

Rum Runners Trail Itinerary

Halifax to Lunenburg - 119km

Day 1: Halifax to Hubbards - 52.25km

Pick up snacks and water before heading on the Chain of Lakes Trail (Trailhead – Joseph Howe Drive, across from the Atlantic Superstore. This paved trail section offers smooth pedaling and travels past residential areas, alongside a series of lakes.

After about 13km of cycling from the Chain of Lakes Trail to the BLT Trail, you'll come to the trailhead for the Bluff Wilderness Hiking Trail (wrweo.ca/wp/?page_id=107) in Timberlea. Stop to stretch your legs by walking into the wilderness area, which offers over 30km of looping wilderness trails, or simply have a seat on the bench or granite outcropping overlooking Cranberry Lake, this is a peaceful place for a break.

Back on the BLT Trail, you'll make your way to the St. Margaret's Bay Trail. As your stomach starts to growl, you'll arrive at the Train Station Bike and Bean in Upper Tantallon (www.bikeandbean.ca; 902-820-3400). This heritage train station has been cleverly converted into a café and bike repair and cycling supplies shop, while maintaining its historic charm. Pick up some lunch here, or head over to the neighbouring cafes.

While in the neighbourhood, be sure to stop into Acadian Maple Products (www.acadianmaple.com; 902-826-2312; 13578 Peggy's Cove Road, Upper Tantallon) to learn more about the syrup-making process before tasting the different grades. They also sell delicious gift sets, with a variety of syrups, jams and juices made from Nova Scotian berries. They are happy to ship your purchase anywhere in North America.

After getting refueled, head back on trail. You'll soon start to feel the ocean breeze of St. Margaret's Bay, as the trail runs parallel to Hwy 3, which has five beautiful white sand beaches alongside the road. Take a break and cool off with a swim at Cleveland Beach Provincial Park (8878 Hwy 3, Hubbards), which also has vault toilets and picnic tables.

At the end of the St. Margaret's Bay Trail, turn left onto Hwy 3, heading into Hubbards. This seaside community is a great place to spend the night and is home to Nova Scotia's last great dance hall, the Shore Club (shoreclub.ca; 902-857-9555; 250 Shore Club Road, Hubbards). Known for their Lobster Supper (Wednesday-Sunday; mid May-mid October) that includes unlimited steamed mussels and live music every weekend (May-September). The Saturday night Lobster Supper & Dance Package gives you a discount and VIP access to the dance. For an earlier evening, check out an acoustic jam session at The Trellis Café (Thursday-Saturday) (www.trelliscafe.ca; 902-857-1188; 22 Hwy 3, Hubbards). Stay the night in one of the many waterfront inns, B&Bs or cottages nearby.

Day 2: Hubbards to Western Shore - 41km

Start your day off right with a delicious breakfast. If your accommodation doesn't include breakfast, head over to The Trellis Café for hearty meals like The Codfather or Lobster Eggs Benedict. The Saturday morning Farmers' Market at Hubbards Barn & Community Park (mid May-end of October) (hubbardsbarn.org/farmers-market) is the perfect place to meet local farmers and artisans while picking up some fresh local produce, meats and homemade bread and jams for a picnic along the trail.

Back on the trail, you'll be travelling on Aspotogan Trail to Chester Connection Trail. These wooded trails offer a few picnic stops alongside lakes and rivers. Take a break at Meisner's Beach in East River Point, or continue to Grave's Island Provincial Park in East Chester. Exit the trail by turning left onto Duncan's Road, then right onto Hwy 3. Graves Island Road will be on your left.

Graves Island Provincial Park (www.novascotiaparks.ca/parks/graves.asp) offers picnic areas, washroom facilities, a campground and waterview walking trails around the island. This is a great place to stop for a picnic and rest your legs. Heading back to the trail, you'll continue along to the Chester Train Station/Visitor Information Centre. Here, you can have a break and pick up a town map.

The Village of Chester has long been a favourite vacationing spot and many people have built beautiful mansion-like summer cottages throughout the town and along the water. Take a pedal or stroll through the downtown, where you'll find studios, galleries and restaurants, such as The Kiwi Café (www.kiwicafechester.com; 902-275-1492) and Rope Loft (ropeloft.com; 902-275-3430). This is also where you can access Big Tancook Island.

For the small price of \$7, you and your bicycle can board the ferry and make the 8km journey to Big Tancook Island. This small island that was traditionally a fishing outpost has attracted a number of artisans over the years and offers visitors cute galleries and quiet roadways and trails that are great for cycling. There are also a seasonal restaurants on the island.

Back on the Chester mainland, head on the trail toward Western Shore. You know you're close when you cross the large trestle bridge over Gold River. The trail crosses a number of roads in the community of Western Shore. Turning left onto these roads will lead you down to Hwy 3 (the main road through the community). At the end of the downtown, you'll see the entrance to Atlantica Oak Island Resort & Conference Centre (www.atlanticoakisland.com; 902-627-2600; 1-800-565-5075). This full-service resort offers restaurants, pools, spa, and activities, such as kayak rentals and is a great place to relax and unwind. The resort offers oceanview rooms in the main building, as well as extended stay apartments, oceanfront chalets, and seaside villas - something for everyone!

Day 3: Western Shore to Lunenburg - 25km or 39km (optional route)

Wake up to the fresh salt area and fuel up with breakfast at La Vista dining room at Oak Island Resort. Afterwards, head over to Island View Restaurant and Bakery, known locally as 'the Green canteen', to pick up some freshly baked sweet treats for later. Before starting back on the trail, be sure to check out the Walk The Mystery Tour of Oak Island offered throughout the summer friendsofoakislandsociety.rezgo.com. The site of the longest running treasure hunt in history, Oak Island has mystified people for over 200 years. The treasure is said to have possible connections to famous pirates, including Captain Kidd, royalty, such as Marie Antoinette and even the Knights Templar. The treasure hunt has continued more recently on the documentary series, *The Curse of Oak Island*.

To further indulge your inner child, be sure to stop at The Whirlygig factory (www.whirlygigfactory.com; 902-627-1407; 6833 Hwy 3) in Martin's Point. These colourful spinners and windsocks will put a smile on anyone's face. Plus, they love creating custom work - a cycling whirligig could be a great way to remember your seaside adventure! They're also happy to ship your treasures anywhere you like!

Back on the trail (which intersects with Hwy 3 near the Whirlgig Factory), you'll travel through some peaceful woodland and across the Martin's River trestle bridge before entering the Dynamite Trail. As explained in the interpretive panels along this section, this trail passes by Common Land, which was farmed by the area settlers and meant for the use of all citizens. You'll also pass the scenic Oakland Lake before entering Mahone Bay.

Outside Mahone Bay, turn left on Cleveland Road, then right on Hwy 3, travelling into the downtown. You'll pass by the famous Three Churches and get a great view of the colourful downtown buildings. Take a walk through the downtown to peruse the many beautiful gift shops and delicious cafes and restaurants. Be sure to take a tour of Amos Pewter (www.amospewter.com; 902-624-9547; 589 Main Street) to learn how their handcrafted treasures are created. You can also try your hand at finishing your very own pewter keepsake. The friendly folks at Amos Pewter are also happy to ship your purchases anywhere you like. There are also many great dining options and superb snack stops.

The route between Mahone Bay and Lunenburg is peaceful and wooded. If you'd prefer to see more of the water while travelling between the two towns, and are comfortable biking on the road with traffic, continue along Hwy 3 and turn left along the water at Mader's Cove. For this optional route, follow Mader's Cove Road to Sunnybrook Road. Turn left on Herman's Island Road and follow along the water to Prince's Inlet Road, then Second Peninsula Road, which brings you back to Hwy 3, onto Lincoln Street into downtown Lunenburg.

If you stick on the trail, it's only a few kilometers to Lunenburg. Note there is a steep grade at end of trail approaching Lunenburg. Walk up hill, to where trail ends. Look for cars as you cross the street to connect up with the last part of trail, less than 1km into Lunenburg. The trail ends at the old train station. Old Town Lunenburg is to your left. Follow signs for the Fisheries Museum to access the waterfront, only a few blocks away! This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a bustling community with many shops, artisans, restaurants, attractions, and grand heritage

inns and B&Bs. The best way to see this historic town and learn about the history, legends and architecture is by taking a tour, either on foot with Lunenburg Walking Tours (www.lunenburgwalkingtours.com; 902-521-6867) or by horse-drawn carriage with Trot in Time Buggy Rides (www.trotintime.ca; 902-634-8917). If a view from the water is what you crave, relax aboard our sailing ambassador, Bluenose II (bluenose.novascotia.ca/schedule; 902-640-3177) or sail with Sail Lunenburg Star Charters (www.novascotiasailing.com; 902-634-3535; 1-877-247-7075) or explore the hidden coves of Lunenburg's coast by kayak with Pleasant Paddling (www.pleasantpaddling.com; 902-541-9233).