



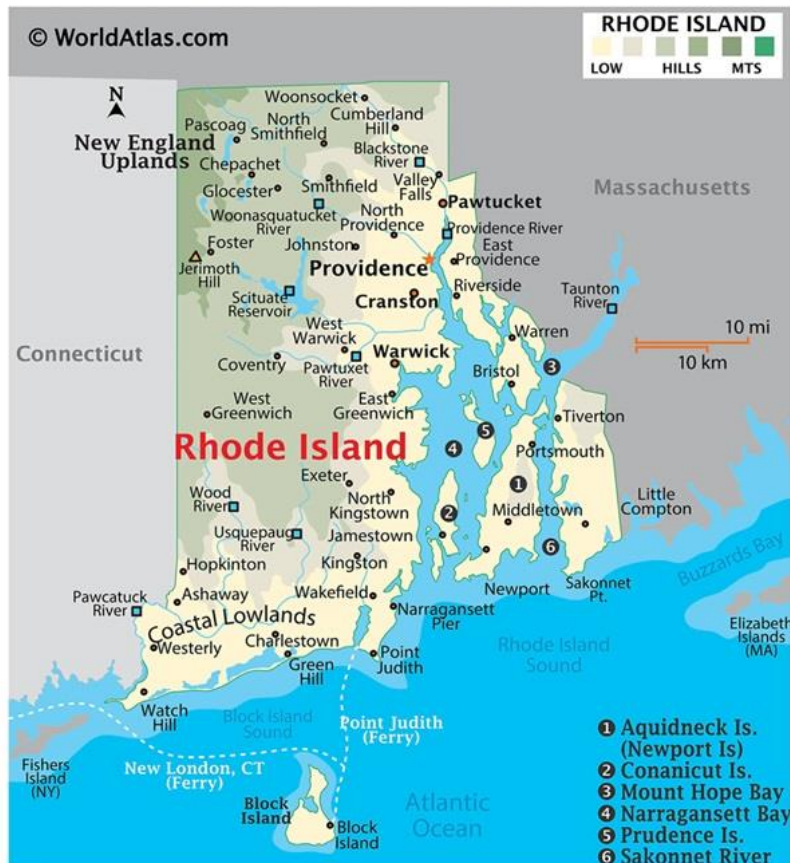
My Drift

Title: Rhode Island

Written By: Jerry D. Petersen

Date: 10 Aug 2024

Article Number: (466-2024-25)



Rhode Island is a state in the New England region of the Northeastern United States. It borders Connecticut to its west; Massachusetts to its north and east; and the Atlantic Ocean to its south via Rhode Island Sound and Block Island Sound; and shares a small maritime border with New York, east of Long Island. Rhode Island is the smallest U.S. state by area and the seventh-least populous, with about 1.1 million residents but it has grown at every decennial count since 1790 and is the second-most densely populated state (1,028 people per square mile), after New Jersey. The state was named by Dutch explorer Adrian Block. He named it "Roodt Eylandt" meaning "red island" in reference to the red clay that lined the shore even though nearly all its land area is on the mainland.

Native Americans lived around Narragansett Bay for thousands of years before English settlers began arriving in the early 17th century. Rhode Island was unique among the Thirteen British Colonies in having been founded by a refugee, Roger Williams, who fled religious persecution in the Massachusetts Bay Colony to establish a haven for religious liberty. He founded Providence in 1636 on land purchased from local tribes, creating the first settlement in North America with an explicitly secular government. Rhode Island subsequently became a destination for religious and political dissenters and social outcasts, earning it the moniker "Rogue's Island".

Rhode Island was the first colony to call for a Continental Congress, in 1774, and the first to renounce its allegiance to the British Crown, on May 4, 1776. After the American Revolution, during which it was heavily occupied and contested, Rhode Island became the fourth state to ratify the Articles of Confederation, on February 9, 1778. Because its citizens favored a weaker central government, it boycotted the 1787 convention that had drafted the United States Constitution, which it initially refused to ratify; it finally ratified it on May 29, 1790, the last of the original 13 states to do so.

The state was officially named the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations since the colonial era but came to be commonly known as "Rhode Island". In November 2020, the state's voters approved an amendment to the state constitution formally dropping "and Providence Plantations" from its full name. Its official nickname is the "Ocean State", a reference to its 400 miles of coastline and the large bays and inlets that make up about 14% of its area.

Largest Cities



Providence (Population 191,000)

Providence is the capital and most populous city in the state of Rhode Island. The county seat of Providence County, it is one of the oldest cities in New England, founded in 1636 by Roger Williams, a Reformed Baptist theologian and religious exile from the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He named the area in honor of "God's merciful Providence" which he believed was responsible for revealing such a haven for him and his followers. The city developed as a busy port, as it is situated at the mouth of the Providence River at the head of Narragansett Bay.

Providence was one of the first cities in the country to industrialize and became noted for its textile manufacturing and subsequent machine tool, jewelry, and silverware industries. Today, the city of Providence is home to eight hospitals and eight institutions of higher learning which have shifted the city's economy into service industries, though it still retains some manufacturing activity.



Warwick (Population 83,100)

Warwick is located approximately 12 miles south of downtown Providence, 63 miles southwest of Boston, Massachusetts, and 171 miles northeast of New York City.

Warwick was founded by Samuel Gorton in 1642 and has witnessed major events in American history. It was decimated during King Philip's War (1675–1676) and was the site of the Gaspee Affair, the first act of armed resistance against the British, preceding even the Boston Tea Party, and a significant prelude to the American Revolution. Warwick was also the home of Revolutionary War General Nathanael Greene, George Washington's second-in-command, and Civil War General George S. Greene, a hero of the Battle of Gettysburg.

Today, it is home to Rhode Island's main airport, T. F. Green Airport, which serves the Providence area and also functions as a reliever for Logan International Airport in Boston. Warwick was also home to Rocky Point Amusement Park, which operated from the 1840s until it closed in 1995. It has now been preserved as a public park by the City of Warwick and the State of Rhode Island and is open to the public for picnics, hikes with or without a four-legged companion, or just taking in the view of Narragansett Bay.



Cranston (Population 82,600)

Cranston, formerly known as Pawtuxet, was named one of the "100 Best Places to Live" in the United States by Money and several other surveys.

The Town of Cranston was created in 1754 from a portion of Providence north of the Pawtuxet River. After losing much of its territory to neighboring towns and the city of Providence, Cranston itself became a city on March 10, 1910.



Pawtucket (Population 75,300)

Pawtucket borders Providence and East Providence to the south, Central Falls and Lincoln to the north, and North Providence to the west. The city also borders the Massachusetts municipalities of Seekonk and Attleboro.

Pawtucket was an early and important center of textile manufacturing. It is home to Slater Mill, a historic textile mill recognized for helping to found the Industrial Revolution in the United States.

Primary Rivers

Most of Rhode Island's streams, ponds, and lakes drain into three major rivers—the Blackstone (the longest at 48 miles), the Pawtuxet, and the Pawcatuck. The Blackstone and Pawtuxet Rivers flow into Narragansett Bay, while the Pawcatuck River flows into Little Narragansett Bay and then on to the Atlantic Ocean.



The Blackstone River



The Pawtuxet River



The Pawcatuck River

Bays and Sounds

The Massachusetts and Rhode Island Bay subregion includes Cape Cod Bay, Buzzards Bay, Narragansett Bay, Martha's Vineyard Sound, and Block Island Sound.

Do you know the difference between a Bay and a Sound? I didn't so I looked it up on Google. A Bay connects to one waterbody while a sound connects to multiple water bodies.



Narragansett Bay

(Picture shows the Newport Bridge which is a suspension bridge that spans the East Passage of the Narragansett Bay)



Block Island Sound

Beautiful Places in Rhode Island

Rhode Island may be a tiny little state, but it's big on scenic beauty. From sweeping rivers in the north to radiant lighthouses along the coast, Rhode Island has endless stunning views to take in. Each part of the state has something beautiful to behold. I picked 10 places that I thought were interesting and scenic.



Rose Island Lighthouse in Newport



Newport Cliff Walk



Providence Waterfire



Chepachet, Gloucester



Block Island



Blackstone River Bikeway



Beavertail State Park, Jamestown



Green Animals Topiary Garden, Portsmouth



Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge



Sakonnet River

State Symbols



State Appetizer

Calamari

Adopted on June 27, 2014

Rhode Island has the largest squid-fishing fleet on the East Coast.



State Bird

Rhode Island Red

Adopted on May 3, 1954

Rhode Island Reds lay up to 300 brown eggs a year.

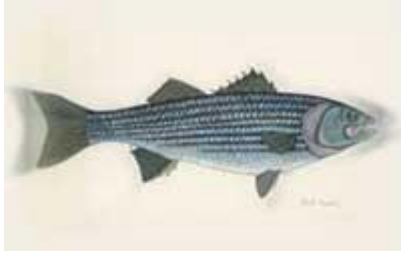


State Drink

Coffee Milk

Adopted on July 29, 1993

The “cabinet,” a classic Rhode Island drink, is made by mixing coffee milk and vanilla ice cream.



State Fish

Striped Bass

Adopted on July 13, 2000

Striped Bass average 20-30 inches long and can live for 30 or more years.



State Flagship

SSV Oliver Hazard Perry

Adopted on July 2, 2018.

The SSV Oliver Hazard Perry is a Class A Tall Ship.



State Flower

Violet

Adopted on March 11, 1968

Violets are often purple and bloom in the spring.



State Fruit

Greening Apple

Adopted on June 20, 1991

Developed in Rhode Island around 1760, Greening Apples retain their sharp taste in cooking.



State Insect

American Burying Beetle

Adopted on July 14, 2015

American Burying Beetles are on the federal Endangered Species List. Photo courtesy of Roger Williams Park Zoo.



State Marine Mammal

Harbor Seal

Adopted on July 14, 2016

Harbor Seals can grow to six feet and weigh over 200 pounds. Photo courtesy of Roger Williams Park Zoo.

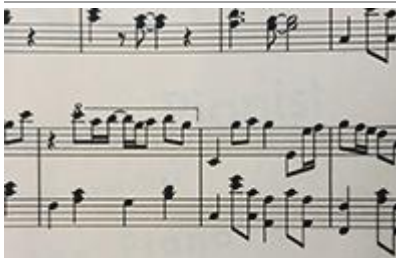


State Mineral

Bowenite

Adopted on May 26, 1966

Bowenite, found in northern Rhode Island, is a relative of jade.



State Song

"Rhode Island Is It for Me"

Adopted on July 29, 1996

The song entitled "Rhode Island Is It for Me," words by Charlie Hall, music by Maria Day.



State Tree

Red Maple

Adopted on March 6, 1964

Red Maple leaves turn gold, purple, and red in the fall.

Rhode Island Lighthouses

Along Rhode Island's 400 miles of coastline, there are 21 lighthouses to explore. Here are a few of them:



Rhode Island Facts and Trivia

- **Rhode Island is one of only two states that begin with a double consonant. The other is Florida. (While it's true that the letter Y can be used as either a vowel or a consonant, in Wyoming it's a vowel).**
- **Rhode Island's State Motto, "Hope," is the shortest of all states.**
- **As most of us know, Rhode Island is the smallest state in the union. 547 Rhode Islands could fit inside the biggest state, Alaska. If the U.S. were divided into states the size of Rhode Island, we'd have 3,131.5 states.**
- **While Rhode Island is only thirty-seven miles wide and forty-eight miles tall, its many bays, coves, and offshore islands give it a tidal shoreline that measures 384 miles in length.**
- **About seventy-seven percent of Rhode Island's inhabitants live within a fifteen-mile radius of Providence, the capital city.**
- **Providence's Benefit Street, known as the "Mile of History," is believed to contain the largest single collection of historic buildings at their original location in the nation.**
- **Per square mile, Rhode Island has more shipwrecks than any other state. The Beavertail Lighthouse Museum Association's shipwreck database includes 3,403 known maritime "incidents" as of 2020.**
- **Rhode Island is one of five states—also including Arizona, California, Idaho, and Massachusetts—that does not have an official residence for its governor.**
- **Rhode Island is one of only four states—also including Alaska, Maryland, and Delaware—where you can't buy alcohol in grocery stores.**
- **America's first Baptist Church was established in Providence by Roger Williams in 1638.**
- **The White Horse Tavern in Newport is believed to be the oldest tavern building in the United States.**

- **The first truly American breed of horse, the Narragansett Pacer, was developed in Rhode Island in the 1700s. It's purported that Paul Revere rode a Narragansett Pacer during his midnight ride.**
- **The Redwood Library and Athenaeum, established in Newport in 1747, is the oldest community library still occupying its original building in the United States.**
- **Newport's Touro Synagogue, built in 1763, is the oldest surviving synagogue building in the United States.**
- **Before the Boston Tea Party (1773) and prior to "The Shot Heard 'Round the World" at Lexington (1775), Rhode Island patriots expressed their displeasure with British rule by burning the grounded British revenue schooner Gaspee at Namquit (now Gaspee) Point in 1772.**
- **On May 4, 1776, Rhode Island renounced allegiance to King George III of England, the first colony to make such a bold statement of independence.**
- **The First Rhode Island Regiment—the first black American army unit—was formed in Rhode Island in the Spring of 1778. They made a gallant stand against British forces in the Battle of Rhode Island on August 29, 1778.**
- **Since 1785 Bristol has been home to the country's longest running, unbroken series of 4th of July celebrations.**
- **On December 21, 1790, the first American cotton mill began operation in Pawtucket. Samuel Slater developed the first water-powered cotton mill, and is credited with starting the Industrial Revolution in the U.S.**
- **Prior to 1854, Rhode Island had five capitals, one in each county, and the government rotated between them. In 1854 the number was cut down to two (Providence and Newport), and then Providence became the sole seat of government in 1901.**
- **Rhode Island had 6,000 farms in 1880. In comparison, the number of "farm operations" reported by the USDA in 2020 was 1,100.**

- In 1856, the B.B. & R. Knight Corporation, operating out of Pontiac Mills in Warwick, began producing bolts of cloth under the "Fruit of the Loom" label. You may have grown up wearing their underwear.
- The United States one dollar bill was redesigned in 1869 to include a portrait of George Washington, based on the Athenaeum Portrait painted by Rhode Islander Gilbert Stuart in 1796.
- Walter Scott originated the concept of the diner in 1872 with his horse-drawn Providence lunch cart, from which he sold sandwiches, pies, and coffee outside the Providence Journal offices.
- Watch Hill's The Flying Horse Carousel, manufactured by the Charles W.F. Dare Company around 1876, is the oldest operating chain-suspended carousel in the United States.
- The first U.S. National Men's Tennis Championship took place at Newport Casino in August 1881.
- Between 1893 and 1934, the America's Cup sailing competition was dominated by eight yachts built at Herreshoff Manufacturing Company in Bristol.
- Last but not least: Block Island has its very own ghost ship, which has haunted islanders ever since a deadly wreck there in 1738. Some say the passengers and crew seek revenge against locals who failed to help them as the boat went down. According to legend, a local mass grave contains their bodies.

Conclusion

Rhode Island is one of the few US states I haven't visited or written about even though I have a longtime friend living there. I think we have learned that this small state has a long interesting history and many scenic things to see.

Bigdrifter44@gmail.com

Bigdrifter.com