Includes maps, GPS coordinates, photo stops, and descriptions of tourist sites for driving tours from Sydney Nova Scotia to Cabot Trail & Ingonish, Bras d’Or Lake, Baddeck & Highland Village, and Fortress Louisbourg. Also has details on booking a car and the Avis shuttle service from the cruise ship.
Renting a car is NOT for everyone. I've rented a car five times to drive these routes and love it. I bring my GPS from home and pre-program it with the GPS coordinates from this guide.

- **Weather can be an issue.** Fog or rain may make it unsafe, impractical to drive over the mountains to Cabot Trail. Patrick Sullivan suggests this website [http://511.gov.ns.ca/en/map.html](http://511.gov.ns.ca/en/map.html) for weather conditions.
- **Road construction** in the Fall months along Cabot Trail can cause major delays. In 2014, about 20 miles of road was being rebuilt to fill sink holes caused by heavy storm water flow from the mountains.
- **Many restaurants may be closed in the Fall months** when cruise ships visit Sydney Nova Scotia.
- **The “perfect” time to see Fall tree colors is unpredictable**, but the area is beautiful year round.
- **The first cruise ship to arrive docks at Sydney port, the second ship anchors in the harbor and tenders** passenger into shore. You'll waste as much as 30-60 minutes each way if you tender to/from shore. This dramatically reduces the time you have for a driving tour. Ugh!

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**CAVEAT**

Information contained herein is believed to be accurate. PLEASE verify the information you use for your travel plans. Opinions expressed are my own. This port guide is protected by copyright law - see the last page of this guide for legal notices.

*Tom Sheridan*
Goal of Driving Tour Guides
This is the first in a new series of driving tour guides for those interested in renting a car near the cruise port. The guide contains highly detailed information such as GPS coordinates, maps with turn-by-turn directions, and location of scenic stops for postcard photos along the route.

To use this guide most effectively, it is assumed you have or will purchase a GPS that accepts GPS coordinates as well as street addresses and has maps of Canada. I use a Garmin nüvi® 2460LMT GPS ($200 cost May 2012). My GPS speaks street names and announces turns; I only look at it except at complex intersections.

This guide is a supplement to the Sydney, Nova Scotia Canada Port Guide. Please read that guide first.

Excursion Options for Cape Breton Island
Cape Breton Island is 4000 square miles of one of the world's most scenic areas with rugged Atlantic coastline, beautiful coves, mountains, forests, Bras d'Or saltwater Lakes, and the world famous Fortress Louisbourg.

There's not much to see and do in the port city of Sydney. I highly recommend an excursion to one of the tourist areas. I don't have an agenda to promote one type of tour over another, it's your choice.

We've taken cruise ship bus tours from Sydney and really enjoyed them.

Advantages:
- No planning required, just sign up and pay for the tour on the ship. Ship's tours can maximize touring time because the buses can leave early. Also, the ship won't leave until your bus returns.

Issues:
- Pricey. Can't take good photos thru bus windows and the bus rarely makes a photo stop. No flexibility on where you stop or how you spend time; it's all pre-planned.

We've taken a private van tour with Don Blackwood on Cabot Trail north to Ingonish. It was outstanding.

Advantages:
- Flexibility to go where you want and spend time as you choose. Learn about the area from an expert. Don was the former head of tourism for Cape Breton Island and is an outstanding guide. He prearranges a lunch stop at a restaurant with great food because he knows the restaurant owners. You can order what you want for lunch unlike the ship's pre-arranged menus. Don's van leaves the port early to maximize your touring time and he will get you back on time. His tours are tailored to your interests and reasonably priced = a great value.

Issue:
- Don is in great demand. Be sure to contact him early to book your tour.

Don Blackwood
Blackwood Tours
654 Willow St, New Waterford, NS, B1H 3W4
Phone: 902-862-3791
Email: donblackwood@seascape.ns.ca

I have rented cars for self-guided touring and enjoyed it

Advantages:
- NO RESTRICTION on where I can stop for photos. Low cost especially if you share a car or van with a total of 4-6 people.

Issues:
- Pre-planning is required for an efficient and successful tour. Book the car early. Pick a car rental that's efficient and will pick you up and get you on the road quickly. Pre-program the route on your GPS.

Fortress Louisbourg is a relatively simple, short drive. Driving around Bras d'Or Lake is more challenging because of the distance involved. Driving to Ingonish is a challenge. It's a long ride; getting back to the ship on time is a concern. And it's a remote, sparsely populated area. It's almost impossible to find a restaurant open for lunch in late October and you'll never find the neat little lighthouses and fishing coves that Don Blackwood takes you to on his tours to the Ingonish area.
Ship dock and car rental shuttle van pick up location

Ships dock near the intersection of Esplanade & York St; GPS coordinates are `N 46.08.549, W 60.11.909`.

You could enter “Esplanade & York St, Sydney, NS Canada” in Google Maps, but it's easier to use the GPS coordinates. To reduce typing, open this guide in one window on your computer and Google Maps in a second window. Copy and paste GPS coordinates into Google Maps.

Google displays GPS coordinates as a down pointing green arrow and the closest street address as a red balloon. Because there is a street address at the dock, the green arrow is behind the red balloon in the map below.

Switch from “street” to “aerial” view and enlarge it to see the map below.

I've marked up the map to show the ship dock location and the security fence. Walk through the opening in the security fence (red arrow) and you'll find the car rental pick up van near the buses used for excursion tours.

I rent from Avis & Budget. Their vans have signage and continuously run between the dock and rental office. It's about a 20 minute round trip ride to the car rental. We get off the ship early to be in the first van. If you miss the first van, it will be back in 20 minutes.

If there are several people waiting for the rental car van, the van might only take the people who will be driving cars. If this happens, make a plan on where you will pick up your fellow passengers when you return with the
rental car. Have your passengers walk to Esplanade near York St and wait for you. The dock parking lot is a secure, restricted entry area. You cannot drive your rental car into the port !!

**How to find rental car agencies in Sydney near the cruise ship dock**

Internet listings for car rental locations on travel websites such as Expedia and Google are often wrong! The problem is that car rental agencies move or go out of business but internet sites do NOT update the information.

Go to the main websites of major car rentals such as “Avis.com”, “Budget.com”, “Hertz.com”, etc. The **Avis.com** and **Budget.com** websites have a “Locations” menu item at the top. Click on “Locations”, enter the country, city/town, and state/province and click on “Find” or “Go”. You will see the street addresses for Avis and Budget rental agencies located in Sydney and North Sydney.

The **Enterprise.com** website is different. Enter “Canada” in the block under “Rent a car in”. Then click on “Port Of Call” near “Pick Up Location” and select “Sydney”. Enterprise has one rental car location in Sydney.

Once you've verified exact locations for rental car agencies, use the Google Map “Get directions” to determine distance of the rental agencies from the cruise port. The Avis & Budget Rental office (both companies are in the same building) is closest to the dock. The street address is 224 Welton Street, Sydney, NS B1P 5S1 CA. The Enterprise office is only a bit farther at 446 Grand Lake Road Sydney, NS B1P5S8.

Avis, Budget, and Enterprise will pick you up at the cruise dock.

**Important Questions Regarding Car Rental**

**What are the car rental office hours compared with when your ship will arrive/leave?**

This can be a deal breaker. If your ship is arriving on a Sunday, the car rental office might be closed. Avis is the only car rental open on Sunday in Sydney.

**How will you get the car?**

Rental agencies have different policies regarding how you arrange for a pick up at the dock. With the Avis & Budget in Sydney it's simple. You call them and tell them you are arriving on cruise ship x on y date and they send a shuttle to continuously run between the dock and rental office.

The Avis rental in Halifax, Canada requires that you call them from the cruise terminal when you get off the ship and they will send a car. That is easy to do from the cruise terminal pay phone.

The Enterprise rental near the Boston port insists you call them **the day before your ship docks to confirm your pick up**. I explained to Enterprise my ship was at sea so I could not call them the day before I arrived in Boston. They would not change their policy so I canceled my car rental.

**How much time will you waste at the rental office filling out the forms?**

The Avis & Budget rental office in Sydney is very efficient. When I arrive, the paperwork is filled out. I show my license and AARP for a discount, initial, and sign. It only takes a minute. Similarly, the Avis rental in Saint John, New Brunswick had all the forms filled out. But the Avis in Halifax and Quebec City can take forever waiting in line for the paperwork.

When you call the car rental agency, ask them how you can speed up the paperwork to save time. It's a good idea to join the car rental preferred customer list. It's free to do so. At Avis, it's called “Preferred”. Budget calls it “Fastbreak”. You'll receive an account number which you should tell the agent whenever you call to reserve a car.

**How will you get back to the ship if you return the car after the rental agency has closed?**

The car rental office may close before you return the car. Ask them how you will get back to the ship. They'll recommend a taxi. Avis & Budget recommend Dynasty Cabs at 562-5777, 562-9222, or 562-8770. The cab company accepts Visa and Mastercard. When you are topping off the gas tank, use a pay phone at the gas station to call the cab and have them meet you at the car rental. I've included information in this guide on location of gas stations near the car rental.
Planning your road trip

First step = find the car rental locations close to the cruise dock
Enter the cruise ship dock and car rental street address into the “Get Directions” function of Google Maps.
The cruise ship dock street address = Esplanade & York St, Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada.
Avis & Budget Car Rental street address = 224 Welton Street, Sydney, NS B1P 5S1 CA.
Google will show the distance, driving route, and time.
Repeat this process for as many car rentals as you wish to consider.

Second step = call the car rental agency(s) to determine rates, availability, how they will meet you at the cruise port, how to speed up the paperwork when you rent the car, etc. Book the car and arrangement to have them pick you up at the cruise dock. I usually call the 800 number to book the car because it is available 24/7. Then I call the local Avis office in Sydney to schedule my pick up at the cruise dock.

Determine location of gas stations near the car rental
To find gas stations near the Avis & Budget in Sydney, do a Google Search for “Gas stations near 224 Welton Street, Sydney, NS B1P 5S1 CA”
The map below appears. It shows the location of the Avis & Budget office as a down pointing green arrow and the gas stations as red balloons. The red balloon with the letter “E” is the closest gas station. It's the Shell Gas Station at 412 Welton St, Sydney, NS B1P 5S7, Canada. Drag the yellow man icon onto the gas station at “E”.

Rotate the man icon to see the Shell gas station. There is a Tim Hortons next to the gas station and the station has a convenience store. You’ll find pay phones at the gas station and Tim Hortons if you need to call a taxi.
**Fortress Louisbourg Scenic Driving Tour**

**This is a simple, easy driving tour.** It is 48 Km and a 50 minute drive one way from the ship along highway 22 to Fortress Louisbourg. Stop as Lighthouse Cove for photos. Then stop at the Visitor Information Center in to get current information on things to see and do in the area. Depending on when you visit, it might be a good time of year to see the beaches or some special events outside the Fortress. The third stop is at the Fortress Louisbourg Parks Canada Visitor Center to park your car for the bus ride to the entrance gate to the Fortress.

You could spend all day at the Fortress. *The Fortress of Louisbourg includes two other National Historic sites; namely, Wolfe’s Landing, and the Royal Battery. Collectively, these three diverse sites encompass 40 square kilometres of land along 15 kilometres of seacoast. Their landscape varies from protected harbour shores and pristine sandy beaches to rugged rocky coasts and mossy forests. (Source = Parks Canada).*

**GPS coordinates for the route**

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<th>Site</th>
<th>GPS Coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Cruise ship dock (Esplanade &amp; York St)</td>
<td>N 46 08.549, W 60 11.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Avis &amp; Budget Car Rental (224 Welton St)</td>
<td>N 46 08.585, W 60 10.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Lighthouse at Lighthouse Cove</td>
<td>N 45 54.402, W 59 57.441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Louisbourg Visitor &amp; Information Center</td>
<td>N 45 55.305, W 59 58.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E) Entrance to parking lots for Fortress Louisbourg Parks Visitor Center</td>
<td>N 45 54.834, W 059 58.838</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **map at right** shows it's a straight 48 Km route along highway 22 from Sydney to Louisbourg. Driving time is 50 minutes one way.

I entered GPS coordinates for the Lighthouse, Louisbourg Visitor & Information Center and the Entrance to parking lots for Fortress Louisbourg Parks Visitor Center in Bing maps “Directions” to create the **aerial map below**
Turn right at the entrance to parking lots. Park in one of the five lots. Board the shuttle bus at the visitor center. It's will drop you off near the main gate to the Fortress. There are different entrances to the Fortress used at different times of the year. The shuttle bus stop location shown on the map on the previous page is the most commonly used entrance during the summer, peak season.

Lighthouse Cove (photo at left)
This is the site of the first lighthouse in Canada dating back to 1734. You'll find panels explaining the history of the site. If weather and lighting conditions are good, you'll get pictures suitable for framing.

Louisbourg Visitor & Information Center
When you leave the lighthouse, drive to the center of town. The Visitor Center is next to the fire department. Stop at the center to get recommendations on what to see and do. Activities and things to see change during the year.

Entrance to parking lots - Fortress Louisbourg - Parks Visitor Center
The blue dot on the map below is the GPS coordinates where you turn right from Route 22 (also known as Wolfe St) to the complex of roads and five parking lots around the Fortress Visitor Center. Find an open lot, park, and walk to the Visitor Center. Shuttle buses take you to the Fortress along the route shown as red dots on the map.

Trivia: Bing Maps place a blue dot at GPS coordinates.
Activity at the Fortress is seasonal. Open hours and routes into the Fortress change.

During the summer, the buildings, restaurants, and shops are open and re-enactors are in period costume to help you imagine what it was like years ago. The Fortress is often open in the evening for walks, murder mystery entertainment, and other events. During the “shoulder” season, there may be no activity and the buildings may be closed, but it is still a magnificent site to walk and visit on your own. The Fortress site is open year round.

Route into the Fortress:

- **During peak season** (July 1st to Labour Day), park your car at the Fortress Visitor Center. You will be bussed along the northern shore of the harbour to a reconstructed fishing proprietor’s home, Desroches House (#1), situated close to the fortified town. (Please remember that this is the location where you will get back aboard your bus after your visit).

- **During the shoulder season** (Victoria Day to June 30th and from the day following Labour Day to Thanksgiving Day), the site is accessible seven days a week 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. To access the fortified town, drive along Route 22 through the modern community of Louisbourg. Bypass the Parks Canada Visitor Centre (as this is open only during the peak season unless signage otherwise indicates) and follow the road along the harbour. As you arrive at the end of the pavement bear right and drive along the gravel road until you reach our grey Gate House to your left with a sign indicating Gate 2. The total distance from the Parks Canada Visitor Centre entrance to Gate 2 is 3.3 kilometres (two miles). You will be greeted by an attendant at Gate 2 who will provide you with directions to parking at the McLennan Centre (#33). At the McLennan Centre you will pick up your Visitor Pass and a site map. Your Visitor Pass is a sticker that must be visibly displayed on your outerwear. **The driving route is shown by the black arrows on the map below.**
A MUST READ, Comprehensive Summary and Description of the Fortress Louisbourg AREA

The Canadian Parks Group has published a little known, but incredibly informative, summary of what to see and do in the AREA throughout the year. In addition to exhaustive coverage of the Fortress Fortified City, this guide also covers the spectacular beaches at Wolfe's Landing National Historic Site with details on how to get there and what to see. There is also detailed information on five hiking trails.

It is the best written description I have ever seen by a parks group. The title is:

“Reference Guide Information on the Fortified Town, North Shore Trails, Lighthouse Area, Kennington Cove Area, and the Modern Community (June 27, 2012)”


Comparison of a Ship's Bus Excursion Vs. a Rental Car Driving Tour of Louisbourg

It is your choice whether you take a ship's tour or rent a car. The ship's tour requires no planning or preparation, just sign up for the tour. The bus ride will be comfortable and the tour will be pleasant. Typically, a ship's bus excursion is 3.5 hours long which includes ~1.7 hours travel time.

If you are interested in renting a car, you'll need to reserve the car early. For me, the advantage of renting a car is that it gives me complete flexibility to go where I want and spend time as I choose. It's unlikely the ship's bus tour will go to the Lighthouse Cove, but I want to go there. I like to take photos and enjoy the freedom of stopping to get good pictures rather than photos through a moving bus window. If you find another couple or two to share the rental car with you, the cost/person for a rental car will be much cheaper than the ship's tour.

The route between the ship and the Louisbourg area is straightforward. It's unlikely you'll get lost. You are not very far from the ship, so there should be no problem getting back on time if you pay attention to time.
Cabot Trail Bras d'Or Lakes Scenic Driving to Baddeck and Highland Village

This is a moderate distance, potentially challenging driving tour. It is 209 Km and a 3.2 hour drive around Bras d' Or Lakes. You may encounter road construction. Road work tends to affect your drive both ways so if you take note of delay time on the outbound route, you can add it to your return time and plan accordingly.

Another potential issue is fog. This route is up the winding roads over Kelly's mountain. These roads can be dangerous in heavy fog. As a practical matter, you can't see anything or take pictures in the fog anyway. If there's fog the day you are in port, either change your driving plan and go to Fortress Louisbourg (which does not involve crossing any mountains) or cancel your driving tour. On our cruise in May 2011, all of the ship's bus excursion tours to the Bras d' Or Lake area were canceled due to heavy fog.

This driving route includes photo stops at the north end of the lake, Seal Island Bridge, and Kelly's Mountain Look Offs of Bras d' Or Look Off and St Ann's Look Offs. The Look Offs are postcard photo opportunities looking down from the mountain to the lakes. The route continues along Trans Canada Hwy 105 to Exit 10 where you turn onto Rte 205 for a scenic drive along the lake to Baddeck (pronounced /baˈdek/).

Go to Visitor Information in Baddeck to get details on events and sites open in the area. I've included a street map highlighting the Visitor Center, the lovely boardwalk for scenic views of the harbor, and the Alexander Graham Bell Museum. See my Sydney, Nova Scotia Port Guide for details on the Bell Museum. I've also included a visitor map showing shopping, restaurants, museums, etc.

When you are done visiting Baddeck, you can backtrack on the same route to the ship or you can continue to drive around the lake to a Ferry Boat, cross the channel, and proceed north along the lake to Highland Village Museum. I describe Highland Village in my Sydney Port Guide. When you done at the Highland Museum, drive north along the lake to return to the Avis & Budget Car Rental.

You can drive to visit either Baddeck area and/or Highland Village. I've provided GPS coordinates so you can plan a customized driving route. I describe the driving tour as two segments. The first is from the ship to Baddeck. The second is from Baddeck to Highland Village and to the ship. Some of the ship's bus excursions do the full tour around the lake with stops at the Alexander Graham Bell Museum, lunch in Baddeck, and a stop at Highland Village Museum.

This route is a continuous loop around Bras d'Or Lake. It's 209 km with 3 hours 13 minutes driving time.

From the ship to Baddeck is 87 km and 1 hour 8 minutes driving time one way
From Baddeck to Highland Village Museum, to the ship is 122 km and 2 hours 5 minutes one way

GPS coordinates for Driving Route from the Ship to Baddeck

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>GPS Coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Cruise ship dock (Esplanade &amp; York St)</td>
<td>N 46 08.549,  W 60 11.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Avis &amp; Budget Car Rental (224 Welton St)</td>
<td>N 46 08.585,  W 60 10.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Photo stop -north end of Bras d' Or Lake</td>
<td>N 46 15.187,  W 60 17.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Photo stop - Seal Island Bridge</td>
<td>N 46 13.794 ,  W 60 29.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E) Photo stop – Bras d'Or Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 14 45.62,  W 60 30 16.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F) Photo stop – St Ann's Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 15 17.32,  W 60 32 23.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G) Exit 10 from Trans Canada Hwy 205</td>
<td>N 46 09.242,  W 60 40.279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H) Entrance to Alexander G Bell Hwy</td>
<td>N 46 06.090,  W 60 44.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I) Baddeck Visitor Center</td>
<td>N 46 05.987,  W 60 45.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baddeck Boardwalk</td>
<td>N 46 05.876,  W 60 44.979</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I entered these GPS coordinates into Google Maps Get Directions to create the map on the following page. The only problem is that Google wants to use the fastest route. I had to change/move the route on the map at Exit 10 to use the scenic drive on RTE 205 into Baddeck.
Driving Route from the Ship to Baddeck

From the ship or car rental:
- Drive to Rte 125 heading toward North Sydney where you connect with Trans Canada 105 going west.
- Use Exit 10 to connect with Rte 205 for a scenic drive along the lake into Baddeck.

The two most important and scenic Look Offs are on Kelly's Mountain (240 meter elevation).
- The Bra d'Or Look Off is to the east side of the mountain looking down on Seal Island Bridge and Bras d'Or Lake.
- St. Ann's Look Off is to the west side of the mountain. The body of water you are viewing is actually part of the Atlantic Ocean. St Ann's is to the south. If you look at a Google map, you'll see that Bras d'Or Lake also connects to the Atlantic Ocean.

Throughout this guide, I use Google street level photos to show the location to take the picture.
Location: I parked at the Ultramar gas station (shown at right) near the north end of Bras d'Or Lake and walked across the street to take the photo below.

GPS = N 46 15.187, W 60 17.913

Location: Seal Island Bridge photo - I parked behind the blue sign on the right side of the road and walked through the field to get close to the bridge.

GPS location is N 46 13.794, W 60 29.088

After you cross Seal Island Bridge, you can park near the bridge to take additional photos.

The highway makes several turns as it ascends Kelly's Mountain (see map on the next page).

The top of the mountain is 240 m elevation and is midway between Bras d'Or and St Ann's Look Offs. Distance between these two Look Offs is 3 km which is only 2 minutes driving time.

The Look Offs provide majestic views. We've been to Cape Breton Island five times and always stop for more photos.
Map of Kelly's Mountain Showing Look Offs

The Bras d'Or Look Off is a view of the lake and bridge. If you look to the north, you'll see the Atlantic Ocean. St Ann's Look Off gives a view of St Ann to the south and the ocean to the north.

CAUTION: You are on a high speed highway, going uphill, at a turn in the road and the Bras d'Or Look Off is on the other side of the highway. USE EXTREME CARE! Know what vehicles are behind you and whether they will run into you as you slow down. Make sure you know what vehicles are approaching from the other direction. I drive far enough into the curve to see approaching traffic from the other direction before turning left to cross the road into the Look Off.

Location: Bras d'Or Look Off on Kelly's Mountain.  GPS = N 46 14 45.62,  W 60 30 16.86

Street level Google photo below
At Exit 10 on Trans Canada Highway 105 (GPS = N 46 09.242, W 60 40.279), turn left onto Rte 205 for a scenic drive along the lake into Baddeck. As you approach the village, you'll see a lighthouse on your left. It's at the east side of the village, across the harbor from the Alexander Graham Bell Museum. Continue into town to the Visitor Information Center at Chebucto & Twining St (see map below). Get information at the Visitor Center on current events, tourist site open hours, restaurants, shopping, etc. If you plan to visit Highland Village Museum, check when it is open. Baddeck is a small village; it's easy to walk and there are several parking areas. The boardwalk is a “must see” along Water St. View boats in the harbor, the lighthouse, and take pictures of your friends sitting on the bench next to statues of Alexander Graham Bell and his wife Mabel.
Download this Visitor Map from [http://www.visitbaddeck.com/images/baddeck_map.pdf](http://www.visitbaddeck.com/images/baddeck_map.pdf)

When you are done visiting Baddeck you can return to the ship by backtracking the route. To drive around the lake, and possibly stop at Highland Village, you’ll have to head south to the Little Narrows Ferry to cross the channel and then drive north on the other side of the lake. This route is 122 km and 2 hours to the ship.

**GPS coordinates for Driving Route from Baddeck to Highland Village to the Ship**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>GPS Coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A) Baddeck Visitor Center</td>
<td>N 46 05.987, W 60 45.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B) Little Narrows Ferry</td>
<td>N 45 59 32.35, W 60 59.949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Highland Village</td>
<td>N 45 56 51.00, W 60 49 1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D) Bridge after Highland Village</td>
<td>N 45 57 39.07, W 60 48 19.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E) Photo stop</td>
<td>N 46 8 34.77, W 60 26 13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F) Shell Gas Station</td>
<td>N 46 08.58, W 60 10.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G) Avis &amp; Budget Car Rental</td>
<td>N 46 08.54, W 60 11.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H) Cruise ship dock</td>
<td>N 46 08.54, W 60 11.909</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Watch for eagles on the railroad bridge

Enter the GPS coordinates or street address for items A thru H into Get Directions of Google Maps. You can view the map as “street”, “satellite” or “terrain”. I selected “terrain” to get the map on the next page.
Leaving Baddeck for Little Narrows Ferry

From the Baddeck Visitor Center, go west on Margaree Rd following the signs to Trans Canada Hwy 105. Turn left to go west on Hwy 105.

Continue west on Hwy 105 for 27 km and 18 minutes to Exit 6.

Turn left at Exit 6 onto Rte 223 East toward Iona. Drive 1.7 km and 2 minutes to the Ferry Ramp.

As you exit the ferry, turn right on 223 East toward Iona, Grand Narrows, and North Sydney.

The map below shows the route on westbound Trans Canada Hwy 105 from Baddeck turning left at Exit 6 toward Iona onto Rte 223 Eastbound to Little Narrows Ferry. When you cross the ferry, turn right to continue on 223 East to Highland Village.
Little Narrows Ferry unloading to accept new vehicles (photo below)

In this photo you can see the other side of the channel; it's not very wide. There are instruction signs as you approach the ramp. Turn your engine off and wait for the ferry. The attendant will signal you to drive onto the ferry and where to park. The cost is 5.25 Canadian dollars. I used Canadian bills because I was not sure they would accept USD. Crossing on the ferry is fun and it only takes a few minutes.

It's a 21 km 18 minute drive along Rte 223 East from the ferry to Highland Village

See my Sydney Nova Scotia port guide for a description of Highland Village. It's a farm/village setting on a hill with replicas of historic buildings, re-enactors in period costume, photogenic farm animals, etc. We loved it.

Bing maps show GPS coordinates of N 45 56 51.00, W 60 49 1.50 as a blue dot in this aerial photo above.
Continue on 223 east 1.8 km and a 2 minute ride from Highland Village to the bridge at Barra Strait. **There is a good chance you will see many birds or an eagle sitting on the railroad bridge next to the road bridge.**

**GPS = N 45 57 39.07, W 60 48 19.51**

Below is a Google street level photo. The railroad bridge runs parallel to the road. I've seen people park their cars and walk onto the railroad bridge to photograph the birds. I don't know how safe that is if a train comes along and I don't know how close you can walk to eagles.

We were on the ship's bus tour when I had an opportunity to **photograph (below)** an eagle through the bus window. Yeah, I know it's a lousy photo, but if you see an eagle when your car is crossing the bridge, you might
The next photo stop is 37 km and 30 minutes driving time to GPS = N 46° 8' 34.77", W 60° 26' 13.79"
It's a small bridge where you can park on the side of the road and take some good photos especially when it is peak time for the fall colors. See photos below.
I have provided GPS coordinates and the street address for you to drive to the Shell Gas Station and back to the
Avis & Budget rental car agency.

My intent in writing this driving tour guide is to alert you to the issues and provide specific information
to help you decide whether you want to rent a car and to plan to make it a successful experience. Below is
a summary by my friend’s car rental experience/problems.

Car rental experience of Lynda and Larry Muche’ in May 2011.
We had read you could walk to the car rental office, but we disagree. It seemed to be several miles from the
seaport. It took a bit of time to find the van at the ship’s dock to take us to the rental office. We were told it
would be out back of the terminal, which it was, but not directly and we had to walk around the lot to find it.
We called the rental agency twice and spent about 20 minutes finding the rental pickup van which had NO sign
or markings.

It took a good half-hour to rent the car, as there was a line and only three agents. On the plus side, our agent
was helpful with the map and how to return the car after-hours.

It took no time to return the car, as we just parked it, locked the doors, and used the drop box for the keys. We
were lucky to spot a cab immediately and it took approximately 10-15 minutes to get back to the ship.

The entire car rental procedure is a minimum of an hour:
We drove to Baddeck and Bras d’Or Lakes. We had planned to drive part of Cabot Trail, completely around the
lake, but changed our mind. There were notices on the highway that one of the ferries was closed and we were
unsure of how to drive around the lake without the use of the ferries. Also the ship’s bus tour had been
canceled. The rumor on the ship was the bus was canceled due to fog. If the experienced driver on the bus
could not drive that tour route, we doubted we could.

Car rental for the two of us was still cheaper than the cost of the bus tour; so we would recommend it but would
probably share with another couple or rent a van with two couples. Would we do it again? Yes, the price of the
rental and gas is still less than the bus tour but we would use the Cruise Critic website again to do a ride-share.

The main reason to recommend car rental is that it is cost effective. But it is not time efficient.

NOTE from Tom Sheridan
The problems cited above by Lynda are real. The rental car agency can affect the time efficiency of getting a
car in terms of the quality of information they provide you re where to get the pick up van and how they handle
paperwork in their office.

In October 2012, I rented a car twice from Avis & Budget in Sydney. The process was time efficient because
Avis had told me the correct location where the pickup van would be parked at the port, the van had signage,
was easy to spot, and I got on the first van to the rental office. I was impressed with the efficiency of the Avis &
Budget rental agency in Sydney. They had filled out the paperwork BEFORE I arrived. It only took a few
minutes to get on the road.

I had the benefit of knowing GPS coordinates for my driving route and had pre-programmed my GPS that I was
carrying with me.

I was lucky that I did not encounter any problems with fog nor closure of the ferry boats. If I had arrived in
Sydney when there was a fog problem, I would not drive across the mountains to Baddeck. I would have have
changed my travel route and gone to Fortress Louisbourg or I would have canceled the car rental.
This is a long driving distance. It's 186 km and 2 hours 51 minutes driving time one way. Add time for photo stops and lunch and it's an 8-9 hour tour! Keep track of time!

You may encounter road construction. Road work tends to affect your drive both ways so if you take note of delay time on the outbound route, you can add it to you return time and plan accordingly. Don't rely on your GPS to include traffic delays in the estimated arrival time at destination.

Another potential issue is fog. This route is up the winding roads over Kelly's mountain into mountains to the north. These roads can be dangerous in heavy fog. As a practical matter, you can't see anything or take pictures in the fog anyway. If there's fog the day you are in port, either change your driving plan and go to Fortress Louisbourg (which does not involve crossing any mountains) or cancel your driving tour. On our cruise in May 2011, all of the ship's bus excursion tours to Cabot Trail were canceled due to heavy fog.

You are traveling a long distance; time is a critical issue that determines how far you can drive. This route is almost all wilderness and sparsely populated areas. There are few places to stop, other than for photos. The longest stop you'll make is for lunch. Unfortunately, most of the restaurants are closed during fall color cruises. The ship's bus tours and the private tour guides make special arrangements with family owned restaurants to ensure they will be open for lunch for their tour group. When I did a driving tour in late October 2012, I could not find a restaurant that was open, so we stopped for a sandwich at a small cafe.

People want to go on this tour to see and photograph the breathtakingly beautiful forests, coves, mountains, lighthouses, beaches, and rugged Atlantic Coastline. This guide provides GPS coordinates for the stops with turn-by-turn driving directions.

You can use this information to create your own maps and decide how and where you wish to stop. But please recognize, you are traveling a long distance from the cruise ship dock and it is your responsibility to get back to the ship on time.

This tour begins at Exit 12 on Hwy 105. Please see pages 12-16 of this guide for driving information from the ship to Exit 12 on HWY 105.

Use these GPS coordinates to map the entire route

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>GPS Coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cruise ship dock (Esplanade &amp; York St)</td>
<td>N 46 08.549, W 60 11.909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avis &amp; Budget Car Rental (224 Welton St)</td>
<td>N 46 08.585, W 60 10.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North end of Bras d’Or Lake</td>
<td>N 46 15.187, W 60 17.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seal Island Bridge</td>
<td>N 46 13.794, W 60 29.088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bras d’Or Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 14 45.62, W 60 30 16.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Ann's Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 15 17.32, W 60 32 23.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Englishtown Ferry</td>
<td>N 46 17 19.75, W 60 32 23.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison Bridge</td>
<td>N 46 32.775, W 60 24.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base of Smokey Mnt sign</td>
<td>N 46 34.979, W 60 23.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steep incline with view to the south</td>
<td>N 46 35 0.09, W 60 23 7.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Smokey Provincial Park side road</td>
<td>N 46 35 43.00, W 60 23 8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle Rock Country Inn</td>
<td>N 46 37 36.16, W 60 22 40.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge over marsh</td>
<td>N 46 37 37.07, W 60 26 0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keltic Lodge</td>
<td>N 46 39 20.81, W 60 22 36.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Peters Church</td>
<td>N 46 39 25.29, W 60 23 59.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bean Barn Cafe</td>
<td>N 46 40 54.44, W 60 24 22.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Waters Restaurant</td>
<td>N 46 41.397, W 60 23 553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 42 48.50, W 60 21 21.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad Cove Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 43 25.60, W 60 20 56.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacies Head Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 44 5.92, W 60 19 55.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Cove Look Off</td>
<td>N 46 45 3.25, W 60 19 29.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are two exits from Trans Canada Hwy 105 to Ingonish:

**From Hwy 105, use Exit 12 to Rte 312 and take the Englishtown Ferry**
The traffic lines for the ferry might be long in the summer. But we usually visit the area on fall cruises when traffic is sparse; we didn't have to wait long to cross on the ferry.

OR

**From Hwy 105, use Exit 11 to Cabot Trail**
This route is about 12 miles longer driving distance. But travel time to Ingonish is about the same because the longer driving distance is offset by the time you wait for the Englishtown Ferry. It takes 5-10 minutes to cross the channel and the ferry costs 5.25 Canadian. There are public toilets on both sides of the channel.

The map below shows Exit 12 and Exit 11 from trans Canada Hwy 105 to Cabot Trail north to Ingonish
For reference, I've shown the location of St Ann's Look Off on Hwy 105
Directions for this route start at St Ann's Look Off – see pages 12 to 16 of this guide for the route from the cruise ship to St Ann's Look Off.
Highway Signs for Exit 12 and Exit 11 shown in the order in which you will see them

I like to ride on the Ferry. There's space to park on the other side of the channel. Walk around to see what the fisherman are catching and take photos. We saw an eagle having a fish lunch at the edge of the water.

From the intersection of Rte 312 and Cabot Trail (see map on the previous page), drive north on Cabot Trail 26 km and 20 minutes to **Morrison Bridge (photo below)** *(GPS = N 46 32.775, W 60 24.924)*

It's a tiny bridge, but it can be gorgeous. Slow down and look to your left as you cross the bridge. If it's a good photo op, drive to the end of the bridge, turn left and park on the side street. Walk back to the center of the bridge to take the **photo at right**.

Continue driving north to see gorgeous mountains, coves, inlets, rugged Atlantic coastline, etc.
The map below shows the driving route to Cape Smokey Provincial Park. If you use Exit 12 from Hwy 105, you take Rte 312 to Englishtown Ferry and continue on Rte 312 to where it intersects with Cabot Trail. If you use Exit 11 from Hwy 105, you get on Cabot Trail at St Ann's and drive north. From the intersection of Cabot Trail and Rte 312, there isn't much to photograph until you get close to Cape Smokey Provincial Park. There are hills on your left but you can't see the ocean on the right very well due to trees on the ocean side and the road is not high enough to see over them. Other than photographing the hills, the only scenic photo I got was at Morrison Bridge.
The map below combines terrain and satellite images to show both topography and water details. Details on the scenic areas on this map are described below:

[A] The “Base of Smokey” sign is at GPS = N 46 34.979, W 60 23.727
[B] **The road steeply ascends the mountain.** The sides of the road are washed out from heavy rainfall. The shoulder is only a few feet wide; not wide enough to park beside the road. There was no traffic when we were there in late October 2012. I stopped the car, set the brake, and jumped out to snap the **photo below**.

**GPS = N 46 35 0.09, W 60 23 7.95  looking to the south**

---

[C] **There is a side road (photo below) at GPS = N 46 35 43.00, W 60 23 8.89** I did not drive this road, but it appears to go about ½ mile toward the ocean. It should give views similar to my photo above.
[D] Castle Rock Country Inn   GPS = N 46 37 36.16, W 60 22 40.44
We stopped at the side of the road in front of the Inn, took some photos, and then drove down the side road next to the Inn to take the photo below.

[E] Bridge over marsh   GPS = N 46 37 37.07, W 60 26 0.89
There was ample room at the side of the road before the bridge. We parked and walked onto the bridge to take the photo on the previous page. Where there is a bridge over water, you get views unobstructed by trees.

The satellite map below shows how Cabot Trail circles Ingonish Harbor. The Cape Breton Highlands National Park Visitor Centre is in the middle of the road. You can't miss it. We followed the signs toward Keltic Lodge. The roads are one way; named “Keltic In” and “Keltic Out” on Google Maps.

[B] Keltic Lodge (photo right)
GPS = N 46 39 20.81, W 60 22 36.37
We have been to this area twice on cruises in October. Both times, the lodge was closed because the tourist season had ended.

Cruise ship excursions sometimes stop for lunch at the lodge. I'm sure it is nice, but the ship excursions are very pricey.

Be sure to drive around the lodge and check out the views. Also, check out the stunning photos of the lodge and surrounding area at http://www.kelticlodge.ca/
[A] Looking down on Ingonish Beach  

On our way to the Keltic Lodge on the one way road called “Keltic In”, we stopped at the parking area to take photos. The photo below was taken at 18 mm focal length. A 3x zoom lens will give you a good shot of the building at the beach. There are roads to drive down to the beach. We drove there, but I believe the view from this location gives a better perspective of the beach shoreline with mountains in the background.

[C] St Peter's Church  
GPS = N 46 39 25.29, W 60 23 59.23
Points of Interest North of Keltic Lodge and St Peter's Church

The map below shows two restaurants and four scenic look offs on Cabot Trail

Where to stop for lunch?

The tourist season begins around mid-May and ends around mid-October. We were on a late October Fall Color Cruise. Keltic Lodge was closed and the Coastal Waters Restaurant had a sign “closed for the season”, but there were people inside. I went inside. The manager told me the restaurant was closed but they were preparing for a cruise ship tour bus. I told him, “I am on that ship”. He said he could set a table for us but that food would not be served until the bus arrived, in another 40 minutes. I didn't want to wait (waste 40 minutes) and asked which
restaurants were open. He said the Bean Barn Cafe might still be open. It's popular with locals.

**NOTE:** It is difficult to find a place to eat if you are driving the Ingonish area in late October. This is a rural, sparsely populated area. Cruise ships and private tour guides like Don Blackwood make special arrangements for restaurants to be open for their tour groups. The buses are limited to large restaurants. Don Blackwood's van tours have lunch at the “neat” little family owned restaurants that serve great food at reasonable prices. And you have the flexibility to order what you want with no obligation to order anything on a Don Blackwood tour.

**Bean Barn Cafe**  
GPS = N 46 40 54.44, W 60 24 22.23
We stopped for a sandwich and coffee at Bean Barn Cafe. It is a tiny restaurant focusing on deserts and coffee. See [https://www.facebook.com/BeanBarnCafe](https://www.facebook.com/BeanBarnCafe) and [http://www.cabottrail.travel/ingonish/dining.cfm?did=70](http://www.cabottrail.travel/ingonish/dining.cfm?did=70)

**Coastal Waters Restaurant**  
GPS = N 46 41.397, W 60 23.553

**Continuing north on Cabot Trail for more scenic views**

Cruise ship bus tours do not go north beyond Coastal Waters Restaurant. The buses cannot pull off the road into small look offs along Cabot Trail. I had read about Lakies Head and Green Cove and seen pictures by professional photographers. We continued north and stopped at four look offs on the right side of the road.

**Look Off**  
GPS = N 46 42 48.50, W 60 21 21.78
Broad Cove Look Off  GPS = N 46 43 25.60, W 60 20 56.13

Lakies Head Look Off  GPS = N 46 44 5.92, W 60 19 55.31
Green Cove Look Off (photo below) GPS = N 46 45 3.25, W 60 19 29.07

Green Cove

A Coastal Headland
Rocky bluffs and shallow coves characterize this Park’s eastern coastline. Green Cove is one example.

Come explore this coastal headland. Plants living here must endure an overpowering force - the Atlantic Ocean.
User Feedback Is Welcome

Goal
My guides are designed to help you plan a great cruise vacation by providing information such as where the ship docks, location of tourist sites, public transit, walking tour maps, things to see and do, travel issues unique to the port, etc. Knowledge of ports is important when planning shore excursions because you have to make many decisions and commitments long before your ship docks. I believe the information in this guide is accurate, however you are responsible to verify accuracy of the information that you use to plan your vacation.

Information on cruise ports frequently changes such as bus routes, admission fees to sites, rental car locations, etc. Cruise Critic is the best source for up-to-date, detailed information on travel details for shore excursions, reviews of cruise ships, etc. There are many knowledgeable people on Cruise Critic who are willing to share their expertise and travel experience. I highly recommend www.CruiseCritic.com; it's free to join.

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Tom Sheridan