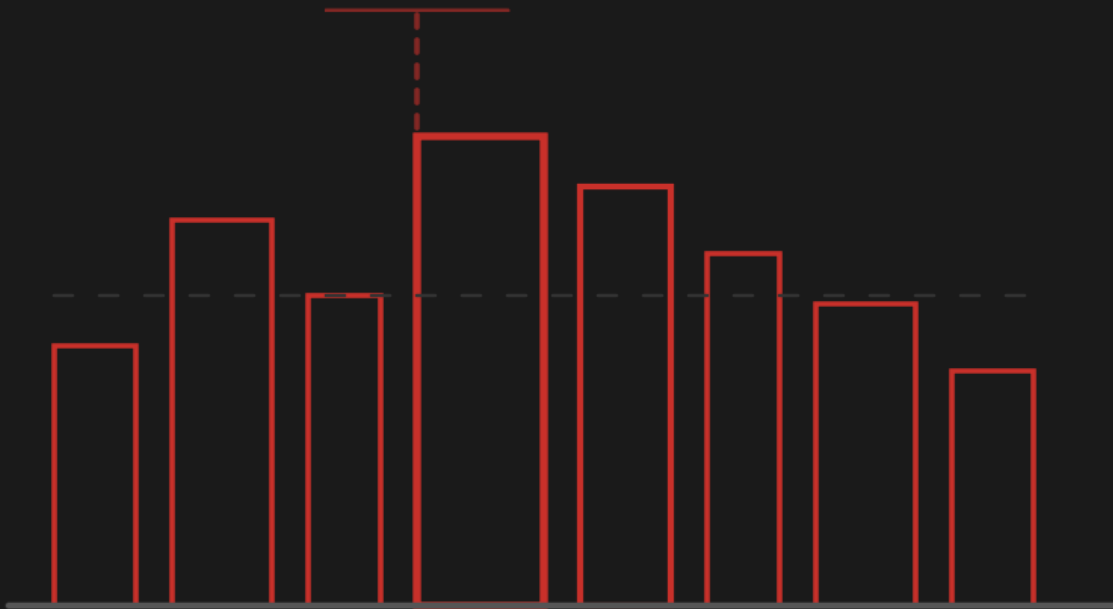




48 HOURS IN

PORTLAND, ME

TERMINAL TO TERMINAL

WELCOME

Welcome to Portland, Maine.

Portland, Maine works at a scale most American food and travel writers still find surprising: a peninsula city of about 68,000 people that has repeatedly been named one of the best food cities in the country, sits a short walk from a genuinely working waterfront, and has one of the highest breweries-per-capita counts in the United States. It does all of this without much pretense — this is a city of fishermen, ferry captains, and chefs who trained elsewhere and came back.

What most first-time visitors miss: Portland isn't just the Old Port's cobblestones and lobster rolls, though both are worth the trip. Casco Bay's islands are a 15-to-45-minute ferry ride from downtown and feel entirely removed from the city; Portland Head Light, one of the most photographed lighthouses in America, is 15 minutes away in Cape Elizabeth; and neighborhoods like Munjoy Hill and the West End reward an unhurried walk with sea captains' houses and genuine quiet.

Portland is well suited to solo travel — the peninsula is compact and walkable, brewery taprooms and oyster bar counters make solo dining and drinking the norm rather than the exception, and the ferry system turns a solo afternoon into an easy, self-contained island excursion.

Day One · Old Port · Waterfront · Munjoy Hill

8:00 AM Breakfast: Tandem Coffee + Bakery

742 Congress Street: a small-batch roaster and bakery in a converted auto shop, consistently ranked among the best coffee in the city. \$8–14.

Insider Tip: The morning buns sell out — arrive before 9am if you want one, and take your coffee to the counter seating rather than standing.

9:30 AM Old Port Walking

Cobblestone streets between Commercial and Middle: 19th-century brick warehouses now holding independent shops, galleries, and restaurants, with the working waterfront a block away. Free.

Insider Tip: Duck down to Commercial Street itself to watch the lobster boats and ferries — the Old Port's charm is inseparable from the working harbor right behind it.

11:00 AM Portland Museum of Art

7 Congress Square: a strong collection with real depth in Winslow Homer, who painted from a studio down the coast at Prouts Neck. Admission \$20; free Friday evenings.

Insider Tip: The Homer galleries are the reason to come — his seascapes were painted a short drive from this building, and it shows.

1:00 PM Lunch: Eventide Oyster Co.

86 Middle Street: the restaurant that put the brown-butter lobster roll on a steamed bun on the national food map, alongside a serious raw oyster program. \$20–40, counter seating.

Insider Tip: Sit at the marble counter — it's the best seat in the house and the fastest way in without a long wait.

2:30 PM Wadsworth-Longfellow House

489 Congress Street: the oldest building on the Portland peninsula and childhood home of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, now a house museum run by the Maine Historical Society. Admission \$18.

Insider Tip: The adjoining Maine Historical Society library is worth a few quiet minutes if you have any interest in the state's history beyond this one house.

4:00 PM Munjoy Hill & the Eastern Promenade

The hill at the peninsula's east end: working-class turned trendy, with the 1807 Portland Observatory — the only surviving maritime signal station in the country — and Eastern Prom's waterfront trail and Casco Bay views.

Insider Tip: Climb the Observatory if it's open (seasonal hours) for a maritime-history angle on the same view you get free from the Prom below.

7:00 PM Dinner: Fore Street

288 Fore Street: Sam Hayward's farm-to-table pioneer, credited with helping shape Portland's entire food identity, built around a wood-fired oven and open kitchen. \$40–65.

Insider Tip: Ask for counter seats facing the open kitchen — it's the most solo-friendly vantage point and the restaurant's real theater.

Day Two · Casco Bay Islands · Cape Elizabeth · West End

9:00 AM Casco Bay Lines Ferry to Peaks Island

Casco Bay Ferry Terminal, Commercial Street: a 15-minute public ferry ride to Peaks Island, the most visited of Casco Bay's 'Calendar Islands.' Round trip about \$9.50.

Insider Tip: Rent a bike right at the Peaks Island dock and ride the 4-mile loop around the island's edge — the easiest, most complete solo morning on the water.

12:00 PM Lunch on Peaks Island

The island's small commercial strip near the ferry dock: a few casual restaurants and a market, all an easy walk or bike ride from the boat. \$12–20.

Insider Tip: Kettle Cove or the Cockeyed Gull are the reliable options — check current hours before relying on either, since island restaurants keep tighter seasonal schedules.

2:00 PM

Portland Head Light

1000 Shore Road, Cape Elizabeth: commissioned by George Washington in 1791, one of the most photographed lighthouses in America, set in the oceanfront Fort Williams Park. Park free; museum \$2.

Insider Tip: Walk the full park, not just the lighthouse – the old fort battlements and the rocky shoreline south of the tower are quieter and just as scenic.

4:00 PM

Two Lights State Park

Two Lights Road, Cape Elizabeth: rugged Atlantic coastline a short drive from Portland Head Light, with dramatic rocks and, nearby, the well-known Lobster Shack takeout stand. Entry \$4.

Insider Tip: The Lobster Shack next to the park serves lobster rolls with an ocean view if you want a second one today – it's a genuinely different setting from Eventide's counter.

6:00 PM

West End Walk

Bounded roughly by State Street and the Western Promenade: Portland's grandest Victorian residential neighborhood, sea captains' houses lining quiet streets down to river views at the Western Prom.

Insider Tip: The Western Promenade at sunset looks out over the Fore River rather than the ocean – a quieter, less-visited counterpart to the Eastern Prom.

7:30 PM

Dinner: Central Provisions

180 Middle Street: small, globally inflected shared plates in a tight Old Port room, consistently one of the most talked-about kitchens in the city. \$35–55, bar seating.

Insider Tip: No reservations for the bar – put your name in, get a drink at a nearby taproom, and come back when they text.

9:30 PM

Nightcap: Allagash Brewing Tasting Room

50 Industrial Way: Portland's best-known brewery, famous for its Belgian-style Allagash White, with free daily tours and a tasting room a short rideshare from downtown.

Insider Tip: Check the tour schedule ahead – the free brewery tour is worth timing your evening around if you haven't been.

WHERE TO EAT

Portland's Table

OLD PORT

Eventide Oyster Co.

OLD PORT • \$\$

The brown-butter lobster roll that put Portland on the national food map.

Central Provisions

OLD PORT · \$\$\$

Small shared plates and one of the city’s most talked-about kitchens.

Fore Street

OLD PORT · \$\$\$

Sam Hayward’s farm-to-table pioneer — ask for counter seats by the open kitchen.

Duckfat

OLD PORT · \$

Belgian fries in duck fat and panini — a fast, easy solo lunch.

WATERFRONT & BEYOND

The Holy Donut

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS · \$

Potato-based donuts that have become a genuine Portland institution.

Hot Suppa

STATE STREET · \$\$

A beloved brunch spot with a Southern-leaning menu and a loyal local following.

The Lobster Shack

CAPE ELIZABETH · \$\$

Takeout lobster rolls with an ocean view at Two Lights.

BREWERIES & BARS

Allagash Brewing

INDUSTRIAL WAY · \$\$\$

Portland’s best-known brewery, famous for its Belgian-style White ale — free tours.

Bissell Brothers

THOMPSON’S POINT · \$\$

A leading modern IPA producer with a large, communal taproom.

Rising Tide Brewing

EAST BAYSIDE · \$\$

A relaxed neighborhood taproom a short walk from the Eastern Prom.

GETTING AROUND

Navigating Portland, Maine

MODE	COST	NOTES
Walking	Free	The peninsula is compact — Old Port, the West End, and Munjoy Hill are all walkable.

Casco Bay Lines ferry	\$9–12 round trip	The way to reach Peaks Island and the rest of Casco Bay.
METRO bus	\$2/ride	Covers the peninsula and connects to South Portland and the airport.
Uber / Lyft	Varies	Best for Cape Elizabeth lighthouses and getting home from the breweries.
Rental car	\$50–75/day	Useful for Cape Elizabeth, Freeport, and any day trip beyond the peninsula.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

TOPIC	DETAILS
Getting There	Portland International Jetport (PWM) is about 10 minutes from downtown — Uber runs \$15–20, or METRO bus.
Best Time	June through September brings the warmest weather and full ferry schedules; September and early October add foliage with thinner crowds. Winters are genuinely cold with a much quieter island ferry schedule.
Solo Dining	Oyster bar and brewery counters are the norm at the city's best spots — solo dining here is entirely unremarkable.
Reservations	Fore Street takes reservations and books up; Central Provisions and Eventide run walk-in-only bar seating, so budget time to wait.
Island Schedules	Ferry frequency and island restaurant hours both thin out considerably outside summer — check the Casco Bay Lines schedule before planning an island day.
Useful Apps	Uber, the Casco Bay Lines app for ferry times, and a tide chart if you plan on the rocky Cape Elizabeth shoreline.

BEFORE YOU LEAVE: FINAL CHECKLIST

- ☐ Check the Casco Bay Lines ferry schedule before planning an island day
- ☐ Book Fore Street ahead if you want a table rather than the bar
- ☐ Pack a warm layer even in summer — evenings on the water run cool
- ☐ Confirm island restaurant hours before relying on any single option
- ☐ Check the Allagash tour schedule if you want to time a visit
- ☐ Bring comfortable shoes for cobblestones in the Old Port
- ☐ Carry cash for smaller Peaks Island vendors

GoingSolo.Life

Your interactive map is one scan away.

All locations from this guide, colour-coded by day, open on your phone.



goingsolo.life/maps/portland-me

TRAVEL ALONE. LIVE FULLY.

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