

## Vistas of Vermont

### Charming Small Towns & Splendid Scenery

Five Day Tour ~ July 15-19, 2024

Highlights: Four Serene Nights at the Charming Blueberry Hill Inn • Smugglers' Notch Scenic Pass & Trails • Scenic Road to Mount Mansfield's Beautiful Vistas • Bingham Falls Trail • Barnes Camp Boardwalk • Smugglers' Cave • Quaint Town of Dorset • Taconic Mountains Ramble State Park's Secret Japanese Garden • Scenic Middlebury Gap Road • Robert Frost Interpretive Trail • Moss Glen Falls • Charming Towns of Warren & Waitsfield • Warren Falls • Warren General Store • Von Trapp Farmstead Farm Store • Smallest Town in Vermont, Vergennes • Huntington Gorge • Old Round Church • Whistling Man Schooner Wine Cruise • Wonderful Town of Weston • Old Mill Museum • Vermont Country Store • Clarendon Gorge Suspension Bridge • Art & Soul Village of Brandon • All Breakfasts • Three Lunches • Four Dinners • Evening Wine Cocktail Hours • Fully Escorted

Let's make our way north to the Green Mountain State of Vermont with its rich history, local artisanal goodies, and perfectly splendid scenery. Vermont is not just a place but a state of mind that delights in outdoor beauty, delicious cuisine, and the preservation of unique small towns. It's a land of hidden treasures filled with unspoiled scenery. Our travels will take us through the green forests leading to untouched countryside dotted with farms and framed by mountains. We'll visit classic New England villages just oozing with charm with their picturesque church steeples, village greens, and covered bridges that are perfect for wandering. Even the highways here are unspoiled by billboards, banned by law, and don't be surprised if we find ourselves on a road where cows still stop traffic en route to their pasture. We'll spend a lot of time exploring all the nature Vermont has to offer from Japanese Gardens to tall mountain peaks. There's plenty of time for relaxation as well, from our serene inn among the forest to a gentle sail along Lake Champlain. So why not pack a suitcase and join us as we travel together with a sense of wonder and peacefulness that comes with slowing down while taking in all the surrounding nature of Vermont's summer scenery.

**Day 1.** Our first stop after crossing the border of Vermont is quaint Dorset, a hidden gem of a town tucked in a valley where the Taconic and Green Mountain ranges meet. Take your time to stroll the streets past the village green lined with classic white clapboard houses and find a tasty lunch on your own. Another hidden gem is next to uncover, a secret Japanese Garden hidden within the undeveloped Taconic Mountains Ramble State Park. With an interesting history, this new state park is a unique collection of trails meandering over 204 acres of fields, forests, gorges, cliffs, and gardens. An easy walk into the Zen Garden will lead to a rather steep path leading down to the amazing Japanese Gardens filled with picturesque footbridges, waterfalls, small frog filled ponds, and giant boulders. Wander and explore! We must stop by the unhurried Art & Soul Village of Brandon for a wander among the historic downtown. Now it's time to find our new home at the charming Blueberry Hill Inn nestled high in the Green Mountain National Forest. Check into your cozy room then enjoy the charming surroundings with a glass of wine in one hand and a homemade chocolate chip cookie in the other. A home baked dinner will be our treat tonight, so sit back and enjoy!

**Day 2.** Let's explore the Green Mountain National Forest! A glorious scenic drive through Middlebury Gap leads to a charming woodland trail offering a glimpse of the beautiful landscape that once inspired Robert Frost. Follow the interpretive trail dotted with



**Views from Mount Mansfield**



**Small Town Vergennes**

Frost's poems set among the perfect natural setting that brings his words to life. While we're here, let's take a look at Frost's summer home for 23 years, Homer Noble Farm. The beautifully cascading Moss Glen Falls is worth a stop, so get your camera ready. Now we're entering the Mad River Valley home to the classic picture-perfect town of Warren. Take some time to explore and don't miss the Warren General Store. If the weather is our friend today, we'll grab a yummy deli lunch for a picnic at the delightful Warren Falls. Take in the scenery as you relax and enjoy your included picnic. More charm awaits in the town of Waitsfield surrounded by the continuing spectacular beauty of the Mad River Valley. Wander the enchanting streets and see what treasure you may find. A peek into the Von Trappe Family Farm Store may result in bags filled with a true taste of Vermont local foods. Now we make our way back to our comfy home at Blueberry Hill Inn for a wine cocktail and included dinner.

**Day 3.** More magnificent mountains await so our direction is north to the highest mountain in Vermont, Mount Mansfield with a summit that peaks at 4,393 feet. This is one of the 2 places in Vermont where the fragile ecosystem of the Arctic Tundra can be found. Take a closer look at the mountain arising in the distance and you'll be able to see its resemblance to a man's face looking up at the sky. Our mountain road leads us towards a narrow pass between Mount Mansfield and the Green Mountains aptly named Smugglers' Notch for its interesting history. The spectacular 40-foot Bingham Falls is our first scenic stop where a short walk will take you to the upper gorge with incredible views of the winding river that artistically cut snake like curves into the giant rockface and to the base of the falls where you can feel the spray of the cool refreshing mist. If the weather allows, we'll stop for an included picnic lunch at the Smugglers' Notch picnic area set along a beautiful stream. Now all fueled and ready to go, we'll make our way up through the narrow, winding pass lined with 1000-foot cliffs and giant boulders only allowing one car at a time in certain areas. Once in the notch, we'll get out to stretch our legs and explore the hidden caves and crevices formed by the gigantic boulders that were formed during the last ice age when a glacier smashed the mountain ledges and dropped them into the notch where they were carved and tumbled by more glacial action. Now we make our way back down with a stop for a walk in the lovely scenery on the Barnes Camp Boardwalk trail where you can traverse a wetland, catch a glimpse of a beaver dam, and admire the inspiring views of the notch. Sit back and rest those weary legs because it's time to zig zag to the top of Mount Mansfield, driving this time! We'll take the historic Toll Road, passing stunning views of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains along the way. Once at the top the sweeping views will call to you, so walk the ridgeline as much as you like or find a nice boulder on which to sit and take it all in. Time to return to our lovely home at Blueberry Hill Inn for an included dinner and wine cocktail hour.

**Day 4.** Today will be filled with relaxation and charm starting with Vermont's smallest and oldest town, Vergennes. The history here that spans over 200 years is visible in the striking architecture of the buildings lining Main Street. Stroll the city green past eclectic shops to Vergennes Falls Park and MacDonough Park that provide walking paths along Otter Creek and beautiful views of the waterfalls. See a glass marvel at the Bixby Free Memorial Library! It's time to set sail on our wine and lunch cruise aboard the schooner Friend Ship. Take in the fresh Lake Champlain air as we sail past sunken shipwrecks, historic battle sites, and miles of gorgeous shoreline. Cheers! Just a few stops before heading back home, the intriguing Old Round Church is the only 16-sided wooden church building in the U.S. and the deadly, yet spectacular Huntington Gorge is a sight not to miss. Now back to the Blueberry Hill Inn for some wine cocktails and our second homemade included dinner.

**Day 5.** We say goodbye to our lovely mountain home this morning, but there is still more charm and nature to be seen. A short walk along the Appalachian Trail leads to a 30-foot-long cable suspension footbridge hanging high above the cascading Mill River. Step foot onto this swinging bridge for views of the Clarendon Gorge and it will be an exciting wobbly crossing to the other side. Onto the quiet, picturesque town of Weston for a wander and to find some lunch on your own. Take some time to explore the Old Mill and its historic buildings set serenely along the West River and don't miss the Vermont Country Store filled with everything and anything you could possibly need or want. One more special treat before we hit New Jersey, a place where talented artists craft everything from dinnerware to unique and colorful sculptures and garden accents. Step foot into D. Lasser Ceramics and you'll be met with a rainbow of colorful pottery pieces. Keep your wallet far away! © 2023 Group Tours & Travel

Departs South Plainfield High School at the end of Lane Ave at 7:00 AM and returns at approximately 8:15 PM

Departs Madison's Kings Road Parking Lot, 62 Kings Rd. at 7:45 AM and returns at approximately 7:45 PM

Departs Ridgewood's Graydon Pool South lot (across Linwood Ave) at 8:30 AM and returns at approximately 7:00 PM

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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I will be departing from Ridgewood \_\_\_\_\_ from Madison \_\_\_\_\_ from South Plainfield \_\_\_\_\_

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