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An A-Z guide to why we love Rhode Island

By Dan McGowan Globe Columnist, Updated June 13, 2022, 9:11 a.m.

Squonk Opera's Cycle Sonic show at PVDFest, the annual multi-arts festival in Providence, R.I. JOHN ALTDORFER

Once in a while, it's important to stop and smell the quahogs.

Rhode Island is a special place to live or visit, and it shines especially bright during the summer. So whether you call this place home or are in need of a spectacular vacation, here's an A-Z guide to why we love Rhode Island.

Travelers at T.F. Green International Airport in Rhode Island. DAVID GOLDMAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Airport

There isn't a more convenient airport in America than PVD, which is actually in Warwick and is officially called Rhode Island T. F. Green International Airport. No one in the state lives more than 20 minutes away, and there's never a wait in the security line. To top it all off, you will never see nicer bathrooms.

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The view from the Spring House Hotel on Block Island. JONATHAN WIGGS/GLOBE STAFF

Block Island

From Ballard's to moped rides, Block Island is perfect for both day trips and extended vacations. Bonus: If you're from Rhode Island, there's a 75 percent chance you'll know at least one other person on the ferry ride over.

Head coach Ed Cooley of the Providence Friars. QUINN HARRIS/GETTY

Coach Ed Cooley

The Providence College men's basketball coach has been building a Big East powerhouse on the court, but he's also a role model to children across the state, the most sought-after speaker on the philanthropic circuit, and perhaps the most beloved Rhode Islander on the planet right now. If the Friars ever make the Final Four, Providence will need to rename Eaton Street after him.

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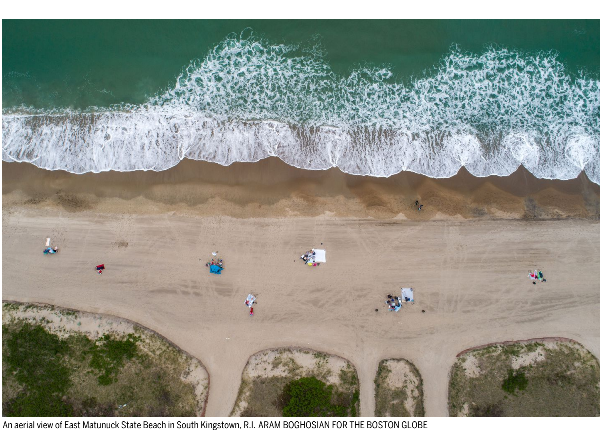
A slice of Gregg's six-layer Death by Chocolate cake. GREGG'S FACEBOOK PAGE

Death by Chocolate

You'll need to save a lot of room for dessert if you want to finish a slice of this cake from Gregg's, which consists of six layers of chocolate cake and is covered in chocolate chips. It's so good that even former president Barack Obama ordered it when he visited Rhode Island a few years ago.



An aerial view of East Matunuck State Beach in South Kingstown, R.I. ARAM BOGHOSIAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

East Matunuck State Beach

There are so many different ways to judge your favorite beach, but this South Kingstown beach is the cleanest and the quietest, so you can catch some rays without the yelling and screaming you get at some of the more crowded beaches in the state.

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DePasquale Square on Federal Hill in Providence. LANE TURNER/GLOBE STAFF

Federal Hill

The Hill has been home to some of the best Italian restaurants in the country for a long time, but a recent decision to close parts of Atwells Avenue to vehicle traffic on weekends has made it one of the most beautiful places to take a walk in Providence. You can catch live music in DePasquale Square, have a wonderful dinner, and even get a tattoo if you wish.

The Hot Club in Providence, R.I.

Good Night Lights

What started as one bar (the Hot Club) flashing its neon sign as a message of support for the children across the river at Hasbro Children's Hospital has become so much bigger in recent years as the East Providence Police Department and others have joined in.

Rhode Island Hospital. PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

Hospitals

Speaking of Hasbro Children's Hospital, Rhode Island is lucky to have several world-class hospitals with terrific doctors and nurses right in our own backyard -- often overshadowed by the medical centers in Boston and New York. We don't thank them enough for everything they to do treat us and keep us healthy.

Ida Lewis Rock Light in Newport. KENNETH C. ZIRKEL VIA WIKIMEDIA

Ida Lewis Rock Light

Constructed in 1854, this Newport lighthouse is named after a former keeper who was once called the "bravest woman in America" for saving at least 18 lives during her tenure.

A US Coast and Geodetic survey marker in a stone from 1968 marks the high point of Jerimoth Hill, the tallest hill in the state at 812 feet. DEBEE TLUMACKI FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Jerimoth Hill

It's the highest point in Rhode Island, allowing you to thumb your nose at Connecticut while truly appreciating the beauty of our state.

A sandwich at Kay's Restaurant in Woonsocket, R.I. KAY'S RESTAURANT

Kay's Restaurant

Woonsocket sometimes feels like the most forgotten place in Rhode Island, but Kay's has some of the best sandwiches you can get anywhere. So put on your Napoleon Lajoie throwback baseball jersey and get to Kay's for lunch.

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Boston Globe columnist Dan McGowan, who coaches a Little League team in Providence, R.I., congratulated Finn Crossman, 7, during a recent game. MARK STOCKWELL FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Little League dominance

Rhode Island doesn't get enough credit for the amount of talent it produces in baseball, especially at the Little League level. Between 2011 and 2021, the state sent six teams to Williamsport, Penn., for the Little League World Series. That's the best performance of any state in the country.

A man took a selfie as customers gathered outside Mr. Lemon in Providence. BLAKE NISSEN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Mr. Lemon

Everyone has heard of Del's Lemonade, but the best frozen drink in the state comes from this family-owned business in Providence's North End. If you stick your head in the window, you can see the sign that shows the best alcohol to pair with your flavored icy drink.

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Run by Black journalists at The Boston Globe, "Black News Hour," a new radio program, delivers reliable news that connects with our community and expands on deeper issues impacting our city.

BOSTON GLOBE VIDEO

March for Our Lives rallies in Boston SHARE

More than a thousand demonstrators gathered Saturday afternoon on Boston's waterfront to call for stronger gun control laws. (PHOTO: ERIN CLARK/GLOBE STAFF)

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Matthew McConaughey discusses Uvalde victims
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Have you explored Virginia?
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The Nonviolence Institute in Providence, R.I. | THE NONVIOLENCE INSTITUTE

Nonviolence Institute

Rhode Island is lucky to be home to many nonprofits doing important work, but the Nonviolence Institute has helped serve the lives of hundreds of young men and women of color over the past two decades. They understand how to determine tension among gangs, and they've given lots of people a second chance to make a difference in their community.

Jesse Mercado and Benjamin Ortiz are the co-founders of Nonviolence Institute in Rhode Island. | COURTESY PROVIDER

Ocean Mist

We already mentioned Ballard's on Block Island, but if you want to stay on the mainland, this South Kingstown spot delivers five-means, good food, and cheap drinks.

PVDfest

Fancy board of beards by beefcurrent. Just if you want to get in on the ground floor of the next great national festival, start coming to PVDfest. This three-day party rocks from transitions downtown Providence into the best block party of the summer, complete with live music and beautiful art installments.

RELATED: **Scenes from PVDFest 2022: Providence's iconic arts festival**

Jesse Mercado and Benjamin Ortiz are the co-founders of Nonviolence Institute in Rhode Island. | COURTESY PROVIDER

Quahogging

Some would say that you're not officially a Rhode Islander until you've tried digging for these clams, but as long as you've mind a stuffed quahog, you probably qualify.

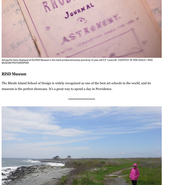
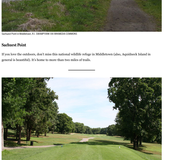


Image by Pixabay | PIXABAY

RISD Museum

The Rhode Island School of Design is widely recognized as one of the best art schools in the world, and its museum is the perfect discussion. It's a great way to spend a day in Providence.



Jackson's Point | MARGOT THE ADVENTURE JOURNEYS

Sachuest Point

If you love the outdoors, don't miss this national wildlife refuge in Middletown (also, Aquidneck Island in general is beautiful). It's home to more than two miles of trails.

The 15th tee at Twin Rivers Golf Course in Providence, R.I. | TRISTA MORFIA, DEC COURIER

Briggs Memorial Golf Course

Golf isn't for everyone, but this public course in Providence is one of the most special tracks in Rhode Island. Be prepared for a long day because it gets pretty crowded, so make sure you bring sunscreen and Deer Lick of Bees. Pro tip: The part of beach-hole player much longer than it looks.

Cape Ann Bike and Boat Tours, photo posted on Aug. 20, 2019 | CAPE ANN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, FACEBOOK

Unclear driving directions

Take a left at the old Bessie's, followed by a right at the gas station that's now an apartment complex, and if you hit the old Bumpa King, you've gone too far. If you're visiting Rhode Island for the first time, your GPS is going to be way more reliable than asking for help from those of us who have lived here for a long time.

Vida Davis, who will attend the upcoming Women's Rhode Island Classic, Cranston, R.I. | JOE MANTEGNA

Vida Davis

This Central Falls native has become one of the most special actresses of our time, and she's always showing love to the tiny city that earned her. She's also a Rhode Island College graduate.

Head coaches Kayla Sadell (Cranston Junior Nationals) and Ryan Mullen (Cranston Junior Nationals) | Rhode Island Women's Hockey Association, Facebook

Watch Hill

If you can't get enough of Taylor Swift, you can visit one of her homes that's here in Westerly (she's for a young, through). The fun backstory of her mansion is detailed in the catchy song, "The Last Great American Dynasty."

Bethesda Mall, Bethesda, Md. | CORP VIDEOS/PRODUCER

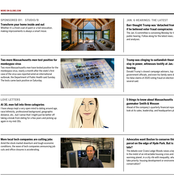
A Gamer

Did you know that Newport and Providence hosted the first ever Summer X Games back in 1995? The winners of stars Dan Tony Hawk (who didn't win gold) and Mat Hoffman were launched to these competitions. Rhode Island should cook to bring the X Games home, if only because it will require lots of public parking.

Camp Yavneyeh in Rhode Island. | CORP VIDEOS/PRODUCER

Camp Yavneyeh

Run by the Narragansett Council of the Boy Scouts of America, Yavneyeh in Brookville, R.I., is one of the oldest Boy Scout camps in the country. It covers 1,800 acres and hosts hundreds of children each year.



A reenactor will especially at the Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence, R.I. | PHOTO PROVIDED BY RIP OUT FIBERS

The Zoo

The Roger Williams Park Zoo is fun to visit with your children any time of the year, but the best time is around Halloween when Ravenwoods of Lush is welcome out carved and lit up to celebrate the spooky season.

So there you have it. There actually are at least one other reasons to love the Ocean State, and if you live here, remember them. If you visit, we hope you experience as much joy discovering the delights of this special place as we have.

Dan Rickman can be reached at dan.rickman@phjournal.com. Follow him on Twitter, @thatsmyrickman.

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Ken Vanagel Trump was 'detached from reality' in his conversations, former aide testifies

Ex-Trump lieutenant Cassidy Hutchinson is author bearing "critical energy" for Kevin Cates, systems and technology.

Two more Massachusetts men hurt pontoon by Washington shoes

Two men from Massachusetts were hurt when a pontoon boat they were in was struck by a piece of a shoe that fell from a passing plane in Washington, Massachusetts, and Sunday. Two people were hurt when a pontoon boat they were in was struck by a piece of a shoe that fell from a passing plane in Washington, Massachusetts, and Sunday.

Trump says clinging to unshaded theories to cling to power, eliminate loyalty at Jan. 6 panel

Donald Trump's lawyer contended whether the former president had a "sincere belief" in the claims he made claims of 2020 voting fraud and election rigging.

LIFE, LIVING

D.W. and Hall sale Bean categories

Have always had a very open mind to selling around eight or nine years ago, we started selling Bean's products, also, and I assume that Craigslist and Bean's Facebook page, and I'm not sure what we're going to open in the site.

5 things to know about Massachusetts governor Charlie D'Marcus

Ahead of the company's quarterly financial report, Sun's CEO is in Lima, Leadership, and Management Leader.

Mass head tech companies are calling jobs

Amazon has a current vacancy and a very long business plan, and Google is hiring for a number of positions, and with office closures is pretending.

Arkansas and Boston to remove the middle spot on the edge of Apple Park, But is it too late?

The owner of Cold Lodge Rhode Island, a long-standing Boston-area restaurant, is preparing to open a new location in the North Kingsville, which would be the first location of Cold Lodge Rhode Island, a long-standing Boston-area restaurant.

THE GOODS, TIMES

Donald Trump's lawyer Tutwiler to serve a total ban on Jan. 6 committee

Tutwiler is a longtime Republican lawyer who served as Alabama's first female U.S. Attorney. Tutwiler is a longtime Republican lawyer who served as Alabama's first female U.S. Attorney.

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Tell us: Are you among the lucky minority who never gets sick?

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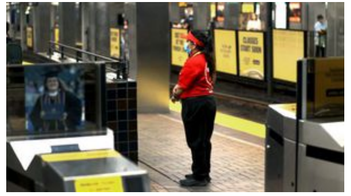
"detached from reality" if he believed voter fraud conspiracies

Tell us: Are you among the lucky minority who never got COVID-19?

'The Marshals are not going to stop looking for her.' Suspect in killing of Vt. cyclist in Texas still at large

Driver's licenses for residents without legal status just became law. Now, the GOP wants Mass. voters to repeal it.

They offer help with CharlieCards and directions. At $102 million, panel mulls if T Ambassador contract is too pricey.



COLUMN

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Kayaker finds body believed to be missing 6-year-old boy in Merrimack River

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