



THE TRAVEL

## 10 Of The World's Oldest Libraries That You Can Still Read At

With sunny reading rooms, dark interiors, and walls lined with rare books, these ancient libraries open their doors to new visitors even today.

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For most bibliophiles, any library that smells of used books is a good place to be. But there's something about the dark and dusty old libraries filled with wooden tables, high ceilings, and the grandeur of old times that's every book lover's dream. Luckily, the human race has had an appreciation for books and libraries for centuries now, with the first-ever library having been established between 668 and 631 BCE. Some of these old libraries continue to function today, retaining much of their old-world charm, warmth, and beauty that attracts book lovers from all over the globe. Consider booking a one-way ticket to these ancient libraries because the rare treasures hiding in there will take more than a day or two to find.

### 9 Redwood Library & Athenaeum, United States



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[#didyouknow](#) that the oldest purpose-built lending library in the United States is in Newport, Rhode Island?

The year was 1747. The bustling seaport town of Newport in the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations was abounding with trade from the West Indies (including the prolific and often reclusive rum trade). As the town expanded, businesses and services of all types sprung up to accommodate the rapidly growing population.

As the coastal community grew in refinement, a local man named Abraham Redwood and 45 colonists felt that the citizens of Newport needed a library to expand their knowledge and understanding; therefore, they created the Company of the Redwood Library. The building, which would be the first neo-classical public building in the colonies, was designed by Peter Harrison, who also designed Boston's King's Chapel (ca. 1749), Newport's Touro Synagogue (ca. 1759), and the Brick Market Building (ca. 1762-72). The Redwood Library was constructed on land donated by a man named Henry Collins.

Abraham Redwood donated £500 (English pounds) sterling to purchase a collection of 751 books from London- thus began the first lending library in North America. These books ranged in topic from mathematics, law, history, geography and the classics.

Today, the Redwood Library & Athenaeum remains one of the educational and architectural gems of Newport and the United States as a whole.

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Founded in 1747 by Abraham Redwood, the Redwood Library happens to be America's oldest Neo-Classical building and is believed to be among the country's oldest functioning libraries. It's also home to the first art gallery in all of Rhode Island, which opened in 1875. With 200,000 volumes mainly made of texts on American history, the history of Newport and Rhode Island, architecture, and 8th-century European books, the Redwood Library not only holds regular events and exhibitions, but it's one of the rare old libraries that can still be regularly accessed through reading memberships.