Hi Everyone!

As you may have guessed from the title of this post, I’m going to be talking about all the wonderful walking trails that the St. John’s area has to offer. The landscape and the scenery on the trails in St. John’s are unique, tranquil and filled with beautiful flora and fauna! As you walk these trails, you may encounter whales, many different species of birds, berry plants, and the famous Pitcher Plant, which is NL’s floral emblem.

One of the things I love most about NL is that all these trails give you the ability to be adventurous and allow you to enjoy the nature of NL without having to go very far. These trails allow you to connect with nature, yourself and your friends while getting physically active. Also, did you know that spending time in nature has been shown to be good for your mental health?

I have so many precious, warm and fun memories from my time on the trails of NL that have deepened my bond with my friends, and helped me grow and learn more about myself. One of my favorite memories is having a picnic on the La Manche Village Trail on a warm August day while laughing with friends and soaking up the scenic ocean view.

I encourage you to make some time to check out these trails for yourself and see what benefits they bring to your life and studies.

The top 10 trails I’m about to list for you are in no particular order, because I love them all and I cannot choose a favorite — every trail has something new for you to discover once you start exploring these trails on your own.

Before we get started on this list, I’d like to give you some pointers for you to keep in mind prior to heading out on the trails:

1. **Wear appropriate footwear (e.g., hiking shoes or supported joggers).** Most, if not all, of these trails will have uneven landscape with gravel, loose rocks, tree roots and/or mud. This kind of landscape is a tripping hazard, so remember safety first!

2. **Take a sweater and/or raincoat.** In NL, you never know when you could see a rain shower that was not forecast or a sudden drop in temperature, especially if you are walking near the ocean. As you will soon see, you can experience 4 seasons in one day in NL.
3. **Bring bug repellent.** In NL, we get a lot of wet weather which is a good breeding ground for bugs. So if you’re going on a trail that has wooded areas then its best to bring the repellent and avoid those itchy bug bits.

4. **Take water and snacks with you.** Remember that you need to stay hydrated and keep your energy up while undergoing physical activity.

5. **Let others know where you are going and walk/hike with a buddy if possible.** When exploring a trail, you should always let others know where you are in case of an emergency.

6. **Bring a first aid kit.** This applies more to those on hiking trails because you are more likely to fall, trip or slip from the changes in elevation and landscape.

7. **Bring a hat and do not forget your sunscreen.** Even when it’s overcast there is still the risk of getting a sunburn or heat stroke.

Now that you know what you need to consider before exploring the trails of St. John’s area, let’s talk about the top 10 trails you must try and complete while you study at Memorial University.

1. **North Head Trail - Signal Hill National Historic Site**
Image and Trail Information from **North Head Trail - Signal Hill National Historic Site** and **Destination St. John's**.

This is a classic trail that many in St. John’s enjoy each year, especially in the summer months, as you can see whales, seabirds, icebergs and the famous Signal Hill. You absolutely must go to Signal Hill for the views — but also go to learn about the history of NL! This trail is the oldest and most hiked trail in St. John’s with over 35,000 people hiking it annually. The trail takes about 1 hour to complete and is a 1.7 km loop with a difficulty level of strenuous/challenging. While considered strenuous/challenging, most people have no trouble walking this trail, however, those with disabilities and health issues should assess the trail before heading out.

2. **Pippy Park: Hiking and Walking Trails**

Image and Trail Information from **Pippy Park**.

This is a popular trail that is loved by MUN students, as the trail is located between the **Fluvarium** and the MUN campus, located just behind the S.J. Carew Building. This easy trail features a beautiful walk around Long Pond, as well as lots of different aquatic and terrestrial habits and wildlife, such as ducks and
squirrels. When you walk this trail, you won't believe that you are in the city centre. The trail takes about 2 hours to complete and is about 3 km long.

3. **East Coast Trail**

![Image of a coastal arch rock formation]

**Image and Trail Information from [East Coast Trail Association](http://www.eastcoasttrail.ca).**

I love, love, love the East Coast Trail! It is an expansive network of trails, with the most spectacular ocean views, wildlife, flora and fauna! You will be amazed by the beauty of the Island of Newfoundland once you start hiking these trails. The East Coast Trail Association has over 20 hiking trails rated from easy to difficult, and trails can take anywhere from 2-12+ hours depending on the trail you choose. All the trails are beautiful and it's way too hard to pick a favourite, so here are 6 you don't want to miss because the views are out of this world:

1. [Silver Mine Head Path](http://www.eastcoasttrail.ca/silvermineheadpath)
2. [Sugarloaf Path](http://www.eastcoasttrail.ca/sugarloaphat)
3. [Cape Spear Path](http://www.eastcoasttrail.ca/capespearpath)
4. [La Manche Village Path](http://www.eastcoasttrail.ca/lamanchevillagepath)
5. [Spurwink Island Path](http://www.eastcoasttrail.ca/spurwinkislandpath)
6. **Spout Path**

4. **Manuels River Trails**

![Manuels River Trails Image](image-url)

Image and Trail Information from [Manuels River](#).

This is a popular, well-loved walking trail in CBS (20 minutes from the St. John’s area). This trail features ocean views, ancient fossils, rivers, local wildlife and is wheelchair accessible and stroller friendly. This trail is 4.5 km that takes about 2 hours to finish, and has a moderate difficulty level. If you're in the mood for ice cream after your walk, make sure to visit Bergs Famous Ice Cream Shop, which is just a few minutes’ walk from Manuals River Trail. Don’t forget to put this trail on your to-do list!

5. **Quidi Vidi Lake Trail**
This is a beloved trail in St. John’s where you will often find many people running and walking their dogs. This lake is home to many ducks and the famous Royal St. John’s Regatta, which is held on the first Wednesday of August each year. This easy trail is a 3.8 km loop that takes about 1.5 hours from start to finish. It’s also stroller friendly.
6. **Bowring Park Walking Trails**

![Image of Bowring Park](image)

Image and Trail Information from [Municipal Parks | St. John's](https://www.muni.stjohns.ca/parks) and [Ray Mackey Photography](https://www.raymackeyphotography.com).

My favourite seasons to visit this park in are the fall and winter because of the lovely fall colours and the warm christmas lights displayed during the holidays. Please make the effort to visit this park, I promise you won't regret it. This park was opened in 1914 and has grown into a downtown favorite for the people of St. John’s. It contains 4.8 km of easy walking trails, over 81 hectares (200 acres) of land, outdoor swimming and a bungalow. The trails feature lots of wildlife, like ducks, swans, geese and many other species of birds. You will also encounter lots of beautiful tall trees and a variety of flowers, rivers, fountains, ponds and small bridges. This is a great spot for picnics, active and passive recreational activities and is stroller friendly.

7. **Voisey's Brook Park Trails**
This is a lovely park in Portugal Cove-St. Philip’s (20 minutes from the St. John’s area) featuring about 6.5 km of easy walking trails that loop around the park. You can find local wildlife and flora on the trails, as well as bird watchers and lots of people walking with their dogs.
8. Ladies' Lookout Trail - Signal Hill National Historic Site

Image and Trail Information from Ladies' Lookout Trail - Signal Hill National Historic Site and The Telegram.

This is another classic, well-visited trail on Signal Hill that you have to visit! This trail features the highest point on Signal Hill and the earliest military defenses and signal stations in St. John’s. This trail is a 1.3 km loop that takes about 30 minutes to complete and has a difficult level of moderate.

9. Botanical Garden Trails
Images and Trail Information from Botanical Garden, Programs and Events | Botanical Garden and MUN SGS | FaceBook Page.

The Memorial University Botanical Gardens brings the community together by connecting people and plants in a beautiful and fun space that offers opportunities to learn about NL's flora, share knowledge about protecting NL’s
plants and bask in the beauty that is NL’s flora, by visiting the gardens and walking the easy trails.

I absolutely love the beauty and tranquility of Botanical Gardens. I highly recommend not only visiting the gardens in the summer but that you also visit the gardens in the winter for the Merry and Bright event that showcases the beauty of winter — it’s a wonderful event with spectacular light displays and arrangements that make you feel like you’re in a winter wonderland! This is one of my favorite winter events and I have been going ever since the event first started.

10. Bannerman Park
This park is another downtown favorite for those living in St. John’s, and is home to regional and provincial events, such as tournaments and festivals. It contains short, easy walking trails, bungalows, outdoor swimming and an outdoor skating park called The Loop in the winter months. I absolutely love The Loop, you have to go skating here! It features many other species of birds, gorgeous tall trees, and flowers. This is a great spot for picnics, active and passive recreational activities and is stroller friendly. If you got a sweet tooth then you must visit these 2 delicious ice cream shops: Moo Moo’s and The Parlour Gelato. Moo Moo’s and The Parlour Gelato are located right next to Bannerman Park.

P.S. The pictures don’t do the beauty justice, you have to see these places for yourself.

I wish you all the best as you explore the wondrous beauty found in NL and I hope that you find NL to be every bit as beautiful as I do!

- Leah C.