

NORTH HAVEN, MAINE

An island in the middle of Penobscot Bay

With rocky coastlines and windswept fields and forests, North Haven is a place of breathtaking beauty. For thousands of years, people have been drawn to these shores.

Today a community of 350 people call the island home. Whether they readily admit it or not, people care deeply about this place. Despite the challenges of living miles out to sea, they hold fast to the island, continually working hard to keep the community alive for generations to come.

During the summer, as visitors and seasonal residents flock to North Haven, the population grows to over 1000 people. The island's economy hinges on this seasonal influx, with employment centered around construction, lobstering, boatbuilding, and taking care of summer homes. To make a living, many islanders juggle multiple jobs, relying on both creativity and tenacity to get by.

On North Haven, people become attuned to the tides, wind, and weather. Rhythms of nature affect livelihoods and travel to and from the island. A 130 foot long ferry connects North Haven to the mainland with three trips a day, all year round. Small passenger planes bring packages and mail daily and fly out the sick and injured in emergencies. The island has one gas pump and zero traffic lights, shopping malls, or sidewalks.



NORTH HAVEN IN NUMBERS

The island measures 8 miles long and 3 miles wide

North Haven encompasses 6,837 total acres

The highest point of the island is Oak Hill at 162 feet

North Haven has 48 miles of coastline and 25+ miles of roads

Local tides, with two high and two low per day, average 9 to 10 feet in range

"I don't like the water. I don't swim or anything and I don't like it when it's rough. Somebody asked me, well how come you live on an island then?"

I said, because it's the most beautiful place in the world."

*Freda Smith, North Haven
We Belong Here, an oral history project
by Leta Hallowell*



"There is an interdependence. Whether you like someone or not, you get along with them because there may come a day you need them or they need you. So you learn tolerance. You learn to get along."

*Bobby Brown, North Haven
Aging on an Island, a film by Pull-Start Pictures*

Like other small towns, North Haven exists as a community because people show up, take care, and stay involved. Many residents serve on committees, boards, the fire department, and the ambulance service. Islanders participate in town government, write articles for the North Haven News, check in on the sick and elderly, and clean up the roadsides and beaches.

Life here is also sustained by a community center and theater, a small grocery store, several farms, an eldercare facility, a town office, a library, a post office, churches, a medical clinic, a monthly town newspaper, and the smallest K-12 public school in the state.

Seasonally, people gather at two restaurants, a brewery, a yacht club, a golf course, and a public town park.



On North Haven, kids grow up learning that community members take the time to say hello when they meet on the road, at the store, on the ferry, and in the tiny post office. It is a place where kids inherit the freedom to explore the woods, fields, swamps, and beaches, returning home just in time for supper.

Islanders and visitors both find solace in the land and surrounding ocean. The unforgettable sunsets, star-filled night skies, salt-soaked ocean air, mossy woods, clean drinking water, and the rhythm of the waves on the shore remind all here to be grateful for this place.



LEARN LOTS MORE!

Town of North Haven
www.northhavenmaine.org

North Haven Community School
www.northhavencommunityschool.org

Waterman's Community Center
www.watermans.org

Southern Harbor Eldercare Services
www.southernharborhouse.org

*We Belong Here,
an oral history project*
www.webelonghereproject.org