

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

GET AWAY BY CAR, TRAIN, PLANE OR FERRY

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Sometimes you need a break from the norm, but don't have time for a full-blown vacation. A long weekend getaway can be the perfect answer. We've come up with four excursions for every type of traveler, from those who like to hop in the car for a short road trip to those who prefer to take a quick flight for an escape further afield.

Destination: Woodstock, Vt.
How to get there: 2 hours, 20 minutes by car
The Mood: This bucolic New England small town could easily pass for a movie set, but in fact, it's the real deal. It has a charming downtown packed with cute shops, plus a covered bridge and more than 20 miles of trails to explore nearby at the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller Historical Park. Other attractions include the Billings Farm and Museum, the New England Fal-



Bermuda

conry Center and the Suicide Six Ski Area. The historic Woodstock Inn & Resort is central to everything and a fabulous place to stay.
Things to Do: Relax, hike, shop, ski, fly hawks
Good for: The charming town offers a lot that will appeal to couples and families.

Destination: Mystic, Conn.
How to get there: 1 hour, 20 minutes by train
The Mood: The scenic seaside village of Mystic offers an easy weekend away via train, with plenty of attractions within walking distance from downtown. The Mystic Aquarium is one of the top aquariums in the region, with favorites like Beluga whales to visit, while the 19-acre Mystic Seaport Museum details the nation's mar-

itime past with a plethora of exhibits. Dining on seafood is a must, but save room for a slice at Mystic Pizza, made famous in a classic '80s movie of the same name.
Things to Do: Explore the waterfront, visit museums, shop
Good for: Mystic is perfect for families, couples, or a girls' getaway.

Destination: Bermuda
How to get there: 2 hours by plane
The Mood: Bermuda is so close to Boston that if you hop on a morning flight, you can be there in time for lunch. In winter, temps are in the mid-60s and 70s, definitely an improvement over the usual New England deep freeze. While you won't be sunbathing, there are plenty of indoor and outdoor activities to keep you busy, from playing on its six golf courses (open year-round) to exploring the island's Rail Trail on bike or foot to boutique shopping in downtown Hamilton.
Things to Do: Hike, bike, golf, shop, relax
Good for: The island offers a great spot for couples or a girls' getaway.

Destination: Block Island, R.I.
How to get there: About 1 hour, 30 minutes by car, then about 1 hour by ferry
The Mood: This laidback island 12 miles off the coast of Rhode Island offers a real chance to unplug and enjoy small-town island charms, with lots of natural beauty and peace and quiet. While winter weather means you won't be swimming, you can still kick back and enjoy the tiny island — it's just 3 miles by 7 miles in size — via bike or on foot, with ease. Visit one of the island's lighthouses, walk along the 17 miles of beaches, or bird watch at one of the island's many protected spaces. Old Harbor is the main hub for dining and shopping, such as it is, as well as charming Victorian hotels, which beckon most visitors.
Things to Do: Hike, bike, read, shop
Good for: This is a great place for a romantic couple's weekend or a solo retreat.

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BILLINGS FARM AND MUSEUM

A still life from the farmhouse at Billings Farm and Museum in Woodstock, Vt.



BILLINGS FARM AND MUSEUM

Baby Animal Day at Billings Farm and Museum.



DINA RUDICK/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

Beluga whales at the Mystic Aquarium.



DIANE BAIR FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE/FILE

Victorian style hotels are part of the laidback charm of Block Island.

HERE

SHARE THE ICE WITH FORMER BRUINS
Ice skate with legendary Bruins players at a resort at Loon Mountain to benefit the New England Disabled Sports organization. The fund-raiser on Dec. 14 includes skating, a silent auction, photo ops, and a chance to skate with more than a dozen Bruins alumni. Those expected to attend include Terry O'Reilly, Rick Middleton, Bruce Crowder, Dave Shaw, Bob Cormier, Frank Simonetti, Alex Bezanson, John Carter, Terry Virtue, and Joe Mullen. These alums will skate with guests in 30-minute sessions between 3 and 5 p.m. at The Rink at Riverwalk Resort in Lincoln, N.H. Anyone 21 and older can attend a reception from 7 to 9 p.m. with refreshments, photos with Bruins alumni, and silent and live auctions (bid on signed Bruins memorabilia, game tickets, and vacation packages). You must reserve a spot to participate. Tickets \$25-\$125 with limited availability, so book early. 603-745-7500, www.riverwalkresortatloon.com

NEW HAVEN'S HOLIDAY EXHIBIT/SHOW
Discover holiday customs of different European cultures through a new exhibit at New Haven's Knights of Columbus Museum. "Christmas in Europe," on display through Feb. 2, features more than 80 nativity scenes and religious artworks from 30 countries across Europe. The museum welcomes visitors 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily and offers free parking and admission. (203-865-0400, www.kofcmuseum.org). Also, don't miss the New Haven Ballet's performance of "The Nutcracker" Dec. 14-15 at the Shubert Theatre. This



family classic stars New York City Ballet dancers Lauren Lovette and Joseph Gordon with students of the New Haven Ballet. Tickets \$25-\$73. 203-562-5666, www.shubert.com

SHOP HOMEMADE GIFTS IN HYANNIS
A Cape Cod illustrator has transformed Hyannis's artist shanties into decorative gingerbread houses for the holiday season. Stroll down Gingerbread Lane at the Harbor Overlook, located at the base of Hyannis Village Green, and see how artist Anne Tochka (who once worked in a cookie factory) has decorated the shanties with hand-cut sprinkles, icing, wrapped candy sticks, and more. Then wander along the Walkway to the Sea brick path to Main Street and enjoy other holiday decorations and shopping treats. Park at the Town Hall, the Red Cross, and North Street parking lots for free for up to six hours. www.arts-barnstable.com

THERE

TWO WAYS TO EXPERIENCE TAHITI
Book a stay at a secluded private island resort in Tahiti's Tuamotu Archipelago and enjoy quiet beaches, a pro-

tected lagoon, and a natural coral reef. Nukutepipi island resort, which is owned by Cirque du Soleil founder Guy Laliberté, was created to protect the island's natural habitat while allowing guests special access. The full-service property includes one master residence, two junior villas, and 13 bungalows. Rates start at about \$991,062 per week, but include all meals, most activities, and lodging for up to 52 people — imagine! (www.spmhotels.com/en/nukutepipi-private-island). Or maybe this is more your speed: Help replant healthy coral fragments to help save Tahiti's coral reefs. The Coral Gardeners, a local organization, has launched an eco-tour in Moorea, during which visitors take part in a coral-cutting



workshop, plant coral, and visit an underwater nursery. Tours: \$46 per person; free under 8 years old (www.coralgardeners.org). Fly nonstop from Los Angeles to Papeete, Tahiti — an eight-hour flight — onboard Air Tahiti Nui's new fleet of Boeing 787-9 aircraft. 310-414-8484, www.tahititourisme.com

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NYC DEALS
Get special deals on Broadway shows, museum admissions, performances, tours, and restaurant meals during three programs that run for three weeks in January and February. The programs — NYC Broadway Week, NYC Restaurant Week, and NYC Must-See Week — run Jan. 21 through Feb. 9. Take advantage of two-for-one pricing for many Broadway shows, attractions, and tours — see everything from the musicals "Chicago" and "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child" to attractions such as the Bronx Zoo, Madame Tussauds New York, and the Empire State Building. Nearly 400 restaurants will also offer prix-fixe menus, with two-course lunches for \$26 and three-course dinners for \$42. Plan your

trip now through NYC & Company's website, and then start booking tickets and reservations Jan. 8. www.nyc-go.com/nyc-winter-outing

EVERYWHERE

A SPEAKER THAT'S BUILT TO TRAVEL
Take your tunes on the road and enjoy superior sound with Sonos's new Move speaker. This indoor-outdoor portable speaker sets up quickly and easily through the Sonos app and offers Wi-Fi and — here's the best part — Bluetooth capability. That means you can connect Move to your other Sonos speakers (or set it up on its own) using Wi-Fi or connect it to your smartphone via Bluetooth and stream music on the go — ideal for travel or using in places without a good Wi-Fi connection. The speaker offers robust bass, crisp lyrics, and the company's Automatic Trueplay technology that adjusts the sound quality to suit your surroundings — you'll hear the difference whether using Move inside your vacation cottage or down at the beach. This smart speaker also works with Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant so you can check the weather, ask questions, and queue music with your voice. The durable IP56-rated speaker can withstand accidental drops, rain, UV rays, and extreme temperatures. It's beefier than some portable speakers, at 6.6 pounds and 10 inches tall, but it has a hand grip on the back for easy carrying. To charge, rest the speaker on its slim charging base or plug a Type C cord into the back; the built-in battery lasts up to 10 hours. \$399. 800-680-2345, www.sonos.com
KARI BODNARCHUK