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The location of the most sublime wilderness surf break on California's Lost Coast is classified information. Catch a glimpse of the secret beaches.

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In 1996 a storm brought tragedy to the world's grandest stage. Ten years later, the spectacle is as bizarre, disturbing, and heroic as ever.

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Your Kind of Town: St. Johnsbury, Vermont

Are you an urban adventurer or a small-town dreamer? Do you crave culture or live for the beach? Find your spot in these 31 action-packed locales. Text by Dan Grushkin



TAKING TIME OUT: Catching up along St. Johnsbury's Railroad Street

Small Towns:

- [St. Johnsbury, VT](#) |
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 [Port Townsend, WA](#)
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St. Johnsbury, Vermont: Simplify your life

To take the Kingdom Trails, a hundred miles (161 kilometers) of pathways tracing the hillsides near St. Johnsbury, is to be swept up in the kind of neighborly idealism that makes small-town living so attractive. The trails—available for hiking and mountain biking in summer and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in winter—are a coordinated series of old carriage roads and footpaths that cross 42 separate parcels of private land. "There's nothing else like it," says Kingdom Trails executive director Tim Tierney. "The trails are part of a tradition of community recreation. They're built and maintained by local volunteers."

This can-do Yankee attitude pervades the whole of Vermont's rural, forested Northeast Kingdom, of which St. Johnsbury is the hub. Three hours north of Boston, "St. J" (as it's known to residents) is an old New England original with late 19th-century Victorian homes, a Main Street, and hardly a drop of sprawl. An active effort is under way to lure newcomers; the entire Northeast Kingdom region has development programs for small-business entrepreneurs—an important part of the local economy. These innovative initiatives, including a tax credit for those who renovate historic

ST. JOHNSBURY BY THE NUMBERS:

- Population:** 7,571
- Elevation:** 699 feet (213 meters)
- Median Home Price:** \$120,000
- Number of Stoplights:** Four
- Main Industries:** Small manufacturing, higher education (six universities within 60 miles (97 kilometers)), health care

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homes, offer clues to the type of person who might want to move here: civic-minded, self-motivated, slightly utopian.

No influx of new residents will change the fact that cultural life in St. J is not what you'd find in a big city. But Montreal is a mere two and a half hours north and, chances are, you'll be too busy playing outdoors to miss the nightclubs. There's camping, hiking, and swimming at Stillwater State Park (www.vtstateparks.com); skiing at Burke Mountain (www.skiburke.com); and hiking at Mount Pisgah for expansive foliage views. And when all other options are exhausted, you can always pitch in with some trail maintenance along your adopted stretch of the Kingdom Trails (www.kingdomtrails.org).

SCOUTING TRIP:

Getting There: St. Johnsbury is three hours north of Boston by car. Also, US Airways, United, Continental, and JetBlue all serve Burlington International Airport. From there, rent a car and drive 90 minutes east.

Where To Stay: Rabbit Hill Inn (\$119; www.rabbithillinn.com) offers on-property trail access and a refreshing swimming pond.

Where To Eat: The smoked trout and apple cakes dish at **Elements Food & Spirits** (www.elementsfood.com) is locally famous, as are afternoon lattes at **Bagel Depot** (+1 802 748 1600).

Moving There: **Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce** (www.nekchamber.com). For real estate listings, check www.parkwayrealtyassoc.com.

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