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Heavenly sailing on the Maine coast with Angelique

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The schooner Angelique sailing in the waters of Penobscot Bay in mid-coast Maine.

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I'm not a sailor but I love the sight of large ships scudding over water with nothing but the wind to propel them. With sails billowing and decks aslant, I want to be on them listening to the wind and the sound of water rushing by.

That's why, when the chance to sail on Angelique came, I jumped. The added perk was that the trip included a chance to see the annual parade of



Schooners in Rockland Harbor – and from the deck of a ship flaunting red sails!

All about Angelique

Angelique is a member of the [Maine Windjammer Fleet](#) and, while she was built in 1980, she is an all steel vessel built as a traditional Gaff Topsail Ketch and as beautiful to see as any of the historic vessels in the Fleet. Her dark green hull is topped off with a white rail and the deep wood tones of her two tall masts match nicely with the deep red of her massive sails. Nearly two dozen feet wide, her overall length is 130 feet with a deck length of 95 feet which means that even when she is filled with her maximum capacity of 31 passengers there is plenty of room for everyone.



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I had heard that cabins on these ships were small but I found that each of the [sixteen cabins on the Angelique](#) were just what was needed, most being fitted out with bunk beds and a few with doubles. Much to my surprise, every room comes with a sink and running water – cold water, that is. Close to each of the set of cabins is a common head (that's a bathroom to us land-bound folk) and there are two showers.

It's about the trip

Angelique sets sail on voyages from 2, 3, 4 and 6 days, sailing from its home berth in Camden, Maine, to locations throughout the huge Penobscot Bay, Blue Hill Bay and even to Mount Desert Island and Acadia National Park. Its cruises often include events, such as the Swan's Island Music Festival (Aug 4-10), the Camden Windjammer Festival (Aug 27-31) and the Windjammer Fleet rendezvous (Sept 8-14). Other sailings concentrate on nature, such as the Meteor Shower cruise (Aug 11-14) and the Fall Foliage tour (Sept 29-Oct 3).

The sailing experience

While Angelique does have twin diesel engines to make sure she can get to where she needs to be if the wind dies down, they are seldom used as she makes her way noiselessly across the bay and between the myriad of islands.

There is a certain magic about standing on a slightly canted deck and hearing the low murmur of the winds sliding off the huge red sails above your head and the rippling of white water rushing past the sharp pointed bow. Penobscot Bay is a huge piece of water but it

also is dotted by numerous islands, large and small. Ask the captain where we are headed in the morning and he is likely to answer "I don't know yet." The vagaries of the wind are the telling force in these ventures and one is as likely to spend the night off the island of North Haven as anchored in Stonington at the end of Deer Island.

Sailing through the Fox Islands Thorofare between North Haven and Vinalhaven Islands and through the Deer Island Thorofare off Stonington, one is struck by the extraordinary wild beauty of these granite outposts at sea. Small smooth faced skerries project from the sea while beyond large islands poke above the surface, some with only a few trees and others with small forests. One night, anchored off Babson Island, just east of Deer Island, there was a chance to explore the rocky shoreline and venture up through the wooded shore to the island's center, through a field of bright green three-foot tall ferns with views to sailboats in the bay beyond. Shore excursions -- there's usually one each day -- are part of the fun, exploring small island outposts like North Haven and visits to the wooden boat-building school run by Wooden Boat Magazine at Brooklin being only two of a many possibilities. Every trip is different. And not the least of experiences is watching spectacular sunsets from the deck after dinner.

Life aboard ship

While the large galley below decks can easily accommodate all of the passengers, many times meals are served on deck. Coffee and tea appear magically at 7 a.m. daily and breakfast is freshly made in the compact but efficient galley. Passengers can avoid the sun in the deck-level salon or find a place in the sun or shade on deck watching for porpoise, seals and even whales. Lunch is usually served on deck where passengers are free to move about and compare notes on their experiences. One of the memorable meals on my trip was a late brunch with small individual frittatas and fresh-baked rolls with lox and cream cheese. Every voyage comes with a lobster dinner prepared and served on the beach -- if the weather allows, of course. Even the bread served on the ship is made daily by the ship's chef. The captain keeps a large chest filled with ice on deck for drinks that each passenger brings aboard and passengers are allowed to bring their own alcoholic beverages (but excessive drinking is not allowed) aboard. A spontaneous and congenial happy hour developed on deck just after anchoring and the stowing of sails for the day.

Finding Angelique

Check out [Angelique on line](#) and find the schedule of sailings and special events. If you are unsure about sailing but want to sample the experience, choose one of the shorter trips. If

the lure of the sea is stronger pick a longer cruise. Immensely enjoyable and relaxing, these trips can be addictive. Prices run from \$520 to about \$980 per person and include the trip, all meals while at sea and all shore excursions. Dinner on the night of boarding is in Camden and is on your own. We chose Fresh near the harbor and liked both the food and the atmosphere.

From the Boston area take I-95 north and at Portland follow I-295 which will merge again with I-95. At Brunswick take the exit for Route 1 through Bath, Wiscasset, Newcastle/Damariscotta and Waldoboro. A few miles beyond Waldoboro, turn left onto Route 90, a short-cut to Camden. Figure on 3.5 to 4 hours plus a stop for lunch at a clam shack on the way.



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