

Grey's Anatomy star Katherine Heigl has visited Providence.

Steve Carell spent time in Providence filming *Underdog*.

Enjoy tasty Italian treats on Federal Hill.

# Stars love going to Providence

Rhode Island's beautiful capital is full of history — and great food

**OK!'s 3 must-do's**

1. Fried Calamari at Camille's
2. Culinary Archives & Museum
3. Temple Downtown Restaurant & Lounge

Unwind at the Renaissance Providence Hotel.

Enjoy WaterFire, an artistic display of bonfires along Providence's three rivers.

## Travel tips

- » Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau; pwcvb.com, 401-456-0200 or 800-233-1636
- » Renaissance Providence Hotel; renaissanceprovidence.com, 401-276-0010 or 800-HOTELS-1
- » Camille's; camillesonthehill.com, 401-751-4812
- » Cuban Revolution Restaurant & Bar; thecubanrevolution.com, 401-331-8829
- » Culinary Archives & Museum; www.culinary.org
- » Amtrak; amtrak.com, 800-USA-RAIL

**How do I get there?** Providence is located on Amtrak's Northeast Corridor between Washington D.C./New York City and Boston. Travelers from the West Coast can fly into Warwick, R.I.'s T.F. Green International Airport.

## Why should I go?

Just 45 minutes from Boston and barely three hours from New York City via Amtrak, Providence, R.I., is a great weekend getaway for the fall. Home to Brown University, Johnson & Wales University and Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), the capital city has a young, college-town vibe — but you can certainly get a taste of the past by viewing 18th- and 19th-century homes, impressively preserved by the Rhode Island Historical Society. The eclectic mix of old and new architecture has made Providence an ideal location to shoot television shows and movies. The family movie *Underdog*, the Showtime series *Brotherhood* and Katherine Heigl's upcoming flick *27 Dresses* (due out next year) all filmed here. And that's not the

only reason stars flock to this gorgeous city. Kevin Costner and Susan Sarandon both have kids who graduated from the prestigious Brown.

## Where should I stay?

When the stars are in town, they've got a range of hotels to choose from. The famous Providence Biltmore, built in 1922, recently underwent a \$10-million-plus renovation of its public spaces and 289 guest rooms and added an Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa. The Westin, where Dustin Hoffman and Julia Stiles have stayed, is downtown, adjacent to the Rhode Island Convention Center and the Providence Place Mall. (A separate tower is currently being built and will feature condos.) But no residence is as impressive as the Renaissance Providence

Hotel, which has a remarkable history. In 1926, the Masons set out to build a Masonic temple in the city, but when their money ran out in 1928, they left the skeleton of an eight-story, copper-roofed building. For 75 years, the property was untouched except by vandals, who stole the roofing, and graffiti artists, who left their own marks. In 2006, Marriott rebuilt what the Masons had started, turning the property into a 272-room luxury hotel with a trendy lounge and restaurant, Temple Downtown, on the main floor. Each guest room has amenities such as stunning marble bathrooms and Starbucks coffee; some also have views of the State Capitol building across the street.

## What should I do?

This vibrant city is known for its artists and

chefs, many of whom, like Emeril Lagasse, graduated from the culinary program at Johnson & Wales. Not surprisingly, Providence's eclectic mix of fine and casual dining attracts people from miles away. Little Italy on Federal Hill is bustling with Italian bakeries, restaurants and shops that sell everything from blocks of cheese and olive oil to prepared foods and casseroles. Try Camille's, where the daily specials include fresh fish, and the fried calamari, tossed with garlic butter, hot peppers and fresh mint, is exquisite. For something south of

the border, head to Cuban Revolution Restaurant & Bar in DOWNCITY, where you can order The Fidel (a Cuban sandwich with pork, ham and salami) or The JFK (a steak sandwich). A second location is opening soon. If you want to eat on the lighter side, Pot Au Feu has daily quiche specials. The portions are small but savory. Don't feel like eating your way through town? The Culinary Archives & Museum at Johnson & Wales offers a fabulous look at the evolution of cooking, food preparation and packaging through the years. You won't believe what the first microwave oven looked like! Want to shop?

Providence has it all. Thayer Street is lined with funky stores; Westminster Street is more preppy and upscale; and Wickenden Street has some great art and antique shops. On a rainy day, the Providence Place Mall is an easy visit; it has everything from Bed Bath & Beyond to Old Navy.

If you want a history lesson, The Rhode Island Historical Society runs walking tours of Benefit Street that leave from the John Brown House. And while you can't take a class there, exploring Brown's beautiful main campus, located atop College Hill, is educational all by itself. The admissions office offers tours on weekdays and select Saturdays.

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