

# ShermansTravel

Easy Escapes

## Retreat to Canada's Dreamy Prince Edward Island This Autumn

by Donna Heiderstadt • Sep 3, 2019



There are still several weeks left to enjoy the historic charm, coastal scenery, and fresh seafood of Prince Edward Island (PEI) before the season winds down — or start planning for a visit from May to October 2020. In addition to its natural beauty and literary allure as home to the beloved heroine in *Anne of Green Gables*, PEI has the atmospheric hotels, farm-to-table restaurants, and leisure activities that upscale travelers appreciate. Even better, luxury here isn't cookie cutter. Instead, it's steeped in history and seasoned with artisanal touches that create an authentic sense of place. This is Canada's smallest province — just 140 miles long and 40 miles at its widest — and that intimacy creates a vacation experience reminiscent of coastal New England but offering great value; the exchange rate translates to a 30 percent discount against the U.S. dollar. Here's a luxury guide to PEI.

### Where to Stay

To experience all that PEI has to offer, split your stay between two of its most appealing hotels, both of which offer top-notch accommodations in historic settings. Begin or end your visit in the capital, Charlottetown, and stay at the **Great George Hotel**, a boutique property located in a cluster of 19th-century buildings in the heart of the city's best-preserved neighborhoods. **Romantic Hideaway Suites** (from \$250 per night) feature king-sized beds, a fireplace, and a double Jacuzzi tub; most suites offer views of the landmark St. Dunstan's Basilica. If the property's provenance intrigues you, join the hotel's daily historical walking tour at 4 p.m., followed by complimentary cocktails in the antiques-filled lobby.

Next, head to [Dalvay by the Sea](#), a pretty Victorian inn visited by Prince William and Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, on their Canada tour in 2011. A National Historic Site located inside [Prince Edward Island National Park](#) on the north coast, the property was constructed in 1895 by Scottish businessman Alexander MacDonald and has been a hotel since 1959. For traditional architecture and period furnishings, opt for a [King Suite](#) (from \$180 per night) in the historic building. Families and large groups can book one of the eight [three-bedroom cottages](#) (from \$233 per night), which have pine interiors and updated traditional décor. The inn, which features a covered porch and public rooms with roaring fireplaces, overlooks Dalvay Lake and is within walking distance of the beach.

## Where and What to Eat

PEI is all about local seafood, from its legendary mussels and oysters to fresh-caught halibut and cod – and, of course, lobster. In Charlottetown, [Terre Rouge](#) offers farm-to-table dining that's popular with both locals and visitors. Plus, this vegan- and vegetarian-friendly eatery is open for lunch, dinner, and weekend brunch. Top dishes include mushroom toast, seared scallops, and halibut. A new spot in town offering a more casual menu (mussels & frites, lobster burgers, and local craft beer and cider) is [Salt & Sol](#). Its deck overlooking the marina is the perfect spot for lunch on a sunny day. Another must-try: [Cows Creamery](#) – the original on Queen Street or the outpost in Peakes Quay – for ice cream scoops in fun flavors such as Caramel Moccchiato and Cownadian Maple.

While staying in Charlottetown, take a drive to explore the island's southern shore, especially the Instagram-worthy seaside village [Victoria by the Sea](#). Have lunch at [Landmark Oyster House](#). The name gives it all away, but in addition to three to five varieties of fresh PEI oysters offered daily, the menu also supports other island suppliers offering fresh local ingredients.

During your stay at Dalvay by the Sea, reserve a window table in the [MacMillan Dining Room](#) at sunset. The menu by chef Ryan Janssens features exquisitely prepared seasonal dishes. The roasted beet and feta salad, followed by seared Digby scallops with asparagus and smoked potatoes, was the perfect conclusion to a sunny July day – especially with an international wine list in a relaxed fine-dining setting. Another top option that mixes fresh locally inspired menus with work by more than 50 Canadian artists is [Dunes Studio Gallery & Café](#) in nearby Brackley Beach. The menus are seasonal, but you can always expect to enjoy seafood chowder, island crab cakes, local halibut, and grilled island beef tenderloin. And, when you're craving the simple pleasure of an expertly prepared lobster roll paired with crispy fries or a fresh kale salad, stop in at family-friendly [On the Dock Eatery](#) in North Rustico.

## What to See and Do

### Explore the Island's Scenic National Parks and Beaches

Abundant natural beauty is another reason PEI is a top tourism destination. Drive east from Charlottetown to Prince Edward Island National Park and enjoy a 2.7-mile walk along the Greenwich Dunes Trail, part of which is a floating bridge with panoramic views of marshes and parabolic dunes — and there's a terrific beach on the other side. From Dalvay, explore the woodlands and beaches of Prince Edward Island National Park, which includes the family-friendly main beach at Cavendish. Also nearby is the nostalgic **Green Gables Heritage Place**, which is so wonderfully designed that even visitors who weren't Anne of Green Gables fans as children will leave with an appreciation of author Lucy Maud Montgomery and her love for PEI.

### Stroll Back in Time Around Charlottetown

The island's capital also delivers historic charm. While staying at the Great George Hotel, you'll likely encounter the costumed **Confederation Players**, who stroll outside the hotel and in front of **St. Dunstan's Basilica**. The players stay in character — they're attending the 1864 Charlottetown Conference, which forged the unification of Canadian provinces. The performance is whimsical and charming. Also nearby is **Province House**, birthplace of the Confederation, and Victoria Row, a pedestrian-only street lined with historic buildings, outdoor bars, cafés, and live music.

### Play Golf, Bird-Watch, or Sip on Locally Made Spirits

PEI also has plenty of ways for visitors to enjoy their favorite pastimes, from putting for a birdie on the island's 18 beautifully manicured golf courses to spying on great blue herons and red-throated loons in its national parks and preserves. Top courses include **The Links at Crowbush Cove**, **Dundarave Golf Course**, and **Green Gables Golf Course**. Birders also flock to PEI to seek out species along the boardwalks in Cavendish Dunes, Greenwich Dunes, and dozens of other spots such as East Point during migration season. A fun way to cap off any stay is a visit to **Myriad View Artisan Distillery** to sample botanical-infused gin, Canadian-oak-aged whiskey, and Canada's first legal moonshine — and take home a potent and unique souvenir of Prince Edward Island.

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