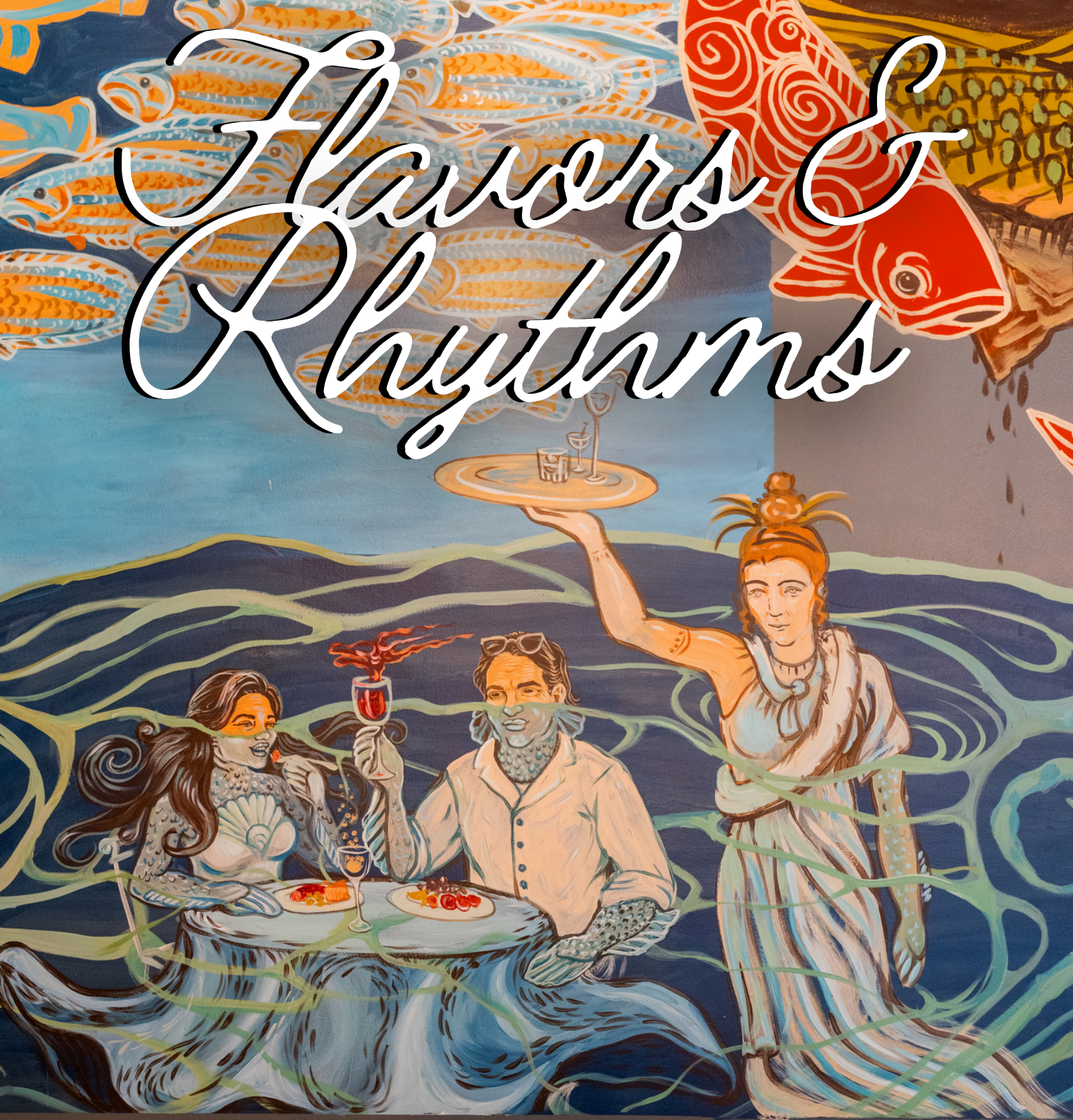


# Flavors & Rhythms



A Culinary & Cultural Adventure  
in Kennebec Valley



# WELCOME!

## What's in this guide

- Details on Kennebec Valley
- The Best Places to Eat, Visit, and Explore
- Hidden Gems and Pro Tips from Insiders in-the-know
- The Festivals & Celebrations that showcase the BEST of Kennebec Valley
- Clickable links for info at your fingertips
- How to access all the resources to plan your stay.

**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.



# KENNEBEC VALLEY REGION



The Kennebec Valley is a picturesque central Maine region renowned for its natural beauty, rich history, and engaging, vibrant communities. The Kennebec River, a major waterway, flows through the valley, offering fishing, boating, and kayaking opportunities to visitors and locals alike. The region is home to numerous historic sites, charming towns, and state parks, each offering a unique experience. The growing arts, food, and music scene make it a destination for long-term vacationers and for day-trips from around the state. From the bustling city of Augusta, to the cultural hub of Waterville and the historic charm of Gardiner and Skowhegan, the Kennebec Valley offers diverse experiences for travelers of all tastes.

- Distance from Portland, Maine:  
Approximately 50 Miles (1 hour)
- Distance from Boston, Massachusetts:  
Approximately 160 miles (2.75 hours)
- Distance from Montreal, Québec, QC,  
Canada: Approximately 220 miles (3.5 hours)

# IN THIS GUIDE

## FEATURED TOWNS



- [Solon, Maine](#), nestled in Somerset County, offers historic landmarks like the Solon Hotel and The Solon Meeting House, as well as outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, and camping.
- [Waterville, Maine](#), is a vibrant hub of culture and entertainment with a thriving arts scene, historic downtown, museums, theaters, parks, and recreational facilities.
- [Fairfield, Maine](#), boasts a rich history and natural beauty, including the Fairfield Historical Society, the Shaw House Museum, and peaceful Kennebec River scenery.
- [Canaan, Maine](#), surrounded by breathtaking natural beauty, offers opportunities for hiking, skiing at Sugarloaf, and enjoying the tranquility of the Carrabassett Valley.
- [Skowhegan, Maine](#), is known for its rich history of agriculture, industry, and the arts, featuring the Skowhegan State Historic Site, the Redington Museum, and various outdoor activities along the Kennebec River.
- [Gardiner, Maine](#), has a growing arts scene and a revitalized, historic downtown, with the [Johnson Hall Performing Arts Center](#), as well as a unique blend of historic buildings and boutique shops..

# FOOD & DRINK

## WATERVILLE



- **[Front + Main](#)** stands out with its exceptional wine list, unique bar program, and delicious comfort food. Guests are drawn to its creative and nourishing cuisine, lovingly sourced from local farmers and fishermen. Located on Main Street, it is the ideal spot to stop for lunch or dinner as you explore the downtown Arts Scene. Try the fried fish Reuben or the homemade falafel. The peanut shrimp lettuce wraps are stunning, as is the passion fruit key lime dessert. Make sure to grab an artfully made cocktail or mocktail. Try a **Crush on Suze** featuring sorrel, Suze, peach, and Altos tequila.
- **[Holy Cannoli](#)** is an Italian bakery and deli in Waterville, Maine. Renowned for its delicious cannoli made with a crispy shell and a creamy ricotta filling, it also offers a variety of other pastries, sandwiches, and ready-to-go foods. Insider Scoop: Get the mini cannolis to sample every flavor, or try the local fave, a Raspberry Almond thumbprint cookie.
- **[Incense and Peppermints](#)** is a nostalgic candy shop in Waterville, Maine, is a haven for those with a sweet tooth. Beyond its tempting array of chocolate bars, jelly beans, and old-fashioned penny candy, the shop also offers a unique selection of crystals, spiritual gifts, and vintage items. This diverse range of offerings creates a unique and inviting experience for all visitors.
- **[Main Street Provisions](#)** is a family-owned grocery store in Waterville, Maine. It offers a wide selection of beer, wine, and pantry staples. Main Street Provisions is a treasured community hub known for its friendly atmosphere and commitment to supporting local farmers.



# FOOD & DRINK

## SKOWHEGAN



**Maine Grains**, is a sustainable food hub in Skowhegan, Maine, revitalizes local agriculture by milling organic and heritage grains from over 40 partner farms across the Northeast. Their traditional stone milling process produces the highest quality flours (whole wheat, rye, cornmeal, etc.) with exceptional flavor, sought after by bakers, brewers, and chefs throughout the region. This innovative enterprise goes beyond wholesale - they operate a farm store and The Miller's Table cafe, offering delicious baked goods and meals made with their freshly milled products. By supporting local farmers and promoting sustainable practices, Maine Grains plays a vital role in the Maine food scene. Pro Tip: Sign up for a free 1-hour tour and explore their offerings! You'll find Maine-made flours, baking mixes, unique tools, and more at the gift shop, or online at [mainegrains.com](http://mainegrains.com).



**The Kneading Conference** is an annual Maine gathering of bakers, farmers, and food enthusiasts. This event celebrates the art and science of breadmaking, featuring workshops, demos, and tastings. Attendees (both professional and home bakers) can learn from experienced professionals, connect with like-minded individuals, and explore the latest trends in the baking world.



**The Miller's Table Café and Bakery** is a culinary gem in the Maine Grains gristmill. This farm-to-table cafe and bakery offers a delightful menu featuring fresh, locally sourced ingredients. From pizzas, open-faced smørrebrød, and sandwiches to soups, pastries, and bread, every dish is crafted with care and focused on flavor. The cozy atmosphere and friendly staff make it a must-visit for foodies and locals alike. It is a quintessential Taste of Maine. Pro tip: Try the Roots & Shoots Wood-fired Pizza with local mushrooms and spinach and drink a Sour Cherry Smash - a non-alcoholic soda made with preserved cherries.

# FOOD & DRINK

## SKOWHEGAN



**The Bankery and Fleuriste**, located in Skowhegan, Maine, is a charming duo of businesses that offer a delightful combination of baked goods and floral arrangements. The bakery features a variety of old-fashioned, scrumptious treats, including soft pretzels, miniature cakes, and custom-made tortes for special occasions. The Fleuriste, connected next door, offers stunning floral arrangements, making it a one-stop shop for all your culinary and floral needs.



**Crooked Face Creamery**, is located next door to the Miller's Table. It is as described by its founder, "as the embodiment of the place, the animals, and the people who make it all possible. The quirky personalities inhabit the farm, the gentle hum of contented cows, and the laughter that fills the air during cheese-tasting sessions. It's about bringing a taste of home, wherever you are, with every single bite." (reference ~ website)  
[crookedfacecreamery.com](http://crookedfacecreamery.com)

Amy Rowbottom founded the company with a vision of creating unique, local cheeses that reflect the spirit of her farm. Her passion has led to a growing collection of delicious, artisanal cheeses now sold online and in-store. Tip: Crooked Face Creamery's ricotta freezes well. Bring your cooler and stock up for your trip home.







# FOOD & DRINK

## SOLON

### The Solon Hotel

On Route 201 in the heart of the Forks/Bingham/Sugarloaf recreation areas sits the **Solon Hotel (The SOHO)**. This scenic byway staple has long been a place for travelers to rest. In 2021, The Goguen Family purchased the property with a desire to move to Maine and showcase their culinary and hospitality expertise.

The restaurant and event space has been lovingly renovated with gorgeous touches of natural wood and wrought iron, made cozy by the stone fireplaces and fresh flowers on every table. What distinguishes the SOHO menu are its abundant offerings. Try a charcuterie board or get one for the table. It comes loaded with meats, cheeses, crackers, and Italian fig jam.

The spirit of abundance permeates everything that the team makes. The food is made fresh, from the stacked house burgers and pastas, to the freshly squeezed juices in the margaritas. Italian and Portuguese specialties dot the menu and are a nod to the family's origins and culinary roots. "People love these unique dishes and we are so happy when people keep coming back for more," states owner Faith Goguen. Fan favorites include the Linguica Chili with House Honey Cornbread and the Shrimp in Creamy Pesto.

Insider tip: Try the Italian lemon cream cake. It is a one-of-a-kind confection that makes you want to slow down and savor every sweet bite. It is irresistible and you will want to get one for yourself and one to share. The SOHO offers a late-night menu, live music, party planning and event catering. Reservations are accepted.



# FOOD & DRINK

## CAANAN



[Silverton Sporting Ranch](#) offers a delicious BBQ restaurant known as the **Silverton BBQ Bar**. Just a 20-minute drive along part of the Kennebec River from Skowhegan, the restaurant is in an ideal, rural location serving smoked meats, sides, and desserts—and crave-able, freshly baked pretzel bites with homemade beer cheese! Settle up to the front porch to grab an order of the pulled pork nachos or the pork belly bites and take in the serene setting. Owner Denise Murchison states, "We are a hidden gem. We have our seasonal restaurant and cabins on nearly 400 acres in central Maine, along with year-round catering. When people find out about us, they keep coming back."



Denise's journey with Silverton Foods and the BBQ Bar began with a vision. She bought and cleared the land, restoring and renovating the main cabin to create a relaxing getaway. As a registered Maine Guide, accomplished horsewoman, and respected hunting instructor, Denise's deep connection to her community is evident in her work. Her dedication to hospitality and sustainability is a driving force behind the success of the BBQ Bar. The property features two getaway cabins, often utilized for sporting groups and women's hunting workshops. Denise also makes a sweet, savory, and spicy line of sauces that she uses in her BBQ. Reviews of the BBQ Bar make note of the fantastic setting and well-crafted food: "All you hear is light music, the sounds of nature, and people enjoying amazing BBQ." and "Great food and a welcoming, calm atmosphere." ~ R. Cyr





# FOOD & DRINK

## FAIRFIELD

[Meridians](#) in Fairfield, Maine, is a culinary destination celebrating the bounty of local Kennebec Valley Farms. The menu features farm-to-table dishes crafted with the owner's fresh produce and regional specialties, including Maine fish, meat, mushrooms, and grain. When you visit Meridians, you'll often find our owner, David Gulak, at the bar and in the kitchen. He's always ready to offer advice on wine pairings and share his food adventures, adding a personal touch to your dining experience.

"I want people to get as excited about the vegetables in front of them as they do a steak or a burger," he states. "There is so much variety in our gardens and farms here, and when we cook it right, people really go crazy for it."

Meridians has undergone several changes, focusing its menu on sharable boards and a community experience. The interior has been refreshed with a sweeping, gorgeous mural by local artist Désirée Dubois. It reflects the farm-land-sea connection that is the bedrock of the restaurant's philosophy.

Complementing the exceptional cuisine is an extensive wine shop offering a carefully curated selection of local and international wines. Meridians provide an immersive dining experience highlighting the connection between the land and the table. Insider Scoop: Try one of the board selections like the fish and chips, featuring shatteringly crispy fried pollock and house-made kimchi, or the vegetable board, with sautéed squash in a Gochujang glaze.





# ARTS & CULTURE ACROSS THE VALLEY



**Waterville Creates** is a nonprofit organization, is committed to enriching the cultural landscape of Waterville, Maine. Through a collaborative effort of local arts organizations, they offer diverse programs, including theater productions, live music concerts, dance performances, film screenings, and visual arts exhibitions. They aim to make arts experiences accessible to everyone, fostering a vibrant and creative community. Waterville Creates is instrumental in revitalizing the city's downtown area, attracting visitors, and supporting local businesses. The Center hosts events year-round and connects to the Waterville Opera House. World-renowned acts, artists, films, and shows fill out the schedule. Check [www.watervillecreates.org](http://www.watervillecreates.org) for complete details.

**Downtown Waterville** has a vibrant outdoor public art scene featuring numerous murals that add color and character to the city. These murals depict various themes, from local history to contemporary art, and can be found throughout the downtown area. The murals are a popular attraction. Tip: Check out the **Light Sentinels by Skunk Control** on the green next to Waterville Creates. These outdoor sculptures open and close in the day, and illuminate at night.

**The Hinge Collaborative** is a vibrant community arts space in Waterville, Maine. It serves as a studio, gallery, and resource for artists and the public. The collaborative offers printmaking workshops, exhibitions, and educational programs, fostering a creative and inclusive environment for artists and the community. Insider Scoop: Co-Founder and Artist, Elizabeth Jabar curates works from printmakers from around the country and can often be found working in the shop.





# ARTS & CULTURE

## ACROSS THE VALLEY



The [Greene Block Studio](#), in Waterville a vibrant arts center in the heart of Waterville, Maine, offers a variety of classes, workshops, and exhibitions. This creative space provides opportunities for seasoned and aspiring artists of all ages and skill levels to explore their passions and connect with the local community. Insider Scoop: Take advantage of the First Friday Events for free live music, including New Orleans Jazz bands.



The [Solon Meeting House](#) in Solon is tucked away in the tranquil Maine countryside. It offers a surprising and delightful discovery. Built in 1842, this unassuming Gothic Revival church has become an intriguing artistic touchpoint. Its interior walls and ceiling are adorned with frescoes painted by artists from the renowned Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in the mid-20th century. These colorful depictions of biblical scenes and secular themes create a captivating, unexpected, and mysterious atmosphere within the historic space. Tip: The church is always open and accessible to the public. Seasonal talks are held at the church by local art professors. Donations are welcome.



# SHOPPING

## A LITTLE BIT OF



[Happy Knits](#) in Skowhegan is a cozy yarn shop in downtown Skowhegan. This charming store offers a wide variety of high-quality yarns and supplies. With friendly and knowledgeable staff, Happy Knits is a haven for knitters and crocheters of all levels. Tip: The shop holds monthly groups and is home to Maine's Summer Knitting Cruise. Learn about fun projects you can do and shops you can visit around the state.



[The Robin's Nest](#) is a beloved floral shop in a historic Waterville bank with a second location in Belgrade Village. Renowned for its exquisite arrangements and personalized service, this local business offers a variety of floral designs for all occasions, from birthdays and anniversaries to weddings and funerals. Its focus is on fresh, regional, and high-quality flowers and gifts. Insider Tip: The Robin's Nest offers floral design classes in conjunction with The Mid Maine Regional Adult Education and private classes on or off-site. Customers in the Kennebec Valley love the Robin's Nest. They state: "Incredible arrangements according to whatever budget you give. Customer service is the highest quality. I keep going, again and again!"



[Selene's Fly Shop](#) in Gardiner, Maine, is a premier destination for fly fishing enthusiasts. With a knowledgeable staff and a wide selection of gear, Selene's offers everything needed for a successful day on the water in the Kennebec Valley. Tip: Owner Selene is also an accomplished watercolorist, and you can see (and purchase) her wildlife-inspired artwork in the shop.



# REVITALIZATION

## GARDINER

[The Johnson Hall Opera House](#) began in 1864. Over the centuries and countless performances later, the newly renovated space features two theaters—a 400-seat grand theater called the Reehl Stage and a 120-seat Black Box theater called the Logan Stage. Both spaces feature refreshment areas and full ADA access. The names honor former owners and performers instrumental in putting the Opera House on the map.

In 2018, the renovation of the Johnson Hall Opera House began by focusing on the artist and guest experience. Its goals were twofold: "We wanted to be the "best-sounding room in Maine. We invested heavily in the sound system and sunk the audio booth at seat level so that any equipment would not disrupt the audience members' line of sight," states Executive Director Michael Miclon. "And we wanted to bring back community theater and live music to Central Maine. We want both kids and their families to experience all aspects of creativity- from playwriting to performance."

The Black Box Theater is the perfect home for creative play and exploration and acts as a springboard for smaller, local acts to get their start.

Larger acts are also attracted to the Opera House. Grammy Award-winning artist Lyle Lovett remarked, "How beautiful the sound is at Johnson Hall Opera House. It is like you are right there, filled with the music." [Find out more about shows & programs online.](#)





# FESTIVALS



[First Fridays Waterville](#) is a monthly event that brings together the community to celebrate the city's vibrant arts scene. Held on the first Friday of each month, this event features art galleries, live music, food trucks, and other activities. It's an excellent opportunity to explore Waterville's unique culture and support local businesses.



[Waterville Rocks](#) is a popular, multi-week, free music festival held each summer in Waterville, Maine. This event showcases a diverse lineup of local and national bands, attracting music lovers from all over the region. With a focus on community and celebration, this family-friendly event is at the Head of Falls along the Kennebec River and features a beer garden and food truck park



[Taste of Waterville](#) is an annual food and music festival held at the Head of Falls along the Kennebec River. This popular event showcases the city's diverse (and rich) food scene, featuring local food trucks, restaurants, & breweries. Attendees can enjoy delicious food - like overstuffed baked potatoes, BBQ-topped poutine, Filipino lumpia, and live music. It is also home to a highly competitive corn hole competition where local teams vie for cash prizes. The TOW is an excellent opportunity to experience the best of Waterville's burgeoning food scene.



# FESTIVALS



**Skowhegan Riverfest** is an annual community celebration held in Skowhegan, Maine. This popular multi-event features live music, a parade, an outdoor film festival, food vendors, craft fairs, and boat races. Riverfest is an excellent opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the Kennebec River and experience the region's reinvigorated and rich history. Fun tip: Register your boat for the Glowstick Paddle or try your hand paddling an Inflatable Kayak through the Skowhegan Gorge during the weekend's events.



**Maine Outdoor Film Festival (MOFF)** is an annual event that showcases the beauty and adventure of the Maine outdoors through film. The festival features a variety of films, including documentaries, short films, and feature-length films, that explore topics such as hiking, camping, fishing, kayaking, and more. Insider tip: Skowhegan is one of MOFF's screening locations. Check the website for the summer schedule.







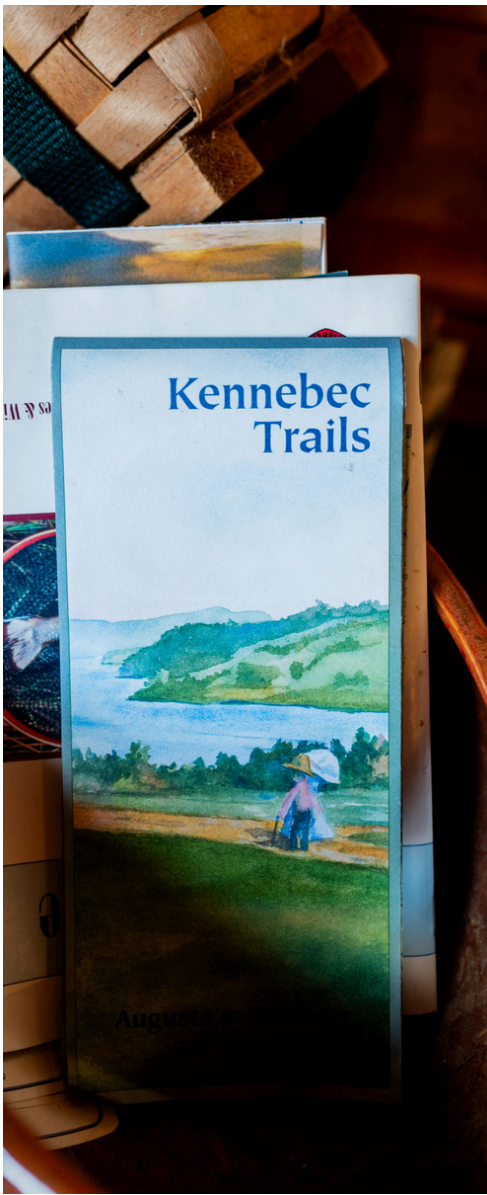
# WHAT'S NEXT

& where to stay

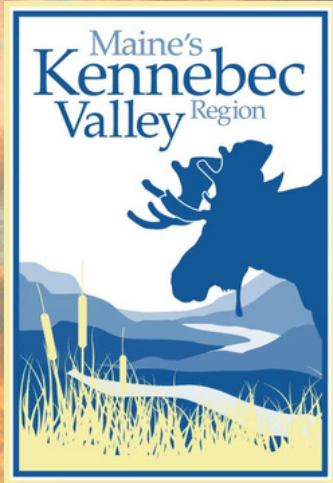
Plan your visit to the Kennebec Valley

Download the App at [visitkennebecvalley.com](https://www.visitkennebecvalley.com)

- Find the best places to stay including camping, hotels, and resorts
- Learn more about the arts & local makers
- Dig deep into the region's history
- Plan your outdoor recreation like viewing Fall foliage, hiking, boating, skiing, and snowmobiling
- Find out where to eat and visit local farms
- Learn more and follow along on social media



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This itinerary was researched and produced on the unceded ancestral lands and waters of the Wabanaki Nation. We are grateful for their historic stewardship of these lands and waters.