



## The Windy Side of PEI

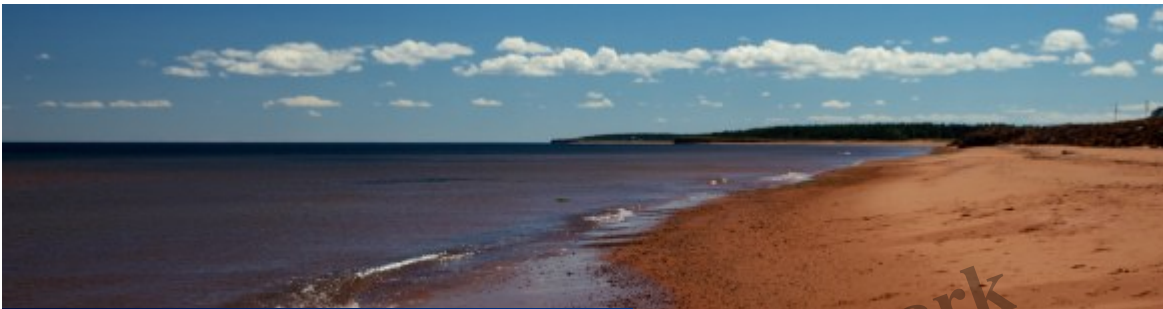
### Description



The tourist literature divides Prince Edward Island (PEI) into three distinct coastal drives: North Cape, Central (which includes the Green Gables Shore and the Red Sands Shore) and Points East Coastal Drives. But distances on the island can be deceiving, since those coastal roads can be slow-going. So it's a good idea to build in time for activities along the way, or for gawking at the beautiful scenery.

We set out for the North Cape Coastal Drive (a bit misleading since this is Western PEI) first, which we'd heard was the most spectacular. This is the (mostly) French Acadian part of the island and also has a Mi'kmaq community – on Lennox Island.

Like the rest of PEI, the area has many picturesque farmhouses on beautiful patches of pastoral land all along the way. We make a brief stop in Tignish, a fishing community.





As we approach North Cape, which is the northernmost point of PEI, we see a few giant wind turbines, then more and more appear in the sky. We are fortunate that there is a clear blue sky today, making the white wind turbines stand out even more as we reach our destination.



Here on the

windiest side of PEI is the [Wind Energy Institute of Canada Test Site](#) established in 1980 as Canada's National Wind Energy Laboratory, a 38-acre facility that houses wind turbines of all shapes and sizes. Using data collected by the test site, the [North Cape Wind Farm](#) was developed with 16 Vestas wind turbines that have a total capacity to power 4,000 homes.

The North Cape Wind Energy Interpretive Centre has lots of interesting information and displays, many of them state-of-the-art, and offers opportunities for hands on learning about the importance of wind energy and how it can be harnessed. Another very educational center. Outside, there is a section of a wind turbine on the ground which really helped me appreciate their enormous size.



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This site is also home to the longest natural reef on the

continent, and, at low tide, you can walk out almost 2,500 feet. We were there at high tide, but could still see much of the reef. There are sheer red cliffs going into the water, and we walk along the rocky shore, and we'll see much more of it before we leave here.



Out on the rocks, we spot some cairns, these stone

sculptures always fascinate me. Many of the ones here are actually inukshuks, which are cairns

formed into a human shape. Some are quite elaborate and beautiful, they look like works of art.

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We also found a different kind of cairn, a human sized seat

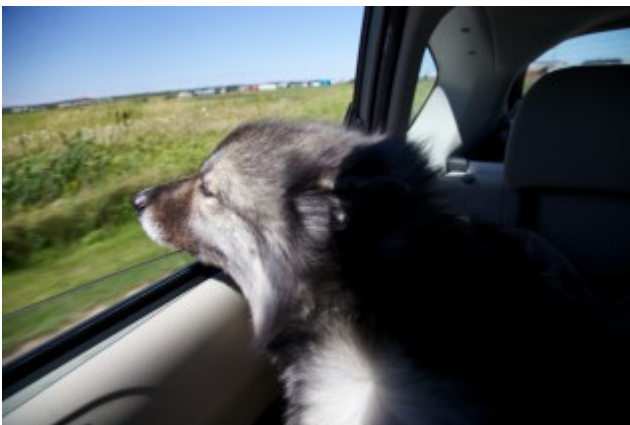
that a very ambitious person created with large stones. The seat is large enough for Hector to sit comfortably in. It's well reinforced in the back as well and seems to have withstood the tide. Very cool!



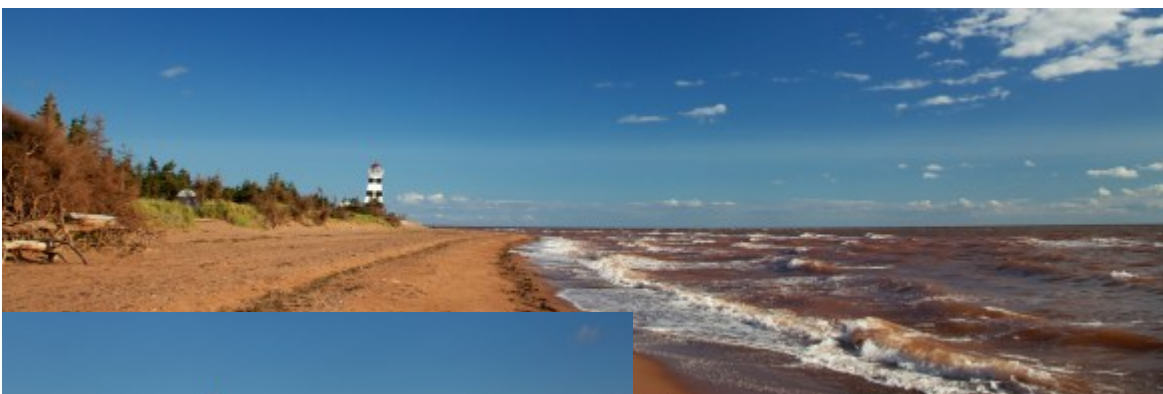
High winds and a long reef are definitely a formula for a lighthouse. The North Cape Lighthouse was  
nated, with a  
d turbines.



As we come around the north side of the coast, the gargantuan wind turbines continue for miles. It's such a contrast to see the farmhouses amongst fields of gold and green and then see the windturbines as a backdrop. I'm not sure whether it's beautiful or surreal or both.



I smell crab ...





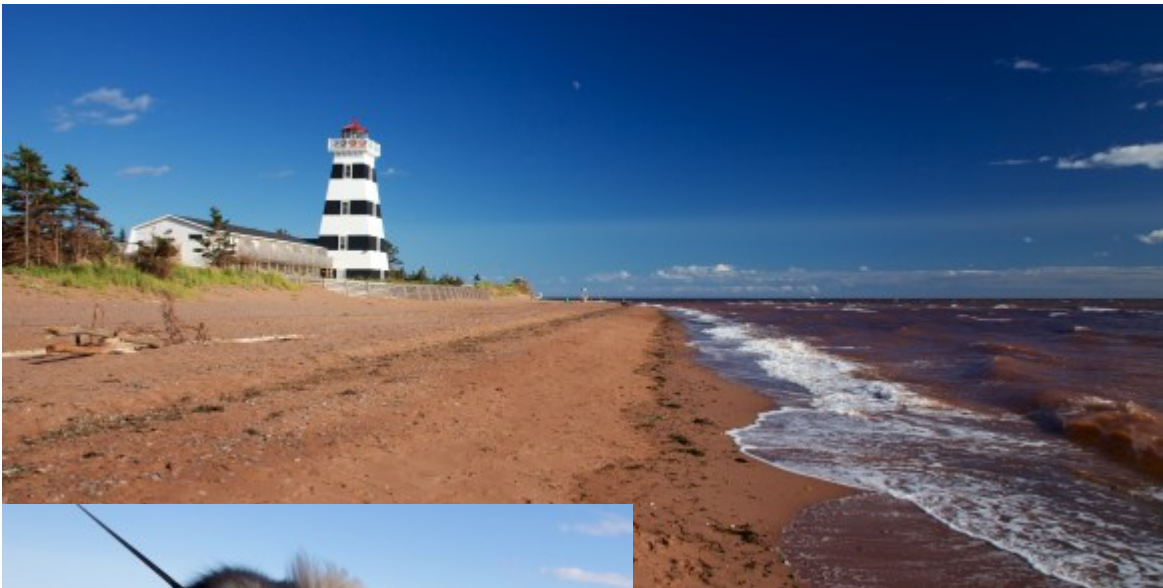
We reach the village of West Point, to see another lighthouse that I've really been looking forward to seeing. I love the black and white stripes. It's a great sight. The West Point Lighthouse was constructed in 1859. And the black and white looks



great against the red sand.



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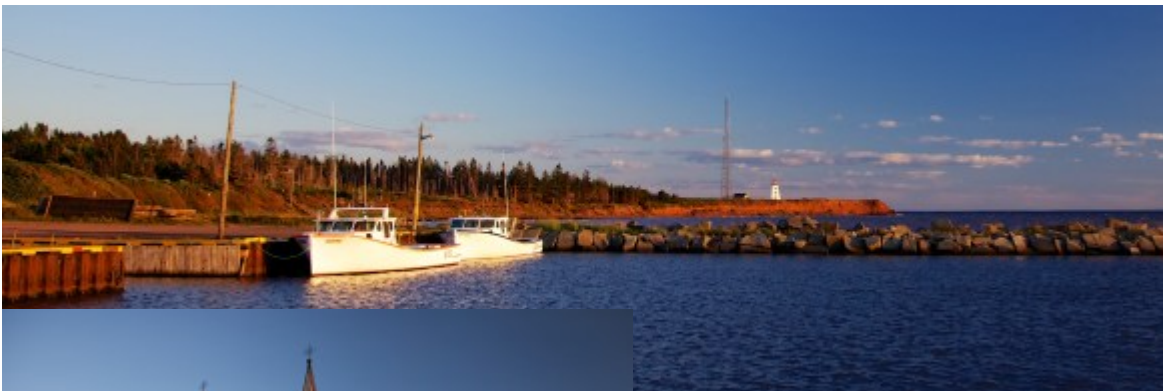
The light was automated in 1963 and the structure is now

a lighthouse museum, country inn, restaurant and craftshop. Very enterprising.



Continuing down

the road, we make another quick stop overlooking the Cape Egmont lighthouse, which was built in 1883. Due to erosion, the lighthouse was moved back from the cliffs in 2000. It has a signature of a two second white flash and three seconds off. Yet another beautiful scene with the lighthouse sitting on more of those red cliffs by the sea.



Our last stop is at the community of Mont Carmel where

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Our Lady of Mont Carmel, one of the island's oldest churches, cons

cated.



The church is striking, but it's unfortunately closed when we arrive.



We notice lots of cars parked along the road, and ask someone arriving what's going on. She tells us that it's a free event commemorating Acadia Day and the public is welcome. So we take a peek, and what do we find, fiddlers and dancers step dancing, in French of course. Very interesting how the cultures intermingle in some ways. It's standing room only, and quite a happening, but It's getting late so we stay to listen and watch for only a little bit.





We cut across the last little segment of the coastal drive

as we need to get home. And I can't say whether this is the most spectacular side of the island, but beautiful pastoral land, pretty fishing villages, a natural reef, lighthouses, gargantuan wind turbines and red cliffs along the sea do make for a spectacular combination.

We'll just have to check out the rest of the island...

~ Brenda

### Category

1. Canada
2. Prince Edward Island

## Tags

1. beaches
2. lighthouses
3. windmills

## Date Created

August 2013

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