

Acadia on the Rocks: Under Canvas Style

By Peggy Newland
Travel Writer

I wake with the sound of birdsong. Redstarts, Warblers, the trilling of Swainson's thrush, and it's a morning symphony as I watch shadows of spruce and pine forest on the canvas walls of our tent. I'm at Under Canvas Acadia, a luxury camping resort, just south of Mount Desert Island, and a world away for weekend peacefulness in the late spring. We've brought Lucy and she is asleep on her sleeping bag by the woodstove as I sip coffee in bed. Brian is on the secluded beach playing guitar and it's a perfect time of quiet and calm.

All canvas tents offer personal showers and bathrooms (no shared latrines), wingback loungers with footrests, zippered windows, cushy king beds, stocked woodstoves, multiple Pendleton blankets, and decks with Adirondack chairs. Tents have views to the sea or through private pine groves. With 1200 feet of rocky shoreline to explore and thick spruce forests surrounding the caravan of canvas tents, there's a hush of calmness that only comes to those Downeast. It's the morning light on ferns, the mist that rolls in and out through spruce, the scent of tide, and the distant clang of buoys. Under Canvas has locations across the country and each is landscape designed and personalized to place.

After beachside yoga and egg sandwiches made-to-order at the Under Canvas cafe, Brian, Lucy and I take off to Acadia to hike all day on pristine trails. The day is promising sunshine through the afternoon, so we choose Eagle Lake Loop with a side stroll up to Bubble Pond with our packed "Grab and Go" picnic lunch.

Acadia never disappoints. Early summer is a kaleidoscope of color: fresh lime green of birch, red buds of maple, pinkish hues of oak, yellow tips

of cedar, the ruffled, blue surface of Eagle Lake. We spy a loon swimming low to nesting grounds in one cove and watch as sparrows fill underbrush and then rush to the spruce branches. After hiking seven miles with a picnic stop at Bubble Pond, it's a relaxing hike under granite tunnels, across wooden bridges, through boulder fields. We finish in early afternoon, and because the park is so uncrowded this early in the summer, we brave the Park Loop Road and are rewarded by easy turn-offs for hikes to Sand Beach Overlook, Thunder Hole, Boulder Beach, Otter Cliffs and Coves, and our favorite nook—Little Hunter's Beach. A storm is rolling in from the sea, deepening dark clouds combining with a thrashing sea makes for excitement as we pack it in and return to "our camp" (as we've been calling Under Canvas Acadia). We get back just in time to make it to the lodge before the storm hits, and it's a party of campers celebrating coziness by the sea. We lift glasses of wine, microbrews, with other campers, and then Brian, Lucy, and I find grouped couches by heat lamps. Lucy gets her kibble while Brian and I share olive and feta dip. I choose shrimp tacos while Brian goes for the grilled salmon and baby kale. The night calls for a chocolate chip brownie with vanilla ice cream as we play cards in the warmth of the lodge. We take s'more fixings back to the tent for more camp snacks over our woodstove fire.

Rain lets up so we run back to the tent, light a fire, eat s'mores, and read by lantern light. The storm rages outside, but inside, it's toasty under the quilts.

I've never slept better.

We wake again to birdsong and the end of rain. After coffee, we walk to the beach and a rainbow curves from one end of Union River Bay over to Mount Desert Narrows.



We sit on driftwood and watch the colors become brilliant, purple, red, yellow, before they fade away. Two hawks careen overhead, and it's the start of a gorgeous day on the coast of Maine.

We decide to stay on the water as the marine outlook reports calm seas and warm temperatures. Because Under Canvas can book kayak, lobster boat, and even bioluminescent star gazing tours, we are in good hands, but we've brought our own canoe. Lucy, Brian and I head out to the protected Union River Bay. Dense forest, rocky inlets, and some nature preserves—we are in

quiet nature. As we round a curve, we find sweet Newbury Neck Beach. Luckily, we are wearing swimsuits and have packed towels and foldable chairs, and we make a morning of it, in and out of the bracing sea. Close by, Perry's Lobster Shack is the perfect lunch spot for lobster rolls and beers before the glide back to "camp." We join others by the firepits, and warm up listening to a local musician serenading us on the deck of the lodge.

That night, we sit under the constellations, night sky heavy in starlight. Brian sees a shooting star, and we make wishes for a long, warm summer.



if you go

Under Canvas Acadia. www.undercanvas.com.
702 Surry Road, Surry, Maine. Open May 7- October 22.
Glamping is the perfect swanky retreat for those who have graduated from camping, and Under Canvas provides all the bells and whistles for a fun time in nature.