



# In the Driver's Seat: Baby-Bumping Around Newport, Rhode Island

Where to go for a fabulous East Coast babymoon.



BY JANELL M. HICKMAN-KIRBY / PUBLISHED: DEC 12, 2022

*Far-flung travel is fabulous if you've got the time (and budget!) to make it happen. But if you're looking for a quick and easy getaway, allow us to remind you of the beauty of the weekend road trip. In this recurring series, we ask seasoned travelers to share all the details of their best recent trip, from the car they drove to the clothes they packed—and of course, the must-visit locations on their itinerary.*

## THE DESTINATION

At 28-weeks pregnant, I was determined to have a final travel fling with my husband that didn't require a complicated itinerary, uncomfortable plane travel, or any layovers. Cut to me googling "easy East Coast babymoons" at 2AM. Thankfully, I landed on Newport, Rhode Island, a beachside destination roughly 3.5 hours away from New York City. Fans of HBO's *Gilded Age* (myself included) are no stranger to the 1800's hotspot boasting breathtaking seaside views, fresh seafood, and all-around New England charm. Typically we opt for quaint Airbnbs, however I needed a little bit of luxury (and room service) — and the historic Hotel Viking in downtown Newport fit the bill.



**The Hotel Viking at dusk**

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### WHAT I DROVE

The 2022 Land Rover Defender 90 V8. As a carless Brooklynite, the Defender felt like a true indulgence (sidenote: I will forever side eye all future trips on the MTA.) My husband and I traded taking turns pushing around this SUV with pleasure. It was large enough to feel extra roomy—without feeling monstrous—and turned more than a few heads as we cruised around town. Small details like the center console that allowed you to chill drinks (so major), heating and cooling seats, ClearSight interior rearview mirror (no obstructed views, ever) make this model stand out from the pack. Despite my limited car knowledge, I have to talk about the pick-up — this baby (no pun intended) goes from 0 to 60 mph in less than 4.9 seconds, very impressive for a nearly 6,000 lb car. While the interior felt luxe, it was also functional. Great in case you decided to take this for an off-road spin — or have to potentially clean up spilled milk.

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## WHAT I PACKED

We lucked out with the weather, experiencing high 50s and 60s all weekend, which allowed me to pack layered, spring-adjacent looks. I'm a huge proponent of traveling in a chic matching set or jumpsuit (btw, Parc has great options), so there's no need to change upon arrival. With a growing belly that changes week by week, pieces that stretch are a necessity. For dinner, I wanted to feel a little sexy so curve-hugging dresses were my nighttime M.O. Finally, Newport is incredibly walkable which meant I

needed a pair of comfortable slip-on sneakers to hold me down while I got some steps in.



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## THE ITINERARY

**Friday:** We timed our arrival to Newport for roughly 2pm so we could enjoy an early check-in at Hotel Viking and take advantage of the warmest day of the weekend. We left the car with the valet to set-off by foot and explore the iconic 3.5 mile Cliff Walk alongside the Atlantic Ocean. To say the views were dramatic would be an understatement. I was blown away. Add in some hot chocolate and fresh baked cookies from Picnic Cafe and we had a lovely afternoon date.



Writer Janell Hickman-Kirby

COURTESY



Up next was dinner at the oldest operating restaurant in the U.S, White Horse Tavern. The charming 1673-built, two story cottage features contemporary tavern food with a twist. I'd recommend the lump crab cocktail, traditional Caesar salad with white anchovies, crispy duck breast (add the whipped potatoes), and lobster ravioli.

**Saturday:** After staying up late watching the current season of Netflix's Top Boy, we grabbed a quick bite at Hotel Viking's in-house cafe, Hill Market. Think delicious pastries, healthy nibbles, and freshly brewed coffee from local purveyors.

**Stop 1:** #Influenced by one of my travel Instagram accounts ([@theplaceiwastellingyouabout](#)), I wanted to check out the recently-opened Wayfinder Hotel and Nomi Park Restaurant. The 197-room property boasts a cool, laid-back vintage coastal vibe about 15-minutes from downtown Newport, a nice departure from the more classic properties in the area. I'd suggest booking a room here during the summer to enjoy an afternoon of pool-side cocktails and live music.

**Stop 2:** After a yummy brunch, we noticed a storm was on the way and booked it over to the legendary Marble House formerly owned by the Vanderbilt family. The two-story, 50-room French-inspired "summer cottage" was maintained by a staff of 26 and is still adorned with 22-karat panels, painted ceiling murals, millions of dollars of marble (roughly \$7 million worth), and an authentic Chinese Tea House located on the back lawn overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. #Casual. Plan on spending at least an hour here to truly take in the full grandeur of this iconic home.

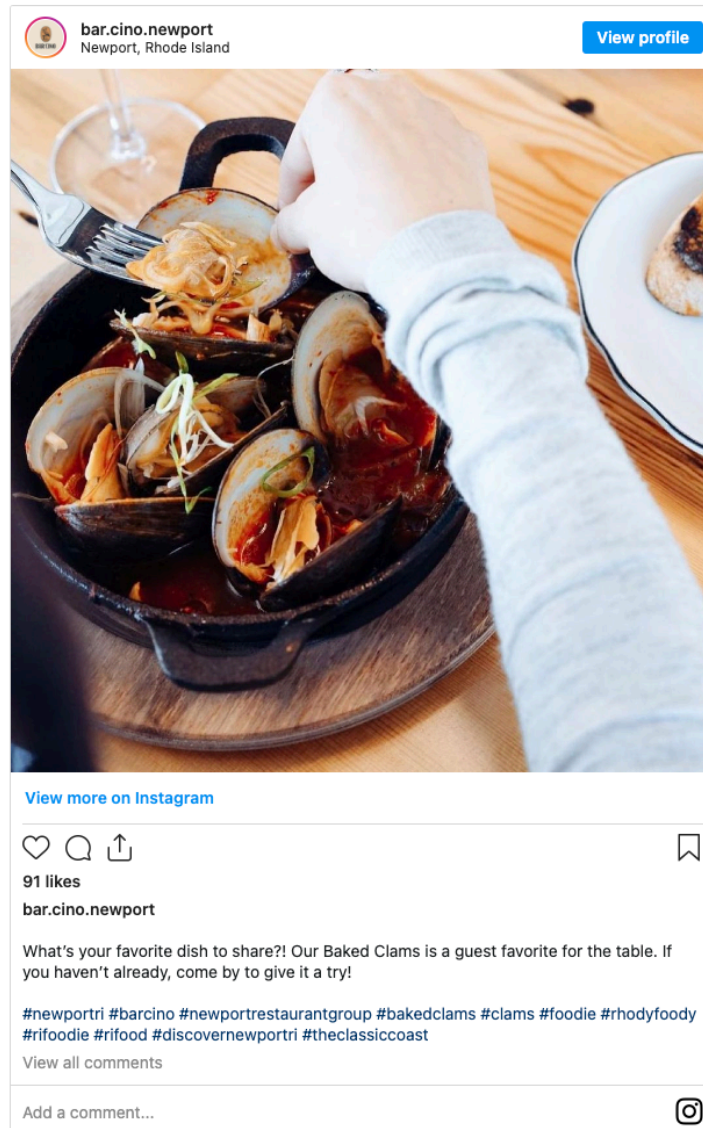


**Marble House Gold room**

GAVIN ASHWORTH

**Stop 3:** Next-up, a much-needed mother-to-be massage at [Spa Fjor](#) back at our hotel. I wish I could report back with more detail, but I passed out thanks to Susan's magic touch. All my pregnancy discomfort (hello, rib pain and random Charlie horses) melted away. If you have time to spare, check out the infrared sauna, Himalayan salt wall, and indoor pool.

**Stop 4:** We ended the evening at Bar 'Cino, a short walk away from our hotel. The bustling Italian restaurant helmed by Chef Mariana Gonzalez-Trasvina features a mix of delicious pastas and pizzas. It was hard to make a decision, so we ordered a mix of everything: shaved arugula salad, baked clams pomodoro, a grilled prosciutto and fig pizza, spaghetti carbonara, and olive oil cake.



**Sunday:** Before heading back to Brooklyn, we had one final meal in Newport at The Vanderbilt, an Auberge Resort. If decor is your thing, The Vanderbilt is a visual feast. I instantly fell in love with the conservatory room, a sun-drenched indoor dining area that overlooks the garden patio. The brioche French toast paired with the bowl of local fruits? \*chefs kiss\*

Post-baby, I'll be right back in Newport recreating this relaxing trip all over again.