



NATURE & TERROIR

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Autumn Colours of New England

Prix - **4028.00€** Dates - 24/09 au 06/10/21 Guide - *Philip Thompson*

This holiday begins with a flight to Boston from where we will go out to search for Humpback Whales and other cetaceans as well as seabirds such as shearwaters, petrels and skuas. We then drive north, birding en route, along the coast of Maine to New Harbour, our base for two nights. We'll spend a day on the tiny island of Monhegan, an important stopover for migrant birds, before continuing our journey north to Mount Desert Island, the ideal base for exploring Acadia National Park which is home to White-tailed Deer, Racoons and other mammals as well as a wide variety of birdlife including Spruce Grouse and Common Loon. Next we head inland to the Moosehead Lake region where we will spend three days exploring the boreal forests by canoe, minibus and on foot before driving south into New Hampshire to the White Mountains where we will be based for two nights. Finally we will visit Walden Pond, made famous by the author Henry David Thoreau, as we make our leisurely way back to Boston for our flights home, having enjoyed the colours, scenery, wildlife, and pancakes and muffins of New England at this special time of year.

New England, on the east coast of the United States, is justifiably famous for its wonderful display of autumn colours that occur with the onset of each autumn (or 'fall'). From vivid reds and oranges through to bright yellows and darker shades of purple, the forests present a kaleidoscope of colours as the air turns crisp with the change of season. As the populations of many species of birds, and mammals especially, have recovered in recent decades to levels not seen for centuries, we also have a great chance of encountering some of the forest's most famed inhabitants, amongst them Beaver, Moose, White-tailed Deer and, with a little luck, Black Bear. With the autumn passage of migrant passerine birds well under way, we may also enjoy the challenge of identifying a confusing array of warblers, vireos and sparrows, as well as typical common residents such as Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal and Blue Jay.

We begin our holiday with a direct flight to Boston where we will spend the night. On our first morning we will head out to sea on a whale-watching trip to Stellwagen Bank, hoping in particular to see Humpback, Minke and Fin Whales as they feast in these waters before their migration south. We will also look out for seabirds such as shearwaters, petrels and skuas. Next we will drive north along the coast of Maine to New Harbour. En route we may stop at Scarborough Marsh, its tidal saltwater creeks and freshwater marshes attracting a wealth of wildfowl and wading birds, amongst them Baird's, White-rumped and Stilt Sandpipers.

From our base in New Harbour we will spend a day exploring Monhegan Island, lying 11 miles off the coast of Maine. Covering barely a square mile, this diminutive island provides an important stopover for migrant birds and, with our visit coinciding with the autumn migration, we can hope to see a variety of small migratory passerines such as Blackburnian, Cape May and Wilson's Warblers, as well as Blackpoll and various raptors as they journey south. In addition to the birds, we should also see migrant Monarch butterflies in good numbers, as they begin to make their way south to the mountains of central Mexico.

Continuing our journey north, we next travel to the stunning Acadia National Park, on Mount Desert Island, where we will be based for the next two nights. The park is home to a rich assemblage of mammals and birds and, by exploring its trails by day, we can hope to see White-tailed Deer, Eastern Chipmunks, Raccoons and Eastern Coyotes, as well as such birds as Gray Jays, Boreal Chickadees and Spruce Grouse. We will also make an evening visit to Beaver Pond, and look in adjacent coastal bays for Common Loons and sea duck ... and perhaps a Bald Eagle passing overhead.

After spending our first five nights on the coast, we next head inland, travelling north-west to Lake Umbagog, which straddles the state line between Maine and New Hampshire. This area marks the transition from deciduous to evergreen boreal forest and, during our three days here, we will search for Moose by boat and from our vehicle, as well as look for other mammals such as American Mink, Striped Skunk, Raccoon, Eastern Coyote and even Canadian Lynx. For the final part of our holiday we will drive south-west to New Hampshire where we will be based for three nights in the White Mountains, part of the northern Appalachians. We will travel to the top of the range's highest summit, Mount Washington (1,917 metres) to enjoy the colourful views and look for American Pipit and White-throated Sparrow; we will also drive along the Kancamagus Highway, famous for spectacular vistas and superb autumn colours. We will stop at vantage points to take photographs, and seek out forest birds such as Red-breasted Nuthatch, Purple Finch and Northern Flicker.

Lastly, we will visit Walden Pond, made famous by Thoreau, who travelled there along quiet back-roads in the mid-19th century. The tranquillity of the Pond offers a last chance to reflect on the excellent New England hospitality (muffins and pancakes galore!), the superb fall colours of the Sugar and Red Maples, Red Oaks and Yellow Birches and, perhaps, as Thoreau did 160 years before us, reflect on a 'simple life in the woods' before it is time to return to Boston for our journey home.

Highlights

- Enjoy world-famous colours of the New England 'fall'
- Look for Humpback, Fin & Minke Whales, Stellwagen Bank
- Blackburnian, Cape May & Chestnut-sided Warblers among migrants, Monhegan Island
- Eastern Chipmunk, Eastern Coyote & visit to Beaver Pond, Acadia NP
- Boreal Chickadee, Gray Jay & Bald Eagle possible, Acadia NP
- Evening visit to Beaver Pond, Mount Desert Island
- Look for American Mink, Striped Skunk & Canadian Lynx, Moosehead Lakes
- American Pipit, White-throated Sparrow, Purple Finch & Northern Flicker among birdlife
- Drive along the Kancamagus Highway & visit Walden Pond
- Led by expert naturalist guide

Responsible destination

Colette

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 Présente le mardi et vendredi toute la journée





Dates & Prix

4028.00€

Fri 24th Sep - Wed 6th Oct 2021 - 4028€

What's Included?

- Flights from London
- Accommodation: We stay in comfortable tourist lodges and hotels, where all rooms have private facilities.
- Food: All breakfasts are included. Lunches and dinners are not included, in order to give you the freedom to sample New England's excellent seafood and other specialities. Allow approximately \$60 per day.

* These tours are operated by Naturetrek (ABTA Y6206) for which Nature et Terroir acts as agent.

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Journalier

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Day 1 Fly Boston

We leave London on a late morning flight and arrive in Boston in the early afternoon after a sevenhour flight. This will allow us time to transfer to our city hotel, close to the harbourside, with perhaps a little time to enjoy a short exploration of the city before our first evening meal.

Day 2 Boston & New Harbor

After a short walk from the hotel we will be boarding a whale-watching trip from the harbourside. This will last most of the morning, travelling out to the Stellwagen Bank. This is an underwater plateau surrounded by much deeper water, the steep sides of which cause deep-water currents to rise up bringing nutrients and minerals from the bottom. As a result the area attracts large numbers of shoaling fish and feeding marine mammals. Our main target will be to see the impressive Humpback Whales for which the area is well known. Also present are smaller numbers of Minke, Fin and the critically endangered Northern Right Whales as well as up to 12 other species of cetacean. Many species of marine birds can also be seen at this time of year including shearwaters, petrels, gannets, fulmars, skuas and auks. Plenty to keep us occupied, whilst we can rely on the boat crew to keep a sharp eye out for any of the whales present.

Returning to Boston we will next load our luggage for the transfer north to New Harbor. This charming fishing village lies on the Pemaquid Peninsula in central Maine. Our hotel is located overlooking the harbour.

Time should allow during our transfer for a short visit to Scarborough Marsh a coastal tidal wetland with its range of passage shorebirds. The iconic Pemaquid Point Lighthouse established in 1827 and is one of the most visited attractions on the Maine coast and lies a short distance south of New Harbor and which we will visit in the next couple of days.

Day 3 Monhegan Island

We will walk the short distance to the harbour to board one of the local boat services taking us across to the little gem of Monhegan Island. During the crossings to and fro, which take about 1hr each way, with luck, we should spot Harbour Seals and possibly cetaceans such as Minke, Pilot and Humpback Whales and White-sided Dolphins and Harbour Porpoises.

Monhegan Island is roughly a mile long by half a mile wide with steep rugged cliffs on the eastern shore and extensive interior woodlands of spruce and balsam fir. Set 11 miles out in the Gulf of Maine the island acts as a magnet for tired migrant birds looking to pause and rest before continuing their southward migration. At the time of our visit an array of small passerines are possibilities as are numerous raptors. The rocky shoreline below the cliffs will be sure to hold shorebirds, cormorants and gulls with perhaps Eiders and White-winged Scoter in the bays. The island is crisscrossed with numerous trails that we will explore during the 5hrs we have available, before catching the return ferry to spend a second night in New Harbor.

Days 4 – 5 Acadia National Park

Leaving New Harbor behind we transfer to Bar Harbor on Mount Desert Island. From here we will spend the next two days exploring Acadia National Park.

Whilst enjoying the autumn colours along the way we should arrive on Mount Desert Island for lunch before beginning our exploration of the park. The granite hills of the park rise abruptly from the coast creating a unique landscape in New England allowing exploration of rocky tide pools to forest trails and lakes and ultimately the high open summit of Cadillac Mountain. White-tailed Deer are common and can be encountered almost anywhere whilst other larger mammal inhabitants are scarce but do include Black Bear and Moose. We will make an early evening visit to a Beaver pond to observe these attractive animals as they go about their daily activities. Walking the forest trails we will hope to encounter some of the year round bird inhabitants such as Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee and Spruce Grouse. Several species of summer-breeding species will still be present and passing through on migration including such species as Scarlet Tanagers and various warblers.

Days 6 – 8 Lake Umbagog

After our time spent on the coast we now head further north and inland to spend the next few days at Lake Umbagog, which straddles the state line separating Maine from New Hampshire. We will be staying in the small community of Upton in, appropriately, Upton House Inn a renovated 19th century farmhouse. This lies less than a mile from Lake Umbagog in an area that has one of the highest densities of Moose in Maine. Whilst here we will be paying particular attention to several roadside wallows which Moose favour. We will also undertake a boat trip with local guides onto the lake to access Harper's Meadow, a specially protected floating bog to hopefully spot these huge impressive beasts as they graze placidly in the shallow waters. The lake holds an important breeding population of both Bald Eagles and Common Loons, both of which should be present at the time of our visit. Other mammals to be seen include Raccoons, Mink and Striped Skunk while Black Bear and even Bobcat occur here.

The forests here are close to the transition zone where the hardwood deciduous forests of further south give way to a mix of fir, spruce, cedar and tamarack with maple, beech and birch. As a result the birdlife changes subtly with a different and sought after selection of warblers, many of which will still be present before they migrate south. Specialists of these forests include birds such as Gray Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, GoldenRaccoon crowned Kinglet and Black-backed New Hampshire in the fall Woodpecker. We will explore the quiet roads in this sparsely populated region stopping at likely spots for a series of short walks. We will walk the short Magalloway River Trail that leads through a mixture of forest types, such as Northern White Cedar and Black Spruce swamps and mixed Norway Spruce and northern hardwoods, leading to an observation platform overlooking the Magalloway River, which is a good area to view Moose, boreal birds and waterfowl.

Days 9 – 11 White Mountains

Today we will transfer from Maine into New Hampshire where we will spend the next three nights in the White Mountains National Forest. The morning's drive will take us south, following the Androscoggin River and the Thirteen Mile Woods before we reach our next stop at the Riverwood Inn in Jackson. If the weather permits during our time here we will take the famous auto road to the 1917m summit of Mount Washington. The views from here are breathtaking with the autumn colours of the White Mountains NF all around. Birds on this inhospitable summit are few but do include American Pipit, Horned Lark and Bicknell's Thrush.

Time will be spent walking and exploring Crawford Notch State Park with its attractive waterfalls and trails. Another day will be spent visiting Pondicherry Wildlife Refuge one of the prime New Hampshire reserves known for its diversity of wetland, lake and forest habitats. One of the highlights will be a day spent slowly driving the length of the Kancamagus Highway that cuts through the forest and providing one of the most famous areas for viewing the New England fall colours! Several stops will be taken to soak up the richness of the colours and enjoy the ponds, waterfalls and covered bridges found along the way.

Day 12 Concord & Fly London

We begin the day by leaving the White Mountains and travel south along quieter roads heading towards the small town of Concord to the west of Boston. Our destination here is to visit the Walden Pond State Reservation. For readers of natural history writing this site needs little introduction. It was here that the transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, having built his own cabin, spent two years living, which he then wrote about in the celebrated 'Walden: or, Life in the Woods' published in 1854. We will visit the replica of Thoreau's house and spend some time in quiet reflection at this historic site before continuing our journey to Boston. From here we will catch an early evening flight to arrive back at London Heathrow in the morning of the next day.



Quelques photos...



Envie d'en voir plus ?

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