

APOGEE ADVENTURES

2026 Maine's Downeast Explorer

Summarized Itinerary

Trip Begins: Brunswick, Maine (flights into Portland, ME)
Trip Ends: Brunswick, Maine (flights out of Portland, ME)

Day 1: Our group will meet in Brunswick this afternoon before transferring by van and trailer to the charming coastal village of Camden. Here, we will spend the rest of the day getting to know one another, playing games, and talking about our adventure ahead.

Days 2-4: We will begin Day 2 by heading “Downeast” to Acadia National Park, the Eastern Jewel of the National Park System. Over the next few days, we will hike Acadia’s stunning trails, swim in the lakes on Mount Desert Island, and even set out on a pre-dawn hike to watch the sunrise from one of the first points in the United States to see daylight over the Atlantic.

Days 5-9: Leaving Mount Desert Island and the coast behind, we will make our way north to Maine’s Great North Woods. After getting outfitted for our time in the backcountry, we will head to our trailhead along the legendary “100 Mile Wilderness” section of the Appalachian Trail. Over three days and two nights, we will hike toward Baxter State Park and Mount Katahdin—Maine’s highest peak—cook hearty backcountry meals, and keep an eye out for moose. After completing our time on the Appalachian Trail, we will transfer into Baxter State Park, which will serve as our basecamp for the next three nights. Weather permitting, we will have the opportunity to attempt a summit of Mount Katahdin, an unforgettable highlight of the trip.

Days 10-12: Feeling accomplished, we will return to the coast on Day 10, setting our sights on Stonington, Maine. That evening, our professional kayaking guides will facilitate a paddling safety and skills orientation to help prepare us for our overnight expedition among the islands of Penobscot Bay. Early on Day 11, we will load up our boats and paddle to one of the beautiful and remote islands that make up the Maine Island Trail (MITA). During our time on Penobscot Bay, MITA will help facilitate a meaningful service project, which may include cleaning the beaches of some of the islands we explore. The rest of our time will be spent swimming, setting up our island camp, and exploring this incredible stretch of coastline by kayak.

Days 12-13: For our last full day together, we will paddle back to the mainland and travel south toward Portland. After cleaning up, we will spend the afternoon exploring the city before gathering for a celebratory dinner in one of the Old Port’s many excellent restaurants—a perfect way to end our adventure together. On our final morning, we will say our goodbyes and prepare for the arrival of parents, reflecting on an unforgettable journey and promising to stay in touch with new friends.

Please note that we often operate Maine’s Downeast Explorer with two groups in the field concurrently—an “A” group and a “B” group. Both groups will participate in the same activities described above, although the order of these activities may differ. Students will be assigned to their group and will receive their detailed, night-by-night itinerary a few weeks before the trip begins. All itineraries are subject to change.

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