

9 destinations in the US to travel to this July, from the beach to expansive caves

OUTDOOR, TRAVEL



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IF YOU STILL haven't made your vacation plans for July, you might find yourself staring down expensive last-minute summer bookings. So get started now, because it's never too early to plan a summer vacation.

Whether you're looking for an epic (and safe) Fourth of July, an island beach getaway, or some relaxing wine tasting, there are plenty of towns and cities around the country to satiate your thirst. Just be sure to set aside your preconceived notions of the "classic summer trip." From Seward, Alaska, to Jekyll Island, Georgia, these are the best places to travel in the US this July.

3. Bristol, Rhode Island



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If you happen to be traveling around the Fourth of July, Bristol, [Rhode Island](#), is the quintessential New England destination for a healthy dose of patriotism. It's home to the oldest continuous Fourth of July parade in the country, which has run for 235 years. Every year, Main Street is painted red, white, and blue, flags wave from the stoops of historic homes, and a National Guard flyover puts an exclamation point on the festivities. If braving the holiday traffic sounds less-than-appealing, there's still plenty to keep you busy in Bristol on the average summer weekend.

With a preserved waterfront district, historic port, and stately captain's mansions from the 17th century, Bristol is packed with character. Its most impressive home is probably the [Blithewold Mansion & Arboretum](#) that sits on 33 acres of gardens on Bristol Bay. The 45-room estate is the perfect representation of the city's rich maritime tradition. It's pretty impossible to forget Bristol's close proximity to the water. The entire western border of [Colt State Park](#) abuts Narragansett Bay, with unforgettable viewpoints and an abundance of kayak trails for the truly adventurous.

The best part about a college town in summer is that you don't have to share the bars with students trying to pass off fake-IDs. While Roger Williams University is out for the season, check out [Aidan's Pub](#) and [Judge Roy Bean Saloon](#) for pub fare at college kid prices, or [Thames Waterside Bar & Grill](#) for a slightly more upscale seafood experience with water views.