



# Spend the summer at these secret East Coast beach towns

See shells, not crowds.

Every year from Memorial Day to Labor Day, countless New Yorkers flock to the Kiawahs and Kennebunkports of the Eastern seaboard. They diligently check these la-di-da locales off their list, curtsying to their inner prep schooler. But you, dear reader, know better. This summer, seek refuge upon a lido less traveled. For swimming, shorefront bike rides, boat excursions and more, read on for our five favorite picks for local-ish beach vacations.

And do these small towns a favor — don't tell your friends.

## Westerly, RI



Taylor Swift may own a \$17 million mansion in Watch Hill — part of Westerly, RI — but you don't have to be a pop star to enjoy the area's historic charm, natural wonders and nautical activities.

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About 145 miles outside the city, slip into vacation mode with a dip in the water at Misquamicut Beach or Napatree Point Beach & Conservation Area, where you'll also want to bring your binoculars along for birdwatching.

If you're traveling with kids, make a detour after Napatree to the Flying Horse Carousel, said to be the country's oldest platform carousel. For your accommodations, book the Ocean House (from \$755) in the posh Watch Hill neighborhood, just steps from the shoreline, or the Margin Street Inn (from \$300), two splendid homes on the Pawcatuck River.

Wherever you stay, definitely feast at Olympia Tea Room, "famous not fancy" since 1916.

## Bristol, RI



Four hours from the city lies Bristol, with bragging rights to the oldest Fourth of July parade in the country, inaugurated in 1785. Though considering the town was settled in 1680, that's practically the modern era. Channel the days of yore at Mount Hope Farm B&B (from \$190), perched on 127-soul-restorative acres.

Come for the property's history (George Washington was a guest!) — stay for the area's stellar seafood (the newly reopened Bristol Oyster Bar and a dockside meal at Quito's are musts). By day, camp out at Walley Beach or visit Blithewold Mansion, Gardens & Arboretum. We daresay the latter, a 45-room, English-style manor home brimming with antiques and art, is Little Rhody's best-kept secret.