the two roads that see the most traffic. Detailed route notes aren't really needed here as long as you have a basic map. Pick a destination, whether it is a gallery, winery or restaurant and wind your way there through any series of back roads. There is no end to the roads you can take and exploring is half the fun.



Fifth Town Dairy

My favourite ride was one that took me from Picton past Lake of the Mountain Provincial Park and along lovely roads with views of the Aldolphus Reach section of Lake Ontario. The road gets very quiet the further east you go. Any of the north – south crossroads will take you back to Highway 8 and then back to Picton. There are however a few very worthwhile stops out here. **Fifth Town Artisan Cheese Company** can be found at 4309 County Road 8. They are eco friendly – in fact they have attained the coveted Platinum LEED certification for their goat and sheep milk dairy. They offer lots of free samples and you can pick up the makings of a picnic here. (www.fifthtown.ca)

Just a short distance away is the **Waupoos Winery and the County Cider Company & Estate Winery**. Both of these places have tasting rooms with delicious offerings like Waupoos Maple Ice and Waupoos Ice Cider. (www.countycider.com)

Bike Rentals

Rent a bike in a town that is convenient to your planned bike tour – whether it be for a day or a week. Don't forget to bring your own pump and patch kit and bring a spare inner tube.

BLOOMFIELD BICYCLE COMPANY

www.bloomfieldbicycle.ca/
225 Main Street, Bloomfield Ph: 613-393-1060
Rates start at \$35 per day or \$125 for a week. They provide delivery and emergency rescue pickup.

IDEAL BIKE

www.idealbike.com/
172 Main Street, Unit 106, Picton
Ph: 800-301-3981 or 613-476-1913

The guys running the shop are very accommodating. Rates start at \$30 per day and the weekly rate is \$120. Rentals include a helmet, lock and bike map. They will also pick you up if you have an emergency.



Swing Set

AHOY RENTALS

www.ahoyrentals.com
23 Ontario Street, Kingston
Ph: 613-539-3202

A full day bike rental is \$25 and they are conveniently located close to the Wolfe Island ferry.

THE CYCLEPATH KINGSTON

www.cyclepathkingston.com/
471 Princess Street, Kingston Ph: 613-542-3616
They need 24 hour notice for email bookings.



Other Diversions

- Kayak the **1000 Islands** out of Gananoque . Choose from guided half and full day trips as well as weekend adventures. Rentals are also available for experienced paddlers. (www.1000ikc.com/ Ph: 613-329-6265)
- A trip to **Sand Banks Provincial Park** is the perfect destination for a swim and a picnic. Cycle or drive there. (www.ontarioparks.com/english/sand.html)
- **Claramount Inn and Spa** has a full selection of individual therapies and packages. If you need some pampering this is the place to visit. (www.claramountinn.com)
- **The Festival Players of Prince Edward County** are performing three plays in the 2010 season. Ph: 866-584-1991 (www.festivalplayers.ca)
- Take a cooking class at **The Waring House** . Pick from interesting course offerings such as Indian Cuisine, Aussie Fusion, Mexican Tacos and more on Wednesdays and Sundays. Classes are three hours in length and most are \$75. Ph: 613-476-7492 (www.waringhouse.com)

Birding is excellent and in the spring birdsong is ever present. You'll find eight excellent birding spots in the county as follows:

- **Sandbanks Provincial Park**, especially for ducks, scoters and grebes
- **Beaver Meadow Wildlife Management Area** (Highway 11 near East Lake)

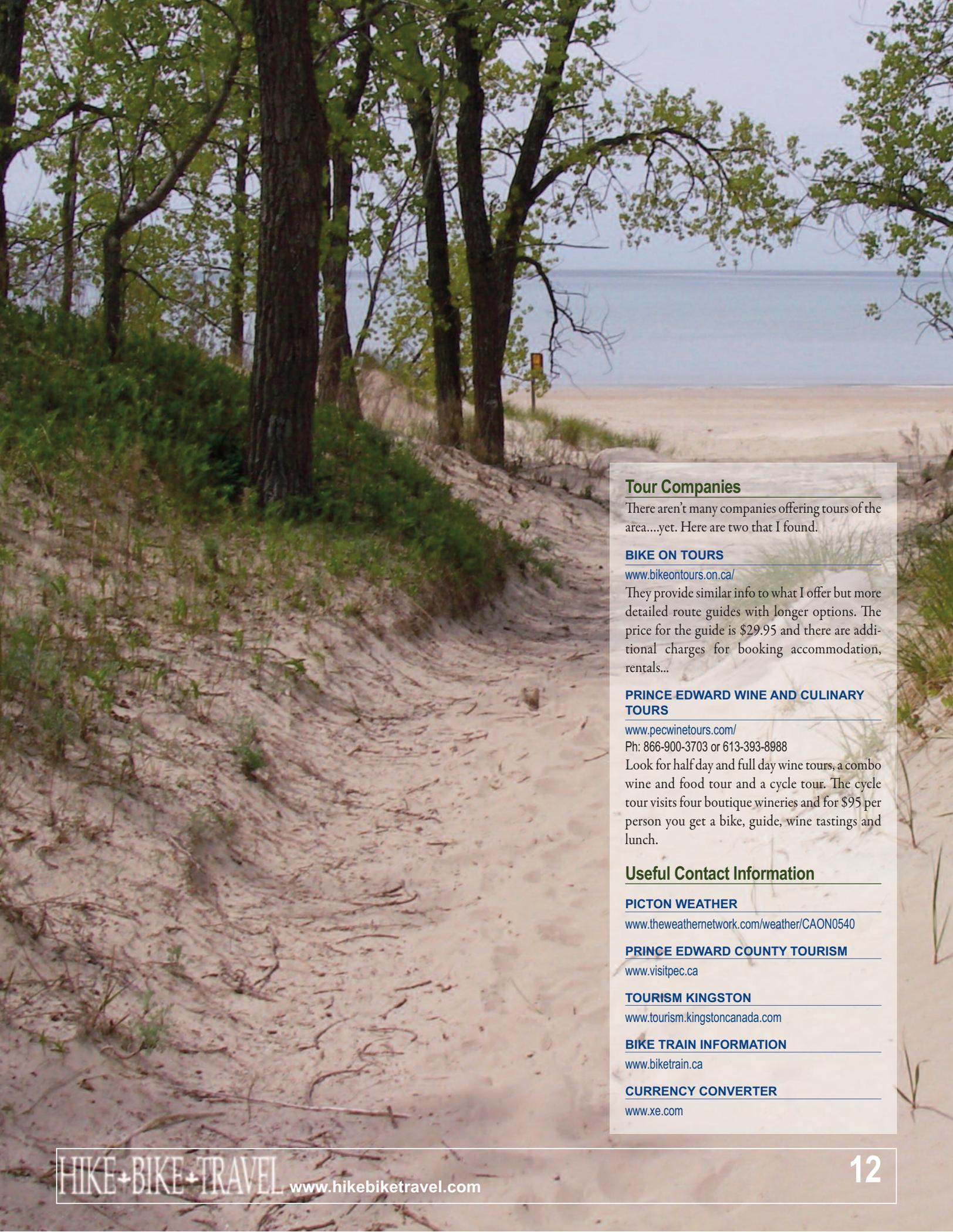
- **Salmon Point**
- **Point Petre** (at the end of Highway 24)
- **Prince Edward Point** (at the end of Highway 13); This is a Globally Important Birding Area. During the migration it sees large numbers of raptors, waterfowl and songbirds including many rare species.
- **Little Bluff Conservation Area** (located on the way to Prince Edward Point)
- **Macaulay Mountain Conservation Area and Birdhouse City**, just outside of Picton on Highway 8
- **Prinyer's Cove** near Cressey
- Head to **Gananoque and the 1000 Islands Parkway**. You can drive it or bike about 35 kms one way on a dedicated trail that parallels the road. Take time to stop at the St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Canada's smallest National Park. The gorgeous granite rocks are the perfect place for a rest. There aren't many places to buy food so plan ahead and bring a picnic lunch with you.
- Take an **art studio walking tour** of downtown Kingston. Visit:
 - **ZEALmetal** (www.zealmetal.com)
 - **Black Dog Pottery** (www.blackdogpottery.ca)
 - **Delvalle's Art Corner** (www.DelvallesArtCorner.com)
 - **mjhglass designs**(www.mjhglassdesigns.com)

- Head over to Wolfe Island with a bike for a half day or more via the **Wolfe Island ferry**. The ferry between Kingston and Wolfe Island is free and has a crossing time of only 20 minutes The ferry leaves Kingston approximately every hour starting at 6:15 am. The first ferries to leave Wolfe Island begin at 5:45 am. You can walk on with a bike. (www.wolfeisland.com/ferry.php)

Once on Wolfe Island you have a choice of three bike routes. I recommend The Head, an easy route from Marysville that follows the shores of Lake Ontario. There are pleasant farming vistas, lots of close ups of the wind turbines and excellent birding opportunities. You can continue to Button Bay and Alexandria Point where the ferry from Cape Vincent, New York arrives daily during the summer months. The route to Button Bay takes you through pretty, rolling farmland. Take a side trip to the Big Sandy Bay Management Area, a scenic spot with beaches.

Surprisingly, many of the roads are dirt and when it's dry, a lot of dust gets kicked up. In 2010 construction trucks are thundering around causing the biking to be a little less idyllic. Weekends are probably your best bet.

On Wolfe Island, near the ferry you can find a bakery, a bike rental spot and village stores.



Tour Companies

There aren't many companies offering tours of the area....yet. Here are two that I found.

BIKE ON TOURS

www.bikeontours.on.ca/

They provide similar info to what I offer but more detailed route guides with longer options. The price for the guide is \$29.95 and there are additional charges for booking accommodation, rentals...

PRINCE EDWARD WINE AND CULINARY TOURS

www.pecwinetours.com/

Ph: 866-900-3703 or 613-393-8988

Look for half day and full day wine tours, a combo wine and food tour and a cycle tour. The cycle tour visits four boutique wineries and for \$95 per person you get a bike, guide, wine tastings and lunch.

Useful Contact Information

PICTON WEATHER

www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/CAON0540

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY TOURISM

www.visitpec.ca

TOURISM KINGSTON

www.tourism.kingstoncanada.com

BIKE TRAIN INFORMATION

www.biketrain.ca

CURRENCY CONVERTER

www.xe.com