

## Petite Forte

47° 23.4' N x 54° 39.7' W

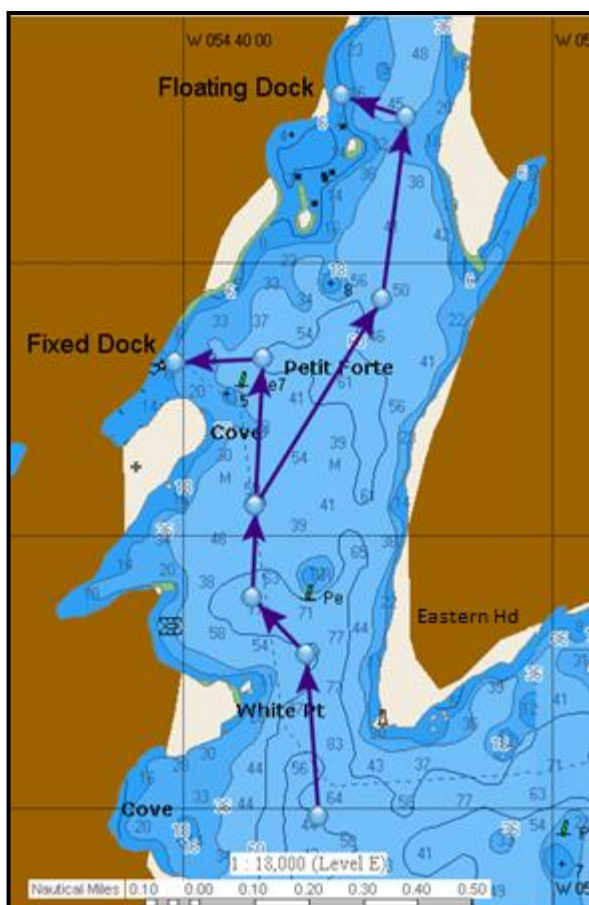
Chart # 4615

Frequently the subject of portraits and photographs, Petite Forte is a picturesque fishing town with a population of 102. Visitors will find two dockage options (one fixed, one floating), a good road connection to the Burin Peninsula Highway, and two small general stores.

**Approach:** Petite Forte is entered between Eastern Head to the east and White Point to the west. Approximately 0.3nm north of the entrance, a mid-channel bifurcation light buoy marks a rocky shoal covered by 12 feet of water. The town occupies the area along the western side of the arm.

**Caution:** The Petite Forte/Southeast Bight ferry (M/V Winchester) plies the approach waters six days a week on a schedule that varies each day. Like many other communities in this part of Placentia Bay, Petite Forte spends many days fog-bound, a circumstance that makes the movements of the 120-foot ferry a concern for visiting yachters. Its close-to-shore route presents a challenge to radar in resolving the vessel as a distinct target. The ferry monitors VHF 16 and we found the crew prompt and professional in responding to our inquiries about the ferry's current location and/or the time of its next transit. Mariners are strongly advised to ascertain the ferry's location prior to beginning an approach to Petite Forte.

**Docking:** The fixed dock, known locally as the government wharf, is next to the ferry terminal and is often busy with fishery activities. Avoid tying up next to the jib crane on the dock's south side. Although water and power are available, ferry operations along with around-the-clock commercial fishing activities suggest that a peaceful night is very unlikely. A floating dock is located about half a mile to the north along the



Source: C-Map in [NavSim's BoatCruiser](#).



Staragan at the floating dock in Petite Forte

western side of the arm. Power and water are not available; however, the floating dock promises a more restful night. In a January 2012 communication with the Harbour Authority (709-428-4261), it was reported that the floating dock had recently been extended to a length of 160 feet.

**History:** Petite Forte has a long tradition as a fishing town beginning with the French presence in Placentia Bay in the 1600 and 1700s. In 1875, a school and chapel served a population of around 100 which grew to almost 300 by 1935.

True to its reputed spirit of independence, Petite Forte was one the few communities to resist government-sponsored resettlement in the 1960s despite having no road connection to the Province's highway system, a circumstance that only ended with road construction in 1992. Petite Forte retains its traditional connection to the fishery to the present day with fishing stages and fishing vessels readily seen in active use throughout the town.

**Ashore:** The town has two small general stores: one on the opposite side of the road from the fixed dock and the other in the area south of the floating dock. Neither store has any external indication that it is a business establishment. It will be necessary to inquire about the location of each store and its hours of operation. No regular transportation service operates from the town and no useable cell phone signal could be obtained. Visitors will enjoy walking around the tidy town and engaging its approachable residents in conversation. There is a walking trailing around 'Petite Forte Bottom' in the area north of the floating dock. Further information on the fixed and floating docks may be obtained at <http://iprox.mi.mun.ca/PlacentiaBay.htm> which provides separate location webcards for each dock.

Jim Wyse and Patricia Morrissey aboard Staragan in 2010



Staragan at the fixed dock in Petite Forte (photo by Ed Wyse)