

Little Black Book

The Ultimate Newport Guide: What's New and Always Classic

by California Chaney

NEWPORT, Rhode Island — Newport leaves little to the imagination when it comes to sharing and preserving its Gilded Age past. That's why you'll see mansion tours and their counterpart, the Cliff Walk, on every itinerary for the popular summer destination that makes for an easy city break from New York (a quick three-and-a-half hour drive) and Boston (a mere 90 minutes). And while the gilded-mirror hallways of the 70-plus room, 19th-century homes will leave your jaw on the marble floors, there are plenty off-the-port ways to enjoy the affluent coastal shores.

With new boutique hotels, restaurants, cocktail bars, and festivals offering a fresh take on the classic seaside town, it's an especially good time as ever to take a trip. Don't skip the classics, but mix in these new and little-discovered spots to your itinerary.



Photo courtesy of The Wayfinder.

Where to Stay

Three Newport newcomers are making waves.

The Wayfinder

There's nothing cliché about the seaside decor of this hotel, which is relaxed and stylish with cool tones and vintage elements sourced from antique markets and local artists. Tucked away from the bustling harbor, the location is ideal for travelers who want to avoid the tourist crowds while staying within a short drive of beaches and restaurants. The lobby and its sunshine-yellow floating fireplace give off retro vibes and have plenty of seating for cocktails and unwinding after a day in the sun. The vibe by the pool — decorated with a hand-painted wave mural by Rhode Island native Sean Spellman — is cheery, and the bar serves frozen cocktails and lobster rolls. On weekends, several food trucks pull up outside the hotel, including the especially popular Del's Lemonade, a Rhode Island icon.

Where to Eat

Of course in Newport, it's all about chowda and lobster. But several new restaurants that have popped up across the wharf are quickly becoming as beloved as the classics.

Nomi Park

The Wayfinder's on-site restaurant and bar is a destination in itself, run by the family-owned Mission restaurant group behind Thames Street Kitchen and Mission. The all-day retro cafe with tufted banquettes serves playful takes on New England classics such as a brown-butter lobster roll with trout roe and grilled gem salad.



Photo courtesy of The Wayfinder.