



ITINERARY: LIVING HISTORY & RURAL RELAXATION

Massachusetts, Connecticut, & Rhode Island

This is a relatively short but beautiful easy-to-drive route that links classic small New England communities in three states. To get the most from each of the stopovers, stay two or three nights and spend time following our Top Tips.

Trip ideas and itineraries are meant as suggestions only. They are intended as ideas and to highlight all there is to see and do in New England.

- Start and finish in Boston, Massachusetts. Spend a couple of days here to see the sights. The “T,” the public transport system, is efficient and inexpensive — and Boston is one of the most walkable major U.S cities, so you don’t need to rent a car until you leave the city.
- Driving distance: About 275 miles
- Allow 10-12 days
- View a [Google map](#) of this suggested trip

Start: Drive west to Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts (60 miles/100 km)

[Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts](#)

New England has several outstanding living history outdoor museums. This one recreates the rural village life of the early 19th century, with bakers making bread and blacksmiths hammering out horseshoes. In the 200 acres (80 hectares), horses pull plows and, in the fall, an ox drives the traditional cider mill.

TOP TIPS

- **Pick your own:** This is apple country, and the Tuttle family grows 18 varieties at [Breezelands](#) in Warren. Eat apple donuts or crunch them straight from the tree!
- **Discover the [Last Green Valley](#):** This National Heritage Corridor is one of the last unspoiled rural areas of New England.
- **Hike the [Mid-State Trail](#):** The route cuts through Central Massachusetts for 95 miles/150 km, but you can do just a portion: in the quiet of Douglas State Forest, near Webster.

Take the short drive south into northeastern [Connecticut](#), known as the Quiet Corner. Stay in or near Woodstock (15 miles/25 km)

[Woodstock, Connecticut](#)

Covering six villages (South Woodstock, Woodstock Hill, North Woodstock, East Woodstock, West Woodstock, and Woodstock Valley), peaceful Woodstock offers antique shops, crafts shops, farms, and charming bed and breakfasts.

TOP TIPS

- **Travel back to 1846:** Visit [Roseland Cottage](#), a Gothic Revival summer retreat, with a fine 19th-century landscaped garden.
- **Cry wolf:** Hike in [Mashamoquet Brook State Park](#). Peer into the Wolf Den, where Israel Putnam killed a predatory wolf back in 1742 — according to legend.
- **Follow Route 169:** Parallel to the Rhode Island border, this is one of the U.S.A.'s prettiest country roads, linking historic hamlets: Pomfret, Brooklyn, and Canterbury.

Drive south to Norwich. Take Route 2 to Westerly, just across the Rhode Island border (55 miles/90 km)

[Westerly](#), Rhode Island

On the Pawcatuck River, this town makes a popular base for nearby sandy, family-friendly beaches and, in Watch Hill, the [Flying Horse Carousel](#). Built in 1876, it is one of the oldest of its kind in the U.S., with beautifully carved wooden horses.

TOP TIPS

- **Delve into the past:** Stonington (just across the Connecticut line) dates from 1649. Colonial, Federal and Greek Revival houses stand on tree-lined streets; the port is home to the state's only surviving commercial fishing fleet.
- **Step into the Gilded Age:** Newport is a must-see destination. Go for the opulent [mansions](#), built by the Vanderbilts and their friends in the late 19th century — and for the colonial history.

Drive along the South County Coast through Narragansett, Newport, and Portsmouth to Bristol (60 miles/100 km)

[Bristol](#), Rhode Island

In one of "America's Distinctive Destinations," the annual Fourth of July celebration has been held 1785 and is the oldest in the country. Almost totally surrounded by water, the town's long history of boat building is told at the [Herreshoff Marine Museum](#) and America's Cup Hall of Fame. Nearby, the 300 different tree species provide fall color at [Blithewold Mansion](#), Gardens and Arboretum.

TOP TIPS

- **Enjoy simple pleasures:** At [Coggeshall Farm Museum](#), Bristol, the clocks stopped in 1799. Fall events include a Harvest Fair, hearth cooking, and pressing fresh apple cider!
- **Cycle the shore:** The paved, well-marked East Bay Bicycle Path follows Narragansett Bay for 14 miles/22 km, from Bristol to Providence. Stop at the Audubon Society of RI Environmental Education Center to spot migratory birds.
- **Get away from it all:** The 265-year-old [Mount Hope Farm](#) combines farmland, wetlands, farm buildings, and more on 200 acres (80 hectares).

Drive through southeastern Massachusetts to Plymouth, where the Pilgrim Fathers settled in 1620 (50 miles/80 km)

Plymouth, Massachusetts

“America’s Hometown” is all about the Pilgrims who sailed across the Atlantic more than 400 years ago. See the memorial at Plymouth Rock, board Mayflower II, the full-scale reproduction of the Pilgrims’ 17th-century vessel, and see how they lived at nearby [Plimoth Patuxet Museums](#).

- Learn about Thanksgiving: Plimoth Patuxet Museums explains the facts (and the fiction) about the country’s favorite national holiday — that started right here!
- Enjoy the harvest: Cranberries are the state’s number one crop and the bogs turn a brilliant red at harvest time. Also fun is the [Edaville Family Theme Park](#).
- Go whale watching: Seeing a whale “breach” (leap out of the water) is a thrill for the whole family. Take warm clothes and sunblock.

Return to Boston, MA (40 miles/65 km)

Have a little more time? It is well worth it to extend this three-state loop tour into Vermont. You can see route options from Boston, MA to Vermont [here](#).

Vermont

Vermont’s storied history includes famed authors and artists and U.S. presidents sworn in on their family dairy farms. Explore the state’s only national park, [Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park](#), and head to historic sites celebrating Vermont-born presidents [Chester Arthur](#) and [Calvin Coolidge](#). Heading south, the [Bennington Battle Monument](#) commemorates a pivotal Revolutionary War victory, and visitors can find the historic homes of [writer Rudyard Kipling](#) and [poet Robert Frost](#), 1958 U.S. poet laureate. [Hildene, the Lincoln Family Home](#), offers tours of the summer home built by Robert and Mary Todd Lincoln, complete with an original Pullman car.

- Explore the [Brattleboro Words Trail](#) and learn about the southern Vermont “print town.”
- Hildene makes its own cheese and dairy; take some home to sample Vermont cheese as fresh as it comes.
- As fall colors the leaves, the [Justin Morrill Homestead](#) hosts a 19th century apple and cheese harvest festival.