

Welcoming Winter Deer Isle-Stonington

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS & MORE



WELCOME

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Download the guide to your smartphone or mobile device to click through on the links.

Use **Google Lens** to help you explore more about each of the photos. This guide uses descriptive text on photos and high contrast typography. It is optimized for assistive devices.

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

There is a unique magic to Stonington during the holidays. While the world rushes, our Victorian fishing village slows down, welcoming neighbors from across the Peninsula and travelers from Boston alike with genuine coastal warmth.

Experience a quintessential Maine Christmas where lobster boats twinkle in the harbor and "trees" are built from lobster traps and colorful buoys.

From late November through mid-December, our community comes alive with wreath-making workshops, artisan craft fairs, cribbage, karaoke, and festive trivia nights at the historic Opera House.

Families can enjoy a community reading of A Christmas Carol, meet Santa for a seaside rendition of “The Night Before Christmas,” or create hand-crafted seashell ornaments.

Holidays in Stonington are the real thing. Whether you’re here for a festive day trip or a quiet winter escape, come share in our traditions.





The Tree Lighting and
Caroling at the Public Dock



WHAT TO EXPECT

Winter visitors experience Stonington at its most authentic—a working fishing village where the pace slows, the harbor freezes at the edges, and the community gathers around warm fires and local traditions.

Getting Here:

- From Portland, ME: Approximately 3 hours (130 miles)
- From Boston, MA: Approximately 5 hours (280 miles)
- Cross the iconic suspension bridge spanning Eggemoggin Reach to reach Deer Isle and continue south to Stonington

Know before you go: Many businesses close for the season. Check ahead to confirm what's open during your visit.

Essential Planning:

- Weather Preparation: Winter is cold and beautiful, but windchill off the water can be brisk. Snowfall is common. Pack heavy layers, waterproof winter gear, insulated boots, hats, and gloves.

- Rural Cell Service: Plan for spotty cell phone coverage, depending on your plan. Download maps and any necessary information before arrival.

- No Rideshare Services: Uber and Lyft are not available on Deer Isle. Bring your own vehicle or arrange transportation in advance.









EVENTS ON THE ISLAND

The Home for the Holidays celebration begins on Small Business Saturday in late November and culminates in mid-December with the "**Very Merry Holiday Concert**" at the **Opera House.**

Throughout the season, the town invites you to dive into community traditions:

- Creative Workshops: Get hands-on with glass ornament making, wreath-making, or crafting mini clay winter wonderlands at the **Island Community Center**.
- Family Favorites: Join the **Aragosta** cookie decorating event, explore the Festival of Trees at the **Island Community Center,** or gather for a community reading of “A Christmas Carol” with cocoa and cookies at the **Opera House**.

Town Traditions:
Don’t miss Holiday Trivia Night or the Town Tree Lighting at The Public Pier, featuring local food, stories, and songs.

“This is the third winter our island businesses have organized to welcome year-round and seasonal community members and visitors alike to our very special Maine fishing village," said Linda Nelson, Stonington's Economic and Community Development Director. "Whether you are in need of a holiday staycation, a day trip across our iconic bridge, or simply the warmth of experiencing winter in a close-knit community—come home to Stonington this holiday season!"

The **Community Reading of A Christmas Carol** is quickly becoming one of our most cherished traditions here at the Opera House. Now in its second year, we have nearly twenty neighbors taking the stage to read assigned portions of Dickens' classic, accompanied by the soulful sounds of live cello music and festive sound effects.

“What makes it truly special is the spirit of the gathering. It’s an open door for the entire island; anyone can drop in for a few minutes or stay for a few hours, settling in with a complimentary cup of cocoa and some cookies. We’ve been thrilled to see so many readers from our inaugural year return to take their place in the spotlight again. We wanted to give all of our friends and neighbors a genuine opportunity to gather in the holiday spirit, and we hope this remains a Stonington tradition for many years to come."

~ Kathryn Markey, Artistic Director, **Opera House Arts**







HOLIDAY LINK LIST

- Town of Stonington: **stoningtonmaine.org**
- Deer Isle-Stonington Chamber: **deerisle.com**
- Opera House Arts: **operahousearts.org**
- Island Heritage Trust: **islandheritagetrust.org**
- Visit Maine: **visitmaine.com**
- Island Community Center: **islandcommunitycenter.org**
- Deer Isle Adult Community Education: **maineadulted.org/location/deer-isle-adult-education**





Enjoy cocktails while you shop at Aragosta's Winter Wonderland Market



EXPLORE

Winter exploration in Deer Isle is about quiet beauty and crisp coastal air. **Island Heritage Trust** maintains several year-round preserves that offer a peaceful alternative to the festive bustle of downtown.

- Wildlife Tracking: Winter is the best time for "reading" the island. Look for deer, fox, and otter tracks.
- Winter Birding: Keep an eye out for sea ducks like Eiders and Buffleheads that congregate in the icy coves.

The Maine coast is beautiful, but it can be unforgiving. A successful winter trek requires the right gear:

- The "No Cotton" Rule: Wear wool or synthetic layers. Cotton holds moisture and will make you dangerously cold if you sweat or get wet.
- Traction is Key: Coastal ledges are often covered in "black ice." Pack Microspikes for your boots, and bring snowshoes if there's a fresh deep pack.
- Short Days: The sun sets early (often by 4:00 PM). Always carry a headlamp and finish your hike well before dusk.
- Tide Awareness: Check the tide charts. You don't want to be stranded as the tide comes in.

THE LOCAL PERSPECTIVE







"There's a unique, unpolished magic that takes over Stonington during the holidays. Down here, while the rest of the world is rushing through the season, our village slows down and simply welcomes you in. It's a transformation that feels both rugged and incredibly warm. You'll see the harbor glowing with decked-out lobster boats and our famous 'trees' built from lobster traps and colorful buoys.

As a business owner downtown at Island Approaches, the town is a constant part of my daily life, and the holidays really highlight that connection. If I were showing Stonington to someone for the first time, I'd take them straight to our working waterfront. It's the heart of our community, and during the season, seeing the lighthouse aglow in red and green while the fishing fleet unloads millions of pounds of lobster really captures our heritage.

The schedule is packed with moments that bring us together. It's about real community and real traditions. Living and working here means being tied to that rhythm, and there is truly no place like it to call home for the holidays."

— Kasi Billings, **Island Approaches**



Take time to explore the beauty of Deer Isle- Stonington in Winter.





HOLIDAY DINING

While Stonington's pace slows in the winter, the community stays warm and well-fed. The dining scene during the colder months offers everything from hearty sit-down meals to quick, hot provisions for a quiet night in.

Whether you're fueling up for a brisk walk along the harbor or looking for a cozy corner to escape the chill, you'll find that our local favorites remain a staple of island life.

- **27 Fathoms Waterfront Grille:** A reliable harbor-side choice for a casual, sit-down meal. Known for its cozy atmosphere and comfort food, it's a favorite for both locals and winter travelers looking for hearty burgers and fresh seafood.
- **Stonecutters Kitchen:** Located right near the town pier, this spot captures the true "working waterfront" vibe. It's the go-to gathering place for a classic, unpretentious breakfast or lunch where you can catch up on local news over coffee.
- **Burnt Cove Market:** Perfect for those seeking quick, hot meals or provisions. Their deli section is famous for fresh, hot pizza and hearty subs, while the market provides a full range of groceries for a winter staycation.

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WHERE TO STAY

Boyce's Motel is where visitors become regulars. This family-run motel in the center of Stonington offers exactly what you need—clean, comfortable rooms, friendly service, and that real Maine fishing village atmosphere. It's in the heart of town, and everything's within walking distance. At Boyce's, you're paying for location and authenticity, not unnecessary extras. It's classic Maine stay. (The owner also leaves sweets in each room as a holiday treat!)

Inn on the Harbor Imagine sipping your coffee while watching the morning light dance across Stonington Harbor. The Inn on the Harbor gives you that view along with thoughtfully designed rooms that feel both historic and fresh. Many guests find themselves spending extra time just enjoying the harbor views from their rooms.

The Island Agency These folks know the island inside and out, and they're passionate about connecting visitors with the right property. Their portfolio ranges from intimate cottages tucked into the pines to stunning waterfront estates—all with full kitchens, many with private water access. What sets them apart is the personal touch: they'll help you find not just a place to stay, but the right fit for how you want to experience island life.



Airbnb & **Vacation Rentals** Vacation rentals offer the independence to create your own island rhythm. Find everything from charming cottages to waterfront retreats—ideal for families, groups, or anyone wanting to settle in and truly experience island living.


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FROM THE HEART

Visitor Testimonial

"We've been coming to Maine for years, but visiting Stonington during Home for the Holidays was something truly special. The whole village felt like stepping into a snow globe—lobster trap Christmas trees, boats decorated with lights, and genuine coastal charm everywhere you looked.

The tree lighting at the public pier was magical. Everyone bundled up together, kids running around with hot cocoa, and when those lights came on with everyone singing, I got a little teary. The next evening, we went to the live reading of A Christmas Carol at the Opera House. Community members took turns reading by candlelight while we sipped hot cocoa and ate cookies. It felt so intimate and genuine—nothing polished or commercial, just neighbors sharing a beloved story.

The fused glass ornament class at the Island Community Center was a highlight. The instructor was patient and encouraging, and I loved creating a little tree out of glass shards. My ornament now hangs on our tree, and it reminds me of that perfect evening.

We stayed at Boyce's Motel—comfortable, affordable, and right in the heart of everything. And dinner was wonderful. I had the loaded shrimp scampi and the most delicious holiday cocktail with cranberry and rosemary that put me completely in the festive spirit.

Stonington at the holidays is so cozy and connected. It's real, warm, and welcoming. We'll absolutely be back next year."

— Jennifer M., Boston, MA









GOOD TO KNOW

- **Respect island rhythms:** You've come to Deer Isle for peace and natural beauty. Help preserve what makes this place special by being a thoughtful visitor.
- **Dress in layers:** Island weather changes quickly. Winter is cold and beautiful, but windchill off the water can be cold. Snowfall is common—pack your layers and winter gear along with waterproof clothing.
- **Limited shopping:** Harbor View Store and Burnt Cove Market provide groceries and ready-made meals, but there are no supermarket chains.
- **Working harbor etiquette:** Stonington's waterfront is a functioning commercial fishing port. Keep a distance from equipment and working areas, never touch fishing gear, and request permission before photographing working fishermen. Early morning boat departures begin well before sunrise.
- **Banking:** Island banks operate during regular business hours. ATMs are open 24 hours.
- **Know your environment:** Be aware of tides, slippery rocks, and paths covered in snow. Check conditions before exploring coastal areas and trails.
- **Electric vehicle charging:** Two stations available—at Deer Isle Town Office and Stonington's Small Cove Park. Consult the EFFICIENCY MAINE map for specifics.
- **Limited Drinking Water Supply.** Conserve water while you are on the island.









WHAT'S NEXT

Plan your visit to Stonington, Maine

- Find the best places to stay.
- Learn more about local food, the arts, & island makers, along with the region's rich history.
- Plan your recreation like winter hiking, snowshoeing, craft classes, trivia nights, and movies.
- Find out where to eat and where to buy lobster, oysters, and local scallops.
- Learn more and follow along on social media.
- Stay informed about parking, public bathrooms, adaptive and handicapped services, health notices, and local emergency services.



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Experience Authentic Maine

STONINGTON



This itinerary was researched and produced on the unceded ancestral lands and waters of the Wabanaki Nations. To learn more about and support these people's ongoing stewardship, go to www.wabanakialliance.com