

# Your Itinerary For A Remarkable Rhode Island Getaway

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Most travelers have never heard of Westerly, a hidden gem in Rhode Island. This town of nearly 23,000 residents, situated on the state's south shore, is often overlooked by trendier beach areas such as Block Island and Newport. Of course, those in the know would prefer to keep it that way, seeing as how the coastal locale has all the makings of a serene, intimate vacation. Protected beaches, historic homes, centuries-old lighthouses and endless biking and hiking paths are just a few of things that make Westerly one of the most alluring vacation spots in the Ocean State.



Weekapaug Inn, *Photo Courtesy of Weekapaug Inn*

Amid the farmer's markets, wineries and hamlets wrought with New England charm and family-friendly activities sits Weekapaug Inn and its sister property, Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star Ocean House, about 10 minutes away in Watch Hill. Either property would be an ideal home base for your trip. After you've dropped off your bags, we certainly suggest taking time to explore the hotel grounds and checking out all the boutiques and craft stores that border them. But whatever you do, make it a point to also reserve time in your weekend for the following three things:

## **The Attractions**

Stop by the historic Flying Horse merry-go-round, the oldest in America. Made in 1876, the 20 horses that "fly" here are suspended from the center of the carousel, swinging out when the ride is in motion. Each horse is hand carved from wood and dressed in leather saddles, welcoming small riders during the warmer months. As the only surviving flying horse carousel in the country, this is a must-do for kids when you're in the area.

Commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson in 1807, the Watch Hill Lighthouse is another top Westerly attraction. While you can't climb up it, nothing's stopping you from taking some memorable selfies with the historic landmark. The lighthouse museum is

open Tuesdays and Thursdays during the summer months, but seeing as how it's just a short drive from Watch Hill, you can approach the structure any time of year for picture-perfect New England memories.

### **The Views**

There's good reason Rhode Island is called the Ocean State, and one of those is Napatree Point. The Westerly beach is approximately 1.5 miles long and separates Rhode Island and Connecticut. Visit here any time of year and walk along the bluffs or dip your toes in the water. Stop by Fort Mansfield, located toward the end of Napatree where the river merges into the ocean. Meander along with your camera in tow — many a painting has been inspired by this scenery.



Jonathan Edwards Winery, *Photo Courtesy of Jonathan Edwards Winery*

### **The Wines**

Beyond landscapes and lighthouses, another great thing about vacationing in Westerly is its location. In just under 20 minutes, you can be in Connecticut, gambling at nearby casinos, eating pizza in Mystic or sipping wines at some of the local estates. With regards to the latter, Jonathan Edwards Winery and Saltwater Farm Vineyard are two of Stonington's famous wineries, and both are just a 15-minute drive from Westerly. Jonathan Edwards Winery brings a bit of Napa Valley to New England with 20 acres of vineyards planted along the coastline. Saltwater Farm sits on more than 100 acres, some of which are devoted to six varieties of grapes. And while the pours are worth a visit to Saltwater alone, so too is a look around the vineyard's stunning signature building, a converted 1930s airplane hanger made of a milled aluminum exterior and timber trusses.