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Hidden Pond

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Hidden Pond Review

354 Goose Rocks Road, Kennebunkport, Maine



Families will love:

- A large outdoor pool area complete with bar & grill and nearby bonfire pit
- An on-site organic garden that encourages picking and eating
- Easy access to nearby beach via convenient "beach safari" service

Best for:

- Tots (0-2)
- Kids (3-6)
- Kids (7-9)
- Tweens (10-12)
- Teens (13+)

Family Amenities

- Babysitting
- Children's Program
- Cribs
- DVD Player
- Kitchenettes
- Laundry Service
- Onsite Dining
- Pool

Family Interests

- Beach
- Bicycling
- Golf
- Hiking
- Museum/Cultural
- Water Sports

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96% families recommend



29 family reviews

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Only a few years old, this magical Maine resort has already become an annual pilgrimage place for families looking for a summer oasis that perfectly combines relaxation and communing with the outdoors. The tradition of Maine wilderness camps goes back more than century, but most camps are farther north in the piney interior of the state, some on lakes accessible only by seaplane. While such seclusion can be peaceful, it doesn't offer a lot of activities to entertain young kids; and rustic accommodations can often be trying for families in need of modern comforts. Enter Hidden Pond: located just outside the southern Maine resort town of Kennebunkport, it consists of several dozen cottages set in a beautiful wooded area that gives the feel of a wilderness experience without the seclusion or splinters.

The 14 two-bedroom cottages of the resort have been individually designed by leading New England interior designers in a range of styles. Despite the upscale feel inside the cottages, however, the atmosphere of the resort still retains the laidback feel of an authentic Maine camp with plenty of local character in the decor and fun recreational offerings. A fire pit by the pool is the site of nightly s'more-making, and the main lodge is tastefully decorated with a combination of birch boughs and Audubon prints. The 60-acre wooded site also has plenty of ways to get out into nature, including hiking trails leading into the woods from the property, a shuttle to nearby Goose Rocks beach, and special "forest clambakes" that create a traditional Maine meal in a wooded setting. At the center of the resort is an on-site organic farm that allows guest to learn about slow-food growing techniques and pick their own vegetables to cook in the cottages.

The resort itself opened in 2008, and has been slowly adding features ever since. New for the 2011 season are 20 bungalows that offer more affordable, rustic accommodations, while still maintaining high standards of comfort. Also new is a "farm-to-fork" restaurant by Boston restaurateur Ken Origner and a "tree spa" that is literally housed within a log cabin set high in the tree canopy. While not cheap, the resort is relatively affordable compared to similar high-end New England resorts, and great value considering all of the perks that come with it. Cottages go for a flat-rate in the high-season of around \$800 a night, and half that in the shoulder season.

Written by Michael Blanding

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Hidden Pond Reviews

Read More Reviews from TripAdvisor



What a Place!!

BFamilyMass - (Massachusetts) - Sep 27th, 2010

My family and I (two girls -- ages 9 & 6) were treated to 4 days at Hidden Pond. We did everything you could do. We swam in the resort's pool, attended the nightly bonfires complete with smores, rode bikes around the resorts roads and trails (the kids even [more +](#)

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Family Ratings

Accommodations:

Dining:

Kid Activities:

Kids Play Area:

Money Value:

Pool & Water Fun:

Staff:

Editor's Rating:

Club CARLSON

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Kids' Club

Hidden Pond offers a wealth of outdoor activities for kids in both a formal and informal capacity. The resort's formal kids' program, Camp Hidden Pond, is available for tykes age 4 and over (advance registration required). Energetic staffers lead kids in bug hunts, gardening lessons, field day games, hikes, and crafts.

Activities for Everyone

In addition to the kids' program, Hidden Pond also offers many activities on the resort grounds, including a sizeable outdoor pool with both deep and shallow ends outside the main lodge building. There is a convenient, adjacent bar and grill for parents to chill while the kids splash around. Every night at 6:30 p.m., the resort holds a bonfire in the fire pit where guests can relax and children can make s'mores by the fire. Kids of all ages are also allowed to attend yoga and tai chi classes offered throughout the week in the fitness center (children under 12 should be accompanied by a parent), or attend painting or other art classes on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons with friendly artist-in-resident Judith Kinsman, who is used to teaching all ages of children and adults.

Beaches

Take a jaunt to Goose Rocks Beach, one of the nicest in Southern Maine, just a mile away. If you want to save the schlepping, the resort also offers a "Beach Safari" service -- a shuttle to Goose Rocks or other local beaches that includes a pre-packed cooler of snacks, beach umbrella, and tote bag full of towels and other amenities, perfect for families with young kids who have enough to carry already.

Teens will find their thrills at Old Orchard Beach -- an old-school beachside amusement park full of rickety wooden rides, games of skill and tented arcade parlors that provide lots of opportunity for fun mischief.

Area Excursions

It's easy for families to explore the surrounding environment. The resort's fleet of old-fashioned style cruising bikes includes some children's bikes and bike carriers for families to tool into downtown Kennebunkport for ice cream.

The resort also coordinates several expeditions with local tour operators, including a half-day lobster boat tour that allows kids to try their hand at hauling up traps, and kayaking trips on along the coast.

Within a half-hour's drive southern Maine offers up plenty of other diversions to keep all ages happy. Toddlers will be thrilled by the 200-some trolleys and streetcars of the Seashore Trolley Museum, which includes complimentary rides through the nearby woods.

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Sandbar Grill

The main lodge has an outdoor grill area by the pool called the Sandbar Grill that offers a full area of classics such as hot dogs, hamburgers, and of course, lobster rolls. Kid-sized versions of all of the sandwiches are available.

Back Porch Bar

Next door, the Back Porch bar opens at 3:30 p.m. to serve cocktails, beer, and wine, along with "small bites" including local cheese, shrimp

cocktail, and lobster sliders.

Earth

Just opened in 2011, Earth takes the resort to a new level, offering fine-dining creations crafted by a superstar Boston chef, Ken Oringer. Like many new restaurants, the focus is on farm-to-table cuisine, with a changing menu of ingredients -- all sourced from farms within a 50-mile radius of the resort. In late spring, for example, appetizers may include fiddlehead ferns and oysters, while late summer might feature heirloom tomatoes and fresh herbs. Entrees of course will always include Maine lobster, roasted in a wood oven and served with green curry butter, as well as locally caught fish and wood-roasted garden vegetables. The accompanying sauces and spices are bold, featuring an around-the-world tour of flavors from curry to jalpeno. Keep that in mind when you are bringing the kids. While the restaurant offers high chairs and booster seats, it doesn't have a separate children's menu, so parents of picky eaters may have to do a little foraging of their own to accommodate kids' palates. On the plus-side, the farm-fresh, healthy cuisine is a welcome respite from the usual kids' selections of mac n' cheese and chicken fingers.

Nunan's Lobster Hut

When venturing off property, you can't go wrong with Nunan's Lobster Hut, an archetypal Maine lobster pound with virtually one item on the menu. Lobsters are served without pretention the way they have been here for nearly 60 years: boiled with a side of butter on a pizza tray, and bursting with flavorful meat. Hamburgers and hot dogs are available for kids with crustacean aversion. Keep in mind the restaurant is cash only.

The Clam Shack

Another favorite in the heart of Kennebunkport is The Clam Shack, which lives up to its name with fresh clams and other deep-fried goodies, served at picnic tables on the waterfront.

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When Hidden Pond was conceived, its owners wanted to retain as much of a local feel as possible without engaging in straight rustic Maine cliché. So it hired the best interior designers in the region to put their own twist on the cottage experience -- the designers competed to outdo one another in over-the-top but tasteful designs. It is the guests who win out. The results range from a comfy country interior full of wicker and wainscoting, to stylish urban palettes of bright red and lime green, to more exotic nods to Indian

decor. No matter how bold the designs; however, each creator took pains to remind guests that they are still in Maine with rustic stone fireplaces, whimsical lobster sculptures and other details that evoke the character of the state. Each of the cottages accommodates four people at a flat rate, though several cottages have nooks that can fit an extra twin bed. Air mattresses and "pack n' plays" are available at no additional cost to accommodate larger families.

The 20 new bungalow cottages are more consistent in design, offering a cozier and more affordable alternative to the design cottages. Here, the intent was to harmonize indoor and outdoor spaces as much as possible, with a king-size bed fronted by a fieldstone fireplace, a screened sitting area with daybed, and bathroom complete with outdoor shower -- perfect after a day at the beach. The bungalows are designed for two adults; however, again there is flexibility for adding children, especially if families have only one small child.

Both cottages and bungalows offer all the luxurious amenities you'd expect from an upscale resort, including Frette linens, flat-screen televisions with DVD players and Bose stereo systems. All of the accommodations also offer a full kitchen with refrigerator, stove, and dishwasher, for nights you don't feel like bringing the family into town or even across the grounds to the resort's restaurants. Making life easier, the resort offers several packages for stocking the fridge at reasonable rates, and allows guests to freely pick produce from the onsite organic garden to supplement meals.

The only downside from a kids' accommodation standpoint is the lack of toys, games, or other goodies provided in the rooms.

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All about the Extras

New for 2011 is the resort's Tree Spa, a log cabin literally set up in the tree canopy with catwalks connecting three treatment rooms. At this point, therapists offer Swedish, deep tissue, and reflexology massages, accompanied by the sounds of forest birds and gently swaying tree boughs. The resort also offers a small fitness center by the farm, with two treadmills and a selection of free weights. Real gym rats won't be impressed by the equipment, but for a quick and casual workout, the facility does the trick.

Call ahead to arrange for babysitting for a night out in Kennebunkport or a romantic meal at the resort's restaurant, Earth. The resort provides a list of bonded babysitters in the area. Rates are typically \$20 to \$25 an hour depending on the babysitter and number of children.

The Art of Smart Timing

Hidden Pond is open from mid-May through Halloween. The most economical time to visit is during shoulder season in May to June or September to October, when rates can be half that of high season. If you have a choice, choose the later months, as the ocean warms a month or two behind the land, making September your best bet for swimmable water temperatures at the beach (though this is Maine after all, so be prepared to shiver when you first dip your toe no matter what month.) The most rewarding time to visit, however, is during the height of summer, when the forest is lush, the beach days are hot, and the garden is full of good things to pick for cooking. Of course, this is also the most expensive time to visit, but thankfully Hidden Pond's spacious grounds and small number of cottages ensure it doesn't seem crowded even at summer's peak. Keep in mind that August can get pretty sticky from humidity (all the more reason to hit the beach), and bug spray is mandatory in late May and early June, otherwise known as "black fly" season in Northern New England, when the little biting critters come out with a vengeance.

Getting There

It's easy enough to drive to Hidden Pond from Boston or New York, a two-hour or six-hour drive up I-95 respectively (from the latter origin, take a detour down I-84 and I-495 along the way to shave off a half an hour). Boston is served by Logan International Airport, which offers all the standard rental car counters. Flights by major carriers also land at Portland International Jetport, where car rentals are also available. If you prefer to take a taxi from the airport, charges are approximately \$100 to \$140 each way.

For Mom and Dad

Even though the resort is perfectly accommodating to families, mom and dad will never feel like they are sacrificing their own luxury and enjoyment in order to cater to the kids. The poolside bar is a particularly nice feature, allowing parents to drink and nosh while their kids have fun playing. While it accommodates families, the new restaurant Earth is really better suited to adults with its romantic outdoor tables literally set around the paths of the chef's garden. And of course, the treetop spa offers the perfect opportunity to leave worldly cares behind for an hour while getting pampered in the canopy.

Downtown Kennebunkport is full of dining options for a night out sans kids. On the Marsh features a candlelit dining room with live piano on weekends to accompany a classic bistro menu; or for the ultimate in romance, book ahead at the White Barn Inn, a rustically romantic dining room inside a converted 19th century barn that serves up white-jacketed waiters, the delectable cuisine of chef Jonathan Cartwright (try the smoked lobster or the short-rib mille-feuille), and regular wedding proposals.

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