



Ceilidh Trail

Hearty highland greetings

Scottish traditions and Gaelic folklore come alive along the Ceilidh Trail. Ceilidh (pronounced kay-lee) is Gaelic for party or gathering, and if you listen closely you might hear the heart-stirring music of bagpipes and fiddles echoing through the glens of this beautiful corner of Cape Breton Island.

Around every bend, the Ceilidh Trail offers stunning vistas of rugged coastline, bays and inlets, verdant hills and rolling farmlands as it follows the shore of western Cape Breton for 107 km (67 mi.) from the Canso Causeway to the Cabot Trail. Along the way you can explore the beautiful Mabou Highlands, hike unforgettable coastal trails, stroll along fine sand beaches and swim in the warm salt water of St. George's Bay. Linger along the breathtaking Broad Cove Road where seacliffs rise high above the sparkling surf. Tour a distillery, explore fascinating local museums, or take a leisurely drive around lovely Lake Ainslie.

Visitor Information Centres

Baddeck E15, 295-1911
Chéticamp B14, 224-2642
Inverness D13, 258-3740
Little Narrows E14, 756-2413
Louisbourg E17, 733-2720
Margaree Forks D14, 248-2803
North Sydney D16, 794-7719
☞ Port Hastings F13, 625-4201
Port Hood E13, 787-2521
St Peter's F14, 535-2185
Sydney E16, 539-9876

Most Visitor Information Centres are open mid-May to mid-October (subject to change). Call the above numbers or 1-800-565-0000.

☞ Provincial Visitor Information Centre
cbisland.com

This region is well known for its musical talent.(pictured: Beolach, at Celtic Colours)



Experience musical tradition on the Ceilidh Trail

"There's so much music on the Island; it's a very important part of our culture. I know for myself, my parents both played instruments and I grew up listening to music at home. In the community where I was born, it seemed like every second house has a fiddler, a singer, or a dancer—I can't imagine my life without music. Like the Ceilidh, an old-fashioned kitchen party where people drop in and enjoy tunes and stories, a drink and a bite to eat and just have a good ol' time. The history of our music and dance, Gaelic song and language, piping and all the different instruments, it's part of what makes Cape Breton a fascinating place to visit. It's part of who we are. People can come here, feel at home and take a little bit of the Island with them when they leave."

– Kinnon Beaton



Director of Programming,
Celtic Music Centre

Visit novascotia.com to watch videos of this and other exciting Nova Scotia experiences.



The names along the Ceilidh Trail—Creignish, Craigmore, Inverness and Glenora—reflect the area's strong Scottish heritage. Large numbers of Scottish immigrants settled here between the 1780s and 1820s. They brought with them their Gaelic language and their passionate love of music. From these roots sprang up some of Canada's top musicians, such as the Rankins and Natalie MacMaster, who brought the Celtic-inspired "Cape Breton Sound" to delighted audiences worldwide.

The **Canso Causeway** connects Cape Breton with the mainland. Before the causeway's completion in 1955, Cape Breton was reachable only by ferry.

 The Ceilidh Trail begins at the Cape Breton end of the Canso Causeway, in the full-service community of **Port Hastings**, once known as Plaster Cove for the extensive gypsum deposits that were mined there in the 1800s. On Church Street, the Gut of Canso Museum and Archives trace the region's interesting history through photographs and memorabilia (see p. 278). Stop at the  Nova Scotia Visitor Information Centre to get information about Cape Breton Island.

From Port Hastings to Judique, the Ceilidh Trail traces the ruggedly beautiful coastal plain that lies between St. George's Bay and the thickly wooded Creignish Mountain. Along the way the Ceilidh Trail passes through the picturesque village of **Creignish**, where the graceful Stella Maris Church overlooks the blue waters of the bay. The public beach is an open invitation to beachcombers and those who love the sea. Nearby Long Point offers a pretty inland provincial park and picnic area with a small freshwater stream. Hikers can experience this region's unique beauty along the section of the Trans

Canada Trail that stretches between Port Hastings and **Long Point**.

Judique is a stronghold for Scottish culture and tradition, with the Celtic Music Interpretive Centre (see p. 278), The Tartan Gardens and a variety of musical performances throughout the year, such as the Kintyre Farm Scottish Concert. St. Andrew's Church, dedicated to the patron saint of Scotland, has fine stone architecture and a beautiful setting. The Trans Canada Trail continues, much of it along the open water, from Long Point Park to the beach at Baxter's Cove.

OFF TRAIL ▶ At **Judique North**, a left turn leads to the shore road, which skirts the coast of St. George's Bay, Nova Scotia's largest bay. A boat tour from Little Judique Harbour takes visitors to Port Hood Island and offers an excellent opportunity to see whales and bald eagles.

At **Harbourview**, the Chestico Museum highlights the history of the settlement and growth of the Port Hood region (see p. 278).

 **Port Hood**, a full-service fishing community, is the county seat of Inverness, the second-largest community on the Ceilidh Trail, and the step-dancing capital of Cape Breton. The village's scenic beauty is enhanced by magnificent views of Port Hood Island just offshore. The island's green meadows, brightly painted houses and high bluffs make it a favourite subject for photographers. The area around Port Hood is known for delightfully warm waters and fine sandy beaches at Port Hood Provincial Park and Court House Beach.

Port Hood marks the beginning of the Mabou Highlands, ancient rolling coastal hills that extend inland to Lake Ainslie and north to Inverness, reaching almost 300 m (1000 ft.) in height in places. The beauty of these hills, and their similarity to parts of



A great view from one of the Mabou Highlands Trails.



Celtic Colours Festival—
Celtic music at its best.



Hiking near Sight Point,
between Inverness and Mabou



The wharf at Inverness

Don't Miss!

Broad Cove Concert

Foot it all the night at West Cape Breton's finest showcase of Highland music and dance.

Mabou Highlands

Ramble the hillside, soar with the eagles and revel in the ocean panorama.

Inverness

Miners' Museum

Relive the heyday of the Inverness coal mining industry.

Glenora Distillery

Tour Canada's only distiller of single-malt whisky.

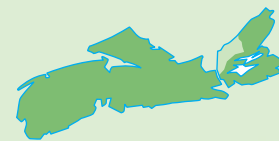
Kintyre Farm Scottish Concert

At Judique indulge in a stirring celebration of Cape Breton's Scottish culture.

Cape Breton

Square Dances

Join in a set almost any night along the Ceilidh Trail.



Approx. touring distances
along scenic route:

Port Hastings–Mabou 58 km

Mabou–Dunvegan 31 km

Dunvegan–Margaree Harbour 18 km



The Celtic Music Interpretive Centre at Judique.





Glenora Distillery, Glenville



Salmon fishing on the famous Margaree River.

the Scottish highlands, made this region particularly attractive to the Scottish settlers of the late 1700s and early 1800s.

OFF TRAIL ► The Colindale Road, a 14.5-km (9-mi.) paved and gravel byway, follows the scenic coastline of St. George's Bay from Port Hood to Mabou and enters the Mabou Highlands, passing through rolling countryside and coastal hills with stunning seascapes around every bend.

Watch for a small sign indicating the turnoff for West Mabou Beach Provincial Park, which features a beautiful 2-km curve of fine white sand, wonderfully warm water, captivating views of the green hills surrounding the harbour, and walking trails.

19 Route 19 continues through farmland and picturesque scenery of rolling hills and water to **Mabou**, a full-service community. In the south end of the village, Strathspey Place is a beautiful state-of-the-art theatre where concerts are held year-round. About 1 km (0.5 mi.) north of the theatre, a right turn off Route 19 leads to the small, charming Mother of Sorrows Pioneer Shrine and gift shop. Entering Mabou, the graceful spire of St. Mary's Church can be seen casting its reflection into the still water of the harbour. Just across the bridge, the Mabou Gaelic and Historical Society Museum, An Drochaid (The Bridge), houses local genealogical and historic records as well as serving as a forum for local musicians, storytellers and poets. (See p. 278).

Scottish traditions are still strong in Mabou. In fact, the Gaelic language is still taught in the local school, and in summer, the joyous sounds of Celtic music ring through the hills at celebrations like the Mabou Ceilidh, concerts at Strathspey Place, and the square dances for the whole family at West Mabou and nearby Glencoe Mills, where young and old alike share in the fun of the dance.

OFF TRAIL ► Just across the Mabou Bridge, a left turn leads along the beautiful northern shore of Mabou Harbour. Near the end of this road, a marked right turn leads to **Mabou Mines**, ending at a series of popular hiking trails through the coastal highlands. One of the most popular trails is a challenging 11-km (7-mi.) hike along the coastal headlands that offers spectacular views along the coast; trail maps are available locally.

19 On Route 19, just north of Mabou, Mabou Provincial Park is a wooded picnic park near the junction of Routes 19 and 252.

At **Glenville**, daily guided tours of Canada's only single-malt whisky distillery offer visitors a fascinating glimpse into the art of creating a world-class whisky (see p. 278).

OFF TRAIL ► Just beyond Glenville, a right turn leads to beautiful Lake Ainslie, the largest freshwater lake in Nova Scotia. The lake lies nestled between the green rolling hills of the Mabou Highlands that are blanketed by fields originally cleared and settled by Scottish Highlanders in the early 1800s. The 53-km (33-mi.) route around the lake is relatively level, making it popular with joggers and cyclists, and a great venue for the Lake Ainslie Marathon.

On Route 395 at **East Lake Ainslie**, the MacDonald House Museum is a traditional farm that has been restored to reflect the settler's farm life in the late 1800s. This farm is often the site of ceilidhs, barn dances, and other local musical celebrations (see p. 278). In Scotsville, a school of crafts carries on the traditions of weaving and other household arts.

19 **Inverness**, the largest community on the Ceilidh Trail, is a full-service community that also offers harness racing, several hiking trails, and an extensive boardwalk alongside one of the most popular sandy beaches on the Ceilidh Trail. The CN

Railway station, built in 1901, is now the home of the Inverness Miner's Museum, which highlights the region's coal-mining history (see p.278). The works of local artists and artisans are displayed at the museum and at the art gallery in the Inverness County Centre for the Arts (see p. 278).

OFF TRAIL ► At **Broad Cove**, turn left and follow a narrow gravel road that clings to the edge of bluffs high above the sea for 9 km (5.5 mi.) to Dunvegan, along one of Cape Breton's most magnificently scenic stretches of coastline. The open-air Broad Cove Concert, held the last Sunday in July, is one of Cape Breton's most popular Scottish music festivals.

OFF TRAIL ► At Dunvegan, continue along Route 19 through Southwest Margaree to the hub of the Margaree tourist area at Margaree Forks.

219 The Ceilidh Trail branches to the left on Route 219 at **Dunvegan**. This country road follows the beautiful Cape Breton coastline through **St. Rose** and **Chimney Corner**, joining the Cabot Trail at Margaree Harbour. Watch for a road on the left leading to the Whale Cove Cemetery, where the coastal bluffs offer superb views of the dramatic rise of the Cape Breton Highlands, Margaree Island (a Canadian bird sanctuary) and Margaree's three warm sandy beaches.

Entering **Margaree Harbour**, the Ceilidh Trail crests, presenting a panoramic view of this picturesque fishing community with its lighthouses, colourful houses, beaches and sparkling anchorages.

Just beyond the village is the junction of the Ceilidh and Cabot trails. A right turn leads through the lush green Margaree River Valley toward **Margaree Forks**, while a left turn across the Margaree Harbour bridge takes you toward **Belle Côte**, **Cheticamp** and the Cape Breton Highlands National Park (see p. 282).

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Cape Breton's Celtic Music Interpretive Centre at Judique




If you are coming to Cape Breton Island for the music, here is the place to start.

Learn about the history of the music and musicians and where to find it this summer. Our fiddlers, our exhibitory, and our archives are here to guide you. Check our website at www.celticmusic.com or call (902) 787-2708.

Come Ceilidh with us on the

Port Hawkesbury Waterfront




Monday Night Piper on the Pier 7:00-8:00pm
(weather permitting) Enjoy the tunes of a local bagpiper playing every Monday evening during July and August. **Admission is FREE.**

Tuesday Night - Ceilidh on the Waterfront
8:00-10:00pm- From June 12 to October 2, 2007.
The Ceilidhs are a combination of Cape Breton fiddle music, step dancing, vocalists, Highland dancing and instrumental performances. Admission is **\$8.00** for Adults and **\$4.00** for Youth.

Wednesday Night Sound Waves 7:00-8:30pm
July and August. Located on the Port Hawkesbury Waterfront (weather permitting) This event takes place in the waterfront band shell and showcases talented young local performers...singers & players. **Admission is FREE.**

WEBSITE: www.ceilidh.ca
Email: creamery@ns.aliantzinc.ca
Toll Free Info Line: 1-888-234-5434






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2. Inverness Beach Village: 1-902-258-2653. 41 housekeeping cottages by the sea on 1.5 miles of sandy beach. Gourmet restaurant nearby. Beach cottages where the sound of the surf is always at your doorstep and a beautiful view a glance away. (0.4 km. north of Inverness)

3. MacLeod Inn: 1-902-258-3360. A gracious Celtic inn. Six bedrooms, private bath (three with jacuzzis), fireplace, library and a sweeping verandah offering a splendid view. Our guests describe it best: "I think this must be what heaven is like." (5 km. north of Inverness)

4. MacLeod's Beach Campsite: 1-902-258-2433. Enjoy our award-winning campground, rated as one of the top five in North America by the London, Ontario Free Press. High bluffs guard beach end of the quarter-mile beach. (10 km. north of Inverness)

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