

Three Churches on the Water, One Lighthouse at Sunset — A 3-Day Nova Scotia South Shore Road Trip

Three days along Nova Scotia's South Shore — the postcard trio of churches on Mahone Bay, the UNESCO-listed old town of Lunenburg and its tall ship the Bluenose, and a sunset finish at Canada's most photographed lighthouse in Peggy's Cove. A short, easy self-drive loop out of Halifax, with real inns and 2026 prices for every stop.

DURATION

3 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

June–September

the warmest, clearest stretch for coastal walks and lighthouse photos; early October adds Mahone Bay's Scarecrow Festival and thinner crowds, though fog and cooler water become more common

FROM

\$620 USD / person

for 2 people

Day 1

Halifax to Mahone Bay & Lunenburg

An easy coastal drive out of Halifax into two of Nova Scotia's most photographed harbor towns, with a postcard stop in between.

Self-Drive — Halifax Stanfield Airport to Mahone Bay

~1 hour (65 km) · rental car required for the loop

Mahone Bay sits an easy hour southwest of Halifax Stanfield International Airport via Highway 103 — pick up a rental car here, since the South Shore's back roads and harbor towns are built for a self-drive loop.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car — Halifax Stanfield Airport ·

<https://www.enterprise.ca/en/car-rental/locations/canada/ns/halifax-international-airport-c9e1.html>

Mahone Bay — Three Churches on the Water

~1 hour · Free, self-guided

The postcard view of the whole South Shore: three white wooden churches lined up along the waterfront, best photographed from the little park across the water — stop into The Barn for coffee before wandering the harborside shops.

The Barn, Mahone Bay

Lunch — Oh My Cod

~1 hour · Est. \$20–\$30 CAD / person

A casual, fish-forward spot on the way into Mahone Bay, known for its namesake fried cod plate — a straightforward, reliable stop before the short drive on to Lunenburg.

Oh My Cod

Overnight — B2 Lofts

From \$180 CAD / night, for 2 people

A small, modern loft stay with a view across Lunenburg's working harbor, an easy walk down to the Old Town waterfront and the Bluenose II dock.

B2 Lofts, Lunenburg

Day 2

Lunenburg's UNESCO Old Town

A full day in Nova Scotia's only UNESCO World Heritage town, built around the legendary racing schooner that still calls this harbor home.

Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic & Bluenose II

Daily, 9:30 AM–5:00 PM · \$15 CAD adult admission

A working waterfront museum built around real fishing vessels, with exhibits on the Grand Banks fishery and the Bluenose, the undefeated racing schooner on Canada's dime — her modern replica, Bluenose II, ties up at the museum wharf between sails, with sailing dates posted separately.

Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic · <https://fisheriesmuseum.novascotia.ca/visit>

Old Town Lunenburg — Galleries & Waterfront Walk

~2 hours · Free, self-guided

A grid of candy-colored 18th-century wooden houses laid out by the British in 1753, now home to art galleries, vintage shops, and the red-and-black Knaut-Rhuland House — the whole Old Town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Dinner — Bar Salvador

~1.5 hours · Est. \$35–\$50 CAD / person

A small-plates, natural-wine spot just off the waterfront, built around a short, locally sourced tapas menu — book ahead in summer, since the dining room is tiny.

Bar Salvador, Lunenburg

Overnight — B2 Lofts

From \$180 CAD / night, for 2 people

A second night at the same harbor-view loft.

B2 Lofts, Lunenburg

Day 3

Peggy's Cove & Return to Halifax

Close the loop at Canada's most photographed lighthouse before returning the car in Halifax.

Scenic Drive — Lunenburg to Peggy's Cove

~1 hour (75 km) · via St. Margarets Bay

A quiet coastal run along St. Margarets Bay, trading Lunenburg's harbor for the wind-scoured granite coastline that Peggy's Cove is built on.

Peggy's Point Lighthouse & Village

~1.5 hours · Free, self-guided

A working lighthouse set on wave-smoothed granite above the Atlantic, still one of the most photographed spots in Canada — arrive early to beat the tour buses, then browse the fishing shacks turned studios and The Buoy Shack for souvenirs.

The Buoy Shack, Peggy's Cove

Lunch — Rhubarb Restaurant, Oceanstone Resort

~1.5 hours · Est. \$30–\$45 CAD / person

A short drive from the lighthouse, this resort dining room looks straight out over the water and leans on South Shore seafood — the kind of last lunch that's worth the detour before the drive back to Halifax.

Rhubarb Restaurant, Oceanstone Resort

Self-Drive — Peggy's Cove to Halifax Stanfield Airport

~45 minutes (50 km) · rental car return

A straightforward run back into Halifax to close a three-day loop that ran from three churches on the water to the country's most iconic lighthouse — return the rental car at the airport with time to spare.

Enterprise Rent-A-Car — Halifax Stanfield Airport