

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

The 9 Best Laid-back Beach Towns in the Northeast

These coastal getaways are worth visiting for their beautiful shores and small-town feel.

By Kira Turnbull | April 19, 2024

Block Island, Rhode Island



On this island, cars are scarce and bikes are plentiful. A quick ferry ride from New London, Connecticut, or Newport, Rhode Island, this 7,000-acre island is the perfect antidote to congested Nantucket. The northern part of the island remains untouched and is home to wildlife rarely seen on the mainland. On the southern half, you'll find the quaint town of New Shoreham, which houses most of the hotels and eateries. This island might have a tiny population (around 1,000, to be exact) but in the summer the small oasis comes alive with festivals and sailing regattas.

A five-minute walk from Ballard's Beach, [Hotel Manisses](#) is the place to stay. The exterior of the 19th-century building is reminiscent of Victorian manor houses, with lovely details like gilded mirrors and claw foot tubs in its 17 guestrooms. Besides the hotel's on-site restaurant, one of the best on the island, another spot for upscale dining is [Eli's](#), which also has delicious cocktails and ocean views. The Dark 'n Stormy should always be the drink of choice here.