

The Best of New England

One of the greatest challenges of traveling in New England is choosing from an abundance of superb restaurants, accommodations, and attractions. Where to start? Here's an entirely biased list of our favorite destinations and experiences. Over years of traveling through the region, we've discovered that these are places worth more than just a quick stop—they're all worth a major detour.

1 The Best of Small-Town New England

- **Marblehead (MA):** The “Yachting Capital of America” has major picture-postcard potential, especially in summer, when the harbor fills with boats of all sizes. From downtown, a short distance inland, make your way toward the water down the narrow, flower-dotted streets. The first glimpse of blue sea and sky is breathtaking. See “Marblehead” in chapter 6.
- **Provincetown (Cape Cod, MA):** At the far tip of the Cape's curl, in intensely beautiful surroundings, is Provincetown. Provincetown's history goes back nearly 400 years, and in the last century, it's been a veritable headquarters of bohemia—a gathering place for famous writers and artists. It's also, of course, one of the world's top gay and lesbian resort areas. But Provincetown is a place for everyone who enjoys savory food, fun shopping, and fascinating people-watching. See “The Lower Cape” in chapter 7.
- **Nantucket (MA):** With grand 19th-century homes and cobblestone streets, it looks as though the whalers just left. Traveling to the island of Nantucket is like taking a trip to a parallel universe; you get historic charm but with 21st-century amenities. The island also has shops full of luxury goods, loads of historical sites open to the public, and miles of public beaches and bike paths. See “Nantucket” in chapter 8.
- **Oak Bluffs (Martha's Vineyard, MA):** Stroll down Circuit Avenue in Oak Bluffs with a Mad Martha's ice cream cone and then ride the Flying Horses Carousel. This island harbor town is full of fun for kids and parents. Don't miss the colorful “gingerbread” cottages behind Circuit Avenue. Oak Bluffs also has great beaches, bike paths, and the Vineyard's best nightlife. See “Martha's Vineyard” in chapter 8.
- **Stockbridge (MA):** Norman Rockwell made a famous painting of the main street of this, his adopted hometown. Facing south, it uses the southern Berkshires as backdrop for the sprawl of the Red Lion Inn and the other late-19th-century buildings that make up the commercial district. Then as now, they service a beguiling mix of unassuming saltboxes and Gilded Age mansions that have sheltered farmers, artists, and aristocrats since the days of the French and Indian Wars. See “The Berkshires” in chapter 9.

New England



- **Washington (CT):** A classic, with a Congregational church facing a village green surrounded by clapboard Colonial houses—all of them with black shutters. See “The Litchfield Hills” in chapter 10.
- **Essex (CT):** A walk past white-clapboard houses to the active waterfront on this narrow, unspoiled stretch of the Connecticut River rings all the right bells. There is not an artificial

note, a cookie-cutter franchise, nor a costumed docent to muddy its near-perfect image. Rides on a 1920s steam locomotive or Mississippi-style riverboat are options. See “The Connecticut River Valley” in chapter 10.

- **Woodstock (VT):** Woodstock has a stunning village green, a whole range of 19th-century homes, woodland walks leading just out of town, and a settled, old-money air. This is a good

place to explore on foot or by bike, or to just sit and watch summer unfold. See “Woodstock & Environs” in chapter 12.

- **Montpelier (VT):** This is the way all state capitals should be: slow paced, small enough so you can walk everywhere, and full of shops that still sell nails and strapping tape. Montpelier also shows a more sophisticated edge, with its Culinary Institute, an art-house movie theater, and several fine bookshops. But at heart it's a small town, where you just might run into the governor at the corner store. See “Exploring Montpelier & Barre” in chapter 12.

- **Hanover (NH):** It's the perfect college town: the handsome brick buildings of Dartmouth College, a tidy green, a small but select shopping district, and a scattering of good restaurants. Come in the fall, and you'll be tempted to join in the touch football game on the green. See “Hanover” in chapter 13.

- **Castine (ME):** Soaring elm trees, a peaceful harborside setting, plenty of grand historic homes, and a few good inns make this a great spot to soak up some of Maine's coastal ambience off the beaten path. See “The Blue Hill Peninsula” in chapter 14.

2 The Best Places to See Fall Foliage

- **Walden Pond State Reservation (Concord, MA):** Walden Pond is hidden from the road by the woods where Henry David Thoreau built a small cabin and lived from 1845 to 1847. When the leaves are turning and the trees are reflected in the water, it's hard to imagine why he left. See p. 158
- **Mount Auburn Cemetery (Cambridge, MA):** More than 5,000 trees spread across Mount Auburn's 175 acres. Each deciduous specimen changes color on its own schedule, and at the peak of foliage season, each seems to be a different shade of red, orange, or gold. See p. 131.
- **Bash-Bish Falls State Park (MA):** Head from the comely village of South Egremont up into the forested hills of the southwest corner of Massachusetts. The roads, which change from macadam to gravel to dirt and back, wind between crimson clouds of sugar maples and white birches feather-stroked against banks of black evergreens. The payoff is a three-state view from a promontory above a 50-foot cascade notched into a bluff, with carpets of russet and gold

stretching all the way to the Hudson River. See p. 335.

- **The Litchfield Hills (CT):** Route 7, running south to north through the rugged northwest corner of Connecticut, roughly along the course of the Housatonic River, explodes with color in the weeks before and after Columbus Day. Leaves drift down to the water and whirl down the foaming river. See “The Litchfield Hills” in chapter 10.
- **I-91 (VT):** An interstate? Don't scoff (the traffic can be terrible on narrow state roads). If you like your foliage viewing wholesale, cruise I-91 from Brattleboro to Newport. You'll be overwhelmed with gorgeous terrain, from the gentle Connecticut River Valley to the sloping hills of the Northeast Kingdom. See chapter 12.
- **Vermont Route 100 (VT):** Route 100 winds the length of Vermont from Readsboro to Newport, plying the Mad River Valley for a stretch. It's the major north-south route through the center of the Green Mountains, and it's surprisingly undeveloped along most of its length. You won't have it to yourself along the southern stretches on autumn

weekends, but as you head farther north, you'll leave the crowds behind. See chapter 12.

- **Crawford Notch (NH):** Route 302 passes through this scenic valley, where you can see the brilliant red maples and yellow birches high on the hillsides. In fall, Mount Washington, in the background, is likely to be dusted with an early snow. See "The White Mountains" in chapter 13.

- **Camden (ME):** The dazzling fall colors that cover the rolling hills are reflected in Penobscot Bay on the east side, and in the lakes on the west. Ascend the peaks for views out to the color-splashed islands in the bay. Autumn usually comes a week or so later on the coast, so you can stretch out your viewing pleasure. See "Penobscot Bay" in chapter 14.

3 The Best Ways to View Coastal Scenery

- **Strolling Around Rockport (MA):** The town surrounds the small harbor and spreads out along the rugged, rocky coastline of Cape Ann. From the end of Bearskin Neck, the view is spectacular—fishing and pleasure boats in one direction, roaring surf in the other. The surf's the thing at Halibut Point State Park, at the tip of the peninsula. See "Cape Ann" in chapter 6.
- **Getting Back to Nature on Plum Island (MA):** The Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, in Newburyport, offers two varieties of coastal scenery: picturesque salt marshes packed with birds and other animals, and gorgeous ocean beaches where the power of the Atlantic is evident. See "Newburyport, Ipswich & Plum Island" in chapter 6.
- **Biking or Driving the Outer Cape (MA):** From Eastham through Wellfleet and Truro, all the way to Provincetown, Cape Cod's outermost towns offer dazzling ocean vistas and a number of exceptional bike paths, including the Province Lands, just outside Provincetown, that are bordered by spectacular swooping dunes. See "The Outer Cape" in chapter 7.
- **Heading "Up-Island" on Martha's Vineyard (MA):** Many visitors never venture beyond the port towns of Vineyard Haven, Oak Bluffs, and Edgartown. Though each has its

charms, the scenery actually gets more spectacular "up-island," in towns like Chilmark, where you'll pass moorlike meadows and family farms surrounded by stone walls. Follow State Road and the scenic Moshup Trail to the westernmost tip of the island, where you'll experience the dazzling colored cliffs of Aquinnah and the quaint fishing port of Menemsha. See "Martha's Vineyard" in chapter 8.

- **Cruising Newport's Ocean Drive (RI):** After a tour of the fabulously overwrought "cottages" of the hyper-rich that are strung along Bellevue Avenue, emerging onto the shoreline road that dodges the spray of the Atlantic is a cleansing reminder of the power of nature over fragile monuments to the conceits of men. To extend the experience, take a 3.5-mile hike along the Cliff Walk that skirts the edge of the bluff commanded by the largest mansions. See "Newport" in chapter 11.
- **Sitting in a Rocking Chair (ME):** The views are never better than when you're caught unawares—such as suddenly looking up from an engrossing book on the front porch of an ocean-side inn. Throughout the Maine chapter, look for mention of inns right on the water, such as Beach House Inn (p. 604), Samoset Resort

(p. 633), East Wind Inn (p. 633), and the Claremont (p. 659).

- **Hiking Monhegan Island** (ME): The village of Monhegan is clustered around the harbor, but the rest of this 700-acre island is all picturesque wildlands, with miles of trails crossing open meadows and winding along rocky bluffs. See “Midcoast Maine” in chapter 14.

- **Driving the Park Loop Road at Acadia National Park** (ME): This is the region’s premier ocean drive. You’ll start high along a ridge with views of Frenchman Bay and the Porcupine Islands, then dip down along the rocky shores to watch the surf crash against the dark rocks. Plan to do this 20-mile loop at least twice to get the most out of it. See p. 647.

4 The Best Places to Rediscover America’s Past

- **Paul Revere House** (Boston, MA): We often study the history of the American Revolution through stories of governments and institutions. At this little home in the North End, you’ll learn about a real person. The self-guided tour is particularly thought-provoking, allowing you to linger on the artifacts that hold your interest. Revere had 16 children with two wives, supported them with his thriving silversmith’s trade—and put the whole operation in jeopardy with his role in the events that led to the Revolution. See p. 124.
- **Old State House** (Boston, MA): Built in 1713, the once-towering Old State House is dwarfed by modern skyscrapers. It stands as a reminder of British rule (the exterior features a lion and a unicorn) and its overthrow—the Declaration of Independence was read from the balcony, which overlooks a traffic island where a circle of bricks represents the site of the Boston Massacre. See p. 122.
- **Faneuil Hall** (Boston, MA): Although Faneuil Hall is best known nowadays as a shopping destination, if you head upstairs, you’ll be transported back in time. In the second-floor auditorium, park rangers talk about the building’s role in the Revolution. Tune out the sound of sneakers

squeaking across the floor, and you can almost hear Samuel Adams (his statue is out front) exhorting the Sons of Liberty. See p. 116.

- **“Old Ironsides”** (Boston, MA): Formally named USS *Constitution*, the frigate was launched in 1797 and gained fame battling Barbary pirates and seeing action in the War of 1812. Last used in battle in 1815, it was periodically threatened with destruction until a complete renovation in the late 1920s started its career as a floating monument. The staff includes sailors on active duty who wear 1812 dress uniforms. See p. 124.
- **North Bridge** (Concord, MA): British troops headed to Concord after putting down the uprising in Lexington, and the bridge (a replica) stands as a testament to the Minutemen who fought here. The Concord River and its peaceful green banks give no hint of the bloodshed that took place. On the path in from Monument Street, placards and audio stations provide a fascinating narrative. See “Concord” in chapter 6.
- **Plymouth Rock** (Plymouth, MA): Okay, it’s a fraction of its original size and looks like something you might find in your garden. Nevertheless, Plymouth Rock makes a perfect starting point for exploration. Close by is

Mayflower II, a replica of the alarmingly small original vessel. The juxtaposition reminds you of what a dangerous undertaking the Pilgrims' voyage was. See "Plymouth" in chapter 6.

- **Sandwich (MA):** The oldest town on Cape Cod, Sandwich was founded in 1637. Glassmaking brought notoriety and prosperity to this picturesque town in the 19th century. Visit the Sandwich Glass Museum for the whole story, or tour one of the town's glassblowing studios. Don't leave without visiting the 76-acre Heritage Museums and Gardens, which has a working carousel, a sparkling antique-car collection, and a wonderful collection of Americana. See "The Upper Cape" in chapter 7.
- **Nantucket (MA):** It looks as though the whalers just left, leaving behind their grand houses, cobbled streets, and a gamut of enticing shops offering luxury goods from around the world. The Nantucket Historical Association owns more than a dozen properties open for tours, and the Whaling Museum is one of the most fascinating sites in the region. Tourism may be rampant, but not its tackier side effects, thanks to stringent preservation measures. See "Nantucket" in chapter 8.
- **Old Sturbridge Village (MA):** Authentic buildings re-create a rural settlement of the 1830s. In the winter, the participatory "Dinner in a Country Village" promotion lets guests stay after hours and prepare a meal of the era on a massive hearth by candlelight, then enjoy the fruits of their labor—roast chicken, "beef olives," gourd soup, trifle, and fresh-roasted coffee. See "Sturbridge & Old Sturbridge Village" in chapter 9.
- **Deerfield (MA):** Arguably the best-preserved Colonial village in New England, the historic section of this town has over 80 houses dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries. None of the clutter of modernity has intruded here. Thirteen museum houses on the main avenue can be visited through tours conducted by the organization known as Historic Deerfield. See "The Pioneer Valley" in chapter 9.
- **Newport (RI):** A key port of the clipper trade long before the British surrendered their colony, Newport retains abundant recollections of its maritime past. In addition to its great harbor, clogged with tugs, ferries, yachts, and majestic sloops, the City by the Sea has kept three distinctive enclaves preserved: the waterside homes of Colonial seamen, the hillside Federal houses of port-bound merchants, and the ostentatious mansions of America's post-Civil War industrial and financial grandees. See "Newport" in chapter 11.
- **Plymouth Notch (VT):** President Calvin Coolidge was born in this high upland valley, and the state has done a superb job preserving his hometown village. You'll get a good sense of the president's roots, but also gain a greater understanding of how a New England village works. See p. 497.
- **Shelburne Museum (Shelburne, VT):** Think of this sprawling museum as New England's attic. Located on the shores of Lake Champlain, the Shelburne features not only the usual exhibits of quilts and early glass, but also whole buildings preserved like specimens in formaldehyde. Look for the lighthouse, the railroad station, and the stagecoach inn. This is one of northern New England's "don't miss" destinations. See p. 530.
- **Portsmouth (NH):** Portsmouth is a salty coastal city that just happens to

boast some of the most impressive historic homes in New England. Start at Strawberry Banke, a historic compound of 42 buildings dating from 1695 to 1820. Then visit the many other grand homes in nearby neighborhoods, like the house John Paul Jones occupied while building his warship during the Revolution. See “Portsmouth” in chapter 13.

- **Victoria Mansion** (Portland, ME): The Donald had nothing on the Victorians when it came to excess. You’ll see Victorian decorative arts at their zenith in this Italianate mansion built during the Civil War years by a prosperous hotelier. It’s open to the public for tours in summer and also puts on outstanding Christmas-season programs in December. See p. 611.

5 The Best Activities for Families

- **Exploring the Museum of Fine Arts** (Boston, MA): Parents hear “magnificent Egyptian collections.” Kids think: “Mummies!” Even the most hyper youngster manages to take it down a notch in these quiet, refined surroundings, and the collections at the MFA simultaneously tickle visitors’ brains. See p. 119.
- **Experimenting in the Museum of Science** (Boston, MA): Built around demonstrations and interactive displays that never feel like homework, this museum is wildly popular with kids—and adults. Explore the exhibits, then take in a show at the planetarium or the Mugar Omni Theater. Before you know it, everyone will have learned something, painlessly. See p. 120.
- **Catching a Free Friday Flick at the Hatch Shell** (Boston, MA): Better known for the Boston Pops Fourth of July concert, the Esplanade is also famous for family films (like *Shrek* or *Pocahontas*) shown on Friday nights in summer. The lawn in front of the Hatch Shell turns into a giant, carless drive-in as hundreds of people picnic and wait for dark. See p. 140.
- **Visiting the Heritage Museums and Gardens** (Cape Cod, MA): This site with museum buildings spread over 76 acres will delight both children and adults. Kids will especially love the gleaming antique cars, the collections

of soldiers and Native American clothing, and the 1912 carousel that offers unlimited rides. Outdoor concerts free with admission take place most Sunday afternoons in season. See p. 199.

- **Whale-Watching off Provincetown** (Cape Cod, MA): Boats leave MacMillan Wharf for the 8-mile journey to Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, a rich feeding ground for several types of whales. Nothing can prepare you for the thrill of spotting these magnificent creatures feeding, breaching, and even flipper-slapping. See p. 254.
- **Deep-Sea Fishing:** Charter fishing boats these days usually have high-tech fish-finding gear—imagine how your kids will react to reeling in one big bluefish after another. The top spots to mount such an expedition are Barnstable Harbor or Rock Harbor in Orleans, on Cape Cod; Point Judith, at the southern tip of Rhode Island; and the Maine coast. See chapters 7, 11, and 14, respectively.
- **Riding the Flying Horses Carousel in Oak Bluffs** (Martha’s Vineyard, MA): Some say this is the oldest carousel in the country, but your kids might not notice the genuine horsehair, sculptural details, or glass eyes. They’ll be too busy trying to grab the brass ring to win a free ride. After your ride, stroll around the town of Oak

Bluffs. Children will be enchanted with the “gingerbread” houses, a carry-over from the 19th-century revivalist movement. See p. 278.

- **Biking Nantucket** (MA): Short, flat trails crisscross the island, and every one leads to a beach. The shortest rides lead to Children’s Beach, with its own playground, and Jetties Beach, with a skate park and water-sports equipment for rent; older kids will be able to make the few miles to Surfside and Madaket. See “Nantucket” in chapter 8.
- **Visiting Mystic Seaport and Mystic Aquarium** (CT): The double-down winner in the family-fun sweepstakes has to be this combination: a visit to the waterfront settlement of the Seaport, which captures the look and feel of a 19th-century seafaring village, and a trip to the Aquarium, with performing sea lions and a display of glowing, fluorescent coral. These are the kinds of G-rated attractions that have no age barriers. See p. 407.
- **Visiting the Ben & Jerry Ice Cream Factory** (Waterbury, VT): Kids and ice cream are a great combination, and the half-hour tours that leave every 10 minutes in summer won’t tax anybody’s patience. Browse the small ice cream museum, enjoy the playground and cow-viewing area,

and make sure to save room for the free samples. See p. 514.

- **Exploring the Shelburne Museum** (Shelburne, VT): This museum contains one of the nation’s most singular collections of American decorative, folk, and fine art. Kid favorites include the Circus Building, with a 35,000-piece three-ring miniature circus; an operating vintage carousel; a collection of dolls and dollhouses; and automata, large (sometimes 3 feet tall), often comical wind-up toys. See p. 530.
- **Riding the Mount Washington Cog Railway** (Crawford Notch, NH): 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 aboard trains that were specially designed to scale the mountain in 1869. As a technological marvel, the railroad attracted tourists by the thousands a century ago. They still come to marvel at the sheer audacity of it all. See p. 584.
- **Exploring Monhegan Island** (ME): Kids from 8 to 12 especially enjoy overnight excursions to Monhegan Island. The mail boat from Port Clyde is rustic and intriguing, and the hotels are an adventure. Leave at least an afternoon to sit atop the high, rocky bluffs scouting the glimmering ocean for whales. See “Mid-coast Maine” in chapter 14.

6 The Best Country Inns

- **Hawthorne Inn** (Concord, MA; ☎ 978/369-5610): Everything here—the 1870 building, the garden setting a stone’s throw from the historic attractions, the antiques, the eclectic decorations, the accommodating innkeepers—is top of the line. See p. 160.
- **Coonamessett Inn** (Falmouth, MA; ☎ 508/548-2300): Picture windows overlooking a pond and 7 verdant

acres make this former (from 1796) homestead a very special place to stay. Separate sitting rooms and knotty pine walls add to its comfort and charm. Plus, Sunday brunch is a real treat. See p. 206.

- **Captain’s House Inn** (Chatham, Cape Cod, MA; ☎ 800/315-0728): An elegant country inn dripping with good taste, this is among the best small inns in the region. Most rooms

have fireplaces, elegant paneling, and antiques; they're sumptuous yet cozy. Your British hostess serves a stupendous high tea. This could be the ultimate spot to enjoy Chatham's Christmas Stroll festivities. See p. 235.

- **Charlotte Inn** (Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, MA; ☎ 508/627-4751): Edgartown tends to be the most formal enclave on Martha's Vineyard, and this compound of exquisite buildings is by far the fanciest address in town. The rooms are distinctively decorated: One boasts a baby grand, another its own thematic dressing room. The restaurant, **Catch at the Terrace**, is also top-notch. See p. 280.
- **The Porches** (North Adams, MA; ☎ 413/664-0400): It may be stretching the definition of the "country inn" category, but this is too much fun to ignore. It was put together with six 19th-century workmen's houses lined up opposite the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, a new veranda running across their length. The wit of the designers is evident in the use of paint-by-the-numbers pictures and sublimely kitschy accessories, but laptop rentals, DVD players, and Internet access ensure no 21st-century deprivation. See p. 358.
- **Mayflower Inn & Spa** (Washington, CT; ☎ 860/868-9466): Not a tough call at all for this part of the region: Immaculate in taste and execution, the Mayflower is as close to perfection as any such enterprise is likely to be (although points off for whiffs of excess pretension). A genuine Joshua Reynolds hangs in the hall. See p. 375.
- **Griswold Inn** (Essex, CT; ☎ 860/767-1776): "The Griz" has been accommodating sailors and travelers as long as any inn in the country, give or take a decade. In all that time, it has been a part of life and commerce in the lower Connecticut River

Valley, always ready with a mug of suds, a haunch of beef, and a roaring fire. The walls are layered with nautical paintings and memorabilia, and they've even gotten up the nerve to add a wine bar to the mix. See p. 400.

- **The Equinox Resort** (Manchester Village, VT; ☎ 800/362-4747): This is southern Vermont's grand resort, with nearly 200 rooms in a white-clapboard compound that seems to go on forever. The rooms are pleasant enough, but the real draws are the grounds and the resort's varied activities—it's set on 2,300 acres with pools, tennis courts, an 18-hole golf course, and even its own mountain-side. Tried everything on vacation? How about falconry classes or back-country driving at the Range Rover school? See p. 474.
- **Windham Hill Inn** (West Townshend, VT; ☎ 800/944-4080): Welcome amenities such as air-conditioning in the rooms and a conference room in the barn have been added, while preserving the charm of this 1823 farmstead. 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. 489.
- **Twin Farms** (Barnard, VT; ☎ 800/894-6327): Just north of Woodstock may be the most elegant inn in New England. Its rates are a tad breathtaking, but guests are certainly pampered here. Novelist Sinclair Lewis once lived on this 300-acre farm, and today it's an aesthetic retreat that offers serenity and exceptional food. See p. 493.
- **The Pitcher Inn** (Warren, VT; ☎ 802/496-6350): Even though this place was built in 1997, it's possessed of the graciousness of a longtime, well-worn inn. It combines traditional New England form and scale with modern and luxe touches, plus a good dollop of whimsy. See p. 510.

- **Basin Harbor Club** (Vergennes, VT; ☎ 800/622-4000): Established in 1886, this waterside gem is a classic family resort, with golf, tennis, boating on Lake Champlain, jackets-required dining, stunning views, and evening lectures on the arts. Bring books and board games, and relearn what summer's all about. See p. 532.
- **White Barn Inn** (Kennebunkport, ME; ☎ 207/967-2321): Many of the White Barn's staff hail from Europe, and guests are treated with a

Continental graciousness that's hard to match. Rooms, suites, and cottages here are all a delight, and the meals (served in the barn) are among the best in Maine. See p. 605.

- **Claremont** (Southwest Harbor, ME; ☎ 800/244-5036): 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 water and mountains, and a perfect croquet pitch. See p. 659.

7 The Best Moderately Priced Accommodations

- **Newbury Guest House** (Boston, MA; ☎ 800/437-7668): This lovely property would be a good deal even if it weren't ideally located on Newbury Street, Boston's version of Rodeo Drive. Rates even include breakfast. See p. 101.
- **Pilgrim Sands Motel** (Plymouth, MA; ☎ 800/729-7263): The ocean views and two pools (indoor and outdoor) make this a great deal, whether you're immersing yourself in Pilgrim lore or passing through on the way from Boston to Cape Cod. See p. 193.
- **White Horse Inn** (Provincetown, Cape Cod, MA; ☎ 508/487-1790): The very embodiment of Provincetown funkiness, this inn has hosted such celebrities as filmmaker John Waters and poet laureate Robert Pinsky. Rooms are short on amenities but long on artiness. The apartments, cobbled together by innkeeper Frank Schaefer, are highly original and a lot of fun. See p. 258.
- **Nauset House Inn** (East Orleans, Cape Cod, MA; ☎ 800/771-5508): This romantic 1810 farmhouse is like a sepia-toned vision of old Cape Cod. Recline in a wicker divan surrounded by fragrant flowers while the wind whistles outside. Better yet, stroll to Nauset Beach and take a quiet walk

as the sun sets. Your genial hosts also prepare one of the finest breakfasts in town. See p. 241.

- **Hopkins Inn** (New Preston, CT; ☎ 860/868-7295): This yellow farmhouse bestows the top view of Lake Waramaug, and is at its best on soft summer days when robust Alpine dishes can be taken out on the terrace. The somewhat spartan rooms don't tempt winding-down guests with either phones or TVs. The Hopkins Vineyard is adjacent. See p. 377.
- **Bee and Thistle Inn** (Old Lyme, CT; ☎ 800/622-4946): Known for decades for its cuisine, this 1756 house also has a detached cottage and 11 pretty guest rooms, two of which have fireplaces. Easily one of the area's most romantic weekend getaways, it sits on 5 acres beside the small Lieutenant River. See p. 399.
- **Inn at the Mad River Barn** (Waitsfield, VT; ☎ 800/631-0466): It takes a few minutes to adapt to the spartan rooms and no-frills accommodations here. 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. See p. 510.

8 The Best Restaurants

- **Legal Sea Foods** (Boston, MA, and other locations; ☎ 617/266-6800): Newcomers ask where to go for fresh seafood, then react suspiciously when I recommend a world-famous restaurant instead of a local secret. No, it's no secret—but it's a wildly successful chain for a reason. See p. 105.
- **Mamma Maria** (Boston, MA; ☎ 617/523-0077): The best restaurant in the restaurant-choked North End is a far cry from the spaghetti-and-meatballs workhorses that crowd this Italian-American neighborhood. The Northern Italian cuisine at this elegant town house is something to write home about. See p. 108.
- **902 Main** (South Yarmouth, Cape Cod, MA; ☎ 508/398-9902): With fabulous service, an elegant atmosphere, and to-die-for food, this is the place to go for fine dining in the Mid-Cape. Entrees like filet mignon with portobello mushrooms, rack of lamb with truffle mashed potatoes, and haddock with organic beets range will set you swooning. See p. 221.
- **Atria** (Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, MA; ☎ 508/627-5840): This fine-dining restaurant set in an 18th-century sea captain's home gets rave reviews for its gourmet cuisine and its high-quality service. This is one of those places where you can just relax and have a fantastic and memorable meal, because the staff knows exactly what they are doing. See p. 285.
- **Centre Street Bistro** (Nantucket, MA; ☎ 508/228-8470): Two of the best chefs on the island, Ruth and Tim Pitts, combine their talents at this cozy little hole-in-the-wall restaurant. The best part is that this place features wonderful, creative cuisine at fairly reasonable prices, compared to other island fine-dining restaurants. See p. 309.
- **Zinc** (Lenox, MA; ☎ 413/637-8800): Setting the Berkshires culinary standard ever since its opening, this stylish, contemporary bistro impresses on every repeat visit. It looks great, for starters, with its zinc bar, buffed woods, and flowers everywhere. Most everything that arrives on a plate is supremely satisfying, joining familiarity with the French repertoire with cunning twists in execution. There are 24 wines by the glass and an irresistible five-cheese tasting. See p. 350.
- **Bespoke** (New Haven, CT; ☎ 203/562-4644): The preeminent new-ish restaurant in Connecticut, Bespoke has been open since 2006. Food arrives in one dazzling display after another: seafood chowder in a coconut milk broth; roasted sea bass in a carrot-curry broth; and "Two-Way" duck, an Asian-style leg confit and breast with rhubarb-celery salad. The chef is from the late-lamented Roomba, a revelatory exercise in the then-fresh Nuevo Latino arena. See p. 386.
- **Union League Café** (New Haven, CT; ☎ 203/562-4299): This august setting of arched windows and high ceilings is more than 150 years old and was long the sanctuary of an exclusive club. It still looks good, but the tone has been lightened into an approximation of a Lyonnaise brasserie. See p. 388.
- **Scales & Shells** (Newport, RI; ☎ 401/846-3474): Ye who turn aside all ostentation, get yourselves hence. There's nary a frill nor affectation anywhere near this place, and because the wide-open kitchen is right at the entrance, there are no secrets, either. What we have here are marine critters mere hours from the depths, prepared and presented free of any but the slightest artifice. This might well be the purest seafood joint on the southern New England coast. See p. 450.

- **Chantecleer** (Manchester Center, VT; ☎ 802/362-1616): Swiss chef Michel Baumann has been turning out dazzling dinners here since 1981, and the kitchen hasn't gotten stale in the least. The dining room in an old barn is magical, the staff helpful and friendly. It's a great spot for those who demand top-notch Continental fare but don't like the fuss of a fancy restaurant. See p. 478.
- **T. J. Buckley's** (Brattleboro, VT; ☎ 802/257-4922): This tiny diner on a dark side street serves up outsize tastes prepared by a talented chef. Forget about stewed-too-long diner fare; get in your mind big tastes blossoming from the freshest of ingredients prepared just right. See p. 487.
- **Hemingway's** (Killington, VT; ☎ 802/422-3886): Killington seems an unlikely place for a serious culinary adventure, yet Hemingway's will meet the loftiest expectations. The menu changes frequently to ensure only the freshest of ingredients. If it's available, be sure to order a bowl of the wild mushroom and truffle soup. See p. 487.
- **Arrows** (Ogunquit, ME; ☎ 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, 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. 602.
- **White Barn Inn** (Kennebunkport, ME; ☎ 207/967-2321): The setting in an ancient, rustic barn is magical. The tables are set with floor-length tablecloths, and the chairs feature imported Italian upholstery. The food? To die for. Start with lobster spring rolls, then enjoy entrees such as roasted duck with juniper sauce or Maine lobster over fettuccine with a cognac coral butter sauce. See p. 604.
- **Fore Street** (Portland, ME; ☎ 207/775-2717): Fore Street is one of northern New England's most celebrated restaurants. The chef's secret? Simplicity, and lots of it. Some of the most memorable meals are prepared over an apple-wood grill. See p. 614.
- **Hugo's** (Portland, ME; ☎ 207/774-8538): Chef Rob Evans has performed a CPR job on this once-proud bistro that's been nothing short of amazing; it now stands among Maine's finest restaurants. The tasting menus are especially wonderful, and there's an affiliated Belgian-fries shop just down the street for guilty-pleasure dining as well. See p. 614.

9 The Best Local Dining Experiences

- **Durgin-Park** (Boston, MA; ☎ 617/227-2038): A meal at this landmark restaurant might start with a waitress dropping a handful of cutlery in front of you and saying, "Here, give these out." The surly service usually seems to be an act, but it's so much a part of the experience that some people are disappointed when the waitresses are nice (as they often are). In any case, it's worked since 1827. See p. 110.
- **Woodman's of Essex** (Essex, MA; ☎ 800/649-1773): This busy North Shore institution is not for the faint of heart—or the hard of artery, unless you like eating corn and steamers while everyone around you is gobbling fried clams and onion rings. The food at this glorified clam shack is fresh and delicious, and a look at the organized pandemonium behind the counter is worth the (reasonable) price. See p. 174.

- **Black Eyed Susan's** (Nantucket, MA; ☎ 508/325-0308): This is extremely exciting food in a funky bistro atmosphere. The place is small, popular with locals, and packed. Sitting at the diner counter and watching the chef in action is a show in itself. No credit cards, no reservations, and no liquor license are all an inconvenience, but if you can get past all that, you're in for a top-notch dining experience. See p. 309.
- **Louis' Lunch—The Very First (Well, Probably) Burgers** (New Haven, CT; ☎ 203/562-5507): Not a lot of serious history has happened in New Haven, but boosters claim it was here that hamburgers were invented in 1900. This little lunchette lives on, moved from its original site in order to save it. The patties are freshly ground daily, thrust into vertical grills, and served on white toast. Garnishes are tomato, onion, and cheese. No ketchup and no fries, so don't even ask. See p. 387.
- **Pizza** (New Haven, CT): The city's claim to America's first pizza is a whole lot shakier than its claim to the first burgers, but New Haven has few equals as purveyor of the ultrathin, charred variety of what they still call "apizza" in these parts, pronounced "ah-peeetz." Old-timer **Frank Pepe's**, 157 Wooster St. (☎ 203/865-5762), is usually ceded top rank among the local parlors, but it is joined by such contenders as **Sally's**, 237 Wooster St. (☎ 203/624-5271), and **Modern Apizza**, 874 State St. (☎ 203/776-5306). See p. 386.
- **Abbott's Lobster in the Rough** (Noank, CT; ☎ 860/536-7719): Places like this frill-free lobster shack abound along more northerly reaches of the New England coast, but here's a little bit o' Maine a Sunday drive from Manhattan. Shore dinners rule, so roll up sleeves, tie on napkins, and dive into platters of boiled shrimp and steamed mussels, and dunk hot lobster chunks in pots of drawn butter. See p. 410.
- **Johnnycakes and Stuffies** (RI): Most worthy regional food faves eventually become known to the wider world (witness Buffalo wings). But the Ocean State still has some taste treats that are mysteries beyond its borders. "Johnnycakes" are flapjacks made with cornmeal, which come small and plump or wide and lacy, depending upon family tradition. "Stuffies" are the baby-fist-size quahog (*KWAH*-og or *KOE*-hog) clams barely known elsewhere in New England. The flesh is chopped up, combined with minced bell peppers and bread crumbs, and packed back into both halves of the shell. See chapter 11.
- **Blue Benn Diner** (Bennington, VT; ☎ 802/442-5140): This 1945 Silk City diner has a barrel ceiling, acres of stainless steel, and a vast menu. Don't overlook specials scrawled on paper and taped all over the walls. And leave room for a slice of delicious pie, such as blackberry, pumpkin, or chocolate cream. See p. 470.
- **Bove's** (Burlington, VT; ☎ 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. 534.
- **Al's French Frys** (South Burlington, VT; ☎ 802/862-9203): This is where Ben and Jerry go to eat french fries—as does every other potato addict in the state. See p. 534.
- **Lou's** (Hanover, NH; ☎ 603/643-3321): Huge crowds flock to Lou's, just down the block from the Dartmouth campus, for breakfast on

weekends. Fortunately, breakfast is served all day here, and the sandwiches on fresh-baked bread are huge and delicious. See p. 562.

- **Becky's** (Portland, ME; ☎ 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. 616.

- **Silly's** (Portland, ME; ☎ 207/772-0360): Hectic and fun, this tiny, informal, kitschy restaurant serves up delicious finger food, like pita wraps, hamburgers, and pizza. The milkshakes alone are worth the detour. See p. 617.

10 The Best of the Performing Arts

- **Symphony Hall** (Boston, MA; ☎ 617/266-1492): Home to the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Pops, and other local and visiting groups and performers, this is a perfect (acoustically and otherwise) destination for classical music. See p. 140.
- **Hatch Shell** (Boston, MA; ☎ 617/626-1250): This amphitheater on the Charles River Esplanade plays host to free music, dance performances, and films almost all summer. Around the Fourth of July, the Boston Pops provide the entertainment. Bring a blanket to sit on. See p. 140.
- **The Nutcracker** (Boston, MA; ☎ 800/447-7400 for tickets): New England's premier family-oriented holiday event is Boston Ballet's extravaganza. When the Christmas tree grows through the floor, even fidgety preadolescents forget that they think they're too cool to be here. See p. 140.
- **The Comedy Connection at Faneuil Hall** (Boston, MA; ☎ 617/248-9700): Even in the Athens of America, it's not all high culture. The biggest national names and the funniest local comics take the stage at this hot spot. See p. 143.
- **The Berkshire Theatre Festival** (Stockbridge, MA; ☎ 413/298-5576): An 1887 "casino" and converted barn mount both new and

classic plays from June to late August in one of the prettiest towns in the Berkshires. Name artists on the order of Joanne Woodward and Kevin Kline are often listed as actors and directors in the annual playbill. See p. 340.

- **The Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival** (Becket, MA; ☎ 413/243-0745): Celebrated dancer/choreographer Martha Graham made this her summertime performance space for decades. Guest troupes are among the world's best, often including Mark Morris Dance Group, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, and Twyla Tharp. The growing campus includes a store, pub, dining room, and tent restaurant. See p. 343.
- **Tanglewood Music Festival** (Lenox, MA; ☎ 617/266-1492): By far the most dominating presence on New England's summer cultural front, the music festival that takes place on this magnificent Berkshires estate is the summer playground for the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Room is also made for such guest soloists as Itzhak Perlman and Yo-Yo Ma, as well as popular artists including James Taylor, Bonnie Raitt, and Wynton Marsalis. See p. 346.
- **Williamstown Theatre Festival** (Williamstown, MA; ☎ 413/597-3400): Classic, new, and avant-garde plays are all presented during the June-through-August season at this

venerable festival. There are two stages, one for works by established playwrights, the smaller second venue for less mainstream or experimental plays. See p. 357.

- **Summer in Newport (RI):** From Memorial Day to Labor Day, only a scheduling misfortune will deny

visitors the experience of an outdoor musical event. In calendar order, the highlights (well short of all-inclusive) are the Newport Music Festival, in July; the Dunkin' Donuts Newport Folk Festival and JVC Jazz Festival, in August; and the Waterfront Irish Festival, in September. See p. 433.

11 The Best Destinations for Antiques Hounds

- **Charles Street (Boston, MA):** Beacon Hill is one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, and at the foot of the hill is a thoroughfare that's equally steeped in history. Hundreds of years' worth of furniture, collectibles, and accessories jam the shops along its 5 blocks. River Street, which runs parallel to Charles (follow Chestnut St. 1 block), is worth a look, too. See p. 138.
- **Main Street, Essex (MA):** The treasures on display in this North Shore town run the gamut, from "one step above yard sale" to "one step below nationally televised auction." Follow Route 133 west of Route 128 through downtown and north almost all the way to the Ipswich border. See "Cape Ann" in chapter 6.
- **Route 6A: The Old King's Highway (Cape Cod, MA):** Antiques buffs, as well as architecture and country-road connoisseurs, will have a field day along scenic Route 6A. Designated a Regional Historic District, this former stagecoach route winds through a half-dozen charming villages and is lined with scores of antiques shops. The largest concentration is in Brewster, but you'll find good pickings all along this meandering road, from Sandwich to Orleans. See chapter 7.
- **Brimfield Antique and Collectible Shows (Brimfield, MA):** The otherwise sleepy town west of Sturbridge erupts with three monster shows

every summer, in mid-May, mid-July, and early September. Upward of 6,000 dealers set up tented and table-top shops in fields around town. Call ☎ **800/628-8379** for details, and book room reservations far in advance. See p. 315.

- **Sheffield (MA):** This southernmost town in the Berkshires is home to at least two dozen dealers in collectibles, Americana, military memorabilia, English furniture of the Georgian period, silverware, and weather vanes . . . even antique birdhouses. Most of them are strung along Route 7, with a worthwhile detour west along Route 23 in South Egremont. See p. 334.
- **Woodbury (CT):** More than 30 high-end dealers along Main Street offer a diversity of precious treasures, near-antiques, and simply funky old stuff. American and European furniture and other pieces are most evident, but there are forays into crafts and assorted whimsies as well. Pick up the directory of the Woodbury Antiques Dealers Association, available in most shops. See p. 373.
- **Newfane and Townshend (VT):** A handful of delightful antiques shops are hidden in and around these picture-perfect towns. But the real draw is the Sunday flea market, held just off Route 30 north of Newfane, where you never know what might turn up. See p. 488.

- **Portsmouth (NH):** Picturesque downtown Portsmouth is home to a half-dozen or so antiques stores and some fine used-book shops. For more meaty browsing, head about 25 miles northwest on Route 4 to Northwood, where a dozen good-size shops flank the highway. See “Portsmouth” in chapter 13.
- **Route 1, Kittery to Scarborough (ME):** Antiques scavengers delight in this 37-mile stretch of less-than-scenic Route 1. Antiques minimalls and high-class junk shops alike are scattered all along the route, though there’s no central antiques zone. See “The Southern Maine Coast” in chapter 14.