

# Travel

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## The itinerary

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Hotel ZaZa

### There's an art to a Houston summer stay

Houston in the summer is all heat and humidity, making that an ideal time to visit its world-class (and air-conditioned) museums. The Hotel ZaZa Houston makes that even easier with an Arts and Smarts package that includes overnight accommodations in the boutique hotel, \$50 credit at its Monarch Restaurant, valet parking and two tickets to the "Houghton Hall: Portrait of an English Country House" exhibit at the nearby Museum of Fine Arts Houston. Hit the exhibit, which runs through Sept. 21, and return to the hotel for a cocktail, dinner and a dip in the pool. The package starts at \$309 per night. 5701 Main St., Houston. 888-880-3244; www.hotelzaza.com. — **Sandy Guerra-Cline**



Paul MacLeod in 2009

AP/Rogelio V. Solis

### Graceland Too tours planned in August

Paul MacLeod's Holly Springs, Miss., mansion, a one-man shrine to the King, will reopen to the public during Elvis Presley week with a memorial for its owner, who died July 17. Family, friends and museum members will lead tours of Graceland Too on Aug. 12 to raise money for MacLeod's funeral and estate expenses. The day will end with a midnight candlelight vigil. The museum, its walls covered floor-to-ceiling with a mishmash of photos, records and other random kitsch featuring Elvis, is at 200 E. Gholson Ave. — **The Associated Press**

### How to leave the scammers at home

Unfortunately, there is never a vacation from scammers. Watch for these ongoing scams:  
■ A call from the hotel's front desk telling you there is a problem with your credit card and asking you to read the card number over the phone. Don't. Go to the front desk instead.  
■ A pizza delivery flier slipped under your hotel door could be from someone just trying to get your credit card number. You order, they get your information, and you get no pizza.  
■ While searching for the hotel's Wi-Fi network you could come across one with the hotel's name that is really a scammer's. Make sure you are using the authorized, protected network before connecting.  
— **Susan Salisbury, The Palm Beach Post**

### Fun fact



Plastic toy sharks are feeding the frenzy. AP/Steven Senne

### Shark sightings a tourism boon

In *Jaws*, the fictional mayor tried to protect the summer tourism season by keeping a lid on reports of the man-eater lurking offshore. As sightings of great white sharks mount off Cape Cod this summer, however, businesses in the Massachusetts town of Chatham are embracing the frenzy. Shark T-shirts are everywhere, *Jaws* has been playing in local theaters, and boat tours are taking more tourists out to see the huge seal population that keeps the sharks coming. Harbormasters have issued warnings, but the great whites generally are not seen as a threat to human swimmers. Cape Cod Tourism: www.capecodchamber.org. — **The Associated Press**

## Coastal destinations



Peggy's Point Lighthouse in Peggy's Cove is one of the most photographed lighthouses in the world. Special to the Star-Telegram/Debra Dunning Brouillette

# Lighthouses and lobster

Escape the heat with a cruise to Canada's Maritime Islands and New England, exploring local history and cuisine along the way

**By Debra Dunning Brouillette**  
Special to the Star-Telegram

Lighthouses, lobster and cooler temperatures are big draws for travel to Canada's Maritime Islands and New England in the summer months, especially for Texans who are eager to escape the heat. During autumn's peak season, you can add fall foliage to the list of attractions.

When presented with an opportunity to spend a week visiting Prince Edward Island, two ports in Nova Scotia, and Bar Harbor, Maine, my husband and I didn't hesitate to book the summer Canada/New England cruise aboard Holland America's ms Veendam — a midsize ship carrying a maximum of 1,350 passengers.

Already enthused about the itinerary, we also liked the idea of beginning our cruise in the historic French Canadian city of Quebec.

If you've never been to France, visiting Quebec City, the capital of the province, is the next best thing. Quebec was founded by French explorer Samuel de Champlain in 1608, and remained under French rule until the British



Quebec City, on the St. Lawrence River, is among Holland America's ports of call for the ms Veendam. Special to the Star-Telegram/Debra Dunning Brouillette

prevailed in 1763. French is still widely spoken here, as well as being a mandatory part of school curriculum and used routinely on signage throughout the province.

Once we checked into our stateroom, we had the remainder of the day and evening to explore and had soon set out on a pre-arranged tour with a guide in order to re-

orient ourselves with the Historic District of Old Quebec — the only walled city in North America north of Mexico and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1985.

From the port, we were driven through the district known as Lower Town, along cobblestone streets lined with sidewalk cafes, antique stores, and art galleries, to reach Up-

per Town. Its cliffside skyline is dominated by the castlelike Chateau Frontenac, completed in 1893 as a governor's residence and now in operation as a Fairmont grand hotel.

The historic building, one of the most photographed hotels in the world, was the site of a secret military conference in 1943 between Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt. **More on CRUISE, 10E**

# Wild beauty of Canada's Alberta brings out adventurous spirit of mother-daughter duo

Animal life and natural wonders in the Canadian Rockies inspire a desire to leave one's comfort zone.

**By Irene Middleman Thomas**  
Special to the Star-Telegram

Often it's the unexpected triumphs that make for the most memorable travel memories. One of mine happened recently at Louise McKinney Riverfront Park in Edmonton, Alberta, where I witnessed my almost 88-year-old mother riding a Segway, wreathed in smiles.

Moments earlier, she had obstinately refused the activity, planting her 4-foot-11 frame in front of a 6-foot-something Joe Riel — our engaging guide for River Valley Adventure Company — and declaring that she was simply too old and couldn't risk a fall.

Ever-so-sweetly, Joe urged her to consider the possibility. "Just listen to the little lesson," he said. "Just try standing on it for a photo."

Next thing we knew, she had moved past standing and was deftly turning on her new "Seg legs." From there, it was just a matter of time before the three of us were gliding off on a scenic adventure.

The gorgeously lush park, adjacent to downtown Edmonton, is the entree to the North Saskatchewan River Valley, North America's longest expanse of urban park-



The writer's mom quickly took to a Segway once she tried it. Special to the S-T/Irene Middleman Thomas

land — 22 times the size of New York's Central Park.

Joe took us down wide paths alongside the flowing river to Edmonton's gorgeous Chinese gardens (full of poppies, roses and peonies), Chinese gazebo and Riverfront Plaza and Promenade. We didn't even notice the light drizzle. Later, our guide noted that our "Segway smiles" never stopped.

Alberta is one of Canada's most beautiful provinces — so idyllic, in fact, that the tourism slogan for Travel Alberta is "remember to breathe." As the gateway to the Canadian Rockies, it is home to the mountain towns of Jasper and Banff and the spectacular 144-mile-long Icefields Parkway, one of the world's most celebrated scenic byways, which runs **More on ALBERTA, 11E**



# Cruise

Continued from 9E

Churchill, Franklin Roosevelt and Mackenzie King.

We continued our crash course in more than four centuries of history as our guide pointed out places of interest, including the Citadel, still an active fort, and churches of historical significance. On the way out of town, we drove through the 250-acre Battlegrounds Park, scene of the 1759 Conquest between the French and British.

Next, we crossed a bridge over the St. Lawrence River to the Isle de Orleans for a visit to two wineries. The Cassis Monna & Filles produces black currant wines and crème de cassis, while Isle de Bacchus winery offers tastings of eight wines, including an ice wine made from apples and a lovely dry white wine that made its way into my checked luggage.

Since the rest of our evening meals would be eaten on board, we stayed in the city to dine, capping off our first day in Quebec with a three-course dinner accompanied by local wines at a small bistro, Café St. Malo, within walking distance of the ship.

The ship remained in port until five o'clock on Sunday, leaving most of the next day for sightseeing. A highlight of our morning excursion was the majestic Montmorency Falls, one-and-a-half times higher than Niagara Falls but not as wide. The falls can be viewed from lookout points or via a suspension bridge.

Back in Old Quebec, we rode the funicular, a vertical cable railway in operation since 1879, to Upper Town, where we revisited many of the sights viewed the previous day by car,

then strolled along Lower Town's cobblestone streets until boarding time.

**Setting sail**

We bid adieu to Quebec City and looked forward to spending Monday at sea, as we cruised down the Gulf of St. Lawrence to reach Prince Edward Island, our first port of call.

This was our maiden voyage aboard a traditional cruise ship, so we took our time exploring the layout of the ship.

The main pool area is covered by a steel and glass dome that can be opened to allow in fresh air or closed in inclement weather.

Our lanai stateroom on the lower promenade deck was efficiently designed with generous storage, a comfy queen-size bed, sitting area, flat-screen TV/DVR, safe, bathrobes, and hairdryer. We had access to the ship's only walk-around deck from a sliding-glass door with one-way privacy glass.

While we had pre-booked excursions in most ports of call, and arranged a couple of private tours before leaving home, other passengers booked excursions a day ahead or explored on their own. Some stayed on board or returned early to take part in the ship's extensive daily schedule of activities, from cooking and computer classes to dance classes.

The ms Veendam set sail each afternoon at 4 or 5 p.m., and over the course of the week, we dined in each of the ship's restaurants, including the Pinnacle Grill, where we enjoyed an Evening at Le Cirque (\$49 per person; \$29 on other evenings), a special menu inspired by the legendary New York eatery. After dinner, the upper promenade deck was the place to be, with several entertainment areas catering to a variety of musical tastes.



The quaint Nova Scotia town of Peggy's Cove is a quintessential fishing village.  
Special to the Star-Telegram/Debbra Dunning Brouillette



Learn about the life of a commercial lobsterman on a lobster boat in Maine.  
Special to the Star-Telegram/Debbra Dunning Brouillette

**Prince Edward Island**

If you are a fan of *Anne of Green Gables*, made famous in Lucy Maud Montgomery's classic novels about an orphaned red-haired girl sent to live on Prince Edward Island, you'll want to book one of several excursions that focus on the Green Gables farm and museum.

Since I hadn't read the books, we chose instead to sample some of Prince Edward Island's freshest seafood on the "Seafood

Chef" excursion.

Our taste buds were primed as we arrived at the Merchantman Seafood & Oyster Bar in Charlottetown. The chef began with a cooking demonstration of the island's famous blue cultured mussels, first steamed in white wine and garlic, then combined with shrimp and a tomato-based sauce. Nutrient-rich and low in cholesterol, mussels contain the same amount of protein as beef with only half the calories.

Next, we sampled four of the many oyster varieties harvested on Prince Edward Island, with colorful names like Raspberry Points, Daisy Bay, Lucky Limes, and Pickled Points, which are available and eaten year-round there. Pan-seared scallops with rice and vegetables completed our gourmet lunch, and then we were ready for our afternoon tour of two of the island's 63 lighthouses.

The island has a higher concentration of lighthouses than any province or state in North America. To lend some perspective, Prince Edward Island's 2,184 square miles would fit into the state of Texas 122 times.

At Point Prim, the island's oldest lighthouse, we climbed 60 feet to the top, imagining the thou-

sands of ships that had seen its light from afar and the shipwrecks it had averted. In service since 1845, it was automated in 1969.

In contrast, Wood Island Lighthouse, our next stop, was built in 1876. Its six-room, two-story dwelling was later attached to the lighthouse tower for the keeper and his family, and its restored rooms are used today as an interpretive museum.

**Sydney, Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia is Latin for New Scotland, so we weren't surprised when Scottish bagpipers greeted us as we stepped off the ship in Sydney, located on Cape Breton Island at the northeasterly end of the province. On the way to meet our guide, we passed by the world's largest fiddle — as tall as the lighthouse we'd toured the day before — which has become an iconic symbol of Sydney to cruise ship visitors.

Our first stop was the Highland Village Living History Museum, where visitors are given an authentic view of an early Scottish settlement. Costumed staff in 11 period buildings share the Gaelic heritage and culture of more than 50,000 Highland Scots who settled in Cape Breton in the first half of the 19th century. Its scenic location overlooks the Bras D'Or Lake, an inland sea.

Traveling onward to the small village of Baddeck on the shores of the lake, we visited the Alexander Graham Bell Museum and came away fascinated by Bell's many inventions and accomplishments in addition to his most famous one, the telephone. Scottish by birth, Bell lived much of his life in America before spending the last three decades of his life in Nova Scotia.

Holland America offers a variety of other excursions, among them, a tour of the Cabot Trail, called one of the most scenic

drives in North America; a visit to Fort Louisbourg, the largest fortified town outside of Europe; and a sail on Bras d'Or Lake.

**Halifax, Nova Scotia**

We booked a private guide for our day through the countryside outside Halifax. Within an hour's drive, we reached the first of three picturesque villages I'd read about before leaving home.

Lunenburg's Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was once the world's busiest shipbuilding town. Among its charms are colorful buildings and historic homes that line the harbor, where the famous racing schooner *Bluenose*, depicted on the back of the Canadian dime, was built.

We next passed through Mahone Bay, with its famous harbor view of three churches, before reaching my most-anticipated stop, Peggy's Cove, a fishing village that is home to Peggy's Point Lighthouse, perched atop huge granite boulders. Artists discovered it shortly after it was built in 1915, and shutterbugs have made it the most photographed lighthouse in the world.

When we learned of Halifax's ties to the Titanic shipwreck, we requested a stop at Fairview Lawn Cemetery, the final resting place of 121 bodies recovered by Halifax-based vessels after the sinking of the ocean liner. We had time for a poignant stroll through the three rows of small granite markers — the largest number of Titanic graves in the world — laid out in the shape of a ship's bow, before returning to the port.

**Bar Harbor, Maine**

Upon reaching Bar Harbor, Maine, our last port of call, we passed through U.S. Customs and boarded a bus for a driving tour of Acadia National Park, which is visited annually by nearly 2.5 million people and attracts crowds from September to mid-October with spectacular displays of fall foliage.

From Cadillac Mountain, the park's highest peak at 1,530 feet, 100 miles of Maine's rugged coastline can be seen on a clear day. For us, however, fog continued to roll in, dashing our hopes of photographing the view.

But all was not lost. A lobster meal with all the trimmings awaited us as we returned to Bar Harbor, and we were taught how to extract the sweet meat from the shell in order to enjoy every morsel.

Our final excursion was aboard a lobster boat, where our host, Captain John, gave us an insight into the life of a commercial lobsterman. It was exciting to watch him haul in the traps and see how many lobsters had taken the bait, sometimes along with a crab or two.

He also gave us lessons on the anatomy and life cycle of these crustaceans that, besides being eaten boiled, grilled, on a roll and in chowder, also make it into ice cream in these parts.

Tasting is believing, so afterward, we took a stroll down Bar Harbor's Main Street to Ben & Bill's Chocolate Emporium, where lobster ice cream is sold. After a hesitant first bite, I was ready for a second and found that the semi-frozen lobster bits mixed in creamy vanilla created a surprisingly tasty treat. If you go, give it a try.

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