BUSINESS INSIDER

I've lived in New England my whole life. There's one Rhode Island town that I love visiting in the fall.

By Morgan Rizzo

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Middletown is lovely in the summer, but I like to visit in the fall. Ward DeWitt/Getty Images

As the summer crowds slowly begin to fade and the trees turn fiery shades of red, orange, and yellow, fall in New England has officially begun. It's time for sweater weather, pumpkin spice, and apple orchards.

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Being from Rhode Island myself, I know many people think the Ocean State is most exceptional in the summer, with iconic Westerly beach days and summer mansion tours in Newport. Yet, in my opinion, fall is the perfect time to plan a quiet escape.

One of my favorite lesser-known places, Middletown, is home to local farms, quiet beaches, and a beautiful vineyard, making for a quiet, fun-filled fall day.

I always start a fall day with a pumpkin-spice latte and a farm trip



Sweet Berry Farm is my favorite apple-picking spot. Morgan Rizzo

Nothing says fall more than an iced pumpkin-spice latte. One of my favorite local coffee spots is Custom House Coffee, which always has delicious seasonal beverages.

Walking in, guests can smell the beans roasting on-site and even pick up a fresh bag. If I want a sweet treat, I'll also grab a cheese danish for the road.

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Then, it's time to head to the farm. Picking apples and pumpkins at a local spot is one of my favorite seasonal pastimes, and Sweet Berry Farm is my go-to.

Because apple-picking season ends in mid-October and pumpkin season starts in September, I've found late September or early October to be the best time to visit. I love walking through the neat rows of trees searching for the ripest and juiciest apples to add to my bucket.

From summer golden to honeycrisp, Fuji, and McIntosh (my personal favorite), there's a wide variety of apples available — plus, a pumpkin patch where you can find the perfect specimen for your front porch.

Fall is the best time of year for a quiet beach walk

Fall is the prime time of year to grab a cozy crewneck and walk along Second or Third Beach.

These beaches are always bustling in the summer with hordes of tourists lying blanket to blanket, but now, they're quiet and perfect for taking in the beauty of the ocean or strolling hand-in-hand with your loved one.

Second Beach is within walking distance of the Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, which is a great place for a fall hike. The main loop is around 2 ½ miles, or you can opt for the Ocean View Loop at around 1 ½ miles.

While walking around, you may even spot migratory birds or other wildlife.

The Newport Vineyards are perfect for wine and a snack

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I love ending the day with a trip to Newport Vineyards. Morgan Rizzo

Although this spot is called the Newport Vineyards, don't be fooled: It's actually located in Middletown.

After a beach walk, a glass of their famous Great White usually starts to call my name. Fruity and light, the wine pairs well with their cheese boards.

I'll often pick a funky blue cheese, a sharp cheddar, and a soft goat cheese from their list of offerings, many of which come from New England farms and dairy producers.

Fall is peak harvest season, when visitors can tour the property. Maybe you'll even be lucky enough to show up during the annual Harvest Festival in October, where you can watch guests squash grapes with their feet in an exciting competition.

At the vineyard, you'll often hear live music — and, if you're chilly, you can find a place to sit by a fire pit. I find this to be the best spot to warm up with friends after a long day of fall adventures.

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