



# The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2021

When the time comes to travel again, these destinations — all right in your own backyard — are the ones to visit next.

By **Travel + Leisure** | December 17, 2020

Even for the compulsive jetsetters among us, it's a simple truth that most travel stories are aspirational in the best of times. There are too many incredible places to see, not enough vacation days, and sometimes we all have to content ourselves with scrawling another spot on the bucket list and hoping the stars align.

But this year, as we all sat at home and watched the world come to a halt, “aspirational” took on new meaning. When restrictions relaxed this [summer](#), the familiar wanderlust crept back in. With even the most straightforward international getaways ruled out, and many travelers still hesitant to hop on a plane, even simple trips — [scenic drives](#), [camping weekends](#), [staycations](#) across town — suddenly felt novel and luxurious.

With the [first vaccines now rolling out](#), it seems the end of our long international nightmare is finally (finally!) in sight. In anticipation of that moment, we've once again compiled our annual list of the best places to travel in the coming year — with one twist. In honor of our revived appreciation for the discoveries to be made in our own backyards, this year's list features 50 dynamic, of-the-moment destinations — all right here in the United States.

Some spots on the list ahead are newly blossoming thanks to hotel or infrastructure developments or revamped cultural attractions. Others caught on this summer, as social distancing made empty expanses of wilderness more compelling than ever and we all looked for new wells of charm in our own home states. What they all have in common is that singularity that makes a destination memorable — the sense that this place has something to offer that you won't find anywhere else in the world.

One day soon, we'll all get back to traveling the way we did before. We'll gripe about [security lines](#) and [airplane meals](#), delight at hearing an unfamiliar language or staying in a [new hotel](#), develop passionate loyalties for a particular food truck or coffee kiosk. Until then, we hope this list will serve as something to hold onto — to stoke your wanderlust and keep the tiny flame of optimism burning. Sure, it's a little bit aspirational. But that just means we're still willing to dream.

Ahead, *Travel + Leisure's* 50 best places to travel in 2021, listed in alphabetical order.

## 38. Rhode Island



Credit: Mariah Tyler



Known for its Colonial seaside towns and Gilded Age mansions, Rhode Island is a destination steeped in history. But it's become a modern hot spot recently with the openings of several new properties. [The Wayfinder Hotel](#) in Newport, created by a group of locals, touts its anti-nautical design vibe — visit the on-site restaurant, Nomi Park, for traditional New England fare with a twist. And the past blends with the present at Providence's new hotel, [the Beatrice](#), once the 1887 Exchange Building. Now, it's a 47-room boutique property within walking distance of the university city's buzzing downtown. And there are even options for outdoor enthusiasts thanks to the opening of the 3,500-acre [Preserve Sporting Club & Residences](#) in Richmond, from the team behind [Ocean House](#). The one-of-a-kind wilderness retreat features an 18-hole golf course, zip line, mountain biking, rock climbing, kayaking, archery, and more. The pint-size state is having such a moment, luxury travel company Black Tomato even included a stop at [the Vanderbilt](#) in Newport on a New England road trip itinerary launched as part of its curated [Take the Open Road with Auberge and Black Tomato](#) collection. Of course, the classic experiences are just as appealing: You can't leave the Ocean State without making a pilgrimage to try the epic Sunday brunch at [Castle Hill Inn](#), overlooking Narragansett Bay. —*Jordi Lippe-McGraw*