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BEACHES

Best Beach Camping in New England | Favorite Spots

A handy guide to some of the top beach camping destinations in New England.

Yankee Magazine · April 18, 2022 · Read Comments (12)



3.61 avg. rating (72% score) - 22 votes

Please note that many establishments throughout New England have modified their hours and/or operations in response to COVID-19. Always check for the latest information before making travel plans.

Always wanted to go camping by the ocean? From Maine to Connecticut, here are some of the best beach camping destinations we've found in New England — but book early, as these seaside spots fill up fast.

Best Beach Camping in New England



Hammonasset Beach in Connecticut | Best Beach Camping in New England Wikimedia Commons

Best Beach Camping in Connecticut

Hammonasset Beach State Park | Madison

Boasting 900 acres, Hammonasset is 2 miles of sandy beach with mild ocean temperatures (we've enjoyed the sea there well into September) and a light surf. All in all, it's perfect for swimming, hiking, and surf fishing. The array of 550-plus wellmaintained campsites makes for an inexpensive beach vacation when the big resort hotels are overflowing.

Best Beach Camping in Maine

Blackwoods Campground at Acadia National Park | Bar Harbor Seawall Campground at Acadia National Park | Southwest Harbor

Maine's Mount Desert Island offers two park campgrounds. The popular Blackwoods, located 5 miles south of Bar Harbor on Route 3, has 306 sites conveniently located on the east side of the island. Seawall, located 4 miles south of Southwest Harbor, has 214 tent sites nestled in the woods; plus, the campground is only a 10-minute walk to the tidal pools. Both are close to hiking, boating, and mountain biking opportunities.

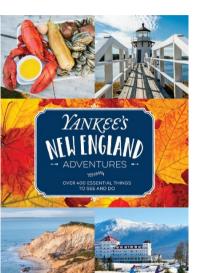
SEE MORE: Acadia National Park | Things to See and Do

Hermit Island Campground | Phippsburg

Located on a 255-acre peninsula overlooking Casco Bay, Hermit Island has 270 campsites, some with ocean views. To the north are several beaches, hiking trails, and a small marina and wharf. Enjoy sandy beaches, rocky cliffs, and forests before toasting marshmallows under the stars. When reserving, note that campsites fall into four categories depending on proximity to the ocean, views, and beach access. If you're not keen on tent camping, three cabins are available to rent.

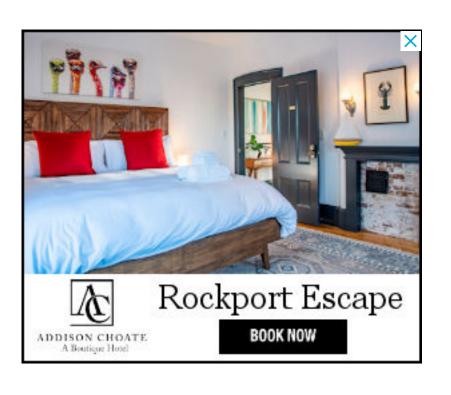
Searsport Shores Ocean Camping | Searsport

"Tired of the congestion of southern Maine? Looking for a Maine campground vacation that accommodates both RV camping and tent camping in separate shaded camping sites?" The website says it all. Located on the shores of Penobscot Bay, between bustling Bar Harbor and charming Camden, Searsport Shores offers a quarter-mile of private beach with a 100-yard tide. Some of the 125 campsites even have ocean views.



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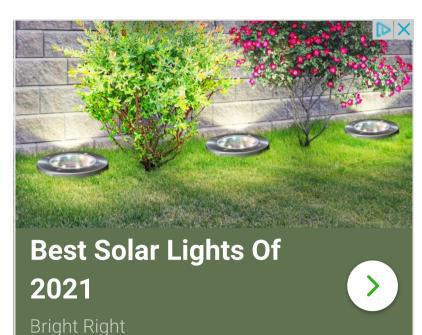
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Best Beach Camping in Massachusetts

Boston Harbor Islands | Ferry Access from Boston, Hingham & Hull

It's hard to find a more memorable beach camping spot in New England. Where else can you pitch a tent and sleep under the stars so close to a major metropolitan city? Camping is allowed on certain islands (including Lovells, Peddocks, Grape, and Bumpkin) during the summer months, but sites are limited — and popular! Make your reservation early, then enjoy the beaches, wildlife, tide pools, and spectacular city views.

SEE MORE: Boston Harbor Islands | National Recreation Area

Shawme-Crowell State Forest Campground | Sandwich

Sandy shore and tranquil forest — both sides of Cape Cod can be your playground all week for less than you'd pay for a single night at a family resort. So pack up your kids, the dog, and a tent (or reserve a yurt if you're new to camping) and enjoy evenings by a campfire at your private site after days of hiking this 700-acre preserve or swimming in relatively warm bay waters. It's a little-advertised perk that campers here enjoy free access to nearby Scusset Beach. And even more obscure that mushroom foragers love these woods.



Salisbury Beach in Massachusetts | Best Beach Camping in New England Wikimedia Commons

Salisbury Beach State Reservation | Salisbury

To keep things orderly, the 484 campsites — each with picnic table and barbecue grill — are arranged along lettered streets. The campground doesn't sit right on the water, but it's within walking distance of Salisbury Beach, a 4-mile stretch of dunes and white sand beach, with plenty of room to spread out.

Bourne Scenic Park | Bourne

Families have been coming to this woodsy enclave for idylls on the Cape Cod Canal in the shadow of the Bourne Bridge for more than 50 years. Two in-ground pools offer freshwater swimming, and saltwater beaches are only a short bike ride away. Catch dinner by fishing off the rocks.

Best Beach Camping in New Hampshire

Hampton Beach State Park | Hampton

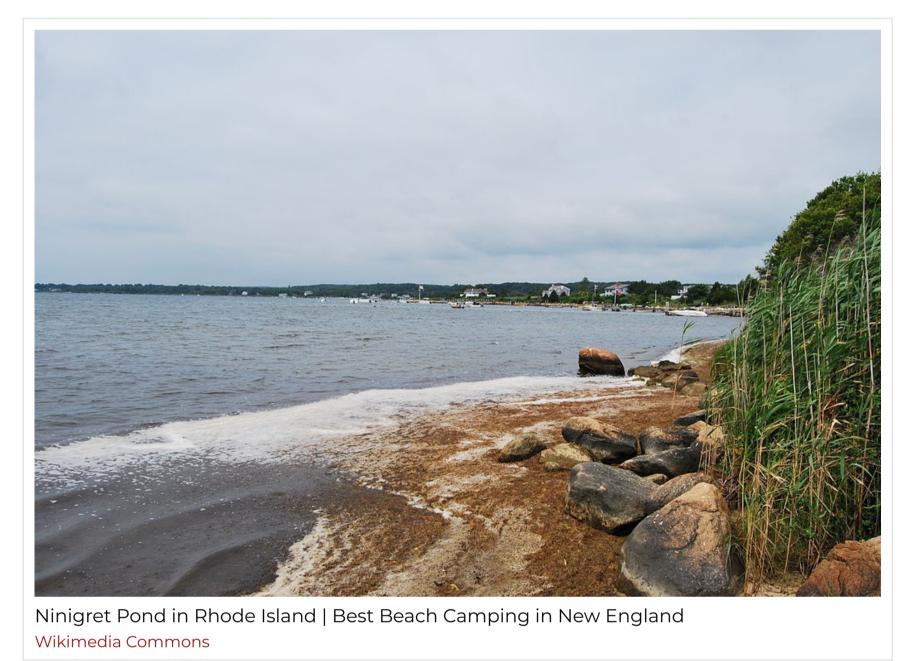
Seasonal RV camping at Hampton Beach State Park offers oceanfront facilities situated along miles of sandy beach. In fact, the 28 sites make up the only RV park on the New Hampshire coast. Located at the mouth of the Hampton River and close to attractions like sandy beaches, whale watching, and saltwater fishing, Hampton Beach is a popular summer camping destination. Note: Campers must be able to hook up to water, sewer, and electricity — tents or pop-ups are not allowed.

SEE MORE: Things to Do in Hampton Beach, NH

Best Beach Camping in Rhode Island

Charlestown Breachway | Charlestown

Located within walking distance of the beach and boasting panoramic views of Block Island Sound, the 75 sites at Charlestown Breachway are RV-only (no tents). There's a boat launch with limited parking, plus some of the best saltwater fishing in South County. Prefer swimming? Take a dip at Ninigret, the state's largest coastal pond, just a short stroll away.



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East Beach | Charlestown

Also in Charlestown, East Beach is a large stretch of sand overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and Narragansett Bay. Part of the Ninigret Conservation Area, the 20-site RV campground has not just a beautiful beach but also hiking trails and terrific opportunities for bird-watching.

Do you have a favorite beach camping spot?

Note: This information was accurate at the time of publication. When planning a trip, please confirm details by directly contacting any company or establishment you intend to visit.

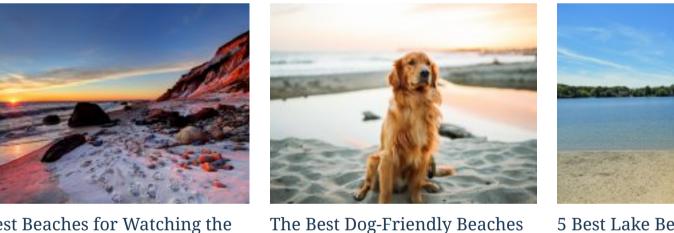
This post was first published in 2017 and has been updated.

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Comments

Carol M. April 23, 2022

Why didn't this article include Fisherman's Memorial State Park Campground in Narragansett, RI? It's beautiful.

Reader L. April 18, 2022

Reply

Scusset State Reservation on Cape Cod Bay and the Cape Cod Canal is spectacular. Whales, seals and dolphins. Huge ocean vessels. Huge sandy beach. 100 rv sites with hookups. A Summer week in paradise or weekend escape on the Cape. ???? Reply

Cindy G. May 29, 2021

Camped on the water once in MA, and had a lobsterman sail by and sell us lobsters right from his boat! Heaven! Anywhere we can do this? Reply

William A. April 20, 2021 How about camping on Cape Cod? Reply

Lynn H. March 2, 2019

Hi. Please be sure to include which beach campsites permit pets. We had wanted to stay in Hampton Beach State Park but couldn't because we travel with a dog. That state park is located on the beach and dogs are not permitted on the beach May to Sept. It is on their website and also in conversations with the park employees by phone. We wound up staying at Shel-Al which was quite nice except a drive to the beaches. The parking fees in Hampton Beach were very expensive if we wanted to vacation daily at the beach for a week. Too bad they don't do a deal for the longer one stays. The parking fee has prevented us from returning to Hampton Beach. We might try elsewhere on the New England coast though! Reply

Wendy M. January 31, 2019

The Breach, as it's local nickname, is a one of a kind place! LOCATION is perfect. Even though most describe it as a dirt parking lot, actually not really brown soil/dirt, it is sandy/pepple parking lot. The activities that are all within your reach in minutes. The only RV camping spot directly on the shoreline, but also on a breachway. The beach and I mean real sandy beach that is not full of umbrella's everywhere. Around the bend is the salt ponds for many vessel activities. Biking riding down sandy beach road for a quick snack at the little beach shack on the salt ponds. The fishing is over the top. Even though you must be a self contained unit, that is why this little paradise is the way it is. The best place on the entire new England east coast shoreline camping with so many perks!!! Reply

Charlene July 1, 2018

We camp at Charlestown Breachway very often and yes it is a dirt parking lot and no they don't offer any water or electric but a quick walk through the parking lot and you are on a gorgeous beach that is never crowded. We also get a clamming license and get the best clams around. We also kyack and paddle board. The sunrises and sunsets are simple gorgeous there! We love it! Reply

Debbie L. June 16, 2017

I thought beach camping was actually on the beach with water right at or near your site. I know for a fact that Paine's Campground, although a really nice campground, is NOT on any beach but a good walk of 2.5-3.5 miles to the ocean, and almost 2 miles to a pond.

Reply

Barbara D. June 16, 2017

I want anyone wishing to camp at Charlestown Breachway in Rhode Island be aware that all this is, is a dirt parking lot. You park side by side with no amenities. The only room you have is enough for your awning to open so you can sit out. The beach has a big drop off to get into the water and there are lots of little stones at the waves edge making it hard to get in and out of the water. I have camped there, love that it is so close to the water, but a day or two is more than enough time. Remember no hook-ups and no dump station. Not saying don't go, just saying be prepared. Reply

Gail P. June 16, 2017

Just got back from Fishermen's Memorial State Park Campground in Rhode Island and that is far superior to the other RI campgrounds you mention. The sites are shady and provide incredibly easy access to fishing ports in Galilee and Point Judith as well as the beautiful Scarborough State Beach. We also took the ferry out to Block Island for the day. Reply

jen_e July 4, 2018

Hi! I just made reservations here and I'm wondering how best to get around to the beaches. We have 2 kids and from the map it looks like walking to the ocean might be too far for them. We'll have the car but I worry about parking.

Reply

Elaine H. April 18, 2022

Parking can be an issue, but we always managed to,find spots but had to,drive around and sometimes park a ways from the beaches. Usually, there is paid parking which will have openings- go early for better chance of getting a good spot, and scout out some lesser known parking areas before hand. I like,to,park,in people's driveways, that way I can get free meals too at the local jailhouse after I get back to my car from the beach.. saves a,lot,on the food bill. Just kidding g of course, but yeah, i know like, in Ogunquit, moody wells area, driving around along the sea wall will get you a spot as folks leave and arrive constantly throughout the day, jusy gotta be patient. Bring some, snacks to much on while, waiting. Summers thercan be pretty hectic driving. But with good, patience you can almost always find good spots Reply

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