

## Rhode Island getaway: Spend a weekend in coastal Westerly

Fresh local oysters, pristine beaches and lighthouse views await.



Enjoy picturesque views of the Watch Hill Lighthouse in Westerly, a town in Rhode Island. Photo Credit: Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

**By Allison Tibaldi**

For an alternative to a beach weekend on Long Island's East End or the Jersey Shore, consider Westerly, Rhode Island. At the picturesque coastal New England town, beautiful beaches are plentiful for swimming, surfing and sailing. And a thriving local food scene and an emphasis on the arts add to its charm.

## Get outdoors

On the Atlantic Ocean, Misquamicut State Beach (\$12 per vehicle on weekdays, \$14 on weekends and holidays for nonresidents; 257 Atlantic Ave., [riparks.com](http://riparks.com)) offers views of Block Island's towering bluffs on a clear day. Lifeguards in season, toilets, outdoor showers and a concession stand add creature comforts.

Wilcox Park (44 Broad St., 401-596-2877, [westerlylibrary.org](http://westerlylibrary.org)) is a leafy respite with an arboretum and colorful perennial gardens. Soak in the flowers, watch a Shakespeare production or catch an open-air concert.

Watch Hill, a discreet old-money summer colony, is part of Westerly and the perfect place for a breezy stroll. Stately homes, pristine beaches and a lighthouse magnify its vintage charm. If you're traveling with children, the old-fashioned Watch Hill Flying Horses Carousel (open daily through Labor Day, \$1.50 per ride; 151 Bay St., 401-348-6007, [watchhillbeachandcarousel.com](http://watchhillbeachandcarousel.com)) is sure to be a hit.

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## Cultural offerings

Indie bookstore Savoy Bookshop and Café (10 Canal St., 401-213-3901, [banksquarebooks.com](http://banksquarebooks.com)) has a fine selection of titles by New England authors. It's a cerebral spot if you're looking for a rainy day hideout or a break from sand and surf, with frequent readings, book signings and Saturday morning story time for the kids.

Granite Theatre (1 Granite St., 401-596-2341, [granitetheatre.com](http://granitetheatre.com)) is housed in a restored Greek Revival church. Each season includes a balanced mix of live comedies, dramas and musicals.

To get an overview of the local art scene, head to the Artists' Cooperative Gallery of Westerly (closed Mondays and Tuesdays; 7 Canal St., 401-596-2221, [westerlyarts.com](http://westerlyarts.com)). Rotating monthly shows open on the first Friday of the month.

## Local eats

The Malted Barley (42 High St., 401-315-2184, [themaltedbarleyri.com](http://themaltedbarleyri.com)) specializes in craft beer served with just-baked pretzels. Select your beverage from a menu loaded with bottled, canned and tap brews. Customize your pretzel with a dipping sauce or indulge in a gooey pretzel grilled cheese sandwich.

For more upscale dining, there's Coast at Ocean House (dinner only, closed Mondays and Tuesdays; 1 Bluff Ave., 855-678-0364, [oceanhouseri.com](http://oceanhouseri.com)). The chef works with foragers, farmers and fishermen to source local ingredients for the nightly four-course tasting menu.

Head about 30 minutes east to the Matunuck Oyster Bar in South Kingston (629 Succotash Rd., 401-783-4202, [rhodyoysters.com](http://rhodyoysters.com)) for a pond-to-plate dining experience. The restaurant is committed to sustainably sourcing ingredients, with shellfish beds just beyond the kitchen door to supply its super-fresh raw bar.

## Good to know

**Getting there:** It's 140 miles from midtown to Westerly via I-95. Take Amtrak from Penn Station and you'll be there in three hours.

**Getting around:** Downtown Westerly is pedestrian-friendly. If you're arriving by train, many properties can arrange pick-up at the train station. Some also provide guests with loaner bikes and helmets to traverse the town and its scenic back roads.

**Where to stay:** Enjoy clambakes and s'mores by the fire pit at the Weekapaug Inn (25 Spray Rock Rd., 855-679-2995, [weekapauginn.com](http://weekapauginn.com)), which overlooks a saltwater lagoon. Ocean House (1 Bluff Ave., 855-678-0364, [oceanhouseri.com](http://oceanhouseri.com)) is perched high on the bluffs of Watch Hill with spectacular sea views.