

Here's where to get your hands on moon rocks and pirate treasure, take walking tours inspired by great horror writers, and otherwise ditch the "typical" vacation in favor of a journey into the quirky, bizarre, and utterly unique.

DAYS 1 & 2: MAINE

Lodging ideas: Harraseeket Inn (Freeport), Jordan Hotel (Newry), The Tarratine (Bangor)

A 10-foot Bigfoot statue guards the entrance to Portland's **International Cryptozoology Museum**, a cornucopia of art and artifacts related to creatures like the Loch Ness Monster and Maine's own Casco Bay Sea Serpent, Cassie. Hit Route 1 to see the world's largest revolving globe, **Eartha**, in Yarmouth before continuing to Freeport's **Desert of Maine**, whose 20 acres of sand dunes are New England's very own Sahara Desert. A change in climes awaits at Bowdoin College's **Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum**; in nearby Bath, step inside a full-scale replica of a lighthouse lantern room at the **Maine Maritime Museum**.

On day two, drive north to Bangor to explore sites related to best-selling author Stephen King with **SK Tours**, including the 31-foot-tall **Paul Bunyan statue** featured in the novel *It*. Or trek west to Bethel, where you can actually hold pieces of the moon and Mars in your hands at the **Maine Mineral & Gem Museum**.

DAYS 3-5: NEW HAMPSHIRE

Lodging ideas: Aldworth Manor (Harrisville), Thayers Inn (Littleton)

Hear tales of ghosts, pirates, and shipwrecks during a cruise with **Isles of Shoals Steamship Co.** from Portsmouth to a cluster of small rocky islands including Smuttynose, made infamous by an 1873 double murder. In Salem, check out the mysterious rock formations of **America's Stonehenge**, then venture into the White Mountains to see the "**Betty and Barney Hill Incident**" site, marking their reported 1961 UFO abduction. Two more "out-of-this-world" attractions: the **Redstone Rocket**, a Cold War-era missile in Warren, and the 112-foot-long **Chutters candy counter** in Littleton.

Head to southwest New Hampshire to visit the most authentic 19th-century mill town still in existence, **Harrisville**. Grab lunch at its circa-1838 general store or in the college town of Keene, where you might spot the "**Parrish Shoes**" mural from the movie *Jumanji*. Nearby **Madame Sherri Forest**, home to the eerie ruins of a grand summer estate, is a great place for a hike before continuing on to Vermont.

DAYS 6 & 7: VERMONT

Lodging ideas: Firehouse Inn (Barre), Highland Lodge (Greensboro)

Enter Vermont via the **Cornish-Windsor Bridge**, the nation's longest historic covered bridge, and stop into the tranquil **Path of Life Sculpture Garden** in Windsor. You can also cross the **Brookfield Floating Bridge**, one of only two in the U.S., on your way to "the granite capital of the world," Barre. Tour the mammoth **Rock of Ages** quarry, visit the hand-carved masterpieces of **Hope Cemetery**, and look for the **world's longest granite zipper**, a 74-foot-long sculpture in downtown Barre. Then it's over to Waterbury for a stroll through the **Ben & Jerry's Flavor Graveyard** before pushing on to Burlington, home of the **tallest filing cabinet on earth** and a favorite place to look for "**Champ**," Lake Champlain's own Loch Ness Monster.

Fill up day two with any of the Northeast Kingdom's many hidden gems, such as **Bread & Puppet Theater** and the **Museum of Everyday Life** in Glover; the **St. Johnsbury Athenaeum** and **Dog Mountain** in St. Johnsbury; the **Old Stone House Museum** in Brownington; and **Haskell Library and Opera House**, which sits on the U.S.-Canadian border and lets visitors enjoy its books and performances in two countries. Finally, nature lovers won't want to miss this region's signature glacial lakes, such as the fjord-like **Lake Willoughby** and the U.S.-Canadian **Lake Memphremagog** (which, like Champlain, is said to harbor a sea monster, Memphre).

DAYS 8 & 9: CONNECTICUT

Lodging ideas: The Kent Collection-The Train Car (Kent), Winvian Farm-The Helicopter Room (Morris)

Immerse yourself in one man's artistic vision at Woodbury's **Hogpen Hill Farms**, whose landscape is filled with 100-plus sculptures by owner Edward Tufte (look for the vintage Airstream trailer poised on a catapult). In Waterbury, a 56-foot cross points the way to **Holy Land**, a former religious theme park that's open for public strolling in the daytime. Or make tracks to Rocky Hill's **Dinosaur State Park** to see more than 750 dinosaur footprints from the early Jurassic era.

On day two, delight your inner child at the **PEZ Visitor Center**, home of the world's largest collection of PEZ candy memorabilia. It's just outside New Haven, where you can fuel up at **Louie's Lunch**, birthplace of the hamburger, before stopping into Yale's **Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library**: Its public exhibits include the Gutenberg Bible, one of only five copies in the U.S., and a Buddhist prayer scroll that's over 1,200 years old. Lastly, take the historic **Chester-Lyme Ferry** to **Gillette Castle State Park** and marvel at its namesake fortress, a stone mansion built in 1914 and featuring such quirks as handcrafted locks (47 in all) and spy mirrors.

DAYS 10 & 11: RHODE ISLAND

Lodging ideas: Jailhouse Inn (Newport), Rose Island Lighthouse (Newport)

Arriving in Providence, scan the skyline for the Art Deco–style Industrial Trust Tower, better known as the “**Superman Building**” for its resemblance to the fictional *Daily Planet*. Head to Brown University’s **John Hay Library** to see what’s on display in the public exhibit areas; its collection spans everything from Napoleon’s death mask to books bound in human skin and a trove of original writings by fantasy-horror legend H.P. Lovecraft. (For more on the famed Providence author, stop into the **Lovecraft Arts & Sciences** bookshop or take a self-guided spin on **Lovecraft’s College Hill Walking Tour**.)

Wander among whimsical living sculptures at Portsmouth’s **Green Animals**, the oldest topiary garden in the U.S., then let a lantern-toting guide lead you through Newport’s colonial-era neighborhoods on a **Ghosts of Newport** tour. Finally, on your way to Massachusetts, detour to Burrillville and the Old Arnold Estate, a.k.a. **The Conjuring House**, whose history of paranormal activity inspired the hit horror movie of the same name.

DAYS 12-14: MASSACHUSETTS

Lodging ideas: Belfry Inn & Bistro (Sandwich), Lizzie Borden House (Fall River)

Delve into a legendary crime by booking a tour or staying overnight at the **Lizzie Borden House**, a museum/B&B in Fall River. Another one-of-a-kind B&B can be found on Cape Cod, where the **Belfry Inn & Bistro** lets you sleep amid the stained-glass windows of a 1901 church, or in a Victorian “Painted Lady” or a former church meetinghouse.

In Yarmouth Port, check out the **Edward Gorey House**, a museum devoted to the quirky, macabre artist and author, then head toward the North Shore (but do stop in Boston to walk through the **Mapparium**, a 30-foot-wide stained-glass globe, and see the astonishingly lifelike glass flowers at the **Harvard Museum of Natural History**). In Salem, get a fascinating peek into New England history at the **Salem Witch Museum**, focused on the notorious 1692 witch trials, and **Real Pirates Salem**, home to the world’s only authenticated pirate treasure.

Still have time to spare? Soak up medieval vibes at Gloucester’s **Hammond Castle Museum**, or road-trip to Webster for an unusual bragging right: visiting the place with the longest name in the U.S., **Lake Chargoggagoggmanchauggagoggchaubunagungamaugg**.

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