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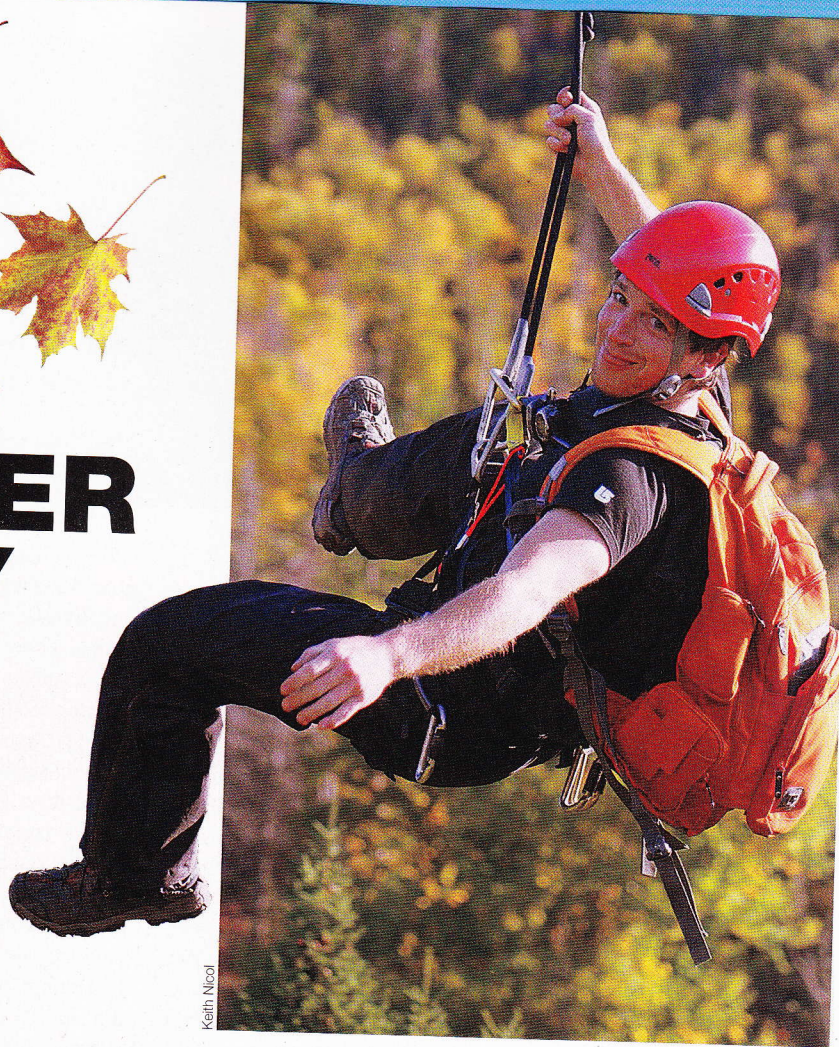
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# Falling for the **HUMBER VALLEY**

Autumn in Western Newfoundland offers  
awesome outdoor experiences

by Dale Dunlop and Alison Scott



Keith Nicol

**T**he Long Range Mountains of Western Newfoundland are the northernmost extension of the Appalachians—and therefore contain most of the same tree species found in New England. Few people realize that they can do a traditional fall foliage driving tour there and have the quintessential experiences associated with autumn in the Northeast. And, as with many Newfoundland experiences, visitors will be pleasantly surprised—maybe even thrilled—by how much there is to see and do.

Just outside Corner Brook, NL, the Humber River cuts a steep valley through the surrounding mountains. By mid-September, the valley is aflame with the oranges and reds of fall foliage. The Trans-Canada Highway follows the course of the river from Corner Brook to Deer Lake, a distance of about 50 kilometres, almost all of which makes for great fall viewing.

But the foliage is by no means the only reason to visit the Humber River region at this time of year. The region plays host to an amazing variety of activities for outdoor-oriented visitors. Probably the most exhilarating can be had at Marble Zip Tours at Steady Brook, just outside Corner Brook.

Steady Brook Gorge is found adjacent to Marble Mountain Ski Resort and, until the zipline was built, it was best known for its spectacular waterfall. The zipline crosses and re-crosses the gorge eight times, offering some amazing views of the waterfall.

Marble Zip Tours uses a two-line connection that allows for hands-free zipping. While zipping from platform to platform you can photograph or shoot video of the waterfall and the foliage on Marble Mountain, all while spinning 360 degrees. One of the ziplines is the highest in Canada; at its highest point, it is an amazing 285 feet (87 metres) above the ground. The final two lines are the second- and third-longest in the country and offer a great way to end the Marble Zip experience. While ziplining sounds scary, it is actually very safe, and customers as young as six and as old as 89 have enjoyed the sport here. For those less intrepid, there is a large viewing deck just minutes away.

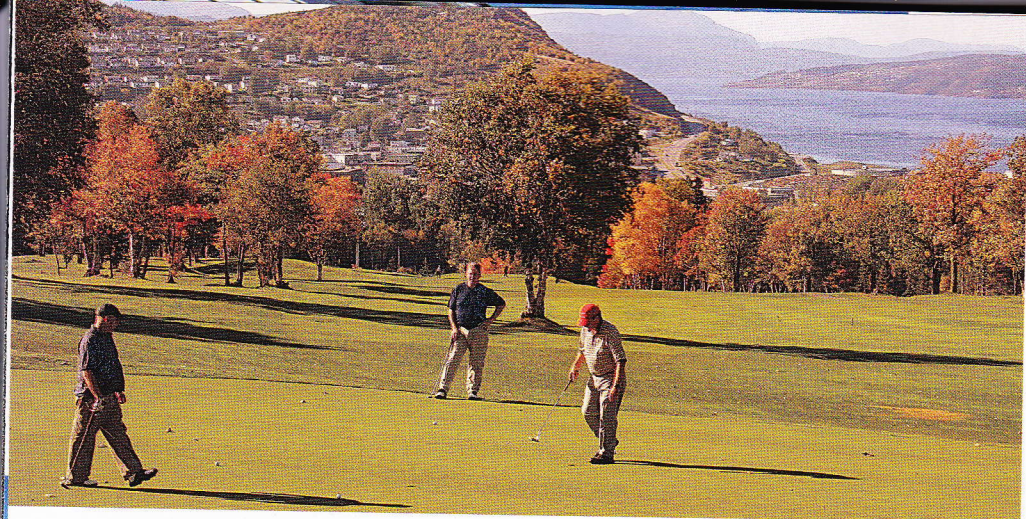
If you prefer to keep your feet a little closer to the ground, you can try spelunking. Cycle Solutions in Corner Brook offers tours that can be tailored for the skill and fitness levels of the participants. After a short hike through the woods and a scramble down a small cliff with

Right: Newfoundland's Humber River Canyon is ablaze with yellow birch trees in the fall. Far right: the fall brilliance at Wild Cove Pond, along the Appalachian Trail, makes a great photographic backdrop. Above: ziplining over Steady Brook Gorge.



Keith Nicol





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#### If you go, check out these links

- [marbleziptours.com](http://marbleziptours.com)
- [cyclesolutions.com](http://cyclesolutions.com)
- [blomidongolf.com](http://blomidongolf.com)
- [humbervalley.com/golf](http://humbervalley.com/golf)
- [eurekaoutdoors.nf.ca](http://eurekaoutdoors.nf.ca)
- [newfoundlandlabrador.com](http://newfoundlandlabrador.com)
- [humbervalley.com](http://humbervalley.com)

the aid of a rope, you come to a cave opening. The cave, carved out of the mountains by the Corner Brook Stream, is a relatively easy one to explore, even for beginners. Once inside, you follow the traverse of the brook, negotiating the pinches and curves of the "shore" of the waterway. For those who are a little more ambitious, this cave has an attic—a cave above the cave. You have to manage the climb and be willing to get really dirty.

Golf is not the sport most potential visitors would associate with the Humber River Valley, but it is home to two courses. Blomidon Golf and Country Club is a mature course located in the heart of Corner Brook; it was recently redesigned by Canada's most famous golf architect, Graham Cooke. It is a good test of golf at a fair price.

Just 20 minutes outside Corner Brook is Humber Valley Resort, where the River Course has gained renown. The course was named "Canada's Best New Course" by *SCORE* Golf magazine and "Best New International Course" by *Golf* magazine in 2007. Architect Doug Carrick has taken full advantage of the changes of elevation and the proximity of the river to create a course that is a must-play for any serious golfer. From a scenic perspective, the course is truly at its best in the fall.

If the Humber is not synonymous with golf, it certainly is synonymous with salmon fishing. The lower Humber River, from Deer Lake to its mouth at Bay of Islands, has been attracting salmon fishermen from all over the world for more than 100 years—all of them hoping to catch one of the huge fish for which this river is known.

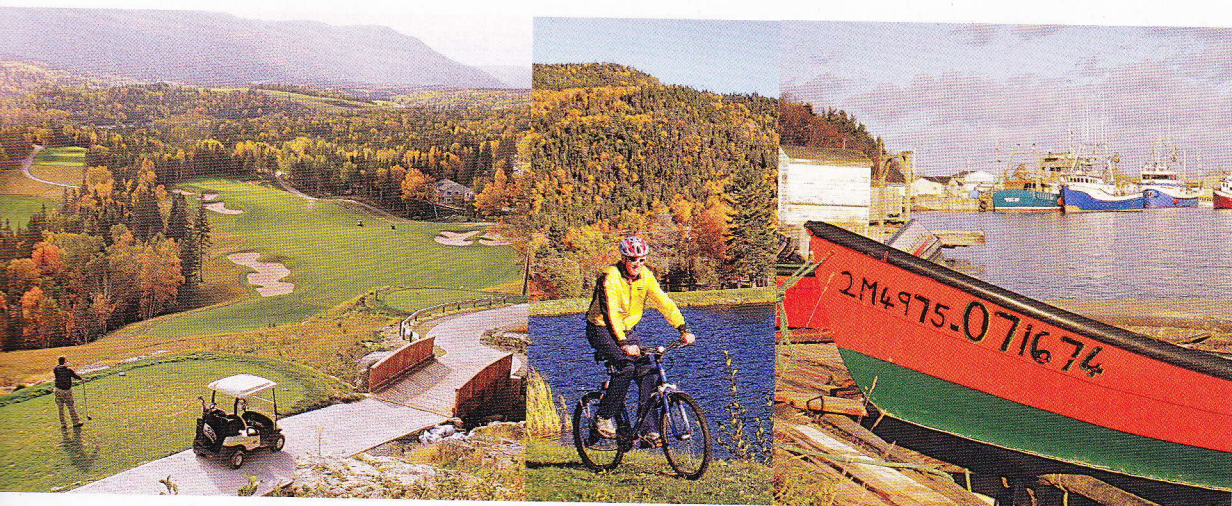
While salmon are caught throughout the summer, the best time to land a trophy-sized salmon is from late August to mid-September. In this part of Newfoundland, non-residents who want to fish for salmon are required to use a licenced guide or be accompanied by a direct relative who is licenced; one of the best-known guiding companies is Eureka Outdoors.

Don't miss the chance to see Western Newfoundland's seaside fall splendor along the Captain Cook's Trail, which starts in Corner Brook and ends at Lark Harbour, at the entrance to the Bay of Islands. Few people know that the legendary Captain Cook learned and honed his navigational skills in Canada or that he spent four years mapping the island of Newfoundland for the British Admiralty. Start the trip by visiting Captain James Cook National Historic Site atop Crow Hill, overlooking Corner Brook, where a series of panels details his exploits in the area. Be sure to follow the path to its end, where there is an outstanding panorama of the Bay of Islands.

After passing through a number of scenic villages, you'll come to Frenchman's Cove, where the scenery takes a dramatic turn as the mountains rise almost straight from the sea and the bay becomes studded with rugged islands. One highlight is a series of waterfalls that plunge hundreds of feet from the cliff above. At the end of the trail are Bottle Cove and Little Port, both part of the community of Lark Harbour. The picturesque Little Port is filled with traditional dories and gaily coloured fishing boats. And while the return journey must follow the same road, the views are completely different on the way back.

Getting to the Humber Valley area is not difficult. There is regular air service to Deer Lake, or you can make the 40-minute drive from Corner Brook; alternatively, there are car ferries from Nova Scotia that land at Port aux Basques, just over 200 kilometres away. There are a variety of accommodations throughout the area, especially in Corner Brook and near Marble Mountain Ski Resort. The province's official website is a great place to start looking (see "If You Go," above).

For those in search of luxury, the Humber Valley Resort offers three-to five-bedroom chalets that are larger than most people's homes. Aside from the world-class golf, the resort offers a full service spa—a great way to recharge. ☺



Keith Nicol

From far left: golfers enjoy the fall scenery on the course at Newfoundland's Humber Valley Resort; a bike ride offers a chance to breathe in the autumn air at the base of Marble Mountain Ski Resort; Frenchman's Cove, where the bay becomes studded with rugged islands. Top: Blomidon Golf and Country Club, which was recently redesigned by Canada's most famous golf architect.