

Connecticut Points of Interest

Barnum Museum (Bridgeport)

<http://www.barnum-museum.org/>

The museum has a collection of items from P. T. Barnum and Tom Thumb and recreations from the Barnum home, as well as artwork, carriages, a mummy and many more interesting artifacts. The historic building that housed the collection was damaged by the tornado that struck Bridgeport in 2010. The collection is temporarily housed in the People's United Bank Gallery behind the historic building. One of the exhibits, Recovery in Action! gives visitors a chance to see the amazing process being used to repair the original historic building and preserve the collection.

Beardsley Zoo (Bridgeport)

<http://www.beardsleyzoo.org>

Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo has a proud history of over 80 years as Connecticut's only zoo.

Connecticut River Museum (Essex)

<http://www.ctrivermuseum.org/>

Besides information about the river, the museum has an exhibit on the British raid on Essex, a hands-on discovery room, historic buildings, schooner cruises, and a replica of David Bushnell's Turtle submarine.

Connecticut Science Center (Hartford)

<http://ctsciencecenter.org/>

The science center has exhibits on Ancient Egypt, Space, Force and Motion, the sight and sound experience (Feel sound and hear light!), energy, invention, sports, and much more. Exhibits offer lots of hands-on experiences for all ages. 3-D movies are shown (currently playing: the 3-D Hidden Universe).

Connecticut Trolley Museum

<http://www.ct-trolley.org/>

The museum displays and explains the history of the electric trolley and its effects on society. This ticket is a terrific bargain: it includes the trolley museum admission and admission to the Fire Museum, the Motor Coach Museum, and unlimited rides on the trolley!

Connecticut's Old State House (Hartford)

<http://www.ctosh.org/>

Visit the place where Connecticut's democracy was born! The State House also houses a collection of interesting bits of Connecticut's history (Mark Twain's bicycle, a two-headed calf, and lots more). On this website, there's a cool preview video – watch it and you'll really want to visit. A link to the Calendar of Events is included on the site.

CRRA Trash Museum (Hartford)

http://www.crra.org/pages/Trash_Museum.htm

Start your visit at the Temple of Trash, then learn about modern trash disposal and recycling, energy conservation, the history of trash management from pre-historical times to today, and watch (on closed-circuit television) as recyclable trash is processed.

Danbury Railway Museum (Danbury)

<http://www.danbury.org/drm/>

Located in a historic station and rail yard, the museum has historical exhibits, a large collection of railway equipment, and even a chance to work on a (scale model) railroad. Summer hours begin in June.

Dinosaur Place at Nature's Art Village (Montville)

<http://naturesartvillage.com/thedinosaurplace/>

Dinosaur Place is part of a family fun stop at Nature's Art Village. It does have over 40 life-sized dinosaur models and some learning stations along excellent family walking trails.

Dinosaur State Park and Arboretum (Rocky Hill)

<http://www.dinosaurstatepark.org/>

The Park's geodesic dome contains five hundred of the 2000 dinosaur tracks discovered in 1968. The Park includes a life-size diorama, interactive displays, information about the discovery of the dinosaur tracks, and an arboretum. You can also create your own dinosaur track to take home.

Earthplace Nature Discovery Center (Westport)

<http://www.earthplace.org>

Earthplace Nature Discovery Center includes a hand-on museum room, animals, special events, harbor watches, a nature sanctuary, hiking trails, and much more.

Essex Steam Train and Riverboat (Essex)

<http://www.essexsteamtrain.com/steam.html>

The Essex Station, steam train, and riverboat are interesting parts of Connecticut history. The train trip provides access to Selden Neck State park, tidal wetlands, and bird spotting opportunities that are not otherwise available on land. This would be an excellent addition to a sightseeing day to Gillette Castle, Goodspeed Opera House and the Haddam Swing Bridge.

Florence Griswold Museum (Old Lyme)

<http://www.flogris.org/>

The museum including the Florence Griswold house, a national historic landmark, containing antique furnishings and exhibits of fine art. The history of the family, the village, and art are described and demonstrated. The gardens and landscape have been restored, linking the paintings in the museum to the views that inspired artists to paint.

Gillett Castle State Park (East Haddam)

http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325204&deepNav_GID=1650

The Castle was the home of William Hooker Gillette, a famous actor, director, playwright, and author, who designed both the building and most of its contents. Also included are woodlands, trails, and views open to the public.

Goodspeed Opera House (East Haddam)

<http://www.goodspeed.org/>

The Goodspeed is open for tours as well as musical productions right here in East Haddam!

Harriet Beecher Stowe Center (Hartford)

<https://www.harrietbeecherstowecenter.org/>

The museum was the home of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, a famous anti-slavery novel. The center also includes the Katharine Seymour Day House, a visitor center, and historic gardens; it is located in the Stowe's Nook Farm neighborhood, home to many prominent and nationally known Connecticut residents. Tours of the historic structure are available and many special events are offered.

Institute for American Indian Studies (Washington)

<http://www.iaismuseum.org/>

The Institute for American Indian Studies is "a museum for the study of the rich cultural diversity of the Indian people who have always lived in North America and who are still here today". Exhibits include the Quinnekekut; native peoples across North America, a recreation of the Sachem's house; archaeology in Connecticut; a small reservation house exhibit; a replicated Algonkian village; a children's discovery room; a garden of healing plants; and nature trails, with plant and tree identification signs.

Lake Compounce (Bristol)

<https://www.lakecompounce.com/>

Lake Compounce is the oldest, continuously-operating amusement park in North America. The Park's website has a nice description of its history. In the park, there is a sign detailing the history, as well as signs on some of the historic pieces, such as William Gillett's railroad. A trip to the New England Carousel Museum could also be included in a visit to Bristol.

The Marine Aquarium at Norwalk (Norwalk)

<http://www.maritimeaquarium.org/>

The Aquarium has an interactive visitor introduction to Long Island Sound as well as the harbor seal exhibit. The staff is available for answering questions.

Mark Twain House and Museum (Hartford)

<http://www.marktwainhouse.org>

The Mark Twain House & Museum, a National Historic Landmark in Hartford, Connecticut, was the home of America's greatest author, Samuel Clemens (a.k.a. Mark Twain) and his family from 1874 to 1891. It is also where Twain lived when he wrote his most important works, including Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, The Prince and The Pauper and A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court. Tours are available. Many special events are offered!

Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center (Ledyard)

<http://www.pequotmuseum.org/default.aspx>

This enormous museum has permanent exhibits, temporary exhibits, and a number of collections and libraries. There are dioramas, films, videos, interactive programs, works of art, exhibits of traditional crafts, and much more. The museum suggests you allow at least three hours for your visit.

Mystic Aquarium (Mystic)

<http://www.mysticaquarium.org>

The mission of [Sea Research Foundation, Inc.](#), which includes Mystic Aquarium, Ocean Exploration Center and JASON Learning, is to inspire people to care for and protect our ocean planet through education, research and exploration.

Mystic Seaport (Mystic)

<http://www.mysticseaport.org/>

The Seaport has a number of attractions within it, including the last wooden whaleship in the work (the Charles W. Morgan), a boathouse, cruises, interactive exhibits, performances, gardens, a planetarium, and more.

Nathan Hale Schoolhouse (East Haddam) and Nathan Hale Homestead (Coventry)

<http://www.ctvisit.com/historic-site/nathan-hale-schoolhouse/summary/1455>

<http://www.ctvisit.com/historic-site/nathan-hale-homestead-1776-/summary/1801>

In East Haddam, visit the one-room school where patriot spy and Connecticut state hero Nathan Hale taught before the American Revolution. Then head to Coventry to visit the homestead where Nathan Hale was born and lived most of his life. Both tours are fairly brief, but together they give a glimpse into the life of Connecticut's State Hero.

New Britain Youth Museums (New Britain)

<http://www.newbritainyouthmuseum.org/index.php/en/>

New Britain has two museums for children, both with exhibits and collections designed for children and their families. The High Street museum explores the history and cultures of Connecticut and the world and includes a puppet theater, interactive exhibits, and a dinosaur room. The Hungerford Park museum includes a puppet theater, ice cream parlor, interactive exhibits, a barnyard full of animals, and a nature center, with a focus on the world around us.

New England Air Museum (Windsor Locks)

<https://www.neam.org/>

The museum has more than 80 aircraft (both inside the facility and outside), exhibits, and activities. Their mission includes preserving historically significant aircraft and related items, providing high-quality exhibits on aviation history and technology as well as on the people who built and flew the aircraft, and linking their exhibits and programs to students' studies in school. Plan plenty of time for your visit!

New England Carousel Museum (Bristol)

<http://www.thecarouselmuseum.org/>

As the Bushnell Park Carousel celebrates its 100th birthday, a visit to this museum will link the carousel with the history of Connecticut. This would be a great visit to plan in conjunction with a trip to Hartford or a day at Lake Compounce.

Submarine Force Museum (Groton)

<http://www.ussnautilus.org/>

Climb aboard the historic submarine Nautilus, visit the museum building, and talk to the veterans who volunteer their time and expertise to bring this part of Connecticut's history to life. Both the museum admission and parking are free. Plan plenty of time for this visit.