

Things to Do in Wells, Maine: Best Beaches, Nature Trails & Coastal Attractions



Wells is one of Maine's oldest coastal towns, where wide sandy beaches, scenic salt marshes, fresh seafood, and peaceful nature preserves create the perfect New England getaway. Located between Kennebunkport and Ogunquit along Maine's southern coast, Wells attracts visitors looking for a relaxing beach vacation while remaining close to some of the state's most popular attractions.

Unlike busier seaside [*US destinations*](#), Wells offers a slower pace that makes it easy to enjoy the natural beauty of the Atlantic coastline. You can spend your morning walking along miles of sandy beaches, paddle through quiet marshes in the afternoon, explore wildlife refuges filled with native birds, and end the day watching the sunset while enjoying fresh Maine lobster.

In our experience researching coastal destinations throughout New England, Wells stands out because it successfully balances outdoor recreation, family-friendly attractions, and authentic coastal charm. Whether you're planning a summer beach

vacation, a fall road trip, or a peaceful weekend escape, Wells offers activities for every type of traveler.

If you're wondering about the best things to do in Wells, Maine, this guide covers the top attractions, outdoor adventures, and local experiences you shouldn't miss.

Top 15 Things to Do in Wells, Maine

From relaxing on award-winning beaches and exploring coastal nature preserves to kayaking through salt marshes and enjoying fresh seafood, Wells offers unforgettable experiences for families, couples, and outdoor enthusiasts alike.



Relax at Wells Beach

No visit to Wells is complete without spending time at Wells Beach, one of southern Maine's most popular stretches of coastline. Known for its wide sandy shoreline, gentle surf, and scenic ocean views, the beach is ideal for swimming, sunbathing, beachcombing, and long walks along the Atlantic.

During low tide, the beach expands dramatically, creating plenty of space for families to play, build sandcastles, or simply enjoy a peaceful stroll along the water's edge. We recommend arriving early during the summer months, as parking fills quickly and the beach becomes one of the busiest spots in town.

Explore Drakes Island Beach

Drakes Island Beach offers a quieter alternative to Wells Beach while providing the same beautiful Atlantic scenery. This peaceful barrier beach is popular with families, birdwatchers, photographers, and anyone looking to escape larger crowds. Soft sand, calm waters, and natural dunes create a relaxing environment for spending an afternoon by the ocean.

The surrounding marshes also support a variety of coastal wildlife, making the area particularly attractive for nature lovers. If you prefer a less crowded beach experience, Drakes Island is one of the best places to visit in Wells.

Visit Moody Beach

Located on the southern edge of Wells near Ogunquit, Moody Beach is known for its peaceful atmosphere and scenic coastline. The beach stretches for miles, providing excellent opportunities for walking, shell collecting, swimming, and enjoying panoramic ocean views. Because much of the shoreline remains residential, Moody Beach often feels quieter than many neighboring beaches. Morning walks are especially rewarding as the rising sun illuminates the coastline and visitors enjoy the peaceful surroundings before the day's crowds arrive.

Discover the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge

Nature enthusiasts should not miss the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, one of southern Maine's most important protected coastal ecosystems. The refuge

preserves salt marshes, tidal estuaries, forests, and wildlife habitats that support migratory birds, mammals, and countless native plant species.

Visitors can walk scenic trails while observing birds, enjoying quiet marsh views, and learning about coastal conservation efforts throughout Maine. In our experience, this is one of Wells' most rewarding attractions for photographers, birdwatchers, and anyone seeking a peaceful outdoor experience.

Walk the Wells Reserve at Laudholm

The Wells Reserve at Laudholm combines history, education, and outdoor recreation in one remarkable destination. More than seven miles of hiking trails wind through forests, salt marshes, beaches, and open fields, allowing visitors to experience the diverse ecosystems that define Maine's southern coast.

Interpretive exhibits and educational programs provide additional insight into the area's environmental significance, while the historic Laudholm Farm adds cultural interest to the visit. Whether you're looking for an easy nature walk or a longer hike, the reserve offers trails suitable for every skill level.

Visit Wells Harbor Park

Wells Harbor Park is a favorite gathering place for both locals and visitors. Situated along the harbor, the park offers walking paths, picnic areas, fishing opportunities, public boat access, and beautiful waterfront views.

The harbor is especially active during the summer as lobster boats, fishing vessels, and recreational boats come and go throughout the day. Families often enjoy watching the boats while children play in the open green spaces nearby. We recommend visiting around sunset when the harbor becomes one of the most picturesque locations in Wells.

Explore the Antique Mile

Wells has long been known as one of Maine's best destinations for antique shopping. Stretching along the U.S. Route 1, the famous Antique Mile features numerous antique stores, vintage shops, collectible dealers, and specialty boutiques offering everything from furniture and artwork to rare books and maritime memorabilia.

Even visitors who aren't planning to buy anything often enjoy browsing the unique collections and discovering pieces of New England history. Exploring the Antique Mile is a relaxing activity that offers something different from the area's outdoor attractions.

Tour the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

The Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve protects thousands of acres of coastal habitat while providing visitors with educational exhibits, scenic trails, and research facilities. The reserve offers an excellent opportunity to learn about Maine's salt marshes, estuaries, wildlife, and ongoing conservation efforts.

Walking trails pass through forests, wetlands, and coastal environments, making this one of the area's best destinations for nature photography and wildlife observation. Visitors interested in ecology and environmental education will find the reserve both informative and enjoyable.

Kayak Through the Salt Marshes

One of the most peaceful ways to experience Wells is from the water. Kayaking through the town's salt marshes allows visitors to explore quiet waterways surrounded by native grasses, coastal birds, and scenic landscapes rarely visible from the road.

Paddling routes range from beginner-friendly channels to longer excursions that connect with nearby estuaries and tidal creeks. In our experience, kayaking offers

one of the most memorable ways to appreciate the natural beauty of Wells while avoiding larger crowds.

Go Whale Watching or Deep-Sea Fishing

Several nearby operators offer whale-watching excursions and deep-sea fishing trips departing from southern Maine ports. Depending on the season, visitors may encounter humpback whales, fin whales, dolphins, seals, and a variety of seabirds while exploring the Gulf of Maine.

Fishing charters provide opportunities to catch species such as cod, haddock, and striped bass while enjoying spectacular ocean scenery. Whether you choose sightseeing or fishing, spending time on the Atlantic Ocean is an unforgettable part of any Wells vacation.

Enjoy Fresh Seafood at Local Lobster Shacks

Sampling fresh Maine seafood is one of the highlights of visiting Wells. The town is home to numerous lobster shacks and waterfront restaurants serving lobster rolls, steamed lobster, fried clams, chowder, scallops, oysters, and locally caught fish.

We always recommend trying locally harvested seafood because it provides an authentic taste of Maine's coastal culture. Even a simple lobster roll enjoyed outdoors can become one of the most memorable meals of your trip.

Visit Wonder Mountain Fun Park

Families traveling with children will find plenty to enjoy at Wonder Mountain Fun Park. The attraction features miniature golf courses, go-karts, an arcade, a human maze, and other family-friendly activities that provide entertainment throughout the summer season.

Its convenient location makes it an easy stop after spending the day at the beach. Wonder Mountain is especially popular with families looking to balance outdoor sightseeing with classic vacation fun.

Take a Scenic Drive Along Route 1

U.S. Route 1 winds through Wells and connects many of southern Maine's most charming coastal communities. Driving this historic route allows visitors to discover local shops, seafood restaurants, beaches, scenic overlooks, antique stores, and picturesque villages at their own pace.

One of the advantages of Route 1 is that there is always something interesting to stop and explore along the way. We recommend allowing extra time for spontaneous stops, as many of the area's hidden gems are found just off the highway.

Explore Ogunquit on a Day Trip

Just a few miles south of Wells, Ogunquit makes one of the easiest and most rewarding day trips along the Maine coast. Visitors can walk the famous Marginal Way, relax on Ogunquit Beach, browse local art galleries, enjoy fresh seafood, and explore the lively downtown area filled with boutiques and cafés. Because of its close proximity, many travelers choose Wells as a quieter home base while spending a day discovering everything Ogunquit has to offer.

Visit Kennebunkport

Less than 20 minutes north of Wells, Kennebunkport is one of Maine's most iconic coastal towns and an excellent addition to your itinerary. Known for its historic homes, working harbor, waterfront restaurants, boutique shopping, scenic beaches, and maritime history, Kennebunkport offers a distinctly different atmosphere from Wells while complementing the overall coastal experience.

Whether you are exploring Dock Square, enjoying an oceanfront drive, or watching lobster boats return to the harbor, Kennebunkport provides another unforgettable glimpse into Maine's coastal heritage.

Best Time to Visit Wells, Maine

Wells is a year-round destination, but the best time to visit depends on the type of vacation you're planning. Whether you are looking for warm beach days, colorful fall scenery, or a quiet coastal escape, each season offers something unique.



Spring (April-May)

Spring brings blooming wildflowers, migrating birds, and mild temperatures to southern Maine. It's an excellent time to explore the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, the Wells Reserve at Laudholm, and local hiking trails before the summer crowds arrive.

Summer (June-August)

Summer is the most popular time to visit Wells. Warm weather, long daylight hours, and pleasant ocean breezes make it ideal for relaxing on the beach, kayaking, whale watching, and enjoying fresh seafood at waterfront restaurants. Keep in mind that beaches and accommodations are busiest during weekends and holidays, so booking early is recommended.

Fall (September-October)

Many travelers consider fall the best time to visit Wells. Comfortable temperatures, colorful foliage, and fewer crowds create the perfect conditions for scenic drives, nature walks, photography, and exploring nearby coastal towns like Ogunquit and Kennebunkport. The ocean also remains relatively warm during early fall, allowing visitors to continue enjoying the beaches.

Winter (November-March)

Winter transforms Wells into a peaceful coastal retreat. While swimming isn't practical, visitors can enjoy quiet beaches, birdwatching, scenic walks, cozy inns, and dramatic ocean views without the crowds. This is also a great time for travelers looking for lower hotel rates and a slower pace.

Our Recommendation: If you are planning your first visit, we recommend traveling between late June and early October. You will enjoy the best weather, full access to seasonal attractions, and some of the most beautiful coastal scenery in Maine.

Where to Eat in Wells

Wells may be a small coastal town, but its dining scene is one of its biggest highlights. From classic lobster shacks and waterfront seafood restaurants to cozy cafés and Italian cuisine, there's something to satisfy every appetite after a day of exploring.

Mike's Clam Shack

Mike's Clam Shack is one of the most popular seafood restaurants in Wells and a favorite among both locals and visitors. We recommend trying the lobster roll, fried clams, clam chowder, and steamed lobster. The casual atmosphere and generous portions make it an excellent stop for families and first-time visitors looking for an authentic Maine seafood experience.

Hobbs Harborside Restaurant

Located near Wells Harbor, Hobbs Harborside Restaurant pairs fresh seafood with beautiful waterfront views. Menu favorites include lobster, scallops, haddock, shrimp, oysters, and homemade chowders. Dining on the outdoor deck during sunset is one of the best ways to enjoy the coastal atmosphere.

Billy's Chowder House

Billy's Chowder House has built a reputation for serving some of the area's best New England clam chowder. In addition to its famous chowder, the restaurant offers lobster rolls, fried seafood platters, baked haddock, and locally sourced seafood specialties. It is a great choice for travelers wanting classic coastal comfort food.

Fisherman's Catch Restaurant

If you are looking for a traditional Maine seafood restaurant with a welcoming atmosphere, Fisherman's Catch is an excellent option. Fresh lobster, scallops, shrimp, fish tacos, and seafood baskets are among the restaurant's most popular dishes. The relaxed setting makes it ideal for both families and casual dinners after a day at the beach.

Congdon's Doughnuts

No trip to Wells is complete without stopping at Congdon's Doughnuts. Known throughout Maine, this family-owned bakery serves freshly made doughnuts, breakfast sandwiches, pastries, and coffee that have become a local tradition. We recommend arriving early, especially during the summer, as popular flavors often sell out before midday.

Varano's Ristorante Italiano

For visitors looking for something beyond seafood, Varano's Ristorante Italiano offers homemade Italian dishes in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Fresh pasta, seafood specialties, wood-fired pizzas, and classic desserts make it a popular choice for couples, families, and special occasions.

Where to Stay in Wells

Whether you are planning a beach vacation, a romantic getaway, or a family road trip through southern Maine, Wells offers accommodations for every budget and travel style. Staying near the U.S. Route 1 provides convenient access to beaches, restaurants, shopping, and nearby towns like Ogunquit and Kennebunkport.



Hampton Inn & Suites Wells-Ogunquit

One of the area's most popular hotels, Hampton Inn & Suites offers comfortable rooms, complimentary breakfast, an indoor pool, and easy access to Wells Beach and nearby attractions.

Village by the Sea

Village by the Sea offers spacious condominium-style accommodations with kitchens, separate living areas, indoor and outdoor pools, and beautifully landscaped grounds. It is especially popular with families and travelers planning longer stays.

Anchor Inn & Cottages

This charming property combines traditional motel rooms with cozy cottages, providing a peaceful setting just minutes from Wells Beach. It is an excellent choice for couples and families seeking a relaxed coastal atmosphere.

Misty Harbor Resort

Located near Moody Beach, Misty Harbor Resort features spacious suites, indoor and outdoor pools, and easy beach access. The larger accommodations make it a great option for families traveling with children.

USA Inn

Travelers looking for affordable accommodations often choose USA Inn because of its convenient location and comfortable rooms. It's a practical option for visitors who plan to spend most of their time exploring the Maine coast.

Wells-Ogunquit Resort Motel & Cottages

This seasonal property offers clean accommodations, a heated outdoor pool, and quick access to Wells, Ogunquit, and nearby beaches.

Elmwood Resort Hotel

Elmwood Resort Hotel provides apartment-style suites complete with kitchens, making it ideal for families and extended vacations. Guests also enjoy the indoor pool, fitness center, and quiet location.

Lafayette's Oceanfront Resort

If waking up to ocean views is your priority, Lafayette's Oceanfront Resort is worth considering. Its beachfront location allows guests to enjoy direct access to the sand and spectacular Atlantic sunrises.

Sea Mist Resort Motel

Sea Mist Resort Motel offers comfortable rooms within walking distance of Wells Beach, making it a convenient option for beach lovers.

Drakes Island Resort

Located close to Drakes Island Beach, this family-friendly property provides a peaceful setting away from busier tourist areas.

Atlantic Oceanfront Hotel

Visitors looking for classic oceanfront accommodations appreciate the Atlantic Oceanfront Hotel's location and easy beach access.

The Elmere House Bed & Breakfast

This beautifully restored historic home provides personalized hospitality, elegant rooms, and homemade breakfasts in a peaceful setting. It's one of the area's best choices for couples seeking a romantic getaway.

Moody Beach Camping Resort

For RV travelers and campers, Moody Beach Camping Resort offers campsites, recreational facilities, and convenient access to Wells and neighboring coastal communities.

Tips for Visiting Wells, Maine

A little planning can make your visit even more enjoyable, especially during the busy summer season.



- **Arrive Early at the Beaches:** Parking lots fill quickly during weekends and holidays.
- **Check Tide Schedules:** Low tide reveals wide sandy beaches that are perfect for walking and beachcombing.
- **Pack Layers:** Coastal weather can change throughout the day, even during summer.
- **Reserve Accommodations Early:** Hotels and vacation rentals often sell out months in advance.
- **Bring Comfortable Walking Shoes:** Nature reserves, coastal trails, and nearby towns are best explored on foot.
- **Support Local Seafood Restaurants:** Fresh lobster, clams, oysters, and chowder are among the region's culinary highlights.
- **Plan Day Trips:** Ogunquit and Kennebunkport are both less than 20 minutes away and well worth visiting.

- **Carry Binoculars:** Wildlife refuges and salt marshes offer excellent birdwatching opportunities.
 - **Book Whale-Watching Tours in Advance:** Summer departures can fill quickly.
 - **Stay for Sunset:** Wells Beach and Wells Harbor provide some of the most beautiful sunset views along Maine's southern coast.
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Conclusion

Wells offers everything travelers love about the Maine coast - from beautiful sandy beaches, to peaceful nature preserves, scenic coastal drives, fresh seafood, and welcoming small-town charm. Whether you are relaxing on Wells Beach, kayaking through salt marshes, exploring wildlife refuges, or taking day trips to Ogunquit and Kennebunkport, every day brings a new way to experience southern Maine.

Its central location, family-friendly atmosphere, and abundance of outdoor activities make Wells an excellent destination for couples, families, solo travelers, and road-trippers alike.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Wells, Maine known for?

Wells is known for its beautiful sandy beaches, the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, scenic salt marshes, fresh seafood, antique shops, and its convenient location between Ogunquit and Kennebunkport.

Is Wells, Maine worth visiting?

Yes. Wells offers a quieter alternative to many of Maine's busier coastal towns while still providing beautiful beaches, outdoor recreation, excellent seafood, and easy access to nearby attractions.

What are the best beaches in Wells, Maine?

Wells Beach, Drakes Island Beach, and Moody Beach are the town's most popular beaches, each offering beautiful scenery and excellent opportunities for swimming, walking, and relaxing.

What is the best time to visit Wells?

Late June through early October is generally the best time to visit. Summer offers ideal beach weather, while early fall brings pleasant temperatures, colorful scenery, and fewer crowds.

Are there family-friendly things to do in Wells?

Absolutely. Families can enjoy Wells Beach, Wonder Mountain Fun Park, Wells Harbor Park, kayaking, nature trails, mini golf, and nearby wildlife refuges.

How many days should I spend in Wells?

A three- to four-day stay is ideal. This allows enough time to explore Wells' beaches and attractions while taking day trips to Ogunquit, Kennebunkport, and other nearby coastal communities.

Is Wells close to Ogunquit?

Yes. Ogunquit is only about a 10-minute drive south of Wells, making it one of the easiest and most popular day trips during a visit.

What are some free things to do in Wells, Maine?

Visitors can relax on Wells Beach, explore the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, hike the Wells Reserve at Laudholm, visit Wells Harbor Park, browse the Antique Mile, and enjoy scenic drives along the southern Maine coast.