

GARDEN-INSPIRED GIFTS FOR MOTHER'S DAY / SAYING GOODBYE TO OUR GARAGE SCHOOLHOUSE

# Globe Magazine

THE BOSTON GLOBE | MAY 2, 2021

**2021 SUMMER TRAVEL**

## *The Cape Returns*

**Record numbers of house rentals and a boom in hotel reservations mean Cape Cod could be busier than ever this summer. Here's how to enjoy every minute of it.**

*Plus*

**YOUR GUIDE TO A GREAT GETAWAY: Tips for saving money and exploring off-the-beaten-path destinations**  
**THE BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL: A walking tour through Beacon Hill and deep into Boston history**



2021  
SUMMER  
TRAVEL

## Features

## 18 Your Guide to a Great Getaway

This summer looks to be a better time to get away than last, but it won't be without its COVID complications. Here's how to get the most out of your plans.

BY PATRICIA HARRIS  
AND DAVID LYON

## 22 Cape Cod Returns

With a rush of seasonal rentals and hotel reservations, the idyllic peninsula could be busier than ever. Bring patience and understanding along with your sunscreen.

BY SUSAN MOELLER

## 26 The Geography of Belonging

A walking tour of Boston's Black Heritage Trail leads visitors through the streets of Beacon Hill—and deep into history.

BY DANIELLE  
LEGROS GEORGES

EDITOR Francis Storrs ART DIRECTOR Greg Klee ARTICLES EDITOR Michael Fitzgerald WEB PRODUCER Stacey Myers COPY EDITOR Carrie Simonelli CONTRIBUTING EDITORS Lisa Button, Melissa Schorr EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Jakob Menendez EDITOR AT LARGE Neil Swidey DESIGNER Jacqueline Berthet ASSISTANT DESIGNER Maura Intemann EDITORIAL OFFICE [magazine@globe.com](mailto:magazine@globe.com) VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE SALES Erin Kimball (617) 929-2034; [erin.kimball@globe.com](mailto:erin.kimball@globe.com) PRODUCTION DIRECTOR Cesar Molina PAGINATOR James Kenney

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## Puzzles on Page 33

## THE GLOBE PUZZLE SOLUTION

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## SUDOKU SOLUTION

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## 4 Comments

## Upfront

**8 Perspective** COVID-19 Brought Health Care Into the 21st Century, Finally

**10 Your Week Ahead** Veronica Robles' Mariachi Band, Julianna Margulies' Memoir, and More

**11 Love Letters** A Winter Break

**12 Style Watch** Mother's Day Gifts

**13 On the Block** Max Headroom

**14 Cooking** Sweets for Mom

**16 Miss Conduct** Unwelcome Wagon

**17 Dinner With Cupid** Link Me Up

## 33 The Puzzle Page

**34 Connections** Will My Kindergartener Remember Garage School?

**On the Cover:** Photograph

by Stan Grossfeld/Globe Staff/File

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## Top Spots to Live 2021 / April 25

The pandemic is fundamentally changing the way we think about our homes and where we want to live. Visit [bostonglobe.com/magazine](http://bostonglobe.com/magazine) to discover the 24 Greater Boston communities where demand is soaring—and so are prices.

## College &amp; COVID / April 11

Students survey the year that was, and look ahead to an uncertain future. Find out what some college writers are taking away from an unprecedented year. Plus, 15 last-minute ideas for family fun.

## An Invisible Tax on Teachers of Color / April 4

Discover how educators like Brookline's Malcolm Cawthorne shoulder an unfair burden as well-intentioned schools with mostly white staffs scramble to respond to racism. Also in this issue: The high cost to communities when the ultra-rich game the system to hide trillions.

Your Home: Renovation & Renewal  
March 28

Check out before and after photos on home projects, including a restored deck house; a garage space turned Vegas-style lounge; and a DIY basement office. And learn how the pandemic has already reshaped renovation trends.



2021 Summer Travel

# Your Guide to a Great Getaway

While this year looks to be a better time to get away than last, it won't be without its COVID complications. Here's how to get the most out of your summer travel plans.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TRACY WALKER FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

**W**HEN ONE OF US jumped at a trip to the dentist just to leave the house, we realized that we really need a getaway. We're hardly alone.

Based on early bookings, representatives of all six New England state tourism agencies are predicting a busy summer. Travel professionals reading the tea leaves of industry data forecast a

surge nationwide. A recent survey of Americans by global travel marketplace Skyscanner found anxiety about travel is at its lowest since March 2020.

Adit Damodaran, economist at travel app Hopper, says that his company is seeing "massive increases in search volume." Moreover, its bookings are up 52 percent from the same period in 2019. Hopper's demographic skews to under-40s, a group that has already been more comfortable traveling during the pandemic. But with vaccinations on the rise, people of all ages are ready to go. In early April, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention acknowledged that it was safe for fully vaccinated people to travel domestically while following the now-familiar mask-distancing-handwashing protocols. Flight searches and hotel bookings immediately soared.

What does that mean for your summer vacation? "Planning, planning, planning at a time when nobody wants to plan because everything seems so uncertain," says Pauline Frommer, editorial director of Frommers.com and Frommer's travel guides. Reservations may be necessary for attractions such as museums and theme parks, as well as for lodging and transportation. And time is of the essence: popular destinations are booking up quickly.

But don't worry! We have you covered with some strategies for landing that summer getaway—with minimum stress. →

By  
**Patricia Harris**  
and  
**David Lyon**







## Look Beyond the Obvious

**I**F YOU'RE DREAMING of a summer of New England travel, welcome to the party. Although things could change, by June 1 the last of the travel restrictions in the New England states are set to be lifted.

According to research sponsored by the state of Connecticut, roughly half of Northeast residents plan to travel this summer. "That means that there are *millions* of pent-up New Englanders," says Christine Castonguay, interim director of the Connecticut Office of Tourism. Equally telling is that 68.5 percent plan to stay within 100 miles from home—evidence that 2021 is shaping up as the summer of the within-driving-distance getaway.

But we New Englanders have to compete for hotels and beach towel space with the rest of the country. As Europe and Canada remain largely closed, fellow Americans are eyeing the region. New England states with an outdoorsy brand are definitely trending in online searches. "There's been a 97 percent increase in interest in Maine over 2019," says Damodaran, noting that Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket are also strong.

These trends fit the psychology of easing into travel with low-key, uncrowded outdoor experiences. "People's desire to get outside, get out into nature, is the first step to getting out and traveling," says Nate Formalarie, communications director for Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing. "People want to get out of cities, get out into fresh air." That said, state and federal campgrounds are filling quickly, so act now if you want to camp.

Actually, book now for all kinds of lodgings. Cabin and cottage rentals in traditional vacation spots like Southern Maine and Cape Cod have been extremely strong, and the pickings are getting slim in iconic summer destinations throughout the region. Remaining availability at such favorite getaways as Provincetown shows no bargains—not this year.

For more choice, opt for less obvious



## 2021 Summer Travel



vacation destinations. Links on state tourism websites detail unusual destinations, package deals, and other money-saving offers. To get you started, here are some suggestions from state travel experts.

### Connecticut (ctvisit.com)

Tourism director Christine Castonguay points to less crowded towns such as **Branford** and **Gulford**, where you have water views, beautiful town greens, and lots of small shops. She also recommends two towns that face each other across the Thames River. "There are great family experiences at the Submarine Force Museum in **Groton** [note that it remains closed as of press time]," she says, "or the Custom House Maritime Museum in **New London**."

### Massachusetts and Rhode Island

(visitma.com, visitrhodeisland.com)

For a different coastal getaway, Keiko Matsudo Orrall, executive director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, reminds travelers of the nearly 4-mile strand at **Salisbury Beach**. She also suggests a **Central Massachusetts** holiday, pointing to the family-friendly experience of Old Sturbridge Village and the beautiful plantings at Tower Hill Botanic Garden in Boylston. Extend your Central Massachusetts trip to the **Blackstone River Valley**, which flows into the Ocean State. Matt Sheaff, acting chief marketing officer for Rhode Island, extols the Blackstone's "beautiful walking and cycling trails."

### Maine (visitmaine.com)

Steve Lyons, director of the Maine Office of Tourism, points inland and north to escape the

## Save In The City

**S**OME PEOPLE might be sick of scenery," says Gemma Jamieson, global public relations and communications manager for Skyscanner. "People have had nothing to do for a year. They just really want some entertainment, a nice restaurant, a nice bar." If that sounds familiar, you're in luck. America's cities may be 2021's biggest travel bargains.

"Hotels have lost their convention and business travelers," explains Pauline Frommer.

"That's where the biggest deals will be in the coming months. You can probably save money by doing a city break."

She points out that hotel rooms are now often less expensive than Airbnb or VRBO rentals. For a stay-cation, have a look at **Boston** hotel packages on the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau website ([bostonusa.com](http://bostonusa.com)), where rooms tend to be deeply discounted over pre-pandemic prices. Matsudo Orrall, of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, hopes that some travel dollars will support local business, especially in hard-hit Chinatown.

As of press time, Providence hotels and the Rhode Island state tourism office were ironing out details of a summer promotion program to offer travelers big savings on in-city spending. Specifics will be announced on the state website. Historic architecture, a riverfront esplanade, Roger Williams Park Zoo, and great dining options might make **Providence** ([goprovidence.com](http://goprovidence.com)) the perfect summer getaway. From Providence, **Newport** is only a half-hour ferry ride away. With COVID travel restrictions easing, the iconic Newport folk and jazz festivals are scheduled to return. Attendance size and other protocols are being formulated.

Other great cities — **New York**, **Philadelphia**, **Baltimore**, and **Washington** — are just a train ride away. Amtrak has launched some steep discounts this spring and its booking site shows you what percentage of each train's seats are taken, handy if you're still feeling agoraphobic after a year in lockdown or skittish about full trains of potentially unvaccinated travelers. As of mid-April, Skyscanner was showing summer rates at quality hotels in these city centers as low as \$100-\$150 per night. Amtrak fares were as low as \$29-\$49 each way. Prices could change with demand.



crowds. The town of **Greenville** on Moosehead Lake is probably the capital of New England moose watching. In often-overlooked **Aroostook County**, paddle sports, fishing, and ATV rides are king. Well-marked trails and helpful rangers make Maine's **state parks** an ideal introduction to the near-wilderness experience. Lyons himself has booked a week in **Millinocket**, where the Penobscot River meets the north woods.

### Vermont (vermontvacation.com)

Nate Formalarie points travelers to the **Northeast Kingdom**, where recent improvements in bike trails have been flying under the radar. "You can get off the beaten track and still enjoy good beer and good food," he says. Formalarie also suggests **Addison County**, home of the postcard college

town of **Middlebury**, the fjord-like **Lake Willoughby**, and **Lake Dunmore** on the western edge of the Green Mountain National Forest.

### New Hampshire (visitnh.com)

Advance bookings are strong in the Granite State's coastal and lakes regions, says Lori Harnois, director of New Hampshire Travel and Tourism. "People are often extending their stays to two weeks," and they are booking early fall trips if their favorite summer spots are taken. For alternatives, Harnois recommends the **Monadnock Region**, including climbing the namesake mountain, as well as water sports in and around **Lake Sunapee**. For a true escape, light out for the **Great North Woods** — essentially Coös County — for fishing, ATV riding, and just getting outside.





## Test Your Wings

**N**OW THAT THE CDC has cautiously sanctioned domestic air travel for the fully vaccinated, summer vacation getaways are limited only by local travel restrictions. Moreover, airfares remain surprisingly low. According to Hopper, the average domestic airfare for summer 2021 is around \$270 round trip, as opposed to \$315 in pre-pandemic 2019.

If that savings is enough to get you onto a plane, consider if you'll need a rental car at your destination. "One of the unexpected side effects of the pandemic," explains Frommer, "is that car rental agencies sold off their fleets to stay afloat. So there's a shortage of rental cars." Your best bet is to book far in advance.

As in New England, many popular destinations nationwide are all about the great outdoors. National parks may not be so uncrowded after all. "Travelers are setting the agenda," says Skyscanner's Gemma Jamieson. "Carriers are re-routing capacity to suit their demands." For example, airlines have added flights to Jackson, Wyoming; and Bozeman and Kalispell, Montana—all gateways to Yellowstone or Glacier national parks.

Plan ahead for best airfares. Hopper finds that the cheapest fares are generally three months in advance of departure. Three weeks before departure, prices start rising. "One to two weeks out, they spike," says Hopper's Damodaran. He does note that the expansion of low-cost carriers is driving down airfares in many markets, including at the big airlines. "Legacy carriers are reacting by bringing down their own rates to hold onto market share," he says.

Again, as in New England, urban destinations represent maximum bang for the buck. Hopper finds city hotel rates at or near historic lows. "For example," Damodaran says, "hotel prices are down 65 percent in Las Vegas." Summer flights from Boston are as low as \$191—round trip.

If you want to use your passport this summer, Canada and most of Europe remain questionable, but the Caribbean is wide open. Most of the islands (and Caribbean Mexico) require a negative COVID test before arrival and another on departure. "Thanks to the protocols," says Vanessa Ledesma, acting CEO and director general of the Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association, "our destinations have some of the lowest COVID incidence in the entire world." The association's website updates each destination's requirements almost daily ([caribbeantravel.com](http://caribbeantravel.com)).

Some parts of the region are already in high demand, including Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, where Americans don't need passports. Bookings are also strong in Jamaica, Aruba, Turks and Caicos, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, and Cancun, Mexico. To beat the crowds, Ledesma suggests Antigua and Barbuda, where, she says, "they have a beach for every day of the year and a good mix of properties from all-inclusive resorts to small independents."

Frommer's in-house research finds that conventional air-hotel packages offer an average of 35 percent savings on beach vacations in Caribbean Mexico. Skyscanner, which covers more options than typical travel search engines, advises that separate comparison shopping of airfare and lodging can yield even greater savings. So do your homework.

Ledesma says that, so far, hotels and resorts have not posted price reductions. "It's all about value added," she says. That could include upgraded rooms, free or reduced-fee activities, on-site entertainment, culinary experiences, or even COVID tests. Some properties that normally close during the autumn storm season (September through mid-November) are planning to stay open. If you can wait a little longer, that's when there may be bargains. Airfares also tend to drop in September.

COVID disruption has made protecting your travel expenditure more important than ever. Check change and cancellation policies on flights and hotels. Many travelers are now more open to travel insurance—whether for weather or health reasons. (Some smaller Caribbean destinations require health insurance for airlift home in case of illness.) Frommer especially recommends travel insurance for packages. "There's no one travel insurance company that's always the best," she says. She recommends looking at marketplace websites that identify a number of options.

Consumers may be in the driver's seat for a while. "We think travel will remain quite flexible for a long time as a hangover from the pandemic," says Skyscanner's Jamieson. "We also expect prices to fluctuate with demand, but they should remain competitive while airlines try to win back travelers as they dust off their suitcases." ■

*Patricia Harris and David Lyon are frequent contributors to the Globe Magazine. Send comments to [magazine@globe.com](mailto:magazine@globe.com).*

### FLIGHT & HOTEL SEARCHES

**Skyscanner / [skyscanner.com](http://skyscanner.com)** This inclusive flight/hotel/car rental search site amalgamates results from competitors, along with offering its own results. It offers price alerts as well as tools that allow users to see COVID rates in real time around the world to better navigate ever-changing travel restrictions and entry requirements.

**Hopper** This phone app for iOS and Android allows users to search for flights by date and presents a color-coded calendar of prices. Hotel searches display a range of discounts from Web list prices. For a small fee, Hopper will hold a ticket price for up to two weeks.