

Parade

TRAVEL

17 Fall Foliage Trips to Plan Right Now Because Leaf Peeping Season Is At Its Peak

OCTOBER 15, 2021 – 9:01 AM



By **KELLI ACCIARDO** @kelliacciaro



(iStock)

News from...



1,599,153
unique monthly
visitors

Fall is in full swing and along with [apple](#) and [pumpkin picking](#), copious amounts of plaid, [Oktoberfest shenanigans](#) and sweater weather, comes leaf peeping season, which is a *big* deal to [nature-lovers](#) and Instagrammers alike.

Planning a [weekend escape](#) around scenic drives cascaded by [trees changing colors](#) has basically become the quintessential way to welcome fall. And the foliage fun doesn't stop there. Quaint inns, orchards and nature preserves are doing everything they can to lure socially distant travelers to their destinations ablaze in burning shades of yellow, orange and red. Think: hotel packages tailored to peepers with handy maps, corner rooms with sweeping views, spiked cider happy hours and more.

New England is notorious for boasting some of the top leaf peeping parts in the country (we see you Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut), along with other foliage all-stars like upstate New York, North Carolina in the South and Oregon on the West Coast. The key to planning your trip is knowing when to visit though.

If you peep too soon you could be faced with a field of basic greenery. On the opposite end of the spectrum, waiting too long to forest bathe could present near-naked maples, oaks and dogwoods, post-shedding. The beginning-to-middle of October tends to be a sweet spot for the most vibrant landscapes however, which is why we've outlined a few of our favorite destinations below, with where to stay and [what to do](#) in each area. Behold the 17 **best fall foliage trips** to plan (and take) right now.

Best Fall Foliage Spots

Fall Foliage in Westerly, Rhode Island



(Ocean House)

When you think of Westerly, sandy beaches and the ocean most likely come to mind (or [Taylor Swift](#)'s summer home), but this Rhode Island gem transforms in the fall, with the ultimate juxtaposition of seaside backdrops and changing leaves. Spend your days climbing sandy dunes, taking long drives along Route 1A and Route 102 or biking to the [Watch Hill Lighthouse](#), then settle into bistro lounges at the area's top hotels for cocktails and snacks, or s'mores around a fire pit in the evening.

Where to Stay: Check-in to the [Weekapaug Inn](#), then spend the afternoon outdoors with the on-staff naturalist (and former U.S. Coast Guard captain) Mark Bullinger for guided hikes, tide [pool](#) walks and time-honored New England leaf peeping! And if it happens to be muddy one day, not to worry...you can select a jacket and boots from the Hunter Borrowing Closet. PS, if you're traveling with daughters, sisters or girlfriends, the [Lilly Pulitzer Suite at Watch Hill Inn](#) is another solid choice.

Where to Eat: [The Restaurant and Brasserie at Weekapaug](#), [The Olympia Tea Room](#), [Coast at Ocean House](#), plus the [Club Room for brunch](#) and [Matunuck Oyster Bar](#) (a little bit of a drive, but so worth it for this oyster fishery on Potter Pond).

Fall Foliage in Newport, Rhode Island



(iStock)

No excursion to Newport is complete without a stroll around the [Cliff Walk](#), or a lap the [Ocean Drive](#) loop, where you'll come face to face with Rhode Island's gorgeous fall foliage. 10 miles of waterfront real estate known as playground of the rich and famous in the roaring twenties is still alive and well—and bursting with color. Take a [mansion tour](#) to marvel at how the other half lived, set sail on [The Madeleine or Rum Runner II](#), for a history lesson with a side of salt-tinged wind in your hair.

Where to Stay: Newport's newest hotel, [The Brenton](#), is a stone's toss from Thames Street and The Wharf, making it suitable for families or couples with 57 over-sized rooms and two-bedroom suites. Having just opened their doors this summer, it's impeccably well designed—and clean—with both city and water views. Hand sanitizer kits and masks are complimentary and room service offerings come picnic-style. If you happen to be traveling with your pet, they even have a [dog concierge service](#) that will pet sit when you're not on the hunt for leaves. Newport does come with some hefty price tags however, so if you need something a little more affordable, the quirky-cute [Wayfinder](#) has rates starting in the low hundreds and sits right over the bridge in Newport's North End. As for fall happenings, they're keeping out of staters in mind with the [Brew + Crew package](#) featuring dinner for the whole squad at Nomi Park and a local beer tasting.

Where to Eat: [The Dining Room at The Vanderbilt](#) for James Beard award-winning chef April Bloomfield's new takeover and elevated pub menu, [Stoneacre Brasserie](#), [Cara at The Chanler](#), [Giusto](#), [Scarpetta at Gurney's Newport](#), [The Lawn at Castle Hill Inn](#), [Clarke Cooke House](#), [Belle's Cafe](#) for breakfast inside a shipyard, [The Black Pearl](#) for *chowda* and Jackie Kennedy's beloved [White Horse Tavern](#), one of the oldest restaurants in America dating back to 1673.