

TRAVEL

The Globe Rhode Island team's must-do list for the summer

By [Steph Machado](#), [Amanda Milkovits](#) and [Brian Amaral](#) Globe Staff,
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In May 2020, Katie Retzer (left) helped her daughter Collins with a kite on opening day at East Matunuck State Beach in South Kingstown, R.I.
ARAM BOGHOSIAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE/ARAM BOGHOSIAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

We asked the [Globe's Rhode Island team](#) to recommend a few of their favorite can't-miss experiences in the state to Globe readers who might be contemplating a visit this spring and summer. Here's what they said.

For an idyllic Rhode Island beach day, hit these 3 spots in South Kingstown

SOUTH KINGSTOWN, R.I. — If you want to head to a Rhode Island beach for the day, just beware: The fees can stack up high at town-owned beaches, some of which charge an arm and a leg for nonresidents to park and an additional per-person entrance fee.

Luckily, the state beaches are just as lovely and reasonably priced, at \$12 to park for out-of-state license plates (\$14 on weekends and holidays) or \$6 (\$7 on weekends and holidays) if you arrive in a car with Rhode Island plates.

To avoid the throng of peak-summer tourists in Newport, head to [East Matunuck State Beach](#) in lesser-known South Kingstown, a beach with views of the [Block Island Ferry](#) cruising back and forth from Galilee, and complete with bathroom facilities and a snack bar.



Bring a change of clothes and make a reservation for the late afternoon at [Matunuck Oyster Bar](#), just two minutes up the road. The restaurant has valet parking, a rooftop with a spectacular water view, and delicious seafood. Summer attire there can vary from dressy to very casual, so you won't feel out of place coming straight from the beach.

Cap off the trip at [Brickley's Ice Cream](#), a Rhode Island staple, on postcard-worthy Main Street in Wakefield before heading back to the highway. Make sure you get your two scoops in a homemade waffle cone. The line may be long, but it will be worth it.



Alisha Pina performs on Oct. 25, 2023, at the first of Newport jazz Festival's new jam Sessions at The Blue Room in Cranston, RI RAFAEL MEDINA

An intimate music venue in Cranston: 'Everybody is together in this room'

CRANSTON, R.I. — The [Blue Room](#) in Pawtuxet Village can feel like a discovery.

Maybe it's how the live music envelops you in an intimate, 50-seat space, making it feel like the musicians are performing in your living room. Maybe it's the low lighting, the romantic deep royal blue atmosphere, the white leather seating, fresh flowers, and the perfect cocktails.

All I know is that every time I visit The Blue Room, something special happens — that spark between musicians and the audience, connecting in a way that happens best in live settings.

Owner Jen Minuto was fulfilling a childhood dream when she opened this jazz club and piano bar on Memorial Day weekend in 2023. In The Blue Room, she's created a cozy, sophisticated spot that's become a destination for musicians and music lovers.

“There are other music places, but there’s nothing like this one,” said Minuto, a lifelong musician whose band, the Better Angels, includes her wife, Kasey. “That access to the audience is so fun and special for the musicians, because there really isn’t any separation and that closeness sparks energy in performances, and the musicians love the intimacy.”

Minuto wanted to give The Blue Room the mood and sophistication that one would find at a music club in New York, New Orleans, or Paris. As a native Rhode Islander, she wanted to bring the music home. “Why do I have to go around the world? Why can’t this be here?” she said.

There’s all kinds of music at The Blue Room: gospel sing-alongs, soulful jazz renditions, the American Songbook, folk or country, blistering blues, Latin music, open mic nights with local musicians, and a New Orleans-style band that parades the audience in a second-line out into Pawtuxet Village.

Fans of the [Newport Jazz Festival](#) and [Newport Folk Festival](#) can enjoy [Jam Sessions](#), launched by the Newport Festivals Foundation, which feature the music of different artists on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month. “It really restores my faith in humanity and the world to see all these young musicians keeping the jazz music alive,” Minuto said. “They come in and just blow the roof off.

The performances are often packed, and The Blue Room now takes reservations.

“It was like people were waiting for this feeling,” said Minuto. “The biggest takeaway for me is to see the room so completely diverse, onstage and off stage ... every shade of person, every age of person, Black, white, gay, straight — everybody is together in this room.”

The Blue Room is at 2197 Broad St. in Cranston. Performances are Tuesday through Sunday. For the music calendar and other information, visit theblueroom.com.

AMANDA MILKOVITS



A cyclist on the East Bay Bike Path. BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF

Check out the East Bay Bike Path (and a few great bars along the way)

The East Bay Bike Path used to be the most picturesque way to travel between Bristol and Providence. Now, with all [the bridge trouble](#)

Rhode Island’s been having, it can sometimes feel like the fastest, too.

The 14.5-mile path takes you from India Point Park in Providence to Independence Park in Bristol, hitting East Providence, Barrington, and Warren along the way. This Tour d’East Bay has no mountain stages and no yellow jackets, no pelotons or Champs-Élysées, just a few rolling hills and sparkling views of the water.

There are all sorts of ways to enjoy the East Bay Bike Path. I like to wave at people going the other way, mostly because it gives me an excuse to slow down and catch my breath. Town beaches in Barrington, Warren, and Bristol are all near the route if you need a more extensive break. On the Bristol end, there's Colt State Park, where you can stop at a frozen lemonade truck. On the Providence end, there's George Redman Linear Park, where you can learn about the avid cyclist who helped make the path a reality.

For my money, though, the best way to enjoy it is to take it slow and stop at the finest hydration stations the state has to offer. Some of my favorite bars on or near the path for a pit stop are [Narragansett's brewery](#) in Providence, the East Providence Yacht Club, Jack's and [The Guild](#) in Warren, and [Judge Roy Bean Saloon](#) in Bristol. They may or may not have the finest champagnes, as you'd find in Paris, but after a long day of biking and waving to friends, you deserve a toast.

BRIAN AMARAL



The East Bay Bike Path near Kettle Point. BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF

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