

THE KNOCKTURNAL

Travel like Taylor Swift in Westerly, RI



Calling all Swifties — as well as anyone who likes checking out picturesque New England towns.

Westerly, Rhode Island is a quaint town in the beautiful Ocean State — and is known for its epic beaches and shoreline, charming downtown and eateries, and its most famous superstar inhabitant.



Lots of hometown love for resident Taylor Swift in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

The town is so captivating that Taylor Swift not only purchased a home here, but was inspired to write the song, “The Last Great American Dynasty” about her home in Westerly (and its former inhabitant, socialite Rebekah Harkness).

It’s easy to fall in love with Westerly yourself, whether visiting for a few hours or making the coastal town your jumping off point for a longer stay.

What to Do In Downtown Westerly, RI

Indulge in Local Bites



One of the best ways to experience a new place is to indulge in some of its incredible flavors. Downtown Westerly has a host of restaurants and bars to check out, but I got to sample some of the best by visiting [The Cafe](#), located right next to the renovated United Theater.



The burger at The Cafe in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of The Cafe.

The Cafe is an elegant restaurant where — as their website says, “stars are treated like locals and locals are treated like stars.” Enjoy a relaxed, laid-back atmosphere even in the

restaurant's upscale setting. I sat at the bar and ended up chatting with several guests who come here often and I can see why it's such a local fave.



The Braised Lamb Naan "Tacos" with hand-made fries and Harissa-Roasted Heritage Carrots from The Cafe in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of author.

The **Braised Lamb Naan "Tacos"** are a special treat that shouldn't be missed. Packed with flavors and prepared with tzatziki, cucumber, grape tomatoes, red onion, feta, greens, and harissa, they're simply delicious. The lamb was cooked just right and pairs perfectly with the soft naan. They also come with hand-made fries which were perfectly seasoned as well.



Always fun to get to see an open kitchen and see the chefs preparing your oh-so-delicious dishes, like in The Cafe in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

As an extra snack, the **Harissa-Roasted Heritage Carrots** are a crowd-pleaser as well – and were prepared with whipped feta, maple-lime tahini, pomegranate seeds, and micro-cilantro. Don't be surprised if you find yourself scraping the bottom of your plate to make sure you have all the whipped-feta, tahini sauce. It's a unique flavor combination that you'll quickly find yourself happily addicted to.



The Pan-Seared Striped Bass with saffron-braised chickpeas at The Cafe in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

For my main-entree I chose the **Pan-Seared Striped Bass** — which was prepared with saffron-braised chickpeas, and a fennel-citrus-caper salad. If you're a fish person (which I am), you'll love this dish — both for the striped bass, as well as the chickpeas. But be forewarned: they're so good that you'll probably want the recipe because the chickpeas are some of the best I've ever had.



The Chocolate Vinegar Cake at The Cafe in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

For dessert, I got to check out their famous **Chocolate Vinegar Cake**. The menu keeps it simple when describing it, writing to just “trust us on this one.” I’ll add to that voice, saying it’s incredibly good and if you like chocolate even a little, you’ll love a slice of this cake.

Served with a dollop of whipped cream, the three-layer cake features a chocolate creamy filling and ganache that feels both decadent... yet somehow not overly sugar-y. The portion-size is generous, so it’s easily either A) shareable or B) possible to bring home and have cake for breakfast the following morning. That is, of course, assuming you don’t C) simply wolf it down immediately once presented with the cake.



The 2022 Domaine du Petit Clocher Anjou Blanc at The Cafe in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author. Won't judge either way... it's really that delicious.



2022 Domaine du Petit Clocher Anjou Blanc at The Cafe in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

The restaurant offers a full menu of wines and cocktails with fun names like “Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers.” (Say that three times after downing the drink and I guess

you'll see how buzzed you might really be). I tried the 2022 Domaine du Petit Clocher Anjou Blanc, which was light and lovely.

Shop



Get your fun beachy vibes on at the store literally called "Fun," in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

Find your Insta-ready New England looks with a variety of charming boutiques that have your beachy glam fits ready for ya. There are also cute little shops to find fun souvenirs to bring home. One is literally called Fun and is packed with seaside goodies that will feel, you guessed it, "fun."

Recharge



Wilcox Park in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

Westerly is home to Wilcox Park, a beautiful park designed by Warren H Manning, a one-time associate of Frederick Law Olmstead (who famously designed NYC's Central Park, among other iconic landscapes).

Street Art



The Granite Industry of Westerly, RI has been memorialized in a mural, found between Shield Martial Arts (39 High Street) and Fret's Guitar Shop (43 High St). Photo courtesy of the author.

There are a few murals painted on the sides of buildings you can check out. A mural, located between Shield Martial Arts (39 High St) and Fret's Guitar Workshop (43 High St) honors the history of the granite industry to Westerly, RI.

Explore



Who says the Victorian Ladies of SF have to have all the architecture fun on your feed? Check out New England style homes in Westerly, RI. Photo courtesy of the author.

Take a short walk past the shops and eateries into the surrounding neighborhoods to admire classic New England architecture. The vibrant Victorian homes of San Francisco or the NYC brownstones shouldn't get all the architecture love in your feed.