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The 18 Best Weekend Getaways From New York City

From picturesque beaches to dreamy mountain retreats, these weekend getaways are the perfect change of scenery.

By [Alissa Grisler](#)

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New York City has been called many things but "relaxing" isn't necessarily one of them. When you need a break from the hustle and bustle of the Big Apple, relieve some stress by packing a bag and getting out of the city for a few days. To help you pick the right destination for your much-needed escape, U.S. News evaluated expert and traveler opinion to find the best weekend getaways from New York City. Whether you're planning a couples retreat or a fun-filled family weekend, these getaways have everything you need for a memorable trip.

Best Weekend Getaways from New York City:

About two hours or less:

- The Poconos, Pennsylvania
- Beacon, New York
- Philadelphia
- North Fork, New York

About three hours or less:

- Fire Island, New York
- The Hamptons, New York
- The Catskills, New York
- Cape May, New Jersey
- Mystic, Connecticut

About four hours or less:

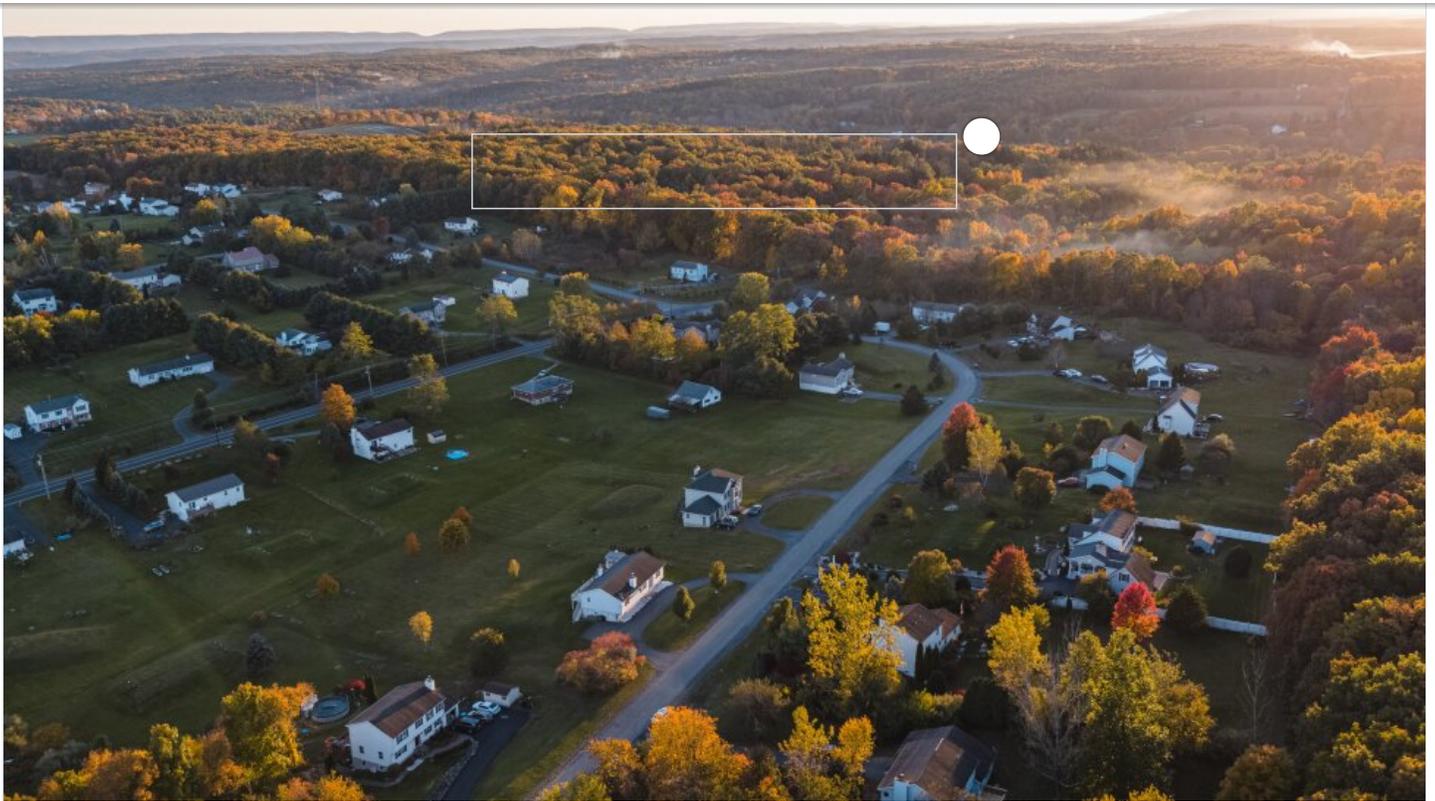
- The Berkshires, Massachusetts
- Shelter Island, New York
- Newport, Rhode Island
- Lake George, New York

About five hours or less:

- Saranac Lake, New York
- Washington, D.C.
- Boston
- The Finger Lakes, New York

A quick flight:

- Niagara Falls, New York and Canada



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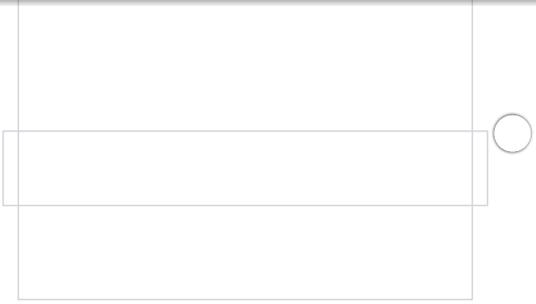
The Poconos

This stunning mountain range in Northeastern Pennsylvania (about 110 miles northwest of New York City) has appealed to travelers for generations. Perfect for both families and couples, [the Poconos](#) offer everything from [whitewater rafting](#) tours to fascinating museums and manicured [golf courses](#). If the kids are in tow, let them burn off their excess energy at a [water park](#). Meanwhile, thrill-seekers will be right at home at one of the region's [adventure parks](#), which feature aerial obstacle courses and an all-season tubing hill, and nature lovers will enjoy ample hiking and horseback riding opportunities. Plus, with several romantic restaurants and [resorts](#), the Poconos have distinguished themselves as a premier honeymoon destination for lovebirds.

Beacon

Located in New York's Hudson Valley, around 70 miles north of Manhattan, Beacon has transformed in the past two decades from a sleepy industrial town to a thriving arts community, making it the getaway of choice for relaxation-seeking city dwellers. Here, visitors can spend weekends (or a day trip) perusing vintage shops and flea markets, kayaking along the Hudson River and exploring Beacon's scenic hiking trails.



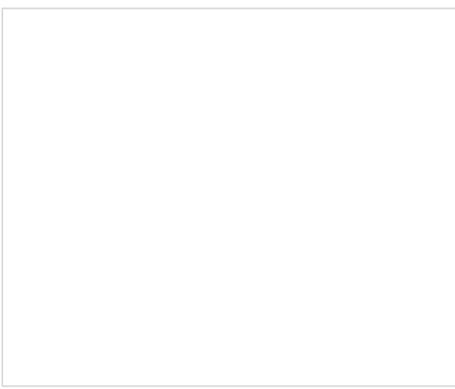


The first stop on your itinerary should be Dia Beacon, a renowned contemporary art museum housed in a former Nabisco box factory. One of the largest contemporary art galleries in the country, Dia's robust collection of work spans from the 1960s to the present. From here, take a stroll down Main Street. Lined with doughnut shops, cafes and art galleries, Beacon's main drag features hidden gems such as Hudson Beach Glass and the Towne Crier Cafe, a popular restaurant and live music venue. While there is plenty to do and see in Beacon, you can't leave without touring the ruins of Bannerman Castle. Situated on Pollepel Island and reachable by boat from May to October, this Scottish-style castle was once a storage site for surplus military equipment and ammunition.

Not only is this quiet refuge less than two hours by car from Manhattan, travelers can easily hop on the train to reach this destination as well: Take the Metro-North Railroad from New York City to Beacon for less than \$50 round trip. There are also plenty of accommodation options to choose from, ranging from cozy bed-and-breakfasts to unique digs like The Roundhouse, an abandoned factory complex-turned-stylish boutique hotel.

Philadelphia

Ditch the Big Apple and head about 95 miles south to the City of Brotherly Love. Known best for being the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence, [Philadelphia](#) is an ideal weekend getaway for families and history buffs. Brush up on your founding fathers trivia on a walking tour of [Independence Hall](#) and the [Liberty Bell Center](#) before strolling through [Rittenhouse Square](#). From there, set your sights on the city's must-see museums: The [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#), the [Barnes Foundation](#) and [The Franklin Institute](#) are all good places to explore.



Philadelphia is also notorious for its substantial [culinary](#) prowess. Sure, the cheesesteaks are a must-try – stop in Dalessandro's Steaks & Hoagies or Jim's South St. to see for yourself what all the hype is about – but this city has a diverse food scene. If you have time to spare, check out the lengthy list of vendors in [Reading Terminal Market](#), where you can sample everything from Greek to Thai to Cajun fare.



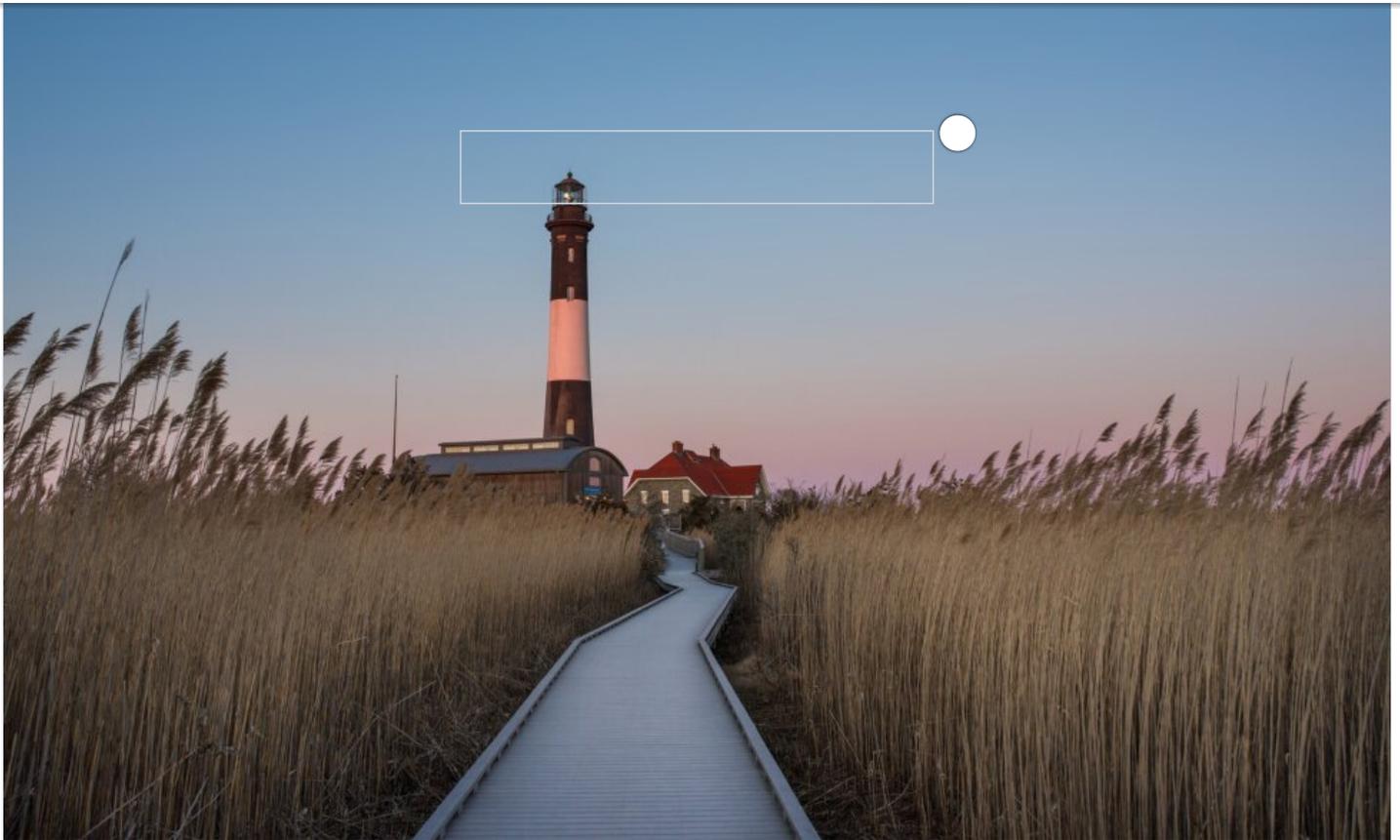
opt for lodging in Center City, where you'll find an array of coffee shops, posh restaurants and historic sites within walking distance of your [hotel](#). Travelers particularly favor [The Rittenhouse](#) for its elegant accommodations and first-rate service.

North Fork

Long Island's northeastern peninsula, known as the North Fork, fits the bill for your next weekend trip if you like tranquil seaside villages and laid-back itineraries. About 90 miles east of Manhattan and located directly north of the illustrious Hamptons, this quiet New York State refuge is characterized by its wineries, beaches and friendly atmosphere. Not only is this short jaunt from the city an excellent place for couples weekend trips, but families will also find a plethora of exciting activities here as well.

To get here, catch the Long Island Railroad commuter train from Penn Station to Greenport. When you arrive, make a beeline for the beach – Orient State Beach Park occupies a prime section of real estate along Gardiner's Bay and is a perfect place for kayaking, swimming and sunbathing. Meanwhile, wine aficionados can spend the afternoon at Macari Vineyards or Sparkling Pointe Vineyards & Winery while families hit up Splish Splash Waterpark. At the end of the day, unwind at the lovely Harborfront Inn at Greenport.

Three hours or less



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Fire Island

This secluded barrier island off the southern shore of Long Island is about 65 miles east of Manhattan and a popular getaway for New Yorkers – for good reason. Travelers will find an unspoiled island free of high rise buildings and the vexing sounds of traffic, all within a few hours of the city. In fact, Fire Island is a car-free environment, making it the ideal choice for city dwellers in need of a short weekend escape. Here, visitors can enjoy activities like sailing, biking, clamming and bird-watching. Just keep in mind, Memorial Day to Labor Day is considered the busy season, so schedule your vacation outside of these dates if you want to avoid crowds.

Because you can't drive onto the island, the best way to get here is by taking the Long Island Railroad Bay Shore Line to Sayville, Patchogue or Bayshore. These destinations have marinas that offer ferry service to and from Fire Island for a fee; round-trip tickets cost about \$20 for adults and about \$10 for children ages 2 to 11, depending on which marina you leave from. When it comes to lodging, Fire Island's options are mostly small inns and hotels, but they fill up quickly, so book in advance to ensure you'll have accommodations. If you'd rather rough it, campgrounds are available within the Otis Pike Fire Island High Dune Wilderness, at Smith Point County Park and at the Watch Hill Family Campground. Keep in mind, backcountry permits and daily campsite fees (around \$20 to \$35 per day) may be required for select areas.



The Hamptons

Arriving in the Hamptons, it's easy to see why this seaside destination has established such a name for itself. White sand beaches, untouched nature preserves and plenty of bars offering frozen cocktails are a few alluring images that come to mind when you think of the Hamptons. Lay down your towel on East Hampton's Main Beach or South Hampton's Coopers Beach, then cast a fishing line from the shore of Montauk Point State Park. For a dose of culture, check out the Hamptons' illustrious art scene: The Parrish Art Museum and the Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center (open seasonally) are two of the area's most prominent museums. When it's time to turn in for the night, save some coin by choosing a hotel in nearby Riverhead or by camping on the beach.

The Catskills

For nature lovers, this mountain range in Southeastern New York is the perfect place to reconnect with the great outdoors. Home of the infamous 1969 Woodstock Music Festival, the Catskills have been inspiring travelers for decades. Spend the weekend hiking the New York State region's popular trails (the Kaaterskill Falls trail features the tallest waterfall in the state), or get out on Alder Lake in a kayak. In winter, head here to see Hunter Mountain blanketed in snow and to take advantage of top-notch skiing and tubing opportunities.

In addition to outdoor activities such as hiking, fly-fishing, biking and zip lining, the Catskills are a haven for artists. Follow the Hudson River School Art Trail to witness firsthand the vistas that inspired artists like Thomas Cole. Meanwhile, music lovers and history buffs won't want to miss a visit to The Museum at Bethel Woods, a museum showcasing artifacts and stories from Woodstock. Before calling it a night at one of the region's fabulous [hotels](#) or [resorts](#), stop by a microbrewery for a flight.

Cape May

Those looking for a relaxing weekend should consider [Cape May, New Jersey](#). Located roughly 160 miles south of New York City, this enchanting East Coast town is beloved for its [beautiful beaches](#), striking Victorian homes and laid-

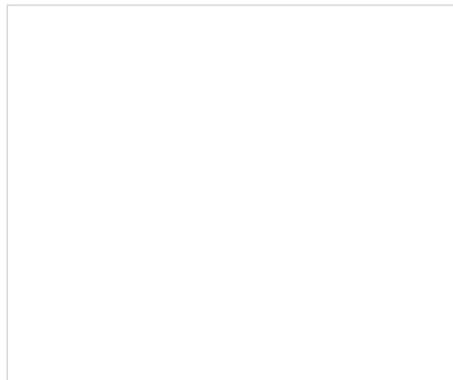


blocks and is perfect for easygoing strolls. Other can't-miss activities in Cape May include climbing the [Cape May Lighthouse](#), watching the sun go down at Sunset Beach and taking a guided tour of the [Emlen Physick Estate](#), Cape May's only Victorian-era house museum.

Cape May offers a plethora of lodging options for weekend trips ranging from quaint bed-and-breakfasts to [hotels](#) set in ornate Victorian mansions. Book a room in historic [Congress Hall](#) or [The Southern Mansion](#) for charming guest rooms and convenient amenities.

Mystic

The quintessential New England town of Mystic, around 130 miles northeast of New York City, has everything you'd want from a weekend getaway: museums, galleries, delicious eateries and historic landmarks. Head to Williams Beach Park for a quiet day by the water, then stroll through Mystic's historic downtown. Colonial-era sea captain's homes line the streets here, and there are countless places to dine and shop. Families will also love the Mystic Aquarium for its educational exhibits and interactive habitats. Meanwhile, the Mystic Seaport Museum is a maritime museum that offers several kids activities, including hands-on children's exhibits and a zoo garden. Just don't leave without snapping a photo of the iconic Mystic River Bascule Bridge, a 1922 drawbridge that connects the Groton and Stonington sides of Mystic. When you're ready to retire for the evening, [Mystic Marriott Hotel & Spa](#) receives rave reviews for its comfortable rooms and ample business amenities.



Four hours or less



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The Berkshires

This rural region in western Massachusetts (about 150 miles north of Manhattan) has all the makings of a fairytale getaway. Picturesque mountain ranges, winding roads and idyllic towns are synonymous with [the Berkshires](#), making this destination the perfect place to escape the hubbub of New York City. Bring your partner along to enjoy a romantic weekend filled with antique shopping, museum tours and scenic car rides through the region's lush countryside.

For breathtaking mountain panoramas, strap on your hiking boots and head to the summit of [Mount Greylock](#), the highest point in Massachusetts. Meanwhile, culture hounds won't want to miss a chance to tour the [Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art](#) and [The Clark Art Institute](#). In summer, catch a dance performance at the prestigious [Jacob's Pillow](#) or listen to live music on the lawn of [Tanglewood](#), an extravagant music venue and summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Accommodations in the Berkshires run the gamut from quaint bed-and-breakfasts to luxurious resorts. [Canyon Ranch Lenox](#), while pricey, is worth the splurge for its wellness-focused amenities and indulgent spa treatments.



Shelter Island

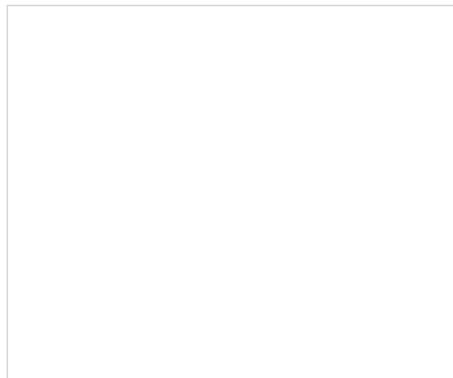
Only accessible by ferry, this hidden oasis between New York's North and South Forks is perfect for a quick weekend escape from the city. You won't find rowdy nightlife or luxurious accommodations here, but that only adds to its appeal. In fact, nearly one-third of the island is made up of the Mashomack Preserve, a protected habitat with 11 miles of coastline and more than 2,350 acres of tidal creeks, freshwater marshes, fields and woodlands. The preserve is also a major hub for bird-watching – more than 200 species of birds call this area home, although it is specifically known for its large population of nesting osprey.

Elsewhere on the island, visitors can lounge on Wades Beach, a family-friendly stretch of sand featuring lifeguards and a comfort station, or search for treasures on Shell Beach. Shelter Island is also a premier spot for kayaking: Kayak Shelter Island (open seasonally) offers single and double kayaks, along with paddleboard rentals. While the island has golf courses, boutique shopping and petanque courts (a French game similar to bocce ball), undoubtedly the best thing to do here is nothing at all.

To get here, start by taking the Long Island Railroad commuter train from Penn Station to Greenport, then board the North Ferry to Shelter Island. Alternatively, you can also get here by driving to Sag Harbor and then loading your car onto the South Ferry. For lodging, Shelter Island offers a handful of small hotels, vacation rentals and bed-and-breakfasts.

Newport

If sandy toes and lobster rolls are calling your name, look no further than [Newport, Rhode Island](#). This New England port town, located on the southern tip of Aquidneck Island and approximately 180 miles northeast of New York, is famous for its miles of pristine shoreline, upscale boutiques and ornate Gilded Age mansions. It is also lauded as one of the premier sailing capitals of the world.



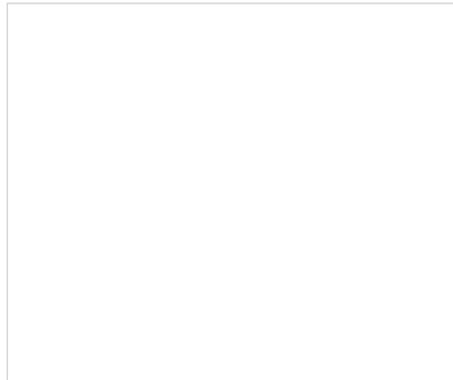


along [Thames Street](#), which is lined with a plethora of shops and restaurants. And of course, you can't leave without touring [The Breakers](#), Newport's iconic Renaissance-style "summer cottage." When it's time to bed down, check out one of Newport's many lavish accommodations, such as [The Vanderbilt](#) and [The Chanler at Cliff Walk](#).

Lake George

Situated in New York's [Adirondacks](#) region, around 215 miles north of Manhattan, [Lake George](#) is filled with fun activities the whole family can enjoy. Sink your toes in the sand at [Lake George Beach](#), also known as the [Million Dollar Beach](#), a kid-friendly stretch of sand complete with lifeguards and concession stands. Then, work up a sweat hiking [Prospect Mountain](#) and [Shelving Rock Falls](#). For more of a thrill, check out [Lake George's](#) parasailing, whitewater rafting and zip lining courses.

If you're simply looking to kick your feet up on your weekend getaway, rent a pontoon boat and spend the day floating around [Lake George](#). The region is also home to restaurants, the [Adirondack Winery](#) outpost in [Lake George](#) and several museums, including The Hyde Collection and the [Fort William Henry Museum](#). After an eventful day of lake activities, head back to your plush accommodations at [The Sagamore Resort](#) to unwind.



Five hours or less



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Saranac Lake

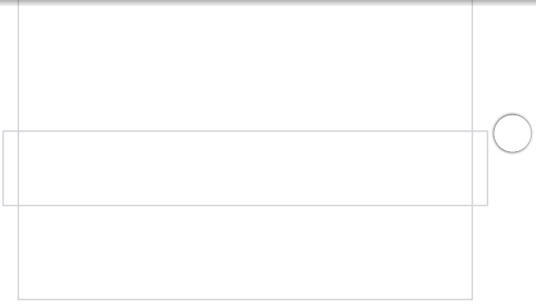
Less crowded than its cousin, Lake Placid, this quiet village in upstate New York (around 300 miles north of New York City) is an excellent choice for a weekend getaway from the Big Apple. Take advantage of this stunning lake by getting out on the water in a canoe or kayak, then get your heart rate going on the 3.7-mile-long Bloomingdale Bog Trail. For an extra dose of history, the Saranac Laboratory Museum showcases Saranac's interesting past as a tuberculosis treatment destination. Downtown, you'll also find a variety of shops, restaurants and art galleries to keep you occupied for hours, plus little ones will enjoy the Adirondack Carousel, which runs Friday through Sunday.

[Saranac Lake](#) is also a popular winter destination thanks to its plethora of outdoor sports (think: snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and ice fishing) and traditional winter activities such as the annual Winter Carnival, which takes place every February. The event also features a fireworks display and multiple parades. When it comes to lodging, visitors will mostly find cozy cabins and bed-and-breakfasts here, but a handful of luxury hotels are available as well. For the ultimate in comfort, book your stay at [Hotel Saranac](#), a historic property with modern amenities.

Washington, D.C.

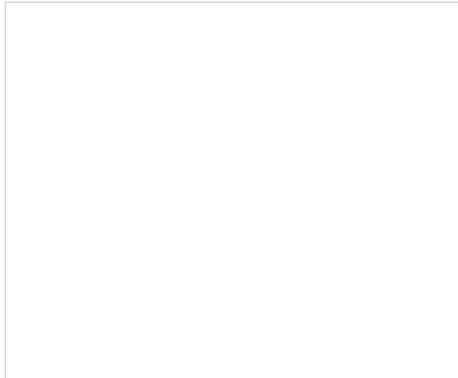
Famous for its slew of historic landmarks, monuments and museums (many of which are free to enter), [Washington, D.C.](#), has long appealed to historians and politicians. However, there's more to the nation's capital than meets the eye. With more than [30 neighborhoods](#) to explore, Washington is a treasure chest waiting to be unlocked. Find killer nightlife and impeccable dining in the Shaw-U Street Corridor, upscale shopping in Georgetown, charming 19th-century row houses in Dupont Circle and a bevy of historic attractions on Capitol Hill.





If you're only visiting for the weekend, expect an action-packed schedule. Start by hitting up one of the city's first-rate museums: The [National Museum of Natural History](#), [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#), [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) and the [National Gallery of Art](#) are a few traveler favorites. Then, take a stroll along the [Tidal Basin](#) (you can also get out on the water by renting a paddleboat) or relax on the lawn of the National Mall. Here, you'll have easy access to attractions like the Washington Monument, the [Lincoln Memorial](#) and its Reflecting Pool, the [White House](#) and the [U.S. Capitol](#). Note: While many of D.C.'s attractions are free, some museums may require timed-entry passes to be reserved ahead of time, so plan as far in advance as possible.

Located roughly 230 miles southwest of New York City, Washington is an easy drive from NYC by car or bus. However, the best way to get here is by train. Take Amtrak's Acela Express or Northeast Regional train from Moynihan Train Hall to Union Station and shed up to 90 minutes off your travel time. Plus, because Washington frequently plays host to celebrities, politicians and business tycoons, there are plenty of top-notch accommodations to choose from once you arrive. For a luxurious stay, book a room at [The Jefferson](#), a sophisticated property with European flair and a restaurant and wine cellar on-site. An added bonus? The Jefferson is located steps away from the National Mall, so you'll be right where the action is.



Boston

Bordering Boston Harbor and Massachusetts Bay, New England's largest city sits 215 miles northeast of New York City, about a four-hour ride by car, bus or train. Whether you're drawn here by the cobblestone streets, the historic landmarks or the city's strong baseball roots (a visit to [Fenway Park](#) can't be missed), [Boston](#) has all the ingredients you need for a memorable weekend getaway – just remember to pack your walking shoes.

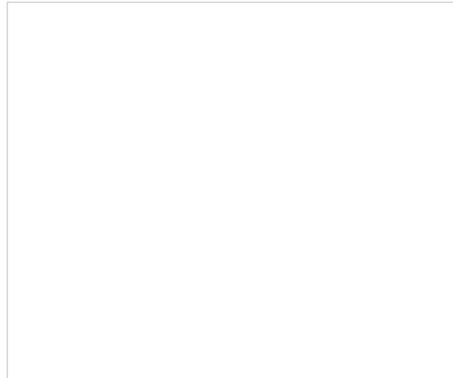
After you've successfully trekked the 2.5-mile [Freedom Trail](#) to some of Boston's most famed attractions, including the [Paul Revere House](#), [Old North Church](#) and [Faneuil Hall Marketplace](#), find a shady spot to rest in [Boston Common](#) or the [Boston Public Garden](#). For a dose of culture, check out the [Museum of Fine Arts](#) and the [Isabella Stewart](#)



[Mandarin Oriental, Boston](#) and the [Boston Harbor Hotel](#) are two of the city's top properties, both offering a lengthy list of amenities and plush accommodations.

The Finger Lakes

New York's [Finger Lakes](#) – a collection of 11 lakes that includes the popular shorelines of Seneca Lake, [Skaneateles Lake](#) and Cayuga Lake – are revered for their spectacular water sports opportunities, scenic state parks and top-notch wine. As one of the chief wine regions in the country and the largest wine producing area in the state of New York, the Finger Lakes region has earned its reputation as a top destination for romantic weekend getaways.



For short stays in the Finger Lakes, the [Seneca Lake Wine Trail](#) is the best way to see a lot of different wineries in a little amount of time. With more than 30 wineries and several restaurants set along the route, the trail is perfect for leisurely car rides in the countryside (just be sure to assign a designated driver ahead of time). Opt for a refreshing riesling, the region's signature wine, or expand your palate on a tasting tour. Meanwhile, nature lovers should head to [Robert Treman State Park](#) or [Watkins Glen State Park](#) for a chance to see breathtaking waterfalls. If you're looking for a small-town atmosphere with local shops and museums, you can't go wrong with Skaneateles Lake. Here, you'll also find a variety of charming bed-and-breakfasts and inns like the [Mirbeau Inn & Spa](#), a traveler favorite.

A quick flight

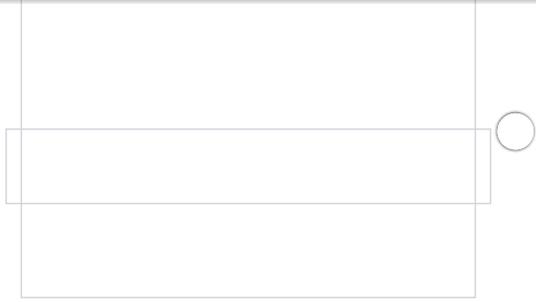


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Niagara Falls

If you're willing to hop on a short flight, you could enjoy a weekend marveling at one of the most beautiful and impressive natural wonders of the world: [Niagara Falls](#). Niagara Falls is less than a two-hour flight from New York City and while this powerful 188-foot waterfall is sure to take your breath away, it isn't the only reason to plan a weekend getaway to Niagara. With beautiful botanical gardens, wineries and casinos, this famous tourist town has everything you need for a fun-filled weekend away. Take advantage of both the American and Canadian sides of the Niagara River by bringing your passport with you.

For a classic Niagara Falls experience, don a poncho and board the [Maid of the Mist](#) boat tour. This famed attraction is one of the best ways to see the falls up close, but it's almost impossible to avoid getting wet. If you'd rather view the falls from a drier and less crowded vantage point, head to the observation deck of the [Skylon Tower](#). Thrill-seekers can also experience the falls on the [Journey Behind the Falls](#), which takes participants directly behind the thunderous waterfall, or on an exhilarating whirlpool jet boat tour. When it's time to turn in, visitors on the American side of the falls can book their stay at [Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino](#), while Ontario-based guests spend a cozy night in the well-appointed [Harbour House Hotel](#).



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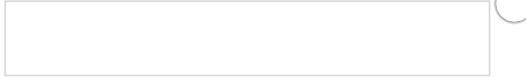
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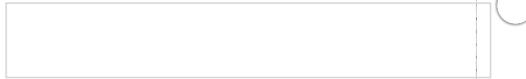


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