

Six perfect New England towns for a fall getaway

From breathtaking views and foliage to charming seacoasts and Main Streets, these regional gems are great places to have a classic autumn experience.

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While many tour the Northeast in the fall simply for its glorious foliage, there's also something special about stopping along the way to spend time in a community so picturesque it feels like it popped out of a calendar.

From breathtaking seacoasts to charming Main Streets, cutting-edge art to culinary adventures — and yes, access to spectacular leaf-peeping — these towns are filled with opportunities for the fall traveler. Here are six of our favorites, one from each New England state, with recommendations for what to do and where to eat and stay when you get there.



Woodstock, Vermont MICHAEL HIRSHON/FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

WOODSTOCK, VERMONT

With its quaint clapboard homes, soaring church spires, and old-fashioned restaurants and inns, Woodstock, Vermont, almost feels more like a movie set than a place where people actually live. But it is, indeed, a real town with a rich history showcased by its many well-preserved structures that date back more than a century. And, as visitors will find, it's also the perfect base for a plethora of outdoor activities, especially in fall.

Woodstock's tree-shaded village green is a great place to begin a walking tour. Start just off the green with a photo-op at a rustic covered bridge that spans the Ottauquechee River. Just east is the downtown section, lined with stately brick buildings and understated storefronts that make it look like a rural version of Charles Street in Beacon Hill. North of the center is the Billings Farm & Museum (billingsfarm.org, 802-457-2355), a peaceful spot for strolling that celebrates Vermont's rural heritage and includes a working dairy farm. If you're a hiker, a switchback trail up Mount Tom, which starts beyond the covered bridge on Mountain Avenue, rises above the town and offers magnificent views of the valley and the imposing Green Mountains to the west.

The Woodstock area is also a great base to access some wonderful places by car or bike. A drive up High Pastures Road, east of the center of town, leads to Sugarbush Farm (sugarbushfarm.com, 800-281-1757), a quintessentially Vermont spot with a petting zoo and farm store that sells maple products, local cheeses, and more; its dramatic hillside location is perfect for picture taking. A bit further east, in the tranquil town of Quechee, is Vermont's version of the Grand Canyon: Quechee Gorge (vtstateparks.com/quechee.html) is a sight to behold, dropping a dizzying 165 feet below Route 4. Bikers will want to head west to West Woodstock and the Aqueduct Trails for its miles of varied terrain and unspoiled surroundings.

What to Eat

A variety of dining options can be found in Woodstock, including a homey farm-to-table spot east of the center called Worthy Kitchen (worthyvermont.com/worthy-kitchen, 802-457-7281). Owned by the people behind the sublime Worthy Burger in South Royalton, it offers delicious burgers along with some of Vermont's best beers. Melaza Bistro (melazabistro.com, 802-457-7110), offers a more upscale and romantic — but still casual — vibe as well as a lovely patio and a regional menu with Caribbean influences. Heading west of the town center, you'll find The White Cottage Snack Bar (whitecottagesnackbar.com, 802-457-3455), a roadside food stand that's open from May through Columbus Day with fried food and ice cream as well as riverside seating.

Where to Stay

One of the region's most luxurious hotels, the Woodstock Inn & Resort (woodstockinn.com, 888-338-2745; from \$629) sits by the village green and features spa, golf, and tennis packages while also offering fine dining at the Red Rooster. The Kedron Valley Inn (kedronvalleyinn.com, 802-457-1473; from \$329) in tiny South Woodstock is a marvelous option with its gorgeous views, beautifully-appointed rooms, and warm elegance. For budget-conscious travelers willing to stay outside the town limits, try the Quality Inn at Quechee Gorge (choicehotels.com/vermont/quechee/quality-inn-hotels, 802-295-7600; from \$95), a comfortable, family-friendly place that's less than 10 minutes from Woodstock.