

## Overview of Rhode Island

Rhode Island is the smallest of the US states, once reserved as the resort for the rich. Today it is a favourite east coast getaway, particularly for Bostonians and New Yorkers, and is only 71 miles (114km) and 167 miles (269km) respectively from those major cities.

Extravagant 19th-century mansions of America's wealthy families grace Newport, Rhode Island's southern city on the Atlantic Ocean. They now exist as relics of a golden age that serve as tourist attractions marvelled at by visitors.

It is easy to understand why the state became a popular pilgrimage for the idle rich in days gone by. There are more than 100 beaches on Rhode Island, boasting miles of packed shoreline jutting into the Atlantic Ocean and Narragansett Bay.

Woodland covers much of the state, with the lands carefully preserved in carefully managed parks. The state capital of Providence lies at the northern point of narrow Narragansett Bay, about 30 miles (48km) from the open ocean.

Interesting histories stem from the colonial periods of both Providence and southerly Newport, worth investing through various local attractions. The small island resort of Block is an unspoilt and well-preserved paradise, about an hour ferry's ride from the town of Point Judith.

Rhode Island is not strictly an island. Instead, it's a portion of coastline cleaved in two and bisected by Narragansett Bay. The name is a legacy of the early Puritan settlers who thought their new homeland resembled the island of Rhodes in the Aegean.

Newport prospered as an important port in the colonial era, with ships trading in slaves, molasses, and rum. After the Civil War, the trading post began to turn into a resort as new millionaires discovered the beautiful beaches and gentle climate around the city.

---

## Key Facts

### **Language:**

English is the most common language spoken but Spanish is often heard in the south-western states.

### **Passport/Visa:**

It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. A visa is required for short visits unless travellers qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program. The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP. As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA, a valid passport is required by immigration authorities. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

### **Currency:**

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

### **Electricity:**

Electrical current is 120 volts, 60Hz. Plugs are mainly the type with two flat pins, though three-pin plugs (two flat parallel pins and a rounded pin) are also widely used. European appliances without dual-voltage capabilities will require an adapter.

# Travel to Rhode Island

## Climate for Rhode Island

The Rhode Island climate tends to be unpredictable and changeable, though it is predominately humid with short summers and cold snowy winters. On average, monthly temperatures range from about 82F (28C) to 20F (-7C).

In comparison to the inland regions, the coastal areas of Rhode Island, including Narragansett Bay, are usually cooler in summer and warmer in winter. July and August tend to be the warmest times of year and temperatures reach 80 to 85F (26 to 29C), though inland is usually hotter.

January is normally the coldest month of the usually chilly winters, with temperatures on average dropping to about 30F (-1C). Storms and hurricanes do occur in Rhode Island, causing considerable damage.

## Health Notes when travelling to United States of America

There are no specific health risks associated with travel within the USA. Medical facilities are excellent, but expensive. Only emergencies are treated without prior payment and treatment can be refused without evidence of insurance or proof of funds. Good medical insurance is essential. Visitors must be fully vaccinated with the primary series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine to travel to the United States by plane if they are non-U.S. citizens.

## Safety Notes when travelling to United States of America

Travel within the United States is generally trouble-free, though travellers should be aware that the US shares with the rest of the world, an increased threat from terrorist incidents. Security has been heightened, particularly at airports. Restrictions on hand luggage apply and travellers are advised to check on the latest situation with airlines in advance. Travellers should also be alert to the dangers of car and street crime in cities and should use common sense and take basic precautions. Hurricanes are common between June and November, putting the southern USA, including the Gulf Coast and the eastern US at risk. There is a risk of wildfires in many dry areas in the US, particularly on the West Coast from March to November.

## Customs in United States of America

Laws vary from state to state, including speed limit, fines and punishment. The age at which alcohol may be legally bought and consumed is 21 years.

## Duty Free in United States of America

Travellers to the United States who are returning residents of the country do not have to pay duty on articles purchased abroad to the value of \$800 provided their stay was longer than 48 hours and their duty-free allowance was not used in the 30-day period prior. For passengers arriving from Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, a duty-free allowance of \$1,600 is allowed. The following items are included in this: 50 cigarettes and 10 cigars and 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of alcoholic beverages or 150 millilitres (5 fl. oz.) of perfume containing alcohol. Restrictions may apply to goods from Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Burma (Myanmar), Angola, Liberia and Sudan. It is prohibited to import Cuban cigars from any country.

Travellers to the United States who are non-residents do not have to pay duty on the following items: 50 cigars or 200 cigarettes and gifts to the value of \$100 provided their stay in the USA is not less than 72 hours and that the allowance has not been used in the preceding six-month period.

Prohibited items for residents and non-residents include meat or meat products, poultry, narcotics, absinthe, plants, seeds, vegetables, fruits, soil, live insects and other living plants or animal pests. Fish is prohibited unless it carries disease-free certification. Wildlife and animals or their by-products carry restrictions. Dairy products and eggs from specified countries are not allowed. Firearms and ammunition are not allowed without the necessary license and permit.

## Doing Business in United States of America

In such a large country, filled with so many diverse groups, business practices may differ according to each state, however rarely to any large degree. The East Coast is traditionally more formal than the West Coast, though in states such as California, dress code and conservative appearance are as common as they would be in New York. Punctuality is important throughout the country and it is considered rude to be late for a meeting. Gift-giving is uncommon as it may be construed as bribery. Appropriate titles (Mr, Mrs, Ms) are used upon introduction and until otherwise stated. Americans favour politeness and greetings of 'Hello' and 'How are you?' are often expressed with sincerity. Business hours may vary in each state, but an 8am start and 5pm finish Monday to Friday is the most common with an hour over lunch.

Status and age are not necessarily indicative of seniority, nor do they carry much weight in themselves. Those doing business in the States should be mindful of this fact; foreigners should never make assumptions about someone's position or rank. Best practice is to be respectful to all parties. That said, the US upholds a hierarchal business structure, in which 'the boss' is the ultimate decision-maker. Senior leaders have the power of the last word, and can go against the grain just as easily as they can follow popular opinion. Foreigners should concentrate on winning over this individual, even if the greater group seems unsupportive. Americans value a direct style of communication. In this fast-paced, consumer culture 'time is money', and small-talk is viewed as unnecessary and wasteful. It's best for foreigners to get to the point quickly, speak about issues in a frank and open manner, and to avoid taking offence if someone questions or challenges them outright.

## Communication in United States of America

The international country dialling code for the United States is +1. Mobile networks cover most of the country, especially all urban areas, and WiFi is widely available.

## Tipping in United States of America

A 15 percent tip is expected by taxi drivers, bartenders, hairdressers and waiters, but travellers shouldn't tip in fast-food or self-service restaurants. In expensive restaurants or for large parties, the tip should be 20 percent of the bill. It is normal to tip staff such as valets and porters in hotels; this is discretionary, although a minimum of \$5 is expected. Most services are customarily tipped if the service is good.

## Passport/Visa Note

It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination. A visa is required for short visits unless travellers qualify for entry under the Visa Waiver Program.

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP) enables citizens of certain countries to travel to the US for a stay of up to 90 days without a visa. Visitors under the VWP need to register online three days before travel and have an Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA). This allows the US government to screen all visitors before travel. Visitors entering the country under the VWP must have a machine-readable passport (MRP) that has a barcode on the photo page. Travellers under the VWP must have passports that include biometrics if they wish to enter the country without a visa, which means that passports must contain unique personal data such as fingerprints or iris details. All passports must contain a digital photo image in order to travel visa-free. All visitors to the USA have a photograph and two fingerprints taken by an inkless scanner on arrival, including those travelling visa-free under the VWP.

As part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), all travellers travelling between the United States and Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and the Caribbean region are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to enter or re-enter the United States. If departing from the USA, a valid passport is required by immigration authorities. Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

# Airports in Rhode Island

## Providence Green Airport (PVD)

### *Theodore Francis Green Memorial State Airport*

[www.pvdairport.com](http://www.pvdairport.com)

**Location:** The airport is located about nine miles (14km) from Providence.

**Time:** GMT -5 (GMT -4 from mid-March to the first Sunday in November)

**Contacts:** Tel: +1 401 691 2471

**Getting to the city:** Rhode Island Public Transit Route 8 connects the airport to downtown Providence, stopping at the InterLink facility on Jefferson Boulevard. Peter Pan Bus Lines provides service from the airport to central Providence, Foxboro, and Boston, with a bus stop located at the far end of the commercial roadway in front of the airport. On weekdays MBTA commuter rail service is available between Southern Rhode Island (Wickford Junction), Green Airport and downtown Providence. An airport shuttle is also available from T.F. Green Airport to various locations around the city.

**Car rental:** Most major car rental companies are represented at the airport, including Avis, Budget, Dollar, Hertz, Alamo, Thrifty, Payless, Enterprise and National.

**Airport Taxis:** Taxis are available outside the airport and take travellers to downtown Providence, Martha's Vineyard, and other local destinations.

**Facilities:** Facilities include restaurants, snack bars, cafes, shops, money exchange, shoe shine, chair massages, a reflection room, a game room and conference facilities.

**Parking:** Long- and short-term parking is available. Rates start at about \$3 for the first half hour, \$6 for the first hour and \$6 per hour thereafter. Daily rates range between \$17 and \$32.

## Providence

Providence is one of the oldest cities in the United States, its name given by a theologian exile Roger Williams from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Founded in 1636, it has undergone recent revitalisation efforts in order to cause an upturn in the poverty problems it continues to face.

Williams established the city as a refuge for freethinkers and religious dissenters, encouraging independence of spirit. The city still reflects this independent spirit today in its academic and cultural realms, countering trends in other New England cities.

Despite the attempted modernisation, the abundance of historic and cultural attractions in Providence remains its most enduring feature. Over 350 years of history populate the streets in the forms of preserved colonial, Greek Revival, and Victorian houses and public buildings.

With 12 colleges and universities filled with students and young people, the city's nightlife is constantly buzzing and Providence is also renowned for its excellent restaurants.

## Getting around in Providence

The RIPTA bus service can get one almost anywhere in Providence. It's the most inexpensive way to travel around Providence, along with water taxis and ferry boats which operate daily. The government sets taxi rates but working meters are required in all taxis. Lyft and Uber are also available.

Hiring a car is also a great way to get around Providence, especially for visitors wanting to explore outside the city. Most attractions are near enough to reach on foot when travelling through the downtown area of Providence.

## Dining in Providence

Providence is one of the unlikely gourmet hotspots in the USA, with a higher per capita number of restaurants than any other city in the country. The Johnson and Wales University of Providence runs well-known culinary arts courses, its graduates contributing to the high quality of restaurants.

Downtown and Federal Hill are two of the most prominent restaurant scenes in Providence. Downtown is an area circled by Memorial Avenue, Dyer Street, Fountain Street, and Empire Street, filled with a variety of cuisines. Popular establishments include Cafe Nuovo and the Capital Grille.

Federal Hill in Providence boasts the highest concentration of restaurants in the city. The Little Italy of Providence, it covers both Italian and international food. Atwells Avenue is at the centre of the neighbourhood and over twenty restaurants line one quarter-mile of the avenue. Angelo's on Atwells Avenue has been around since 1924 and is a Providence institution.

## Climate in Providence

Providence has a humid continental climate. Summer (June to September) has an average daily high temperature above 73F (23C) with a low of 66F (19C). Winter runs from December to March with an average daily high temperature of 45F (7C) dropping to lows around 21F (-6C).

In the summer, there are occasional thunderstorms and a slight threat of hurricanes. It is fairly wet, with an annual average rainfall of 45 inches (1,140mm). However, this spreads evenly throughout the year and doesn't interfere too seriously with holidaymakers' enjoyment of the island's hot summers.

During winter there is also light rain, but mostly snowfall. Snowfall is the highest during January. The best time to visit Providence is during spring and summer (May to September).

## Sightseeing in Providence

A vibrant destination that's perfect for a few days away, attractions in Providence include art, history, and recreational activities. Known to be compact, modern, and a little eccentric, the city has a loyal population and is well loved in the broader region.

The history of Providence means that there are numerous historical sites and districts, such as Federal Hill and the East Side. Exploring them is a wonderful way to soak up the culturally diverse spaces of the state capital city.

The beautiful Rhode Island State House is home to the original Rhode Island Charter of 1663. Visitors will discover other architectural landmarks such as the RISD Museum, which is the leading museum of art and design in the state. Benefit Street helps understand the architectural heritage of Providence, while John Brown House was the first mansion built in the state.

For the artistic, the Providence Performing Arts Center holds concerts, contemporary plays, comedy, and Broadway shows. WaterFire Providence is an exciting attraction for those looking for something different, offering a sensory experience on the river like no other.

Home to the prestigious Brown University, Providence is rich in academics, arts, and student life. The city has some renowned restaurants from which to choose, as well as great shopping districts. Visitors enjoy outdoor recreation at any one of the spectacular parks and golf courses in the city.

## Providence Attractions

### State Capitol

Rhode Island's magnificent Georgian-marble state house was inspired by London's St Paul's Cathedral and the US Capitol. It has the distinction of sporting one of the largest self-supporting domes in the world. The beautiful building in Smith Street houses the original Rhode Island Charter of 1663 and an historic portrait of George Washington painted by Gilbert Stuart, a Rhode Island native. The Washington portrait is renowned for being the one used on the American dollar bill.

**Website:** [sos.ri.gov/publicinfo/tours/](https://sos.ri.gov/publicinfo/tours/)

### John Brown House

Designed by Joseph Brown for his brother John in 1786, sixth president John Quincy Adams once described the three-storey mansion on Power Street as being the most incredible and elegant private mansion ever seen on the continent of North America. The Georgian architecture features elaborate woodwork, French wallpaper, and 18th-century locally made furnishings. John Brown House also contains silver and decorative oriental objet d'art, gathered by John Brown who made his fortune trading with China.

**Website:** [www.rihs.org/museums/john-brown-house/](http://www.rihs.org/museums/john-brown-house/)

### Waterplace Park

Providence's renovated downtown waterfront is known as Waterplace Park, a haven of romantic Venetian footbridges and cobblestone walkways that has won national and international design awards. Sited at the junction of three rivers, the river walk was the centre of the shipping trade in the city's early years. Today it draws enthusiastic crowds to the popular WaterFire events, held several times a year. This multimedia festival involves nearly 100 blazing braziers that rise from the river, seemingly to dance atop the water to the tune of rhythmic music. WaterFire events are not held to schedule and visitors can find out from the visitor information centre in the clock tower (open daily from 10am to 4pm) when the next is to be held. Free concerts and plays are also frequently held in the Waterplace Amphitheatre.

**Website:** [www.waterfire.org/](http://www.waterfire.org/)

## Rhode Island School of Design Museum

The small but comprehensive museum attached to the Rhode Island School of Design features many changing exhibitions, particularly relating to textiles. The museum's permanent collection includes the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller collection of Japanese prints, Chinese terracotta, Greek statuary, and some French Impressionist paintings. Highlights are works by masters such as Monet, Cezanne, Rodin, and Picasso. There is also an American section containing paintings by Gilbert Stuart, John Singleton Copley, and John Singer Sargent. Visitors should note that there are two entrances to the museum, the Museum's Benefit Street entrance and the Chace Center entrance at 20 North Main Street.

**Website:** [www.risdmuseum.org](http://www.risdmuseum.org)

## Roger Williams Park Zoo

Providence's zoo is situated in 16 hectares (40 acres) of beautiful woodlands and is accessed from Elmwood Avenue on the south edge of the city. The Roger Williams Park Zoo focuses on conservation and also contains a museum of natural history and a planetarium, as well as offering a relaxing spot to picnic, feed the ducks, ride a pony, or rent a paddleboat. The zoo is home to more than 900 animals from 156 different species, with display areas divided into different habitats, including rainforest and swamp. Animals on exhibit include cheetahs, elephants, snow leopards, red wolves, bison, and many more. Special features include an exhibit focusing on survival and adaptation, as well as separate environments illustrating the natural worlds of both Africa and North America. There is also a wetlands trail, a mini trek reproducing the journey of Marco Polo, and a rainforest exhibition.

**Website:** [www.rwpzoo.org](http://www.rwpzoo.org)

## Benefit Street

Lined with an impressive concentration of original colonial-style homes, Benefit Street, Providence boasts one of the most extensive collections of 18th and 19th century urban architecture in America. The 'Mile of History' takes in all the well-restored buildings that were home to merchants and sea captains. The street overlooking the city's waterfront also features churches and museums. The Providence Preservation Society cares for the area, providing information about the buildings and escorted tours from their office at 21 Meeting Street.

## Newport

The city of Newport lies just 30 miles (48km) south of Providence, accessible via two bridges crossing the blue Narragansett Bay. Typical of its Rhode Island identity, it exists as a New England summer resort populated with elegant Gilded Age mansions of the nation's elite.

A dozen of these extravagant summer homes in Newport are now open to the public. Famed for being the sailing capital of the world, Newport encourages all visitors to enjoy leisurely trips along its beautiful beaches and varied attractions.

Newport is no longer just a destination for summer fun. Thanks to a full programme of events encompassing classical, folk, and jazz music, the region is hip and happening all year round. These include the Newport Winter Festival, a renowned Christmas celebration, and the Rhode Island International Film Festival, which has screenings in Newport and Providence. The lively waterfront, shops, and cultural attractions are enough to keep visitors entertained outside the beaches.

## Climate in Newport

Newport has a climate of extremes, with bitterly cold, snowy winters beset with storms, and mild to warm, pleasant summers. Precipitation is plentiful but the rains are spread evenly throughout the year.

## Sightseeing in Newport

The popular Touro Synagogue is the oldest in the USA while the Redwood Library and Athenaeum is the one of the oldest lending libraries in the country, founded in 1747. The International Tennis Hall of Fame also makes for a great visit, displaying both the history of the sport and outstanding architecture.

The opulent and grandiose Newport Mansions from the colonial era are at the top of most visitors' lists. History buffs will also appreciate the Museum of Newport History, known for giving unmatched insight into the city as it was and as it is today.

Of course, Newport includes a long stretch of shoreline that invites travellers to do more leisurely things such as picnic, yacht, and swim. Also home to some top-notch restaurants, Newport will leave no foodie disappointed.

## Newport Attractions

### Newport Mansions

The Bellevue Avenue Historical District in Newport, Rhode Island, is home to some of the grandest, most ostentatious mansions in the American architectural canon. Eleven in total, including Kingscote, Marble House, and The Breakers, these enormous residences are important milestones in tracing the development of America's social history and seven of the properties are now National Historic Landmarks. Ranging in style and period, from Carpenter Gothic to Colonial, Victorian to Gilded Age, visitors to Rhode Island have the Preservation Society of Newport County to thank for their tireless work in preserving and protecting these cultural treasures. The Society runs expert guided tours of the mansions, during which visitors are educated about each property's architecture, interior, landscape, and social history. Consistently voted as one of the Ocean State's must-see attractions, visitors to Newport should not pass up the opportunity to experience these majestic mansions first-hand.

**Website:** [www.newportmansions.org](http://www.newportmansions.org)

### International Tennis Hall of Fame

The Tennis Hall of Fame Museum in Newport is an inspiration for fans of the sport. But even those who don't follow tennis will still enjoy visiting this historic establishment, which served as a premier gathering place of Newport society at the turn of the 20th century. Built around a large interior piazza for lawn games, turrets and verandas festoon the building commissioned by wealthy publisher James Gordon Bennett. Originally a private social and sports club, it became known as the Newport Casino. The venue now hosts professional tournaments, while also opening the courts to the public for play by reservation. The Hall of Fame museum presents an exciting timeline of the sport's history, from its beginnings to today's superstars. The collection contains more than 7,000 objects, including historic tennis equipment, period clothing, and a tennis library.

**Website:** [www.tennisfame.com](http://www.tennisfame.com)



## Touro Synagogue

The oldest synagogue still standing in the United States, the Touro Street building was designed by noted British architect, Peter Harrison, and dedicated in 1763. The synagogue has, in its time, also been used as a venue for town meetings. George Washington, who visited Newport in 1790, attended a meeting in the synagogue and afterwards sent a letter to the congregation, which has become regarded as a classical expression of religious liberty in America. A copy of the letter is displayed on the wall of the synagogue, which has been designated as a National Historical Site.

**Website:** [www.tourosynagogue.org](http://www.tourosynagogue.org)

## Museum of Newport History

Visitors interested in history will find the Museum of Newport History an excellent place to begin a sojourn in the city. The museum offers a comprehensive overview, utilising decorative arts, artefacts of everyday life, graphics, old photographs, and audio-visual programmes to bring the past to life. The Newport Historical Society maintains the museum, which is housed in a restored 1772 building in Thames Street, off Touro Street. Highlights are an interactive computer tour of Newport's historic district and a video tour of historic Bellevue Avenue presented onboard a reproduction of an 1890s omnibus.

**Website:** [newporthistory.org](http://newporthistory.org)

## Block Island

Block Island lies barely 12 miles (19km) from the shore of the modern east coast. A tiny treasure island, peaceful pleasure and laidback relaxation are favourite pastimes and it's virtually unspoilt by modern progress. Time seems to have stopped on Block Island, settling comfortably into the Victorian era. This is particularly evident in its main urban concentration known as Old Harbor. Ferries from Rhode Island arrive several times a day. Quaint architecture, spectacular views, and delicious native seafood abounds. Charming inns, beautiful beaches, and gorgeous bike trails make up the entire tourist infrastructure that lures holidaymakers in droves every summer. It's also perfect for long lazy days spent in the water beneath warm sunshine. Winter brings some savage storms, making life fairly tough for the 1000-odd permanent residents. Much of their living depends on warmly welcoming the annual influx of summer visitors, as well as a strong sense of close community.

**Website:** [www.blockislandinfo.com](http://www.blockislandinfo.com)

## National Museum of American Illustration

Established in 1998, the National Museum of American Illustration is devoted exclusively to American illustration artwork. The museum is housed in the beautiful mansion of Vernon Court, with its Gilded Age architectural style synonymous with the Golden Age of American illustration. The museum's American Imagist Collection exhibits work by Normal Rockwell, James Montgomery Flagg, Maxfield Parrish, and more. The impact of these illustrators on subsequent American artists cannot be underestimated. Working in the days before television, their art circulated in all major print publications. It was not only the primary medium through which members of the American public were exposed to images beyond their everyday lives, it also created a host of iconic characters. These characters have formed an integral part of the American aesthetic ever since, such as the iconic Uncle Sam.

**Website:** [www.americanillustration.org](http://www.americanillustration.org)

# Rhode Island Attractions

## Overview

Although it is the smallest of the US states, there are plenty of attractions in Rhode Island to keep visitors entertained. A popular getaway on the east coast, this picturesque state offers visitors memorable sites and experiences that satisfy a varied number of interests.

Rhode Island is popular with those who have a love for the outdoors. Four hundred miles (644km) of shoreline and more than 100 beaches provide the perfect settings for relaxing and sunny holidays spent soaking up the sunshine.

For the more active, Rhode Island has plenty of lush woodland preserved in a number of state parks. This makes the state ideal for camping, hiking, and cycling. Nearby Block Island is only a ferry ride away and offers excellent bird watching and beachcombing prospects.

A favourite among visitors to Rhode Island are the lavish 19th-century mansions of America's wealthy families, slices of opulent history frozen in time. The National Museum of American Illustration is adored by art lovers, as is the Rhode Island School of Design Museum with its many textile and fine art exhibitions.

The cities of Providence and Newport are both worthy of a visit, offering insights into their previous colonial pasts via a number of fantastic museums. Both cities have beautiful sidewalks and atmospheric old neighbourhoods to explore, as well as excellent restaurants and bars.

## State Capitol

Rhode Island's magnificent Georgian-marble state house was inspired by London's St Paul's Cathedral and the US Capitol. It has the distinction of sporting one of the largest self-supporting domes in the world. The beautiful building in Smith Street houses the original Rhode Island Charter of 1663 and an historic portrait of George Washington painted by Gilbert Stuart, a Rhode Island native. The Washington portrait is renowned for being the one used on the American dollar bill.

**Website:** [sos.ri.gov/publicinfo/tours/](https://sos.ri.gov/publicinfo/tours/)

## John Brown House

Designed by Joseph Brown for his brother John in 1786, sixth president John Quincy Adams once described the three-storey mansion on Power Street as being the most incredible and elegant private mansion ever seen on the continent of North America. The Georgian architecture features elaborate woodwork, French wallpaper, and 18th-century locally made furnishings. John Brown House also contains silver and decorative oriental objet d'art, gathered by John Brown who made his fortune trading with China.

**Website:** [www.rihs.org/museums/john-brown-house/](http://www.rihs.org/museums/john-brown-house/)

## Waterplace Park

Providence's renovated downtown waterfront is known as Waterplace Park, a haven of romantic Venetian footbridges and cobblestone walkways that has won national and international design awards. Sited at the junction of three rivers, the river walk was the centre of the shipping trade in the city's early years. Today it draws enthusiastic crowds to the popular WaterFire events, held several times a year. This multimedia festival involves nearly 100 blazing braziers that rise from the river, seemingly to dance atop the water to the tune of rhythmic music. WaterFire events are not held to schedule and visitors can find out from the visitor information centre in the clock tower (open daily from 10am to 4pm) when the next is to be held. Free concerts and plays are also frequently held in the Waterplace Amphitheatre.

**Website:** [www.waterfire.org/](http://www.waterfire.org/)

## Rhode Island School of Design Museum

The small but comprehensive museum attached to the Rhode Island School of Design features many changing exhibitions, particularly relating to textiles. The museum's permanent collection includes the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller collection of Japanese prints, Chinese terracotta, Greek statuary, and some French Impressionist paintings. Highlights are works by masters such as Monet, Cezanne, Rodin, and Picasso. There is also an American section containing paintings by Gilbert Stuart, John Singleton Copley, and John Singer Sargent. Visitors should note that there are two entrances to the museum, the Museum's Benefit Street entrance and the Chace Center entrance at 20 North Main Street.

**Website:** [www.risdmuseum.org](http://www.risdmuseum.org)

## Roger Williams Park Zoo

Providence's zoo is situated in 16 hectares (40 acres) of beautiful woodlands and is accessed from Elmwood Avenue on the south edge of the city. The Roger Williams Park Zoo focuses on conservation and also contains a museum of natural history and a planetarium, as well as offering a relaxing spot to picnic, feed the ducks, ride a pony, or rent a paddleboat. The zoo is home to more than 900 animals from 156 different species, with display areas divided into different habitats, including rainforest and swamp. Animals on exhibit include cheetahs, elephants, snow leopards, red wolves, bison, and many more. Special features include an exhibit focusing on survival and adaptation, as well as separate environments illustrating the natural worlds of both Africa and North America. There is also a wetlands trail, a mini trek reproducing the journey of Marco Polo, and a rainforest exhibition.

**Website:** [www.rwpzoo.org](http://www.rwpzoo.org)

## Benefit Street

Lined with an impressive concentration of original colonial-style homes, Benefit Street, Providence boasts one of the most extensive collections of 18th and 19th century urban architecture in America. The 'Mile of History' takes in all the well-restored buildings that were home to merchants and sea captains. The street overlooking the city's waterfront also features churches and museums. The Providence Preservation Society cares for the area, providing information about the buildings and escorted tours from their office at 21 Meeting Street.

## Newport Mansions

The Bellevue Avenue Historical District in Newport, Rhode Island, is home to some of the grandest, most ostentatious mansions in the American architectural canon. Eleven in total, including Kingscote, Marble House, and The Breakers, these enormous residences are important milestones in tracing the development of America's social history and seven of the properties are now National Historic Landmarks. Ranging in style and period, from Carpenter Gothic to Colonial, Victorian to Gilded Age, visitors to Rhode Island have the Preservation Society of Newport County to thank for their tireless work in preserving and protecting these cultural treasures. The Society runs expert guided tours of the mansions, during which visitors are educated about each property's architecture, interior, landscape, and social history. Consistently voted as one of the Ocean State's must-see attractions, visitors to Newport should not pass up the opportunity to experience these majestic mansions first-hand.

**Website:** [www.newportmansions.org](http://www.newportmansions.org)

## International Tennis Hall of Fame

The Tennis Hall of Fame Museum in Newport is an inspiration for fans of the sport. But even those who don't follow tennis will still enjoy visiting this historic establishment, which served as a premier gathering place of Newport society at the turn of the 20th century. Built around a large interior piazza for lawn games, turrets and verandas festoon the building commissioned by wealthy publisher James Gordon Bennett. Originally a private social and sports club, it became known as the Newport Casino. The venue now hosts professional tournaments, while also opening the courts to the public for play by reservation. The Hall of Fame museum presents an exciting timeline of the sport's history, from its beginnings to today's superstars. The collection contains more than 7,000 objects, including historic tennis equipment, period clothing, and a tennis library.

**Website:** [www.tennisfame.com](http://www.tennisfame.com)

## Touro Synagogue

The oldest synagogue still standing in the United States, the Touro Street building was designed by noted British architect, Peter Harrison, and dedicated in 1763. The synagogue has, in its time, also been used as a venue for town meetings. George Washington, who visited Newport in 1790, attended a meeting in the synagogue and afterwards sent a letter to the congregation, which has become regarded as a classical expression of religious liberty in America. A copy of the letter is displayed on the wall of the synagogue, which has been designated as a National Historical Site.

**Website:** [www.tourosynagogue.org](http://www.tourosynagogue.org)

## Museum of Newport History

Visitors interested in history will find the Museum of Newport History an excellent place to begin a sojourn in the city. The museum offers a comprehensive overview, utilising decorative arts, artefacts of everyday life, graphics, old photographs, and audio-visual programmes to bring the past to life. The Newport Historical Society maintains the museum, which is housed in a restored 1772 building in Thames Street, off Touro Street. Highlights are an interactive computer tour of Newport's historic district and a video tour of historic Bellevue Avenue presented onboard a reproduction of an 1890s omnibus.

**Website:** [newporthistory.org](http://newporthistory.org)

## Block Island

Block Island lies barely 12 miles (19km) from the shore of the modern east coast. A tiny treasure island, peaceful pleasure and laidback relaxation are favourite pastimes and it's virtually unspoilt by modern progress. Time seems to have stopped on Block Island, settling comfortably into the Victorian era. This is particularly evident in its main urban concentration known as Old Harbor. Ferries from Rhode Island arrive several times a day. Quaint architecture, spectacular views, and delicious native seafood abounds. Charming inns, beautiful beaches, and gorgeous bike trails make up the entire tourist infrastructure that lures holidaymakers in droves every summer. It's also perfect for long lazy days spent in the water beneath warm sunshine. Winter brings some savage storms, making life fairly tough for the 1000-odd permanent residents. Much of their living depends on warmly welcoming the annual influx of summer visitors, as well as a strong sense of close community.

**Website:** [www.blockislandinfo.com](http://www.blockislandinfo.com)

## National Museum of American Illustration

Established in 1998, the National Museum of American Illustration is devoted exclusively to American illustration artwork. The museum is housed in the beautiful mansion of Vernon Court, with its Gilded Age architectural style synonymous with the Golden Age of American illustration. The museum's American Imagist Collection exhibits work by Normal Rockwell, James Montgomery Flagg, Maxfield Parrish, and more. The impact of these illustrators on subsequent American artists cannot be underestimated. Working in the days before television, their art circulated in all major print publications. It was not only the primary medium through which members of the American public were exposed to images beyond their everyday lives, it also created a host of iconic characters. These characters have formed an integral part of the American aesthetic ever since, such as the iconic Uncle Sam.

**Website:** [www.americanillustration.org](http://www.americanillustration.org)

# Currency

The official currency is the US Dollar (USD), which is divided into 100 cents. Only major banks exchange foreign currency. ATMs are widespread and credit cards are widely accepted. Banking hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm.

## Exchange rate for 1 USD - U.S. Dollar

<b>0.00</b> BMD Bermudan Dollar	<b>0.93</b> EUR Euro	<b>0.80</b> GBP U.K. Pound Sterling	<b>152.99</b> JPY Japanese Yen	<b>1.37</b> CAD Canadian Dollar	<b>0.91</b> CHF Swiss Franc
<b>1.52</b> AUD Australian Dollar	<b>39.40</b> UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia	<b>443.91</b> KZT Kazakhstani Tenge	<b>93,075.00</b> LBP Lebanese Pound	<b>4.86</b> LYD Libyan Dinar	<b>6.86</b> BOB Bolivian Boliviano
<b>0.00</b> NPR Nepalese Rupee	<b>0.00</b> OMR Omani Rial	<b>0.00</b> QAR Qatari Rial	<b>1.35</b> SGD Singapore Dollar	<b>10.82</b> SEK Swedish Krona	<b>0.00</b> TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar
<b>0.00</b> VEF Venezuelan Bolivar	<b>58.11</b> DOP Dominican Peso	<b>0.00</b> HRK Croatian Kuna	<b>16.95</b> MXN Mexican Peso	<b>610.53</b> XOF West African CFA Franc	<b>0.00</b> PGK Papua New Guinean kina
<b>0.00</b> BSD Bahamian Dollar	<b>0.00</b> FJD Fiji Dollar	<b>0.00</b> HNL Honduran Lempira	<b>133.87</b> DZD Algerian Dinar	<b>0.00</b> MMK Myanma Kyat	<b>0.00</b> BWP Botswana Pula
<b>3.72</b> PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol	<b>938.44</b> CLP Chilean Peso	<b>386.84</b> AMD Armenia Dram	<b>23.29</b> CZK Czech Koruna	<b>17.63</b> MDL Moldova Lei	<b>139.89</b> ISK Icelandic Krona
<b>12,582.40</b> UZS Uzbekistan Sum	<b>3.72</b> ILS Israeli New Sheqel	<b>0.71</b> JOD Jordanian Dinar	<b>0.00</b> KWD Kuwaiti Dinar	<b>38.15</b> UYU Uruguayan Peso	<b>0.00</b> MUR Mauritian Rupee
<b>0.00</b> NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba	<b>10.88</b> NOK Norwegian Krone	<b>4.03</b> PLN Polish Zloty	<b>3.75</b> SAR Saudi Riyal	<b>0.00</b> LKR Sri Lanka Rupee	<b>36.79</b> THB Thai Baht
<b>3.66</b> AED U.A.E Dirham	<b>5.09</b> BRL Brazilian Real	<b>4.63</b> RON Romanian New Leu	<b>7.81</b> HKD Hong Kong Dollar	<b>610.53</b> XAF Central African CFA Franc	<b>25,405.70</b> VND Vietnamese Dong
<b>878.36</b> ARS Argentine Peso	<b>0.00</b> XCD East Caribbean Dollar	<b>0.00</b> GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal	<b>10.06</b> MAD Moroccan Dirham	<b>0.00</b> BHD Bahrain Dinar	<b>1.00</b> PAB Panamanian Balboa
<b>1.70</b> AZN Azerbaijan Manat	<b>3,920.00</b> COP Colombian Peso	<b>88.42</b> KGS Kyrgyzstan Som	<b>362.00</b> HUF Hungarian Forint	<b>10.89</b> TJS Tajikistan Ruble	<b>16,073.70</b> IDR Indonesian Rupiah
<b>47.95</b> EGP Egyptian Pound	<b>1,358.84</b> KRW South Korean Won	<b>7,456.52</b> PYG Paraguayan Guaraní	<b>4.74</b> MYR Malaysian Ringgit	<b>508.31</b> CRC Costa Rican Colón	<b>1.67</b> NZD New Zealand Dollar
<b>277.87</b> PKR Pakistani Rupee	<b>91.39</b> RUB Russian Rouble	<b>18.51</b> ZAR South African Rand	<b>3.13</b> TND Tunisian Dinar	<b>0.00</b> BBD Barbadian Dollar	<b>1.82</b> BGN Bulgarian Lev
<b>32.33</b> TRY Turkish Lira	<b>57.28</b> PHP Philippine Peso	<b>32.31</b> TWD New Taiwan Dollar	<b>1,164.84</b> NGN Nigerian Naira	<b>0.00</b> XPF CFP Franc	<b>0.00</b> GHS Ghanaian Cedi
<b>0.00</b> JMD Jamaican Dollar	<b>0.00</b> ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder	<b>0.00</b> BND Brunei Dollar	<b>108.90</b> RSD Serbian Dinar	<b>7.24</b> CNY Chinese Yuan	<b>6.94</b> DKK Danish Krone
<b>3.49</b> TMT New Turkmenistan Manat	<b>83.42</b> INR Indian Rupee				