

Vermont: Fall Foliage

Tour-Only Itinerary

Third-generation dairy farmer George Woodard flashes a wry grin as he leads you on a hayride through his mountainside farm. His stories and jokes have kept you entertained all afternoon. Meanwhile, you've been fixated on Vermont's radiant fall scenery. Beyond Woodard's cow-dotted pastures, a blazing patchwork of sugar maples sweeps up to Camel Hump's pointy summit. There's nothing like exploring Vermont on a walking tour during autumn's explosion of red, orange, and gold. Strolling picture-postcard villages and rambling high ridgelines on America's oldest long-distance hiking trail are reason enough to visit. But discovering Vermont through locals' eyes, meeting friendly bovines, and sampling cheese and syrup at the source—on farm visits from the Connecticut River to Lake Champlain—brings you a step closer to the heart of the Green Mountain State.



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 Guided - Flex 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 Guided - Flex tours, some days offer options for self-exploration, cultural visits, or free time to relax on your own.

DAY 1

Arrive in Burlington, Vermont

Waitsfield Common Road; 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 restaurants, a 100-year-old covered bridge, and The Big Picture Theater & Café (a quirky theatre-restaurant famous for its maple donuts). Your first walk today takes you along a classic country road with magnificent views over the Mad River Valley towards Sugarbush. On your walk you will also enjoy two notable highlights: the von Trapp Greenhouse and Farm and the Skinner Barn. The Skinner Barn is a beautifully restored historical post-and-beam dairy barn originally built in 1891 by the Daniel Skinner family. You end your walk at the intersection with East Warren Road, where you board a van for a short transfer to today's lunch spot.

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's walk is at the Cossingham Road Farm, where you embark on a meandering walk through woods and open fields. Nearly 70 species of birds have been identified by either sound or sight on the farm, and if you're lucky, you may spot a barred owl or moose tracks.

Your final destination today is the Norwich Inn, your home for the next two nights. 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 dishes made from fresh, local ingredients.

Accommodation: Norwich Inn, Norwich

Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner

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. The dam was built in 1950 as part of a system of 16 dams and reservoirs to control flooding along the Connecticut River and its tributaries. This walk offers a window into the history of Vermont's industries, as you pass the foundation of an old woolen mill and the sites of former farms and homesteads. 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 into Thetford, a town made of six villages lining the Connecticut River. The town is 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 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).

Accommodation: Norwich Inn, Norwich

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

Quechee Gorge. Independent exploration of Woodstock

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

A 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 and a village green surrounded by restored Georgian, Federal-style, and Greek

revival homes. There is also a unique selection of museums, including the Billings Farm & Museum, the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, and The Woodstock Historical Society. Here, you have free time to 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 professionally managed woodlands in America.

Voted the "prettiest town in America," Woodstock is a pleasure to explore on foot. A free afternoon invites you to embark on an activity of your choice. For lunch on your own, choose from one of the many restaurants in town or perhaps pack a picnic lunch to eat trailside.

Guided – Flex Options include:

- Explore Woodstock on foot, strolling past lovingly restored Georgian, Federal, and Greek revival homes and walking through the town's historical covered bridge. Along the way, pop into Woodstock's oldest store, Gillingham's, for a coffee or snack and enjoy a relaxing lunch at one of the many restaurants along Main Street. (Route Notes provided on tour.)
- Visit one of Woodstock's museums such as the Billings Farm & Museum, an award-winning outdoor history museum, and, fully operating dairy farm. (Entrance fees not included.)
- Hike to the top of Mt. Tom (4.2 miles, 700-foot elevation gain/loss) on a self-guided walk. An easy-moderate trail with looping switchbacks brings you to a grassy summit with lovely views over the town of Woodstock and the valley below. You may even choose to pack a picnic lunch to enjoy on the top. (Route Notes provided on tour.)

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, amid the Green Mountains. Here, New England charm and splendid cuisine greet you at the end of your active day.

Accommodation: The Green Mountain Inn, Stowe

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

Trapp Family Lodge. Independent exploration of Stowe

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. Smugglers' Notch got its name in the early 1800s when it was used 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 admire breathtaking views of the surrounding valleys during a brief stroll from the Visitors' Center to a viewpoint offering sweeping 360-degree vistas. Those choosing to continue to the summit of Mt. Mansfield walk along the ridge, taking in a panorama of Lake Champlain and several mountain ranges, 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 the 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. Here, the walking choices are nearly 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 have dinner on your own, choosing from the many local restaurants within easy walking distance of your accommodation. Your guides will be happy to assist in your choice.

Another charming New England town, Stowe is more than just a ski town—it also boasts an abundance of art galleries, craft breweries, and excellent dining options.

Guided – Flex Options include:

- Visit one of Stowe's downtown art galleries such as the Helen Day Art Center or the Green Mountain Fine Art Gallery. The West Branch Gallery & Sculpture Park is a 1.5-mile walk along the Stowe Recreation Path.
- Rent a bike and cycle the 10.6-mile (round trip) paved Stowe Recreation Path as it crisscrosses the West Branch of the Little River and passes farm meadows and woodlands. Along the way, stop to enjoy a café or picnic lunch.
- Sample some of Vermont's finest brews and ciders at Stowe's most popular breweries such as the Alchemist or Stowe Cider. (Tastings not included.)
- Embark on a self-guided walk through historical Stowe, passing the Ski Museum, old schoolhouse, and

period homes. Along the way, pop into a few shops or Laughing Moon Chocolates for a tasting. (Route Notes provided on tour.)

Accommodation: The Green Mountain Inn, Stowe

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5

Bull Moose Pasture

4 miles, easy

This morning'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. Admire the view as you pass working farms, sugar maple groves, and meadows dotted with Vermont's ubiquitous Holstein cows. Afterward, there will be free time to relax in Stowe, where you can select a restaurant with locally sourced fare for lunch on your own.

In the afternoon, you 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. Take a hayride through his meadows, where you'll have views 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.

Accommodation: The Green Mountain Inn, Stowe

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6

Shelburne Farms

2-3 miles, easy. Depart from Burlington

After breakfast, you depart Stowe for historic Shelburne Farms, a nonprofit center promoting sustainability and conservation. Comprised of 1,400 acres on the shores of Lake Champlain, and designated as a National Historic Landmark, the farm 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. The property is home to over 100 Brown Swiss cows, a 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 is a locavore's dream—the Farm Cart, with an ever-changing menu, offers fresh, creative dining options. Ingredients are supplied by local producers and Shelburne Farms' own Market Garden, a seven-acre mixed vegetable garden that furnishes produce for the inn and local farmers' markets. Dramatic views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains leave a lasting impression of your visit to Vermont. Following a 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	✓
Travel assistance available 24/7 provided by Allianz	✓