

20 GOWER

Mark and Eldon's Essential Guide to St. John's, NL

The Postmaster's House Bed & Breakfast
20 Gower Street | St. John's, NL | A1C 1N1
+1 (709) 771-6862 | www.postmastershouse.com

Website: <https://www.postmastershouse.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/postmastershouse>

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Welcome to St. John's!

Hi! We're Eldon and Mark, and we were born and raised in Newfoundland. Eldon on the south coast in a small town called St. Albans, and Mark here in St. John's. Both of us moved away for a while, but are now living in St. John's together with our crazy little Boston Terrier, Phoebe.



We own **The Postmaster's House Bed and Breakfast** right in the heart of downtown St. John's where we welcome guests from all over the world and help them discover the hidden gems of the area. We are so proud of our little corner of the world and we are delighted to help you plan your trip and make it truly special.

We look forward to welcoming you soon!

This guide is designed to help you get the most out of your trip to St. John's. Here is what you will find inside:

- 🐳 Where are the best places to eat?
- 🐳 What are some things I just shouldn't miss?
- 🐳 We rented a car...what are some excellent day trips?
- 🐳 Are there any craft breweries and distilleries?
- 🐳 What about music festivals and outdoor events?
- 🐳 What are the best hiking trails in and around St. John's?
- 🐳 Where are the best places to go shopping?
- 🐳 Will I see whales, puffins, and icebergs?



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Where are the best places to eat?

St. John's has become a culinary destination in the last number of years, and there is no shortage of good food. From jig's dinner (boiled dinner of vegetables, salt beef, and gravy), to fish 'n chips, to a 5-star dining experience, St. John's has it all!

Here are some of our favourite places to eat (and our guests love them, too!):

One place you do not want to miss is **Mallard Cottage**. The food is super local and seasonal, and is located in the oldest wooden structure in Newfoundland. You'll find a cozy atmosphere, finer dining, and excellent cocktails.



Lunch? Definitely check out **The Postmaster's Bakery** (shameless plug) at 134 Military Road and enjoy a freshly made-to-order sandwich, cinnamon bun, coffee, or a smoothie. **Bannerman Park** is just steps away so you can enjoy lunch in the park with the locals!

The **Duke of Duckworth** is always teeming with locals and is a favourite hangout for many artists and musicians. You never know what celebrity you might spot at The Duke! And they have the best fish & chips in town.

One of our favourite places if we're looking to splurge is **Portage**. Simply excellent service and outstanding food! They are a little on the pricier side, and you will definitely want reservations well in advance...*let us know and we'll make the reservation for you.*

For a little more info on these places, check out [this blog post](#) where we take you to some of our favourite places to eat!



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Some things you shouldn't miss

One of our favourite places on this planet is **Cape Spear National Historic Site** – about a 20-minute drive from downtown. It's North America's most easterly point, the first to see the sunrise, and is home to the oldest surviving lighthouse in the province.



Cape Spear Café serves up a wicked bowl of chowder as well as delicious picnics, which you'll need to reserve ahead of time. This is a great place to sit and watch the whales and, at the right time of year, the icebergs!

We love a good food truck, especially the food truck paradise at **Quidi Vidi Wharf**. The atmosphere and vibe down there is second to none! Not only that, but you can enjoy an outdoor cocktail or pint on the patio at **Mallard Cottage**!



**MALLARD
COTTAGE**

For sheer fine art beauty, there is nothing in the world like Giovanni Strazza's **Veiled Virgin** (ca. 1850), which has to be seen to be believed. This life-sized marble bust is at the Presentation Convent, next to the Basilica. Don't miss this artistic wonder - *ask us how you can get in to see her*.

And if you're a war history buff, you won't want to miss **The Crow's Nest Officer's Club**. In the 1940s St. John's was bustling with wartime activity and the Crows Nest was established as a hideaway for seagoing naval officers. Now a provincial heritage structure, it is home to hundreds of military artefacts, including a periscope from a WWII German Submarine U190.

There are so many things to do and see in the St. John's area that we would need a full book to touch on them all. These are just a few of our favourites, [and some more here on our blog](#).

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What about day trips?

There are many fabulous day trips from St. John's, but [you'll need a car to get there.](#)



A well-kept secret that should be on your bucket list is **Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve** and the **Cape Race Lighthouse**. It's a good 2-hour drive from St. John's, but it is perhaps one of the coolest things around.

It's so neat that we've dedicated [a whole blog post just for this!](#)

You'll need to book Mistaken Point in advance though, as the fossil site is accessible only with a guide. Make your booking early, as they do sell out. *Let us know when you want to go and we'll make the inquiry and booking for you!*

We LOVE going to **Brigus** and **Cupids**, which are both located about a one-hour drive from St. John's. They are adorable picture-postcard towns that perfectly reflect their Old-World heritage. Don't miss the annual **Brigus Blueberry Festival** and the delicious blueberry crisp!



In Conception Harbour you'll find **Perchance Theatre**. This professional theatre company produces Shakespearean and other classical theatre productions each summer in their outdoor Elizabethan-style theatre. We go every year and just love it!



MORE DAY TRIPS!



Another day trip we try to make annually is to **Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve**. Bird Rock is overflowing with perching, diving, and scrambling Gannets and Murres from edge to edge – melding together into an awesome moving, breathing spectacle of colour and sound.

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Craft breweries and distilleries

Just around the corner from The Postmaster's House is **Bannerman Brewing Company**. We think they have the best craft beer in town, hands down.



Bannerman Brewing Co. is just minutes from the Postmaster's House B&B. It's one of our favourite places in town, and has the best craft beer hands down! Great food too!!

Our guests all love **Quidi Vidi Brewery**, which is a gorgeous 25 minute walk to **Quidi Vidi Village**. One of the first craft breweries in Newfoundland, they have an extensive line of beers on tap, and a stunning outdoor deck overlooking Quidi Vidi Harbour. In the summer there is often live music. Definitely come early to get a table.



We did take on the arduous task of visiting all the local craft breweries to bring you [this blog post](#) (it was indeed difficult, but all in the name of hospitality).

Downtown on Harbour Drive is **Wooden Walls Distilling**. They make excellent spirits - perfect gifts to bring home! They craft interesting and tasty cocktails, and their food is great. In Clarke's Beach you'll find the popular **NL Distillery Company**.



Outdoor festivals and events

[There is always something going on during the summer months!](#) For any of the festivals, [send us a message](#) and let us book your tickets for you!



The **Newfoundland and Labrador Folk Festival** is a three-day outdoor music festival featuring established and newcomer folk musicians alike. There are workshops, crafts, a beer tent, food trucks, vendors, and more! It's just around the corner from The Postmaster's House at **Bannerman Park**.

George Street: famously (infamously?) known as having the most bars and pubs per square foot of any street in North America. And in late July the massive week-long **George Street Festival** gets underway with all concerts outdoors under the stars (19+ event).

You'll definitely see us lakeside for North America's oldest annual sporting event: **The Royal St. John's Regatta**, which is held on the first Wednesday in August. Join the throngs of people that gather on the shores of Quidi Vidi Lake to watch the boat races, enjoy the food, and play a game of chance or two. *Ask us about Regatta Roulette...*



Also in early August is the annual **Downtown Busker Festival**, held at various performance areas in downtown St. John's. International, national, and local buskers entertain audiences of all ages with shows every hour from noon to 9pm daily!

Hiking in and around St. John's

St. John's and the Avalon Peninsula is a hiker's paradise! We try to get out onto some of our favourite trails as much as we can.

The East Coast Trail is a network of 25 connected wilderness paths, 336 kilometres long, along the rugged Avalon Peninsula coast, ranging from easy to difficult. You'll experience everything from abandoned settlements to lighthouses, to a suspension bridge, to active archaeological dig sites! Some of our guests have taken a week and done large stretches of it, while others will do a smaller section as a nice day hike.



A few minutes walk from The Postmaster's House is one of our favourite ways to just unplug for an hour or so: **The North Head Trail**. This is Signal Hill's most popular trail. Connect with the trail from Signal Hill's top parking lot, descend down boardwalk stairs, follow a footpath to the entrance to St. John's Harbour, and hike along the narrows to Lower Battery Road.



Or, do what we do, and go in the opposite direction. You can then connect at the top of Signal Hill with the **Ladies Lookout Trail**, which offers some of the most magnificent scenery on the Avalon Peninsula. It truly never gets old! Ladies lookout connects with **Burma Road Trail** and **Cuckold's Cove Trail** and lets you out down by **Quidi Vidi Village**: the perfect spot for an après-hike refreshment! Yes, please!

There are so many more wonderful trails in and around St. John's; far too many to get into here.

[Visit our blog for some more!](#)

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Let's go shopping!

You'll love meandering the streets of downtown St. John's and twacking* in the many shops and boutiques just as much as we do. Some of our favourites are, **The Downhome Shoppe**, or **The Heritage Shop**.

*[twacking](#) (v): a Newfoundland term for window shopping, going in and out of stores just for a look

Quidi Vidi Village Artisan Studios is a craft incubator with 10 studio spaces where artisans work and sell to the public in one space. The Studios is open to the public with free admission and you can look around as you please. You're sure to find that perfect gift or souvenir, and you'll be supporting a local artist at the same time! We actually have some art at the B&B from a talented artist who spent time at the Studios!



The Avalon Mall is located in the centre of town, about a 10-minute drive from downtown, and also reachable by Metrobus. It is a typical shopping centre with the usual stores, a food court, and a movie theatre.

[We go into some more detail around our favourite shops in our blog.](#)

Whales, puffins, and bergs, oh my!

When Mark was a kid, he disliked the icebergs so much because it meant it stayed a little cooler later into Spring. But now he can appreciate just how majestic and awesome they are. Icebergs are typically around the coast from mid-March to mid-June. Of course, every year is different, so the best thing to do is check **IcebergFinder** or the **Canadian Ice Service** charts.



The whales that call Newfoundland home between May and October are just as majestic. Although July and August are most active, nature always operates on its own schedule, so the season can vary from year to year.

And the gregarious Puffins arrive in early May. You can view these little tykes in large numbers through mid-September by taking one of the many boat tours around.

Our guests have loved the excellent service they receive on **O'Brien's Boat Tours** and **Gatherall's Boat Tours**, which both operate out of Bay Bulls. Bay Bulls is about a half-hour drive from the B&B, but both tour operators offer a shuttle service from downtown, leaving you to relax and enjoy the ride! Let us know when you want to go, and we'll book for you!



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See you soon!

We hope you've enjoyed reading, and that we've inspired you to come visit our beautiful corner of the world. Please do take a look at our website by [CLICKING HERE](#).

We very much look forward to welcoming you to stunning St. John's. Of course, if you have any questions, we'd love to hear from you!

Eldon and Mark



Website <https://www.postmastershouse.com>

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