



GOOD LIFE

MAKING THE MOST OUT OF LIVING HERE



Historic Trinity Church in Newport hosts its pumpkin patch this year from Oct. 11-31.

TRAVEL

Autumn in Rhode Island

Newport and Providence are dreamy fall destinations for the Halloween- and history-obsessed

BY TESS ALLEN

AS A '90S KID, I religiously watch *Hocus Pocus* every October, and each time, I get the overwhelming urge to spend fall in New England. Last year, I finally got the chance, via a late-October press trip to Rhode Island.

At only 1,214 square miles—48 miles north to south, 37 east to west—Rhode Island is the smallest U.S. state, so you can experience much of it in a short trip. Still, there's no shortage of things to do: Rhode Island has more than 400 miles of coastline, 30 islands, and, as one

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THE GOOD LIFE

Take a colorful stroll through Providence (left).



of the original 13 colonies, boatloads of history. The state's first English settlement, the capital city of Providence, was founded in 1636, and Rhode Island also played major roles in King Philip's War, the American Revolution, the slave trade, the Industrial Revolution, the Civil War, and the Gilded Age.

My flight landed in the wealthy port city of Newport after dark, so I went to sleep that night disoriented, as if I'd been blindfolded during the ride to the hotel. The next morning, I left the curtains drawn in my room as I got ready, so my first glimpse came as I exited the hotel through its propped-open front door. I, an autumn nerd, gasped. Vibrant orange, red, and yellow trees framed a row of historic businesses and the stone entrance to a 17th-century Jewish cemetery. Pumpkins sat happily on steps and storefronts. Leaves skittered on the brick sidewalks in a brisk wind. Binx was surely romping nearby.

Here's where to stay, eat, drink, and play in two popular Rhode Island cities, Newport and Providence.

STAY

My first glimpse of New England in daylight was from the door of **HOTEL VIKING**. The Colonial-style brick inn is the first building on the north end of famous Bellevue Avenue—the main street, lined with Gilded Age mansions, of one of Newport's oldest neighborhoods. Hotel Viking has more than 200 guest rooms, including 24 suites, with touches like plaid carpeting, upholstered and four-poster beds, and traditional, ornate mahogany furniture. The hotel, which opened in 1926, is on the list of Historic Hotels of America. Swing by Hill Market in the lobby for a coffee and pastry, then explore the neighborhood on one of the Viking's complimentary bikes.

THE BEATRICE is a posh base camp for Providence adventures. The 47-room luxury hotel, in a downtown building built in 1887, opened in late 2021. The modern rooms have soaring ceilings and cushy amenities like Italian linens, Nespresso coffee makers, bathroom speakers, and heated bidet toilets and towel racks.



Shop at Bowen's Wharf (top), home to the Kiel James Patrick flagship store (above). Then head back to Hotel Viking in Newport (left) to drop off your new wool sweaters before dinner.

EAT & DRINK

THE NITRO BAR, with two locations in Newport and one in Providence, is a craft coffee shop with trendy, clean Scandinavian interiors. Order a namesake small-batch nitro cold brew—the regular, the extra-concentrated Dark Horse, or the Nitro Chai Latte. All pair well with one of the shop's breakfast sandwiches, wraps, or pastries.

MIDTOWN OYSTER BAR is a modern, two-story pub that overlooks Newport Harbor and boasts the largest raw bar in town. Try some fresh-shucked local oysters or littleneck clams, but save room for a Swordfish Reuben or Quahog Stuffies, a Rhode Island specialty. The large hard-shelled clams are opened and stuffed with sweet peppers and chourico, a spicy Portuguese smoked sausage. (There are plenty of menu options for the seafood-averse, too.)

NEWPORT VINEYARDS & RESTAURANT's 100 acres of rural, preserved farmland makes it feel farther, but it's just a 15-minute drive from downtown Newport. It's easy to lose a few hours sipping its more than 30 wines, or beer from on-site Taproot Brewing Co. You can also tour the facilities

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Enjoy fresh, local seafood at Midtown Oyster Bar (left) or local wine at Newport Vineyards & Restaurant (below).



and grounds, and the restaurant offers an ever-changing menu of dishes made with seasonal, locally sourced ingredients.

For breakfast or brunch in Providence, stop by **ELLIE'S**. The Paris-inspired bistro offers an assortment of toasts, sandwiches, and bowls, plus espresso drinks that may induce visions of the Eiffel Tower. The French Brie sandwich is layered with black mission fig jam, toasted hazelnuts, and baby greens, and Ellie's Poutine is a pile of French fries topped with cheddar cheese curds, duck gravy, and spring onions. But please, save room for a pastry or dessert that looks and tastes like it's from a French confectionery.

MASSIMO, in Providence's Italian American neighborhood of Federal Hill, has a hefty wine menu and authentic food made with local ingredients. Signature dishes at this family restaurant include Spaghettoni alla Carbonara with cured pork cheek and a farm-fresh egg, and Calamari Fritti, calamari from nearby Point Judith with roasted cherry tomatoes and peppers, arugula, and a spicy lemon aioli.

Look for the little red shack by the river in Providence's Innovation District. That's **DUNE BROS**, and it's a great place to get your first taste of Rhode Island-style clam chowder, made with broth and no cream. Get it via a Clam Cakes combo or with an Original Sandwich, a potato chip-crusting fillet topped with homemade pickles, cheddar cheese, slaw, and tartar sauce.

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Massimo—in Providence's Federal Hill neighborhood, the city's "Little Italy"—serves authentic Italian cuisine.

PLAY

Being in Newport is entertainment in and of itself. **WALK, BIKE, OR DRIVE AROUND** and soak in the historic homes, mansions, businesses, and yacht-filled harbors.

During the Gilded Age, some of America's wealthiest families built extravagant, European-style summer mansions in Newport, which is just a quick jaunt from New York City. Today, the Preservation Society of Newport County owns nine of them, all open for public tours. Check out the Marble House, completed in 1892 by William Vanderbilt as a 39th birthday present for his wife; The Elms, commissioned by coal baron Edward Julius Berwind and finished in 1901; or The Breakers, built by Cornelius Vanderbilt in 1895. The **NEWPORT MANSIONS** received renewed attention after they were featured in the popular HBO show *The Gilded Age*, which premiered in 2022. While you're in the area, don't miss the

3.5-mile **CLIFF WALK**, on the southernmost tip of Aquidneck Island, with panoramic ocean views on one side and manicured mansions and grounds on the other.

On Newport's western waterfront is the renowned **BOWEN'S WHARF**. It's another lovely place to just wander, but some popular stops in the area include the new **SAILING MUSEUM & NATIONAL SAILING HALL OF FAME**; **ANNE HALL ANTIQUE PRINTS**; the **NEWPORT ART MUSEUM**; the **INTERNATIONAL TENNIS HALL OF FAME**; and the **KIEL JAMES PATRICK FLAGSHIP STORE** (a fun browse even if you don't want to spend \$150 on a Halloween sweater).

Walk about 200 yards inland from the wharf, and you'll find yourself in **QUEEN ANNE'S SQUARE** park. At the top of the park is **TRINITY CHURCH**, established in 1698 and one of the oldest Episcopal churches in the state. From Oct. 11-31, the church turns the park into a rolling



The Jack-O-Lantern Spectacular at Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence (above); Newport's Sailing Museum & National Sailing Hall of Fame (below).



PUMPKIN PATCH that the Sanderson Sisters would covet. Buy a pumpkin, gourd, mum, homemade baked good, or hot apple cider, and snap those Instagram photos.

Fall offers superb weather for **RHODE ISLAND RED FOOD TOURS'** three(-ish)-hour food crawl through downtown Providence. Your group (private tours also available) will stop at six award-winning restaurants to sample popular dishes and meet the owners. During the almost two-mile walk, your tour guide will also share tidbits of local history, architecture, art, and culture.

If you encounter a rainy day—or even if you don't—the Rhode Island School of Design's **RISD MUSEUM** has almost 100,000 works, ranging from ancient to contemporary, in its collection.

Visit the **JACK-O-LANTERN SPECTACULAR AT ROGER WILLIAMS PARK ZOO**, but please don't let it confuse you—you're still in Providence, not Sleepy Hollow. More than 5,000 glowing jack-o'-lanterns, carved by a team of more than 30 artists, line the walking path and appear to float in the air (they're suspended from trees). This year's event runs from Sept. 27-Nov. 2. Advanced tickets are required. 🍷

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Maker's Mark Hobbit Houses at The Preserve

THE 40-MINUTE DRIVE from Providence to The Preserve Sporting Club and Resort goes quickly when fall foliage is in full effect. The Preserve is a 3,500-acre resort for outdoor enthusiasts that offers luxury lodging and activities like clay-shooting, golf, horseback-riding, fly-fishing, zip lining, rock walls, tennis, basketball, swimming, nature trails, a spa, and an off-road Bentley course. End the day at one of three Hobbit Houses, built into The Preserve's rolling landscape. In the autumn, The Preserve decorates the hobbit houses with thousands of pumpkins. Book one for a cozy meal cooked over a glowing fire inside the house and served with Maker's Mark fine-bourbon pairings. Drink enough, and you may begin to wonder: Is the Shire in Rhode Island?



The Maker's Mark Hobbit Houses dressed up for Halloween.

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