

Romantic Weekends: New England Hunter Travel Guide

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The authors, Patricia and Robert Foulke, married nearly a half-century, admit their idea of romance might be completely different from someone else's, but insist this book, which is another one in a series of romantic travel guides, will cover all ideals. And it just about does.

Divided neatly by geographics, then subdivided into "Where to Stay," "Where to Eat," "What to Do" and "If You Go ...," this easy-to-navigate guide gives one all the specifics needed when planning a romantic getaway.

Lodging is mainly inns and bed-and-breakfasts, complete with descriptions of common rooms, guest rooms, landscaping and other amenities and even recommendations for the best rooms in the place.

Each city's description is introduced with a few paragraphs about what makes it special-whether it's shopping at the L.L. Bean outlets in Freeport, Maine, or the meteorology of Mount Washington, New Hampshire. If physical activity is a reader's idea of romance, they will get plenty of ideas for places to hike, bike and swim. If lounging seaside is someone's cup of tea, there are numerous places along the Atlantic coast from which to choose. One can even pick from rocky beaches or sandy beaches or a mix. The "What to Do" sections include local museums, curio shops and scenic drives.

Especially enjoyable are the descriptions in the "Where To Eat" category. Restaurant specialties are included plus a few recipes. There are several seafood concoctions, tasty desserts featuring plenty of chocolate and soup. The recipes actually give one more of an idea what to expect from a restaurant than a recitation of the menu could. For instance, a listing might say "seafood gumbo" is a specialty but reading the recipe lets one know the creative chef doesn't flinch from garlic and has an affinity for fresh herbs.

Some of the illustrations look like clip art filling space, but most of them are pen-and-ink renditions of the actual inn or restaurant being described on that page. The illustrations are labeled.

At the beginning of each state's chapter, there's a great map to refer to, with all the major roads clearly labeled. Each listing features at least a phone number but more often also includes a fax number, e-mail address and some with Web pages. The prices range from one dollar sign for places that cost \$50-\$100, up to four dollar signs for \$301 and up. Cost estimates, however, are for lodging only.

Each community and state has a listing for a Chamber of Commerce and tourism bureau. That way, if anyone needs more information than this book includes, it is available.

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