

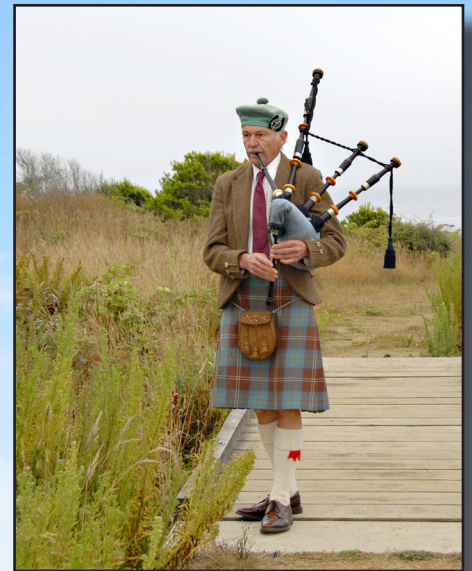
**T**he Cabot Trail is a 298 km (185 mile) loop around the northern part of Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia passing through the very scenic Cape Breton Highlands National Park. It's considered to be one of the best places for a bike tour in all of North America – so says Bicycling Magazine – and it's on the 'must do' list of many a serious biker. Plus Cape Breton Island is consistently named by National Geographic as one of the best islands in the world to visit.

The bike ride wanders through a mix of Acadian and Gaelic towns, where the culture is celebrated especially through music and song. Explore the Margaree Valley, home to great salmon fishing. Continue north, hugging the dramatic coast at times, to French speaking Cheticamp, and the hooked rug capital of the world. Don't laugh. These are true works of art. Continue through the spectacular Highlands renowned for their jaw dropping views where you can expect to be physically challenged on your

bike. Two major climbs will test your conditioning program. The east side of the Cabot Trail offers a host of lovely surprises...beautiful pink rocky shores, secluded beaches, stunning vistas and quaint fishing villages. Look for the Scottish influences – in the food right down to the golf game. Golfers will want to play the famous Highland Links Golf Course in Ingonish. Then it's one last big climb up Cape Smokey before the final leg into Baddeck, noted for its most famous resident, the incredibly creative, Alexander Graham Bell.

The bike tour is best done from early June until early October. Summer rains can occur at any time and June and July are prone to biting insects. October is cooler but you'll enjoy spectacular fall foliage.

Apart from biking look forward to feasting on fresh seafood, browsing museums and galleries, whale watching or hiking on one of the 25 trails in the National Park. Finish your day in one of the small family run B&B's or inns and sample Cape Breton Island's legendary hospitality.



Allow a week for your bike tour - you'll want to have time to savour the experience.

## *Biking Cape Breton Island's* *Cabot Trail*





Weather Stone

## Getting to Cape Breton Island & the Cabot Trail

Getting to the Cabot Trail on Cape Breton Island is usually accomplished by traveling through Halifax or Sydney. Planes fly into both places though prices are on the high side into and out of Sydney. There's a lot more flexibility flying in and out of Halifax but it's further to drive. Multiple daily flights from Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa allow you to connect from afar. If you rent a car in Halifax then it's about a 3 ½ hour drive to Baddeck. It's only a one hour drive from Sydney to Baddeck.

Shuttles can be arranged too though bike transport may be a problem. Framework Fitness will deliver rental bikes to Baddeck. Confirm the time of the shuttle with each company as most offer only once a day service in either direction.

### B&N SHUTTLE

Ph: 800-330-4223 or 902- 562-9893

They offer once a day shuttles to and from Halifax and Sydney airports.

### BRENNAN'S SHUTTLE

Ph: 877-847-7267 or 902-737-1265

They offer daily service between Halifax and Sydney and can pick up and drop off in Baddeck too. Rates are \$55 one way.

### CAPE BRETON SHUTTLE

[www.capeshuttleservice.com/](http://www.capeshuttleservice.com/)

Ph: 800-349-1698 or 902-539-8585

For \$60 they will deliver you to Baddeck from Halifax and back of course.

### EAST COAST SHUTTLE

[www.eastcoastshuttle.com/](http://www.eastcoastshuttle.com/)

Ph: 800-873-5551 or 902-794-1512

They offer once a day trips between Sydney and Halifax with stops in Baddeck.

### STARLINE SHUTTLE

Ph: 800-239-9811

They offer service out of Halifax at 12:45 PM daily to Sydney and back to Halifax.

## Rental Bikes

It is surprisingly hard to rent a bike locally. I think there's a business opportunity here! If you haven't brought your own bike and you're riding the Cabot Trail on your own then here are your choices:

### FRAMEWORK FITNESS

[www.frameworkfitness.com](http://www.frameworkfitness.com)

Ph: 866-567-1909 or 902-567-1909

This bike shop is in Sydney though they will deliver directly to your accommodation for a fee. A hybrid bike rental is \$25 per day or \$100 per week; a road touring bike is \$35 per day or \$125 per week. A rear luggage rack, pump, tubes and minor repair kit is included.

### SEA SPRAY OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

[www.cabot-trail-outdoors.com/](http://www.cabot-trail-outdoors.com/)

Ph: 902-383-2732

They rent bikes out of Smelt Brook near Cape North BUT include an auto rack so you can start anywhere along the Cabot Trail. They are the only bike repair spot on the entire Cabot Trail; as well they provide a rescue service. One way drop offs and a luggage service are also provided but contact them for rates.

## Recommended Itinerary – Overview

Adding in an extra day for hiking, whale watching or golf would be very worthwhile. That would best be done out of Cheticamp, the Dingwall area or around Ingonish.

### Day 1

Arrive in Baddeck and get your bikes ready to go. Visit the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site and marvel at Bell's creativity. Then you might want to try a boat trip around Bras d'Or Lakes to catch a glimpse of the Bell mansion and otherwise enjoy the beauty of this great unpolluted body of water.

### Day 2

Head to the Normaway Inn in the Margaree Valley. The Margaree Valley is famous for fly fishing particularly in the fall when salmon season is in full swing. Distance: 46 kms (28.5 miles)

### Day 3

Margaree Valley to Cheticamp. Today's ride takes you 45-52 kms (28-32 miles) depending where you started from, through the pastoral Margaree Valley to the coast. Then it's up the coast past many craft shops and small fishing communities to the Acadian town of Cheticamp.





### Day 4

Cheticamp to Dingwall. The 76 km (47 mile) ride is tough but incredibly scenic. Two stiff climbs reward with two fantastic downhill stretches. Stay near Cape North, in the Dingwall area or as far south as Neil's Harbour.

### Day 5

Dingwall to Ingonish. Mileage for the day depends on starting and stopping points. It's roughly 43 kms (26.5 miles) from Dingwall to the Keltic Lodge and 55 kms (34 miles) to Castle Rock Inn near Ingonish Ferry. The day is far more beautiful than I expected. Fantastic pink coloured granite edges the ocean for miles. There are great beaches to explore and fantastic vistas.

### Day 6

Ingonish to Baddeck. Choose either the 85 kms (53 miles) route back to Baddeck via the Cabot Trail or the slightly shorter 74 kms (44 miles) route via a combination of the Cabot Trail, the ferry to English-town and the Trans Canada Highway. Cape Smokey is easily the highlight of the day.

## The Details

### Day 1: Arrive in Baddeck.

Baddeck, on Bras d'Or Lake, is a convenient starting point for cycling the Cabot Trail, though by no means the only possibility. A visit to the Alexander Graham Bell Museum is a must and certainly a boat ride or a kayak on the lake would be an equally pleasant way to spend some time. Amoeba Sailing Tours [www.amoebasailingtours.com/](http://www.amoebasailingtours.com/) offers a 90 minute narrated tour for \$25 per adult.

There are plenty of inexpensive places to get a meal. For a more formal dining experience try the Inverary Resort or Gisele's.

## Baddeck Accommodation

You can choose from the full resort experience to intimate B&B's. Here's a sampling of what's out there.

### THE WATER'S EDGE

[www.thewatersedgeinn.com/](http://www.thewatersedgeinn.com/)

22 Water Street

Ph: 866-439-2528 or 902-295-3600

Situated across the street from the water, the inn offers six well appointed rooms from \$150-\$180 per night. Breakfast is in the art gallery on the ground floor and included with the room.

### INVERARY RESORT

[www.capebretonresorts.com/](http://www.capebretonresorts.com/)

368 Shore Road

Ph: 800-565-5660 or 902-295-3500

They offer standard rooms through to two cottage suites. Keen golfers might want to stay here and play the on site course. The basic rooms start at \$159 per night in the summer and do not include breakfast. The dining room is considered to be one of the better ones in town.

### AUBERGE GISELE'S INN

[www.giseles.com/](http://www.giseles.com/)

387 Shore Road

Ph: 800-304-0466 or 902-295-2849

They offer 75 rooms that start at \$135 per night for a double in the summer. Onsite is a restaurant that in some years has been included in the book *Where to Eat in Canada*.

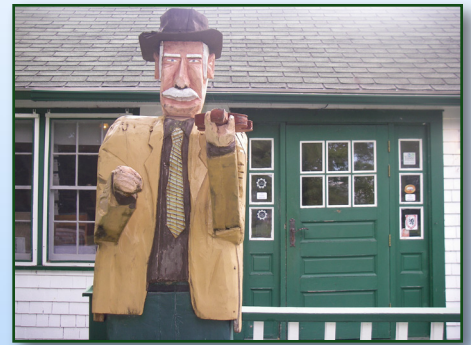
### TELEGRAPH HOUSE

[www.baddeck.com/telegraph/](http://www.baddeck.com/telegraph/)

479 Chebucto Street

Ph: 902-295-1100

A wide assortment of rooms is offered between the historic house and motel at prices starting at \$75 per night. Alexander Graham Bell's room is preserved as it was when he stayed in 1880.



*Normaway Inn*

### THE DUNLOP INN

[www.dunlopinn.com/](http://www.dunlopinn.com/)

552 Chebucto Street

Ph: 888-290-1988 or 902-295-1100

Choose one of five rooms which include access to a private deck and beach. Summer prices are \$120-\$160 per night.

## Day 2: Baddeck to the Margaree Valley

### TOTAL DISTANCE

43 kms (26.5 miles) to North East Margaree, 64 kms (40 miles) to Margaree Harbour

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Easy to moderate. It's a short day with only a few hills but watch out for ruts.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Lovely biking once you reach the Margaree Valley, especially on the quieter East Margaree Road that parallels the Cabot Trail to the east of the river. I highly recommend this road.

### FOOD OPTIONS

The Dancing Goat Café at 6289 Cabot Trail in Northeast Margaree is very good. The Normaway & Duck Cove Inns offer breakfast and dinner and all meals are available at the Island Sunset Resort.





Cheticamp Beach

## Route Notes from Baddeck to the Margaree Valley

Bike from Baddeck along Shore Road (Highway 205) until you reach Highway 105, the Trans Canada Highway, about 2 kms away.

Turn right at the sign for Highway 105 and then left (south) in 80 m onto the Trans Canada Highway. Follow Highway 105 for 8 kms until you see signs pointing to the right for Margaree Forks, Cheticamp and the Cabot Trail.

Turn right and stay on The Cabot Trail, NS-19, for 32 kms to arrive in North East Margaree. *Note: There are plenty of Margarees to choose from so pay attention to which one you are going to.* Your accommodation will dictate where you go next. Normaway Lodge is accessed off of Egypt Road, 3 kms before reaching North East Margaree. Otherwise continue as noted below.

Stay on the Cabot Trail for a further 6.3 kms past Egypt Road until you reach East Margaree Road. It's not the Cabot Trail but it's a recommended quieter alternative to reach the coast. Stay on East Margaree Road for almost 13 kms, until you rejoin the Cabot Trail at the coast. Turn left to reach the Duck Cove

Inn, 1.5 kms south or turn right (north) onto the Cabot Trail and cycle for 750 meters to Belle Cote Beach Road. Turn left towards the ocean and follow it down to the very obvious Island Sunset Resort.

\*\*\*The Dancing Goat Café is a kilometer or two past Egypt Road on the south side and a great lunchtime destination.\*\*\*

## Accommodation

### NORMAWAY INN

[www.thenormawayinn.com/](http://www.thenormawayinn.com/)

691 Egypt Road, Margaree Valley  
Ph: 800-565-9463 or 902-248-2987

The Inn sits on a beautiful piece of property but the rooms need a little TLC. Reading lights are bad, bathrooms need updating and a fresh coat of paint would add some sparkle. Fortunately rooms are only \$99 to \$159 per night though cabins are more. Meals are good but be warned that breakfast is not included. Staff are friendly. This IS THE PLACE to catch some Celtic music at The Barn – just steps away from your room. You can hear some of Cape Breton's top fiddlers and then dance the night away.

### DUCK COVE INN

[www.duckcoveinn.com/](http://www.duckcoveinn.com/)

10289 Cabot Trail, Margaree Harbour  
Ph: 800-565-9993 or 902-235-2658

It's a basic inn but the location is good. Rates are \$95-\$115 per night.

### MARGAREE RIVERVIEW INN

[www.margareeriverviewinn.com/](http://www.margareeriverviewinn.com/)

21045 Route #19  
Intersection with the Cabot Trail near Margaree Forks  
Ph: 888-493-5151 or 902-248-2948 (in season only)  
Rates are \$68- \$119 per night.

### ISLAND SUNSET RESORT & SPA

[www.islandsunset.com/](http://www.islandsunset.com/)

19 Beach Cove Lane, Belle Cote  
Ph: 866-515-2900 or 902-235-2669

The resort is situated up from the water but enjoys lovely views. You can rent cottages from \$180-\$205 per night and do your own cooking or take advantage of their dining room. They have a lobster pound on site.

## Day 3: Margaree Valley to Cheticamp

### TOTAL DISTANCE

45-52 kms (28 -32 miles) depending which road you take

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Easy to moderate with a few hills but nothing onerous; the wind could be a problem

### HIGHLIGHTS

Lovely quiet cycling down the Margaree Valley, nice ocean views along the Cabot Trail, crafts shops

### SIDE TRIPS:

Whale watching is a popular activity. Take one of three daily tours offered by Whale Cruisers. [www.whalecruisers.com/](http://www.whalecruisers.com/) Their sunset tour is always a hit. Chances are high that you'll see pilot whales but minke and fin whales are common too. Overhead you're likely to see eagles and seabirds.

### LES TROIS PIGNONS

[www.lestroispignons.com/](http://www.lestroispignons.com/)

You can't miss the bright red roofed and distinctly cabled building on the Cabot Trail in Cheticamp. It's in here you can get a lesson on Acadian history and marvel at the collection of hooked rugs which are true works of art. It also has a genealogy library which draws visitors from across the Maritimes as well as distant parts of Canada and the US.



## Food Options

In Belle Cote at the Island Sunset Resort you can get pick up sandwiches and sit down by the water. Once in Cheticamp there are lots of small family run restaurants. Worth trying despite slow service is the Acadian Restaurant on Main Street at the north end of town. Here you'll find traditionally clothed women serving Acadian food. Also on site look for locally made handicrafts especially the world famous hooked rugs. Otherwise try the Oceanview Restaurant at 15569 Cabot Trail.

## ROUTE NOTES

(directions from the Dancing Goat Café at 6335 Cabot Trail in Northeast Margaree)

Leave the café and head west on the Cabot Trail for 7.2 kms until you reach the junction with East Margaree Road. Although you can continue on the Cabot Trail, the East Margaree Road is a much quieter and bike friendly alternative.

Turn right on East Margaree Road, cross the river and turn left (northwest) to continue on East Margaree. Stay on this peaceful road for 14 kms until you reach Belle Cote and rejoin the Cabot Trail. If you elect to stay on the Cabot Trail then the distance from the café to Belle Cote is 23 km.

From Belle Cote it's about 23 kms north to reach Cheticamp. The road in this section is rutted in places and the shoulder narrow so your full attention is required. Ocean views are visible for long sections through here. If you aren't in a rush then take time to visit the galleries. Everything from paper mâché masks to hooked rugs to folk art and photography is available.

## Accommodation in Cheticamp

### ACADIAN MOTEL

<http://cheticampns.com/acadianmotel/>

Main Street

Ph: 800-615-1977 or 902-224-2640

A basic motel room for \$85 per night.

### PILOT WHALES CHALET

[www.pilotwhalechalets.com/](http://www.pilotwhalechalets.com/)

15775 Cabot Trail

Ph: 902-224-1040

You'll find these chalets at the north end of town just a short stroll away from the ocean. Basic rooms are clean and have full kitchen facilities. Restaurants are a couple of kilometers south. One bedroom suites are \$95 to \$115 per night.

### OCEAN VIEW MOTEL & CHALETs

[www.oceanviewchalets.com/](http://www.oceanviewchalets.com/)

15569 Cabot Trail

Ph: 877-743-4404 or 902-224-2313

Located right beside the ocean within walking distance of restaurants. Rates are \$115 to \$140 a night.

## Day 4: Cheticamp to Dingwall

### TOTAL DISTANCE

76 kms (47 miles)

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Difficult with a number of long steep hills; a big one in the morning and another one after lunch that boasts a 13% grade over 3 kms

### HIGHLIGHTS

Fantastic scenery, especially along the western coast of Cape Breton Highlands National Park; the climb in the afternoon of North Mountain rewards with excellent scenery too.



*Dingwall Evening*

### SIDE TRIPS

The 7 km Skyline Trail is a perennial favourite for hikers. Moose are almost always around and the views are superlative. The Whale Interpretive Centre at 104 Harbour Road in Pleasant Bay features live ocean creatures and plenty of insight into the various whales that call this area home.

### FOOD OPTIONS

Before you leave Cheticamp stop by the Aucoin Bakery at 14 Lapointe Road in Petit Étang and grab a fresh baguette. I'd also carry a few bars with you for energy on the climbs. You can buy a very good lunch in Pleasant Bay. (See below) Most options for an evening meal are at small family run restaurants. In Cape North look for Angie's Restaurant or buy food at the Cabot Trail Food Market. Try the Celtic Touch Bakery in Dingwall or The Chowder House in Neil's Harbour.



## Route Notes from Cheticamp to Dingwall

Continue north on the Cabot Trail. A few kilometers outside of Cheticamp but before the National Park entrance, pass a convenience store that opens early (7:30ish) and a bakery. In another few kilometers enter Cape Breton Highlands National Park and pay the entrance fee of \$7.80. Continue along the Cabot Trail for a total of 73 kms. There are lots of pull offs along the way to safely enjoy the view. The first major climb of the day is up French Mountain. Enjoy a lovely flat section along the top with air filled with the scent of pine.

Pleasant Bay is a good destination for lunch. It is 42 kms and one major climb from Cheticamp. We enjoyed delicious crab burgers at the first restaurant you come to on your left and the lobster rolls at the Rusty Anchor Restaurant are reputed to be some of the best on the Cabot Trail. Even better are the great ocean views from their terrace.

After Pleasant Bay you'll pull away from the coast, and then climb gradually until you hit the 13% grades of North Mountain. This is a tougher climb than French Mountain when you cycle the Cabot

Trail in a clockwise direction. You'll be very pleased with yourself when you get to the top and will have an exhilarating downhill on the far side of the plateau.

The small community of Cape North lies at the 71 km mark. There are B&B's if you head off towards Aspy Bay (see below) but the bulk of the accommodation is closer to Dingwall. To reach Dingwall turn right in Cape North to continue on the Cabot Trail.

In about 1.5 kms you will reach Dingwall Road. Turn left if you are staying in Dingwall and continue for about 2 kms to reach Dingwall Harbour. The Markland Resort and the Inlet B&B are nearby. Otherwise continue south on the Cabot Trail to reach your accommodation.

### Accommodation

There are only a few places to stay in the Dingwall area though there are others in and around Cape North. White Point and Neil's Harbour both offer accommodation too. It all depends on how far you want to cycle.

### OAKWOOD MANOR B&B

[www.capebretonisland.com/oakwood](http://www.capebretonisland.com/oakwood)

Two miles off the Cabot Trail near Cape North

Ph: 902-383-2317

Look for four star accommodations plus a computer for visitor use. High season rates are \$80-105 per night.

### FOUR MILE BEACH INN

[www.fourmilebeachinn.com](http://www.fourmilebeachinn.com)

RR#1 Cape North

Ph: 888-602-3737 or 902-383-2282

The seasonal 5 room inn is in a building that dates back to the 1880's. Enjoy a private dock and a covered back porch with grand views of Aspy Bay. Rooms are \$99-\$139 per night. Breakfast is included and a general store is on the premises where you can buy a bowl of chowder.

### MACDONALD'S MOTEL

[www.macdonaldsmotel.ca/](http://www.macdonaldsmotel.ca/)

Main Intersection in Cape North Village

Ph: 902-383-2054

They offer a basic motel room for \$65 to \$75 per night.



### THE INLET B&B

[www.dingwallbedandbreakfast.com/](http://www.dingwallbedandbreakfast.com/)

473 Dingwall Road

Ph: 902-383-2112

Rooms in this very friendly B&B are \$70-\$120 per night. The B&B is situated right on the water and it's a short stroll into town to get a meal. Breakfasts are very good.

### MARKLAND BEACH COTTAGES

[www.marklandbeachcottages.com/](http://www.marklandbeachcottages.com/)

At the end of Dingwall Road

Ph: 888-829-6949 or 902-577-4416

The log rooms and one and two bedroom cottages enjoy stunning views of the ocean. Unfortunately meals are no longer served so you'll have to bring food or wander into town to the Celtic Touch Bakery for something to eat.

### TWO TITTLE

[www.twotittle.com](http://www.twotittle.com)

2119 White Point Village (off the Cabot Trail in White Point, about 6 miles north of Neil's Harbour)

Ph: 866-231-4078 or 902-383-2817

The B&B is off the beaten track but offers visitors a view of a small beach and fishing wharf. Breakfast is included but check on dinner possibilities before booking. Rates are \$60-\$80 per night.

### SEYMOUR HARBOUR VIEW

[www.capebretonisland.com/northernhighlands/seymour/](http://www.capebretonisland.com/northernhighlands/seymour/)

Ph: 902-336-2543

The B&B offers 3 rooms in a motel like setting in beautiful Neil's Harbour. A beach is within walking distance. Rooms are \$90 per night and credit cards are not accepted.

### Day 5: Dingwall to Ingonish

#### TOTAL DISTANCE

43 kms (26.5 miles) from Dingwall to the Keltic Lodge, 47 kms (29 miles) to Ingonish Beach, 55 kms (34 miles) to Castle Rock Inn

#### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Easy to moderate with lots of rolling hills

#### HIGHLIGHTS

Vast amounts of beautiful pink granite rock, Neil's Harbour, Black Brook Beach, the alternate scenic coastal route between South Harbour and Neil's Harbour

#### FOOD OPTIONS

Try a bowl of chowder or one of the crab sandwiches at the Chowder House in Neil's Harbour. The site of the restaurant is worth the detour alone. In Ingonish Center look for grocery and convenience stores. There are restaurants in the Keltic Lodge (Atlantic Restaurant), at the Glenghorm Beach Resort (the Crofter's table) and at the Castle Rock Inn. The Seaside Coastal Retreat also offers meals.

### Route Notes from Dingwall to Ingonish Ferry

From Dingwall return to the Cabot Trail and turn left (south). Continue on the Cabot Trail for 3 kms. Then if you would prefer the scenic coastal route turn left onto White Point Road. Otherwise stay on the Cabot Trail for 13 kms to reach Neil's Harbour. The coastal route is quiet, but hilly. Roads aren't in great shape but traffic is so light it won't matter. The

route takes you by small hamlets with lobster traps piled out in the yard. If you want to visit the hamlet of White Point then turn left at the intersection of White Point and New Haven Road at the 9.5 km mark from the Cabot Trail. You will have a great downhill but of course every foot down is a foot you will have to climb back up. From the White Point – New Haven Road Intersection it's another 9.5 kms to Neil's Harbour.

A refueling stop at Neil's Harbour might be in order. Then continue for under a kilometer out to the Cabot Trail and turn left (south) to rejoin the Cabot Trail. In about 5 kms Black Brook Cove appears. Take the time to get off your bike and explore this very scenic area, complete with a small waterfall.

Stay on the Cabot Trail all the way to Ingonish; though make sure you know ahead of time which Ingonish you're staying in. First you reach Ingonish, then Ingonish Centre, Ingonish Beach (the Keltic Lodge is here), Ingonish Harbour and Ingonish Ferry. Along the way a series of pullovers with stunning views up and down the coast beckon for you to stop and explore. At Green Cove an interesting sign informs you about the leatherback sea turtles. These turtles migrate via the Gulf Stream from the Caribbean to the Atlantic Coast every summer. If you are lucky enough to spot one then the Canadian Sea Turtle Network would love a call. (1-888-729-4667)

The distance from Neil's Harbour to Ingonish Beach is roughly 25 kms. To continue to the Castle Rock Inn near Ingonish Ferry add another 8 kms including the start of the climb up Cape Smoky.



## Accommodation

### KELTIC LODGE

[www.kelticlodge.ca/](http://www.kelticlodge.ca/)

383 Middle Head Peninsula, Ingonish Beach

Ph: 800-565-0444 or 902-285-2880

The lodge enjoys a fantastic location on a cliff high above the ocean with superb views. Take the 4 km trail from the lodge to the headland and then dine in the Purple Thistle Dining Room. The lodge sits within the National Park so a valid ticket is required for a stay. Rooms start at \$174 per night and include breakfast.

### GLENGHORM BEACH RESORT

[www.capebretonresorts.com/](http://www.capebretonresorts.com/)

36743 Cabot Trail

Ph: 800-565-5660 or 902-285-2049

The Resort sits just outside the National Park on a kilometer long beach. Rooms start at \$120 a night in the summer.

### CASTLE ROCK INN

[www.ingonish.com/castlerock/](http://www.ingonish.com/castlerock/)

39339 Cabot Trail

Ph: 888-884-7625 or 902-285-2700

The Inn sits high on a hill with a commanding view of the area. Rooms are pretty basic but the dining room is surprisingly good. Breakfast and dinner are served. Rooms are \$129-\$156 per night.

## Day 6: Ingonish to Baddeck

### TOTAL DISTANCE

85 kms (53 miles) via the Cabot Trail, 74 kms (44 miles) via a combination of the Cabot Trail, the ferry to Englishtown and the Trans Canada Highway

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderate to difficult because of the long climb up Cape Smokey

### HIGHLIGHTS

Stunning views from Cape Smokey, fantastic descent, The Clucking Hen Restaurant

### FOOD OPTIONS

Your best bet is eating at The Clucking Hen at 45073 Cabot Trail near Englishtown. It's open for breakfast, lunch and dinner starting at 7am. Friendly people, a great atmosphere and some of the best food on the Cabot Trail is what's in store. They are a recent additions to the book 'Where to Eat in Canada.'

### Route Notes (from the Castle Rock Inn near Ingonish Ferry)

Leave Castle Rock Inn by turning left out of the driveway and continuing on the climb up Cape Smokey that you began yesterday. It's only about 4 kms to the top. Turn left onto the access road to the view point and once there park your bikes and explore the paths with terrific views up and down the coast.

Back on the road the fun begins. A very steep descent filled with hairpin curves takes you down to Wreck Cove, about 9 kms away. Watch the roads as there isn't much of a shoulder and in places it is deeply rutted.

Unfortunately after the descent the rest of the day has an anticlimactic feel to it. The Clucking Hen restaurant is 30.6 kms from the start of the day so it may be a bit early for lunch. Take your time around here and wander through a number of galleries if you need to build an appetite. Clustered close together are basket, leather and woodworking studios.



*Alexander Graham Bell & wife*

From the Clucking Hen continue on the Cabot Trail for 8.3 kms to the intersection of the Cabot Trail and Route 312. To continue to Baddeck on the Cabot Trail turn right. In the summer of 2010 this section of the Cabot Trail was a mess of construction. Instead we continued on Route 312 for about 5 kms until we reached the ferry terminal. It's only a 5 minute ferry ride to Englishtown. In fact the ferry is pulled across the water by a big cable. It continues going back and forth all day and is free for bikers.

Once on the other side continue on Highway 312 for 6 kms until you reach the Trans Canada Highway 105 where you will turn right (south). Although it's noisy and busy there is a very wide shoulder so it's safe for cyclists.

Stay on the Trans Canada for about 12.5 kms. When you come to the junction with Highway 205 turn left. Then the car noise quiets down but the shoulder disappears. Fortunately it's nice cycling along the Bras d'Or Lake and it's only about 8.5 kms to reach the center of town. On the way in you pass the Alexander Graham Bell National Historic Site which is described in more detail below.

And voila –you're finished. Now time for that cold beer or great glass of wine. Then the celebratory meal.



## Other Activities on the Cabot Trail

Most people drive rather than cycle the Cabot Trail. Although there are plenty of places to get out and stretch your legs there is much more to do than just drive or bike the Cabot Trail. Try out one of these activities to give you a whole new perspective on Cape Breton Island.

### WHALE WATCHING

Whale watching is very popular all around Cape Breton Island. Some spots to take advantage of it on the Cabot Trail are in Cheticamp, Pleasant Bay and Bay St. Lawrence. Here is a sampling of the companies offering tours.

#### OSHAN WHALE WATCH

[www.oshan.ca/](http://www.oshan.ca/)

Ph: 877-383-2883

This company with Captain Cyril Fraser at the helm operates out of Bay St. Lawrence at the northeast end of Cape Breton Island. They offer three departures a day all summer. Tours are 2 – 2 1/2 hours in length and cost \$30 per adult. The frequent sightings of Fin, Humpback, Minke and Pilot whales delight guests. Also look out for seals, dolphins and seabirds.

### WHALE CRUISERS

[www.whalecruisers.com/](http://www.whalecruisers.com/)

Ph: 800-813-3376 or 902-224-3376

They operate three tours a day in the summer time out of Cheticamp.

### CABOT TRAIL WHALE WATCHING

[www.pleasantbaywhalewatching.com/](http://www.pleasantbaywhalewatching.com/)

Ph: 866-688-2424 or 902-224-1976

Tours are offered up to four times a day in July and typically last for 1 ½ -2 hours. They offer a 100% money back guarantee if you don't see whales – but that means another trip which isn't always possible.

### BIRD WATCHING

#### DONELDA'S PUFFIN BOAT TOURS

[www.puffinboattours.ca](http://www.puffinboattours.ca)

Ph: 877-278-3346 or 902-929-2563

The 2.5 hour tour takes you to Bird Island and the nesting grounds of the Atlantic Puffin. A local naturalist provides insight and commentary on every tour. You'll likely see seals and bald eagles and up to 14 other types of seabirds. Rates are \$34.50 per adult but may vary with fuel prices.

### HIKING

Cape Breton Highlands National Park offers 25 hiking trails ranging from easy strolls to stiff climbs. The hikes are clustered along the eastern and western sides of the park. I liked the sound of the hike down to Fishing Cove on the west side of the Cabot Trail. It's about a 16 km return hike though you can camp down by the water and it's the only back country site in the park. Here you get breathtaking sunsets and sightings of moose or whales. The foundations of a long forgotten lobster cannery are still visible too.

### KAYAKING

Cape Breton offers rugged coastlines, salt marshes, quiet coves and beaches – all the makings for an interesting kayak trip. There are a number of companies just off the Cabot Trail that offer the choice of a guided tour or a rental kayak.

### EAGLE NORTH

[www.kayakingcapebreton.ca](http://www.kayakingcapebreton.ca)

Ph: 888-616-1689 or 902-383-2552

These folks are located out of Dingwall. They offer a three hour guided tour for \$55. There is also the option of renting a single or double kayak at very reasonable rates.





## **NORTH RIVER KAYAK TOURS**

[www.northriverkayak.com/](http://www.northriverkayak.com/)

Ph: 888-865-2925 or 902-929-2628

The company is based in the Baddeck area

## **GOLF**

Golfers will enjoy playing the 18-hole Highlands Links - [www.highlandslinksgolf.com/](http://www.highlandslinksgolf.com/), rated the best course in Canada in 2000 by Score Golf magazine. They say its golf as its meant to be played - in Scottish fashion - which I think means it rains a great deal or it has people eating roughs. If it doesn't rain, it's a beautiful course.

## **CRAFTS TRAIL**

The Cape Breton Center for Craft and Design ([www.capebretoncraft.com](http://www.capebretoncraft.com)) publishes a trail map that you can find anywhere tourists might go. Fifty

nine artisans around not only the Cabot Trail but the whole of Cape Breton Island are represented on the map by a number which corresponds to a blurb about what they offer. The full artistic range is represented - glass, leather, quilts, baskets, wood, stone, photography, folk art...you get the picture.

## **ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE**

[www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/grahambell/index.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhn-nhs/ns/grahambell/index.aspx)

559 Chebucto Street

The genius and inventiveness of Alexander Graham Bell is impossible to miss. Allow at least two hours to wander through the museum, watch videos, check out exhibits and appreciate how prolific his interests were. It includes a full scale model of the hydrofoil he built during the World War I. The entrance fee is \$7.80 per adult.

## **TOUR COMPANIES**

As an alternate to doing a self guided trip you may prefer to have someone else do the detailed organizing. Listed are most of the companies operating in the area.

## **PEDAL AND SEA ADVENTURES**

[www.pedalandseaadventures.com/](http://www.pedalandseaadventures.com/)

Ph: 877-777-5699

They offer a 6 night/7 day Cabot Trail guided tour for \$2199 or a self guided version for \$1499. A shuttle from Halifax to Baddeck, the start of the tour, can be arranged for a reasonable fee.







*Englishtown Ferry*

#### **EASTWIND CYCLE**

[www.eastwindcycle.com](http://www.eastwindcycle.com)

Ph: 902-471-4424

A 5 night/6 day trip is offered for \$1850. Their minimum group size is four people. Airport shuttles from Halifax are possible too.

#### **ATLANTIC CANADA CYCLING**

[www.atlanticcanadacycling.com](http://www.atlanticcanadacycling.com)

Ph: 888-879-2453 or 902-423-2453

They offer a one week tour that covers more of Cape Breton Island than just the Cabot Trail. Their 8 day cycling trip costs \$698 if booked early, otherwise \$806. It's a camping style trip they offer with

no meals included. Group sizes are large but people naturally break off and form smaller sub groups. Your gear is transported and a sag wagon is provided. They know Atlantic Canada very well and have been offering these trips for years!!

#### **FREEWHEELING ADVENTURES**

[www.freewheeling.ca/](http://www.freewheeling.ca/)

Ph: 800-672-0775 or 902-857-3600

On offer is a 5 night/6 day guided trip for \$1995 or a self guided affair for \$1795.

#### **SEA SPRAY OUTDOOR ADVENTURES**

[www.cabot-trail-outdoors.com/](http://www.cabot-trail-outdoors.com/)

Ph: 902-383-2732

They specialize in packaging multi day bike/hike and kayak tours. They prefer to be contacted for rates.

#### **Useful Websites**

#### **BADDECK WEATHER**

[www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/cans0008](http://www.theweathernetwork.com/weather/cans0008)

#### **NORTHERN CAPE BRETON TOURISM**

[www.northerncapebreton.com](http://www.northerncapebreton.com)

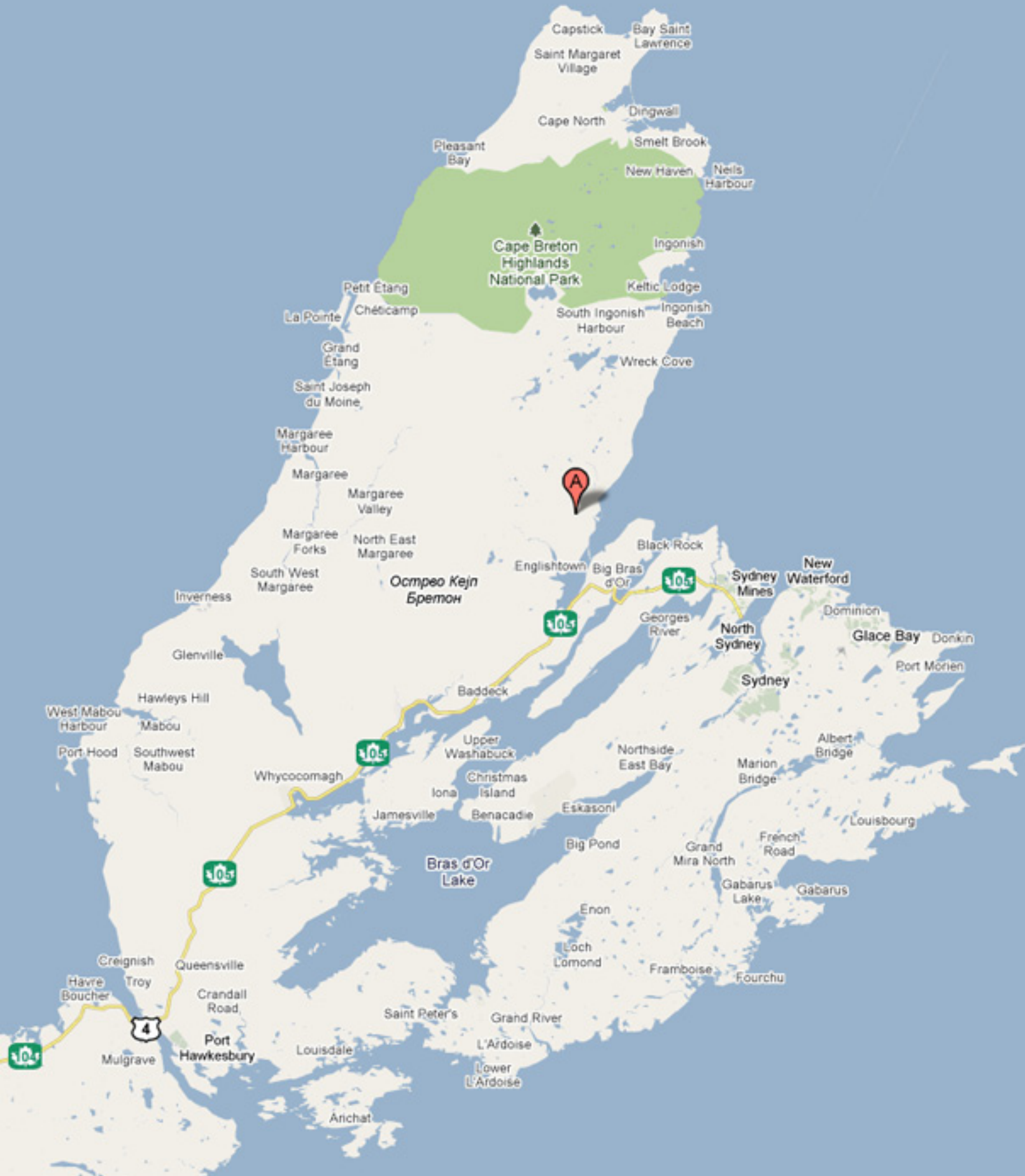
#### **CAPE BRETON HIGHLANDS NATIONAL PARK**

[www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ns/cbreton/index.aspx](http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/ns/cbreton/index.aspx)

#### **NOVA SCOTIA TOURISM**

<http://novascotia.com/en/home/default.aspx>







# PACKING LIST

## BIKE EQUIPMENT

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- Pump, tire irons and patch kit plus spare inner tubes
- Cycle odometer
- Bike lock
- Repair tools with Allen wrenches
- Bungee cord
- Your own pedals and bike shoes (optional)
- Helmet and helmet cover for rain
- Water bottles

## CLOTHES

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(\*\*\*this trip is not formal so you can keep your non biking clothes simple\*\*\*)

- Underwear and socks, biking and otherwise
- Leg and arm warmers depending on the season
- Booties for rain protection
- Cycling gloves
- Bike shorts and short and long sleeved bike jerseys depending on the season
- Long biking pants depending on the season
- Rain gear for top and bottom
- Windproof fleece jacket
- Jeans and/or shorts
- After biking tops – long and short sleeved
- Shoes and/or sandals
- Bandana

## OTHER

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- Cycling glasses/sunglasses
- Camera + extra batteries
- Cell phone or phone card plus recharger and electric plug
- Cash + debit card
- Ziploc bags + large plastic bags for panniers
- Panniers and a handlebar bag if not supplied
- Nylon bags for dirty clothes
- Map, guide and itinerary
- Swiss army style of knife + spoon and fork (optional)
- Headlamp + extra batteries or a bike light in case you're on the road when it gets dark
- First aid kit
- Prescription and non prescription drugs
- Sunscreen and toiletries
- Energy bars