Portland, Maine, was established by the British in 1632 as a trading fishing settlement and called by the Indian name Machigonne. The name was changed to Casco and then to Falmouth in 1658 before becoming Portland in 1786.

The Portland Museum of Art is one of Portland's many museums and features American, European, and Maine artists from the 18th century to the present. The Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine College of Art presents contemporary artwork by local, national, and international artists. The Museum of African Culture is devoted exclusively to sub-Saharan African arts and culture. Art, artifacts, and documents that focus on life in Maine are exhibited at the Maine Historical Society Museum.

Other museums in the area include the Portland Science Center; Children's Museum and Theatre; Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Co. & Museum; Portland Fire Museum; International Cryptozoology Museum, which presents the study of hidden animals; and the Maine Memory Network, which is a statewide digital museum.

The Longfellow House, childhood home of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, is decorated with family memorabilia and original furnishings from the 1850s and is the oldest standing building in the city. Other historic homes in Portland include the Tate House, which was built in 1755 by a mast agent for the British Navy, and Victoria Mansion, which is also known as the Morse Libby House and contains the original furnishings from the Victorian era designed by Gustave Herter. The Portland Observatory Museum is the only remaining historic maritime signal station in the country.

Portland has many venues for the arts. Merrill Auditorium is home to the Kotschmar Organ, which is one of the oldest working municipal pipe organs in the United States; Portland Symphony Orchestra; PORTopera; and Portland Ovations, which sponsors music, dance, theater, and Broadway shows. Portland Stage Company produces 10 plays annually. The State Theater and Port City Music Hall host various musical acts. Theater, dance, and musical performances are held at St. Lawrence Arts Center and One Longfellow Square. Children’s Museum and Theatre annually produces four shows by children and for children.

The annual Portland Chamber Music Festival is based at the on the Portland campus.

**NEIGHBORHOODS**

Portland’s 18 neighborhoods can be classified as being located on the peninsula, off the peninsula, or the islands. Downtown Portland, located on the peninsula, features an art district with condominiums located on the upper floors of commercial buildings. The Western Promenade is an on-the-peninsula neighborhood developed during the later 19th and early 20th centuries and is home to the city’s three hospitals. Other on-the-peninsula neighborhoods like the West End and Munjoy Hill, also known as the East End, have a mix of single-, two-, and three-family homes and new condominium developments. Located between the downtown and the Back Cove, Bayside and East Bayside feature new high-density housing developments.

Deering Center is an off-the-peninsula neighborhood built during the first half of the 20th century and features single- and two-family houses with a more suburban and predominantly residential feel. Housing styles include Italianate, Romanesque, eclectic Revival, and Colonial Revival styles. This neighborhood is convenient to the city’s three hospitals. Other off-the-peninsula neighborhoods include Stroudwater Village, which is one of the oldest settlements in Portland and features historic homes, and North Deering, which has a range of housing styles, sizes, and prices. Most of the houses in North Deering were built during the 20th century; however, some lots are available for new construction. The off-the-peninsula area has many trails for hiking and cycling.

Among the islands, Peaks Island is the largest, closest to the mainland, and is home to the most year-round residents. Cushing, Little Diamond, and Great Diamond Islands, as well as Peaks, are accessible to the mainland by ferries that operate daily. Cliff Island, furthest from the mainland, is very rustic and home to many lobstermen. Access to Cushing Island is reserved for residents and their guests.

**PARKS AND RECREATION**

Portland has 37 parks, including two off-leash dog parks, four community centers (two with pools), an outdoor pool, a municipal golf course, and an ice arena.

The 55-acre Deering Oaks Park features the Karl Switzer Rose Circle, which contains over 600 roses and is an All-America Rose Selections bed for testing new rose varieties. This park also has a large playground and a Saturday farmer’s market.

Baxter Woods is a 30-acre nature reserve and home to the largest forest in Portland.

The 3.5-mile circular trail around Back Cove is a preferred jogging, biking, and walking trail.

Located behind the Longfellow House, Longfellow Garden is a Colonial Revival style garden.

The Eastern Promenade (Eastern Prom) is a 68.2-acre historic promenade that is home to many historical sites, including the Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad Museum and the mast of the USS Portland, a heavy cruiser commissioned by the United States Navy in 1933.

East End Beach is Portland’s only public beach. Portland also offers many opportunities for water sports, including sailing and fishing.

Portland is home to the Portland Pirates (ice hockey), Portland Sea Dogs (baseball), and Red Claws (basketball).

**EDUCATION**

Portland Public Schools serve approximately 7,000 students in 10 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 4 high schools. The regional arts and technology high school offers courses in health care, robotics, and “green” construction.

Opportunities for higher education are available in Portland. The University of Southern Maine offers undergraduate and graduate programs in various fields, including nursing. The University of New England’s Portland campus has undergraduate and graduate degree programs in many health care fields, including dentistry, nursing, and pharmaceutical sciences. Undergraduate and graduate degrees in art are available at Maine College of Art. Southern Maine Community College offers courses at two Portland high schools.

**HEALTH CARE**

Maine Medical Center is licensed for 637 beds and is both a community hospital and a tertiary care center. In partnership with Maine Medical Center, Tufts University School of Medicine offers a "Maine Track" for medical students interested in rural practice as well as training in a major tertiary medical center.

Mercy Health System of Maine is a not-for-profit community health care system with three campuses and a combined total of 230 inpatient beds.

New England Rehabilitation Hospital of Portland is a 90-bed free-standing acute rehabilitation hospital.

**CITY STATS**

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