

## The Second District

Geographically, Maine's Second Congressional District is the largest congressional district east of the Mississippi River. Please click on the links below for more information on each of the Maine counties that make up the district.

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### Androscoggin County

Androscoggin County is the most densely populated county in Maine's Second Congressional District. Named after the Androscoggin River which runs through the county, the area owes its high population to the Industrial Revolution. As mills began to grow up along the Androscoggin, to take advantage of its central location and the power produced by its strong currents, the county quickly became thickly settled. Despite its history of industrialization however, Androscoggin remains home to beautiful scenery and abundant natural resources, highlighted by the Poland Spring water source which jumpstarted the Poland Spring bottled water company.

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The two biggest cities in the county, Lewiston

and Auburn, are located across the Androscoggin River from each other. With a population of 35,690 people, Lewiston is the second largest city in Maine.

Once highly industrialized towns, Lewiston and Auburn have undergone a renaissance in the past half century, and Lewiston was recently named as one of the 100 best small arts towns in America. Lewiston is also the site of Bates College, one of the finest liberal arts colleges in the nation.

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## Aroostook County

Originally inhabited by the Micmac and Maliseet Native American tribes, Aroostook county derives its name from the Wabanaki word for "beautiful river." Acadian culture developed in Aroostook following colonial clashes between the English and the French over the region. While many Acadians fled south to become "Cajuns," Acadian culture and traditions still maintain a strong influence on the region, and the town of Madawaska holds an annual Acadian Festival. Aroostook today is the largest county east of the Mississippi, and bigger than the states of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Maine is the fifth largest potato producing state in the nation, and the majority of the state's crop comes from Aroostook's fertile farmland. The County is also a popular destination for those looking to enjoy its miles of forests and lakes, teeming with deer and moose. While its wide expanse of natural resources currently brings visitors from across America, in 1838 it nearly drew the United States into a war with England.

When Maine became a state in 1820, much of Aroostook was still claimed by the British as being part of their New Brunswick colony. Maine ignored these claims, however, and continued to grant land in the Aroostook River Valley to settlers. In response, officials from New Brunswick arrested an American land surveyor, and in 1838, the "Aroostook War" was launched. Maine became the only state to ever unilaterally declare war on a foreign country when the Maine legislature authorized the raising of 10,000 militiamen to defend its northern territory against the British. Congress would later agree to send an additional 50,000 men to defend Maine. Despite these large numbers of men, not a single combat fatality occurred during the border dispute. The "War" ended in 1842, with the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, which established the boundaries of Maine as they are today.

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## Franklin County

Located along Maine's western border with Canada, Franklin County has long been one of the premier avenues of trade between Maine and Canada. Containing a broad variety of terrain, from snow covered mountains to fertile farmland, the people of Franklin County have found success throughout the years with everything from dairy farms to paper mills. Today much of Franklin's economy is driven by the ski industry. Built on the second tallest peak in Maine, Sugarloaf/USA is tucked into the Carrabassett Valley and has 133 trails which offer the only lift-serviced above-treeline skiing in the East. In the summer, Sugarloaf golf course opens. Consistently rated the best golf course in Maine, Golf Digest has also recently rated it one of the top 100 courses in the nation.

The county seat in Franklin is home to the University of Maine's Farmington campus. UMF has a nationwide reputation, having been named "One of America's Best Colleges" by U.S. News and World Report for eight consecutive years. Franklin County also has a reputation for its picturesque mountains and lakes. Among the most exceptional sights in Franklin are those that can be seen in Mount Blue State Park. Home to moose and black bears, Mount Blue is a popular destination for many people looking to undergo the Maine experience.

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## Hancock County

Hancock County was incorporated as a Massachusetts county in 1789 out of what was then Lincoln County. Rich in both history and natural beauty, Hancock has more seacoast than any other county in Maine, and contains over 1500 islands within its borders. Located in Hancock is the town of Castine, which during the Revolutionary War was the site of America's worst naval defeat until Pearl Harbor, and today hosts the Maine Maritime Academy.

Hancock is also home to some of the most beautiful coastline in Maine, including Mount Desert Island, one of the largest islands in America. On Mount Desert Island is Acadia National Park, the first national park established east of the Mississippi River. Thought to be inhabited as early as 6,000 years ago by Native Americans, Acadia is today home to a unique combination of animal and marine life. It is one of the top ten most visited national parks in America. It is not only a breathtaking tourist destination, but also an area of great scientific importance as home to institutions like the Jackson Laboratories.

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## Kennebec County

Kennebec County is the only county in Maine split between the First and Second Congressional districts. The First Congressional District encompasses the majority of the county, including Augusta, Maine's state capital. The Second District includes the cities of Waterville, Oakland, and Winslow. Oakland is known as the "gateway to the Belgrade Lakes Region," a popular vacation area which every summer is flooded with an influx of young campgoers. Oakland split away from Waterville in the mid-1800s and due to the water power of its Messalonskee Stream, soon became industrialized. Once known as the axe and scythe producing capital of New England, the addition of the Cascade Woolen Mill in 1882 turned Oakland into an industrial town. Today Oakland is primarily residential, with many of its citizens taking advantage of its proximity to I-95 to commute.

Waterville's history is also intertwined with the power provided by the Kennebec River. However, today it is probably best known as the home of Colby College. Chartered in 1813, Colby has developed a reputation for being one of the premier liberal arts colleges in the nation. Located on picturesque Mayflower Hill, Colby has long been a shining example to the college community, as it was the first all-male college in New England to admit women. Its influence can be seen in the city of Waterville, which recently has undergone a cultural renaissance, highlighted by its playing host to the Maine International Film Festival.

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## Oxford County

Oxford County was organized in 1805 out of York and Cumberland counties, and today encompasses the majority of Maine's border with New Hampshire. Oxford is one of the more geographically diverse counties in Maine. Its northern portion is popular among tourists for its scenic lakes. The center region is dominated by forests and the Androscoggin River. It includes a section of the White Mountain National Forest, which continues into New Hampshire. This area is generally known as one of the homes of Maine's forest products industry.

The southern segment is concentrated primarily around the fertility of the Saco River Valley. Fryeburg, the premier town in this area, is home to one of the oldest secondary schools in the nation, Fryeburg Academy. Founded in 1792, Fryeburg Academy boasts Daniel Webster as one of the many illustrious teachers in its two hundred year history. Fryeburg is also home to the Fryeburg Fair, the largest agricultural fair in Maine. Over 150 years old, the eight day "Blue Ribbon Classic" draws tens of thousands to Fryeburg every October.

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## Penobscot County

Penobscot County was built around the logging industry. Its largest city, Bangor, was the timber and logging capital of the world in the 19th century, and at one point was reputed to be the richest per capita city in the world. Several Penobscot towns came into existence primarily because of mills, most noticeably the development of Millinocket around the Great Northern Paper Company.

Penobscot County is home to The University of Maine in Orono. Established in 1862, the University of Maine has over 8,000 undergraduate and over 2,000 graduate students enrolled in its various programs. UMaine has one of the nation's premier men's hockey programs, which is annual contender in the tough Hockey East Conference, and the proud owner of several NCAA national championships. In addition, UMaine is known for having one of the best forestry programs in the nation.

Penobscot County has produced some of the more notable figures in Maine's history. Hannibal Hamlin, Abraham Lincoln's Vice President, was born in Bangor and the author Stephen King currently lives there. Brewer is the birthplace of Major General Joshua Chamberlain, commander of the 20th Maine at the battle of Gettysburg, and later the Governor of Maine.

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## Piscataquis County

Piscataquis is the least populated county in Maine, with only 17,000 people, but remains nonetheless one of the most popular with visitors. Perhaps the largest draw for locals and tourists alike is the expansive shore of Moosehead Lake. One of the largest lakes east of the Mississippi, and surrounded by tree-covered mountains, Moosehead Lake has long been a retreat for anyone seeking to experience the best that nature has to offer.

Also within the confines of the county lies Baxter State Park, at over 200,000 acres, the largest state park in Maine. Consisting of mountains and forestland, and dotted by ponds and waterfalls, Baxter is an excellent cross section of the animal and plant life indigenous to Maine. One of the park's main attractions is Mount Katahdin. Its name, the Penobscot word meaning "The Greatest Mountain," is an apt description for the tallest mountain in Maine, and the northern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.

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## Somerset County

Covered in forests and interspersed by lakes, Somerset County's main distinguishing feature is the Kennebec River, which snakes its way through the county, cutting it in half. Somerset's people have long relied upon the area's immense expanse of trees. It was once common to see lumber being floated down the Kennebec on its way to be processed. Today Maine's highest capacity paper mill, Sappi Fine Paper North America's Somerset Mill, resides in Skowhegan and is able to produce 2100 tons of paper a day.

While the profession of logging is still a celebrated one throughout the county, inspiring such events as Log Days in Skowhegan, the livelihood of many Somerset County Residents depends on its stock of living trees. Somerset County produces more maple syrup than any other county in the nation. The large quantity of deciduous trees in the county also makes it one of the most popular tourist destinations in Maine during the fall. Thousands come to the forests to see the leaves change colors annually.

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## Waldo County

Waldo County was created in 1827 from Hancock and Lincoln Counties. Today, Waldo County is populated by small towns revered for their majestic sights and serenity. The scenic coastline has helped inspire many young students, and led to the development of Unity College. Unity College offers more environmental programs and graduates more environmental majors than any other college in America, giving it the reputation of "America's Environmental College."

However, in the 19th century, the area was a bustling center of trade. Due to its location at the mouth of the Penobscot River, Waldo County held some of the most prominent seaports in Maine, including Searsport and Belfast. Belfast was known for its shipbuilding, producing hundreds of schooners during the mid 1800s. Searsport, meanwhile, had a reputation for producing excellent sea captains, and at one point was the point of origin for a full tenth of America's deep-sea captain community. Another testament to the area's importance is Fort Knox in Prospect. Built to protect Bangor from British invasion following the "Aroostook War," Fort Knox is Maine's most visited national historic site.

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## Washington County

Bordering Nova Scotia, Washington County is the site of one of the first attempts at settlement on the North Atlantic coast by the French, at St. Croix Island in 1604. Often referred to as the "sunrise county," Washington County contains Eastport, the easternmost point in the United States, and therefore the first town to receive sunlight every day. Off the shore of Eastport lies the largest tidal whirlpool in the Western Hemisphere, "Old Sow." With a diameter of 250 feet and a water current which can reach 27.7 km/h, Old Sow is one of the most powerful whirlpools in the world. Also occupying the waters between Eastport and New Brunswick, Canada is Machias Seal Island, the only portion of the US border still in dispute. Both Canada and the United States have had a presence on the island over the last few centuries, and its ownership remains contested.

Known for its blueberries, Washington County produces more than 90% of America's total wild blueberry crop, or 30 million pounds of wild blueberries a year. Containing some of the most stunning coastline in Maine, Washington County has three Maine State Parks, at Cobscook Bay, Quoddy Head, and Roque Bluff. While Washington County abounds with natural beauty, many visitors are also impressed by its wide variety of lighthouses, which protect ships from crashing on its rocky shores.

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