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TRAVEL TO RI

9 things to do in Rhode Island on a rainy summer day

There are lots of options, from visiting Newport mansions to axe throwing, cigar lounges, and indoor wineries

By Alina Kagan Jtv Staff | Updated Jan 22, 2022, 4:56 p.m.

Alison Lambert, 3, sets up of the cot as he leans the boat with his grandmother Karen Lambert, on a cat 30ft, and another Emily Lambert, right, for kid play during a one of the few public parking areas left open for the area that opened in 1 SHOELESS GRAPHIC

You planned the perfect summer: Sailing in Newport, A ferry into Providence. Bike rides to the cliffs on Block Island. A table for two with a view.

And then, the dreaded weather alert comes: It's going to rain.

There are plenty of ways to salvage your plans if you don't feel like getting soaked. Here are a few ideas of what to do in Rhode Island when the weather isn't on your side.

PROVIDENCE, RI - JULY 04: Students of R. Wayne Gretzel School of Design (Gallery), Ryan Cotter, Fall | 2017 FILM, AP PHOTO: Jason Jones photo SHOWS: WORK SUBJECTS FOR FILM

1. Visit a museum

Explore the state's rich cultural history in a family-friendly way at the Providence Children's Museum. The Rhode Island School of Design's museum has reopened to the public, but obtaining ticket purchase is required. Newport's Rough Point Museum offers a combination of the Gilded Age tastes, such as French and conventional furniture and other decorative arts also from the 18th-century, 19th-century Flemish tapestries, and chinoiserie ceramics.

The Chinese Tea Museum in Warwick prides itself as a "portal of the past," but plan carefully as is only open on certain days. The largest collection of original artworks from the Golden Age of American Illustration can be viewed at the National Museum of American Illustration and Prudential Law Olmsted Park along Newport's Bellevue Avenue.

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While Newport's mansions are grand, the John Brown House Museum in Providence was home to a businessman, patriot, and slave trader. Julia Irish presents what you participated in the debate that shaped the new nation. This Bristol, Rhode Island museum and hall of fame presents the story of the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company and the America's Cup competition dominance. Look at the original Herreshoff boats, steam engines, artifacts, and photographs from the "golden age of yachting."

The Tomaquag Indigenous Historical Museum, in Exeter displays artifacts about local Native American groups, but is only open Wednesdays and Saturdays by appointment only.

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2. Decode an escape room

The Great Escape Room in Providence is an award-winning escape room with some themes that have a low than on percent answers rate. Escape Room Rescue in Jamestown has appropriately themed rooms for locals like "Sonny's House," where you discover your grandmother's gambling habit at the local casino.

Lock It Clue in Pawtucket has one room where you set in a professional thief and have to steal a priceless artifact locked in a vault in a nearby factory. And Dr. Riddle Escape has two locations; one in Warwick and the other in East Greenwich.

3. Climb (indoors)

Try out 36-foot climbing walls, zero rope stations, fitness equipment, professional yoga classes, and summer camps at Central Rock Gym in Warwick. Rock Spot Climbing has three locations in Rhode Island (Providence, South Kingstown, and Lincoln).

Gina Pimentel Catalano hosts guests with Secretary of Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo as they visit Stories on the Square bookstore Wednesday, May 5, 2021, in Providence, R.I. ANDREW HARNIK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

4. Read a book

Rhode Island has a slew of bookstores throughout the state. In Providence alone, there's Symposium Books, Books on the Square, Paper Hamilton Books, Billfold Bookstore and Bar, Lovecraft Arts & Sciences, Twenty Broke, among many others.

Along County Road, Barrington Books, which was voted best Independent Bookstore by Rhode Island Monthly, is open seven days a week. Books on the Pond is laid out on more than two acres in Charlestown; and Island Books in Middletown has been locally owned since 1993.

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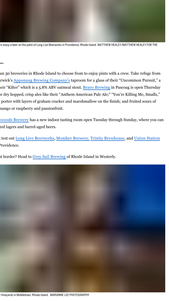
There's also Ink Pitch Books in Warren, Wakefield Books, and Jarvis Bookshop & Café in Westerly (with a sister location in Mystic, Connecticut right over the border).

Explore walls of used books and rare collectables at Arthur Brown in downtown Providence or Power Fold Fables in Cranston.



The Dunkers interiors, seen through a Corvette wrought iron fence. TLUNICK, JOHN QUINN STAFF

5. Pick inside Newport Mansions

The Breakers, the summer mansion of all mansions, is the symbol of the Vanderbilt family's social and financial wealth in turn-of-the-century America. It was their summer cottage in the late 19th century, and is now a top destination for all ages for many Newport visitors.

The 52-acre grounds of the Breakers once included landscape designed by Ernest W. Bowditch, who was a leader in evolution of landscape architecture. But by the late 1920s, it was in need of repair — a project which the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission started in December 2018. The project is expected to be completed sometime in 2023, and is an investment of "several million dollars."

Then there's the Marble House, which has 500,000 cubic feet of marble worth $7 million.

Even wander where "The Great Gatsby" was shot? Or "True Lies," or "Amistad?" Look no further than Rosecliff, which was completed in 1902 at a reported cost of $3.5 million at the time.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward Julius Berwind of Philadelphia and New York made their fortune in the coal industry, and the Elms was their summer residence.

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A cocktail glass with lemon wedge is seen on the patio of Long Line Restaurants, in Providence, Rhode Island. BETTINA HULSEY/AUTHOR HULSEY FOR THE JOURNAL.COM

6. Grab an IPA ...

There are more than 30 breweries in Rhode Island to choose from to enjoy pints with a crew. Take refuge from the rain inside Warwick's Narragansett Brewing Company's taproom for a glass of their "Uncommon Pretzels," a 6% ABV IPA, or their "Kilter" which is a 5.8% ABV national shout. Bones Brewing in Pawtucket is open Thursday through Sunday for dry hopped, crisp ales like their "Sunbeam American Pale Ale" "Face the Killing Heads," which is a cheeto porter with layers of graham cracker and marshmallow on the finish; and frolsed scores of other punch and mango or raspberry and passionfruit.

Cranston's Bottlemouth Brewery has a new inlaw tasting room open Tuesday through Sunday, where you can sample sophisticated lagers and barrel-aged beers.

For indoor dining, look out Long Line Restaurants, Member Brewery, Trinity Brewhouse, and Union Station Brewery — all in Providence.

On the Connecticut border? Head to Grey Sail Brewing of Rhode Island in Westerly.

The tasty cart at Newport Vineyards in Middletown, Rhode Island. MARIANNE LEE PHOTOGRAPHY

7. ... or a glass of wine!

Newport Vineyards is situated on more than sixty acres of protected farmland where you can enjoy a wine tasting and have a bite filled with locally sourced ingredients (if you're bringing along someone who doesn't drink wine, the winery also offers craft beer through Tugnuts Brewing Co., which the vineyard owns).

Greenwich Vineyards is a third-generation farm producing small quantities of wine along the Sakonnet River in Portsmouth. Carolina's Adornment Vineyards in Little Compton offers tasting flights, wine by the bottle, grab-and-go food items, and a patio (with umbrellas) to sip through their collection that looks to clearly resemble varietals of northern France.

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Greenwich Vineyards in Wickford sources elements of their wines from around the world (be sure to try the Heritage Red), which is a blend of albariños, aragonez, touriga nacional, and alicante bouschet. Visit our Leighton Farm Vineyard & Winery in West Greenwich while enjoying their three-generation Christmas tree farm.

8. Indoor go-karting, axe throwing, arcades, and more

Experience the thrill of racing at 45 miles per hour indoors at Ft. Indoor Karting in Lincoln, then stop by axe throwing at play pinball at the arcade. Just over the Massachusetts border, in Fall River, there's also Stompin's Rockin' Bowl for more axe-throwing activities.

For an innovative arcade, there's Bass Station VR Lounge in Johnston. And to pull your friends with paintballs, Airsoft guns, lasers, and more, check out Ballistic[sports] in Lincoln, which is New England's largest indoor airsoft-and-gun-friend, and more! Plus, there's Providence Indoor Paintball in the South Elmwood neighborhood.

9. Puff on a cigar

Sinking into a leather chair and puffing on a Cohiba Robusto Cuban or a Diamond Crown Julius Caesar shouldn't only be for the Don Draper of the world. In Rhode Island, there's plenty of lounges to enjoy a stogie — and maybe a glass of scotch, too (two ice cubes, please).

Mr. Stogie Cigar Bar in downtown offers 15 that cabinage, original lockbrook, and a comfortable lounge in the former Bailey's Brewing, which was its full operation in the early 1900s. Old Ben Waterfront offers riverside views, two floors of patios and indoor dining, and an expansive choice of cigars for both first-time smokers and aficionados alike. And Portland Bell's Tomaquag Club along Alexander Avenue in Exeter is a free pollination nightstage.

Alina Kagan can be reached at alina.kagan@jtvjtv.com. Follow her on Twitter @alinaxkagan.

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