

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

Home + World's Best

The Top 15 Islands in the Continental U.S.

BY REBECCA ASCHER-WALSH | JULY 08, 2020

This year's World's Best Awards survey closed on March 2, just before widespread stay-at-home orders were implemented as a result of COVID-19. The results reflect our readers' experiences before the pandemic, but we hope that this year's honorees will inspire your trips to come — whenever they may be.

The Eastern seaboard once again lays claim to the majority of the islands T+L readers voted as their favorites. Still, that's not to say there haven't been some shake-ups; six of the top 15 islands didn't appear on last year's list.

Every year for our [World's Best Awards](#) survey, T+L asks readers to weigh in on travel experiences around the globe — to share their opinions on the top cities, islands, cruise ships, spas, airlines, and more. [Readers rated islands](#) according to their activities and sights, natural attractions and beaches, food, friendliness, and overall value.

In the Northeast, summertime escape Martha's Vineyard in [Cape Cod](#) took the No. 15 spot. Readers loved the fact that there are "plenty of places to explore and discover," as one summarized. The half of the area dubbed Up-Island is a glorious, sleepy stretch of craggy coastline, farms, and the fishing village of Menemsha, while Down-Island includes the old whaling town of Edgartown and the village of Oak Bluffs, known for its gingerbread houses. Charming lodgings abound, including Up-Island favorite the Outermost Inn, which is owned by Jeanne and Hugh Taylor (James Taylor's brother). The seven-room house is perched high on the Gay Head Cliffs, overlooking the Atlantic as well as Rhode Island and Block Island Sound, and is home to one of the finest restaurants on the island.

The opposite coast's sole representation this year is [Washington's San Juan Islands](#), which move onto the list at the No. 2 spot. The archipelago, which includes Orcas Island, Lopez Island, and San Juan Island, is beloved for its dense pine-tree forests, breathtaking vistas, and abundant wildlife, which includes a robust orca population. "Each is beautiful in its own way," reflected one reader, who added that "ferries are easy to negotiate between islands."

But it was another cluster that sits just off the coast of Georgia that captured the most votes for the best islands in the continental U.S. Read on for the full list of the top U.S. coastal destinations.

10. Block Island, Rhode Island



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Score: 81.05