



Have GPS, will travel: Geocaching in Nova Scotia

Remember burying treasure (a shoebox with a kazoo from your last birthday party, and four or five of your best bottle tops) and making a map (beneath the tree with the knee is the treasure you seek) when you were a kid? The world-wide, family-friendly, low cost or no cost activity of geo-caching has taken that simple scavenger hunting, hide and seek, treasure pleasure of a baby boomer's childhood into the 21st century - turning a new generation of technology-loving kids loose on the world to find secret caches of hidden treasure that might include an action figure, a disposable camera, a glow stick, a temporary tattoo, or a little flag on a stick.

Nova Scotia boasts 7,600 km (4,750 mi) of coastline wrapped around all kinds of topography from the Highlands of Cape Breton to the dykelands of the Annapolis Valley and the deep forests of Lunenburg County. It is also home to hundreds of clever little geocaches. In fact, Canada's first geocache was hidden in the year 2001 at East River just over a half an hour from Halifax. Joining in the global game is a great way to add value to a family vacation without adding any expense.

The basics of geocaching are simple. All over the world, there are caches, or stores, stashed away in all kinds of locations. There are geocaches on car ferries, in cemeteries, high up in treetops, underwater, in restaurants, on bridges. Cachers find a cool nook or cranny, leave a waterproof container filled with tiny treasures of little or no monetary value, and a log for cache visitors to leave a record of their finding, and then they post the latitude and longitude coordinates and a few hints or details about their cache on a web site. Anyone with access to the internet and a GPS can join in the game. When a seeker finds a cache, it is proper etiquette to take a little something and leave a little something - only legal trinkets appropriate for all ages to find, please and thank you - and replace the cache for the next visitor.

Checking out the listings for Nova Scotia cache locations at geocaching.com where you will also find all kinds of ideas for getting the kids involved, active, and excited wherever you are in the province. Take in the **Antigonish Highland Games** (www.antigonishhighlandgames.com) then head out on a hike to find the cache hidden at Horseshoe Turn Falls in nearby Cape George. Cheer on the competitors at the **Annual Pumpkin Regatta** in Windsor (www.worldsbiggestpumpkins.com), then throw in a search for the cache that goes by the name: Third Largest Port in Canada (there's a little history lesson for you in the cache details as a bonus). Go whale watching on the **Bay of Fundy** (www.bayoffundy.com) where the world's highest tides rise and fall, then seek out the cache known as Oliver's Cove on Brier Island. Spend a busy day at the **Upper Clements Park** (www.upperclementspark.com) and search for the cache located at the Wildlife Park next door. Hit all the highlights in historic Halifax and leave with a list of the city's secret