

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

10 Popular U.S. Destinations That Are Even Better in Shoulder Season

Fall in love with these off-peak getaways.



PHOTO: DENISTANGNEYJR/GETTY IMAGES

While there are selling points for traveling during every season, something about a fall getaway just feels particularly special. Perhaps it's the crisp air or the laid-back energy that seems to permeate this period. No doubt natural beauty plays a big part, too. Beach and [mountain towns](#) that see a tourism surge in the summer and winter respectively tend to be relatively quiet during the months of September, October, and November. That makes shoulder season the perfect time to explore sans tons of tourists. In addition to a lack of crowds, travelers will find more favorable rates on airfare and accommodations and increased availability at hotels, restaurants, and attractions. It's also worth noting that just because a place peaks at another period (think: when the winter resorts open in [Aspen](#) or the beaches beckon in [Cape May](#)) doesn't mean it's without [colorful autumn leaves](#). Leaf peepers need only check [online foliage trackers](#) to suss out which locations put on a fiery show — and when.

Whether you're looking to save a few bucks, want to see a different side of a favorite vacation spot, or just need some inspiration for a [quick weekend escape](#) this fall, consider these popular U.S. destinations that shine even brighter during shoulder season.

01 | **Newport, Rhode Island**

of 10



PHOTO: AIMINTANG/GETTY IMAGES

Most people think of [Newport](#) as a summer resort that charms visitors with its sailing regattas, buzzy waterfront restaurants, and outdoor concert series, but New Englanders know this Rhode Island city is particularly wonderful in shoulder season when the beaches are empty, The Cliff Walk doesn't feel so crowded, and it's possible to wander through the Gilded Age mansions without hordes of tourists. Of course, the changing leaves, pick-your-own apple orchards, and seasonal events such as the [Bowen's Wharf Seafood Food Festival](#) are even more autumnal drawcards.