

2018 OFFICIAL VISITORS GUIDE

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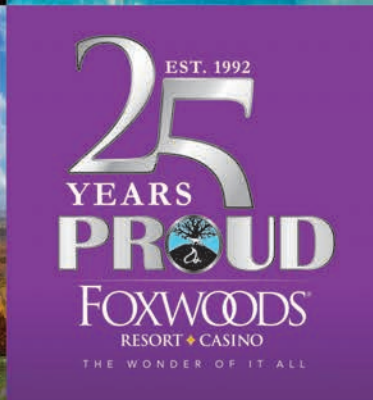
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– Yankee Magazine

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WELCOME

Whatever time of year you visit, you'll find that Connecticut offers a dynamic blend of experiences—from the natural to the cultural, the historic to the contemporary, the active to the relaxing. So whether you're looking for some pulse-racing adventures or a stress-releasing retreat, you'll find so many options to explore all across our beautiful state.

In just a few hours, you can go from Connecticut's scenic coastal communities to our hiker-friendly mountain trails. You can go tubing on our clean rivers, snowboard our ranges, zip line our quarries and revel in New England's longest foliage season. You can stroll our quintessential New England small towns or explore our vibrant cities—home to some of the nation's top art galleries, cultural centers, live theaters, concert venues and restaurants.

Take some time to retrace our revolutionary past, then fast forward to our still revolutionary new attractions. Settle in at one of our historic B&Bs or treat yourself at one of our world-class destination resorts.

Whether you spend a weekend or a lifetime, we invite you to sample all Connecticut has to offer. You will find a few highlights in the pages that follow and more at CTvisit.com. And be sure to try our website's new "season selector" that highlights the top experiences for each of our four spectacular seasons.

We invite you to get off the beaten path in Connecticut. We promise to surprise you—and hopefully inspire you to return again and again.

We look forward to welcoming you to Connecticut.

Dannel P. Malloy, Governor



Hiking, Simsbury



Farmington River Tubing, New Hartford

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Get more travel ideas at CTvisit.com. From special deals to diverse activities for couples, families, history buffs and foodies—all within close proximity—the Connecticut Office of Tourism's comprehensive website has it all. Like us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CTvisit) and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/CTvisit) to receive timely updates. See what inspires other travelers at [Pinterest.com/visitct](https://www.pinterest.com/visitct). For more Connecticut, check out our [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/visitct) channel and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/visitct) pictures.



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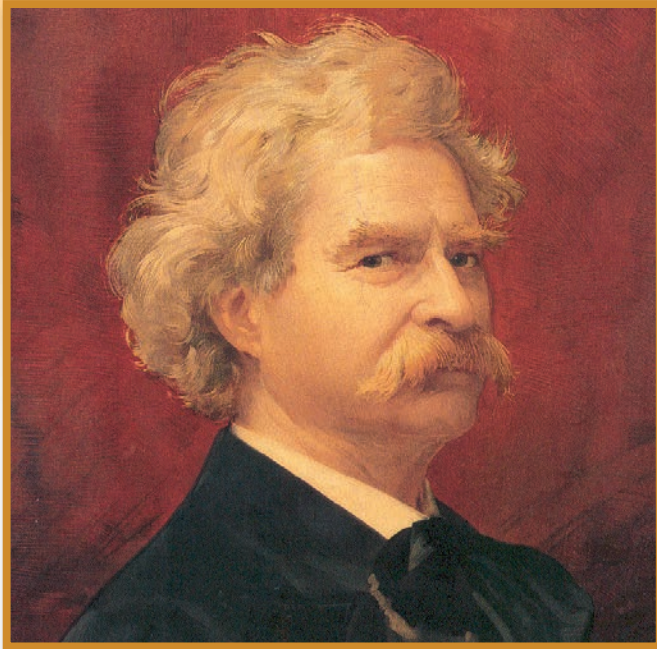


ON THE COVER

Kayaking on the Connecticut River near Old Lyme.

Photo by
Janine Lamontagne

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Florence Griswold Museum, Old Lyme



The Aldrich, Ridgefield

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CREATIVE PURSUITS

FIND INSPIRATION AT CONNECTICUT'S
AMAZING ART MUSEUMS

■ THE ALDRICH CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

Connecticut's lone contemporary art museum in Ridgefield is perpetually inspiring, as experimental artists transform "blank" spaces installation after intriguing installation. Outside, a two-acre sculpture garden is your place for imaginative contemplation. Special programs for all ages foster deep and personal engagement with art by today's gifted creators.

■ FLORENCE GRISWOLD MUSEUM

This was no ordinary boardinghouse in Old Lyme. Florence Griswold hosted the early 20th century's leading American Impressionists. Visit her historic home, the gallery and gardens, and you can experience the era of the Lyme Art Colony, participate in workshops and savor lunch with a riverside view at the seasonal Café Flo.

■ YALE CENTER FOR BRITISH ART & YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

The largest collection of British masterworks outside the United Kingdom is housed on one side of Chapel Street in New Haven. A massive assemblage of art and artifacts from around the world is displayed on the other. Yale's art holdings rival those of major museums, yet admission to admire the evolution of human creativity is absolutely free.

■ BRUCE MUSEUM

Intimate yet sophisticated, this art and science museum in Greenwich mounts exhibitions you'd expect to find at larger, more metropolitan institutions. So, check what's on—and take the kids. Local history and the natural world's diversity are celebrated here, too. Every object—meteorite, wigwam, dino egg, Rodin sculpture—tells a story.

■ WADSWORTH ATHENEUM MUSEUM OF ART

Art from the past. Art of the future. America's oldest continuously operating public art museum gathers five millennia of human ingenuity in one spot in Hartford. Luminous Hudson River School landscapes—one of the largest collections in existence—are reason alone for a visit. So is the beautifully curated museum shop.

■ NEW BRITAIN MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Credit this New Britain museum with being first to decide American art deserves its own place. It was a radical idea back in 1903, and the NBMAA—now a repository for more than 8,300 works from Colonial portraits to cutting-edge contemporary art—keeps things fresh with changing exhibitions and fun social events.

■ HILL-STEAD MUSEUM

Step inside the Colonial Revival home of one of America's earliest female architects and discover what it's like to live with priceless art on the walls. It's rare to see paintings by Impressionist masters like Claude Monet, Mary Cassatt and Edgar Degas "in situ." The Farmington estate's sunken garden and grounds are captivating, too. **KKB**



Mystic Aquarium

7 WILD ENCOUNTERS

WHERE TO INTERACT WITH
ANIMALS OF EVERY ORDER

■ MYSTIC AQUARIUM

It's one of the nation's leading aquariums, with more than 300 marine life species and Arctic Coast—the largest outdoor beluga whale exhibit in the United States. Watch them through underwater viewing windows or during feeding and training sessions. Rescued harbor seals Bristol and Coral recently joined the belugas. Other exhibits at this Mystic favorite feature

African penguins, alligators, frogs, seals and sea lions. Main Gallery habitats feature crowd-pleasing sharks, stingrays and jellyfish.

■ THE MARITIME AQUARIUM AT NORWALK

This year, the aquarium symbolizes its 30th anniversary with the pearl-befitting, since Norwalk is the oystering capital of Connecticut. Expect celebratory special



CARYN B. DAVIS

The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk

museum and picnic area and take a hayride in the fall.

■ BURGIS BROOK ALPACAS

Alpacas are rare outside of South America, but there are more than 50 Peruvian huacayas living on this farm in Canterbury. With whimsical names like El Futuro and Clari-belle, many are happy to be petted. If owners Mark and Alisa aren't out at a farmers market, they'll tell you how the soft fleece turns into beautiful knitting yarn. Stop into The Crimp Farm Shop for yarns, hand knits, honey and garlic, all produced on-site.

■ STAMFORD MUSEUM & NATURE CENTER

Nature, history and art come together in Stamford, where visitors enjoy the interactive nature center, planetarium, observatory and telescope, otter pond, trails and playground. Animal "meet and greets" featuring small exotic animals from around the world are a family favorite. Seasonal exhibits explore science, conservation and endangered species. Or plan a visit during one of their annual events such as Harvest Festival Weekend or the Farm Egg Hunt.

■ THE CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY

The 19 sanctuaries stewarded by the state's Audubon Society provide daily access to nature—to observe wildlife and go birdwatching, hike and learn from interpretative signage. Nature centers offering educational programs are located in Fairfield, Milford, Glastonbury and Pomfret. Some of the largest sanctuaries are Croft preserve in Goshen, Bafflin preserve in Pomfret and the newest—Deer Pond Farm in Sherman, with 835 acres of forest, meadow and wetlands. **TLS**



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Go to **CTvisit.com/animals**
for more wildlife encounters
across the state.



Creamery Brook Bison

FARM FUN

Want to check in with some chickens, or gab with a goat? Find a farm open to the public. There are 400 chickens at **Flamig Farm** in West Simsbury, as

well as a petting zoo with alpacas, cows, emus, goats, peacocks, potbellied pigs and sheep. At **Fort Hill Farms** in Thompson,

meet cows and calves on guided tours, and sample fresh milk and ice cream.

Karabin Farms in Southington is a great place for a wagon ride to meet the cows, pigs, turkeys and chickens on-site. **Creamery Brook Bison** in Brooklyn runs monthly Bison Adventure Saturdays, giving wagon rides to the bison pasture. On the **UConn** campus in Storrs, visit the Animal Barns to see the cows, sheep and horses in the Animal Science program. Stop by the Dairy Bar for ice cream made on-premise.

offers, events and displays throughout 2018. The new *Journey with Jellies* exhibit added exotic species to the largest jellyfish collection in New England, but don't forget the sharks, seals, turtles and otters. In addition to animal-encounter programs, guests can participate in marine-life tours on Long Island Sound.

■ CONNECTICUT'S BEARDSLEY ZOO

Protecting endangered species is a key mission for this Bridgeport institution, which opened in the early 1920s and is the state's only accredited zoo. Many of the 300 animals, such as the Siberian tigers and Brazilian ocelots, are threatened by extinction. Popular exhibits include the indoor rainforest, Alligator Alley and New England Farmyard. The newest, Pampas Plains, features South American species such as the vicuña and

giant anteater. Save time to ride the indoor carousel.

■ ACTION WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

You'll forget you're even in Connecticut as you embark on the Drive-thru Safari at this wildlife sanctuary in Goshen. The more than 350 exotic animals that live here—elk, zebra, ibex, red sheep and wild boars—come from North America, Africa, India, Asia and the Arctic, and many are endangered. Visit the petting zoo to feed the smaller animals, spend time in the



SKI THE RIDGE

Powder Ridge Mountain Park & Resort, Middlefield

SNOW DAYS

HIT THE SLOPES
FOR FROSTY FUN

■ POWDER RIDGE MOUNTAIN PARK & RESORT

New owners have dressed up Powder Ridge in Middlefield to be one of the region's best destinations. New this year, the 365 Synthetic Snow Park offers winter sports year-round. Hit the Fire at the Ridge restaurant after a day on the mountain's 19 trails and four terrain parks.

■ MOHAWK MOUNTAIN

Offering some of the best views in the state, historic Mohawk Mountain in Cornwall boasts 25 trails, with night skiing on half of them. Mohawk Mountain was established in 1947 and is the

oldest and largest ski resort in the state. See those snowmaking machines? This was the country's first ski area to have them!

■ MT. SOUTHTON SKI AREA

Connecticut's ski resorts all offer fun and safe places for novices to learn. Mt. Southington, centrally located and easy to access, focuses on family fun for all. With 12 trails, terrain parks, mogul runs and night skiing, this cozy resort on a former dairy farm is a top choice.

■ SKI SUNDOWN

Originally called Satan's Ridge, Ski Sundown in New Hartford offers the devilishly difficult double-black-diamond Satan's Staircase trail for experts. With 15 other trails appealing to all skill levels, everyone can celebrate the winter season.

■ WOODBURY SKI AREA

Like the renowned antiquing in Woodbury, great things come in small packages. Woodbury Ski Area packs every activity you can think of within their resort: skiing, snowboarding, tubing, day camps and development programs. Woodbury really packs a punch. **SW**



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Hammonasset Beach State Park, Madison

BEACH DAYS

PERFECT WAYS TO FROLIC
IN THE SURF OR KICK BACK
ON THE SAND

■ OCEAN BEACH PARK

Call this half-mile of sugary sand in New London the anti-boredom beach. Little kids love the spray park and retro amusement rides. Tweens and teens gravitate to the Olympic-size pool, arcade and water-slides. Miniature golf's fun for the whole family. And just when you think you've done it all, there's entertainment almost every night on the boardwalk.

■ HAMMONASSET BEACH STATE PARK

Toes in the sand at a yoga class. Fingertips in the nature center's touch tank, tickling a crab. Muscles warmed from a hike or bike ride. Eyes alert for rare birds and butterflies. At Connecticut's largest beach, you can swim, sunbathe, camp under starry skies and truly commune with the coast in Madison.

■ ROCKY NECK STATE PARK

Swimsuit styles have changed. But otherwise, this half-mile, soft-sand beach and its fortress-like fieldstone pavilion look remarkably as they did in 1950s vintage postcards. Families pitch tents. Kids cheer when trains rumble through. Couples claim rocky love seats and gaze at the horizon in East Lyme. And the gentle water's a silvery shade of blue.

■ SHERWOOD ISLAND STATE PARK

Fairfield County's only state-owned beach is located in Westport, yet remarkably scenic and wild. More than a century after visionary state leaders deemed this mile and a half of shoreline worthy of preservation, it remains a popular place to cool off, walk, fly kites, observe nature and fish from shore.

■ HARVEY'S BEACH

Old Saybrook's open-to-the-public town beach is a small patch of sheltered shore. Low tide leaves behind tidal pools swirling with curious life forms and saturated sand for little builders to scoop and mold. Then, it's off to the playground or the food truck with its menu of summertime favorites.

■ JACOB'S BEACH

This stunning beach is hidden on a narrow, dead-end street in the town of Guilford. A jetty pens in sun-warmed water so clear that clouds look submerged. A quick dip, a good book, a picnic: Any cares you brought along will disappear. With Connecticut's second-oldest lighthouse in view out on Faulkner's Island, the scene is the epitome of tranquility.

■ SILVER SANDS STATE PARK

Free parking is priceless enough, but it's sure nice to dream some of Captain Kidd's loot might be in the vicinity. Charles Island—where the 17th-century pirate allegedly buried treasure—dominates the view from this seashell-strewn beach located in Milford. Stake out your own quiet spot, and watch as the outbound tide resculpts the coastline. **KKB**



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CT PLAY LIST

ANNUAL EVENTS CAPTURE
THE BEST OF ALL SEASONS

JANUARY

Feel the chill

Families who play together stay together. That's especially true when playtime includes snow and ice. Try your hand at ice fishing at the **Family Ice Fishing Derby**, held at Patriot's Park in Coventry. Gear up for this wintertime event that includes demonstrations and prizes on top of a frozen lake. Another outdoor favorite for families is the ❶ **ice skating rink** at Foxwoods Resort Casino in Mashantucket. When you feel the chill here, take cover on the winter patio to warm up around fire pits and enjoy hot chocolate. Make sure to bring the camera.

FEBRUARY

Flying high

Head to Salisbury for ❷ **Jumpfest** weekend, a three-day winter festival revolving around a 55-meter jump at Satre Ski Hill—the oldest ski-jumping program in the nation. See junior and Olympic-level competitors take flight, and enjoy other festivities including ice carving, the Human Dog Sled Race and Snow Ball Dance. See nature's most graceful flyers on eagle cruises such as **Winter Wildlife Eagle Tours** that depart from the Connecticut River Museum or aboard the Essex Steam Train's **Eagle Flyer** expedition, both in Essex.



MARCH

Sugar shacks

Celebrate a New England tradition at maple syrup festivals across Connecticut. Pancake breakfasts highlight **Hebron Maple Festival**, but festival-goers also enjoy other syrup-infused goodies and learn how the sweet treats are made. At the **Plymouth Maple Festival** visitors enjoy horse-drawn hayrides and maple syrup snow cones. The **Maple Sugar Festival Weekend** in Stamford includes demonstrations on how to tap trees and collect sap. And in Washington, the **Maple Sugaring Festival** shows how Native Americans started the tradition.

APRIL

Early bloomers

More than half a million blooms take center stage in Meriden's Hubbard Park during the ❸ **Daffodil Festival**. A full weekend of events honors this rite of spring and includes live music on three stages, a juried craft fair with nearly 100 exhibitors and a huge



JUSTIN COLMAN

food tent where local vendors set up shop. Kids especially enjoy the carnival's Ferris wheel and other thrill rides plus the fireworks show that rounds out the fun.

MAY

Green thumbs

Greet the arrival of spring with **May Markets**, which pop up throughout the state and offer garden items and crafts. Find two popular markets at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington and the Phelps-Hatheway House & Garden in Suffield. The **Dogwood Festival** in Fairfield showcases thousands of trees ushering in the season with walking tours, music and an art show. Hartford gets into the act with Wadsworth Atheneum's **Fine Art & Flowers**, featuring floral arrangements and garden designs inspired by masterworks.

JUNE

Seeing stars

Summer nights often lead to outdoor concerts under the stars.

Westport's **Levitt Pavilion** features more than 50 free nights of entertainment during the summer. New Haven is the site of the **International Festival of Arts & Ideas**, which lasts for most of June and includes multiple open-air concerts. Classical music fans head to Falls Village for **Music Mountain**, the oldest summer chamber music festival in the country. Hartford Symphony Orchestra's **Talcott Mountain Music Festival** serves up Latin, jazz, Broadway favorites and a popular Fourth of July show. Priam Vineyards in Colchester stages classic rock and blues at its **UnWINEd** concert series. If sports stars are more your game, look for big-name golfers at Cromwell's **Travelers Championship**, the Northeast's stop on the PGA Tour.

JULY

Civic pride

This time of year, activities often take place in, on or near the water.

Sailfest, a street and harbor festival at New London's Waterfront



COURTESY OF TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Park, features tall ships, a road race, a crafts festival and a huge display of fireworks. Another annual favorite, Mystic's **Antique & Classic Boat Rendezvous** adds a three-mile boat parade along Mystic River to the fun. For a truly old-fashioned Fourth of July party, head inland to Enfield's **Fourth of July Town Celebration**, which features a parade, the Taste of Enfield and a grand finale of fireworks.

AUGUST

Get creative

Communities display their cultural assets as summer comes to a close. Visual and performing arts take over the streets of South Norwalk during the **SoNo Arts Celebration**, which features the work of more than 100 juried artists. The **Mystic Outdoor Art Festival** features art *en plein air* from artists from across the country along a two-mile route. The Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation exhibits Native American culture during **Schemitzun**. View native dances, arts and crafts demonstrations and a re-created 17th-century village. Find on-court artistry at the **Connecticut Open**, featuring international female tennis greats.



SEPTEMBER

Best in show

More than 20 agricultural fairs across the state take place from July through October. The **Durham Fair**, on the last full weekend in September, is the state's largest. But these are not all about plants and animals. The **midways** have awesome thrill rides and classic carny games, and entertainment ranges from headline concerts and rodeos to demolition derbies and lumberjack shows. For something more low-key, celebrate the changing of the season at the **Apple Harvest Festival**, held over two weekends on Southington's town green, and find other pick-your-own farms across the state to enjoy the apple harvest.



OCTOBER

Drive time

When the leaves change, spectacular colors lure visitors outside to hike, to sit on the porch, to drive scenic routes...anything to soak in the splendor of New England's longest fall-foliage season. Cover as much ground as you can on scenic drives such as **Route 169**—a National Scenic Byway in the Quiet Corner—or **Route 7** in the Litchfield Hills, named one of the most scenic stretches in the country by *National Geographic Traveler*. Other popular road trips this time of year lead to pumpkin patches, corn mazes and harvest fests hosted by area farms. **Lyman Orchards** in Middlefield is a crowd favorite for all of the above. During the Stamford Museum & Nature Center's **Harvest Festival Weekend**, guests take part in apple cider demos, a scarecrow contest and pumpkin carving located in Stamford.





CTvisit.com

SAVE THE DATE

For more details on these celebrations and other parties across the state, check the Events section at CTvisit.com.

NOVEMBER

'Tis the season to shop

Put something handmade and heartfelt under the tree this season. Holiday shoppers find contemporary crafts by more than 300 artisans at the **Celebration of American Crafts** at Creative Arts Workshop in New Haven. Add **CraftWestport** to your holiday shopping list for one-of-a-kind items from nearly 200 nationwide crafters plus a marketplace of locally made gifts. **Wesleyan Potters Exhibit & Sale** in Middletown features an array of arts

and crafts on display including pottery, jewelry, weavings and more by a cooperative crafters guild.

DECEMBER

That's the spirit

Holiday lights festivals draw adoring crowds this time of year. A few to consider: **Fantasy of Lights** in New Haven, **Holiday Light Fantasia** in Hartford, **Lake Compounce's Holiday Lights** in Bristol and the old-timey **Lantern Light**

Tours and Holiday Lighted Boat Parade

in Mystic. Holiday home tours also capture the spirit at historic landmarks decked in holiday splendor. **Florence Griswold Museum** in Old Lyme, **Lockwood-Matthews Mansion** in Norwalk and the **Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum** in Wethersfield top the list. Put on your coziest pajamas and hit the rails along Railroad Museum of New England's **Northern Lights Polar Express**. Santa and his elves join the fun on this magical ride to the North Pole.

CARYN B. DAVIS




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116 Crown, New Haven

CULINARY TRAILS

DISCOVER HOW
A SMALL STATE
PACKS SUCH A
FLAVORFUL PUNCH

■ SIGNATURE COCKTAIL TRAIL

Connecticut's most cosmopolitan trail has more than, well, Cosmopolitans going for it, though you'll find many versions of these cocktail-culture favorites among the featured drinks. Selected by social media surveys, the watering holes highlighted here range from swanky to down home. Several venues at Uncasville's **Mohegan**

Sun celebrated the arrival of the Trail with spirited sips; you can depend on the drinks menu at **Todd English's Tuscany** to feature such specialties as the Poker Face—silver tequila with Cointreau and pineapple juice. At the elegant **Restaurant at Winvian Farm** in Morris, the Apple Old Fashioned includes fruit slices, sugar, nutmeg bitters and bourbon. A mixologist's mecca in New Haven, **116 Crown** serves up the likes of the Church Key, an aquavit, passion fruit and ginger combo that many consider a religious experience.

■ CHOWDA TRAIL

New England foodies and chefs flock to Westport the first Sunday in October for Chowdafest, where

judges choose the region's best chowder, soup and bisque. Can't make the event? No worries. Drop in on one of the state's many contenders whenever you visit. Grab a picnic table at **Captain Scott's Lobster Dock** in New London and savor two types of chowder or creamy lobster bisque—in a bread bowl if you like—while watching the boats bob in the marina. The New England-style clam chowder at **Clam Castle**, a no-frills roadside spot in Madison, is laced with bacon and deliciously rich. The broth-based Rhode Island version is lighter but tasty, too. The chunky chowder at the **Chowder Pot of Hartford** is a popular prelude to their substantial seafood and prime rib dinners. At the waterfront **Crab Shell Restaurant** in Stamford, sample four different styles of seafood soup, including red (tomato-based) clam chowder and New England crab chowder, perhaps accompanied by a nice Chardonnay.



CARYN B DAVIS



Captain Scott's Lobster Dock, New London



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features more local bites
and brews.

■ CHOCOLATE TRAIL

This chocoholic's dream route around the state includes confectioners who have catered to cacao lovers for decades, along with recent arrivals bearing sweet surprises. Founded in 1946 as The Dandy Candy Company, Bolton-based **Munson's** used locally sourced ingredients before anyone heard the term "locavore." The company is still in the same family, and their popular delectables are now sold in several Connecticut outlets. Another generation-spanning family business, **Fascia's** has

been winning the hearts—and palates—of chocolate lovers since 1964. You'll find their wares all around the state, but for the full chocolate experience tour and class, visit the Waterbury headquarters. **Le Rouge** purveys its handcrafted treats in an intimate cafe in Westport, where many deliciously nontraditional creations are whipped up. The chocolate sculptures at **Tschudin**, including stylish high-heeled shoes, are a delightful novelty, but it's the complex flavors of the bonbons, truffles and ganaches that draw repeat customers into this downtown Middleton shop.

■ BEER TRAIL

Craft brewing dates back to revolutionary times—George Washington made beer as well as whiskey at Mt. Vernon—and Connecticut brings that tradition up to date with award-winning breweries around the state. Among the favorites of suds-loving locals is **Willimantic Brewing Co.**, in Willimantic's 1909 post office. Postal puns abound—Mail Carrier Maybock, for example—but the handcrafted beer is seriously good. Tour **Two Roads Brewing Company**, a converted



MANNY VARGAS

Munson's Chocolates, Bolton

industrial space in Stratford, to see where its (literally) world-class brews are made: Two Roads partnered with Guinness & Co. to create two small batch beers. Its distinctive takes on IPAs are among the reasons that Woodbridge's **New England Brewing Company** got the nod from *BeerAdvocate.com* as one of the top 20 breweries in the country two years running. In Branford, the "aggressively laid-back beers" at **Stony Creek Brewery** include seasonal favorites Sun Juice and Snow Hole. Guests here can even dock their boats to access the indoor/outdoor taproom. In Bloomfield, sample **Thomas Hooker Brewing Company's** wares straight from their brightly colored vats. The blonde ale and pilsner number among the year-round favorites, and many eagerly await seasonal specials such as Chocolate Truffle Stout.



Hopkins Vineyard, New Preston

WINE TRAIL

The journey is part of the reward on Connecticut's Wine Trail, winding through historic towns and picturesque landscapes to a distinctive array of wineries—something for every taste and level of wine savvy. Perched atop a hill with eye-popping vistas in rural Wallingford, the 140-acre **Gouveia** exudes Old World charm. Enjoy a picnic by the pond or cozy up to the tasting room's fireplace. Its unique location near an inland lake and associated microclimate means a longer growing season than usual

at **Hopkins** in New Preston. Among the results: a beautifully fruity ice wine. In the northeast corner, Pomfret's **Sharpe Hill** is known for its award-winning Ballet of Angels—a white blend that outsells every other wine in New England—and its excellent Fireside Tavern restaurant. You can claim continuing education as your reason to visit **Stonington Vineyards**, named for the town in which it resides. After the comprehensive wine tour, kick back on one of the patios or decks and savor your newfound oenophile knowledge.



Stony Creek Brewery, Branford



Ted's Restaurant, Meriden

BURGERS & BREWS TRAIL

Beer and burgers are a perfect match, and many say the iconic sandwich made its American debut in Connecticut. This claim to hamburger fame is disputed, but there's no questioning the state's chopped-meat know-how. The Library of Congress cites **Louis Lunch**, opened 1895 in New Haven, as the hamburger's birthplace. Louis' great grandson is now the keeper of the secret recipe that has locals lining up for a meaty midday break. Since 1948, Manchester's **Shady Glen** has been known for the crispy cheese crowns on their thick patties, veritable works of dairy art. Several places around the state purvey steamed cheeseburgers—prepared, as their name suggests, in a stainless steel steam box—but **Ted's** in Meriden put this Connecticut specialty on the map in 1930, catering to hungry factory workers. At **City Steam** in Hartford, the burgers are charbroiled and often elaborate—one comes enfolded in quesadillas—and the steam is used to brew the beer, not to prepare the meat. That's Connecticut versatility for you. **EJ**

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Connecticut Science Center, Hartford

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■ CONNECTICUT SCIENCE CENTER

This Hartford museum has more than 165 hands-on exhibits to excite all ages. Head to the 3D digital theater or rooftop garden, four educational labs for live demonstrations and daily events like the Wildlife Encounters stage show. Interact with displays about space, sports, genetics and energy. The Butterfly Encounter provides indoor habitat for numerous species, primarily from Central America.

■ DISCOVERY MUSEUM AND PLANETARIUM

In Bridgeport, all kids learn something new at this museum focusing on STEM—science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The Energy Network exhibit showcases how energy is produced, used and transported, and Wild Weather explores extreme weather phenomena. Visit Discovery's Challenger Learning Center, a mock mission control and spacecraft, and Everbright, a giant LED grid. The planetarium offers awesome star shows.



COURTESY OF STEPPING STONES MUSEUM

Stepping Stones Museum, Norwalk

■ STEPPING STONES MUSEUM FOR CHILDREN

To stimulate the imagination—while expending the energy—of the under-10 crowd, bring them to this Norwalk museum. Nearly a dozen indoor and outdoor exhibits allow kids to make robots, try woodworking or learn about erosion. The Energy Lab is a highlight, offering immersive experiments with water, wind and sun. Toddlers get their own dedicated space, Tot Town, with climbing structures and activity mats.

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■ PEABODY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Part of Yale University in New Haven, this museum is a renowned center for dinosaur research. Its paleontology collection, among the largest in the United States, contains fossils 200 to 65 million years old. In the Great Hall, you'll be dwarfed by the 70-foot brontosaurus skeleton, a stegosaurus and a triceratops. Other exhibits showcase birds, plants, gems and minerals. The Discovery Room lets younger children interact with science experiments and watch a colony of leaf-cutter ants.

■ CONNECTICUT RIVER MUSEUM

The history and heritage of the Connecticut River is the focus of this museum, located in Essex at Steamboat Dock in a restored warehouse. A replica of the world's first submarine, the 1776 *Turtle*, is a highlight—kids can climb in to turn the cranks. Take a seasonal river cruise, or rent a canoe or kayak. Time your visit for a summer lawn concert, the Antique & Classic Boat Show in July or Dogs on the Docks in October.

ALL ABOARD!

Every kid is fascinated with trains at some point in their life. Give them a glimpse at history, as well as a fun ride, at the **Railroad Museum of New England**, which operates excursions through Naugatuck Valley from the historic Thomaston Station.

Family favorites include the Easter Bunny Express and Pumpkin Patch rides. In Essex, the **Essex Steam Train** offers excursions through the Connecticut River Valley, including themed trips such as the fall foliage and North Pole Express rides.



CARYN B. DAVIS

Railroad Museum of New England

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■ NEW ENGLAND CAROUSEL MUSEUM

Housed in a restored 1837 hosiery factory, this museum located in Bristol is dedicated to the preservation of antique carousels and displays pieces created by famous wood-carvers. The extensive collection also includes art and memorabilia plus the on-site Museum of Fire History, but the main draw is the working indoor carousel. The museum hosts family programs such as princess tea parties and teddy bear picnics. **TLS**



New England Carousel Museum, Bristol



The **Danbury Railway Museum** has 70 pieces of historic railroad equipment and a Lionel train display and offers weekend rides aboard vintage equipment. To see streetcars, visit the

Shore Line Trolley Museum in East Haven for a ride through scenic salt marshes. Or in East Windsor, board popular old-fashioned trolleys at the **Connecticut Trolley Museum**.



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Mystic Seaport

HOUSE HUNTERS

Connecticut has hundreds of historic house museums. All have their own idiosyncratic charms, but of course some stand out above the rest. The **Noah Webster House** in West Hartford serves as a great primer, but the early dictionary creator's home is just one of many gems.

In Ridgefield, **Keeler Tavern** transports visitors through three centuries of history. From the British

cannonball lodged in its wall during the Revolutionary War up through famed architect Cass Gilbert's ingenious additions to the building, it's tough to find a place with as varied and important a history as the Keeler Tavern.

Other unique buildings include **Gillette Castle**, the striking castle that rises high above the Connecticut River in East Haddam. Built for the slightly eccentric actor William Gillette, the building

itself holds many secrets for you to discover.

If eccentricity is your thing, you'll love Philip Johnson's **Glass House** in New Canaan. The town, a hotbed of mid-century modern design, has embraced its most esteemed structure. A tour will surprise, as there are 13 structures on the property—each one as unique as the last. Many of them contain world-class art collections.



CARYN B. DAVIS

Gillette Castle, East Haddam



CARYN B. DAVIS

CAPTURED IN TIME

FIND LINKS TO THE
PAST WHERE HISTORY
COMES ALIVE

■ MYSTIC SEAPORT

Immerse yourself in a traditional New England whaling town from a century ago in Mystic. An international destination, Mystic Seaport encompasses several acres and houses dozens of transporting mini-museums. Can't miss: The *Charles W. Morgan*, the last of the 19th-century wooden whaling vessels.

■ MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT MUSEUM

Expertly created with the guiding hand of the Smithsonian, the Mashantucket Pequot Museum in Mashantucket tells the rich and detailed story of the local Native American tribe. Lifelike dioramas, modern interactive exhibits and a beautiful 185-foot observation tower make it a must-visit.

■ FORT TRUMBULL STATE PARK

A jewel of Connecticut's expansive state park system, Fort Trumbull provides a world-class fishing pier alongside a mid-18th-century military fort. Enjoy the beautiful view of New London's harbor on the Thames River while exploring 150 years of military history at the fort. Interactive exhibits, a "touchable" cannon and one-of-a-kind architecture will satisfy visitors of all ages.

On the other end of the spectrum is **Roseland Cottage** in Woodstock. This shockingly pink Gothic Revival mansion and gardens add a spark to the Quiet Corner of the state. The interior is just as fanciful, retaining the principles of Andrew Jackson Downing, a prominent 19th-century tastemaker.

Another Quiet Corner resident who made a not-so-quiet mark on American

history was **Prudence Crandall**, Connecticut's State Heroine. Her house in Canterbury served as a school for African Americans at a time when such things were not looked on kindly. As important as she was heroic, Crandall's former home is now a museum.

The **Lockwood-Matthews Mansion** in Norwalk embodies Victorian beauty and excess as much as any other surviving building in

America. In the 1860s, it was more technologically advanced than the White House. Visitors can get lost in this museum—both metaphorically and in reality.

The **Henry Whitfield House** in Guilford is small, cozy and modest—exactly what you'd expect from Connecticut's oldest surviving house. Built in 1639, its nearly 400 years of history pour out of every nook and cranny.



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■ MARK TWAIN HOUSE & MUSEUM

Arguably America's greatest author lived in the stunning Gothic mansion in Hartford from 1874 to 1891. Twain wrote several of his most read and beloved works while living in Hartford. Tours of the mansion will inspire visitors to go on their own carefree adventures, exploring our own nearby rivers and towns.

■ HARRIET BEECHER STOWE CENTER

Ms. Stowe was born and raised in Litchfield before settling at Nook Farm in Hartford next to her friend Mark Twain. While her neighbor may be more famous around the world, it can be argued that Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had as great an impact on American history as any book ever written. One of the most powerful house tours in the state!



Mark Twain House & Museum, Hartford

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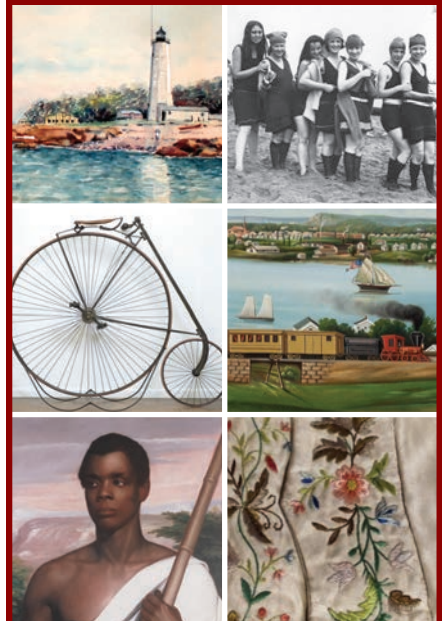
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COURTESY OF HARRIET BEECHER STOWE CENTER

Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford

■ SUBMARINE FORCE MUSEUM

How often do you get a chance to explore the world's first nuclear submarine? After touring the fascinating submarine museum in Groton, walk out on the deck and down into the *Nautilus*. Besides being the world's first nuclear-powered vessel, it was also the first ship to go to the North Pole. Experience what it's like to be a submariner, at sea for months at a time!

■ NEW ENGLAND AIR MUSEUM

It is impossible to capture everything that visitors can see and experience here. This Windsor Locks museum houses the world's most outstanding collections of historic aviation artifacts, including more than 80 aircraft! Many of them are one-of-a-kind and historically important. Open Cockpit Days and other special events take place throughout the year. **SW**

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■ CONNECTICUT RIVER KAYAKING

In a few dips of a paddle, you can be out among the egrets, osprey and bald eagles and breeze-tickled, brackish plants. Rent a kayak or stand-up paddleboard from Old Lyme's Black Hall Outfitters on the 500-acre Great Island salt marsh—a protected wildlife refuge where the Connecticut, Black Hall and Lieutenant rivers meet Long Island Sound—and explore a coastal realm few human eyes have seen. Calm, shallow, motorboat-free waterways are a paddler's nirvana. Guided ecotours are enlightening, with sunset excursions that offer a luminous color show.

■ FARMINGTON RIVER TUBING

One of Connecticut's coolest rides is never the same twice. Strap on a life jacket, choose your colorful tube and blast off into the cold rush of the Farmington—a National Wild and Scenic River in Satan's Kingdom located in New Hartford. Natural forces decide whether your trip will be mostly tame or bumpy and fast-paced. You will hit three sets of rapids that will elevate your heart rate, but there'll be plenty of time to soak in lush scenery. You may even spot a bear on the river's edge.

■ THE LAST GREEN VALLEY WALKTOBER

Don't leave perfect autumn outings to chance. Rural towns in Connecticut's northeast corner join in the Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor's celebration of Walktober. But it's not just for walkers. Guided walking, biking, paddling and horseback riding trips are planned



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for practically every day from late September through early November. Tour guides can't wait to show you this pristine region's gorgeous landscapes as leaves dazzle overhead and crunch beneath your feet.

■ **TALCOTT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK**

Fall is the optimal time to tackle the moderate hike up Talcott Mountain in Simsbury. The trail is a perfect first hike for kids. When you reach the summit, you'll have 165 feet more to climb to the top of Heublein Tower, built in 1914 as a summer residence. From this storied structure, visitors enjoy panoramic views as far away as Long Island Sound.



Talcott Mountain State Park, Simsbury

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If you wouldn't dream of pedaling anything but your own trusty two-wheeler, map out a route and a stylish stay along Connecticut's **B&B Bike Trail**. Or challenge yourself to ride mountain bike-friendly stretches on the **New England National Scenic Trail**.



Nehemiah Brainerd House B&B, Haddam

COURTESY OF NEHEMIAH BRAINERD HOUSE

■ DEVIL'S HOPYARD STATE PARK

You can't escape historic lore in Connecticut, even in the midst of 860 acres of serene woods and water in East Haddam. So, before you embark on a birdwatching hike or try your luck fishing for brook trout, walk the short distance from the parking lot to photogenic Chapman Falls. See those circular potholes at the waterfall's base? Stories—likely invented by Connecticut's earliest settlers—attribute them to a hopping-mad Satan, who accidentally dipped his tail in the cold water.

■ KENT FALLS STATE PARK

Route 7 in western Connecticut follows the Housatonic River, rewarding fall color seekers with superb photo ops. The best shots await in Kent Falls State Park located in Kent, where Falls Brook tumbles toward the river in a dramatic cascade. The dancing waters provide soothing background music for picnicking and strolling across a tiny covered bridge. If you're up for a climb, a steep quarter-mile trail leads to up-close views of the shimmering spray and its gold-leaf frame.

■ SLEEPING GIANT STATE PARK

Named for the shape of its two-mile ridgeline that resembles a mighty giant stretched out for a snooze, this 1,500-acre park in Hamden is a destination for hikers of all abilities. Thirty miles of trails include original portions of the famed Blue Blazed network. Some summit routes are steep and require skill. But the 1.5-mile Tower Trail is a relaxed ascent. Views from the four-story, fieldstone tower stretch all the way to Long Island Sound. **KKB**

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IT Adventure Ropes Course, New Haven

■ IT ADVENTURE ROPES COURSE

At the world's largest indoor ropes course in New Haven, you have options. There are two ropes courses reaching 60 feet high, with more than 100 elements, four 200-foot-long zip lines, four climbing challenges and a kids' course. New tweaks are regularly made to the courses, which hover over the Waltzing Water Show's awesome fountain.

■ QUASSY AMUSEMENT PARK & WATERPARK

An old-time charmer in Middlebury, Quassy celebrates its 110th season May through September. The Splash Away Bay water park is a huge hit with kids, in addition to rides, arcade, midway, swimming and boat tours on Lake Quassapaug. Rides include the Wooden Warrior coaster, Frantic pendulum, Skipper's Clippers pirate ships and Up, Up & Away balloons.

■ LAKE COMPOUND & CROCODILE COVE

Roller coasters are a major draw to this Bristol theme park, particularly the triple-launch Phobia Phear and the wooden coaster Boulder Dash. Fierce animatronic dinosaurs line the pathways through Dino Expedition. Cool off at the Crocodile Cove water park with slides, wave pool, lazy river and play area with water cannons. Recharge after a day of



Brownstone Exploration & Discovery Park, Portland



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■ BROWNSTONE EXPLORATION & DISCOVERY PARK

Almost all the action at this former quarry in Portland takes place in the refreshing lake. You can slide or jump into it from the rocky cliffside, zip over it, scuba under it or climb the inflatable obstacle course floating on top of it. There are six new zip lines and additional inflatable elements as well as an expanded beach area. Dry off and go rock climbing, biking or hiking.

■ DINOSAUR PLACE AT NATURE'S ART VILLAGE

More than 40 life-sized dinosaurs live in this Montville park, and you can walk among them along 1.5 miles of trails. Other attractions include the T. Rex Tower, the Jurassic Moon Bounce, Monty's playground and Discovery Depot—an indoor area with gem and gold digging. New England's largest splashpad, a zero-depth water park, is great on hot days. The newest addition, Copper Creek Mini Golf, is so challenging that only kids eight and over get to play it.

■ ADVENTURE PARK AT THE DISCOVERY MUSEUM

Tucked into the trees behind The Discovery Museum in Bridgeport, this aerial forest ropes park consists of 11 different courses of bridges and zip lines,



Dinosaur Place at Nature's Art Village, Montville

connected by 180 platforms. Anyone aged five years or older can find one at their comfort level. During Glow in the Park nights, the entire course is lit up in color.

■ ADVENTURE PARK AT STORRS

This outdoor zip line and climbing park in Storrs offers a variety of aerial trails for beginners through experts. These trails of cable, wood and rope crossings, including zip lines, are connected by platforms in the trees and are lit at night for late-day climbing. Plan your visit during a fun event like Superhero Day or Luau Night for music, games and prizes.

■ PRIME CLIMB

This indoor rock climbing gym in Wallingford offers safe but challenging rock climbing surfaces, the highest reaching 40 feet. The newest wall features separate top rope and lead anchors, and steep lead-only sections. Kids and beginners should start at Mountain Fun—the auto belay stations let you climb without needing to know knots or rope techniques.

■ MAKE YOUR ESCAPE

Bring your friends to get locked up together. Sound fun? Escape rooms let you solve puzzles together, against the clock, to win your release. At Escape 101 in Danbury, you have 60 minutes

to work through one of three adventures. At Mystified in Mystic, B.Y.O. costume if you choose to play Chaos at the Comic-Con. If you don't want to be locked in, Pursue the Clues in Torrington offers mysteries to solve while progressing forward through the space.

■ EMPOWER LEADERSHIP SPORTS & ADVENTURE CENTER

This tree-top zip line canopy tour in Middletown offers guided adventures for every skill level, as well as climbing, rappelling and scavenger hunt treks. Look for packages with other attractions, like Grip It & Zip It—a canopy tour followed by nine holes at Indian Springs Golf Club in Middlefield—or Zip, Sip & Stay with beverages and an overnight at The Inn at Middletown. Two nights each month May through September, the Moonlight Adventure Tour lets guests zip through the canopy after dark. **TLS**



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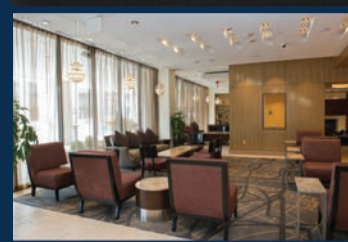
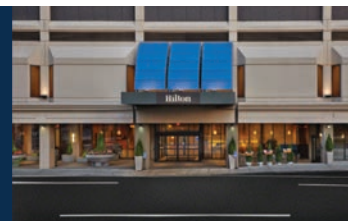
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Mohegan Sun, Uncasville

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■ MOHEGAN SUN

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ESSEX CLIPPER DINNER TRAIN

How's this for a romantic scene: a candlelit dinner aboard a vintage Pullman dining car, riding the rails through the Connecticut River Valley. This 2½-hour evening excursion, from Essex through Deep River and Chester, takes you back to 1871, when the train line was first put into service.

Expect personalized attention during your four-course meal, which includes signature entrées such as Seafood Newburg and Chicken Francaise. Delectable desserts, including key lime pie and pot de crème, are house made. Dinner aboard the 1920s cars Meriden and Wallingford is offered weekends from May through October, and reservations are recommended.

■ HARTFORD STAGE COMPANY

You're never more than 12 rows away from the stage in this modern, 484-seat theater known for innovative revivals and provocative new plays and musicals. The 2018 calendar includes *Feeding the Dragon*, *Murder on the Orient Express* and *The Age of Innocence*. There are also lectures, panels and post-show discussions at this Hartford favorite.

■ THE KATHARINE HEPBURN CULTURAL ARTS CENTER

Nicknamed The Kate for local legend Katharine Hepburn, this Old Saybrook theater produces plays, musicals, concerts and events such as the annual Oscar Night Party. The prolific year-round calendar averages 18 performances a month, Tuesday through Sunday, so there's always something to see—music, theater, opera, dance, comedy, film and more.

■ PALACE THEATER

One of the region's largest historic theaters, this 1922 Renaissance Revival Waterbury landmark is perfect for a special occasion, with its grand lobby and ornate floor-to-ceiling decor. Early 2018 shows include *Rent*, *Jersey Boys*, and *Motown the Musical*. Another fun outing: behind-the-scenes history and architectural tours with a peek at hidden backstage murals.

■ FOXWOODS RESORT CASINO

It's safe to say there's plenty for couples to do at the largest resort casino in North America. For more than 25 years, people have been coming to Mashantucket to try their luck in the seven different casinos, stay at the Four Diamond hotels and enjoy shows with national music and comedy headliners. You have a choice of 35 restaurants, including the new Sugar Factory American Brasserie and Caputo Trattoria. You can also spend time together at one of the two spas, on the golf course, on the Highflyer Zipline or on the new Thrill Tower's Sky Drop and Sky Launch rides.

■ GOODSPEED OPERA HOUSE

This 1876 opera house on the Connecticut River in East Haddam now produces new and revived musicals during the April to December season. It was the birthplace of the original *Man of La Mancha*, *Shenandoah* and *Annie*. In addition to pre-show wine tastings and Sunday Sips events, try the dinner packages with local restaurants and the dinner river cruise packages.



Goodspeed Opera House, East Haddam

CARYN B. DAVIS

■ SHUBERT THEATRE

The place for live professional theater in New Haven since 1914, this restored performing arts center is known for world premieres and pre-Broadway shows as well as dance, cabaret and music productions. *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* and *Chicago* are 2018 headliners. Dinner and a show? Present your ticket at several nearby eateries for special offers.

■ WESTPORT COUNTRY PLAYHOUSE

This striking red historic tannery building has been a state-of-the-art producing theater since 1931. The season runs May through November and includes both modern and classic musicals and plays such as *Camelot*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *A Raisin in the Sun*. Meet someone new at the Taste of Tuesday or LGBT Night Out events. **TLS**

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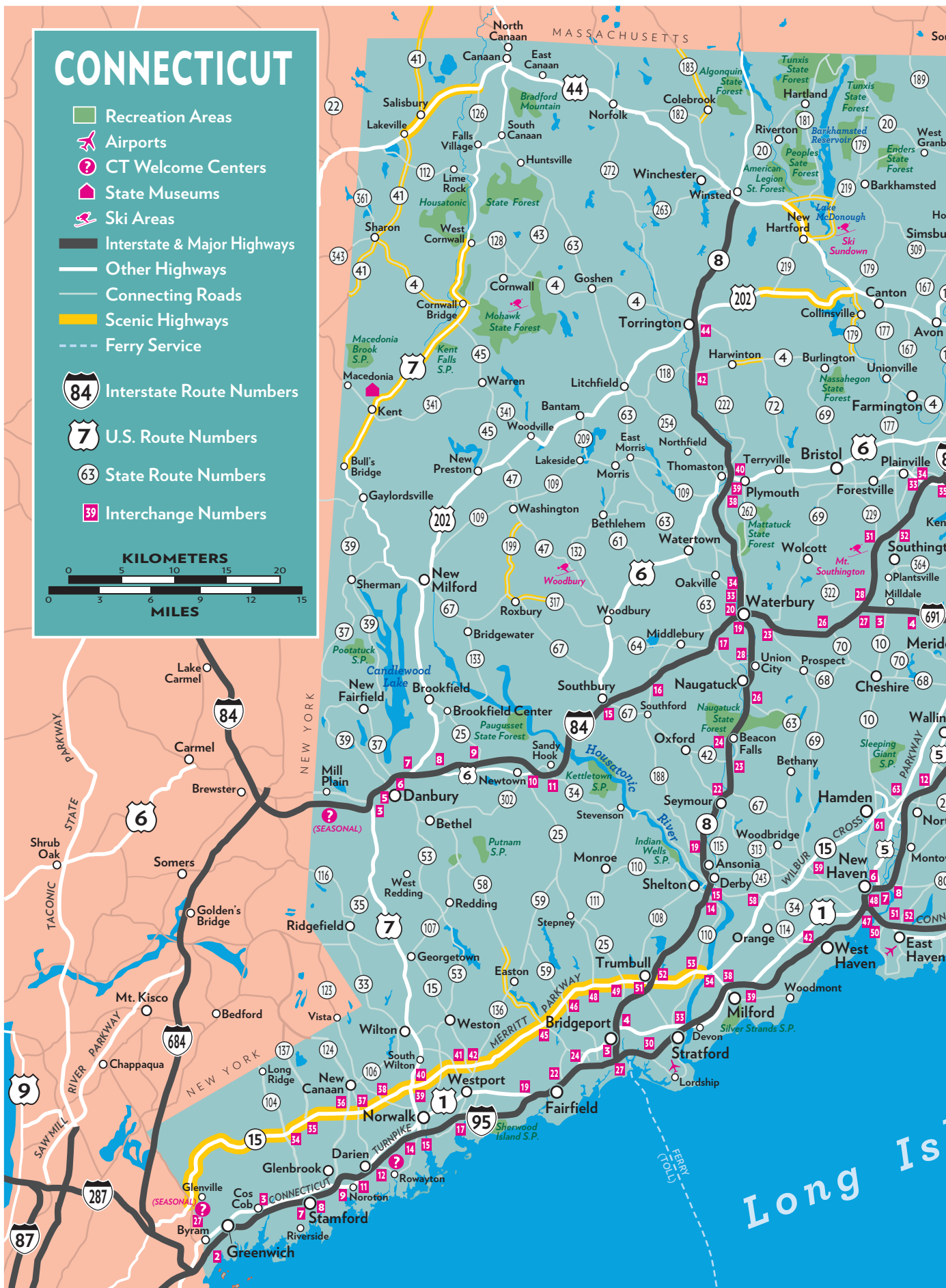
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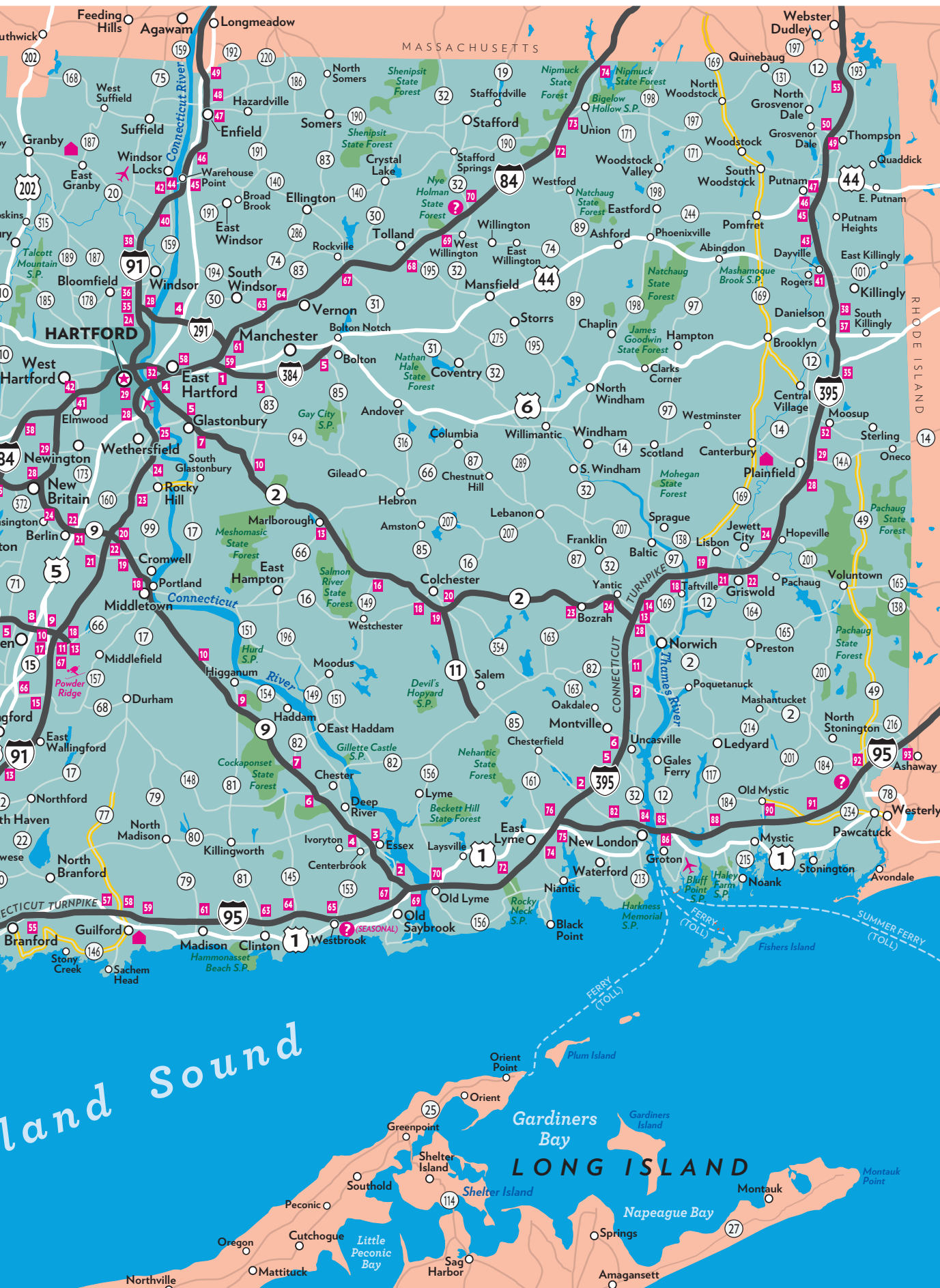
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