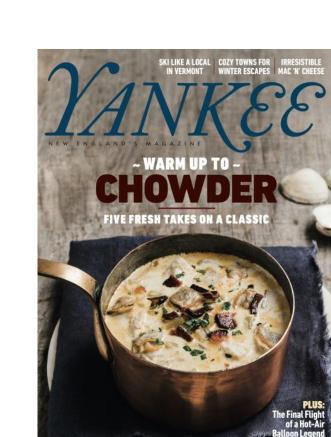
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### **∢** PREVIOUS NEXT**>** 29 Best Cozy New England Winter Towns These New England destinations have ambience that's easy to warm up to.

Yankee Editors · January 3, 2022 · 1 Comment

HOME

TOPIC: **NEW ENGLAND** 

From the Jan 2022 issue

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Just as foliage time transforms New England into a wondrous new landscape to explore, so, too, does winter. Yet experiencing the best of the snowy season isn't always about being outdoors. Sometimes it's all about finding a place that envelops you in history, scenery, and a sense of profound contentment when a chill wind blows. New England is filled with towns that can do just that; the following are some of our favorites.



29 Best Cozy New England Winter Towns CONNECTICUT

## **ESSEX:** Famously dubbed "The Perfect Small American Town" in the *New York Times* best-seller 1,000 Places to See Before You Die, Essex delights winter visitors with a

glimmering lights across the harbor.

Susan Cole Kelly

Main Street stuffed with early Colonial and Federal-era homes and some 30 antique and specialty shops. And when the snow flies, it's hard to imagine a better hideout than the Griswold Inn's 18th-century Tap Room, warmed by an old stone fireplace, the glow of a vintage popcorn machine, and a twinkling year-round Christmas tree. essexct.com **LITCHFIELD:** The Litchfield Hills region may be famed for fall foliage drives, but its byways are just as beguiling in winter. Starting from Litchfield's White Memorial Conservation Center, a 35-mile counterclockwise loop will bring you past a classic red

covered bridge, the prettiest lake in the state, and Litchfield Distillery (whose

cinnamon bourbon is guaranteed to take the chill off) before returning to Litchfield, where you can spend the day shopping for antiques, art, and gifts along the village green. For an unforgettable overnight, check out Winvian, a collection of 18 luxury themed cottages tucked into meadows and forest in nearby Morris. townoflitchfield.org MYSTIC: This scenic, bustling seaport (population about 4,200) has everything needed for a coastal weekend getaway, even in winter: walkable streets lined with shops and cafés, restaurants with fortifying seafood in abundance (think: clam chowder, buttery roasted cod), and two of Connecticut's most popular attractions, Mystic Seaport Museum and the Mystic Aquarium. Plus, the glittering ribbon of the Mystic River runs through it all—something you'll appreciate from your cozy room at

the Steamboat Inn, Mystic's only waterfront lodging, where amenities include working fireplaces, whirlpool tubs, and views of boats gliding to and from Long Island Sound. thisismystic.com SALISBURY: Preserved farmland and expansive fields surround this township, incorporated in 1741, which includes the artist-packed village of Lakeville. The streets are filled with antique homes, just enough shops to supply the essentials, and a handful of restaurants and bakeries (don't miss coffee and croissants at Sweet William's). Homebodies will love the four-star White Hart Inn, whose on-site taproom, café and general store, and farm-to-table restaurant make it a cinch to stay

put when the snow piles high. Come in February and you may be lucky enough to catch Olympic hopefuls flying high at Satre Hill, a dizzying, 30-meter-long slope that hosts the Eastern National Ski Jumping Championships. discoverlitchfieldhills.com **MAINE BAR HARBOR:** Off-season rates and a break from crowds of summer tourists put this coastal town in a whole new light. Acadia National Park is still a draw, but with much of the Park Loop Road closed to cars, it's now largely the province of cross-country skiers and snowshoers. In town, enjoy extra elbow room at popular spots such as

Choco-Latte (order the namesake drink, a warming blend of espresso, chocolate, and spices) and Havana, a Latin-inspired fine dining restaurant. Guests at the Saltair Inn, a cheery waterfront eight-room B&B, can get their hosts' inside tips on winter fun or simply snuggle into a fireplace-equipped suite. *visitbarharbor.com* **BETHEL:** Opened in 2019, the wow-worthy Maine Mineral & Gem Museum is the latest jewel in the crown of this mountain town and its environs, which already have one of New England's top ski resorts, Sunday River, and the state's best cross-country skiing network. There's Maine Guide–led dogsledding adventures here, too, courtesy

of the acclaimed Mahoosuc Guide Service. Bethel itself is a walkable and laid-back

town of black-shuttered Victorian homes, with a requisite village green and white

steepled church, and centrally located lodging in the form of the Bethel Inn Resort,

in an outdoor heated pool. *bethelmaine.com* 

of valentine season. gokennebunks.com

coziness. visitconcord.org

where winter escapes could include horse-drawn sleigh rides, ice skating, and soaks

CAMDEN: Summer in Camden may belong to its famous windjammers, and autumn to the coastal foliage fireworks, but winter here casts a spell of its own. Imagine strolling along the waterfront at Harbor Park ... inhaling the salty smell of the sea while riding the double chair to the top of Camden Snow Bowl ... warming up with award-winning pan-Asian fare at Long Grain ... and relaxing next to the fireplace at the Norumbega Inn's dream stay for bibliophiles: a two-story, book-filled Library Suite. camdenrockland.com **KENNEBUNKPORT/KENNEBUNK:** In these side-by-side towns, you don't have to trudge far through the snow to find a warm and welcoming refuge, from the vibrant

Kennebunk's Mornings in Paris café and Old Vines Wine Bar, a favorite for cocktails

February, look for special offers and events during Paint the Town Red, a celebration

and small plates. At Batson River Brewing & Distilling, one of last winter's must-try

dining experiences has returned: cozy heated fish shacks for up to six people. In

gift shop Daytrip Society and hip home boutique Minka in Dock Square, to

RANGELEY: Filled with spruces and pines top-heavy with snow and dotted with icedover lakes and rising ridges, this wild Maine landscape inspires snowmobilers, snowshoers, and ice fishing die-hards alike. Yet it's also well suited to those dreaming of hibernation. The area's grande dame, the Rangeley Inn, offers rooms year-round; nab one of its comfy couches and while away the day with a good book, or head down to the tavern for drinks and an armchair by the fire. Bonus: Just down the block is The Red Onion, where the house-made chili is justifiably famous. rangeleymaine.com

**MASSACHUSETTS CONCORD:** A blanket of snow turns this treasured New England town into something right out of Currier & Ives. Spend a laid-back afternoon wandering the crowd-free Minute Man National Historical Park or browsing the compact downtown, with beloved, decades-old retail standbys such as the Concord Bookshop, the Cheese Shop, and the Grasshopper Shop. Side trips could include hitting the slopes at Nashoba Valley in Westford and the deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum in Lincoln. And

**NANTUCKET:** Bustling beaches, cobblestone streets lined with shops, and 13,000-plus

playground. But winter has its charms, too, as the island invites visitors to stroll its

when you're ready to turn in, the Colonial Inn provides the requisite historical

acres of preserved land have long made Nantucket a world-famous summer

wide-open stretches of sand, unplug and curl up with a book, and grab a bed, meal, and souvenir at bargain prices. At the Nantucket Hotel & Resort, among the fringe benefits of an off-season stay are the portable fire pits on the porch, which tempt you to pull up a wicker chair and contemplate island life for a while. nantucketchamber.org NORTHAMPTON: Winter warm-ups come in many forms in Northampton, from the lush greenery of Smith College's 19th-century Lyman Conservatory to the steamy interior of artisan bakery Hungry Ghost Bread. Bookstores and coffee shops also provide refuge from the chill, including The Roost, whose rib-sticking Rooster Rolls

offer what the Food Network has called "the best breakfast between bread." Stay

close to it all at the Hotel Northampton, where select rooms have jetted whirlpool

tubs and gas fireplaces, and where the Wiggins Tavern serves up fine dining in an

intimate 18th-century setting complete with stonework, dark wood, and a cracking

hearth. visithampshirecounty.com **STOCKBRIDGE:** In pastoral western Massachusetts, the 18th- and 19th-century buildings along Main Street look much the same as when Norman Rockwell painted them in the 1950s. (Fans of the iconic American illustrator should be sure to visit his namesake museum, which houses the world's largest and most significant collection of Rockwell's work.) The Red Lion Inn, c. 1773, is one of the nation's oldest continuously operating historic inns, and its welcoming pub, the Lion's Den, is guaranteed to shut out whatever weather's howling outside. stockbridgechamber.org WILLIAMSTOWN: No town embodies the beauty of the Berkshires like

Williamstown, walled by the Taconic Mountains to the west and overlooking Mount

Greylock to the southeast, and the home of Williams College since 1791. Art lovers

will especially appreciate a winter stay here, with the Williamstown College of Art, The Clark, and Mass MoCA (in nearby North Adams) going strong through the snowy months. A few miles from downtown on Route 2, one of the newer options on the lodging scene, Tourists, promises a stay that's both rustic and modern. destinationwilliamstown.org **NEW HAMPSHIRE Hanover:** It's easy to fill a snowy weekend at this scenic town tucked alongside the Connecticut River and enlivened with all the perks that come with hosting an Ivy

League school, from Dartmouth College's sprawling art museum, the Hood, to the

diverse array of shops and eateries downtown. For a toasty (and tasty) side trip, the

**Jackson:** After a requisite swing through the outlet stores of North Conway, settle in

King Arthur Baking Company in nearby Norwich offers oven-fresh goodies, as well as

#### classes in how to make them. And don't miss dining at Pine, the Hanover Inn's sleek restaurant anchored by a huge fireplace inspired in part by a blacksmith forge. hanovernh.org/discover-hanover

for a winter stay in Jackson, a mountain town anchored by a circular green ringed with inns, antiques shops, and cafés that has been thriving as a vacation escape since the mid-19th century. The panorama of peaks is mesmerizing, whether seen from local cross-country trails, the slopes of Wildcat or Black Mountain, or the windows of a cozy country retreat, such as the Inn at Ellis River or the Christmas Farm Inn & Spa. And if you're traveling with your sweetheart, the Honeymoon Bridge offers the backdrop for a romantic winter selfie. jacksonnh.com Lincoln: While nature has made this part of New Hampshire undeniably beautiful,

man-made attractions also have a big role to play, especially in winter. Take a scenic

wander the glittering Ice Castles seasonal installation in nearby North Woodstock; or

drive on the Kancamagus Highway, just as jaw-dropping in winter as it is in fall;

ski right in town at the family-friendly Loon Mountain Resort (with another classic ski spot, Cannon Mountain, right up the road). Loon, by the way, is home to the newish (2016) RiverWalk Resort, which has an outdoor hot tub and heated pool, fire pits, and luxury suites with fireplaces, soaker tubs, and mountain views. westernwhitemtns.com Meredith: When temperatures drop, New Hampshire's Lakes Region sparkles with ice-covered expanses that draw the sports-minded set: Set on the shores of Winnipesaukee, Meredith hosts both the crowd-pleasing New England Pond Hockey Classic and the Great Rotary Ice Fishing Derby. But for those not into sub-freezing

thrills, Mill Falls at the Lake—comprising four hotels and inns, a spa, shops, and three

restaurants—makes a comfy home base for those inclined to appreciate this resort

Portsmouth: Walkability makes this historic port town a tourist favorite year-round,

but it's especially appealing in winter. Regionally famous restaurants sit alongside

independent boutiques selling everything from kitchenware to fine stationery;

town's winter beauty from the inside out. meredithareachamber.com

there's also more than 300 years' worth of historical architecture to explore at Strawbery Banke Museum (which invites ice skaters to enjoy its postcard-perfect pond). Nestle in at the centrally located Ale House Inn, whose 10 rooms include a deluxe king that lets you enjoy views of the snowy town, bridge, and harbor while still in your flannel PJs. goportsmouthnh.com **RHODE ISLAND BLOCK ISLAND:** Enjoy the slower pace and natural beauty of off-season on Block Island, where much of the land is designated as protected, meaning that the beautiful

seaside views here are nearly untouched. Make it feel even more like your own

private island with an overnight getaway at the Colonial-style 1661 Inn, where the

or the Victorian-era Hotel Manisses, famed for its chill-banishing "flaming coffee."

cozy amenities among the property's 24 rooms include whirlpool tubs and fireplaces,

#### NARRAGANSETT: Drawn by the surf at Narragansett Town Beach, the wetsuit crowd comes here in winter for some of the year's best waves. But for those inclined to stay on dry land, a winter stroll on Scarborough Beach is lovely, while a drive on Ocean Road, which runs along the sea through the arches of the Towers—the lone remaining artifact from a Gilded Age casino that burned decades ago—is a must.

blockislandinfo.com

at boutique hotel The Break. *narragansettcoc.com* **NEWPORT:** When winter comes to this famed sailing town, getting out on the water can mean twirling your way across freshly groomed ice at the Gurney's Resort skating rink. Stepping out on the Cliff Walk or Easton's Beach is invigorating. Thames Street shopping, Newport Mansions, the Audrain Automobile Museum, and other attractions offer indoor respite. And overnight guests appreciate the Chanler at Cliff Walk's butler-drawn aromatherapy baths or afternoon tea at Castle Hill Inn all the more. discovernewport.org

**WESTERLY:** A mere 10 minutes from this historic town on the Connecticut border is

mile peninsula dipping into Block Island Sound with sweeping views that encompass

hard to part from the warm glow of the massive c. 1895 lobby hearth (there's also an

one of Yankee's favorite coastal walks in any season: Napatree Point, a slender 1½-

Watch Hill Lighthouse. But splurge on a stay at Ocean House, and you may find it

award-winning spa on-site to boost guests' inner glow as well). *southcountyri.com* 

WICKFORD: Salty breezes enliven this waterfront town that boasts architecturally

intact churches and historic homes dating back to the 1700s, made even prettier with

Soak up the ocean scenery at the 1880s Coast Guard House Restaurant, which offers

expansive views and igloo dining, before retreating to a gas-fireplace-warmed suite

a dusting of snow. Take a self-guided walking tour of 20 noteworthy buildings; browse the dozens of independent downtown shops; or do both with help from a refueling stop at Shayna's Place for strong coffee and superlative sandwiches. Or if suds are more your thing, settle in with a winter beer at Tilted Barn Brewery's taproom, just up the road in Exeter. wickfordvillage.org **VERMONT MANCHESTER:** Enjoy art against a backdrop of snow at the Southern Vermont Arts

Center, home to Vermont's largest sculpture park and gardens; step back in time at

the museum estate Hildene (which also has snowshoe rentals for exploring 12 miles

of trails); or just putter around the designer outlets in search of stylish winter togs.

The 21-room Inn at Manchester stands ready to greet visitors with rustic charm and

fireplaces aplenty. *manchestervermont.com* **MIDDLEBURY:** Boutique shops, restaurants, and churches frame the downtown of this village nestled along Otter Creek, whose appeal has long been known to Middlebury College alumni and their families. A wood-fired pie at American Flatbread is an essential experience here, as is carving a few turns at the Middlebury Snow Bowl. For a memorable stay, book the Swift Room at the c. 1814 Swift House Inn: private deck, wood-burning fireplace, and a two-person soaking tub (plus:

homemade cookies!). experiencemiddlebury.com

STOWE: Chalets abound, craft beers flow, and fires crackle in the self-proclaimed "ski capital of the East." Stowe Mountain Resort offers 40 miles of ski trails on two mountains, Mount Mansfield and Spruce Peak, along with four terrain parks and a cross-country ski center. Lounge and nibble fireside après-ski (we recommend pubgrub favorite Doc Ponds) before retiring to the cozy mountain inn or resort of your choice—a number of which, like Stoweflake and the Lodge at Spruce Peak, have heated outdoor pools and hot tubs. *gostowe.com* **WAITSFIELD:** In the heart of the Mad River Valley, a winter wonderland famous for

its skiing, Waitsfield is a place to soak up local flavor—both literally, at famed brewer

Lawson's Finest Liquids and the Vermont-centric grocery Mad River Taste Place, and

figuratively, at craft hubs such as Artisans' Gallery and Mad River Antler. It also

claims one of the few round barns still in existence: the namesake of the Inn at

Round Barn Farm, a gourmet bed-and-breakfast set on 245 acres that turns

downright magical after a snowfall. *madrivervalley.com* **WOODSTOCK:** While this isn't a ski-in/ski-out destination (Killington and Suicide Six are nearby, but you'll have to drive), Woodstock's charm factor is hard to top once you return from playing outside. Within an easy walk of the Woodstock Inn & Resort, where the pampering includes a 10,000-square-foot spa, there are excellent restaurants and an eclectic mix of shops, plus a classic town green and photogenic covered bridge. woodstockvt.com

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Nancy W. January 10, 2022 Excellent article. Reply

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