

Itinerary New Hampshire

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Photo: John Dunkle/Strawbery Banke

Historic gardens

At Strawberry Banke, groups will find a number of lovely gardens.



Photo: Tom Cacchiaro/
Greater Portsmouth COC

A walk along the Portsmouth Harbour Trail brings groups to many of the city's charming shops.

Portsmouth Harbour Trail
 Begin the day with a walking tour of Portsmouth Harbour Trail. Starting in Market Square, the guide will lead group members through the historic downtown and along the waterfront. The tour provides an intimate look at Portsmouth's early and ongoing relationship with the river. Groups will hear fascinating stories of early settlers, patriots, ship captains, and industrialists. The tour ends at Prescott Park with a chance to admire the extensive gardens. Annually, the University of New Hampshire fills the beds with experimental flowering plants and creates charming floral displays that relate to special events of the season.

Strawbery Banke Museum
 Learn about gardens through Portsmouth's history at Strawberry Banke Museum. This 10-acre site tells Portsmouth's history through 400 years of everyday life. Groups will enjoy seeing the five gardens: a Colonial herb garden, Victorian flower garden, 1905 Ukrainian émigré vegetable garden, 1908 Colonial revival garden, and 1940s Victory Garden.

Local lunch and tax-free shopping in downtown Portsmouth
 Visit the Dunaway at Strawberry Banke, which features produce from some of these pocket gardens as well as participating in the NH Farm to Restaurant Connection. The successful collaboration between those who grow native produce and those who prepare it for visitors' enjoyment continues to thrive.

Sidewalk cafes are also inviting to those that may

want to take a coffee or tea break. Then groups may want time to walk off their lunch by exploring the many galleries, boutiques, and other unique shops of downtown Portsmouth.

Fuller Gardens
 Fuller Gardens in nearby North Hampton is an early 20th-century estate garden, which includes formal English perennial borders, more than 1,700 rose bushes, a Japanese garden, hosta garden, and conservatory. Follow a docent who will lead visitors through the gardens offering information and answering questions. The gardens are open seven days a week, May through October.

Evening activities
 Savor dinner at one of Portsmouth's fine restaurants, a respite for groups before attending a play, concert, or other event. Many restaurants specialize in seafood and lobster.

Lodging
 Lodging options vary from the affordable to the luxurious. Tour planners are sure to find accommodations that suit the style and pocketbook of those on their tours.

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Passengers on the Mt. Washington Auto Road learn legends and history from the driver.

Top of the world

Groups climb to new heights with Mount Washington Cog Railway and Mt. Washington Auto Road

The striking views of the White Mountains are worth experiencing. With the Mount Washington Cog Railway and the Mt. Washington Auto Road, groups can relax, devoting their energy to soaking up the breathtaking sights.

On a journey up Mount Washington on the world's first mountain-climbing cog railway, passengers literally climb above the clouds. The three-hour round trip, which includes a 20-minute stop at

the summit, is an unforgettable journey. There's a museum with displays, a gift shop, and a restaurant at the base. On the summit, visitors can explore the mile-high state park, including the Sherman Adams Observation Center.

Groups should plan to arrive 45 minutes before departure time during which they can watch the trains wind their way up the White Mountains.

The Cog Railway continues operation

in winter with the *Snowflake Express*. The one-hour round-trip excursion takes passengers to Upper Waumbek. Trains depart on weekends at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

With the Mt. Washington Auto Road, no two trips are the same. Years ago, the trip up Mount Washington was made in horse-drawn wagons. The trip is now made in vans, complete with anecdotes, legends, and history told by the driver. Guided tours are available from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m., weather permitting, and take approximately 1.5 hours round-trip, including a 0.5-hour visit at the summit. Tours run on a first-come, first-served basis. Tour planners should note that mornings tend to be less busy.

A new, extended guided tour takes passengers up the Mt. Washington Auto Road in vans, allowing for various stops along the way to see and discuss the mountain's ecology, weather, and natural and social history. Groups will have the opportunity to experience a more in-depth look at Mount Washington on this three-hour trip.

In winter the best way to experience everything is on the SnowCoach. All-wheel drive allows the nine-passenger SnowCoach to climb above the tree line. Adventurous group members can choose to cross-country ski or snowshoe down. Tours last approximately 1.25 hours and depart daily, December through March. •

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