

## How To Spend A Salty Weekend In Newport, Rhode Island



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Travel

*From cities to jungles, I write about culture, travel and adventure.*



"Newport represented the escape from duty into an atmosphere of unmitigated holiday-making." It has been nearly a century since [Edith Wharton](#) first published those words in her novel, *The Age of Innocence*. Though the Newport of the author's Gilded Age youth has evolved over the years, her sentiment remains true to this day.



Rosecliff was the setting of the Grace Kelly film 'High Society' JOHN GREIM/LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

One of the oldest resort towns in America, Newport, Rhode Island, is known as the Sailing Capital of the World and as the Queen of Summer Resorts. Yet, there is more to Newport, Rhode Island than meets the eye—though, of course, what greets you when you cross the Pell Bridge is endlessly appealing to all of the senses. A mere 4-hour drive from New York City and an hour and a half from Boston, this seaside city along the southern tip of Aquidneck Island has long been a favored weekend getaway for urban travelers hailing from the East Coast.



Newport, Rhode Island is a boating enthusiast's dream. LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

Yet its charms are not limited to those who frequent New England. Thanks to its proximity to T.F. Green Airport in Providence (a mere 40-minute taxi ride away), the city is waiting to be discovered by travelers nationwide. And planning your Ocean State revelries needn't be restricted to travel in the summer months. Why not visit in the shoulder season, when the water remains warm (and the prices start to cool) in the fall? Or the wintertime, when Snow Polo and Gilded Age Christmas festivities beckon? From decadent mansions to breathtaking cliff walks, read on for your guide to Newport, Rhode Island.



View of the Castle Hill Inn from the water. CASTLE HILL INN



## Stay

From castles on a hill to lighthouses on an island, there's no shortage of luxurious accommodations awaiting the discerning traveler in Newport, Rhode Island. The historic [Hotel Viking](#) in downtown Newport is a local institution, offering travelers easy access to the bars and restaurants of Thames Street while still providing an elegant respite from the bustling city streets.

Hoping to experience an oceanfront retreat that's removed from the action of downtown Newport? Look no further than the rooms available at the [Beach Cottage](#) at [Castle Hill Inn](#). Perched on the sand dunes overlooking the hotel's private coastline, these cottage rooms are also walking distance from the hotel's popular bar and restaurant—but more on that later.



The exterior of the Chanler THE CHANLER

Travelers looking to be removed from their daily lives—and awakened to the struggles of how life was lived in another time—should consider booking a stay at the [Rose Island Lighthouse](#). This lighthouse is set upon an 18-acre island located one mile off Narragansett Bay—just book quickly: There are only five rooms available in total.

Visitors who appreciate a happening nightlife scene (while also enjoying an oceanfront view) should travel closer to shore for our next option: [Gurney's Newport Resort & Marina](#). This Rhode Island outpost of Gurney's Montauk is also home to another New York institution that's sure to appeal to Manhattanites: The mouthwatering Italian restaurant, [Scarpetta](#).

From 2019 to 1873: Our final selection, [The Chanler at Cliff Walk](#), was first built as a summer home for Congressman John Winthrop Chanler and Margaret Astor Ward. The 20-room, European-inspired hotel offers a taste of how the other half once lived, and is just steps from the historic Cliff Walk—but more on that in our next section.



International Tennis Hall of Fame - VISIT RHODE ISLAND

### Explore

Newport is an intoxicating mix of historic architecture blended with dramatic coastal cliffs, and nowhere is this better appreciated than along the city's famous [Cliff Walk](#). This path begins at The Chanler and winds along the coastal edge of the lavish properties that were built for America's aristocracy at the turn-of-the-century.

Curious travelers should consider signing up for a tour of these iconic estates—we personally recommend exploring the interior of [The Elms](#) or [The Breakers](#), though the grounds of [Rosecliff](#) (the setting of the Grace Kelly film, *High Society*) are the most breathtaking. Travelers visiting in the fall should purchase tickets to the [Newport Wine & Food Festival](#), which will be held from September 19th to 22nd at The Elms, Rosecliff, and [Marble House](#).



Newport Polo - THE CHANLER



Visitors during the wintertime have the opportunity to witness the palatial estates resplendent in Christmas lights and decorations during the holiday season. The [Newport Winter Festival](#), meanwhile, is slated to occur from February 14th to the 23rd and will feature an eternally-popular wintertime polo match on [Sachuest Beach](#) in Middletown.

Visitors can enjoy both the beach and the event in the summertime, as well, of course: [Newport Polo](#) is a classic afternoon activity, while Sachuest Beach (locally referred to as "Second Beach") is a known surfer hangout, and is the most social of Newport's public beaches—owing, perhaps in no small part, to the [Dell's Lemonade](#) truck. The beverage is a Rhode Island staple—but more on Newport cuisine in a bit.



Summer mansion on the Cliff Walk JOE SOHM/VISIONS OF AMERICA/UNIVERSAL IMAGES GROUP VIA GETTY

Speaking of summertime attractions, the expansive lawns of [Fort Adams](#) plays host to both the [Newport Jazz Festival](#) and the [Newport Folk Festival](#) in late July and early August. When you arrive at the venue, look out to sea to witness an impressive raft-up of sailboats, motorboats, kayaks, and all manner of watercraft. Newport locals and regular visitors would rather paddle-board to the beach than pay for a walk-in ticket.

Other activities include visiting the grass courts at [The International Tennis Hall of Fame](#), flying a kite at [Brenton Point State Park](#) on [Ocean Drive](#), or—for the truly adventurous—signing up for an afternoon above the clouds with [Skydive Newport](#).

If you're not touring the mansions, rainy days should be spent catching a show at the historic [Jane Pickens](#) theatre or perusing the British styles on display at the [Royal Male](#). Finally, a [sunset sail on the Schooner Adirondack II](#) is a must-do for any visitor: You haven't experienced Newport until you've experienced it by sea, after all.



Brick Alley LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES

### Eat & Drink

When it comes to lunch, [Flo's Clam Shack](#), next to First Beach, is a staple for its fried seafood and delightfully irreverent ambiance. Order Flos' Fiery Stuffed Quahog (locally known as 'stuffies' and the New England clam chowder. Travelers headed out towards [Third Beach](#) in Middletown should consider a stop at [Sweet Berry Farm](#), if only to admire the impressive hydrangea bushes that line the perimeter of the café's parking lot. While there, order the ice cream, and the chicken curry salad (trust us).

For other casual dining options, the [Brick Alley Pub](#) is a Newport institution on downtown Thames Street that is beloved by visitors and locals alike. The [White Horse Tavern](#) is also perfect for a historic pint (or three)—George Washington once stayed within its hallowed walls. The [Newport Lobster Shack](#) offers a quick and easy option for a seafood dinner, while the homey environment of [Scales & Shells](#) is perfect for a group meal with friends.



Castle Hill Lighthouse LIGHTROCKET VIA GETTY IMAGES



Head to the patio of [The Black Pearl](#) for a mudslide (a favorite sailor's drink) before visiting the [Clarke Cooke House](#) for dinner. When it comes to an evening out on the town, there is no topping the three-story wonderland of the Clarke Cooke House—also nicknamed "The Candy Store." Word to the (sartorially wise): Men must wear collared shirts to enter, and blazers are required for the Sky Bar, the elegant banquet on the restaurant's top floor. Travelers in the mood for Motown music and espresso martinis will find themselves in the right place.

Visitors looking for a more low-key night should visit the [IYAC](#) (the International Yacht & Athletic Club). The tiny bar is a favorite amongst old salts: Sailors who don't feel like throwing on a collared shirt. Be ready for a crowd with many stories to tell—as the sailing capital of the world, Newport draws a broad array of seafarers and explorers. (And now: You, too, as well).



The Claiborne Pell Bridge, Newport, RI. CORBIS VIA GETTY IMAGES

## Transportation

The Newport Pell Bridge is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, and though the coastal city is certainly more accessible than it's been in the past (when it was only reachable by boat) travelers seeking a direct route to their destination are at a bit of an eternal loss. While you can fly into Providence or take the Amtrak [train](#) to [Kingston](#), both methods of transport require a scheduled taxi, or ride-share, to your final locale.

Driving remains the only direct method for reaching this seaside town. Travelers escaping New York City should consider the journey part of the vacation. Trading a decades-old Jeep Cherokee for a brand-new [Lincoln Nautilus](#) made the Friday afternoon traffic far more manageable. So, go ahead: splurge on that business class ticket or [Black Label luxury](#). When arriving in the town that's the setting for *High Society*, why not make your entrance in style?