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## Fall Foliage Scenic Drive In Vermont

By Cliff Calderwood

This fall foliage scenic drive in Central Vermont is a loop tour of about 150 miles. Although it's possible to do the drive in one day and bypass many of the attractions and rambles suggested, I'd recommend you carve out a weekend to do it justice.

The drive offers some of the best views in the Green Mountain National Forest, which in the fall is dramatic and stunning.

The scenic drive follows mostly Route 12 south from Montpelier to Woodstock, before heading north on Route 100 and 100B back to Montpelier. You'll discover plenty of surprises on the way, but it's no surprise you'll experience some magnificent fall foliage views all along the way.

Okay, start the ignition and let's get going...

Our journey begins in Montpelier, the smallest state capital city in America. Montpelier is on the northern fringe of central Vermont, and is 182 miles from Boston and 198 miles from Hartford. It can be easily reached from Interstate 89.

Take Route 12 out of Montpelier and head south to Northfield Falls. Vermont has many fine examples of covered bridges, but two of them in Northfield Falls can be seen at once, as you look through one to other. This is unique in New England and definitely worth taking the camera out to capture.

Continue on Route 12 making your way to Bethel.

Bethel is one of those Vermont towns that's a natural part of the scenery. Could this be why it's home to the White River National Fish Hatchery? The hatchery focuses on restoring Atlantic Salmon to the Connecticut River. It's open 8:00am – 3:00pm daily.

>From Bethel you'll continue on the final leg of the southern route to Woodstock.

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The Woodstock area offers a number of attractions, including Billings Farm and Museum, and Quechee Gorge. Woodstock itself is one of those picture–perfect Vermont villages that's fun just to stroll around checking out the boutiques and restaurants.

The Billings Farm and Museum was established in 1871, and today it's a working farm, and a museum depicting farm life in the late 1800s. Depending on the time you visit the museum has seasonal activities so check ahead to see what's going on the day you plan to arrive.

Quechee Gorge is Vermont's little Grand Canyon. Not quite as big a crack in the ground as in Arizona, but at a mile long and plenty of hiking and walking trails on offer, it's a chance to admire the scenery and stretch the legs. Be sure to walk to the picnic area overlooking the falls for a Kodak moment.

The next 20 miles of the scenic drive takes you cross–country on Route 4 to Killington. Killington is a world famous ski area that covers six mountains. At over 4,200' it offers spectacular views from the summit. There's very few better places to appreciate the fall foliage than at the top of Killington Peak. If

it's running take the K1–Gondola from base. You can ride the Gondola daily from late September – early October. Call ahead for schedule or visit their web site at

[www.killington.com](http://www.killington.com)

Killington is about the halfway point in this tour, and if you decide to linger overnight in the area then the beautiful town of Rutland is close–by with plenty of lodging. Just be sure to make reservations during the heavy visited peak fall foliage season.

The next section of the tour follows Route 100 as it borders the Green Mountain National Forest. You'll pass through the towns of Pittsfield, Hancock, Granville, and Waitsfield as you tour perhaps the most scenic areas and diverse terrain you'll see on this drive.

Just North of Hancock and close to Route 100 on Route 125 is Texas Falls. The trail to the falls is an easy hike and offers marvelous views anytime of the year, but especially during fall foliage season when the colors dazzle.

The larger Moss Glen Falls is just north of Granville a few miles up from Hancock. The drive from Hancock towards the falls is a two–lane winding road that passes through a seven–mile stretch of rough wilderness, and worth taking at a slow and easy pace.

The final leg of this central Vermont scenic drive from Granville to Middlesex and back to Montpelier continues to provide startling scenery and great photo opportunities. Route 100B connects with Route 100 just south of Moretown village, and you'll take 100B north to Middlesex and then join Interstate 89 for the quick hop back into Montpelier.

This fall foliage scenic drive offers oodles of opportunities for detours and backroad excursions. My

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advice is to give yourself the time to get distracted and follow a few inviting roads leading away from busy highways, and become a Vermonter for a few days. You'll appreciate a fall Vermont and understand why the people that live here wouldn't trade it for any other place in the world.

Vermonters quip the state really has five seasons – spring, summer, fall, winter, and the famous mud season. But my personal favorite in Vermont is the fall. Take this tour and you'll understand why.

For more details on these and other Vermont scenic drives and to pick up your free travel reports go to Cliff Calderwood's New England Vacations site at:

<http://www.new-england-vacations-guide.com/>

### **Fall Foliage Scenic Drives In New England – Six Of The Best**

#### **By Cliff Calderwood**

Fall foliage in New England provides a showcase for Mother Nature. Perhaps nowhere else in America, and maybe even the world, are the fall colors as stunning and spectacular as October in New England.

Fall foliage in New England really begins in August. The shortening daylight hours trigger the deciduous trees to begin the process of shedding their leaves. It happens all around North America, and all around the world. But in New England it results in a display of special landscapes painted with fiery autumn colors.

Why is fall foliage in New England so different and special?

It's a factor of many things but mostly an abundance of different types of deciduous trees, warm autumn days, and cool – but not freezing – nights. When these and a few other conditions are all mixed in the right proportions, then you get the world famous stunning shades of reds, yellows, oranges, and browns on the hills and mountain sides of New England.

Between mid–September to late–October, visitors flock to New England to see the fall foliage. Many take special bus tours or even train rides. But most take to the road and these six scenic drives offer some of the best autumn views available from anywhere on the planet.

#### **FALL FOLIAGE SCENIC DRIVE – MOHAWK TRAIL MASSACHUSETTS**

In Massachusetts the most popular fall foliage scenic drives are along the famous Mohawk Trail, and the area known as The Berkshires. The Mohawk trail rolls out through the northwestern part of the state on route 2, and winds through the hills and mountains of the Berkshires, touching picturesque towns like Williamstown, Deerfield, Shelbourne, Colrain, Charlemont, and Shelburne Falls. The road follows an ancient foot path used to move between Massachusetts and New York by Native Americans.

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Mount Greylock, the highest point in The Berkshires and Massachusetts, offers stunning views of the surrounding area and Mohawk Trail.

### FALL FOLIAGE SCENIC DRIVE – KANCAMAGUS HIGHWAY NEW HAMPSHIRE

The White Mountain National Forest is home to many wonderful scenic drives but the most popular – and rightly so – has to be the 34-mile Kancamagus Scenic Highway that runs along route 112 from Conway to White Mountains Visitor Center in Lincoln. This drive is considered by many to be the top fall foliage New England scenic drive. You'll see beautiful forests ablaze with autumn colors and plenty of photo opportunities with walks along gorges and streams, and with breathtaking views of the highest mountains in the Presidential Range.

### FALL FOLIAGE SCENIC DRIVE – CENTRAL VERMONT AREA

Vermont is a popular destination state in the fall. With many fall foliage scenic drives to choose from, the Central Vermont area, around Killington, and the towns and highways of Woodstock, Rutland and Ludlow, offer up some of the most dazzling. This area is deep in The Green Mountain National Forest area, and not surprisingly offers dramatic fall foliage color and scenery.

### FALL FOLIAGE SCENIC DRIVE – LAKES AND LEAVES MAINE

Maine is a vast wilderness and given its proximity is the first New England state to display peak fall foliage color. Maine has many unparalleled scenic drives to choose from, and it's difficult to single out one. But the Lakes and Leaves drive that skirts the shores of Moosehead Lake on Route 15 and then heads south on route 201 provides an amazing view of this empty, but beautiful backcountry. You'll see incomparable fall foliage views of the tree-lined banks of the Kennebec River, and the surrounding mountains on this Maine Scenic Highway.

### FALL FOLIAGE SCENIC DRIVE – RHODE ISLAND COAST

Rhode Island provides open roads and coastal drives for fall vacationers and leaf peeping. The 61-mile Rhode Island Coast Scenic Drive follows the coastline east from Westerly towards Point Judith passing nature reserves and secluded beaches, until turning north along Narragansett Bay, and eventually over Newport Bridge on route 138. The drive finishes over the breathtaking Ocean Drive in historic Newport.

Always close to a picnic stop along this short drive it begs to be taken slowly and to stop occasionally and breathe in the crisp fall salt air.

### FALL FOLIAGE SCENIC DRIVE – CONNECTICUT ROUTE 169

Far from being the forgotten step child of the other fall foliage scenic drives in New England, Connecticut is full of its own collection of scenic drives. One noteworthy trip to take in autumn is Route 169 in the eastern "Quiet Corner" region. Here the backdrop is rolling farmland, stone walls, and picturesque towns and villages that line the route.

## Fall Foliage Scenic Drive In Vermont

New England is littered with fall foliage scenic drives, and look at those mentioned here as springboards to visiting other country roads that lead to surprises and discovery at every turn. The backroads of New England are where the gems are located, so don't be afraid to explore.

For more details on these and other New England scenic drives and to pick up your free travel reports go to Cliff Calderwood's Vacations in New England travel site at:

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