

The 15 Best Rail Trails in the U.S.

Rail trails are slowly transforming the way Americans recreate. What were once abandoned and overrun corridors and railways, are now [places for people to walk, run, or bike](#). This renewal of long-forgotten outdoor space is taking place all over the country — from Virginia to Utah — and it's still gaining steam.

According to the [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#), a trails advocacy organization, trail use in 2022 was **45 percent higher** than it was in 2019. To keep up with the growing number of people who want to [access trails and get outside](#), the conservancy is ramping up their signature project, the Great American Rail-Trail, which will eventually connect 3,700 miles of multi-use trails between Washington, D.C. and Washington State.

“Now, after several years of sustained demand for trails, it's clear that this is a trend and that this infrastructure is essential to people across the U.S. These consistently high levels of trail use reinforce how critical this infrastructure is to our physical and mental health — as well as the well-being of our communities,” said Torsha Bhattacharya, the research director at the conservancy in a [December 21, 2022 press release](#).

As we await the completion of the Great American Rail-Trail (which is [more than 50 percent complete](#)), we've called out a few paths you can hop on now. These rail trails are some of the nation's best, and are situated all over the country, from the fully paved [Paul Bunyan State Trail](#) in Minnesota to the water-bound Island Line Rail Trail in Vermont.

East Bay Bike Path, Rhode Island



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As the name suggests, the [East Bay Bike Path](#) was built for bikers, but walkers are welcome on the pedestrian walkway that runs parallel to the bike route. It's good news because this trail is one for the books — it begins in Providence, crosses the Seekonk River, and continues along the waters of Narragansett Bay. This 14.5-mile paved trail is all about enjoying and celebrating the state's watery landscape.