



East Coast



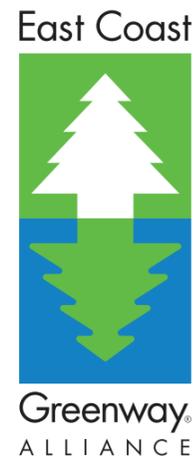
Greenway®

# **GUIDE** *to the* **EAST COAST GREENWAY**

**New Haven, Connecticut,  
*to* Providence, Rhode Island  
*by bike or on foot***

By Lisa Watts

**EAST COAST GREENWAY ALLIANCE**



The nonprofit **East Coast Greenway Alliance** is fostering a safe biking and walking route through the country's most populated corridor. The East Coast Greenway travels through 15 states and Washington, D.C., connecting 450 cities and towns for 3,000 miles from Key West to Canada. [greenway.org](http://greenway.org)

The **1772 Foundation** works to ensure the safe passage of our historic buildings and farmland to future generations. [1772foundation.org](http://1772foundation.org)

Writer and editor **Lisa Watts** lives in Westerly, Rhode Island. A former communications manager for the East Coast Greenway Alliance, she and fellow Rhode Islander Deirdre Bird biked the entire East Coast Greenway, Key West to Canada, over two months in 2018.

*On the front cover: Checking out Ponham Rocks Light in the Providence River from the East Bay Bike Path in Riverside, Rhode Island. Photo by Ana Markasyan*

## Guide to the East Coast Greenway

### New Haven, Connecticut, to Providence, Rhode Island by Bike or on Foot

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An East Coast Greenway Alliance publication,  
with support from the 1772 Foundation

2021

**Please note:** At the time of this guide's publication, some businesses along the route were still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As with all trip planning, it's wise to call ahead to check hours and availability.

The pandemic has also brought more people to the East Coast Greenway as a safe place to exercise, commute, and spend family time. Please use good trail etiquette by slowing down and calling out when passing others. Through crowded sections, please travel single file.



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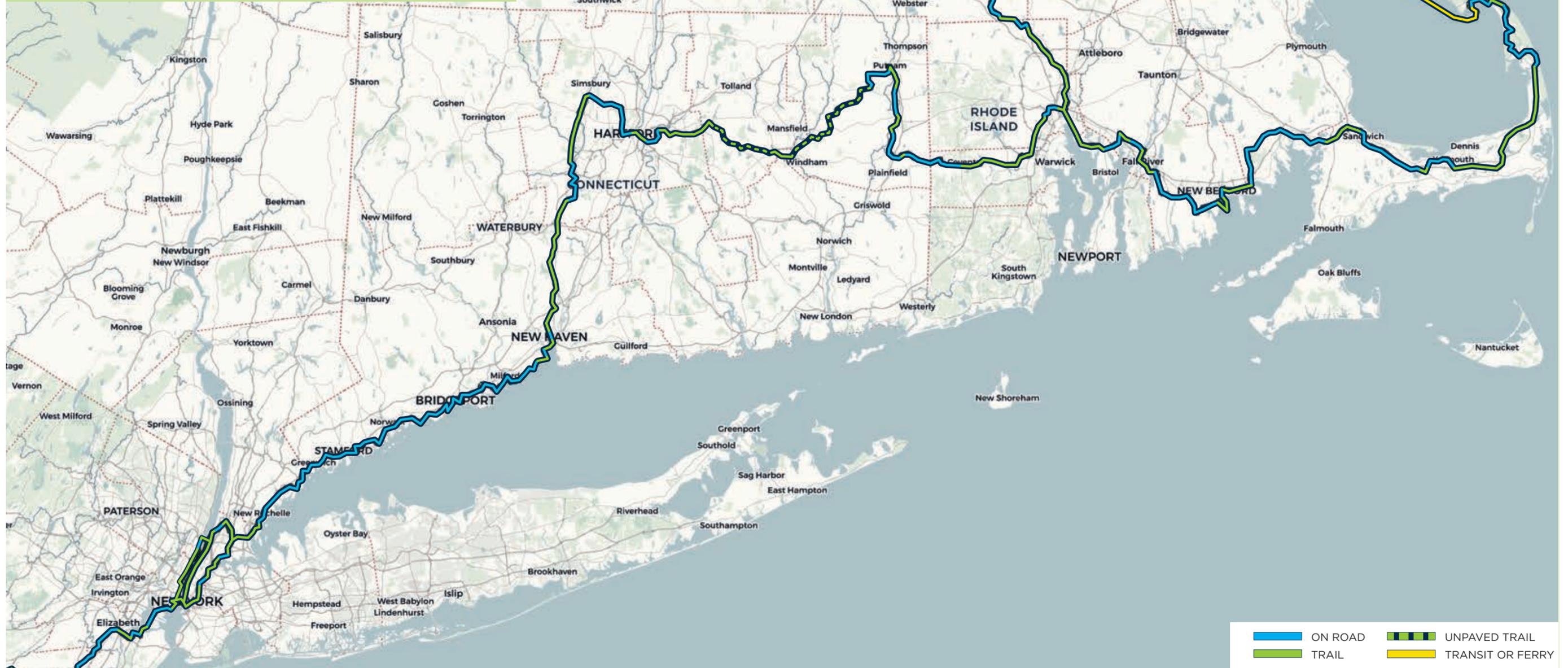
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## New Haven to Providence: 170 miles

Culture, history, and natural beauty experienced up close and in person on the East Coast Greenway.

For turn-by-turn directions and/or gpx files of the route, go to: [map.greenway.org](http://map.greenway.org)

For an interactive Google Map pinpointing all recommended lodging, dining, attractions, and other sites, go to: [greenway.org/ctriguide](http://greenway.org/ctriguide)

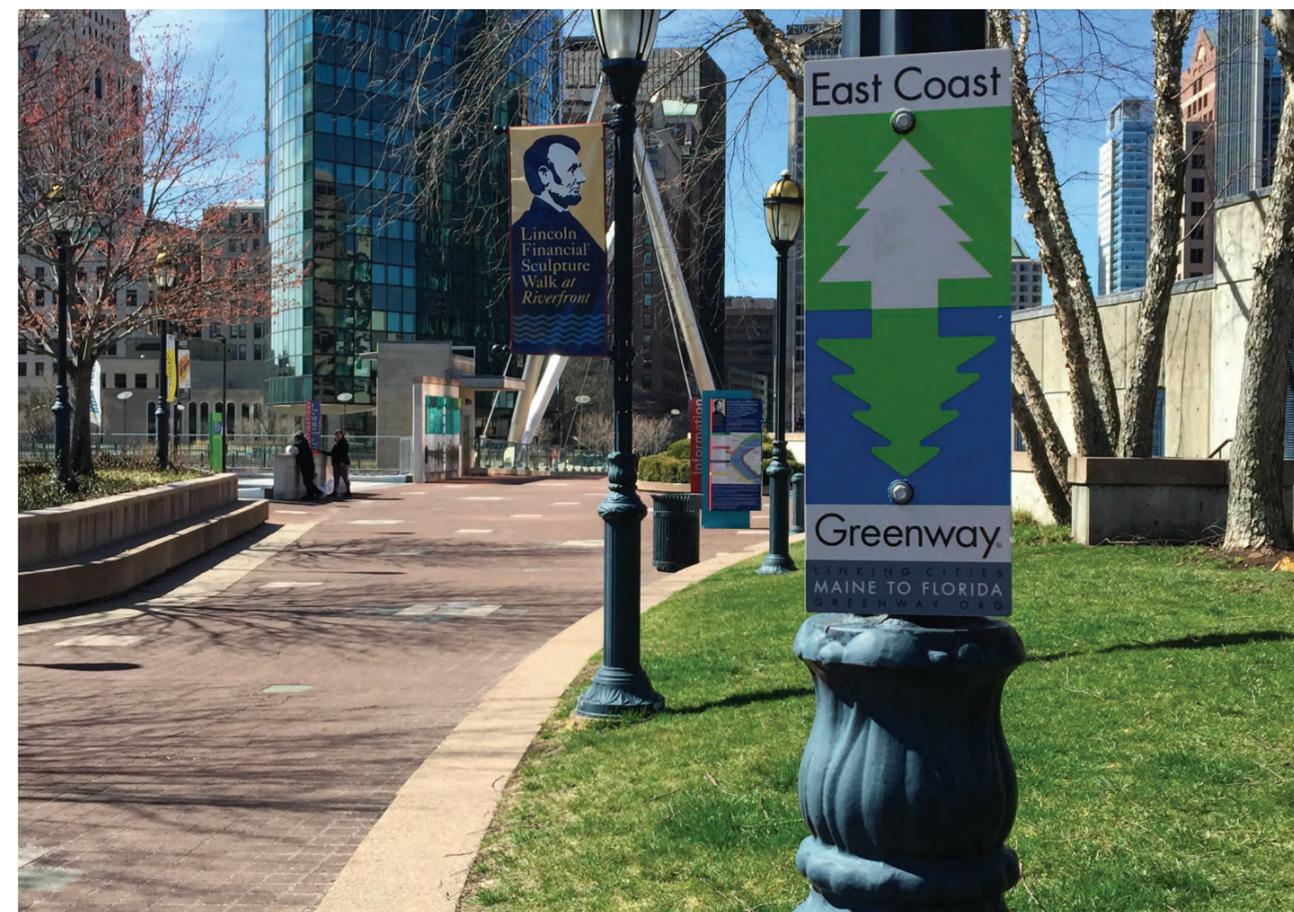


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The East Coast Greenway crosses the Connecticut River from downtown Hartford via the Mortensen Riverfront Plaza. Photo by Erin Roll

## Introduction

**There's a powerful magic to the little green and blue signs that mark your way on the East Coast Greenway.**

You might be out for a morning's run in Georgia or a quick afternoon bike ride in New York City. You see the Greenway sign and it hits you: One day you could just keep heading north and reach the Canadian border, or head south for the palm trees and beaches of Key West.

Such was the East Coast Greenway founders' vision in the early 1990s. As planners and bicycle advocates living in Boston and New York City, they imagined a biking and walking route that would safely

connect those two metropolitan areas. Soon they stretched their vision to span the whole East Coast, from the tip of Florida through Maine. They intentionally routed the Greenway through the coast's largest cities, from Miami to Boston, rather than skirting urban areas. From the start, they envisioned the Greenway as an equitable, accessible multi-use path that connects the places where the most people live. As a result, the East Coast Greenway is as suitable for local commuting by bike or foot as it is for enjoying the outdoors, exercising, and traveling — for hours or for months.

To develop a route of this distance, you have to take the long view. It's a marathon,



For Rhode Islanders, clams are quahogs

not a sprint. The Greenway began as a network of existing paths connected by the safest roads possible between them. The hard work is in developing safe, accessible greenway connections. As the nonprofit East Coast Greenway Alliance approaches its 30th anniversary in 2021, the route has reached the milestone of 35 percent complete, with more than 1,000 of its 3,000 miles now on protected paths. Those miles represent \$1.5 billion in infrastructure investment that has produced a strong return in terms of economic development as well as benefits for public health and the environment. In 2020, so many people flocked to the East Coast Greenway for their physical and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic that it has become the most visited park in America, counting over 50 million bike rides, runs, and walks.

**Visitors to the East Coast Greenway in Connecticut and Rhode Island** will enjoy a number of the Greenway's earliest and most beloved stretches of protected paths: from the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to the Charter Oak, Hop River, and Air Line State Park Trail in Connecticut to the Washington Secondary Trail across Rhode Island and the East Bay Bike Path alongside Narragansett Bay. The two states have some of the highest percentages of completion among the Greenway's 13 states — 50 percent for Connecticut, 68 percent for Rhode Island. In both cases, that progress is thanks to leadership from the top: governors over the years who

have championed the vision of a long-distance trail and whose transportation and parks departments have made it happen.

Traveling the Greenway through Connecticut and Rhode Island, you'll enjoy far more than just traffic-free miles. The route through the Nutmeg State and the Ocean State is steeped in history and culture, natural beauty and urban innovation. Names of towns and rivers and roads remind you of the area's first settlers, including the Wampanoags, the Quinnipiacs, and the Narragansetts, whose descendants still live here. Thanks to an early deal with the Wampanoags, Roger Williams founded Rhode Island in 1636 as a refuge for religious freedom. Just north of Providence, Samuel Slater harnessed the Blackstone River to spin cotton yarn into fabric, creating America's first textile mill and launching the American Industrial Revolution in 1793. In Hartford, merchants worried about their valuable wares sitting in warehouses, vulnerable to fire, so the country's insurance industry took root in this bustling city on the Connecticut River.

You'll read about this history and more in the following chapters. You will learn that the East Coast Greenway passes the first mint to make American coins and the first American factory to build bicycles. You can visit the home of Mark Twain and a boxcar museum detailing the life of *Boxcar Children* author Gertrude Chandler Warner. You can tour the handsome, centuries old campuses of two Ivy League universities. You can take in awe-inspiring views of Long Island Sound and the city from New Haven's two sentinel ridges, West Rock and East Rock. You can soak in the peace and beauty of miles of woods and marshlands where trains once carried freight and passengers between New York City and Boston. You can grab a bench and feast on a fish taco or slice of pizza

while people-watching on a pedestrian bridge over the Providence River, a few miles downriver from Slater's first mill.

The history here is not all admirable, of course. The deep-water harbor of Bristol, Rhode Island, at one end of the East Bay Bike Path, was a key port for the global slave trade. The region's Native American tribes united at one point to fight off English colonizers, but ultimately the Indigenous people were forcibly displaced. In the 1800s an African American entrepreneur and community leader in New Haven died, poor and alone, after decades of growing racism as more people moved to the city for industrial jobs that he helped to create by building Long Wharf. As the region's industries grew, industrial waste polluted the once thriving rivers, bays and harbors.

**Much of New England's evolution** has centered on its modes of transportation. It's a story that is told as you travel along the East Coast Greenway. The rivers and footpaths traveled by Native Americans expanded to dirt roads and canals used by farmers and traders (and the nation's first cyclists). The Industrial Revolution, seeking the quickest and flattest path between producers and markets, brought rail lines and trains. Automobiles, trucks and highways eventually replaced most of the freight and passenger trains, leaving rail beds to weeds and rust. Factory work moved to the American South and eventually overseas, leaving empty red brick mills and factories along the region's riverbanks.

Today, more and more abandoned rail beds are being reclaimed as the trails we love for commuting, play, and exercise. Repurposed factories are home to residents and businesses, from breweries to think tanks. Leaders in New Haven, Hartford, and Providence are



Biking in Long Wharf Park in New Haven, CT. Photo by Rob Dexter

embracing their waterfronts and opening downtown streets to people again (not just automobiles) with bike lanes, redirected highways, and more.

As you travel the East Coast Greenway and enjoy its completed segments through Rhode Island and Connecticut, keep in mind the vision and effort it took to build these miles. You see a beautiful stretch of paved trail winding its way through the Farmington Valley and alongside the Pawtuxet River and think, of course there's a greenway here. But often it takes decades of advocating and hundreds of meetings — plus millions of federal, state, and local dollars — to bring a mile or two of Greenway to life.

Bruce Donald knows how arduous trail development can be. The East Coast



WaterFire lights up Providence on select weekends in warmer months. Photo by Waterfire.org/Erin Cuddigan

Greenway Alliance's Southern New England Manager, Donald has seen this cycle repeated many times in his two decades of trail advocacy, much of it in his native Farmington Valley. A few civic leaders will propose and champion a multi-use path. But once initial plans are drawn and a route announced, opposition appears, often from landowners whose properties border the proposed trail. A bike path, they say, will attract hooligans to my backyard, bringing looting, vandalism, and worse. A paved path, others say, means destroying a natural area. If the trail plans proceed, the landowners build fences and walls to protect their property. Yet soon after the ribbon cutting, naysayers see clearly that greenways and trails attract not thieves but cyclists and walkers, families and friends, young and old. Property values increase for the homes and businesses within walking distance of the trail, expanding tax bases. Nearby coffee shops and ice cream stands thrive on thirsty, hungry greenway users. And slowly but surely, property owners begin to cut holes in their walls and build gates in their fences so they, too, can access the trail. Environmentalists recognize that more people are able to access and experience

nature from the greenway, while trips in cars and fossil fuel use are reduced.

We look forward to celebrating future milestones — the occasions when Connecticut and Rhode Island each complete their section and the day when the entire East Coast Greenway is complete, Key West to Canada. In the meantime, we wish you tailwinds, tasty rest stops, and many delightful hours and days spent exploring southern New England on the East Coast Greenway.

As you explore the Greenway in southern New England, we hope you'll share your adventures. Write to us, tell your family and friends, post and tag us on social media. In the same way our route is a work in progress, adapting and redirecting as we aim eventually to be located fully on protected paths, this guide is a living document that we'll update with your recommendations and insights.

Don't forget to support the nonprofit East Coast Greenway Alliance, which works to develop the 3,000-mile route for many generations to come. You can read more and support our work at [greenway.org](http://greenway.org).

## Itineraries & Navigation

Whether you have a few hours, a few days, or a week to spend exploring, here are some suggestions for how to enjoy the East Coast Greenway in Connecticut and Rhode Island.

This guide describes the route heading south to north, from New Haven to

Providence. Your trip will be every bit as enjoyable if you travel it in reverse, north to south. Prime months for enjoying this stretch of southern New England are May through September, when average day-time temperatures range from 70 degrees to the mid-80s. April and October are cooler, with average highs in the low 60s.



### Favorite half-day runs, walks, and skates: 2-8 miles

Scenic stretches of protected multi-use trail, with nearby amenities (parking, bathrooms, cafes, etc.)

- **Long Wharf Trail, New Haven, CT**  
1.6 miles out and back, scenic views of the harbor. Food trucks at lunch time; port-a-potties near maritime center. Tons of parking.
- **Elizabeth Park, Hartford, CT**  
1.8-mile loop past the park's stunning rose gardens. Extend with side paths, or run 2 miles east to Bushnell Park. Bathrooms in the visitor center; cafe and take-out snack bar.
- **East Bay Bike Path, Providence, RI**  
6.6 miles out and back from Providence, parking at the Mercer Street and Veterans Memorial Parkway lot (a popular spot for watching the sunset). Turn around in River-side at mile 3.3.
- **Putnam River Walk, Putnam, CT**  
2 miles end to end. History displays and scenic river views. Parking lots along Kennedy Street, restaurants on South Main Street.
- **Great River Park Trail, East Hartford, CT**  
2-3 miles. Great views across the Connecticut River of Hartford, the Colt Manufacturing Plant, and bridges up the river. Access to bicycle/pedestrian Founders Bridge across the river to Hartford.

### Favorite one-day rides, runs, skates: 15-50 miles

- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and Farmington River Trail, CT, 30-mile loop
- Cheney Loop, Manchester, CT, 17-mile three town loop (see map)
- Pomfret Center to Willimantic, CT 40 miles out and back
- Hartford to Bolton Notch, CT, 36 miles out and back
- East Bay Bike Path, Providence to Bristol, RI, 28 miles out and back
- Washington Secondary Path, Providence to Coventry, RI, 30 miles out and back



Sylvia Ounpuu on the Air Line Trail during RiMaConn Relay, a 3-state running event

## Entire route, New Haven to Providence (or reverse)

Suggestions for breaking up the route based on how much time you can take and the distances you want to travel each day:

3 days:

- day 1, New Haven to East Hartford, 64 miles
- day 2, East Hartford to Putnam, 56 miles
- day 3, Putnam to Providence, 50 miles

5 days:

- day 1, New Haven to Simsbury, 45 miles
- day 2, Simsbury to East Hartford, 20 miles with time to explore Hartford
- day 3, East Hartford to Putnam, 55 miles
- day 4, Putnam to Providence, 50 miles
- day 5, East Bay Bike Path out and back, 28 miles

8 days:

- day 1, explore New Haven
- day 2, New Haven to Simsbury, 45 miles
- day 3, Simsbury to East Hartford, 20 miles with time to explore Hartford
- day 4, East Hartford to Willimantic, 27 miles
- day 5, Willimantic to Putnam, 28 miles
- day 6, Putnam to Coventry, 35 miles
- day 7, Coventry to Providence, 15 miles, time to explore Providence
- day 8, Providence to Warren and back on East Bay Bike Path, 24 miles



## How to navigate the East Coast Greenway

Connecticut and Rhode Island feature spectacular East Coast Greenway segments that are protected from motor vehicles and suitable for all trail users. Cyclists attempting multiple-day rides should be experienced and comfortable in navigating through cities and rural areas and in sharing roads and bridges with cars and trucks.

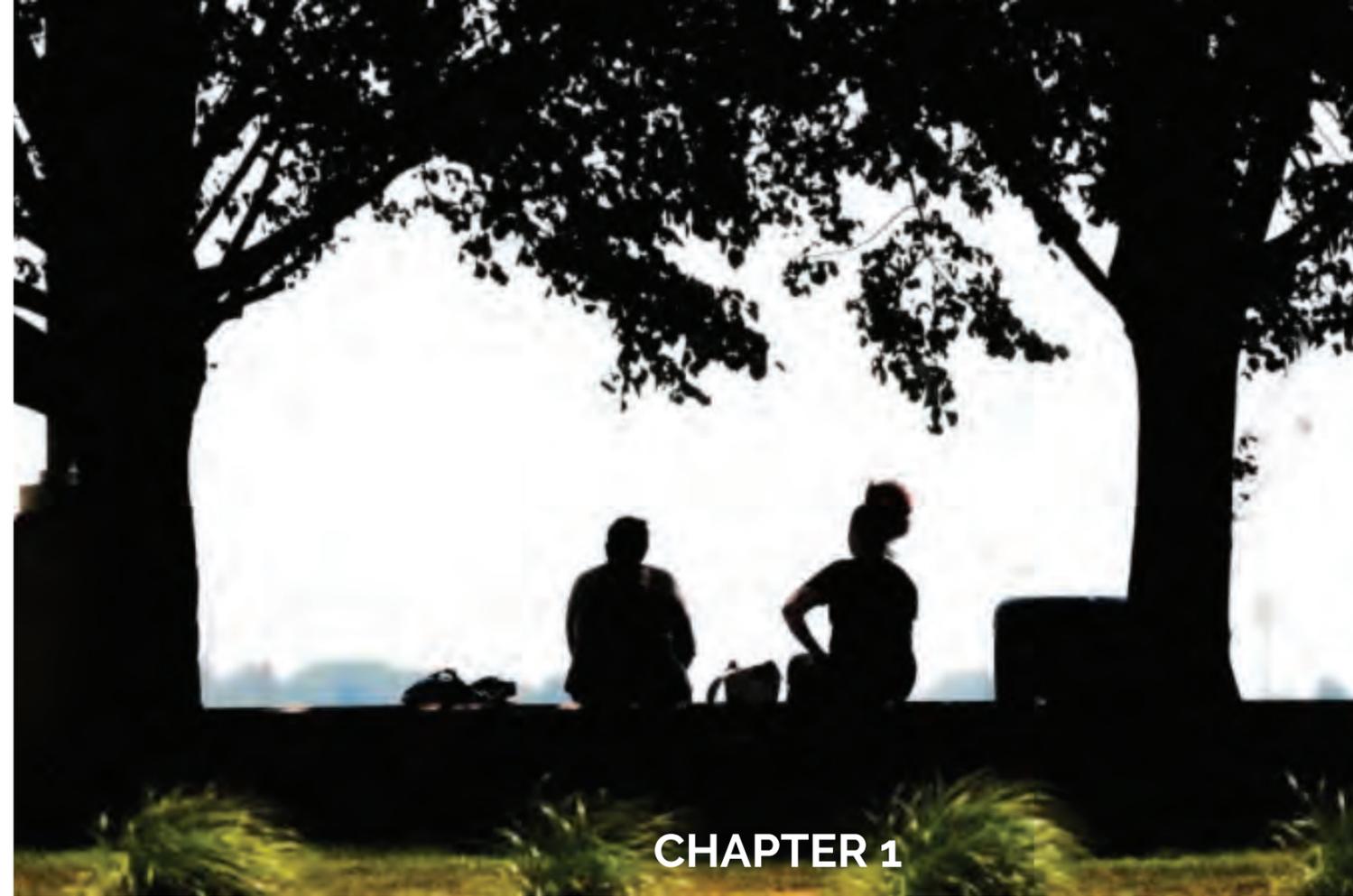
You'll find plenty of East Coast Greenway signs along the way, but you won't want to rely solely on signage for navigation. Frequent route updates as well as local regulations mean there may be gaps in signage. It's safer to use some form of online or paper mapping tool and treat the signs as confirmation that you're on the right route.

An online mapping tool, [map.greenway.org](http://map.greenway.org),

allows you to enter start and end points on the Greenway. Remember to click "enter" or "return" after typing in your starting and ending locations. From there, you can generate a gpx or kml file that you can upload to electronic navigation devices and/or download a PDF of turn-by-turn cue sheets that you can print.

For navigation on the go, we recommend using the East Coast Greenway map on a third-party mobile app such as Maps.me or Ride with GPS. The apps allow you to navigate without needing an Internet connection, once you have downloaded maps for the area where you are traveling and uploaded the Greenway route file.

Find directions for downloading a KML file of the entire Greenway at [greenway.org/route-map](http://greenway.org/route-map).



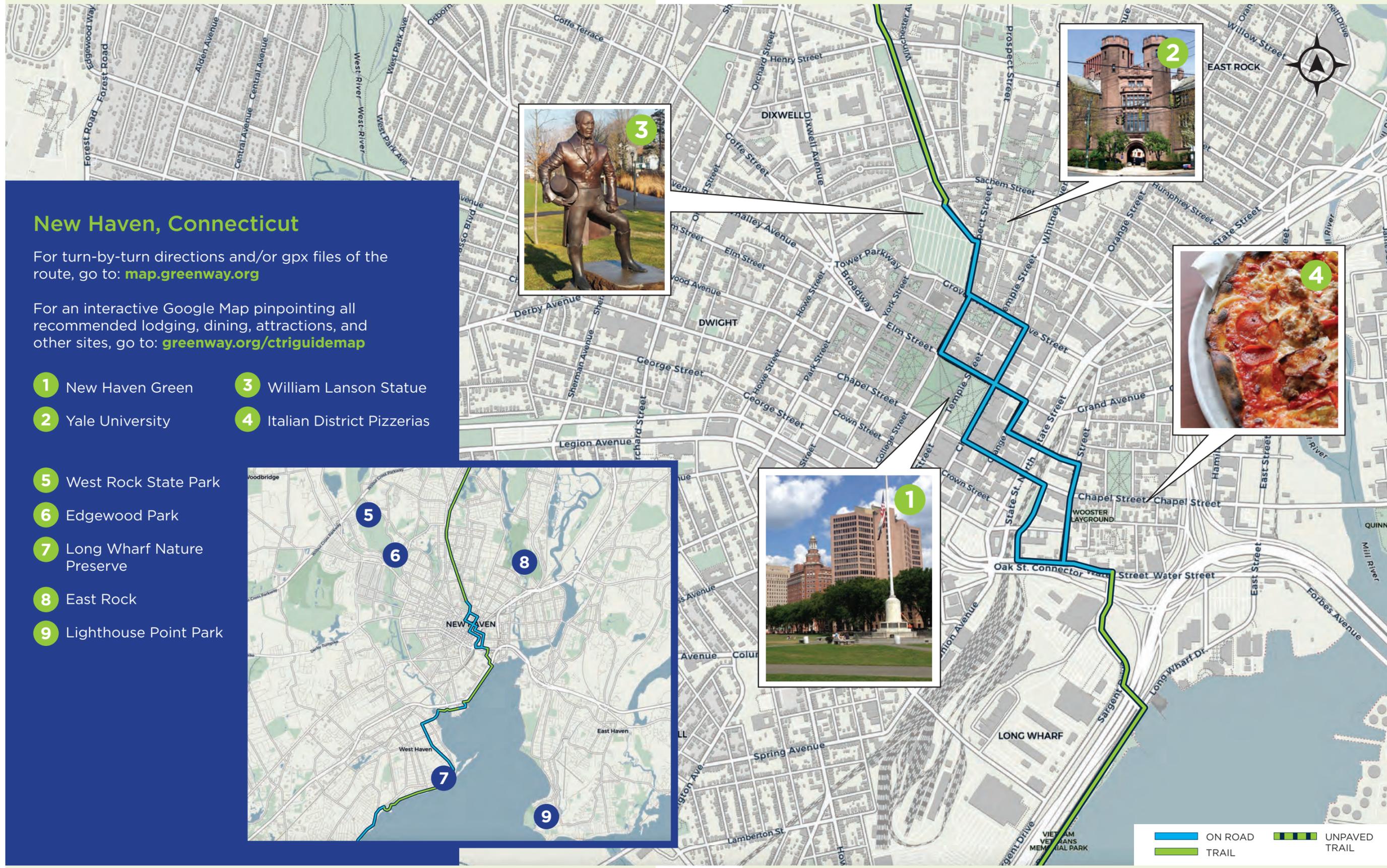
## CHAPTER 1

# NEW HAVEN, CT

*Taking in the breeze off Long Island Sound on the East Coast Greenway along New Haven's Long Wharf. Photo by New Haven Register*



*Historic inventions,  
flavors of many cultures,  
and bike-friendly culture*



## New Haven, Connecticut

For turn-by-turn directions and/or gpx files of the route, go to: [map.greenway.org](http://map.greenway.org)

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- 1** New Haven Green
- 2** Yale University
- 3** William Lanson Statue
- 4** Italian District Pizzerias
- 5** West Rock State Park
- 6** Edgewood Park
- 7** Long Wharf Nature Preserve
- 8** East Rock
- 9** Lighthouse Point Park

## What to know

As cities go, New Haven may be one of New England's best hidden gems. Many of us know that Yale University is located here. Its walkable campus and striking, architecture help to anchor downtown. But the city is also rich in history, home to five academic institutions of higher education in addition to Yale, and was designed from the start to be walkable. Situated on Long Island Sound, the city is bookmarked by two sentinel ridges — East Rock and West Rock— and surrounded by estuaries and other scenic natural areas.

Home to the Quinnipiac tribe, New Haven has a long tradition of welcoming immigrants from all over the world. As organizers of the International Festival of Arts & Ideas note, "One out of every eight residents is foreign-born and our students speak over 100 languages at home." The annual festival, now 25 years old, offers events spanning several weeks in June. The Ethnic Heritage Center at Southern Connecticut State University highlights the city's diversity, which is also celebrated at many local restaurants offering a United Nations of cuisines.

A good place to begin to learn about New Haven is the town green. It's the center square of a nine-square grid designed by Puritan colonists in the 1600s as they created the first city planned by Europeans in North America. The green hosts events year-round and has evolved with the times. Once a burial ground and a public site for grazing cows, the New Haven Green now offers free public wi-fi.

Proceeding from the town green, "On every corner, there's hundreds of years of history," as Jason Bischoff-Wurstle, director of photo archives for the New Haven Museum, says. New Haven's contributions to history are colorful and full of firsts. Two members of the English Parliament hid

out in a cave at West Rock for weeks after signing a death warrant for King Charles I. A convicted counterfeiter and an enslaved person teamed up to make the first American coins out of a Water Street mint. New Haven was home to Benedict Arnold, the Revolutionary War leader who eventually defected to the British army, and to Nathan Hale, a Yale graduate who served as a captain under George Washington and was killed by British troops for spying on them. The Morse Code, vulcanized rubber, Erector Set toys, the hamburger, and metal corset stays were all invented in New Haven. While he gained notoriety for designing the cotton gin, Eli Whitney launched industrial history by building a factory here to make firearms.



*Bike tour leaders Proulx and Burrone*

Paul Proulx and Laura Burrone lead a dozen bike rides a year around their native city as part of the International Festival of Arts & Ideas. They love introducing locals and visitors to the wealth of history, public art, ethnic eats and more.

"It's a city of amazing architecture, history, culture and natural features," says Proulx. "Yale is a tremendous resource. There's stuff going on all the time, and much of it is open to the public. Movies, theater, art gal-



*New Haven Green and Yale University campus. Photo by Michael Melford*

eries are top notch and many offerings are free. I never lack for something to do here." The city has a strong bike culture, with plenty of people using bicycles as a means for transportation, Burrone says. "We've seen more bike lanes and more visibility in general for bikes in recent years." The East Coast Greenway route through New Haven takes in much of the city's best scenery, traveling from the south along Long Island Sound, then along the harbor from West Haven across to Long Wharf, into downtown and the town green, then heading north from the Yale campus on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.

Proulx and Burrone have designed three New Haven bike tours that take in scenic vistas (including East Rock and West Rock), history, and culture. Pick one or two or make a day of it and do all three; each starts and ends at the town green. See tours and download maps: [greenway.org/newhaventours](http://greenway.org/newhaventours).

### Don't miss

- **Beinecke Rare Books Library**, to see a rare Gutenberg Bible and an original edition of Audubon's *Birds of America*.
- **Edgewood Park**, designed in 1910 by Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., the son of the designer of New York City's Central Park.
- **"Women's Table,"** a sculpture located on the Rose Walk on Yale's campus by alumna Maya Lin, the artist who also created the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, DC.
- **Lighthouse Point Park**, past the airport in East Haven, offers swimming, nature trails, boardwalk and lighthouse, and a restored 1916 carousel.

## Local knowledge: Honoring William Lanson



New Haven officials installed this statue of William Lanson on the East Coast Greenway in September 2020. The engineer and entrepreneur built much of Long Wharf and the Farmington Canal. Photo by Laura Burrone

A seven-foot bronze statue at the Lock Street entrance to the Greenway's Farmington Canal Trail celebrates the life and legacy of William Lanson. This 19th-century Black man was an engineer, entrepreneur and abolitionist who built much of the Farmington Canal after successfully extending New Haven's Long Wharf. Lanson's life story illustrates the best and worst of American culture in the 1800s—the promise of a free Black man building thriving businesses and the scourge of racism that beat him down, leaving him to live out his last years in a poor house.

Lanson moved to New Haven with his family

around 1803 and started a quarry business. In 1810 he took on a complicated contract: extending Long Wharf by 1,350 feet so it could accommodate larger cargo ships. Lanson had flat-bottomed boats built that could carry 25 tons of stone, which his laborers quarried from nearby Blue Mountain.

Close on the heels of this successful project, writes historian Peter P. Hinks, Lanson established a popular hostelry on Chapel Street. He also purchased substantial acreage and houses in New Haven's largely undeveloped New Township in the 1810s and '20s. Many Black families settled in the area, mixing amicably with white neighbors and visitors.

In the 1820s, Lanson won contracts to build the retaining wall for the harbor basin opening up from the Farmington Canal as well as sections of the canal. Development was picking up in New Haven. Construction of the canal brought Irish laborers, followed by other ethnicities of laborers and mariners. Racial tensions grew. "Many New Haven residents succumbed to scapegoating their problems on the Black population, while the old elite who had upheld and contracted with Lanson had lost their pre-eminence," Hinks writes. Lanson was an outspoken advocate for voting rights and integration, but "rising white prejudices won the day." By the time of his death in 1851, Lanson had lost his properties and wealth.

At a September 2020 dedication of the Lanson statue, New Haven Mayor Justin Elicker issued a formal apology to Lanson for the harassment that he endured as a Black man and declared September 26 as William Lanson Day in New Haven. His striking sculpture stands as a reminder to visitors of past mistakes and as a tribute to all that Lanson contributed despite the injustices he suffered.



## Where to eat

Pizza. Locals tell visitors that the best pizza in the world is made in New Haven. Developed by Italian immigrants, the local style is known as apizza (pronounced ahh-beets) and features a thin crust and charring from coal-fired brick ovens. On Wooster Street in the city's Italian district, you can check out the best known pizzerias: **Sally's Apizza** and **Frank Pepe's**. Toppings are diverse. "You have to ask for mozzarella or it won't come with cheese," advises Proulx. New Haveners will tell you to try the white clam pie.

A few blocks west on Crown Street, the iconic **Louis' Lunch** has been recognized by the Library of Congress as the first

American restaurant to sell a hamburger. Lore has it the sandwich's name comes from rowdy sailors from Hamburg, Germany, who clamored for the meat on a bun and named it for themselves.

Nearly as famous but meat free, **Claire's Corner Copia** has been offering homemade vegetarian and vegan dishes since 1975. The cafeteria-style eatery is across the street from the New Haven Green and the Pierre Lallement plaque.

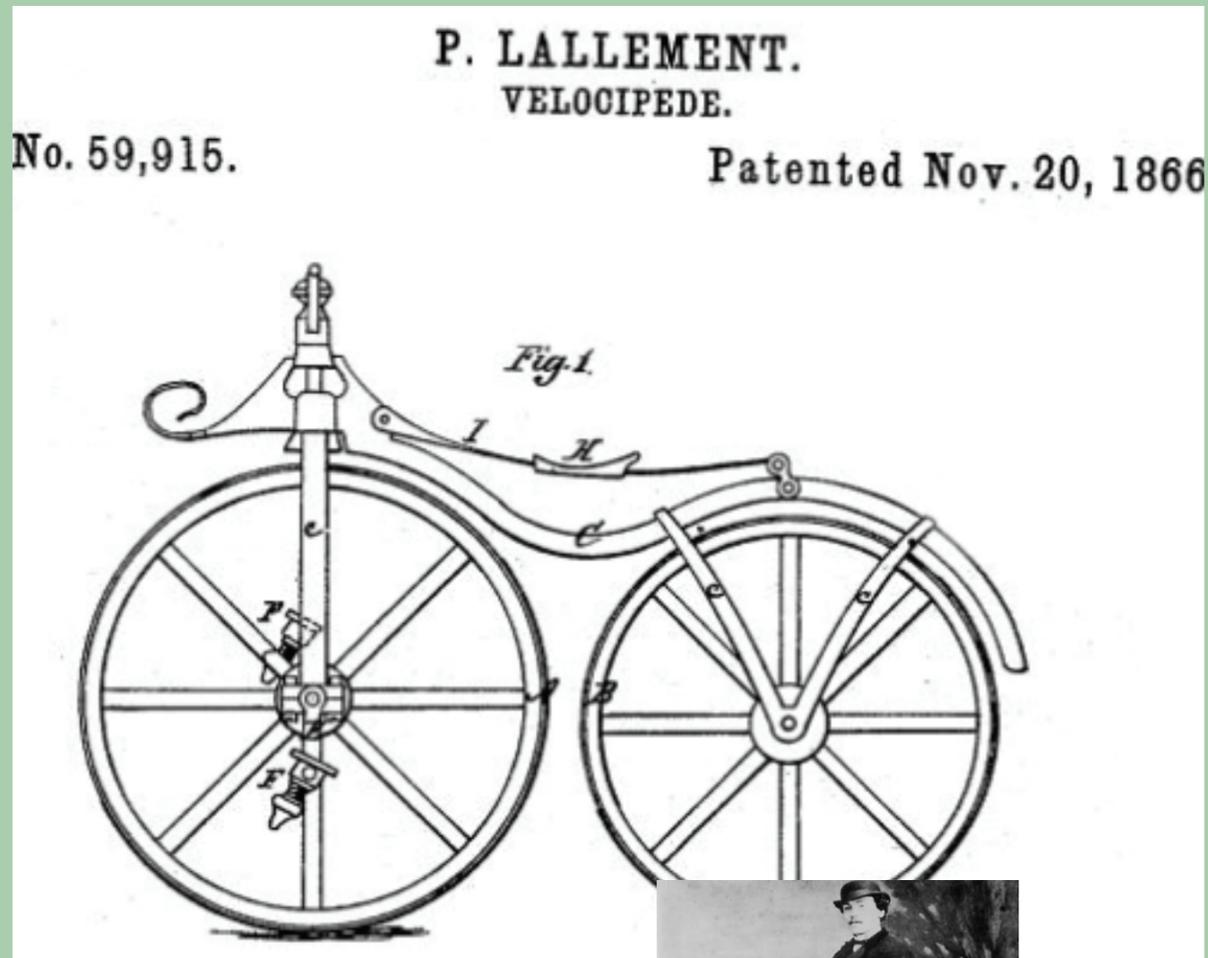
In the arts district, **Koffee?** at 104 Audubon Street, one block from the Greenway, is a great stop for fair trade brews along with homemade pastries and sandwiches.



Larry Lucky inside his mobile cafe. Info:luckystarbuscafe.com

## Local knowledge: Lucky's Star Bus Cafe

"Find affordable lunch and dinner options—including the best blackened salmon I've ever had—served out of a renovated bus parked at the corner of Dixwell Avenue and Dudley Street steps from the Greenway. A former bus driver, Larry Lucky is committed to supporting the neighborhood, sponsoring food for people in need." — Jack Dougherty



## Local knowledge: New Haven is birthplace of two-wheeled bicycle

On November 20, 1866, mechanic Pierre Lallement received a patent for his invention consisting of two wheels placed "one directly in front of the other, combined with a mechanism for driving the wheels, and an arrangement for guiding."

Having recently arrived in New Haven off a steamer from France, Lallement also managed to find a local investor, partly by riding his invention 10 miles from his home in Ansonia to the New Haven Green.

"An enterprising individual propelled himself about the green last evening on a curious frame sustained by two wheels



Lallement on his invention and his patent illustration. Connecticut history.org images

following each other, and driven by foot-crank," reported the *New Haven Palladium*.

Unable to find an American manufacturer, Lallement sold his patent in 1876 to Albert Pope. Using a sewing machine factory in Hartford, Pope started producing the early bicycles under the business name Columbia (see Chapter 3). New Haven installed a plaque on the town green in 2016 to honor the 150th anniversary of Lallement's patent.



Looking back at New Haven from Lighthouse Point Park. Photo: Connecticut Tourism Office/Kindra Clineff

## Where to stay

Yale University's presence and its global visitors means New Haven hosts any number of high-end hotels, all within walking distance of the campus, restaurants and shops.

For bike tourists and walkers traveling on more modest budgets, consider **La Quinta Inn** one block from the Greenway on Sargent Drive. Slightly more expensive

but filled with character is the **Graduate New Haven**, formerly the Hotel Duncan, a storied place centrally located on Chapel Street.

Thanks in part to the strong local cycling culture, you can find a handful of Warmshowers hosts in the area; visit [warmshowers.org](http://warmshowers.org).

## Bike shops

**Devils Gear Bike Shop**, 845 Chapel Street, New Haven, on the East Coast Greenway. 203-773-9288

**College Street Cycles LLC**, 252 College Street, New Haven, 0.3 miles from East Coast Greenway. 203-865-2724

**Bradley Street Bicycle Co-op**, 138 Bradley Street, New Haven, 0.3 miles from East Coast Greenway. 860-337-2777

## Getting there

In New Haven, **Union Station** provides access to New York City, Boston and Hartford via Amtrak (Acela Express, Regional, Vermonter routes) as well as the MTA Metro-North Railroad New Haven Line and Shore Line East.

Learn about long-term parking options in New Haven at [parknewhaven.com](http://parknewhaven.com).



South vista from West Rock ridge, top (explorect.org photo); photo opp at East Rock Park during annual Rock to Rock rides for Earth Day. Photo by New Haven Register



## Natural features

Two natural shoulders frame the city — **East Rock** and **West Rock** — and offer tremendous views of the city, harbor, Long Island Sound and beyond. The cliffs of East Rock’s ridge stand 300 feet above the city as part of the narrow, linear Metacomet Ridge, a series of basalt traprock ridges which extend from the Sound north to the Holyoke Range in Massachusetts. The seven-mile West Rock is also part of the Metacomet Ridge, with cliffs rising 700 feet above sea level. The city park is popular for recreation with a network of hiking trails

running through it. It is home to rare plants, diverse birds, and a number of microclimates.

Closer to sea level, less than two miles from downtown, the **Long Wharf Nature Preserve** showcases tidal wetlands and a stand of cottonwoods. Over 100 species of birds have been spotted here on some 15 acres where, despite being close to Interstate 95 and industrial sites along New Haven’s harbor, native plants and animals have returned. Best feature: the East Coast Greenway runs through the preserve.



# CHAPTER 2 NEW HAVEN TO SIMSBURY

East Coast Greenway and Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Farmington, CT. Rob Dexter photo



45 MILES

*History and amenities  
on the Farmington Canal  
Heritage Trail*