

Visiting Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island On Your Disney Magic Canada Sailing: A Disney Cruise Line Port of Call

by Amy Wear, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island (PEI) is one of Disney Cruise Line's newest Canadian port stops.

Being a Maritimer myself, I live just over three hours from this beautiful spot. Growing up, I didn't see what the big deal was about Prince Edward Island. It was the place nearby to go for a short trip. Now at the ripe old age of 41, I find myself in increasing awe of this province, much as I am about my own province of New Brunswick, Canada.

Since my mom has a financial conference in rural PEI every August, most summers we make it a "girls trip" to the Island. We go with very little on the agenda while Nannie is in her meetings, but always look forward to her leisurely afternoon off, where we get in the car and set out on a drive to just about anywhere. The entertainment really is taking in the beauty of the countryside, rolling hills, and intermittent breath-taking glimpses of the Atlantic Ocean. We pass by farm after farm with cows grazing and perfectly placed hay bales dotted along the fields. Just about everywhere you look is Instagram-worthy!

Aside from being the home of some of Canada's most beautiful beaches, Prince Edward Island is probably most famous for the allegedly fictional character of Anne Shirley. I say allegedly because legend from the Island is that the Anne of Green Gables series was based on some actual people and events. I once babysat for a family whose great-grandmother insisted that she was the sister of the "real" Gilbert and Anne was a much bigger flirt with him than L.M. Montgomery portrayed!

If you grew up reading the Anne books and watching Megan Follows and the late Jonathan Crombie play the beloved Anne and Gilbert on the big screen, you will likely want to visit the Cavendish, PEI area to see the region that inspired the books and later the movies. While Anne may have been of Avonlea, this is where you can find the famous Green Gables House, fictional Avonlea Village, L.M. Montgomery's burial site, and glimpses of paradise along your route. You'll find no shortage of opportunities to purchase souvenirs either.

Normally an absolute do-not-miss for any Anne fan is the

world-renowned Anne of Green Gables musical put on each summer by the Charlottetown Festival. This Broadway quality musical leaves you wanting to see it again and again. I'll always remember the first time I saw it at just six years old. This was my first encounter with Anne and my frame of reference as I read the whole Anne series in late elementary school. It was a real treat to take my daughters for their first time during our summer visit three years back.

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□ Sadly, you'll need to make another trip to the Island to see the headliner musical because the Disney Magic makes its stop too late in the fall to catch it. You can get a taste of it by seeing the sequel, Anne & Gilbert, but this is a much smaller-scale production that is in a much smaller informal theatre.

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□ Prince Edward Island is also famous for its "world's best" Cow's ice cream. As I've mentioned in a previous article covering Halifax, Nova Scotia, sampling this ice cream is a must! With locations in the downtown core, outskirts of Charlottetown, Confederation Bridge, and in Cavendish, no matter where you choose to spend your day on the island, you should have no trouble getting in a visit. While our family rarely eats ice cream, we wouldn't pass up a chance to have Wowie Cowie or Udderly Divine ice cream from Cow's. Good luck choosing your flavour! (Pro tip: Get two scoops and sample two flavours!)

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□ Conveniently, most of the Cow's stores now have the Anne's Chocolates stores attached to them. On recent trips we've discovered Cow Chips. Warning: You will not be able to restrain yourself once you try these chocolate covered salty rippled chips!

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□ You'll need to make some tough choices in deciding how to spend your day on Prince Edward Island. Surprisingly for so late in the PEI tourism season, there is a long list of port adventure options that you can read about in detail on the [Disney Cruise Line web site](#). After studying the options and comparing prices, the following (in no particular order, as preference will depend on personal tastes) are my top recommendations for getting the best value out of your day. There are some very expensive private sedan and culinary tour options, but most visitors will be more than happy with the options I've listed. For any Canadians traveling, keep in mind that these are priced in U.S. dollars:

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□ 1. Anne of Green Gables and Island Tour (\$54 for adults and \$29 for children at press time). There are other Anne-related tours for substantially more money, but this tour has a lot to offer for the price. This will fit the bill for catching glimpses of the island countryside along your 45-minute bus ride each direction, as well as visits to L.M. Montgomery's farmstead and the boardwalk at Cavendish Beach (note

Cow's ice cream is here!).

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□2. Panoramic Drive and Confederation Bridge (\$69 for adults and \$34 for children at press time). Travel 45-minutes in another direction taking in the hypnotizing scenery along the route to the world-famous Confederation Bridge, which links the provinces of Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. You'll have the opportunity to drive all the way across the bridge to New Brunswick for a brief stop (woot, woot!). Then stop on the other side of the bridge at Gateway Village, which is full of unique shops for requisite souvenirs and, most importantly, Cows! You'll only have an hour here, so make haste for that ice cream!

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□3. Taste the Town (\$52 for ages 13 and up). Foodies looking for a unique experience staying within downtown Charlottetown will enjoy this culinary walking tour, enjoying lobster and other seafood delights, visiting a local brewery, and sampling island French fries made from the famous PEI potatoes.

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□4. Historical Walking Tour (\$32 for ages 10 and up, \$20 ages 8-9). You can do a little research and do your own walking tour of downtown Charlottetown or you can join this 90-minute guided tour of the highlights. This will appeal to history buffs looking for an overview of Charlottetown, "Canada's birthplace." The tour includes a stop at Province House National Historic Site and St. Dunstan's Basilica.

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□ However you decide to spend your day, I'll be rooting for a gorgeous scenic fall day for your visit. As you can probably tell, you may find yourself looking for a way to get back to this region for a longer stay! For those who opt to do the tour to Confederation Bridge, throw me a wave when you touch your feet in my beautiful province of New Brunswick.

About The Author: Amy Wear is a work-at-home Mom, Travel Agent, writer, and former occupational therapist. She lives in New Brunswick, Canada, and specializes in planning magical vacations for people of all abilities at [Click The Mouse](#).

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