

Vermont: Fall Foliage

Tour-Only Itinerary

Every autumn something magical happens in Vermont. There's a perfect mix of sun and cloud, and the tree-covered mountains explode with technicolor reds, oranges, and yellows. As you explore one of New England's most colorful hotspots for fall hiking vacations, you'll discover a pastoral landscape of working farms, rolling hills, and maple forests. Descend into the Quechee Gorge, a 165-foot-deep, glacially-carved ravine with cascades of clear water. Walk the ridgeline of Mount Mansfield to Vermont's highest peak for a panoramic view encompassing three states and Canada. In tree-lined pastures, trek paths alive with birdsong arriving at charming New England towns. This is our beautiful home state, and Vermont walking tours are a specialty and passion we'd love to share with you.



Highlights

- Walk a stretch of the nation's first long-distance hiking route, the Long Trail. Country Walkers is proud to help maintain this historic trail.
- Explore the magnificent grounds of Shelburne Farms, a former Vanderbilt estate on the shores of Lake Champlain, now a nonprofit organic farm and education center
- Get a personal sense of Vermont history visiting a friend and local dairy farmer whose farm has belonged to his family for over a century

On all Flex-Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Opportunities to break away from the group and explore on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 20 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious multi-course meals—a majority are included.

Activity Level

This tour is one of our Flex-Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate, with an average of 2 to 6 miles daily with occasional options. The terrain is varied, with walks on dirt roads, dirt paths, and some rocky trails with uneven footing. The trails have some long, flat stretches with an occasional steep but short ascent of no more than 45 minutes. As one of our Flex-Guided tours, some days offer options for self-exploration, cultural visits, or free time to relax on your own.

DAY 1

Arrival in Burlington

Waitsfield Common Rd; 2-3 miles, easy. Cossingham Road Farm Loop; 2-3 miles, easy

Your guide(s) will meet you at the DoubleTree by Hilton Burlington Vermont at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby. Your guide(s) will be wearing a Country Walkers shirt. Please be dressed for walking.

After a brief orientation meeting you depart for an introductory walk in the town of Waitsfield, located in the heart of Vermont's Mad River Valley. Situated 40 miles from Burlington and with only 1,700 full time residents, Waitsfield is known for its natural beauty and two popular ski destinations: Sugarbush Resort and Mad River Glen. It also boasts numerous amazing restaurants, a 100-year-old covered bridge, and The Big Picture Theater, a one-of-a-kind movie theatre. Your first walk today is a stroll along a classic country road with magnificent views over the Mad River Valley towards Sugarbush. On your walk you will also enjoy these notable highlights: the von Trapp Greenhouse and Farm and the Skinner Barn, a beautifully restored historic post-and-beam dairy barn originally built in 1891 by the Daniel Skinner family, plus open landscapes and organic farms. End your walk at the intersection with East Warren Road, where you board the vans for a short transfer to lunch.

After lunch, you depart for a one-hour drive to the quintessential New England town of Norwich. With a population of just over 3,400, Norwich has a vibrant downtown, a lovely village green, and the memorable Dan & Whit's general store, whose motto is "If we don't have it, you don't need it!"

This afternoon, you embark on a meandering walk through woods and open fields at the Cossingham Road Farm. Nearly 70 species of birds have been identified by either sound or sight on the farm. Lucky visitors may see a barred owl or moose tracks.

Your final destination today is the Norwich Inn, your home for the next two nights. First established in 1797 by Dartmouth College graduate Jasper Murdock, the inn's Victorian architecture and antique furnishings belie the modern amenities available to its guests. After time to freshen up, you may enjoy a Vermont-made aperitif before dinner at the inn, where you choose from their menu featuring fresh and local ingredients.

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Norwich Inn, Norwich

DAY 2

Union Village Dam

Optional self-guided history walk; 1 mile, easy. Union Village Dam, 3 miles, easy to moderate

Early risers may opt for a brief self-guided history walk along Norwich's Main Street before breakfast at the inn's terrace dining room. Following this refreshing start to your day, you depart for a walk along the Ompompanoosuc River, eventually reaching the Union Village Dam. Built in 1950 as part of a system of 16 dams and reservoirs, it was installed to control flooding along the Connecticut River and its tributaries. This walk offers a window into the history of Vermont industry, as you pass the foundation of an old woolen mill and the sites of former farms and homesteads. In addition, a multitude of birds and other wildlife inhabit the mature hardwood forest surrounding the dam.

Next, a short but scenic drive brings you over a covered bridge and into Thetford, a town made up of six villages lining the Connecticut River and home to the nation's oldest secondary school, Thetford Academy. In East Thetford, you visit the Cedar Circle Farm, an organic farm and education center whose mission is to raise awareness about the importance of local agriculture and to increase access to affordable healthy produce. After a private farm tour, you enjoy a picnic lunch provided by your guides.

Tonight's dinner is on your own in nearby Hanover, New Hampshire (a short five-minute drive from your accommodation).

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Norwich Inn, Norwich

DAY 3

Quechee Gorge

2 miles, easy to moderate. Optional Mt. Tom, 2 miles, easy to moderate

A brief 15-minute drive from Norwich brings you to Vermont's "Little Grand Canyon"—the 165-foot-deep Quechee Gorge. Here you descend into the gorge and walk along the Ottauquechee River. After, a short drive brings you to the charming village of Woodstock. Voted the prettiest town in America, Woodstock boasts a covered bridge in the center of town, a village green surrounded by restored Georgian, Federal

Style, and Greek revival homes, and a unique selection of museums including the Billings Farm and Museum, the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park, and The Woodstock Historical Society. Enjoy the local cuisine, wander over to Gillingham's, the oldest store in town, visit the birthplace and boyhood home of Calvin Coolidge, or partake in an optional Mt. Tom walk, located in one of the oldest professional managed woodlands in America.

Following your discoveries, a 90-minute transfer brings you to the classic mountain village of Stowe, where wooded trails welcome and spectacular views abound. Your home for the next three evenings is an inn situated in the heart of Stowe village amidst the Green Mountains. New England charm and excellent cuisine provide a warm welcome at the end of an active day.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: The Green Mountain Inn, Stowe

DAY 4

Trapp Family Lodge

2-4 miles, easy to moderate or Mt. Mansfield Ridgeline; 3 miles, moderate to challenging

Today you drive to Smugglers' Notch—the deep, boulder-laden passageway between Mt. Mansfield and Sterling Peak. In the early 1800s, Smugglers Notch was used as a route for transporting illegal or embargoed goods in and out of Canada. After ascending Mt. Mansfield by van via the winding Stowe Mountain Toll Road, you take in the breathtaking views of the surrounding valleys during a brief stroll from the Visitors' Center to a viewpoint offering 360-degree vistas. Those continuing to the summit of Mt. Mansfield walk along the ridge, enjoying views of Lake Champlain and several mountain ranges along the way, including the Adirondacks in New York, the White and Green mountains of New Hampshire and Vermont, as well as Mount Royal in Canada. Those opting for the walk at Trapp Family Lodge return to the van and continue the short journey to the lodge founded by the famous family who settled in Stowe after fleeing the Nazi occupation of Austria. The walking choices are infinite, as their 2,500 acres boast over 30 miles of hiking trails, which double as cross-country ski trails in winter.

Later in the afternoon, there is time to explore the village of Stowe, take a stroll along its recreation path, or simply relax and enjoy the tranquility of your inn. Tonight you are free to enjoy dinner on your own, choosing from many local restaurants within easy walking distance. Your guides will be happy to assist in

your choice.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: The Green Mountain Inn, Stowe

DAY 5

Bull Moose Pasture

4 miles, easy

Today's walk takes you to beautiful Bull Moose Pasture. On your way to the pasture, your guides share secrets about the art of maple sugaring and tell tales of the little-known political history of the area while you pass working farms, sugar maple groves, and meadows dotted with Vermont's ubiquitous Holstein cows. Afterwards, there will be free time to relax in Stowe, where you can select a restaurant with locally-sourced fare for lunch on your own.

This afternoon you take time to visit with George Woodard, a third-generation Vermont organic dairy farmer and storyteller. From George you gain a better understanding of Vermont's history of dairy farming and maple sugaring as you take a hayride through his meadows in fine view of Camel's Hump, Vermont's third-highest peak. This evening you gather for a final dinner, where you toast your Green Mountain adventure and perhaps enjoy a post-dinner swim in the hotel's heated outdoor pool.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: The Green Mountain Inn, Stowe

DAY 6

Shelburne Farms

2-3 miles, easy. Departure from Burlington

After breakfast, you depart Stowe for historic Shelburne Farms, a nonprofit center promoting sustainability and conservation. Located on 1,400 acres on the shores of Lake Champlain and designated as a National Historic Landmark, it was established in 1886 as the agricultural estate of William Seward and Lila Vanderbilt Webb. Today, this working farm integrates a host of community and educational activities, with

a working dairy with over 100 Brown Swiss cows and cheese-making facility, a seasonal inn, and an organic market garden.

Choosing from numerous trails, you explore the grounds and take in the incredible vistas, while passing by the elegant inn as well as the dairy and coach barns. Lunch today is a locavore's dream—with an ever-changing menu, the Farm Cart offers a host of fresh and creative menu options supplied by local producers and the farm's own Market Garden, a seven-acre mixed vegetable garden that furnishes produce for the inn and local farmers' markets. Dramatic views of the lake and Adirondack Mountains leave a lasting impression of your visit to Vermont. Following your final lunch, you transfer to the Burlington International Airport where you bid farewell to your guides before you continue your onward travels.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

What's Included

Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
12 on-tour meals: 5 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓