

TEE THURSDAY

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Put PEI on your 2026 'to-do' list



PHOTOS BY MOIRA MCCARTHY

Awe-inspiring scenery spreads out before you on this Links Course.

It's a rare light wind day on the coast of Prince Edward Island and I'm setting up to tee off on one the many jaw-dropping view holes at the Links at Crowbush Cove in rustic and rural Morell.

The sound of crashing waves calms me and the salty sea air is just the right amount of cool on this super sunny fall day. I swing, strike and land it on the fairway right where I wanted it.

But you know what? Had I shanked it, I'd still be filled with golfer's joy. As a player who loves the whole experience — from the fairway challenges to the doglegs to the scenery around me — The Links at Crowbush (<https://peisfinestgolf.com/>) gave me a list-topping round.

It's no wonder Crowbush won top accolades from the time it opened just over 30 years ago; everything about



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my round there was special. Crowbush is one of four golf courses operated by the provincial government of PEI — basically a muni — but plays like a well-manicured private spot.

The links feel is real: most holes are open to the views and the elements and are lined with thick fescue. Lucky me, for my first round there they'd just mowed that fescue down, making errant balls not just easier to find, but totally hittable. Still, I'd like to play it in its full Links attire, challenging edges or not.

When Hurricane Fiona ripped through the region in September 2022, it had Crowbush in its line of fire, ripping down and destroying thousands of trees.

A tragedy, to be sure, but one with a silver lining. When course designer Thomas McB-

room visited his masterpiece again post-storm clean up and looked out over the holes most impacted — the formerly tree lined holes 1-5 — he smiled.

"Nature did what we should have done," he is said to have said. What that storm did was transform Crowbush from a somewhat Links-like course to a full on Links experience. Today, with that fescue where trees once stood and an oft brisk wind swirling where forestry once somewhat blocked it, Crowbush plays like a dream.

That's not to say it's easy. The championship course offers up long par 5s, wildly challenging par 3s, some great risk/reward spots throughout. The greens are large and hard to read and tame; they're a little bit mean but a lot of fun. Sinking a long putt there is a huge victory.

We arrived early and had a fantastic breakfast at the course side Crow's Nest. There

are other dining choices as well since the course is tucked into the Rodd Crowbush Golf & Beach Resort. Paired up with two visitors from Vancouver, they played the whites, me the reds, and we all found our groove as we played, taking on carries over wetlands, some big water spots and breathtaking elevated tees.

The play was superior but for me, the setting sealed the deal. High up the "stairway to heaven" to the black tees of the 11th hole (stop and walk up there even if you're not playing those tees) you'll find a panoramic view of the PEI coastline and inland farms. Adirondack chairs are set there for you to soak it in; who cares if it adds a few more minutes to your round? It's a must-do. The beach sidles up next to you often, and folks on walks to and from there pop into view all day.

You'll want to arrive early. There's that great breakfast, as well as excellent practice facilities in-

cluding a full length range with free balls and a big putting green that mimics those challenging ones you'll take on out there. The staff — from waitstaff to starters to pro shop folks — are that level of friendly that we all love Canadians for.

Opt for a cart. While it is walkable, there are some big hills, and you'll want to use your time to take photos between shots rather than walk. Rounds come in at \$165 high season and \$115 before June 15 and after Sept. 28. To make it a deal, opt for a multicourse play package or consider one of their many play and stay offerings.

I've been lucky enough in my relatively new golf career to play many famed courses both in North America and abroad. Crowbush ranks among the best. Get to PEI and play it. And when you breathe in that salty air, thank nature for the newer layout. Sometimes the winds of change do right.



Tee boxes are often elevated and demand carry, making play just the right amount of challenging.

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