

# GOLDEN GLORY

When the frost is on the pumpkin, it's time to hit the road in New England. The region's famous fall foliage draws visitors from around the world for the annual leaf-peeping season. Boston-based writer Laurie Kahle shares her picks for where to stay, spa and dine

**New England's charms are abundant with quaint colonial towns built around white-steepled churches and rugged seascapes dotted with lighthouses.** After beach season wanes, mother nature pulls out the brushes and palette to paint her annual masterpiece, turning the region's verdant forests and rolling hills into a canvas awash in scarlet, gold, burgundy and ochre. Blanketing the landscape in a slow crawl from north to south, this magnificent natural exhibition peaks around mid-October, when crisp blue-sky days give way to chilly nights best spent by the fireside. In the autumn, New England's true colors shine with spectacular foliage providing a stunning backdrop for driving back roads and main streets from Boston to the Berkshires and beyond. Though it is a small corner of the country, New England offers remarkable diversity within a few hours' drive or a quick flight. Outdoor enthusiasts can hike, bike and kayak, while culture vultures can visit museums, galleries and antique shops, and foodies can indulge their palates with locally sourced farm-to-table cuisine, fresh-caught North Atlantic seafood and even Michelin-inspired gastronomy.



## A weekend in... Boston

Famous as the cradle of liberty, where the seeds of the American Revolution first took root, Boston exudes an old-world charm rarely found in the US. This gem of a city offers a surprisingly diverse array of things to do – from visiting world-class art museums and shopping in premier boutiques, to indulging your inner historian by learning about the people and events that shaped the nation.

While it boasts a fascinating and impressive history, Boston is by no means caught in a time capsule. Home to more than 100 colleges and universities, the metropolitan area is a magnet for students from around the globe, keeping the city's vibe young, international and brainy. Meanwhile, a burgeoning culinary scene is growing more creative each year with young chefs fusing influences from around the globe.

First timers should not miss walking the city's Freedom Trail. The two-and-a-half mile red-brick ribbon guides you in the footsteps of the patriots to 16 historical landmarks including the site of the 1770 Boston Massacre, the Old South Meeting House and the North End neighborhood, home to the house of Paul Revere who made his daring midnight ride sounding the alarm of the British invasion.

The North End later became the city's Little Italy where Italian immigrant families settled in the early 20th century and imparted a cultural imprint that remains to this day. One tiny hole in the wall here offers what is heralded as the city's best seafood. Unassuming and unabashedly charming, Neptune Oyster serves exceptional fish and shellfish for which patrons line up for more than an hour, thanks to a strict no-

reservation policy. Talk to your concierge or put your name in first, then head off to explore North End landmarks until they call you when your table or counter seats are ready.

For dinner, Ostra presents contemporary seafood prepared with a Mediterranean flair in an elegant, minimalist dining room. Grilled octopus and a variety of carpaccios, tartares and hamachi are highlights. After dinner, the city's new hotspot for a nightcap is Yvonne's, which occupies the former Locke-Ober restaurant, a dining institution that served Boston's elite from 1875 until 2012. You can sit at the original carved wood bar for an artfully mixed cocktail or dine on creative fusion cuisine that blends Latin, Asian and American influences.

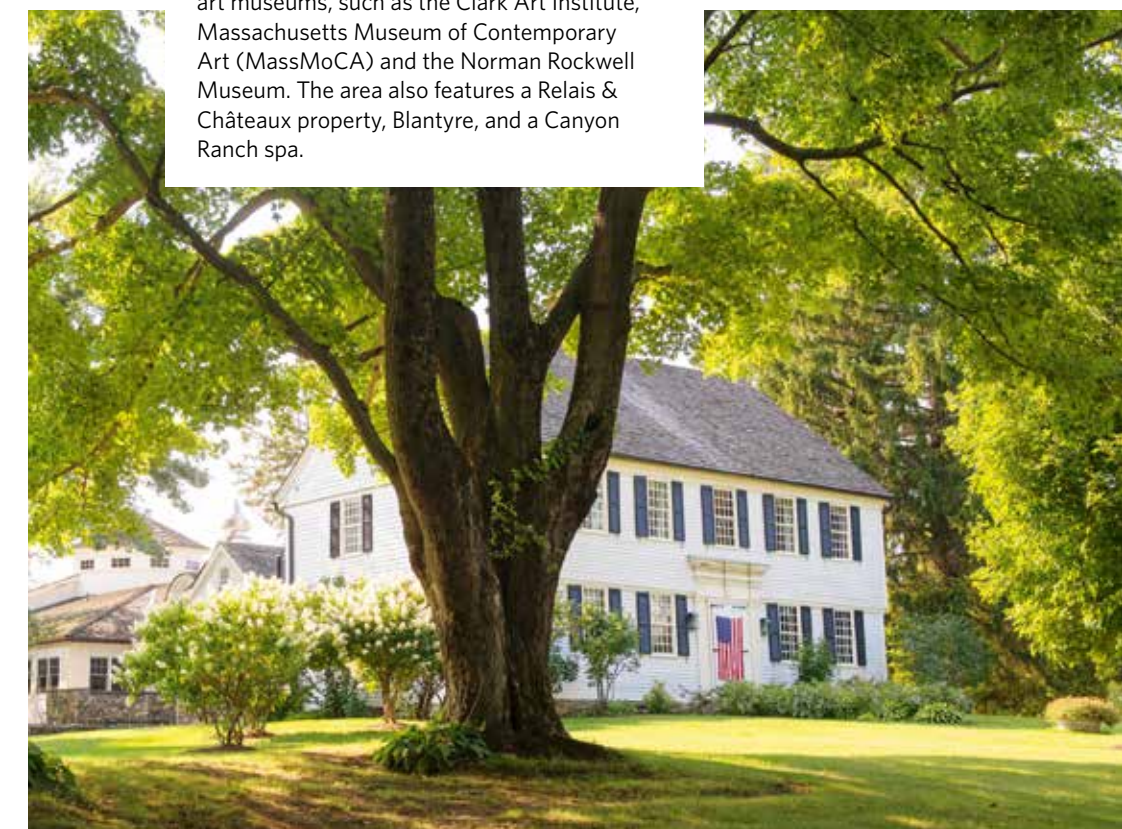
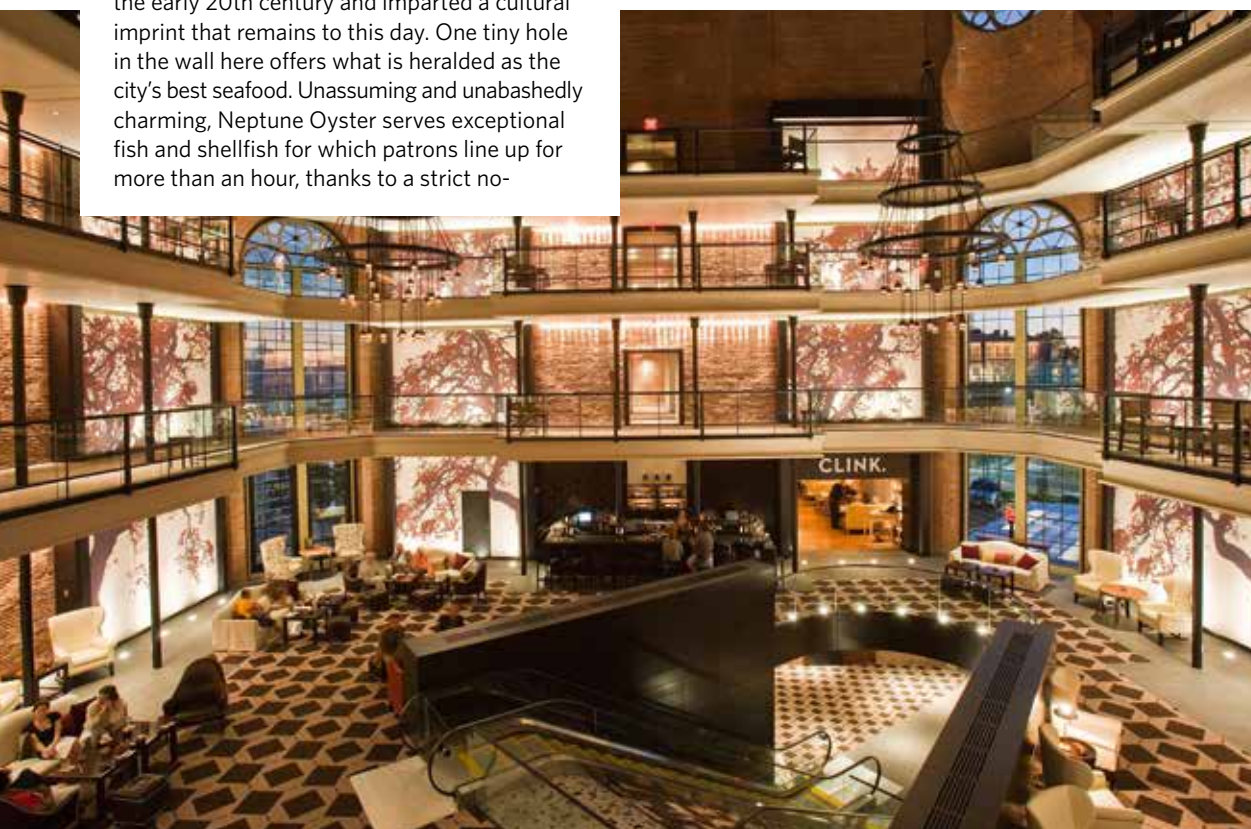
Boston has familiar five-star hotels – Four Seasons, Mandarin Oriental, The Ritz-Carlton and Taj – but two boutique properties stand out for their local character. The Liberty Hotel, which is part of the Luxury Collection, is housed in a former Victorian-era prison, which was transformed to emphasize its dramatic architecture. A recent renovation upgraded the room decor, which subtly plays with the prison theme – keys are a central motif, and the do not

**Above:** Seafood is a specialty  
**Below left:** The Liberty Hotel – a former prison  
**Below right:** City trees in Boston put on their own display

disturb sign features a jailer's key with a banner that reads "solitary." The Ebersol Suite provides stunning 270-degree views of the city and a balcony that can be enjoyed year-round. For other rooms, book odd numbers on high floors for the best views.

For those who prefer a more low-key, intimate hotel, XV Beacon is steps away from the gilt-domed statehouse and Boston Common. With only 63 rooms and suites in a 1903 Beaux Arts building, this arty hotel prides itself on over-the-top personalized service. The Gilbert Stuart Suites feature two bedrooms connected by a parlor with dining and living spaces. And the hotel's modern steakhouse, Moo, offers a meaty antidote to an overdose of local seafood.

Concierges at both hotels can arrange private behind-the-scenes experiences at museums and cultural landmarks such as Fenway Park, home to the Boston Red Sox, a helicopter tour of the city, or a hard-to-get table at the city's top restaurants. Be sure to take a stroll along Beacon Hill's red brick sidewalks, lit by old-fashioned gas lamps, past Federalist and Greek Revival townhouses, and you can imagine having time traveled to another era.



## One week in... Boston, Litchfield County, and the Berkshires

For decades, Litchfield County, located in the hills of western Connecticut, has drawn stylish New Yorkers looking for a sophisticated country getaway. The picturesque town of Washington is known for antiques and art galleries, as well as the Mayflower Grace, an estate property set in 58 acres. The hotel offers 30 rooms and suites plus a standout spa that is beautifully designed and serene.

In nearby Morris, farm-to-table cuisine is taken quite literally at Winvian, where executive chef Chris Eddy harvests the bounty from the property's working farm with three acres of vegetable and fruit gardens, greenhouses, an apiary, and livestock including sheep, pigs and chickens. Eddy, who trained with Alain Ducasse and Daniel Boulud, applies classical French techniques to American country cooking with ever-changing menus and gastronomic events, such as fall harvest dinners.

The family-owned mini-resort has a lighthearted tongue-in-cheek attitude with 18 themed luxury cottages, including Charter Oak, built around the huge trunk of a white oak tree. There is also a state-of-the-art spa.

The ambience is more formal and refined to

**Below left:** Litchfield, a sophisticated country getaway  
**Below right:** The Winvian farmhouse

## Wealthy magnates from New York and Boston constructed imposing "Berkshire cottages"

the north in Lenox, Massachusetts, where wealthy magnates from New York and Boston constructed imposing "Berkshire cottages," mountain retreats to rival the grand seaside mansions of Newport, Rhode Island. These earned Lenox the 19th century epithet "the inland Newport."

One such gilded-age palace is Wheatleigh. Built in 1893 by New York magnate Henry H Cook as a wedding gift for his daughter, the grand home emulates a 15th century Florentine palazzo. Among the 19 guest rooms and suites is the Aviary, a two-story suite with a private outdoor heated pool.

Award-winning executive chef Jeffrey Thompson has built relationships with local sources to create innovative menus for the hotel's restaurant, which includes the glass-walled Dining Room overlooking the 22-acre grounds. Staff can arrange for a round of golf, a romantic picnic on Mount Greylock or tours of renowned art museums, such as the Clark Art Institute, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA) and the Norman Rockwell Museum. The area also features a Relais & Châteaux property, Blantyre, and a Canyon Ranch spa.

## Longer in... Boston, Litchfield County, the Berkshires, and Vermont

Head even farther north to the Green Mountain state of Vermont, where nearly 80 percent of the state is covered by forest and foliage is the star of the show every fall. Woodstock is a picture-postcard New England town, often referred to as the "prettiest small town in America," complete with a covered bridge spanning the Ottauquechee River.

Not far away in Barnard, Twin Farms is an extraordinary property with 20 unique, five-star accommodations ranging from suites in the farmhouse – which dates back to 1795 – to whimsical, themed cottages to private residences showcasing contemporary art.

Executive chef Nathan Rich taps local farms for the freshest seasonal ingredients in addition to growing his own on the 300 acres around the property. Twin Farms hosts special epicurean events throughout the year and guests can dine in the kitchen to experience what goes on behind the scenes at this leading culinary destination.

For those looking to book an entire estate property for themselves, Eastaway is a new luxurious retreat comprised of a main home and guest house on 128 acres in the heart of the Green Mountains near Woodstock. The 5,685 sq ft main house maximizes the panoramic mountain views with floor-to-ceiling windows. The stately four-bedroom home has soaring

**Above:** The covered bridge in Woodstock, Vermont

**Below:** Fine dining on locally produced food at Twin Farms



mahogany wood ceilings, six fireplaces and a wine cellar with tasting room. The guest house has three bedrooms and bathrooms, but the same airy ceilings, as well as a movie and game room on the lower level.

Hike the property's winding network of trails – there's a hilltop gazebo from where you can look out across the glorious foliage display – or explore the region's craft brewers and distilleries for a memorable tasting tour. If you have even more time to explore, you can press on to New Hampshire, Maine, or even make an off-season jaunt to Cape Cod and the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, for an extended, ultimate New England road trip.



**EXPLORE  
NEW ENGLAND**

### THE DETAILS THE WEEKEND...

#### Neptune Oyster

+1 617 742 3474, [neptuneoyster.com](http://neptuneoyster.com)

#### Ostra

Alex Hage, general manager,  
[ahage@ostraboston.com](mailto:ahage@ostraboston.com),  
+1 617 421 1200, [ostraboston.com](http://ostraboston.com)

#### Yvonne's

+1 617 267 0047, [yvonesboston.com](http://yvonesboston.com)

#### The Liberty Hotel

Ebersol Suite from \$5,400 per night,  
Glenn Sampert, general manager,  
[glenn.sampert@libertyhotel.com](mailto:glenn.sampert@libertyhotel.com),  
+1 617 224 4000, [libertyhotel.com](http://libertyhotel.com)

#### XV Beacon

The Gilbert Stuart Suite, from  
\$1,980 per night, Amy W Finsilver,  
general manager, +1 617 670 7320,  
[xvbeacon.com](http://xvbeacon.com)

### ONE WEEK...

#### Mayflower Grace

Grace Suite from \$1,400 per night,  
Michael Kaminski, front office manager,  
[michael.kaminski@gracehotels.com](mailto:michael.kaminski@gracehotels.com),  
+1 860 868 9466,  
[gracehotels.com/mayflower](http://gracehotels.com/mayflower)

#### Winvian

Charter Oak Cottage from \$1,499 per  
night, Paolo Middei, general manager,  
[pmiddei@winvian.com](mailto:pmiddei@winvian.com),  
+1 860 567 9600, [winvian.com](http://winvian.com)

#### Wheatleigh

The Terrace Suite, from \$1,625 per night,  
Julie Rodriguez, reservations manager,  
[reservations@wheatleigh.com](mailto:reservations@wheatleigh.com),  
[wheatleigh.com](http://wheatleigh.com)

### LONGER...

#### Twin Farms

From \$1,500 per night, [info@twinfarms.com](mailto:info@twinfarms.com),  
+1 802 234 9999, [twinfarms.com](http://twinfarms.com)

#### Eastaway

From \$8,000-\$14,000 per week, main  
house plus guest house sleeps 15, Mary  
Lou Hathorn, [info@eastawayestate.com](mailto:info@eastawayestate.com),  
+1 603 443 6757, [eastawayestate.com](http://eastawayestate.com)