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# **25 Best Summer Coastal Events in New England**

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Headed to the coast this summer? Mark your calendar for these seasonal celebrations that are worth the drive.

Yankee Staff · April 5, 2022 · Add Comment

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Few things say "summer escape" like the New England coast, with its scenic shoreline, inviting beaches, and charming seaside towns. *Yankee's May/June feature* "Call of the Coast" celebrates all of these timeless lures, but we have even more reasons right here for you to start planning your ocean escape. Namely, the full slate of events that enliven the New England coast and its islands each summer, from amazing seafood feasts to Fourth of July fireworks by the water. Read on for ideas on what to do this summer from our selection of 25 favorite coastal events.

## **25 Best Summer Coastal Events in New England**

**Best Summer Coastal Events in Maine** 



**Resurgam Music and Arts Festival** 

Portland | June 12, 2022

After the Old Port Festival ended its nearly 50-year run in 2019, Maine's "city by the sea" was left without a signature summer kickoff. The Maine Academy of Modern Music aims to change that with Resurgam, a full day of free fun on Thompson's Point featuring live music, Maine-made arts and crafts, food vendors, and a children's parade.

#### Windjammer Days

#### Boothbay Harbor | June 26–July 2, 2022

Delight your inner ocean adventurer with a trip to Boothbay harbor for this weeklong nautical gala. Can't-miss highlights include the Gathering of the Fleet, showcasing beautifully maintained examples of the grandest of merchant sailing ships, aka the windjammers, and the Harbor Aglow lighted boat parade. Plus: pancake breakfasts, a street parade, cod fish races, fireworks over the harbor, and plenty of pirate mischief.

## **Yarmouth Clam Festival**

Yarmouth | July 15–17, 2022

More than 100,000 people are expected to descend on Yarmouth for this homage to the clam, and they'll be bringing their appetites: From start to finish, more than 6,000 pounds of clams (along with 6,000 lobster rolls, 2,500 pancake breakfasts, and 400 homemade pies) are expected to be consumed this weekend, making it one of the most delicious Maine summer events on record. There's more to the fun than the food, though, thanks to live music on two main stages, a clam-shucking contest, a parade and street dancing, fireworks, a professional bike race, and a firefighters muster.

## Maine Lobster Festival

## Rockland Harbor Park | August 3–7, 2022

Some Maine summer events are a larger spectacle than others. Gorgeous Rockland Harbor is the backdrop for the Maine Lobster Festival, a venerable lobster blowout and Midcoast tradition since 1947. The five days of fun and feasting will see 20,000– 25,000 pounds of lobster—all freshly caught by local lobstermen—served to hungry festivalgoers, who can also amble through maritime displays and demonstrations, browse arts and crafts vendors, take a harbor cruise, cheer on competitors in the lobster crate race in the harbor, and listen to live entertainment. Don't miss the crowning of the Maine Sea Goddess on opening night!

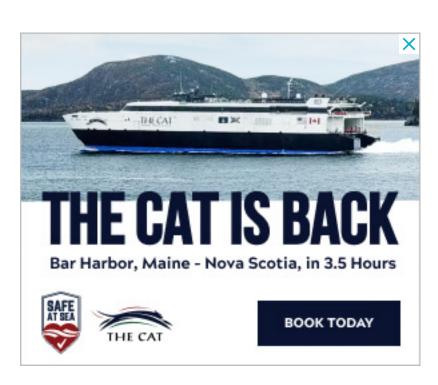
## **Open Lighthouse Day**

September 10, 2022

Sponsored by the U.S. Coast Guard, the American Lighthouse Foundation, and the Maine Office of Tourism, this event draws upward of 15,000 visitors each year. The attraction? More 20 historic Maine lighthouses, all open to the public and ready to be explored. Get a rare chance to climb a tower that's usually closed to visitors, such as Portland Head Light, the state's oldest lighthouse. For the full list of this year's locations, check the website.

**Best Summer Coastal Events in Massachusetts** 





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## **Cape Cod Baseball League**

### Various locations | Opening Day June 12, 2022

As twilight descends, the glow of stadium lights marks the fields where teams from 10 towns play in the Cape Cod Baseball League, the country's elite summer league for college players. Check the schedule and make plans to see the stars of tomorrow: More than 300 current and former MLB players spent at least one summer on the Cape, including Hall of Famers Jeff Bagwell and Carlton Fisk.

## **Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular**

Boston | July 4, 2022

One of the most beloved Massachusetts summer events, this free Boston Pops concert draws more than 300,000 to the Esplanade along the Charles River (tip: if you can stand to skip the fireworks, go on July 3 to enjoy the concert with a little more elbow room). And when the concert wraps up, a stunning half-hour display of pyrotechnics gets under way.

## Cape Cod Hydrangea Festival

Various locations | July 8–17, 2022

The Cape's signature flower takes center stage in tours of private gardens and workshops and lectures by leading international horticulturalists. This community celebration also coincides with the annual Hydrangea Festival at Heritage Museums & Gardens in Sandwich, whose Cape Cod Hydrangea Display Garden offers a showcase of about 155 species and cultivars, including many "historic" cultivars that are not commonly found in the trade.

## **Feast of the Blessed Sacrament**

## New Bedford | Aug. 4–7, 2022

Billed as the largest Portuguese feast of its kind in the world and the single largest ethnic festival in all of New England, this annual New Bedford tradition is still going strong after more than a century. Over 100,000 people are expected to attend the event, which offers a carnival midway, Portuguese food, live entertainment on four stages, a 5K road race, and a parade.

#### **Carnival Week**

#### Provincetown | Aug. 13–20, 2022

Hands down, there's no livelier place on the Cape in August than Provincetown, where parties, art fairs, a costume ball, and other celebrations of LGBTQ life all lead up to the vibrant spectacle of the Carnival Parade.

## Nantucket Race Week

Nantucket| Aug. 13–21, 2022

Among the highlights of this sailing extravaganza — nine days of races, parties, and award ceremonies — are the Nantucket Regatta, part of the prestigious North American Panerai Classic Yachts Challenge Series; a radio-controlled model boat regatta; the Rainbow Fleet Parade; and the Opera House Cup, the oldest classic sailboat race on the East Coast, which draws a fleet of some 100 vintage yachts.

## Martha's Vineyard Livestock Show and Fair

West Tisbury | Aug. 18–21, 2022

Now in its 160th year, this island country fair is filled with old-time fun — shucking contests, skillet toss, horse pull, woodsmen competition — plus dog and livestock shows, arts and crafts, midway rides, and more.

**Best Summer Coastal Events in Connecticut** 



Norwalk Oyster Festival | Best Summer Coastal Events in Connecticut Courtesy of Norwalk Seaport Association

## Wooden Boat Show Mystic | June 24–26, 2022

In partnership with WoodenBoat Publications, Mystic Seaport Museum hosts New England's largest gathering of wooden boats and enthusiasts in New England, with enough demonstrations, tours, and workshops to satisfy your high-seas fantasies. There will be more than 100 traditional and classic wooden boats of every type on display, from handcrafted kayaks to mahogany runabouts, to classic daysailers and schooners.

Sailfest New London | July 8–10, 2022

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Considered southeastern Connecticut's premier summertime event, Sailfest draws more than 300,000 visitors to the New London waterfront district for free entertainment on two stages, 200-plus food and craft vendors, a 5K run, amusement rides, and a major fireworks show.

## **Hey Stamford! Food Festival**

Stamford | Aug. 11–14 & 18–21, 2022

Mill River Park provides the backdrop to two long weekends of food, music, and fun. More than 50 area food trucks and vendors will be on hand to delight the taste buds with everything from gelato to barbecue, while main-stage musical performances are guaranteed to keep the party vibe going.

#### Mystic Outdoor Art Festival Mystic | Aug. 13–14, 2022

The oldest event of its kind in the Northeast, the Mystic Outdoor Art Festival attracts thousands of visitors from around New England and beyond with its lineup of 200plus juried artists. All told, there's more than two miles' worth of arts and crafts booths to peruse, plus all-ages activities including a children's "art park," and food

## **Norwalk Oyster Festival**

East Norwalk | Sep. 9–11, 2022

Norwalk gives thanks for its maritime bounty at this harborside seafood bash, which has grown from 10,000 attendees in 1978 to more than 60,000 today. Oysters play a starring role both in the food court and in events like the oyster slurping contest. Look for a full array of amusement rides alongside live music and entertainment, harbor cruises, and displays of oyster history and artifacts.

#### Best Summer Coastal Events in Rhode Island

and drink for sale by local charitable organizations.



Bristol Fourth of July Parade | Best Summer Coastal Events in Rhode Island Discover Newport

#### **Bristol Fourth of July Parade** Bristol | July 4, 2022

The country's longest-running annual Independence Day celebration draws a crowd to the historic downtown, so arrive early to get a good spot along the route.

#### **Newport Kite Festival** Newport | July 9-10, 2022

Bring your own kite and join in the fun, or just kick back and watch a flock of colorful wind riders dance over the coastal landscape of Brenton Point State Park. Some concessions are available, but picnicking is welcome, too. Admission and parking are free.

## **Blessing of the Fleet**

Narragansett | July 28–30, 2022

The highlight of this annual event is the parade of commercial and recreational vessels, blessed by clergy at the Port of Galilee and judged for prizes. Other diversions include a 10-mile road race and food, games, rides, a beer tent, and live music by local bands.

#### **Charlestown Seafood Festival** Charlestown | August 5–7, 2022

exhibition, and more.

From lobsters, steamers, and chowder to fish and chips, clam cakes, and a raw bar, the whole spectrum of the Ocean State's sea harvest is on delicious display in Ninigret Park, along with a wide variety of arts and crafts, amusement rides, a car show, a kite

**Best Summer Coastal Events in New Hampshire** 



Hampton Beach Master Sand Sculpting Classic | Best Summer Coastal Events in New

Hampshire Paul Dionne/iStock

## **Chowder Festival**

Portsmouth | June 4, 2022

For more than three decades, this event — one of the oldest and largest chowder festivals in New England — has drawn chefs from across the region to Portsmouth's beautiful waterfront Prescott Park to help kick off the summer season in New Hampshire. Bring your appetite, as more than 500 gallons of delicious chowder of all kinds will be served.

### Market Square Day

Portsmouth | June 11, 2022

The streets of downtown Portsmouth fill with locals and visitors alike for this traditional celebration of the city's renovation and beautification efforts. Expect live tunes from musical acts on two performance stages, and 150-plus booths featuring artists, craftspeople, nonprofits, downtown and Seacoast-area merchants and restaurants.

## Hampton Beach Master Sand Sculpting Classic

Hampton | June 16–18, 2022

Watch as 200 tons of imported sand is transformed into monumental works of art by the participants in this venerable invitation-only competition — and even take a free tutorial on how to do it yourself. At night the sculptures are lighted for viewing, turning Hampton Beach into a magical oceanside art gallery. Rounding things off is a fireworks show on closing night.

#### Hampton Beach Seafood Festival Hampton | September 9–11, 2022

Miles of Hampton Beach's main drag, Ocean Boulevard, are closed to traffic for this event, creating a lively pedestrian mall bordered by beautiful ocean views. There's plenty to enjoy, including performances by more than a dozen local bands and a big fireworks show, but food is definitely the star here. Top Seacoast restaurants and local vendors lay out quite a spread — fried clams, lobster, shrimp, and more while professional eaters test their mettle in the lobster roll eating contest.

What New England summer coastal events would you add to this list? Let us know!

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