

Janine Hubbard's Guide to St. John's



Welcome to St. John's and Newfoundland and Labrador. I'm hoping this visit gives you a bit of a taste of what we have to offer, and encourages to return to a future, longer, visit. This is a completed biased, non-comprehensive list of things I like to share with visitors that I hope you'll enjoy. Also noting that everything is weather dependent but mostly clothing dependent. Bring lots of layers, don't both with an umbrella, and treat the experience as an adventure.



Much (but not all) of the bolded/underlined text is hyperlinked – so click for more info!



MY TOP SUGGESTIONS

Boat Trip – I'll make sure organizers are aware of any whale/iceberg sightings closer to time, but a trip in Witless Bay to see the seabirds and puffins is incredible. If the weather is nice, the boat from town heads out to Cape Spear and back and gives you unique views of the harbours and coastlines. The boats all offer the opportunity for a screech in.

Visit George Street. Whether you simply stroll down the street people watching, or go inside somewhere for a cup of tea, or a pint and a bite to eat. You'll hear lots of musical options.

The Rooms – Provincial Archives/Museum/Art Gallery. The cafe has the best view in town with binoculars on the tables and excellent coffee and food. Great "lousy" weather day activity.

Try Some Local Food/Drink. It's lobster/crab season if that's your things. Despite some recent closures the restaurant is vibrant, exciting and has something for everyone.

See the Coastline. If you can, get a chance to see some of the coastline, nature in and around the area. Lots of small manageable walks and hikes, as well as those for the more adventurous.

Visit Quidi Vidi. A small fishing village at the base of Signal Hill. Mallard Cottage and the Quidi Vidi Brewery are there as well as an artist studio and seasonal food trucks. For fun pop your head into Linda's Inn of Olde. Roughly a 45-minute walk (but flat not uphill) or an easy taxi ride.

Jelly Bean Row. Take the time to wander through some of old St. John's and enjoy the brightly coloured houses. There are a number of audio tours available that will explain the history of various parts of town.

Meet the Locals. Be prepared to be referred to with terms such as "me darlin', me duckie, me love" maybe even "me old trout" – and that's just from the cashier at the coffee shop! This is a place of storytellers.

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PLACES TO EAT AND DRINK

Did we mention that June is usually fresh snow crab and lobster season???? Look for lots of specials. (also, for a small fee, most of the grocery stores will steam them for you while you buy your groceries). Occasionally there’s a catch of tuna which the restaurants rapidly buy up at make into specials – take advantage if that’s your thing/you’re able.



Mallard Cottage - previously owned by Todd Perrin, now under new ownership and closed for the winter so I can’t say what it will be like (previously my favourite place in town). located in great restored historic building in Quidi Vidi.

Portage – family style, meals, decor looks like Nan’s from around the Bay, but world class chef (Ross Larkin former head chef at Raymond’s) and his wife/ pastry chef. Quirky and fun and extensive wine list.

St. John’s Fish Exchange

Merchant Tavern - Was created by Chef Jeremy Charles (owner of Raymond’s before it closed) but I don’t think he’s currently actively involved.

Duke of Duckworth - also for fans of Republic of Doyle.

Adelaide Oyster House - tiny, homey, interesting and creative dishes and friendly staff.

Saltwater

Terre

Rabble – Todd Perrin’s newest restaurant.

Yellowbelly – brew pub in a historic building on the corner of George Street.

Gypsy Tea Room

Blue on Water

Bagel Café

NOT NECESSARILY TRADITIONAL NL

Piatto – try “The Stephanie” – I’ve been told their gluten free crust is pretty decent.

GingerGrass - gluten free/vegan/vegetarian friendly.

The Sprout (Vegetarian)

Peaceful Loft – Vegan/Vegetarian

The Parlour – homemade gelato

NL Chocolate Company also makes their own gelato – location on Signal Hill and a couple other spots around town.

BREWERIES/DRINKS

Lots of great microbreweries – look for cans at the liquor store (NLC) or in many corner stores.

Yellowbelly

Quidi Vidi

Bannerman - just long listed by En Route magazine

Dildo Brewery – store 332 Water Street

Newfoundland Distillery has produced an award-winning Seaweed Gin as well as a range of products. We also have Fog Vodka, Chaga Rum and lots of things made with berries.

Wooden Walls Distillery is new-ish and quite close to the hotel.

Urban Market 1919 – largest variety of local beer – steep hike or short taxi ride from the hotel. Also fabulous place for locally made souvenirs.

LOCAL 'DELICACIES' TO TRY

- **Fish and chips**
- **Cod cheeks/cod tongues**
- **Fish and Brewis**
- **Jigg's Dinner**

- **Moose burgers/stew/sausages/bolognaise sauce**
- **Bottled moose/seal** (can typically purchase at Belbin's grocery)
- **Seal flipper pie**
- **Scrunchions** (don't ask what's in them, just know they're delicious on pan fried cod or fish & brewis).
- **Toutons** – traditionally served with Molasses but they'll forgive you if you ask for syrup. Often used as the base for an eggs Benny.
- **Fish cakes** – also often used to support an Eggs Benny or just enjoyed on their own.
- **Baked beans** – often served as part of a full breakfast.
- **Pea soup with salt meat and dough boys**
- **Wild blueberries/partridgeberries/bakeapples**
- **Purity products** – depending on the wind direction I can smell these baking from my office. From Purity Syrup to Jam Jams to Hard Bread or Nobs.
- **Pineapple Crush**

FYI – you'll likely be offered Pepsi products for your soda of choice. Coke products are still available, but Pepsi is bottled locally. **For a fun take on this debate.**



SHOPPING

[Craft Council](#)

[Urban Market](#)

[Quidi Vidi Artisan Studios](#)

[Heritage Shops](#)

THINGS TO SEE AND DO

- **Live Music** – almost anywhere on George Street.
- **Boat Trip** – either out of harbour or from Bay Bulls. We'll keep you posted of any up-to-date-whale/iceberg sightings. Worth doing the shuttle (or drive) to Bay Bulls – 2-hour boat trip will show you seabirds, including the Atlantic Puffin, and search for whales).
- **Signal Hill/The Battery** – depending on fitness level you can take a taxi up (and back) or wind your way down via the Battery trail (be careful it can be very slippery when wet).
- **Cape Spear** – most easternly point in North America – good spot to see whales spouting if they're in. Can be arranged as part of one of the tours, or you should be able to negotiate (often along with Signal Hill) a trip from a local taxi.

- **[The GeoCentre](#)** – Cut from the ancient rock of Signal Hill in St. John's, Memorial University's Johnson Geo Centre takes you deep underground to experience the story of planet Earth. Explore the varied species of corals that live off the coast, learn about the volcanoes, earthquakes, and natural forces that shape the very ground beneath our feet, look to the future with space exploration. Great for kids. Lots of interactive exhibits.
- **[Middle Cove Beach/Marine Institute](#)** – visit with the captive seals (who have been involved in some pretty cool psychology experiments over the years), there's usually a touch tank, and beautiful ocean view.
- **[St. John's Farmers Market](#)** – in case you have family looking for something to do on Saturday.

DAY TRIPS

- **Cape Spear, Petty Harbour, Middle Cove Beach, Topsail Beach** – all within about ½ hour of town. Lots of hikes available from each of these locations or just enjoy sunrise/sunset over the ocean.
- **Bell Island** – Take the ferry here and do the mine tour





- **Sea Kayaking**
- **Dive, Snorkel, Kayak**
- **Salmonier Nature Park** – 3km board trail through natural woods, bog etc. with rescued animals native to NL. Very naturalistic setting so you likely won't see all the animals. Kid/stroller friendly and it's free! 45-60 min drive but can be combined with either partial Irish Loop or a visit to Dildo or Brigus.
- **Irish Loop** - you don't need to drive the full loop (unless you want to). Highlights include Bay Bulls/Witless Bay, the very scenic outlook at Tors Cove, if you drive down to Ferryland there's an archaeological dig (Colony of Avalon) and well as Lighthouse Picnics.
- **Mistaken Point** – a wilderness area and UNESCO World Heritage Site located at the southeastern tip of Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula – book ahead to arrange for a guide.
- **Local Day Tours**

NOTE: check out local updates. If the whales are in at Cape St. Vincent's it's an incredible experience – steep drop off close to shore means incredible up close and personal encounters (or a lot of wet, grey and fog – check before going).

OVERNIGHT ADVENTURES

- **Bonavista Peninsula** - spend a night or two
- **Trinity** – beautiful town, go to the Pageant or Rising Tide Theatre productions
- **Elliston** – root cellar capital of the world (seriously it's kind of cool). Also potentially the closest access you'll have to puffins. They breed on an island very close to shore, and if you're really lucky they may come over to collect flowers and grass near your feet!
- **Port Union** – fascinating historic down
- **Bonavista** – great town to explore, replica of the Matthew
- **Skervink Trail**
- **Port Rexton Brewery**
- **Fisher's Loft** – if you want a fancy treat of dinner or overnight.
- **Twine Loft**
- **Baccalieu Coastal Trail**
- **Dildo** – visit the Brewery and museum, check out the sign, enjoy the community
- **Brigus and Cupids**
- Many historical sites, museums
- **Twillingate** – considered iceberg alley – check on local conditions but could be amazing iceberg/whale/bird watching opportunity.

GENERAL INFO

Taxis

- **Uber** just arrived last year so may not be as available/competitive as some of the taxis
- **City Wide Taxi/Bugden's/Newfound** (they all merged) 722-7777 – or download the app which is similar to Uber. They have the airport contract. They do charge a \$5 surcharge as a result, but will also happily bundle up a group of people going to the same hotel for a flat rate per person – just ask the dispatch staff at the curb
- **Jiffy Cabs** – 722-2222 – they also now have an app.

Parking

- There is underground parking at the hotel \$15/day.
- Street parking is via app or parking station – Pay by phone St. John's if you want to download the app ahead of time.

- The hotel/conference centre are located on the West end of downtown. Downtown basically consists of 3 parallel streets – Harbour Drive, Water Street and Duckworth Street. Signal Hill/ Cabot Tower are at the East end of downtown which helps as a landmark. Depending on your walking speed/style, it's roughly a half hour walk from one end of downtown to the other Quidi Vidi is approx.. 45 minutes walk or a quick cab ride. Downtown starts at the Harbour and the streets rise steeply from there. Good footwear, layers and a hood/hat (not an umbrella) are essential.

LOTS OF OTHER SUGGESTIONS

destinationstjohns.com



Our sincere thanks to Janine Hubbard, whose contagious enthusiasm and eagerness to help have supported and enhanced our work in preparation for this convention. Janine took the time to enumerate her knowledge of St. John's so that our convention attendees can navigate the city with the confidence of a local!