

Vermont Travel Guide

The Best Things to See & Do



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Vermont Travel Guide

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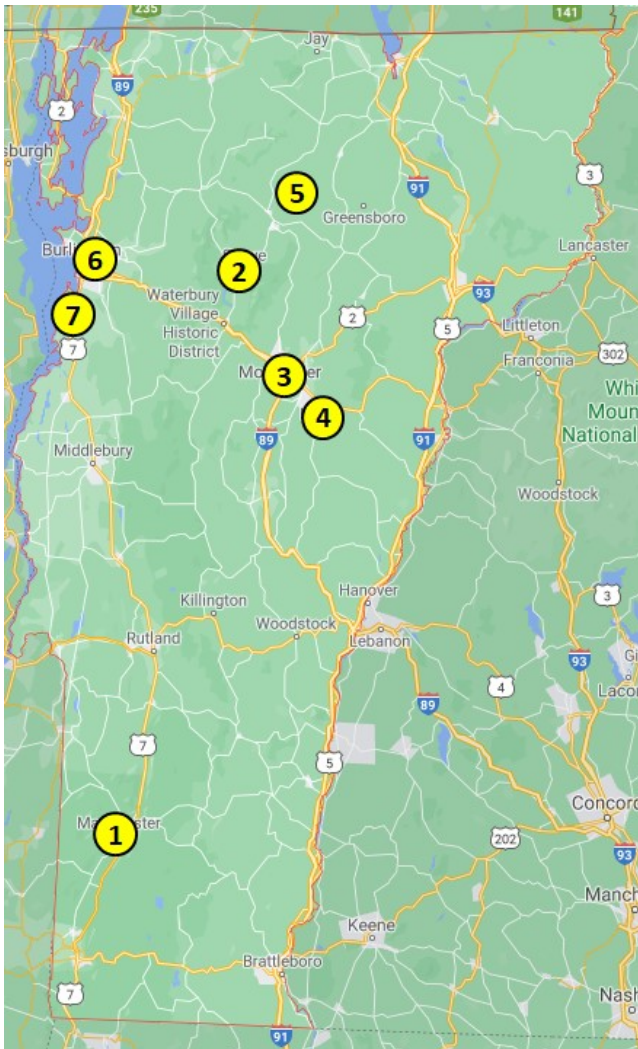
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1. Foreword

Vermont is the 2nd least populated state in the US and it is called the Green Mountain State. Driving through Vermont in summer, you will see seemingly endless green pastures, cattle and hills. The scenery changes dramatically in fall when the foliage changes to spectacular hues of yellow, orange and red. In winter, Vermont becomes a winter wonderland and skiing is the name of the game.

If you are a hiker or kayaker, then you can spend weeks here. For most visitors, one week will give you a good feeling for this state.



1 = Manchester

2 = Stowe & Waterbury

3 = Montpelier

4 = Barre

5 = Green River Reservoir State Park

6 = Burlington

7 = Shelburne

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2.1 Disclaimer

In this guide I am doing my best to give you the most accurate information. Over time, however, prices, times, and even attractions are subject to change. Therefore, I and backpackandsnorkel.com cannot be held responsible for the experiences of users while traveling. I strongly suggest that you write or call the attractions you plan to visit for confirmation when you make your travel plans.

Also, please stay alert, be aware of your surroundings and keep an eye on your belongings. Pickpockets and other criminals can easily ruin even the best planned vacation.

2.2 Copyright

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3.2 History of Vermont

Traces of human population date back 12,000 years. The first human villages date back to 1,600 BC to 1,000 BC and the estimated population at that time was 10,000 people.

French explorer Jacques Cartier was likely the first European who saw Vermont in 1535 and in 1609 Samuel de Champlain claimed the territory as part of New France.

Fort Sainte Anne on Isle La Motte was the first European settlement in Vermont. It was erected in 1666 by the French.

After France lost in the “French and Indian War”, the 1763 “Treaty of Paris” ceded what is now Vermont to the British.

In 1764, King George III established the border between New Hampshire and New York which both states refused to accept. In 1770 Ethan Allen, who nowadays is Vermont’s most highly celebrated hero, formed a militia known as the Green Mountain Boys to protect the interests of the locals.

In January 1777, Vermont declared its independence and called it the “Republic of New Connecticut” and changed the name in June 1777 to “Vermont”.

On July 8, 1777 Vermont adopted its constitution. This is significant as this was the first written constitution in North America that banned adult slavery by stating that male slaves become free at the age of 21 and females at 18.

The Continental Congress of the US refused Vermont’s admission to the US until 1790, when Vermont became the 14th state of the union.

In the years in between, Vermont was an independent country with its own currency and Windsor, VT as its capital.

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4. Six day tour of Vermont highlights

Vermont has lots of things to see and do. The following tour covers the best things to see and do in Vermont in one week.

Day 1

Visit Hildene and afterwards enjoy a walking tour through Manchester. Then drive to Stowe Township for a quick walking tour and then settle in your hotel in Stowe Township.

Day 2

Start your day at the Ben & Jerry's factory with a factory tour and sampling of their ice cream. Afterwards visit Cold Hollow Cider Mill and learn how they make apple cider and other apple products. Then visit the Alchemist Brewery and try some of their beer. When you are done, drive to Montpelier for a visit of the Bragg Farm Sugar House. Afterwards find a restaurant in downtown Montpelier and go to your hotel.

Day 3

Start your day by exploring the State house in Montpelier on a guided tour. Then drive to Barre and for a guided tour of the Rock of Ages quarry and a self-guided tour of their factory. Enjoy nature in the afternoon. We went to Green River Reservoir State Park where you can swim or boat if you bring your own boat as no rentals are available, there are no hiking trails. We brought our inflatable kayak and enjoyed kayaking for a few hours. If you are into hiking, then Lake Willoughby is a much better option for you. Afterwards, get back to your car and drive to the Burlington area where your next hotel awaits you.

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5. Manchester ([map](#), [website](#))

Manchester, Vermont is a small town with a little over 4,000 residents. Most visitors come to this area to visit Hildene, the factory outlet stores or the nearby Stratton Mountain Resort.

First settled in 1764, the town was named after Robert Montagu, 3rd Duke of Manchester.

When you drive through Manchester, and especially its historic downtown, you will notice lots of beautiful well maintained buildings. Below is a short self-guided walking tour.

5.1 Walking Tour

Equinox Hotel ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Built in 1769 the Marsh Tavern was the first building on what today is the Equinox Hotel, luxury golf & spa resort. The building has changed owners several times but was used as a hotel for most of its existence. In 1853, the Equinox House, which is the predecessor of today's Equinox Hotel opened as a 200 room hotel. Today, it is one of Vermont's few surviving 19th century grand hotels. Over the years it has had many prominent visitors like Presidents Ulysses S. Grant, Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln's wife spent the summer here with her two adult sons, and booked the hotel again for 1865. Unfortunately, President Lincoln was assassinated before he would arrive and never saw the special presidential suite that was built for him. Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, later built the Hildene estate nearby as he liked the area so much.

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Should you stay in the hotel, then go to the spa and try out the original hotel scale. In the past, hotel guests used it to prove that they gained weight during their stay.



Now cross the street and walk towards the white church.

Soldiers Monument ([map](#))

Before the white church stands the Soldiers Monument. It was made at Fullerton's Marble and Granite Works in Manchester and was dedicated in 1905 to honor all Vermont veterans. The statue represents an unknown Colonial era officer.

First Congregational Church of Manchester ([map](#))

The white church is the First Congregational Church of Manchester which was built in 1871 to replace an older brick building that the congregation, which formed in 1784, used as a church.

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Besides the mansion and the garden, Hildene has lots of other things that are worth your attention and which can either be reached by a short walk or a free shuttle ride.



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Dene Farm ([map](#))

Lincoln purchased the Dene Farm in 1902 when it was an active dairy farm. While Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln got out of the dairy business fairly quickly, their granddaughter Peggy Lincoln Beckwith revived the dairy business on the farm and she tapped the maple trees on the property for syrup.

You can either take the Maple Trail down the hill or take a free shuttle. This is a short ride that brings you through the maple tree forest where you will see miles of plastic hoses that are used to collect the maple tree sap in late winter/early spring that is then converted into Vermont maple syrup.

The shuttle will drop you off and later pick you up at a shuttle stop near River Road ([map](#)).

From here, walk southwest to the red building, which is the 1832 Hollow School house. Take a look inside and see how the desks are arranged.

This school house is the only remaining school house, of originally 14 in Manchester, which is still on its original foundation and still used as a schoolhouse. It was on the property when Robert Lincoln purchased it.



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7. Waterbury ([map](#))

Waterbury lies 10 miles south of Stowe and has a population of about 5,000 people. The first permanent settler arrived here in 1783.

Interestingly, many of the early settlers came from Waterbury in Connecticut and named their new town after their old hometown. The Central Vermont Railroad came to town in 1849 and in 1875 a passenger station was built. In the early days, the most important industries in Waterbury were lumber and finished wood products, sheep and later dairy.

Today, hordes of tourists flock to Waterbury to visit the Ben & Jerry's Factory.

7.1 Ben & Jerry's Factory ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Founded in 1978 and sold to Unilever in 2000, Ben & Jerry's is one of the most well-known ice cream brands in the US. The headquarters are in South Burlington and the main factory in Waterbury, VT.

The original founders of the company do not hold any board or management position and are not involved in the day-to-day management of the company anymore.

Ben & Jerry's are active in their community and known for political and societal statements and some of their ice creams feature celebrities or are named relating to them like "Yes Pecan" for Barack Obama's election in 2008 or "The Tonight Dough" after Jimmy Fallon's Tonight Show or "Stephen Colbert's AmeriCone Dream" after the Colbert Report.

Through the Ben & Jerry's Foundation, which was established in 1985, the company contributes 7.5% of their annual pre-tax profits to fund community-oriented projects.

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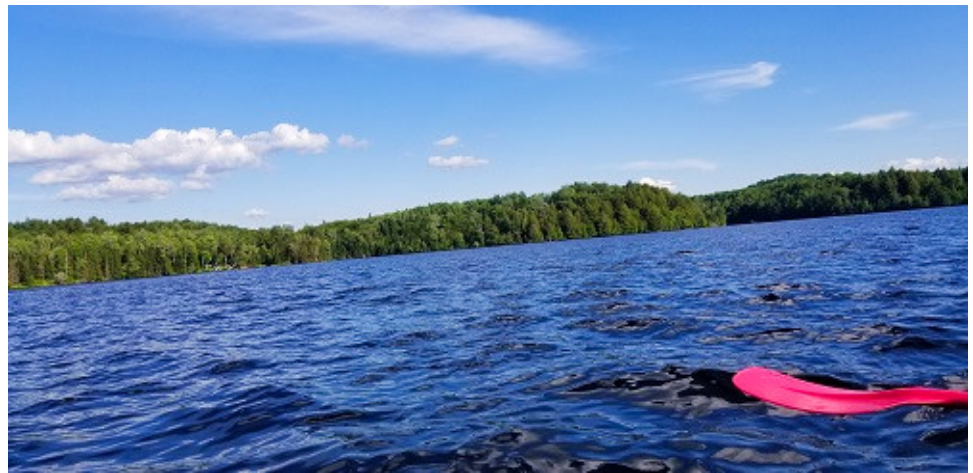
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11. Burlington ([map](#))

With 42,000 residents, Burlington is the most populous city in Vermont. It is located on Lake Champlain and only 45 miles south of the Canadian-US border.

Organized as a town in 1785 and incorporated as a city in 1865, Burlington became a center for the lumber and manufacturing industries, particularly after the Champlain Canal (1823), Erie Canal (1825), and Chambly Canal (1843) were completed.

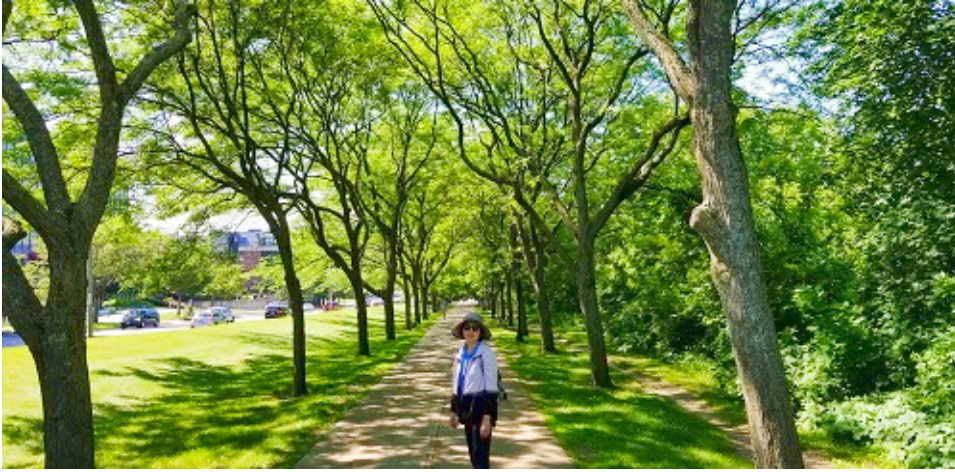
There are two theories as to the origin of the name Burlington: The town was named after Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington. The name honors the politically prominent and wealthy Burling family of New York.

Burlington has several interesting sites for visitors:

11.1 Waterfront ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Burlington's Waterfront Park is located west of downtown along the Lake Champlain shoreline. This park is a very popular meeting point for locals and visitors alike and location for several of Burlington's music and food festivals. The park is beautifully maintained, has playgrounds and seating incl. hanging benches, and a bicycle and a walking path. Be advised that parking here is very limited and it pays to come early.

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11.4 Church Street Marketplace ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

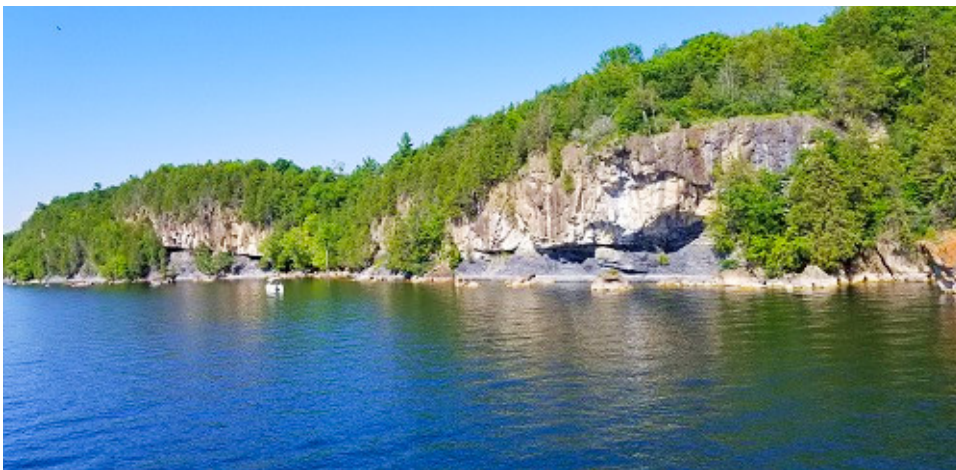
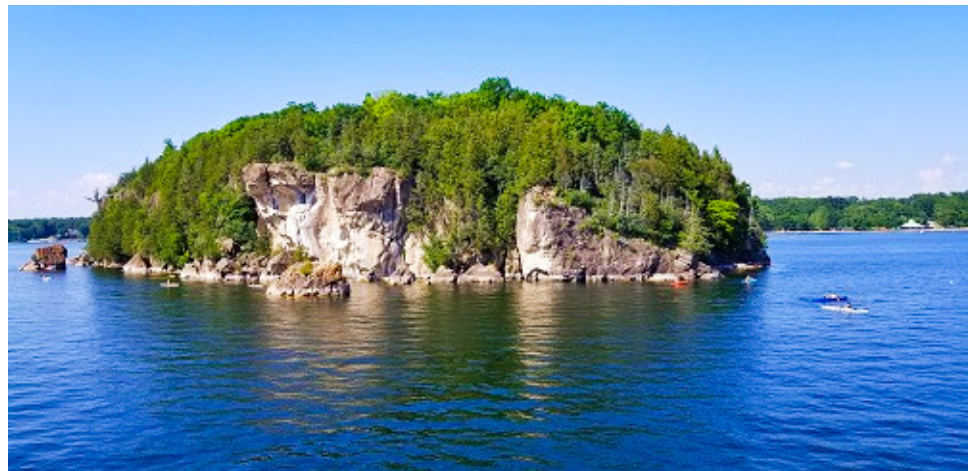
Opened in 1981, the Church Street Marketplace is a four city block outdoor pedestrian shopping and dining mall along Church Street between Main and Pearl Streets in downtown Burlington. We especially liked the diverse dining options here.

Since 2010, much of the Church Street Marketplace is part of the Church Street Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Together with the waterfront, Church Street Marketplace is a preferred place for outdoor festivals in Burlington.



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12.1 Vermont Teddy Bear Factory ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#))

Founded in 1983, the Vermont Teddy Bear Company is the largest seller of teddy bears by mail order through the internet.

All teddy bears are handmade and the very informative factory tour is a must-do for kids and the young-at-heart.

Every teddy bear is guaranteed for life and, should teddy feel sick or need some repairs, teddy can be sent to the Bear hospital for any reason. Dr. Nancy is there to help and make teddy happy and healthy again. Dr. Nancy say: "99% of the time, the patient makes a full recovery" but "sometimes the injuries are just too extreme...we will always replace your friend if he cannot be repaired."



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12.3 Shelburne Museum ([map](#), [reviews](#), [website](#), [museum map](#))

The Shelburne Museum was one of the highlights of our trip. There is so much to see and do, that you should plan full day for the over 150,000 artifacts that are exhibited in 39 buildings. Twenty of those buildings are 18th and 19th century buildings from New England and New York that were relocated to the museum. Among them are barns, a covered bridge, general store, jail, lighthouse, meeting house, one-room schoolhouse, and the 220-foot steamboat Ticonderoga.

The museum displays artifacts from the 17th to the 20th century, 19th-century American folk art, quilts, 19th and 20th century decoys and carriages.

It was founded in 1947 by Electra Havemeyer Webb, who was an avid collector of American folk art. She sought to create "an educational project, varied and alive" by displaying her collections in a village resembling historic New England architecture - the Shelburne Museum.

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Here is a rough overview about the sheer number of displays:

- 1,400 wildfowl decoys and miniature carvings
- 120 weathervanes
- 50 carousel figures, including all 40 animals from an early Dentzel carousel
- 600 historic posters in the circus collection
- 3,500 hand-carved pieces of a Kirk Brothers Miniature Circus
- 525 linear feet of 112 attractions from the Buffalo Bill Wild West Show, Yankee Circus, and Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus in of a special exhibition building
- 770 bed coverings including 500 quilts
- 400 hooked and sewn rugs
- 2,800 costumes and accessories
- 6,650 pieces of ceramics, glass, metalwork, pewter, scrimshaw
- more than 1,000 historic dolls
- 27 dollhouses
- 3,200 American drawings, paintings, and prints from Bierstadt, Cassatt, Chase, Copley, Heade, Homer, Eastman Johnson, Lane, Grandma Moses, Peto and Andrew Wyeth
- European paintings from Corot, Daubigny, Degas, Manet and Monet
- 225 horse-drawn vehicles
- 5,000 hand tools used for leatherworking, metalsmithing, woodworking, spinning and weaving
- apothecary shop and physician's office with 2,000 medicines and medical instruments

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14. Closing Remarks

ABOUT RUDY FROM BACKPACK & SNORKEL

I was born in Germany and emigrated to the US in 2003. My wife and I are a truly multinational couple: I, with my German background, and she with her Chinese heritage. Both of us live in the USA.

Sadly, working in the US means we have much fewer vacation days compared to other countries like e.g. Germany and thus we cannot travel very frequently.

Through a lot of trial and error, we have found our ideal travel and vacation style. **Making Memorable Moments** by focusing on important destinations, planning time for meeting the locals and, of course, for relaxation are our priorities.

We have also learned to appreciate local foods and try to eat as many local dishes as possible. Just for fun, we try to eat at one Chinese restaurant in each country we visit. It is absolutely amazing how different Chinese food is all over the planet.



MAKING MEMORABLE MOMENTS

You may take 10,000 photos during your vacation, rush from one attraction to the next, but what you will remember in your heart is how you were **Making Memorable Moments**.

For me, that was e.g. Spider Rock in Canyon de Chelly (ever heard of this US National Park?). When I first saw it, I was blown away by this majestic natural obelisk and the beautiful canyon that it sits in. I have been there two more times and still feel the same.

Or think of Isla Mujeres, a small island outside Cancun, Mexico. On the surface, Playa Norte is supposedly Mexico's most beautiful beach and it is always crowded and the boats that anchor there play loud music. Below the surface, Isla Mujeres is very relaxed, quite walkable and it has friendly locals, good authentic Mexican food and good international cuisine and is often very affordable.

Isla Mujeres is our personal paradise!



PACK YOUR BACKPACK & SNORKEL AND LET'S GO

Our travel style has evolved over the years. We are packing light these days when we travel and typically only need a small backpack per person - see my [Traveling Light Guide](#).

With this guide, I want to provide value to you and help you plan your own relaxing vacations with the goal of **Making Memorable Moments!**

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.