

YANKEE

BEST OF

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Eat, Play & Stay



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BEST OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

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BEST ATTRACTIONS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

LOOKING FOR FUN IN THE GRANITE STATE? YOU WON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR! READ OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST ATTRACTIONS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

NEW HAMPSHIRE ANTIQUE CO-OP, Milford

Museum-quality pre-Columbian artifacts, art nouveau jewelry, art deco porcelain, rare American Indian art, Chippendale chests, historical maps—this emporium doesn't have just a few rare pieces but rather entire cases and rooms full of them. Modest collectors shouldn't be intimidated, though: Additional rooms are filled with budget-friendly collectibles ranging from teddy bears and crocheted doilies to tin cookie cutters and the books we loved as kids. For genuine antiques, fine art, and just everyday old-fashioned stuff, this 20,000-square-foot group shop is a candy store for collectors and browsers.

603-673-8499; nhantiquecoop.com

GENERAL STORE

HARRISVILLE GENERAL STORE, Harrisville

Overlooking a picture-perfect red-brick mill complex, Harrisville General Store has been its town's gathering point for nearly two centuries. Saved from closing by the nonprofit group Historic Harrisville, the store has all the right ingredients for a local grocery but serves them up with a uniquely Harrisville flavor. Premium brands prevail, and area products get first dibs: The bacon and sausages are from Mayfair Farm; the free-range eggs, fresh vegetables, honey, and jams from other nearby producers. Order a fresh-baked muffin or custom-made sandwich, and join locals at a table. They'll advise you not to miss the cider doughnuts.

603-827-3138; harrisvillegeneralstore.com

HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

REMICK COUNTRY DOCTOR MUSEUM & FARM, Tamworth

Medicine and farming share the spotlight at this 18th-century family farm, home to two generations of Remick doctors. The role the country doctor played in the community blends with an emphasis on how he grew vegetables and kept livestock just as his neighbors did. His wife churned butter and made bread, activities demonstrated in the big kitchen during seasonal events. The rest of the time, visitors can visit the two homes, barns, sugarhouse, dairy, icehouse, and gardens, where exhibits and hands-on experiences teach them the finer points of ice cutting, maple sugaring, preserving, sheepshearing, and more.

603-323-7591; remickmuseum.org

NATURE EXPERIENCE

GORHAM MOOSE TOURS, GORHAM

Although moose-spotting is a notoriously unpredictable pastime, the odds of seeing one of these magnificent beasts are heavily in your favor on these town-sponsored tours. With special permission from the state, Gorham Moose Tours' buses are outfitted with lights that not only make moose easier to spot but also easier to photograph. The reported success rate is better than 90 percent, which offers a much more attractive prospect than prowling the roads in your car at dusk: Yes, you can spend hours sitting by the roadside along Moose Alley and hope, but it's a better bet—and safer—to go with the pros.

603-466-3103; gorhammoosetours.org

SPECIALTY MUSEUM

AMERICAN ARCADE CLASSIC MUSEUM, Laconia

No, you're not a teenager again ... it just feels that way. At this one-of-a-kind destination, more than 250 vintage arcade games blink hypnotically in a dimly lit room, all of them still costing just a quarter to play. Pong, Astro Invader, Q*bert, Punch-Out—they're all here, ready to bring you back to a time when the ability to guide a frog safely through traffic was the criterion by which you were judged by your peers.

603-393-7903; classicarcademuseum.org

WILDERNESS EXPEDITION

REDLINE GUIDING, Intervale

Wondering how to cross a river when there's no bridge? Preparing to embark on a hike across a glacier? Learn these and other wilderness secrets and skills on professionally guided outdoor adventures in the White Mountains. Mount Washington and other rugged terrains are the year-round classroom for teaching mountaineering essentials such as backcountry camping and navigating with a map and compass. And here's a tip for free-spirited lovebirds looking to tie the knot: You furnish the license, and they'll furnish a justice of the peace who's also a licensed guide.

603-617-8788; redlineguiding.com

LAKE CRUISING FOR FAMILIES

M/V MOUNT SUNAPEE II, Sunapee Harbor

History floats on this classic 90-minute narrated tour of Lake Sunapee—a painless way to learn about the charming harbor and the spiritualists who camped out at Blodgett Landing in the 1800s. Kids often get to steer the ship as it cruises the 10-mile-long mountain lake, past eight islands and three lighthouses, with plenty of leeway if they should take a wrong turn.

Town Dock. 603-938-6465; sunapeecruises.com

COUNTRY DECORATING

TWIN ELM FARM, Peterborough

Thirty handpicked dealers fill Louise York's carefully curated antiques shop, where country chic meets garden vintage, with a nod to mid century. The pretty farmhouse and barn are strewn with airy white linens, shabby-chic cupboards, and metal garden furniture—enough to inspire a serious case of cottage envy.

133 Wilton Rd. (Route 101). 603-784-5341; twinelmfarm.com

CRAFTS FAIR

ANNUAL LEAGUE OF NH CRAFTSMEN FAIR, Newbury

Craftspeople overrun the foothills of Mount Sunapee for this annual crafts-fair blowout, oldest and best in the country. For nine days in August, 350 of the country's best artisans pitch a tent city and show us everything they've got.

1398 Route 103. 603-763-3500; nhcrafts.org

RESTORED THEATRE

THE COLONIAL THEATRE, Keene

The historic 1924 stage has embraced performers and celebrities of every stripe, from vaudevillians to Amelia Earhart. A dedicated restoration brought this grande dame back to life, and since 1995 it's hosted more than 350 live performances, entertaining us with the likes of Lyle Lovett, NPR royalty, dance ensembles, and first-rate films.

95 Main St. 603-357-1233; thecolonial.org

SALVAGE

ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE INC., Exeter

Art Nouveau mantel? Porcelain folding yacht sink? How did they move that nine-panel stained-glass ceiling? Carpenters love this vintage trip down memory lane, where you can pick up aging barn doors and finial doodads like an architectural time traveler. Christopher McMahon's extraordinary treasure trove has been here for 18 years. "We have a lot of fun collecting it," says son Aiden, backed up by a panel of ornate doorbells, a contingent of corbels, and a couple hundred years of inventory. Open Friday, Saturday, and by appointment.

3 Mill St. 603-773-5635; oldhousesalvage.com

ORCHARD

ALYSON'S ORCHARD, Walpole

Topographically, it's hard to beat this 450-acre orchard at the top of a ridge overlooking the Connecticut River Valley. Equally hard to choose when it's at its most irresistible. From the spring blossoms to the summer berries to the annual chili cookoff, it always feels like a festival up here on the heights. But with more than 50 varieties of apples, it's ultimately the apple that reigns supreme.

57 Alyson's Ln. 603-756-9800; alysonorchard.com

WINERY

LABELLE WINERY, Amherst

Winemaker Amy LaBelle's elegant facility offers guided tours plus tastings from among more than 25 of the winery's own New Hampshire-produced varietals, including Corazon, Granite State Apple, and Riesling. This coolly sleek enterprise also houses The Bistro, where you can raise a glass to farm-to-fork dishes featuring artisanal cheese plates, roasted chicken tartine, and fresh pasta. Buy all 34 wines, plus unusual kitchen gadgets, at the gift shop.

345 Route 101. 603-672-9898; labellewinerynh.com



Best Orchard | Alyson's Orchard, Walpole
Photograph by Michael Piazza

URBAN ESCAPE

CONTOOCOOK RIVER CANOE CO., Concord

Just 6.5 miles from the golden gleam of the State House dome, a broad lawn sweeps down to the banks of the Contoocook River. Bright kayaks sit stacked like chili peppers beside canoes and stand-up paddleboards at Patrick and Lisa Malfait's family-owned business. But it's the wide expanse of water that inspires you to ease that rental vessel into the river. You can take a nine-mile paddle (they'll shuttle you to Contoocook Village) and steer your boat through Concord's Lehtinen Park, or a shorter jaunt upriver to Daisy Beach.

9 Horse Hill Rd. 603-753-9804; contoocookcanoe.com/contoocook-river

PLACE TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL

OCEANIC HOTEL, Star Island

Portsmouth's Isles of Shoals Steamship Company ferry (315 Market St. 603-431-5500; islesofshoals.com/cruises) cruises six miles off the New Hampshire coast to the windswept Isles of Shoals, where you can reserve lunch at the Oceanic Hotel, a picturesque mid-19th-century hotel turned conference center on Star Island. The Oceanic also offers "personal retreats" for up to a week for those not conferencing, but lucky daytrippers can wander the 43-acre island at will, exploring the old burial ground, picnicking at the gazebo, or just admiring the stunning Atlantic views. 603-430-6272, 603-601-0832 (island phone); starisland.org

CRUISE

GUNDALOW CO., Portsmouth

Set sail on the Piscataqua from Prescott Park and bring your own picnic dinner. This traditional "gundalow" is a replica of the sailing barges that regularly cruised these river waters starting in the 1600s. On Thursday nights (and some weekends), local musicians climb aboard and play concerts ranging from folk and Celtic to bluegrass and jazz. What could be sweeter? The wind in your sails, the port at your back, a picnic, good tunes, and soft river breezes. 60 Marcy St. 603-433-9505; gundalow.org



Best Place to Get Away From It All | Oceanic Hotel, Star Island

ORGANIC FARM STAND

ROSALY'S GARDEN, Peterborough

Mounds of veggies scent this airy farm stand, surrounded by acres of pick-your-own flowers and herbs set against a backdrop of Mount Monadnock, a favorite of fresh-air painters. Named Gardener of the Year by the Northeast Organic Farming Association, founder Rosaly Bass has recapped it all in her book, *Organic!*, which you can cherry-pick from her picture-perfect stand, along with just-picked lettuce, cukes, and armfuls of Skittles-bright zinnias.

63 Route 123. 603-924-7772; rosalysgarden.com

ALL-AROUND ENTERTAINMENT

PORTSMOUTH MUSIC HALL, Portsmouth

The outrageous scope of this performing-arts venue—from Tom Brokaw to Melissa Etheridge—seems right at home in this elegantly rehabbed 1878 Victorian theatre, which once hosted vaudevillians. Its acclaimed Writers on a New England Stage series has seen the kind of celebrity cross-pollination that would rattle any reader, spanning Salman Rushdie to Patti Smith. Across the street, Writers in the Loft hosts more-intimate programs and signings, with best-selling authors such as the prolific Chris Bohjalian.

28 Chestnut St. 603-436-2400; themusichall.org

STUDIO GIFT SHOP

SALTY DOG POTTERY, Barnstead

Everything about Teresa Taylor's world is organically artistic, from her weathered-barn showroom and studio to the stooped and hobbit kiln out back. This 40-year-plus pottery veteran produces a nimble and lovely tumble of platters edged with broad leaves, beakers that are literally beaked, whimsical tiles, and swirling birdbaths, shimmering in foamy greens, blues, and coppery earth tones, perfectly complemented by the late-afternoon dust motes filtering down through barn light.

92 Suncook Valley Rd. 603-435-6014; saltydogpottery.com

20TH-CENTURY-HISTORY MUSEUM

WRIGHT MUSEUM, Wolfeboro

An M3A1 Stuart tank juts from the brick wall encompassing this collection of World War II artifacts, materials, and memorabilia. "We're losing 500 vets a day," notes Gene, a volunteer guide at this under-the-radar gem "Dedicated to the Greatest Generation WWII." The "time tunnel" leads visitors through a series of rooms, one for each year from 1939 to 1945, that orient us to the war via LIFE magazine covers, exhibits, and bits of trivia: A gallon of gas cost 10 cents in 1939 (a car was \$700); Rosy the Riveter appeared in 1943. The 1940s-era wartime kitchen is complete in every detail, down to the shiny Glenwood stove and a box of Rinso at the sink. Jeeps, tanks, and a Red Cross van huddle under hanging airplanes in the Vehicles Gallery. Founded in 1994 by collector David Wright, a Marine in the Korean War, the museum educates and inspires, a tribute to those who served.

77 Center St. 603-569-1212; wrightmuseum.org

VINTAGE DÉCOR

WHITE HOME COLLECTIONS, Wilton

Pearly mirrors, vintage wrought iron, birds' nests—a breezy, elegant collection of carefully curated antique finds, furniture, and garden equipment fills a three-story 1860s farmhouse, spilling over into extra barn stalls, a potting shed, and the front yard. Special events like the annual Garden Extravaganza on Mother's Day attract collectors and decorators from the four corners; across the street, the affiliated White Home Market hosts special themed exhibits every few months. All the ingredients for a makeover.

9 Greenville Rd. 603-654-7363; whitehomecollections.com

BEST LODGING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

LOOKING TO REST YOUR HEAD IN THE GRANITE STATE? WE'VE GOT YOU COVERED! CHECK OUT OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST LODGING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

FAMILY LODGING

HUTTOPIA, Albany

Traveling with kids gets a European twist at this, the first U.S. outpost of a French chain of upscale campgrounds. The menu at the on-site café includes crepes and espresso; wines are available in the small grocery. Yet the core appeal of this “glamping” spot—which includes spacious, fully equipped platform tents—is how it removes the logistics from families’ outdoor adventures. Whether learning to fish, canoeing in the lake, or enjoying a concert under the stars, they can simply revel in nature and each other—something that parents the world over can appreciate.

603-447-3131; canada-usa.huttopia.com/en

FARM STAY

THE INN AT EAST HILL FARM, Troy

Part working farm, part destination resort, the Inn at East Hill Farm makes it easy to unplug and get back to the land. If you’ve never milked a cow or collected the eggs for your own breakfast, find out what you’ve been missing. Meals are served family-style, and when chores are done, there’s outdoor recreation aplenty, as well as perfect spaces for an afternoon of petting animals, playing games, or reading.

603-242-6495; east-hill-farm.com

LUXURY ESCAPE

MOUNTAIN VIEW GRAND RESORT & SPA, Whitefield

One of the grandest of the grand hotels that still dot the landscape of northern New England, this Victorian-era retreat has been generously updated for the 21st century. Relax in the infinity tub while soaking up White Mountain views, surrender to a hot-stone massage in the “tower spa,” or chip away at that handicap on the hotel golf course. However you choose to amuse yourself during the day, when evening comes be sure to grab a well-deserved drink on the sprawling veranda. You’ll feel like so many of the A-listers before you who found refuge and relaxation at this special mountainside retreat.

603-837-2100; mountainviewgrand.com

NEW LODGING

GREAT ISLAND INN, New Castle

Crisp, uncluttered guest rooms overlook the harbor from a cluster of residences that might have seen Paul Revere on his 1774 midday ride—which happened more than four months before his more famous midnight excursion—to warn local patriots of British plans on nearby Fort William and Mary. Great Island Inn’s neighborhood may be historic, but its guest rooms are up-to-the-moment modern; even better, they’re equipped for longer stays with full kitchens, sitting areas, and washers and dryers. A pretty patio with a grill invites guests to gather outside in good weather, and a personal concierge service can help plan explorations of the Seacoast. The beach is a five-minute walk away.

603-436-2778; greatislandinn.com



Best Small Luxury Hotel | The Manor On Golden Pond, Holderness
 Photograph by Douglas Merriam

LAKESIDE LODGING

MANOR ON GOLDEN POND, Holderness

Lovely Squam Lake—the “Golden Pond” of Hepburn-Fonda fame—ripples below this stately manor house set on a hillside of tall pines. The interior is filled with turn-of-the-20th-century details: carved balusters on the grand staircase, elegant mahogany paneling, and original Grueby tiles surrounding the fireplace. Savor the ambience and decor over salmon sandwiches at a genteel afternoon tea in the library, or at dinner in the paneled dining room over smoke-roasted duck or local beef braised in stout.

603-968-3348; manorongoldenpond.com

ROMANTIC GETAWAY

ADAIR COUNTRY INN, Bethlehem

For the full effect, arrive in the evening, when this stately home is aglow with lights, welcoming you and your significant other as warmly as its wealthy former owners once greeted their guests. Their antiques and collections still grace its rooms, which retain the intimacy of the original country home. The dining room offers some surprises, as the chef draws on occasional influences beyond New England for a sophisticated yet approachable dinner menu; breakfast begins with popovers fresh from the oven. Take a stroll in the romantic Olmsted gardens below the house, painstakingly restored by new owners.

603-444-2600; adairinn.com

ROOMS WITH A VIEW

SNOWVILLAGE INN, Eaton Center

Rising above gardens in the summer and snowy meadows in the winter, the full-on view of the Presidential Range from Snowvillage Inn fills a spectacular 180 degrees. The three king suites at the front of the main inn—built in 1916 as a summer home for the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Frank Simonds—are the best bets for those seeking maximum panoramas, but most of the cozy, well-appointed rooms in the three buildings here provide more than a glimpse of mountain grandeur. None have TVs, but heck, who needs 'em? 603-447-2818; snowvillageinn.com

WILDERNESS RETREAT

AMC CARDIGAN LODGE, Alexandria

On the slopes of Mount Cardigan, the Appalachian Mountain Club's 1,200-acre forest is traversed by 50 miles of hiking trails. At the end of the access road is the Cardigan Lodge, where families can stay in either private rooms or private bunkrooms with shared bath, or camp at walk-in tent sites. Summer and fall, dinner and breakfast are served family-style; winter and spring, guests can prepare their own meals in the lodge kitchen. Hike the trails to the summit, join in guided family explorations, pick wild blueberries, snowshoe, ski, or just soak up the quiet. 603-466-2727; outdoors.org

HISTORIC AMC HUT

CARTER NOTCH HUT, Wildcat Mountain, Jackson

The Appalachian Mountain Club calls this rustic beauty in a wildly pretty setting its best-kept secret. This year it turns 100—making it the AMC's oldest hut. From a steep climb up Carter Dome to trout fishing in nearby Wind Lakes, the hut is ideally sited for your exploration of Wildcat and the Carter range. We only hope to be this lovely, inside and out, when we hit our centennial.

603-466-2727; outdoors.org/lodging/huts/carter

FARMHOUSE LUXURY

HIGHLAND LAKE INN B&B, Andover

Porch sitting could become a habit here, and strolling a full-time occupation. The Northern Rail Trail skims by, with miles of walking, biking, and cross-country skiing at hand, plus a private beach. Pretty grounds and an indulgent breakfast make this 1767 B&B everything a gentleman farmer could hope for.

32 Maple St. 603-735-6426; highlandlakeinn.com

NORTH WOODS SPORTING CAMPS

CABINS AT LOPSTICK & TALL TIMBER LODGE, Pittsburg

The Great North Woods deserves equally great pit stops (that is to say, rugged and beautiful). The lakeside “cabins” at these two sporting camps pull out the stops when it comes to rustic chic: great views, grills, satellite TV. With professional guides on hand, you're never far from moose, fly fishing, paddling, or hiking.

Lopstick, 45 Stewart Young Road. 800-538-6659; cabinsatlopstick.com

Tall Timber Lodge, 609 Beach Rd. 603-538-6651; talltimber.com

FAMILY RETREAT BY A POND

LOCH LYME LODGE, Lyme

For nearly 100 years, generations of families have frolicked on Loch Lyme's large lawn and small beach, sheltering in the property's 20 shingled cabins and dining in a clapboard lodge, making memories and stirring up nostalgia from May to October.

70 Orford Rd. 603-795-2141; lochlymelodge.com

B&B ESCAPE

COLBY HILL INN, Henniker

Part inn, part highly regarded restaurant, with a little romance stirred in, this historic 1797 property operated as Bartlett's Tavern. More recently (since 2003), it's been a consistent Wine Spectator Award of Excellence winner. A touch of rusticity meets comfy elegance in the inn's décor, especially in the carriage-house suites, complete with whirlpools and decks.

33 The Oaks St. 603-428-3281; colbyhillinn.com

CAMPGROUND SWIMMING

WHITE LAKE STATE PARK, Tamworth

New Hampshire has plenty of reasons to thank the glaciers, but White Lake ranks high, with some of the best swimming in the White Mountains, a wide and sandy beach, big playgrounds, and a family campground. Our Yankee lake critic says, "I'm a total lake snob. I can't swim in most lakes. This one I could."

94 State Park Rd. 603-323-7350; nhstateparks.org

HISTORIC INN & FARM VACATION

THE INN AT VALLEY FARMS, Walpole

Here's a 105-acre family-friendly organic farm with guestrooms, cottages, and even a rental farmhouse. Get a taste of the farm experience (gather eggs! pet cashmere goats!) and then retire to your pretty, antiques-filled bedroom. In the morning, get fortified with a candlelit, three-course, farm-to-table breakfast.

633 Wentworth Rd. 603-756-2855; innatvalleyfarms.com

LAKEFRONT CABINS

AMES FARM INN, Gilford

Nostalgia rises like mist off the edges of Lake Winnepesaukee where the water meets a quarter-mile of sandy beach and 17 quiet cottages. Five generations of Ames families have tended this idyllic spread since 1890. The lawn would be extravagant anywhere, but on this lake, it's astounding. You scarcely need more than the inn, restaurant, dock, and mountain views, but just in case, there are movies, karaoke, and ping-pong. The cottages line up like ducklings, with porches facing the view.

2800 Lake Shore Rd. 603-293-4321; amesfarminn.com

NEW HISTORIC INN

BELLOWS WALPOLE INN, Walpole

Colonel Benjamin Bellows, one of the founders of pretty (and today, upscale) Walpole, started building his 14,000-square-foot mansion in 1752, just 1.2 miles from the center of town. Recent renovations have transformed the historic building into a bright and airy eight-room luxury boutique hotel. With a sparkling on-site restaurant and pub, outdoor seating, and tennis courts, Bellows would hardly recognize the place.

297 Main St. 603-904-4022; bellowswalpoleinn.com

WILDERNESS CAMPING

NORTHERN WATERS OUTFITTERS, Errol

Take a long, deep breath, check your 9-to-5 routine, and jump off the map. The wild beauty of Lake Umbagog National Wildlife Refuge is yours for the paddling, with Northern Waters Outfitters offering canoe camping at several wilderness sites, including near its base camp and school. Canoe the refuge by day; sleep under the stars at night. Or sign up for instruction in kayak touring and whitewater rafting, plus pontoon-boat wildlife tours.

579 Upton Rd. 603-482-3817, 603-447-2177 (winter); beoutside.com

BEST DINING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

HUNGRY? THE GRANITE STATE OFFERS PLENTY OF RESTAURANT OPTIONS FOR HUNGRY RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE. HERE ARE OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST FOOD & DINING IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

BREW PUB

SCHILLING BEER COMPANY, Littleton

Housed in a gristmill built on the Ammonoosuc more than 200 years ago, the Schilling brewery and its airy taproom have birthed many a modern beer nerd. The lineup of house brews borders on the overwhelming, from Belgians and Czech-inspired creations to German lagers and wild ales. Leave it to others, though, to wax rhapsodic about the subtle toffee notes or breadly undertones they're picking up: Your mission is simply to take a seat above the water and drink up the summer sights and the wicked good brews. Hungry? Take a look at the other tasty menu, of Neapolitan flatbread pizzas from the pub's wood-fired oven.

603-444-4800; schillingbeer.com

BURGERS

BRGR BAR, Portsmouth

These burgers are piled high with fixings, so don't expect to get your mouth around one, even with the lid off. (The most architectural come impaled with a steak knife to hold them upright.) Like to build your own? There's an array of cheeses, house-made sauces, and "bling"—ranging from fried egg to bacon-onion jam—ready to go. So if you happen to have a hankering for duck with avocado, smoked Gouda, and sriracha aioli, it can be yours.

603-294-0902; brgr-bar.com

DINER

SUNNY DAY DINER, Lincoln

Sunny Day began life in 1958 as the shiny new Stoney's Diner in Dover, where it was a local fixture into the 1980s. In 1988 it was moved to Lincoln, where it's been serving breakfast and lunch ever since. Its red-and-gray-tile interior is filled with gleaming chrome, checked curtains, and lots of chatter from happy patrons. Eggs Benedict luxuriate in lemony house-made hollandaise, and you can forget about lunch after a stack of fluffy pancakes with real maple syrup and a pair of oversize sausage patties.

603-745-4833

DOUGHNUTS

HARVEY'S BAKERY, Dover

Glistening honey-dipped rounds, fat jelly doughnuts sparkling with sugar, big creamy maple bars—at least four generations have stood before this glass counter and tried to decide which to bite into first. There's bread hot from the oven, and the case is filled with cinnamon buns dripping with frosting, muffins bursting with local blueberries, and whoopie pies. Harvey's also has a lunchroom and a solid menu (which includes a standout pork pie), but it's the jellies we'd stand in line for.

603-742-6029; harveysbakery.com

HOT DOGS

PUPPY LOVE HOT DOGS, Concord

What's not to love about a menu composed solely of hot dogs, perfectly steamed and dressed in condiments? From April through October, look for the red pickup with the "PUPLOV" plates in the alley next to Northway Bank; in the winter, look for the orange awning next to CVS. Service is fast, but on busy summer days you may have to wait in line. It's worth it.

puppylovehotdogs.com

TASTING MENU

STAGES AT ONE WASHINGTON, Dover

If the words "progressive New England cuisine" sound at all oxymoronic, let chef Evan Hennessey enlighten you. His tiny restaurant/food lab in a converted mill building near Portsmouth takes ultralocal ingredients—such as Irish moss, juniper, black walnuts, apples, and duck—and spins, sears, and swirls them into poetic, seasonal compositions in an ever-changing lineup.

603-842-4077; *stages-dining.com*

PANCAKES

PARKER'S MAPLE BARN, Mason

Out here in the middle of nowhere, the parking lots are mobbed and eager eaters queue up like hopeful lottery winners. Will it be buttermilk or blueberry-buckwheat? Or "Pancake of the Month"? The wait today, a Sunday, is 70 minutes (it's a lot shorter during the week), but there's plenty to fill your time: Sample maple jelly-beans at the bustling gift shop, or try a maple doughnut by the sugarhouse. IMHAPY2 reads one license plate, as a helicopter lands nearby. "It's not unusual," smiles the doughnut-stand lady. "We have regulars who fly in for breakfast."

1316 Brookline Rd. 603-878-2308; *parkersmaplebarn.com*



Best Pancakes | Parker's Maple Barn, Mason
Photograph by Aimee Seavey

BURGER

TUCKAWAY TAVERN & BUTCHERY, Raymond

The burgers are crafted of Angus beef, ground fresh each day—but there's no skimping on BBQ, pork, bacon, bison, or steak tips, either. Hearty fare is what you get—poutine, smashed potatoes, beer battered onion rings, baked beans—with alternatives such as roasted veggies drizzled with fontina.

58 Route 27. 603-244-2431; thetuckaway.com

FARM CAFÉ

HILLTOP CAFÉ, Wilton

You can't get more farm-to-table than at this café/farm tucked into a warm 1765 house, with its stunning hilltop setting, roaming chickens, and flaky croissants. Sidestep the modern rush with fresh yogurt and deliciously creative dishes, like Israeli eggs, plus friendly owners who keep the young, happy vibe alive.

195 Isaac Frye Hwy. 603-654-2223; hilltopcafeh.com

GELATO

MORANO GELATO, Hanover

We're in trouble. Or would be, if we lived within a 20-mile radius of such heavenly temptation. The freshly-made-each-morning Sicilian gelato here comes in bright flavors that are shockingly delicious: Florentine cream, hazelnut, pistachio, and dark chocolate, with sorbettos like raspberry and Concord grape that startle the tongue. Our professional opinion: Sample many and often.

57 South Main St. 603-643-4233; moranogelato.com

SUNDAY BRUNCH

THE RESTAURANT AT BURDICK'S, Walpole

Filmmaker Ken Burns calls this pretty village home, and the elegant restaurant here rivals any Brooklyn hotspot. With Burdick's award-winning chocolate shop attached to this Parisian-style eatery, it's perfect for lingering over the Sunday Times and a plate of charcuterie.

47 Main St. 603-756-9058; burdickchocolate.com

NEW INDIAN RESTAURANT

THE SPICE CHAMBERS, Keene

Ooh, those vegetable pakoras, dipped in chickpea batter and sizzled to crunchy perfection, with some sort of fresh minty sauce that kept us dipping way past the saturation point ... Executive chef Madan Rathore brings spice to Keene, with lamb, seafood, and vegetarian options. We're off to a fine start with creamy navrattam korma (vegetables in sauce), punctuated by a delectable malai kofta (cheese-and-veggie dumplings in curry), plus a puff of garlic-cilantro naan for good measure. But with specialties from all over India, we may have to travel the entire menu, top to bottom.

Winter St. 603-352-9007; spicechambers.com

NEW CHOCOLATIER

VICUNA CHOCOLATE FACTORY & CAFÉ, Peterborough

Food Network winner, chocolatier, and pastry chef Neely Cohen has traveled to Europe and the Amazon to study chocolate, and what she shares with us—handcrafted salt-, yellow chili-, and nibs flavored chocolate bars—is food of the cacao gods. The café setting is as delicious as the 70% organic Fair Trade bars, created from scratch in her on-view “factory” in the back.

15 Main St. 603-924-2040; vicunachocolate.com



Best Pub Grub With Music | Harlow's Pub, Peterborough

PUB GRUB WITH MUSIC

HARLOW'S PUB, Peterborough

What started as a small cheese shop has morphed over the years into a full-blown, family-friendly pub with craft brews on tap, a Celtic music jam every Tuesday, open-mic nights on Wednesday, and weekends of toe-tapping, wide-ranging music. You can never fail with lunchtime veggie chili or a thick “Turkey Thang” sandwich, but at night the sizzling diablo chicken makes a perfect complement to the bands that rock everything from Jamaican ska to “chamber art-pop.”

3 School St. 603-924-6365; harlowspub.com

COCKTAILS

COTTON, Manchester

Owner/chef Jeffrey Paige serves upscale American fare—ruby-red tuna tataki and a perfectly dressed Caesar salad spring to mind—while hunks of chunky bread are companions to any one of a surfeit of award-winning martinis. Candy-colored celebrations—Flirtinis, Bellinis, Cosmopolitans—sashay by. Satisfy your curiosity with a sampler under the gaze of a wall-size, black-and-white Audrey Hepburn.

75 Arms St. 603-622-5488; cottonfood.com

SEAFOOD

THE FRANKLIN OYSTER HOUSE, Portsmouth

Abenaki, Little Grizzly, and Fox Point, piled on heaps of ice, greet the traveler who wanders off busy Market Street and steps inside this shimmery ode to the oyster. The modern, iridescent décor feels like the inside of an oyster shell, but when you plunk down at the horseshoe-shaped bar to order grilled “Oysters Off the Hot Line” and a side of pumpkin fritters, you do so knowing that the guys you crossed paths with in the doorway were dropping off something fresh and briny. There’s also plenty to eat besides oysters.

148 Fleet St. 603-373-8500; franklinoysterhouse.com

SANDWICH

MILLER'S CAFÉ & BAKERY, Littleton

When the Food Network crisscrossed the country to find the best sandwiches in every state (tough job), they flipped over the “Yankee Flip Pot Roast” here: juicy meat stuffed into tandoori flatbread, with garlic potatoes and greens overspilling the borders. You, too, can tackle the full roster of breakfast, lunch, and dinner sandwiches and conduct your own taster’s challenge, preferably on the pretty riverside deck.

16 Mill St. 603-444-2146; millerscafeandbakery.com

FRENCH FARE

MISE EN PLACE RESTAURANT, Wolfeboro

When then-president Nicolas Sarkozy was feeling homesick for France, he pulled up une chaise at this fine eatery a few tangled blocks away from Main Street and Lake Winnepesaukee. Chef/owner Terry Adrignola seasons her gourmet American dishes (like seared sea scallops and lobster/jumbo lump-crab risotto) with French-style flair—good enough for Sarkozy, while giving you a little taste of France without the jet lag.

96 Lechner St. 603-569-5788; miseenplacenh.com

OLD-WORLD DINING

OMNI MOUNT WASHINGTON RESORT, Bretton Woods

With views of its namesake peak and the Presidential Range, you barely need to squint to re-imagine the days of Gilded Age splendor at this massive 1902 luxury resort. Much that’s served in its airy palazzo-style main dining room is locally sourced.

310 Mount Washington Rd. 603-278-1000; omnihotels.com

BISTRO

LIBBY’S BISTRO & SAALT PUB, Gorham

The Gorham streets are alive with ATVs, but traffic slows around the pretty block that shelters this super-hip bistro. Chef/owner Liz Jackson was a 2012 James Beard semifinalist, but she just wants to “cook good food for people.”

French mussels, Turkish eggplant, and Faroe Island salmon are a small, lively sample.

111 Main St. 603-466-5330; libbysbistro.org

DESSERT

TIM-BIR ALLEY, Littleton

Unassuming and lovely, with beautiful dishes like Moroccan chicken and blue-corn-crust tilapia—but owners Biruta and Tim Carr are famed for their swoon-inducing desserts. Save room for white-chocolate coconut cheesecake with toasted coconut–caramel sauce or chocolate hazelnut pâté. Really.

7 Main St. 603-444-6142

BAKERY DISH

UMPLEBY’S BAKERY & CAFÉ, Hanover

Comfort and finger food, rolled into one. Charles and Carolyn Umpleby’s savory pies aren’t much bigger than a generous hockey puck, but they’re juicy reminders of the heights that a pie can achieve in the hands of a master. Chicken curry; artichoke; stuffed with eggs, bacon, mushrooms, or leeks ... We just like saying pie. Savory flavors, engulfed by flaky crust, handed over in a waxed-paper wrapping. Since 2007, they’ve been baking up these hearty, old-fashioned treats, reinterpreted, deliciously, for modern times.

3 South St. 603-643-3030; umplebys.com

BEST BARGAINS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

PINCHING PENNIES NEVER FELT SO GOOD! CHECK OUT OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST BARGAINS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

SEASONAL BARGAIN BOOKSHOP

KYES-SAGE BOOK SHOP, Peterborough

As laid-back as a hammock, Kyes-Sage turns its lights on from April to November, three days a week. Housed in a historic New Englander with Gothic flourishes beside the town's library, and staffed by volunteers, the shop prices most books at \$2 or less, making it a beach reader's bonanza.

14 Concord St. 603-203-1794

FREE MUSEUM

HOOD MUSEUM OF ART, Hanover

Dartmouth shares its art—65,000 pieces from one of the largest college collections in the U.S.—without charging a dime. With works ranging from ancient to modern, Asian to American to West African, plus stunners such as José Clemente Orozco murals and 9th-century Assyrian reliefs from the palace of Ashurnasirpal II.

4 East Wheelock St. 603-646-2808; hoodmuseum.dartmouth.edu

DISCOUNT BRITISH CLOTHING

BARBOUR OUTLET, Milford

Deep discounts plus no sales tax bring this classic, 120-year-old British clothing line well within reach of sporty mortals. Scoop up waxed jacket and wellies (just like Duchess Kate's) at the U.S. headquarters, which houses an outlet store, a warehouse, and a repair shop where devotees send their coats from around the country.

55 Meadowbrook Dr. 603-673-1313; barbour.com

RAINY-DAY FLEA MARKET

FAIRGROUNDS ANTIQUES, Swanzey

On any given day, you'll find bargains galore at the Cheshire Fairgrounds collective, where 85 dealers create enough chaos to keep antiques hounds busy for hours. But you'll score serious deals in the weeks before the Cheshire Fair in late July, when dealers have to pack up their booths for the incoming fair exhibits.

249 Monadnock Hwy. 603-352-4420

NEW OUTLET BARGAINS

MERRIMACK PREMIUM OUTLETS, Merrimack

The state's newest super-outlet offers savings of up to 65% on 100 brand names, including Nike, J.Crew, and Under Armour. But besides the standard New Hampshire bonus of no sales tax, Merrimack Outlets offers a VIP coupon book to veterans, military, and their families, and a 10% discount on Tuesdays at stores like Banana Republic and Le Creuset if you're over 50. Age has its benefits.

80 Premium Outlets Blvd. 603-424-0050; premiumoutlets.com

BEST CLASSIC ATTRACTIONS IN NH

THERE'S A LOT TO SEE AND DO IN THE GRANITE STATE, BUT SOME ACTIVITIES REALLY STAND THE TEST OF TIME. READ OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST CLASSIC ATTRACTIONS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHT – CLASSIC AMUSEMENT PARK

CANOBIE LAKE PARK, Salem (1902)

From its early days as a “pleasure resort” in 1902, with canoeing and a botanical garden, Canobie Lake has evolved into a classic amusement park with 85 rides, games and attractions, and actual fear-factor ratings. Thrill rides, such as the Corkscrew Coaster and the Starblaster (shuttle lift-off meets bungee jumping) demand intrepid commitment; family rides like Crazy Cups and Dodgem bumper cars let your pulse rate recover.

85 North Policy St. 603-893-3506; canobie.com

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHT – EASY SCENIC WALK

THE FLUME, Lincoln (1808)

The setting is certainly dramatic: 90-foot cliffs, cascading falls, and the cool dampness of a primordial forest. But there's also something appealingly Swiss Family Robinson–like about the network of cliff-hugging boardwalks clinging to the walls of this deep granite beauty at the base of Mount Liberty.

852 Daniel Webster Hwy. 603-745-8391; nhstateparks.org

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHT – WHITE-KNUCKLE VISTA

MOUNT WASHINGTON AUTO ROAD, Gorham (1861)

New England's highest peak—6,288 feet — Mount Washington claims some of the world's worst weather and the second-highest wind speed ever recorded. The eight-mile drive to the top is a hair-raiser; drop-away vistas on fair-weather days are stupendous, with visibility up to 130 miles and views of New York and the Atlantic. Bonus: The summit's Extreme Mount Washington museum at the Mount Washington Observatory explores the nitty-gritty of the mountain's subzero, hurricane-force drama. Road open May to October, depending on weather.

603-466-3988; mountwashingtonautoroad.com

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHT – OLD-TIME SUMMER STOCK

THE BARNSTORMERS THEATRE, Tamworth (1931)

The Barnstormers is one of the oldest professional summer theatres in the country, operating since 1931, and it's the only one that goes for a breakneck eight plays in eight weeks. Classics (The Glass Menagerie), kids' fare (Toad of Toad Hall), and comedy (Ken Ludwig's Be My Baby) are this company's “stock” in trade, and the old converted Main Street storefront rings with laughter and applause during the July/August marathon.

104 Main St. 603-323-8500; barnstormerstheatre.org

HISTORIC HIGHLIGHT – PANCAKE & MAPLE EXPERIENCE

POLLY'S PANCAKE PARLOUR, Sugar Hill (1938)

Pancakes, views, and most especially views of pancakes: You'll be in blueberry buckwheat heaven at this family-owned institution, which has been flipping delectable discs for 75 years. Polly's has come a long way from its humble beginnings in a woodshed, and inaugurates a new building in 2015 to accommodate the 58,000 pilgrims who make the trek to tiny, aptly named Sugar Hill each year.

672 Sugar Hill Rd. (Route 117). 603-823-5575; pollyspancakeparlor.com

BEST OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS IN NH

THE GRANITE STATE HAS PLENTY TO OFFER IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS. READ OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST OUTDOOR ATTRACTIONS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.

BERRY PICKING

MONADNOCK BERRIES, Troy

The expansive setting, with majestic Mount Monadnock in the foreground, is as delicious as the grape-sized blueberries clustered on row after row of bushes. The rustic café/gift shop provides a quick pick-me-up before you hit the outdoors for a full range of PYO delectables: gooseberries, currants, and blackberries, oh my.

545 West Hill Rd. 603-242-6417; monadnockberries.com

MOOSE WATCHING

MOOSE ALLEY, Pittsburg

The state's most impressive inhabitants are often found in some of its prettiest, wildest countryside in the White Mountains and Great North Woods. For best chance of a sighting, follow the Moose Path Trail: Take Route 16 north from Gorham to Errol; then Route 26 to Dixville Notch; then U.S. 3 north to Pittsburg. Professional guides will be happy to take you out, too.



Best Berry Picking | Monadnock Berries, Troy
Photograph by Kimberly Peck

FOLIAGE RETREAT

SQUAM LAKE INN, Holderness

When fall blazes across the countryside, it's like a clash of beautiful titans, a riot of red, orange, yellow. Pick a spot, any spot, but why not the Lakes Region? How about a setting so gorgeous that *On Golden Pond* was filmed there? Bingo, Squam Lake—second-largest in the state. And there's no better base camp than the Squam Lake Inn, renowned for its gourmet breakfasts and a restaurant that's open to the public for lunch and dinner. Fresh local ingredients elevate the menu, but homemade ice-cream sandwiches make the perfect fall treat.

28 Shepard Hill Rd. 603-968-4417; squamlakeinn.com

BIKE TRAIL

NORTHERN RAIL TRAIL, Lebanon to Boscawen

Kudos to this 50+-mile stretch: It's been added to "100 Top Trails in the U.S." by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in Washington, D.C. The longest rail trail in the state and still growing, thanks to its devoted volunteers, it glides past farms, orchards, lakes, mill sites, and covered bridges, with possible moose sightings in Grafton and Orange.

northernrailtrail.org

YEAR-ROUND CHRISTMAS-TREE FARM

THE ROCKS ESTATE, Bethlehem

Balsam firs stretch to the horizon at the 1,400-acre Rocks Estate, a Christmas-tree farm extraordinaire in the White Mountains, and former home of International Harvester co-founder John Jacob Glessner. Though the two mansions are long gone, many historic buildings remain. His heirs deeded the estate to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, which today offers programs on everything from vernal pools to wild turkeys to maple sugaring—plus tours, carriage rides, and trail open year-round.

4 Christmas Ln. 603-444-6228; therocks.org

SPOTLIGHT: SEACOAST

HEADING TO THE NEW HAMPSHIRE SEACOAST? WE'VE GOT THE PERFECT ROUNDUP OF WHAT TO SEE, DO, AND EAT WHILE YOU'RE THERE, PLUS WHERE TO STAY WHEN IT'S TIME FOR BED. READ ON TO SEE OUR PICKS FOR THE BEST OF THE NH COAST!

BEST ATTRACTIONS ON THE NEW HAMPSHIRE SEACOAST

HARBOR TOUR

PORTSMOUTH HARBOR CRUISES, Portsmouth

Small, intimate cruises aboard M/V Heritage condense 400 years of harbor history into an hour and a quarter. Leaving from the downtown, cruising past lighthouses, historic forts, and mansions, to the edge of the Atlantic and back, here's history the way we all want to learn it, flavored with humor and scenery. Sunset cruises and monthly wine tastings, plus longer cruises to the Isles of Shoals, nine lore-ridden islands six miles off the coast, are also on tap. 64 Ceres St. 603-436-8084; portsmouthharbor.com

OCEAN ADVENTURE

AL GAURON DEEP SEA FISHING & WHALE WATCHING, Hampton Beach

For more than 50 years, the Gauron family has guided fishing trips, fireworks cruises on Wednesday nights, and close encounters with those most awesome of mammals: humpbacks, minke, and finbacks, along with dolphins and sharks. Until you've looked a whale in the eye, it's just another fish story.

1 Ocean Blvd. 603-926-2469; algauron.com



Best Harbor Tour | Portsmouth Harbor Cruises, Portsmouth
Photograph by Kindra Clineff

WALKING TOUR

BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, Portsmouth

While New England's long African-American history is too often overlooked, Portsmouth has seized a unique opportunity to spotlight it. The trail, well marked with 27 detailed historical brass signs, leads from the waterfront auction block where slaves first arrived as ships' "cargo" to sites related to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. Personal stories—including that of Prince Whipple, one of 20 Portsmouth slaves who petitioned the state legislature in 1779 to abolish slavery—put human faces on the history.

603-318-5120; blackheritagetrailnh.org

SUMMER CONCERTS

PRESCOTT PARK, Portsmouth

Music meets water at Portsmouth's waterfront on the Piscataqua River, and outdoor concerts fill the night air with the sweet sounds of Taj Mahal, Mary Chapin Carpenter, and an impressive roster of summer headliners.

105 Marcy St. 603-436-2848; prescottpark.org

COASTAL STATE PARK

ODIORNE POINT STATE PARK & SEACOAST SCIENCE CENTER, Rye

Rocky coasts, remnants of old World War II bunkers, and a kid-centric science center with a dangling humpback whale skeleton populate this gem of a park, with 330 trail-crossed acres on the ocean. Picnics are practically mandatory, and tidepool explorations a must.

570 Ocean Blvd. 603-227-8722; nhstateparks.org

COASTAL BOTANICAL GARDEN

FULLER GARDENS, North Hampton

If variety is the spice of life, it also makes for an eye-catching botanical garden at this turnof-turnof- the-last-century summer estate in a neighborhood of mansions just off scenic Route 1A, which hugs the Atlantic. Former Massachusetts governor Alvan T. Fuller liked his formal English perennials and masses of roses, but he was fond of Japanese gardens, too. There's also plenty of inspiration for sculpted hedges, and a gift shop that sells take-away summer memories. May to October.

10 Willow Ave. 603-964-5414; fullergardens.org

BEST LODGING ON THE NEW HAMPSHIRE SEACOAST

HISTORIC MANSION

THE HOTEL PORTSMOUTH, Portsmouth

Formerly the Sise Inn, this 32-room 1881 mansion was rehabbed by the former owners of Portsmouth's Ale House Inn and newly reopened in April 2014. Dulcet tones of taupe and gray, the clean lines of modern furniture, and a luxuriously stress-free B&B vibe, all just a few blocks from Market Square and the breezy waterfront, would surely have caught the eye of its original owner, ship merchant John Sise.

40 Court St. 603-433-1200; thehotelportsmouth.com

REALLY OLD WORLD CHARM

THREE CHIMNEYS INN, Durham

A profusion of armoires, oriental rugs, carved fireplaces, and ornate canopy beds ... This 1649 homestead is the oldest in Durham, and just a five-minute walk to the University of New Hampshire campus. With 23 ornately pretty rooms divvied up between the main inn and the 1795 carriage house, expect massive beams, wide-board pine floors, and an onsite tavern that occupies two floors, with a massive chimney running through. On a cold night, ask for the intimate nook downstairs in front of the ancient fireplace.

17 Newmarket Rd. 603-868-7800; threechimneysinn.com

GARDEN LOVER'S B&B

MARTIN HILL INN, Portsmouth

A 19th-century antiques-draped B&B with hidden gardens tucked in the back, this warm retreat will test your knowledge of perennials and provide inspiration for your own backyard. The mixed neighborhood of historic residences and convenience stores is a short walk from town—and the inn's creative breakfast, from banana-nut waffles to gluten-free options (request in advance), will stoke you up for the easy stroll.

404 Islington St. 603-436-2287; martinhillinn.com

BEST DINING ON THE NEW HAMPSHIRE SEACOAST

OYSTER BAR

ROW 34, Portsmouth

If you want the best oysters, go to the guys who grow them. Skip Bennett started farming his Island Creek oysters back in 1995, and today they're known as some of New England's finest. With partners Jeremy Sewall and Garrett Harker, Bennett now supplies his own restaurants, including Row 34 in Portsmouth. Here you'll find a top-notch beer program, the best lobster roll in town, and oysters aplenty, from the house brand and beyond. 603-319-5011; row34nh.com

SEAFOOD SHACK

PETEY'S SUMMERTIME SEAFOOD, Rye

All those cars parked higgledy-piggledy around Petey's should tell you the folks here are doing something right. Namely, fresh-from-the-water seafood. "We catch our own lobster," Petey's proudly proclaims, and it's true. The shrimp, clams, haddock, and scallops are just as fresh, which may account for the wall filled with dining awards. You can get a cheeseburger here, but why would you?

603-433-1937; peteys.com

FARM-TO-TABLE ELEGANCE

BLACK TRUMPET BISTRO, Portsmouth

Brick-warm ambience, artful cuisine, and a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence make this cozy Mediterranean bistro/wine bar on pretty Ceres Street an inviting nook where you can nibble on foraged mushrooms, local seafood, and assorted paellas that flirt with Moroccan, Turkish, and Spanish influences.

29 Ceres St. 603-431-0887; blacktrumpetbistro.com

GRAND-RESORT LUNCH SPOT

SALT KITCHEN & BAR, New Castle

Glittering like an ocean liner, the legendary Wentworth by the Sea resort has dominated this bluff overlooking the water since 1874. Far more modern is its take on cuisine at SALT, an elegant study in deep-sea and powdery blues that's surprisingly affordable. Dine under the rotunda or out on the deck, or cluster at the sleek bar, but do indulge in "hand-spun" pasta, or a rustica pizza that oozes mozzarella, pesto, and grilled chicken.

588 Wentworth Rd. 603-422-7322; wentworth.com

CLAM SHACK

MARKEY'S LOBSTER POOL, Seabrook

Owner Tom Markey presides over the deep-fryers and steamers, cooking up fresh lobsters, clams, scallops, shrimp, and haddock since 1971. Bring your fiercest appetite and dine on a deck over the tidal Blackwater River, where you'll spot locals digging for clams. You don't have to abstain in winter: open Friday to Sunday in the off-season.

420 Route 286. 603-474-2851; markeyslobsterpool.com

SPOTLIGHT: WHITE MOUNTAINS

HEADING TO THE WHITE MOUNTAINS OF NEW HAMPSHIRE THIS YEAR? ALONG WITH CLASSICS LIKE DRIVING THE KANC AND TAKING THE KIDS TO STORY LAND OR SANTA'S VILLAGE, WE'VE GOT THE PERFECT ROUNDUP OF WHAT TO SEE, DO, AND EAT WHILE YOU EXPLORE THE WHITES.

BEST THINGS TO DO IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

FAMILY ADVENTURE

LOST RIVER GORGE AND BOULDER CAVES, North Woodstock

This giant natural funhouse in Kinsman Notch tells a dramatic tale: Mile-deep glaciers melted into streams that rushed through cracks in the bedrock, eroding them into a gorge. Stones and gravel washed through, scouring and carving potholes and chutes. Then wind and winter freezing took over, tearing huge slabs from the granite walls that fell and covered the river. Today you can climb through the gorge they created, following the brook through caves and narrow passages to see it burst out in waterfalls and swirl in huge potholes, as your kids learn about glaciers and geology and even, for a small fee, pan for gemstones and fossils in the Lost River mining sluice.

603-745-8031; lostrivergorge.com

STATE PARK

FRANCONIA NOTCH STATE PARK, Franconia/Lincoln

This park is home to state treasures such as the Flume Gorge, the Cannon Mountain Aerial Tramway, and the Old Man of the Mountain Profile Plaza and Historic Site.

Route 93. 603-745-8391; nhstateparks.org/explore/state-parks/franconia-notch-state-park.aspx

ART GALLERY

LEAGUE OF NH CRAFTSMEN LITTLETON RETAIL GALLERY, Littleton

Everything here (jewelry, baskets, pottery, fiber arts, glass, and more) is made by hand by New Hampshire artists. Inspired? Sign up for a class taught by league members at the nearby Littleton Studio School.

81 Main St. (at The Village Book Store). 603-444-1099; nhcrafts.org

FRESHWATER EXPERIENCE

ECHO LAKE, Franconia Notch State Park, Franconia

Cannon Mountain rises sharply over pristine Echo Lake, and the beach boasts a direct view of spectacular Franconia Notch—that deep cut between the Franconia and Kinsman ranges. Amid all that drama, this serene stretch of sand meets crisp, clear water (with a roped-off area for kids). Rent a canoe, a kayak, or a pedal boat on the spot at the Lakeside General Store, where you can also stock up on sunscreen and souvenirs.

Franconia Notch State Park. 603-745-8391; nhstateparks.org/visit/state-parks/franconia-notch-state-park.aspx



Best of the White Mountains | Mount Washington Cog Railway
Photograph by Aimee Seavey

ADRENALINE-RUSH TRAIN RIDE

MOUNT WASHINGTON COG RAILWAY, Bretton Woods

While options for scaling Mount Washington's dizzying 6,288 feet include hiking and driving, thankfully there's also the only Cog Railway east of the Rockies—a 19th-century feat of engineering that's been clinging to the steep slopes for 147 years. A three-hour round trip affords plenty of time to ogle views of the classic Omni Mount Washington Hotel, Vermont's Green Mountains, and New Hampshire's Presidentials. On the summit, you can explore the Extreme Mount Washington exhibit and historic 1853 Tiptop House.

3168 Base Station Rd. 603-278-5404; thecog.com

CHEESE & CRACKERS:

HARMAN'S CHEESE AND COUNTRY STORE, Sugar Hill

In business since 1955, Harman's sells 11 tons of the "World's Greatest Cheddar" every year. Described as "smooth and zesty," it's the real deal: whole milk, no added chemicals or colors, aged two years, cut by hand with a wire slicer. The red country store also features other goodies, like crackers, jams, moose memorabilia, local crafts, totes, T-shirts, and vintage Old Man of the Mountain cards. A tasty niche, well done.

1400 Route 117. 603-823-8000; harmanscheese.com

CURIO SHOP

RAVENWOOD CURIO SHOPPE, Jackson

"Curio" is defined as an interesting and unusual object. You'll find plenty of fodder for your curiosity inside this handmade hobbit house, stuffed to the rafters with sparkly gifts, but it's the backyard that truly dazzles, with a maze of fencing, plants, statues, and fountains, winding into secret nooks.

60 Main St. 603-383-8026; ravenwoodcurio.com

BEST PLACES TO STAY IN THE WHITE MOUNTAINS

CAMPGROUND

GLEN ELLIS FAMILY CAMPGROUND, Glen

Sandwiched between the Saco and Ellis rivers, Glen Ellis puts campers in the heart of the White Mountains while still offering seclusion from the North Conway scene. Yes, you're just minutes from Storyland and the outlets, but it's also more than OK to stay put at this family-owned facility, now in its 39th season. The riverside sites are some of the most prized car-camping spots in the state, while the pool, playgrounds, and game barn will keep the kiddos entertained all weekend long.

603-383-4567; glenelliscampground.com

FAMILY INN

CHRISTMAS FARM INN & SPA, Jackson

Near Storyland and Santa's Village, this inn offers a playground, swimming pool, and nightly movies for the kids, plus Jacuzzis, fireplaces, and a spa for you. Also featuring a restaurant specializing in seasonal cuisine that reflects the best of New England, with a menu that is eclectic yet approachable, created from fresh, local ingredients as often as possible. Two-night minimum.

3 Blitzen Way. 603-383-4313; christmasfarminn.com

VIEW FROM AN INN

1785 INN, North Conway

With a footprint spanning six prime mountain acres, it's no wonder this inn has some of the best views of the Presidential Range. Soak in the vista from poolside, surrounded by a garden of tall, spikey pink-and-white cleomes, or from the dining room's bay window while sampling cuisine that has garnered a host of culinary awards.

3582 White Mountain Hwy. 603-356-9025; the1785inn.com

FANTASY LODGING

ADVENTURE SUITES, North Conway

Is that shag carpeting on the walls? The B-52s are cranking when you step into the Love Shack, one of 19 themed suites in this compound. In the stained-glass-encrusted Victorian spa, a heart-shaped Jacuzzi faces the mountains. If you can imagine it, it's here, including The Club, with LED dance floor, DJ station, and disco balls. 3440 White Mountain Hwy. 603-356-9744; adventuresuites.com

LUXURY GETAWAY

THE INN AT THORN HILL & SPA, Jackson

This 1895 mansion offers 16 rooms in the main house, including a deluxe beauty named for Stanford White, the renowned architect who designed this romantic retreat: "luxury with a view." With a swimming pool and award-winning dining, the most stressful moment could be choosing your spa treatment.

40 Thorn Hill Rd. 603-383-4242; innatthornhill.com

ESCAPE

DARBY FIELD INN & RESTAURANT, Albany

Eight miles from North Conway's brand names and outlets (L.L. Bean to J. Crew), this family-owned inn is a port in the storm for weary shoppers. One that includes 13 cozy guestrooms; local artwork; a pub; or dining by candlelight on roast duckling, with 12 peaks, including Mount Washington, fanning out before you.

185 Chase Hill Rd. 603-447-2181; darbyfield.com



Best of the White Mountains | The Cave at the Omni Mount Washington Resort

Photograph by Almee Seavey

BEST WHITE MOUNTAINS DINING

NEW RESTAURANT

THOMPSON HOUSE EATERY, Jackson

When Jeff and Kate Fournier left the Boston restaurant scene for the White Mountains, they were looking for more farm-to-table bona fides than a city plot could offer. Now, with a restaurant and farm on a 200-year-old homestead, they've helped turned Jackson into a dining destination. Their menu includes, roasted chicken, an artisanal cheese board and the house-made breads, sambals, and pastas showcase a broad mastery of global techniques.

603-383-9341; thethompsonhouseeatery.com

BREW PUB

MOAT MOUNTAIN SMOKE HOUSE & BREWING CO., North Conway

This venue's two essential products—beer and barbecue—are made on the premises, and both are among the best of their kind. Beers lean toward light and crisp (wheat, pale ale, pilsner, even blueberry ale) while the barbecue is big on smoke and sugar (the salmon is almost candied!).

3378 White Mountain Hwy. (Route 16). 603-356-6381; moatmountain.com

CLASSIC BAR

THE CAVE, Omni Mount Washington Resort, Bretton Woods

We'll take any excuse to swing by this historic landmark and marvel at its grandeur, dwarfed only by Mount Washington rising behind it. The hotel's distinctive 1902 silhouette—a Spanish Renaissance ocean liner topped with red tile—took two years to build. Its veranda is legendary. But dig deeper and you'll uncover The Cave, a “Prohibition Era speakeasy” oozing old-fashioned masculinity with vaulted brick ceilings and a gleaming wooden bar, hosting live entertainment and televised sports. The man cave every woman could love.

310 Mount Washington Rd. 603-278-1000; omnihotels.com/hotels/bretton-woods-mount-washington

BREAKFAST

STAIRWAY CAFE, North Conway

Breakfast all day (there's lunch, too) might include Maine lobster Benedict, pumpkin-pecan pancakes, or a "Bonzo Breakfast Burrito" with a side of homemade applesauce. The deck looks toward the White Mountains, but nothing's as pretty as the "Vegetable Garden Scramble" that just arrived, or as comforting as this cozy nest buzzing with conversation and brimming with vintage décor.

2649 White Mountain Hwy. 603-356-5200; stairwaycafe.com

FUN TIME

WILDCAT INN & TAVERN, Jackson

The Currier & Ives village of Jackson puts on its fun hat at this cozy tavern, where rustic meets après-ski, local musicians are on tap, and everything's seasoned with a sense of humor. Lunchtime locals chow down on "Crazy Cajun Chicken Corn Chowder" and "Baja Fish Tacos." Dinner might be chicken mac-and-cheese—because we can. Tuesday is "Hoot" night, one of the oldest open-mic nights in New England, with one-pound lobsters served. Weekends, anything might happen, just as long as it's fun.

94 Main St. 603-356-8700; wildcattavern.com

TRAIN DINING

CAFÉ LAFAYETTE DINNER TRAIN, North Woodstock

It takes only 20 miles to travel back to a more gracious era aboard the three vintage Pullman cars of the Café Lafayette Dinner Train. Diners enjoy a five-course meal with a side of stunning river, mountain, and forest views. Blazing fall foliage is a seasonal bonus.

Route 112. 603-745-3500; nhdinnertrain.com

WINE CELLAR DINING

MOUNTAIN VIEW GRAND RESORT & SPA, Whitefield

The candlelit tables surrounded by bins holding 6,500 bottles are undeniably romantic. Food such as lobster-scallop stew and roasted locally farmed venison fit the elegant setting. Gentlemen will want a jacket and ladies will like a wrap, as the wine cellar stays cool all year round.

101 Mountain View Rd. 855-837-2100; mountainviewgrand.com



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