

# The Best of Vermont, New Hampshire & Maine

One of the greatest challenges of planning a vacation in northern New England is narrowing down the options. Where to start? Here's an entirely biased list of destinations, the places I enjoy returning to time and again. Over years of traveling through the region, I've discovered these places to be worth more than just a quick stop; they're worth a major detour.

## 1 The Seven Wonders of Northern New England

- **The Appalachian Trail:** This 2,100-mile trail from Georgia to Maine has some of the most spectacular scenery in northern New England. The trail enters the region in southwest Vermont, winding through the southern Green Mountains before angling toward the White Mountains of New Hampshire. From here, it passes by remote Maine lakes and through hilly timberlands before finishing up on the summit of Mount Katahdin. See chapters 5, 8, and 10.
- **Lake Champlain** (Vermont): "New England's West Coast" is lapped by the waves of Lake Champlain, that vast, shimmering sheet of water between Vermont and New York. You can't help but enjoy good views when you're on this lake—to the west are the stern Adirondacks; to the east are the distant, rolling ridges of the Green Mountains. Sign up for a lake cruise, or just hop the ferry from Burlington for a low-budget excursion across the lake and back. See chapter 6.
- **Connecticut River** (Vermont and New Hampshire): The broad, lazy Connecticut River forms the border between New Hampshire and Vermont, and it's a joy to travel along. You'll find wonderful vistas, peaceful villages, and evidence of the region's rich past when the river served as a highway for northern New England. Today, it's a hidden gem of a destination. See chapters 5, 7, and 8.
- **Franconia Notch** (New Hampshire): This rocky pass through the craggiest part of the White Mountains is spectacular to drive through, but it's even more wondrous to stop and explore on foot or bike. Hike the flanking ridges, bike the pathway along the valley floor, or just lounge in the sun at the edge of Echo Lake. See chapter 8.
- **Tuckerman Ravine** (New Hampshire): This glacial cirque high on the flanks of Mount Washington (New England's highest peak) seems part medieval, part alpine, and entirely otherworldly. Snows blown across the upper lip throughout the winter accumulate to depths of 70 feet or more. In spring, skiers from across the U.S. come to challenge its sheer

face, and hikers find snow in its vast bowl during summer. See chapter 8.

- **Acadia National Park** (Maine): New England's only national park is also one of the most popular in the U.S. The rocky, surf-pounded coastline is the main attraction, but don't overlook the quiet boreal forests and open summits of low mountains with spectacular coastal views. See chapter 9.

## 2 The Best Small Towns

- **Grafton** (Vermont): Just a few decades ago, Grafton was a down-at-the-heels mountain town slowly being reclaimed by termites and the elements. A wealthy family took on the town as a pet project, lovingly restoring it to the way it once was—even burying electric lines to reclaim the landscape. It doesn't feel like a living history museum; it just feels *right*. See “Brattleboro & the Southern Green Mountains” in chapter 5.
- **Woodstock** (Vermont): Woodstock has a stunning village green, a whole range of 19th-century homes, woodland walks just outside town, and a settled, old-money air. This is a good place to explore by foot or bike, or to just sit on a porch and watch summer unfold. See “Woodstock & Environs” in chapter 5.
- **Montpelier** (Vermont): This is the way all state capitals should be—slow-paced, small enough that you can walk everywhere, and home to lots of shops selling wrenches and strapping tape. Montpelier also shows a more sophisticated edge, with its culinary institute, a theater showing art-house films, and several

- **Mount Katahdin** (Maine): Rising abruptly from a thick blanket of North Woods forest, the nearly mile-high Mount Katahdin has an ineffable spiritual quality. It's the centerpiece of equally inspiring Baxter State Park, one of the last, best wilderness areas of the eastern states. See chapter 10.

fine bookshops. However, at heart, it's a small town where you could run into the governor buying duct tape at a corner store. See “Montpelier, Barre & Waterbury” in chapter 6.

- **Hancock** (New Hampshire): This quiet hamlet—a satellite of the commercial center of Peterborough—has a historic and settled, white-clapboard grace and has been utterly unperturbed since it was founded in the 18th century. See “The Monadnock Region & the Connecticut River Valley” in chapter 7.
- **Camden** (Maine): This seaside town has everything—a beautiful harbor, great old architecture, and even its own tiny mountain range affording great hikes and sweeping ocean views. With lots of elegant bed-and-breakfasts, it's a perfect base for explorations farther afield. See “Penobscot Bay” in chapter 9.
- **Castine** (Maine): Soaring elm trees, a peaceful harborside setting, grand historic homes, and a selection of good inns make this a great spot to soak up Maine's coastal ambience off the beaten path. See “The Blue Hill Peninsula” in chapter 9.

## 3 The Best Places to See Fall Foliage

- **Route 100** (Vermont): Winding the length of Vermont from Readsboro to Newport, Route 100 is the major

north-south route through the center of the Green Mountains, yet it's surprisingly undeveloped for the most

## Northern New England



part. It can be crowded along the southern stretches on autumn weekends, but head farther north and you'll leave the crowds behind. See chapters 5 and 6.

- **I-91** (Vermont): An interstate? Don't scoff. If you like your foliage viewing big and fast, cruise I-91 from White River Junction to Newport. You'll be overwhelmed with gorgeous terrain, from the Connecticut River Valley to

the rolling hills of the Northeast Kingdom. The traffic isn't as bad as on state roads, either. See chapters 5 and 6.

- **Aboard the MS *Mount Washington*** (New Hampshire): One of the more majestic views of the White Mountains is from Lake Winnepesaukee to the south. It's especially appealing from the deck of the *Mount Washington*, a handsome 230-foot vessel that

takes tours on the lake through mid-October. The fringe of fall colors on the shoreline is a bonus. See “The Lake Winnepesaukee Region” in chapter 7.

- **Crawford Notch** (New Hampshire): Route 302 passes through this scenic valley, where you can see the brilliant red maples and yellow birches high on the hillsides. Mount Washington stands guard in the background and, in fall, is likely to be dusted with an

early snow. See “Crawford Notch” in chapter 8.

- **Blueberry barrens of Downeast Maine:** Maine’s wild blueberry barrens turn a brilliant cranberry-red in fall, setting the fields ablaze with color. Wander the dirt roads north-east of Cherryfield through the upland barrens, or drive Route 1 between Harrington and Machias past the experimental farm atop, of course, Blueberry Hill. See chapter 9.

## 4 The Best Coastal Views

- **Bicycle Route 1A, Hampton Beach to Portsmouth** (New Hampshire): For a broad sampling of scenery on New Hampshire’s minuscule coastline, you begin with sandy beaches, then pass rocky headlands and handsome mansions before coasting into Portsmouth, the region’s most scenic seaside city. See “The Seacoast” in chapter 7.
- **Drive the Park Loop Road at Acadia National Park** (Maine): The region’s premier ocean drive starts along a ridge with views of Frenchman Bay and the Porcupine Islands, then dips down along the rocky shores where surf crashes against the dark rocks. Plan to do this 20-mile loop at least twice to get the most out of it. See “Mount Desert Island & Acadia National Park” in chapter 9.
- **Merchant’s Row by sea kayak** (Maine): The islands between Stonington and Isle au Haut, rimmed with pink granite and capped with the stark spires of spruce trees, are among the most spectacular anywhere. A wonderful way to explore them is by sea kayak, which will get you to islands inaccessible by motorboat. Outfitters take overnight camping trips on the islands. See “The Blue Hill Peninsula” in chapter 9.
- **Hike Monhegan Island** (Maine): The village of Monhegan is clustered around the harbor of this island far off the Maine coast. The rest of this 700-acre island is comprised of picturesque wildlands, with miles of trails crossing open meadows and tracing rocky bluffs. See “The Mid-Coast” in chapter 9.
- **Cruising Maine on a windjammer:** See Maine as seafarers saw it for centuries—from the ocean, looking inland. Sailing ships depart from various harbors along the coast, particularly Rockland and Camden. Spend a night or a week exploring the dramatic shoreline. See “Penobscot Bay” in chapter 9.
- **Sit in a rocking chair** (Maine): Views are often better when you’re caught unaware—such as looking up from an engrossing book on the front porch of an oceanside inn. Chapters 9 and 10 mention many hotels and inns on the water. Some of the better ones: Beachmere Inn (Ogunquit), Black Point Inn (Scarborough), Grey Havens (Georgetown Island), East Wind Inn (Tenant’s Harbor), Samoset Resort (Rockport), Inn on the Harbor (Stonington), Tides Inn (Bar Harbor), and the Claremont (Southwest Harbor).

## 5 The Best Active Vacations

- **Biking from inn to inn** (Vermont): Vermont is a biker's paradise. Serpentine roads wind through verdant hills and along tumbling streams. Several organizations will ferry your baggage from inn to inn; you provide the pedal power to get from one point to the next. See "Enjoying the Great Outdoors" in chapter 5.
- **Skiing in the Green Mountains:** Vermont has nearly two dozen ski areas, with everything from the cozy friendliness of Bolton Valley to the high-impact skiing of sprawling Killington. Vermont has long been New England's ski capital, and the resorts have learned how to do it right. My favorite? The village of Stowe, where great skiing is combined with fine lodging and dining. See chapter 5.
- **Hiking the White Mountains** (New Hampshire): These rugged peaks draw hikers from all over the globe, attracted by the history, exceptional landscapes, and beautiful views from the craggy ridgelines. You can undertake day hikes and retreat to comfortable inns at night, or stay in the hills at the Appalachian Mountain Club's historic high huts. See chapter 8.
- **Mountain biking at Acadia** (Maine): John D. Rockefeller, Jr., built the carriage roads of Mount Desert Island so the gentry could enjoy rambles in the woods with their horses—away from pesky cars. Today, this extensive network allows for some of the most enjoyable, aesthetically pleasing mountain biking anywhere. See "Mount Desert Island & Acadia National Park" in chapter 9.
- **Kayaking the Maine coast:** With its massive, serpentine coastline and thousands of islands, mostly uninhabited, Maine is a world-class destination for those who like to snoop around by kayak. The Stonington area is considered the best spot for kayaking in Maine, but it's hard to go wrong anywhere north and east of Portland. Beware of dangers in the form of tides and weather—kayak with a guide if you're a novice. See chapter 9.
- **Canoeing the North Woods** (Maine): Maine has thousands of miles of flowing rivers and streams, and hundreds of miles of shoreline along remote ponds and lakes. Bring your tent, sleeping bag, and cooking gear, and come prepared to spend a night under the stars listening to the sounds of loons. See chapter 10.

## 6 The Best Destinations for Families

- **Montshire Museum of Science** (Norwich, Vermont): This children's museum, on the border of Vermont and New Hampshire, has wonderful interactive exhibits on the inside and nature trails along the Connecticut River on the outside. See p. 126.
- **Weirs Beach** (New Hampshire): Did somebody say cheesy? You bet. This is the trip your kids would plan if you weren't so meddlesome. Weirs Beach on Lake Winnepesaukee offers passive amusements, such as train and boat rides that appeal to younger kids, and plenty of active adventures for young teens, such as go-kart racing, water slides, and video arcades. Parents can recuperate on the lakeside beach. See "The Lake Winnepesaukee Region" in chapter 7.
- **Cog Railway** (Crawford Notch, New Hampshire): It's fun. It's terrifying. It's a great glimpse into history. Kids love this ratchety climb to the top of

New England's highest peak (Mount Washington) aboard trains specially designed in 1869 to scale the mountain. As a technological marvel, the railway attracted tourists by the thousands a century ago. They still come to marvel at its sheer audacity. See "Crawford Notch" in chapter 8.

- **Monhegan Island** (Maine): Kids from 8 to 12 years old especially enjoy overnight excursions to Monhegan Island. The mail boat from Port Clyde is rustic and intriguing, the hotels are an adventure, and the 700-acre island is perfect for kids to explore. See "The Mid-Coast" in chapter 9.

## 7 The Most Intriguing Historic Homes

- **Hildene** (Manchester, Vermont): This lavish summer home was built by Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln's son, Robert. A prosperous businessman, the younger Lincoln built this summer retreat complete with a 1,000-pipe organ and extensive formal gardens. If you're curious about how the other half lived late in America's Gilded Age, this is your destination. See p. 91.
- **Canterbury Shaker Village** (Canterbury, New Hampshire): This historic village outside Concord captures the Shaker way of life, which stressed simplicity and industry. See the massive laundry room, or enjoy a Shaker-inspired meal at the restaurant, followed by a candlelight tour of the village at its most peaceful. See "Manchester & Concord" in chapter 7.
- **Drisco House** (Portsmouth, New Hampshire): The Drisco House is the most fascinating of any at Strawberry Banke, the region's premier historic attraction. Half of this house was restored to its 1790s grandeur, and half was left as it appeared in the 1950s. You'll learn plenty about how a house adapts to the technology and culture of each era. See "The Seacoast" in chapter 7.
- **Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site** (Cornish, New Hampshire): Sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens has been overshadowed somewhat by his contemporary, Daniel Chester French, but his work was extraordinary and prolific. Learn about the man, and artistic culture of the late-19th and early-20th centuries, while touring his studio and house. See "The Monadnock Region & the Connecticut River Valley" in chapter 7.
- **Zimmerman House** (Manchester, New Hampshire): Designed in 1950 by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Zimmerman house is so, well, *20th century* (mid-century modern, to be specific). A great example of a Wright Usonian home, it offers lessons in how to live right in any age. See p. 202.
- **Victoria Mansion** (Portland, Maine): Donald Trump has nothing on the Victorians when it comes to material excess. You'll see Victorian decorative arts at their zenith in this elaborate Italianate mansion, built during the Civil War. It's open for tours throughout the summer. See p. 288.
- **Parson Fisher House** (Blue Hill, Maine): Parson Jonathan Fisher, who served as minister to the quiet town of Blue Hill in the late-18th century, was a man of extraordinary talents, from designing his own house and building his own clocks to preaching sermons in five languages (including Aramaic). As if that weren't enough, his primitive landscapes of the region are widely regarded as among the best from the area. See "The Blue Hill Peninsula" in chapter 9.

## 8 The Best Places to Rediscover America's Past

- **Plymouth** (Vermont): President Calvin Coolidge was born in this high, upland valley and the state has done a superb job preserving his hometown village. You not only get a good sense of the president's roots, but also gain a greater understanding of how a New England village once worked. Don't miss the excellent cheese shop, owned until recently by the Coolidge family. See "Killington & Rutland" in chapter 5.
- **Shelburne Museum** (Shelburne, Vermont): Think of this sprawling museum as New England's attic. Located on 45 acres on the shores of Lake Champlain, the Shelburne Museum not only has the usual exhibits of quilts and early glass, but also whole buildings preserved like specimens in formaldehyde. Be sure to take in the lighthouse, railroad station, and stagecoach inn. This is one of northern New England's "don't miss" destinations. See p. 168.
- **Portsmouth** (New Hampshire): Portsmouth is a salty coastal city that has some of the most impressive historic homes in New England. Start at Strawberry Banke, a 10-acre compound of 42 historic buildings. Then, visit many other grand homes in nearby neighborhoods, including the house where John Paul Jones lived while building his warship during the Revolution. See "The Seacoast" in chapter 7.
- **Sabbathday Lake Shaker Community** (New Gloucester, Maine): This is the last of the active Shaker communities in the nation and the only one that voted to accept new converts rather than die out. The 1,900-acre farm about 45 minutes outside of Portland has a number of exceptional buildings, some dating back to the 18th century. Visitors can view examples of Shaker craftsmanship and buy locally grown Shaker herbs to bring home. See "Portland" in chapter 9.
- **Mount Desert Island & Bar Harbor** (Maine): In the mid-1800s, America launched a love affair with nature and never looked back. See where it started, in a setting of surf-wracked rocks, where some of the nation's most affluent families ventured to erect vacation "cottages" with bedrooms by the dozen. The area still imparts lessons on how to design with nature as an accomplice rather than adversary. See "Mount Desert Island & Acadia National Park," in chapter 9.

## 9 The Best Resorts

- **Woodstock Inn & Resort** (Woodstock, Vermont; ☎ 800/448-7900 or 802/457-1100): The 140-room inn was built in the 1960s with a strong Colonial Revival accent. Right on the green in picturesque Woodstock, the inn allows easy access to the village, along with plenty of activities, including golf on a course designed by Robert Trent Jones, indoor and outdoor pools, hiking, and skiing (downhill and cross-country) in winter. See p. 123.
- **Basin Harbor Club** (Vergennes, Vermont; ☎ 800/622-4000 or 802/475-2311): This classic lakeside resort on 700 acres was founded in 1886 and is run by descendants of the original family owners. Fittingly, the resort's icon is an Adirondack chair, dozens of which are arrayed for enjoying views across the lake to New York. Most guests occupy cottages,

which are simple rather than swank. See p. 170.

- **Balsams Grand Resort Hotel** (Dixville Notch, New Hampshire; ☎ **800/255-0600** or 800/255-0800 in New Hampshire, or 603/255-3400): This place is like your own castle in a small country. Set on 15,000 acres in far northern New Hampshire, the Balsams has provided superb hospitality and gracious comfort since 1866. It has two golf courses, miles of hiking trails, and, in winter, its own downhill and cross-country ski areas. See p. 258.
- **The Mount Washington Resort at Bretton Woods** (Bretton Woods, New Hampshire; ☎ **800/314-1752** or 603/278-1000): The last of the grand Edwardian resorts, the Mount Washington has come back from the brink of bankruptcy with its famed flair intact. This is the place to golf, climb Mount Washington, or just sit

on the broad porch and feel important. See p. 245.

- **The Colony Hotel** (Kennebunkport, Maine; ☎ **800/552-2363** or 207/967-3331): This rambling and gleaming white resort dates back to 1914 and has been upgraded over the years without losing any of its charm. You can play shuffleboard, putt on the greens, or lounge in the ocean-view pool. More vigorous souls cross the street to brave the cold Atlantic waters. See p. 281.
- **Quisisana** (Center Lovell, Maine; ☎ **207/925-3500**, or 914/833-0293 in winter): It's a rustic Maine vacation with a musical twist. The waiters, chambermaids, and other staff are recruited from conservatories around the nation, and they perform everything from light opera to chamber music for guests at this pine-filled lakeside resort. Between performances, there's ample opportunity for canoeing and hiking. See p. 371.

## 10 The Best Country Inns

- **Blueberry Hill Inn** (Goshen, Vermont; ☎ **800/448-0707** or 802/247-6735): This remote, casual inn on a quiet byway surrounded by national forest is a great retreat. You can enjoy hiking and swimming in summer, skiing in the winter. See p. 132.
- **Jackson House Inn** (Woodstock, Vermont; ☎ **800/448-1890** or 802/457-2065): Constant improvements and meticulous attention to service make this longtime favorite a solid addition to any "best of" list. The meals are delectable, and the guest rooms are the picture of antique elegance. The only downside? It fronts a sometimes noisy road. See p. 122.
- **Twin Farms** (Woodstock, Vermont; ☎ **800/894-6327** or 802/234-9999):

Just north of Woodstock is the most elegant inn in New England. The prices will appall many readers (rooms start at \$800 for two, including all meals and liquor), but you'll certainly be pampered. Novelist Sinclair Lewis once lived on this 300-acre farm; today, it's an aesthetic retreat with serenity and exceptional food. See p. 123.

- **Windham Hill Inn** (West Townshend, Vermont; ☎ **800/944-4080** or 802/874-4080): New innkeepers have skillfully upgraded this historic inn, adding amenities such as soaking tubs, while still preserving the antique charm of this 1823 farmhouse. It's at the end of a remote dirt road in a high upland valley, and



guests are welcome to explore 160 private acres on a network of walking trails. See p. 112.

- **The Pitcher Inn** (Warren, Vermont; ☎ 888/867-8424 or 802/496-6350): Innkeepers who try to meld whimsy with class often end up with disaster, but that's not the case here. With its brand-new building, this New England-village inn feels more historic than many old places. The dining room is top-notch. See p. 148.
- **Adair** (Bethlehem, New Hampshire; ☎ 888/444-2600 or 603/444-2600): This is one of the newer country mansions in the White Mountains (it dates from 1927), but innkeepers Judy and Bill Whitman have done a stellar job of infusing this Georgian Revival inn with time-honored elegance. Tucked away in a little-trekked corner of the White Mountains, it has a superb

dining room and easy access to mountain activities and golf. See p. 255.

- **Claremont** (Southwest Harbor, Maine; ☎ 800/244-5036 or 207/244-5036): The 1884 Claremont is a Maine classic. This waterside lodge has everything a Victorian resort should, including sparsely decorated rooms, creaky floorboards in the halls, great views of the water and mountains, and a croquet pitch. The dining room is only so-so, but Southwest Harbor has other dining options. See p. 361.
- **White Barn Inn** (Kennebunkport, Maine; ☎ 207/967-2321): Much of the White Barn staff hails from Europe, and they treat guests graciously. The rooms are a delight, and the meals (served in a gloriously restored barn) may be the best in Maine. See p. 281.

## 11 The Best Bed & Breakfasts

- **1811 House** (Manchester Village, Vermont; ☎ 800/432-1811 or 802/362-1811): The 1811 House is one of the best historic inns around. If you prefer your decor to match the architectural era, you'll be content here. Everything is steeped in austere, Early American elegance, nicely avoiding the kitschy look that often afflicts places less adept at re-creating a historical sensibility. See p. 94.
- **Inn at Round Barn Farm** (Waitsfield, Vermont; ☎ 802/496-2276): The beautiful lap pool hidden beneath the monumental former barn is only one of the secrets of this charming inn. The rooms are romantic, the surrounding hillsides frame a picture of pastoral Vermont, and small touches everywhere make guests feel welcome. See p. 147.
- **The Captain Lord Mansion** (Kennebunkport, Maine; ☎ 207/967-3141): You'll transcend the "wanna B&Bs" at this genuine place, with grandfather clocks, Chippendale highboys, and other wonderful antiques. This uncommonly handsome mansion is right in the village of Kennebunkport, perfectly situated for relaxing strolls. See p. 280.
- **Pomegranate Inn** (Portland, Maine; ☎ 800/356-0408 or 207/772-1006): Whimsy and history combine with good effect at this fine B&B in one of Portland's most stately neighborhoods. The Italianate mansion is stern on the outside, yet alive on the inside with creative paintings and an eclectic collection of unusual antiques. See p. 291.

## 12 The Best Moderately Priced Accommodations

- **Inn at the Mad River Barn** (Waitsfield, Vermont; ☎ 800/631-0466 or 802/496-3310): It takes a few minutes to adapt to the spartan rooms and no-frills accommodations, but you'll soon discover that the real action takes place in the living room and dining room, where skiers relax and chat after a day on the slopes and share heaping helpings at mealtime. Rooms with breakfast are \$110. See p. 147.
- **Birchwood Inn** (Temple, New Hampshire; ☎ 603/878-3285): Simple comfort is the watchword at this quiet village inn, once visited by Henry David Thoreau. Rooms with breakfast are under \$90. See p. 210.
- **Philbrook Farm Inn** (Shelburne, New Hampshire; ☎ 603/466-3831): Come here if you're looking for a complete getaway. The inn has been hosting travelers since the 1850s and knows how to do it right. The farmhouse sits on 1,000 acres between the Mahoosuc Mountains and the Androscoggin River, and guests can take vigorous hikes or relax in leisure. Rooms for two are \$150 and under, including breakfast and dinner. Ask about discounts for longer stays. See p. 258.
- **Thayers Inn** (Littleton, New Hampshire; ☎ 800/634-8179 or 603/444-6469): This old-fashioned downtown inn has 42 eclectic rooms and a lot of relaxed charm. Among others, Ulysses S. Grant and Richard Nixon slept here. Rooms start at \$45 if you're willing to share a bathroom, or at \$65 for a private bathroom. See p. 256.
- **Franciscan Guest House** (Kennebunkport, Maine; ☎ 207/967-4865): No daily maid service, cheap paneling on the walls, and industrial carpeting. What's to like? Plenty, including the location (on the lush riverside grounds of a monastery), price (doubles from \$65), and a great Lithuanian-style breakfast spread in the morning. You can walk to Dock Square at Kennebunkport or bike to the beach. See p. 281.
- **Driftwood Inn & Cottages** (Bailey Island, Maine; ☎ 207/833-5461): Where else can you find rooms at the edge of the rocky Maine coast for \$80 and up? This classic shingled compound dates from 1910 and most rooms have a shared bathroom, but the views alone are worth that inconvenience. See p. 307.
- **Maine Idyll Motor Court** (Freeport, Maine; ☎ 207/865-4201): The 1932 Maine Idyll Motor Court is a classic—a cluster of 20 cottages scattered about a grove of beech and oak trees. Each cottage has a tiny porch, wood-burning fireplace (birch logs provided), TV, modest kitchen facilities (no ovens), and timeworn furniture. The downside? Highway noise. Cottages are \$46 to \$90 for two. See p. 303.

## 13 The Best Alternative Accommodations

- **Camping in the Green Mountains** (Vermont): Whether your preferred mode of travel is by foot, car, canoe, or bike, you'll find plenty of good campsites in the verdant hills of Vermont. The state parks are well regarded, with many dating from the Civilian Conservation Corps days (1930s and early 1940s). The National Forest Service, aided by the Green Mountain Club, maintains dozens of backcountry sites and lean-tos as secluded getaways far from the noise of everyday life. See chapters 5 and 6.

- **Appalachian Mountain Club huts** (New Hampshire): For more than a century, the AMC has been putting up weary hikers at its huts high in the White Mountains. Today, the club still manages eight of them (each about a day's hike apart), providing filling, family-style meals and sturdy bunks stacked three high in rustic bunkrooms. See chapter 8.
- **Windjammers** (Maine): Maine has the East Coast's largest fleet of windjammers, providing adventures on the high seas throughout the summer. You can explore offshore islands

and inland estuaries, and learn how sailors once made the best of the wind. Accommodations in private cabins are typically spartan, but you'll spend most of your time on deck luxuriating in the stunning views. See "Penobscot Bay" in chapter 9.

- **Maine Island Trail:** About 70 remote islands along the Maine coast are open to camping, and from these remote, salty wildernesses, you'll see some of the best sunsets imaginable. See "Enjoying the Great Outdoors" in chapter 9.

## 14 The Best Restaurants

- **Chantecleer** (Manchester Center, Vermont; ☎ 802/362-1616): Swiss chef Michel Baumann has been turning out dazzling dinners since 1981, and the kitchen hasn't gotten stale in the least. The dining room in an old barn is magical, and the waitstaff is helpful and friendly. It's a great spot for those who want top-notch Continental fare, but don't like the fuss of a fancy restaurant. See p. 96.
- **Hemingway's** (Killington, Vermont; ☎ 802/422-3886): Killington seems an unlikely place for serious culinary adventures, yet Hemingway's meets the loftiest expectations. The menu changes frequently to ensure the freshest of ingredients. Be sure to order the wild mushroom and truffle soup, if it's available. See p. 135.
- **Jackson House Inn** (Woodstock, Vermont; ☎ 800/448-1890 or 802/457-2065): Set in the modern addition to an upscale country inn, this eatery has meals that are ingeniously conceived, deftly prepared, and artfully arranged. The three-course meals cost around \$55 per person and are an excellent value. See p. 124.
- **Arrows** (Ogunquit, Maine; ☎ 207/361-1100): The emphasis at this

elegant spot is on local products—often many ingredients from nearby organic vegetable gardens. Prices are not for the fainthearted (it's expensive by New York City standards), but the experience is top-rate, from the cordial service to the silver and linens. Expect New American fare informed by an Asian sensibility. See p. 275.

- **White Barn Inn** (Kennebunkport, Maine; ☎ 207/967-2321): The setting in an ancient, rustic barn is magical. The tables are draped with floor-length tablecloths, and the chairs have Italian upholstery. The food is to die for. Enjoy entrees such as grilled duckling breast with ginger and sun-dried cherry sauce, or rack of lamb with pecans and homemade barbecue sauce. See p. 281.
- **Fore Street** (Portland, Maine; ☎ 207/775-2717): Fore Street is one of New England's most celebrated restaurants—listed as one of *Gourmet* magazine's 100 best restaurants in 2001—and the chef has been getting lots of press elsewhere. His secret? Simplicity, and lots of it. Some of the most memorable meals are prepared over an applewood grill. See p. 293.

## 15 The Best Local Dining Experiences

- **Blue Benn Diner** (Bennington, Vermont; ☎ 802/442-5140): This favorite, housed in a classic 1945 Silk City diner, has a barrel ceiling, acres of stainless steel, and a vast menu. Make sure not to overlook the specials scrawled on paper and taped all over the walls. Do leave room for a slice of delicious pie, including blackberry, pumpkin, and chocolate cream. See p. 89.
- **Curtis Bar-B-Q** (Putney, Vermont; ☎ 802/387-5474): Who gave the South and Midwest permission to claim the best barbecue? This classic roadside open-air joint is next to a gas station and has a heap of rustic charm and great food. Place your order at the blue school bus for a slab or smaller serving, grab a seat, dig in, and enjoy. See p. 110.
- **Bove's** (Burlington, Vermont; ☎ 802/864-6651): A Burlington landmark since 1941, Bove's is a classic red-sauce-on-spaghetti joint that's a throwback to a lost era. The red sauce is rich and tangy, and the garlic sauce packs enough garlic to knock you clear out of your booth. See p. 173.
- **Lou's** (Hanover, New Hampshire; ☎ 603/643-3321): Huge crowds flock to Lou's, just down the block from the Dartmouth campus in Hanover, for breakfast on weekends. Fortunately, breakfast is served all day. The sandwiches served on fresh-baked bread are huge and delicious. See p. 218.
- **Becky's** (Portland, Maine; ☎ 207/773-7070): Five different kinds of home fries on the menu? It's breakfast nirvana at this local institution on the working waterfront. It's a favored hangout of fishermen, high school kids, businessmen, and just about everyone else. See p. 296.
- **Silly's** (Portland, Maine; ☎ 207/772-0360): Hectic and fun, this tiny, informal, kitschy restaurant serves up delicious finger food, such as pita wraps, hamburgers, and pizza. The milkshakes alone are worth the detour. See p. 296.
- **Dolphin Chowder House** (Harswell, Maine; ☎ 207/833-6000): The fish chowder and lobster stew are reasonably priced and delicious at this hidden spot, part of a marina at the end of a dead-end road. Blueberry muffins come with most meals. See "The Mid-Coast" in chapter 9.

## 16 The Best Destinations for Serious Shoppers

- **Manchester** (Vermont): The dozens of outlet stores clustered in this village include the usual high-fashion suspects and some notable individual shops. Head to Orvis, the maker of noted fly-fishing equipment, for outdoor gear and clothing. See "Bennington, Manchester & Southwestern Vermont" in chapter 5.
- **Portsmouth** (New Hampshire): Downtown Portsmouth has a grab bag of small, manageable, eclectic shops, ranging from funky shoe stores to classy art galleries. The downtown district is small enough to browse leisurely on foot, but you'll find a broad assortment of stuff for sale that will appeal to almost any taste. See "The Seacoast" in chapter 7.
- **North Conway** (New Hampshire): Combine outdoor adventure with serious shopping on a 3-mile stretch of discount outlet stores that makes up most of North Conway. Look for

Anne Klein, American Tourister, Izod, Polo/Ralph Lauren, Donna Karan, Reebok/Rockport, and Eddie Bauer, along with dozens of others. See “North Conway & Environs” in chapter 8.

- **Freeport** (Maine): L.L.Bean is the anchor store for this thriving town of

outlets, but you’ll also find Patagonia, J. Crew, Dansk, Brooks Brothers, Levi’s, and about 100 others. This is the most aesthetically pleasing of the several outlet centers in northern New England. See “The Mid-Coast” in chapter 9.