

# Exploring Gros Morne National Park

If you're looking for a quick adventure, look no further. My personal itinerary shows you how to spend 4 days exploring Gros Morne on a budget. Follow it for yourself or use it as inspiration to plan your own epic adventure.

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## TRIP SUMMARY:

### Day 1: Route 430 (North end)

Day hike

### Day 2: Western Brook Pond

Tour Western Brook Pond

Black Spruce restaurant

### Day 3: Route 431 (South end)

Tablelands hike

Stop for lunch

Green Gardens hike for sunset

### Day 4: Bottle Cove

Hike Bottle Cove for sunset

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**Getting there:** *By air:* Daily flights connect International hubs with Deer Lake Regional Airport (YDF), located 30 minutes from Gros Morne.

Tips on airport travel:

- Deer Lake Airport is small and flights come and go at relatively weird hours. Be prepared to be flexible to accommodate possible early morning/late night arrivals and departures.
- Assure that your rental car reservation will be available when you land, as car rental operation hours at the airport do not always coincide with very late or early arrival times.
- If your tickets are booked through a third-party (KAYAK, skyscanner, etc..) confirm with Deer Lakes that your departing flight is scheduled and correct.

*By sea:* it is possible to take a ferry from North Sydney, Nova Scotia to Port aux Basques (Newfoundland's southwest coast) and Argentia (Newfoundland's east coast).

**Getting around:** A rental car is the most efficient and budget-friendly way of getting around Gros Morne. Watch for moose crossing!

There are two main roads that divide Gros Morne National Park: Route 430 & Route 431. Route 430 will take you north and Route 431 will take you south.

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## Day 1: Route 430 (North end)

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### Take a hike

We opted for backcountry camping for our first day in the park, but if backcountry camping isn't your thing, Gros Morne offers a wide array of ½ day and full day hikes. Some of the most popular trails along the north end of the park are:

- **Gros Morne Mountain:** Length: 16km-return; Time: 6-8 hours; Difficult
- **Coastal Trail:** Length: 6km-return; Time: 1-2 hours; Easy
- **Snug Harbor:** 8km-return; Time: 3-4 hours; Difficult. For information on how to day hike or backcountry camp at snug harbor, visit my blog post.

All hiking and trail information can be found at: <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/nl/grosmorne/activ/experiences/randonnee-hiking>



### Camp at Berry Hill Campground

- Amenities: Flush toilets, heated/lighted bathrooms, hot water, showers, wifi
  - Reservation recommended
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## Day 2: Western Brook Pond

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### Western Brook Pond Boat Tour: BonTours

Western Brook Pond was carved by glaciers during the last ice age, leaving it surrounded by sheer cliffs that stand over 2000ft tall. As the glaciers retreated, the land rebounded, and the fjord was cut off from the sea. It is now a pristine, ultraoligotrophic, and absolutely freezing freshwater lake, reaching max depths of around 500ft. The lake provides migration routes for herds of caribou and habitat for a variety of fishes and nesting gulls. It's also home to one of the tallest waterfalls in North America, and who doesn't love waterfalls? Featured in several magazines and TV programs, the tour of Western Brook Pond with BonTours is one of the highlights of Gros Morne.

Access the trail head from Route 430. From the parking lot, follow the trail approximately 3km to the dock.

Grab a hot coffee at the café on site and take the boat ride along the length of the pond, where you'll learn about the area's geology, history, and cultural influence.



**Tips and tour information:**

- You'll need your National Park Pass to visit Western Brook Pond
- Ticket price: \$65/person – make a reservation or purchase on site
- Length: 2 hours
- Depending on the time of year/group sizes, tours run about every hour
- Bring cash just in case (the credit machine is unreliable)
- If the tour is crowded, be sure to line up early to get the best seat!
- Check website for updated tour prices and departure times:  
<http://www.bontours.ca/tour/western-brook-pond-boat-tour/>



**Where to eat: Black Spruce Restaurant**

The restaurant is located inside Neddie's Harbor Inn in Norris Point (It's a bit pricey, so we used this as our splurge meal)

**Tips:** Don't forget to make a reservation!

Dress code: casual fancy

Ask for a seat with a view of the Tablelands

**What to eat:** mussels, catch of the day, & the local ice wine

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## Day 3: Route 431 (South end)



**Where to eat: Granite Coffee House in Woody Point**

The spot for cheap breakfast and coffee to go



**Tablelands via Tablelands trail**

Walk on the Earth's mantle. That's right – naked Earth, forced up when tectonic plates collided hundreds of millions of years ago (and also where geologists proved the theory of plate tectonics).

You'll find the trailhead along Route 431 between the towns of Trout River and Woody Point.  
Trail length: 4km-return; Easy.

**Tips:**

- Get on the trail before 10am to avoid crowds and have the trail to yourself.
- Feel free to explore off the trail using the Explora App or get a map at the discovery or visitors center
- Take a side trip to check out the waterfall along the trail



**Where to eat: Seaside Restaurant in Trout River**

Find the most delicious, budget-friendly seafood chowder at the Seaside Restaurant



**Hike Green Gardens via Long Pond Trailhead**

Green Gardens is the perfect place to immerse yourself in contrasting landscapes of Gros Morne. You'll start by climbing steadily over sweeping barrens and descending steeply through lush boreal forest to a volcanic seascape.

There are two ways to get to the coast. Take the Long Pond Trailhead, which is the most direct route and accessible right from Route 431 (13km from Woody Point, 3km from Trout River). Trail: 10km-return; Strenuous uphill.

**Tips:**

- Be sure you have enough daylight or be prepared with flashlights
- Give yourself enough time to explore
- Follow the staircase down to the coast – walk along the coast to find a rock piles and a hidden waterfall
- This is a great spot for sunset peeping



You can easily make an entire day of this destination if you prefer to rearrange plans to accommodate a full day here



There are two primitive campsites at Green Gardens with picnic tables and pit toilets. *If you choose to camp here, you must pre-register with Gros Morne National Park.*

Backcountry camp sites can not be reserved in advance. Permits can be purchased in person at the Discovery Center in Woody Point or the Visitors Center in Rocky Harbor.

Or front-country camp in Trout River.



Parks Canada Green Gardens trail information: <http://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/nl/grosmorne/activ/experiences/randonnee-hiking/gg>



**Where to eat: Merchant Warehouse Retro Café & Wine Bar**

Local-family owned and operated, serving the best fish 'n chips, sandwiches, burgers, and happy hour in town

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## Day 4: Bottle Cove

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### Explore Bottle Cove

Bottle Cove has been rated one of the most beautiful spots on the west coast of Newfoundland. Here you'll find: rugged sea coves, calm sandy beaches, and an array of hiking trails leading to wide open views of the Gulf.

Follow the Lighthouse Trail if you're up for a challenge, relax in Cedar Cove, or end your adventure by catching the sunset at Trails End.



Camp sites are available at nearby Blow Me Down Provincial Park, but you'll have to pay an entrance fee