



Tourists hotel, the Berkshires

NICOLE FRANZEN

## It Ain't All About Leaf Peeping

YES, FALL IN THE NORTHEAST EQUALS PEAK FOLIAGE. BUT THE SEASON ALSO OFFERS UP AN ABUNDANCE OF EPIC, UNCROWDED ADVENTURES IN THE MOUNTAINS, ON LAKES, AND ALONG THE COAST.

BY DAVE HERNDON

### BURKE, VERMONT

Mountain biking, downhill skiing, craft beer. Locals in the small town of Burke started riding singletrack 30 years ago. The area is blessed with rock-free soil, and its Kingdom Trails network stretches almost 100 miles. Burke has become a destination for north-eastern riders, and the area is home to pros including cross-country Olympic medalist Georgia Gould. A U.S. Ski and Snowboard

ADAM LUKOWSKI/BURKE MOUNTAIN PHOTOGRAPHER



Mountain biking in Vermont

Team development site, Burke Mountain has 2,000 feet of drop, lift-served all-mountain terrain that's steep and technical up top, and a bike park spanning lower elevations. You'll find natural and man-made singletrack, flow trails, cross-country, berms, jumps, rollovers—you could ride here for a week and never repeat yourself. Post-ride, quaff a Fiddlehead IPA at Mike's Tiki Bar in East Burke, or make a 45-minute pilgrimage to the renowned Hill Farmstead Brewery in the town of Greensboro Bend. Visit the Kingdom Trails website for great local information, including a variety of accommodations that cater to riders, like the Burke Mountain Lodge (from \$139), which offers bike-and-stay packages and lessons. **DON'T MISS:** Riders compete in the annual Circumburke Challenge long-distance backcountry races on September 22.

### THE BERKSHIRES, MASSACHUSETTS

Hiking, wilderness lodges, art

The autumnal landscape takes center stage here, and the best way to see it is to hike up a peak. Monument Mountain's 720 feet of

elevation gain makes for a modest ascent but grants long views over the vibrant woodlands and wetlands of the Housatonic River Valley. The trailhead is right across the street from the hip and homey Briarcliff Motel (from \$79), near the town of Great Barrington. Post-hike, satisfy your craft-brew and comfort-food cravings at the Barrington Brewery. An hour up the road, a harder ascent will bring you to the top of 3,491-foot Mount Greylock, the highest peak in Massachusetts. For a remote getaway, stay on Greylock's summit at the Bascom Lodge (from \$40 for a bunk), a CCC project from the 1930s that was the prototypical national-park lodge. The Mount Greylock State Reservation counts more than 80 miles of trails on its nearly 13,000 acres, including a segment of the Appalachian Trail. Down the hill, the small town of North Adams is home to the 48-room Tourists boutique hotel (from \$141), whose cool-cred owners include John Stirratt, the bass player in the band Wilco. **DON'T MISS:** Mass MoCA (the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art) in North Adams is one of the country's most prominent art-world institutions. It even has a micro-brewery on-site.



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Rhode Island has consistent swell in the fall.



## NARRAGANSETT, RHODE ISLAND

*Surfing, oysters, beach bars*

When it comes to riding waves, Rhode Island punches far above its weight. Its 400 miles of jagged coastline produce a variety of breaks on beaches, points, reefs, and islands, and the conditions are at their best in the stormier fall and winter months. Base out of Narragansett to surf gentle Town Beach, or head to bigger action at Ruggles in Newport or at the Point Judith Lighthouse. Narragansett's Warm Winds surf shop is the place to find rental boards, lessons, and intel on breaks. Surfer-friendly places to stay include the contemporary, recently renovated Aqua Blue Hotel (from \$179) and the chic, 16-room Break (from \$309), both walking distance from the beach. The nearby village of Matunuck has three breaks as well as the Matunuck Oyster Bar, a leader in the pond-to-plate sustainable-shellfish movement. The town is also home to the area's favorite beach bar, Ocean Mist, which books reggae bands you've actually heard of, like the Wallers.

**DON'T MISS:** Go for a two-mile open-water swim with Narragansett Ocean Swimming Enthusiasts. Get dates and times on the group's Facebook page.

## ADIRONDACK PARK, NEW YORK

*Canoeing, kayaking, hiking, fishing*

In a park the size of Vermont, with nearly 30,000 miles of streams and more than 3,000 lakes and ponds, where exactly are you supposed to put a boat in the water and start paddling? Here's an idea: narrow your search to the park's sole designated canoe wilderness, the Saint Regis Canoe Area, 25 miles west of Lake Placid. No motorboats are allowed, which contributes mightily to the quality of the swimming, trout and bass fishing, and quietude. The classic Route of the Seven Carries—which includes six portages, none of them too grueling if you're in decent shape and don't overload on gear—can be done as a day trip. But why rush it? Make it at least three days, taking time to enjoy the

beaches and hike up Saint Regis Mountain. St. Regis Canoe Outfitters is the go-to for information (there's a Nine Carries Route, too) and everything you'll need to set out. Owner Dave Cilley literally wrote the book on paddling in the Adirondacks. When you're not camping, the wood-paneled cabins, lake-view suites, and rooms at Lake Clear Lodge (from \$149) are loaded with old-school character, and the 25-acre resort offers cooking demos and beer workshops. For something a bit less rustic, the grand old Hotel Saranac (from \$148), in the town of Saranac Lake, recently underwent an extensive renovation.

**DON'T MISS:** Saranac Lake is home to more than 5,000 people, and many of them are creatives. The downtown area has enough galleries, artist studios, cultural events, and live music to qualify as a bona fide art colony.

## RUMNEY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Rock climbing, hiking, mountain biking*  
New York's Shawangunks may be the most popular crags in the northeast, but there's no



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Hike, sail, and eat lobster on Maine's Mount Desert Island.



sport climbing in the Gunks. Located at the southern border of White Mountain National Forest, Rumney has become an international destination, and fall is peak season. The area has over 1,000 established sport, boulder, and trad routes, which works out to a little less than one per town resident. The climbs range from beginner-friendly to hardcore (Jaws II is one of only four 5.15's in the country), with the majority falling in the intermediate-to-advanced range (5.9 to 5.14). The national forest also has over 1,200 miles of hiking—try the 3.4-mile out-and-back Stinson Mountain—or mountain-bike at Green Woodlands near Dorchester. Shack up at Rumney's Barn Door Hostel, which owner Dave Cook, a self-described explorer and beer connoisseur, recently opened with climbers in mind, offering bunks, private rooms, and campsites (from \$20 for a bunk).

**DON'T MISS:** What tiny Rumney lacks in after-hours entertainment can be had in the nearby college town of Plymouth at the Lucky Dog Tavern and Grill.

## MOUNT DESERT ISLAND, MAINE

*Lobster, sailing, hiking, more lobster*

Know before you go: (1) Mount Desert Island, where the mountains of Acadia National Park meet the coast, is one of New England's most stunning geographical features. (2) Fall is perhaps the loveliest season here, but it's also prime time for cruise ships in the town of Bar Harbor. (3) Lobster hunters on a seafood safari need not look far—just about every place serves them. For real local flavor, hop the ferry from Southwest Harbor or Northeast Harbor over to Little Cranberry Island's Islesford Dock Restaurant, where you'd have to actually get on a boat to be any more on the water. Same goes for Thurston's Lobster Pound, a classic shack on the dock in Bernard, a busy fishing village in the far southwest corner of Mount Desert Island. This part of Maine is also excellent sailing country. From Bar Harbor, take a sunset cruise on Downeast Windjammer's *Margaret Todd*. If you're crowd averse, stay on the quiet

side of the island in Southwest Harbor. The new Acadia Yurts and Wellness Center has two tiny houses for rent (from \$125) in addition to seven fully appointed yurts (from \$170).

**DON'T MISS:** Hiking in Acadia means spectacular coastal views. Homans Path is a historic trail on Dorr Mountain, with stairways cut into the rock. There's no biking on the hiking trails, but John D. Rockefeller's carriage-road system makes for great riding. The 3.5-mile climb to the summit of Cadillac Mountain is a serious ascent.

## CHATHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

*Fly-fishing, biking*

There's no shortage of day-trip fishing boats on Cape Cod. When you want a greater challenge, try sight-casting for stripers with a fly rod, even wading in after them if you have to. The place to do it: the pristine and isolated flats off Monomoy Island, which begin a mile from the elbow of the cape. The guy to charter with—because he's got the right boat for the



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Fall is striped season in Old Lyme.

sport (a Carolina skiff) and the local savvy it takes to navigate the shallows—is Monomoy Adventures' Jamie Bassett, whose family has been in Chatham since the days of Plymouth Colony. While tourist-friendly, Chatham remains plenty salty, with about 100 commercial fishing boats working the waters. Stay in a typical cape cottage like the Stone Whale, which you can find on Airbnb. Or the Chatham Seafarer hotel is conveniently situated between town and the water (from \$129).

**DON'T MISS:** Bike the 25-mile Cape Cod Rail Trail out to the marshes and ponds of the 40-mile-long Cape Cod National Seashore.

## OLD LYME, CONNECTICUT

*Kayaking, fishing, birdwatching*

If you want to experience a modern-day version of a Nantucket sleigh ride, go to Old Lyme. What's a sleigh ride? The turbo-charged drag you get after hooking a 40-pound striped bass from the saddle of a kayak. The shallows where the Connecticut River meets Long Island Sound are a fall feeding ground for bluefish and

striped bass, and a playground for paddlers. The action takes place in the eastern part of the state, which is dense with Revolutionary War-era maritime history. The Griswold Inn (from \$170), in the small town of Essex, features a renowned taproom that started life in 1735 as a schoolhouse, and the quaint Old Lyme Inn (from \$149) has a top-flight jazz club. For fishing, Black Hall Outfitters can supply all your equipment and guiding needs, including paddleboard rentals. After a day on the water, refuel at Thimble Island Brewing Company, in Branford, or Bill's Seafood, where the vibe is more like Key West.

**DON'T MISS:** Happy-hour birdwatching at Old Lyme's Great Island salt marsh. Paddlers BYOB and watch osprey and eagles feed on baitfish as well as tornadoes of swallows.

## MEDAWISLA LODGE, MAINE

*Paddleboarding, hiking, fly-fishing, mountain biking*

The very notion of the Maine woods conjures nostalgia for hardy old-school hunting and

fishing lodges, which have now mostly gone to seed. But the Appalachian Mountain Club has a fresh approach: take those old lodge sites and build new camps on them. Medawisla Lodge and Cabins, the newest of the Maine Wilderness Lodges network, has access to the 100-Mile Wilderness Trails and is set on a pond that's three miles across. The lodge offers bunkhouse accommodations (from \$109) or hilltop and waterfront cabins (from \$162), and supplies canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards. Rent a fly rod if you want to try casting for brook trout. Go running, hiking, or mountain biking—or, once the snow falls, cross-country skiing or snowshoeing—on 103 miles of local trails that link up with the network's sister lodges. You can explore on your own or with one of the lodge's guides. Sign up for the family-style meal plan or bring your own provisions, but keep in mind that the nearest store is about an hour away.

**DON'T MISS:** Hike the Gulf Hagas Rim Trail. It runs alongside the Pleasant River and offers views of a waterfall-laced gorge known as the Grand Canyon of the East.



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## Dome Away from Home

A NEW LODGE IN BOLIVIA'S UYUNI SALT FLATS EXPONENTIALLY UPS THE AWE FACTOR

BY STEPHANIE PEARSON

**ANYONE WHO** harbors fantasies about life on Mars should visit Kachi Lodge, a surreal colony of luxury domed pods. They're set in Bolivia's Uyuni salt flats, the largest on earth, which stretch for more than 4,050 square miles near the nexus of Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina. At the base of the 17,000-plus-foot Tunupa volcano, the six suites and central dining and lounge dome were designed by Amazing Escapes, a Swiss company that specializes in once-in-a-lifetime outings—think sleepovers at Khmer temples in Cam-

bodia and James Bond-themed parties in Thailand. Bolivia, long known for its soaring Andean peaks, is experiencing a cultural and culinary renaissance. At Kachi, Amazing Escapes dialed it up to eleven, partnering with legendary La Paz restaurant Gustu to provide Bolivian-inspired meals (like llama tartare), using a self-sufficient water system powered by the sun, and displaying work by avant-garde artist Gastón Ugalde. Inside, the domes have hemp cushions and are softly lit by lanterns. Outside, excursions include mountain-biking and hiking the slopes of Tunupa. During the wet season, the lake bed fills with water, and guests can paddleboard across the flats. Meanwhile the Bolivian altiplano, one of the world's highest plateaus, harbors fascinating archaeological history: visit the pre-Columbian site of Alcaya, or peer in on mummies in a cave above the village of Coquesa. Once you turn in, the Red Planet and southern constellations wink at you in the night sky.

**Access:** Book with Amazonas for the 45-minute flight down from La Paz to Uyuni. Kachi will send transport for the 60-mile drive to the lodge. Domes start at \$1,980 for a two-night-minimum stay, all-inclusive.

**Weather:** The dry season runs from May to November, the wet season from December to April. September generally offers blue skies and bright sun, with daytime temperatures in the low sixties. The lodge is open year-round.

**Detour:** Attend one of the country's many festivals. During November's Fiesta de las Ñatis ("little pug-nosed ones"), some 20,000 people descend on La Paz's main cemetery, where they parade skulls they believe will bestow blessings.