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ACTION PLANS

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WEEKEND

SHIPSHAPE: Packing for a day on Maine's Allagash Lake



Island coastline. Settle at colonial Rose Farm Inn (\$149; www.rosefarminn.com) and make for the cobweb of hiking trails in Rodman's Hollow, a glacial outwash basin leading to cappuccino-colored bluffs and an oft deserted swath of beachfront. Hungry? Tie up at Oar on Great Salt Pond for the local combo meal: a cup of chowder and a mudslide.

Do the Tour des Smokies TENNESSEE

It's adventure cush epitomized: high-demolishing days cycling Smoky Mountain grades and cricket-quiet nights on a fluffed-up featherbed. Dancing Bear Lodge (\$229; www.dancingbearlodge.com) treats guests like Tour de France pros, sending out a follow car loaded with gear and food (\$100 for four hours) for cyclists plying the 60-mile Black Bear Bike Bash route, a backroads course so bushy wild it could double as a hiking trail.

CENTRAL

Find Prairie Companions KANSAS

The Cimarron National Grassland (www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/cim), home to a stretch of the Santa Fe Trail, is a 108,175-acre time capsule of the days when tough-as-rawhide settlers rolled West. To parallel the historic thoroughfare, set off down the 19-mile Companion Trail, a discreetly mowed path through wide-open expanses rife with prairie dogs, coyote, and pronghorn antelope. After the hike out, "summit" Point of Rocks; at 3,540 feet, one of the state's highest points. (Continued on page 36)

Launch Your Getaway

Twelve splashy thrills, expertly taught skills, and cushy lodges—found coast-to-coast and close to home BY CHRISTOPHER PERCY COLLIER

EAST

Take the Pole Position

MAINE

The Eagle Scouts were wrong: Standing in a canoe has its advantages. Play apprentice to champion canoe polers as they teach their craft on narrow Class II stretches of Allagash Stream, in northern Maine (\$295 for a two-day course; www.allagashcanoetrips.com). Learn to "snub," a technique that helps you hold your line while navigating the four-mile flow to a

primitive campsite on Allagash Lake. "With a pole, you can stop on a dime and scout rapids," says guide Lani Cochrane. On day two, head salmon-like, upstream, steering clear of beaver dams and seeking refuge in the dead water of eddies.

Bike Around the Block

RHODE ISLAND

A bike and a backpack—that's about all you'll need when boarding the ferry bound for Block Island (\$10 one-way; www.blockislandferry.com), a shabby-chic vacationland 15 miles from the Rhode