

New Hampshire Revolutionary War Itinerary

With a motto like “Live Free or Die,” you know New Hampshire meant business when it came to their independence. From the Battle at Fort William and Mary to becoming the first state to declare its independence, lots of crucial events in Revolutionary history took place here on New Hampshire soil. These historic events are preserved very well on numerous sites throughout the state, and are there for everyone to visit and learn about the times.

Day One

Start off your Colonial tour on the Seacoast at Fort Constitution in New Castle, the former site of Fort William and Mary. This is a great place to begin your tour as it is well known as being the site of the first aggressive acts of the Revolutionary War. It was here where General John Langdon got word of advancing British troops, and led a mob of American Colonists to take over the British held Fort of William and Mary. This was significant not only because it was the first aggressive acts of the Revolution, it was also the first American seizure of a British fort.

Furthering down the Seacoast, the next place you should venture to is the city of Portsmouth. Known then as being the Colonial Capitol, there is an abundance of history behind this town. Of the most notable sites include the Strawberry Banke museum, the Isle of Shoals and the Black History Trail. Strawberry Banke, through its restored colonial homes and interpretive programs, offers great insight as to what life would have been like back in the 1700's. The Isle of Shoals, known as being a large fishing port in colonial times, was evacuated at the start of the war and is best viewed aboard one of the narrated Isle of Shoals Steamship Company ships. The Black Heritage Trail, recognized to honor the contribution of African American slaves, showcases some 24 historic stops all accessible on foot.

To end the day check into one of Portsmouth's great hotels, such as the Wentworth by the Sea or the Sheraton, and grab dinner at one of Portsmouth's great local restaurants. Great venues such as the Muddy River Smokehouse, the Portsmouth Brewery and the Gaslight offer great food as well as great entertainment on the weekends.

Day Two

Heading west for the second day, the next stop on your list should be the American Independence Museum in Exeter. It was here in 1985, where a Dunlap Broadside of the Declaration of Independence was found in the Ladd-Gilman House, which now is included as one of the museums exhibited houses. This amazing discovery is a major focus of the museum's collections and programming. Other museum collections include two rare drafts of the U.S. Constitution as well as an original Purple Heart, awarded by George Washington to soldiers demonstrating extraordinary bravery.

Furthering west, be sure to stop by John Stark Park and the John Stark scenic byway. John Stark was one of NH's greatest leaders in the Revolutionary War having crucial roles at the Battle of Bunker Hill and the Battle of Bennington. The states motto of “Live Free or Die” was taken from John Stark's toast to the 32nd reunion of the Battle of Bennington. At John Stark Park and Scenic Byway you will pass his memorial statue, the Molly Stark House, and the Stark Cannon among numerous other sites.

The final stop on the tour should be the birthplace of Daniel Webster in Franklin. This small farmhouse was the home to Daniel in his childhood years before he moved to attend college at Dartmouth, and eventually serve in Congress. This site has become a historical landmark of the state and gives great insight into what life was like back in the 1700's.

If you have some extra time, other notable stops in NH include the Fort at No. 4 in Charlestown, which was a military base where John Stark stayed before venturing to the battle at Bennington, the Fort Stark Historical Site in New Castle which was built to protect the Portsmouth Harbor, and the American Independence Byway which is a 21 mile route displaying some of the seacoast's oldest settlements.