

MarketWatch

7 smaller U.S. cities worth visiting for their downtown river walks

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From wine country to WaterFire, check out these revitalized riverfronts.

You've heard of long walks on the beach. But could leisurely strolls along the river walk become the next dating app cliché? There's a case for it.

Some of the country's major metros have iconic river walks — like San Antonio, Chicago and Detroit. But rivers run through lots of small and midsize cities, too, and in many places, river fronts are at the heart of cities' revitalization efforts.

The best river walks have surprises in store, like romantic gondola rides, cascading waterfalls and impressive public art displays. From Rhode Island to California, here are seven of our favorite riverfronts.

Riverwalk Providence

Providence, Rhode Island



Visitors can explore Providence's downtown rivers via a gondola or kayak. But the best way to see this Riverwalk is at nighttime, particularly during one of the [WaterFire Festivals](#) when the rivers are aglow with the same kind of warmth as an Edison lightbulb.

WaterFire typically runs 15 to 20 times a year from April through December. The trio of rivers that braid Providence's downtown sparkle with more than 80 bonfires. A Starry Night installation with lanterns and luminous blue stars strung in the trees makes the scene even more magical.

Book a room at The Beatrice, a stylish luxury boutique downtown hotel close to the Providence River, for a cute stay. Guests can ascend to the Bellini Rooftop (only open to members and hotel guests) and enjoy live music while sipping cocktails.