

THE
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A MOTHER
ON LOSING A SON
PERFECT RECIPES
FOR SUMMER'S
END

WHY KIDS SHOULD
PLAY IN THE
WOODS

FALL TRAVEL

WEEKEND ESCAPES

*A LEAFY GETAWAY,
SOUTHERN WINE SWING,
CULTURAL HOT SPOT,
AND MORE. 8 GREAT TRIPS IN
NEW ENGLAND AND BEYOND.*

UPWARD BOUND

Toronto offers architectural
wonders. Page 26

Montpelier

VERMONT



VERMONT STATE HOUSE

A burst of local color, on the trees and off

It's the nation's smallest state capital and, as far as we know, the only one without a McDonald's. But Montpelier is far from sleepy. With its idyllic setting (beside the Winooski River, near the Green Mountains' highest peaks), eclectic shops, and top-notch restaurants that emphasize local ingredients, the city has much to offer a weekender, along with a quirky friendliness that stands out even in a state known for being unconventional.

GETTING THERE › From Boston, it's an easy three-hour drive on Interstate 89. The Visitors Center (134 State Street) is open daily, and the city is easily navigable – most businesses are near the intersection of State and Main streets, a block from the State House. Note: Montpelierites take their crosswalk laws seriously, so watch for pedestrians.

FRIDAY › **Main Street Grill & Bar** (802-223-3188; necidining.com/main-street-grill), part of the Montpelier-based New England Culinary Institute, offers a farm-to-table menu. If

you can't make it there for dinner, try again on Sunday for the award-winning brunch buffet. **Restaurant Phoebe** (802-262-3500; restaurantphoebe.com) serves hearty plates of local food. Stay at the **Capitol**

Plaza Hotel (800-274-5252; capitolplaza.com, 62 rooms/suites, \$176-\$279), cater-corner to the State House, or, for something more intimate, try the Federal-style **Inn at Montpelier** (802-223-2727; innatmontpelier.com, 19 rooms, \$132-\$229).

SATURDAY › If breakfast isn't included with your room, head to **La Brioche** (802-229-0443; necidining.com/la-brioche), the culinary institute's other in-town spot, and watch



PAVILION BUILDING

the student-chefs at work through the window separating the bakery from the cafe.

If you're visiting in leaf season, pick up picnic foods at the **Capital City Farmers Market** on State Street (montpelierfarmersmarket.com). Then enjoy the spectacular Vermont foliage along the hiking trails in **Hubbard and North Branch parks**, which together offer nearly 400 acres of open and forested land. Hubbard Park is home to a stone observation tower that provides panoramic views of the area. Find maps to the parks at montpelier-vt.org/department/81.html. Or rent a bike at **Onion River Sports** (802-229-9409; onionriver.com) and follow the paved bike path along the river.

Also, don't miss a visit to the 1859 **State House**. Its magnificent gilded dome is visible as soon as you leave the highway. The legislative chambers are the oldest still in use in the country, and a 1990s restoration brought the building back to its original grandeur. Take a guided tour (802-828-0386; vtstatehouse.org/tours.htm) or poke around on your own, following the free audio tour available. At the **Pavilion Building**, next door, which houses the **Vermont Historical Society Museum** (802-828-2291; vermont-history.org), learn about the Green Mountain Boys and take in an award-winning multimedia exhibit.

For an afternoon pick-me-up, stop in at the **Three Penny Taproom** (802-223-8277; threepennytaproom.com) and choose from the long list of potables, local and imported, or grab a crepe

at **The Skinny Pancake** (802-262-2253; skinnypancake.com).

Bibliophiles will be happy to roam four stores within about a block of Main and State: **Bear Pond Books** (802-229-0774; bearpondbooks.com), which carries new titles; **Rivendell Books** (802-223-3928; rivendellbooksvt.com) and **The Book Garden** (802-229-9999, 50 State Street), which sell used books (the Book Garden also sells new); and **Black Sheep Books** (802-225-8906; blacksheepbooks.org), which features new and used scholarly works.

Live entertainment – and good eats – can be found at **Positive Pie** (802-229-0453; positivepie.com), a contemporary trattoria with plenty of pizza and weekend bands and DJs, and **The Black Door Bar and Bistro** (802-223-7070; blackdoorvt.com), whose third-floor lounge offers music, comedy, and open-mike storytelling. **Langdon Street Cafe** (802-223-8667; langdonstreetcafe.com) is renowned for its folk/indie/hip-hop performances.

SUNDAY ▶ Stop in at **Artisans Hand Craft Gallery** (802-229-9492; artisanshand.com) for a selection of unique items created by Vermonters. Then, for the road, stock up on kettle corn and pure syrup candies at **Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks** (800-242-2740; morsefarm.com). For an alternate drive south, follow Route 302 East to Route 110 South (rejoining Interstate 89 at exit 3), which meanders through Chelsea and Tunbridge, taking in the covered bridges and more brilliant foliage along the way.

– Sarah Zobel