



ATTRACTIONS IN PORTLAND, CT

AIR LINE PARK TRAIL



PORTLAND



1. Brownstone Quarries National Historic Site
Brownstone Avenue
BrownstoneQuorum.org
 Since 1690, Portland brownstone has been used to construct public buildings, homes, and bridges and the term "brownstone" has become synonymous with a city dwelling.

2. Brownstone Exploration and Discovery Park
161 Brownstone Avenue
BrownstonePark.com
 Seasonal water/adventure park that includes swimming, zip lining, cliff jumping, rock climbing, kayaking, paddle boarding, and food within the walls of the historic main quarry.

3. Quarry View
311 Brownstone Avenue
BrownstoneQuarryView.com
 Immerse yourself in Portland's history with guided tours and the chance to see and feel the stone, learn about the quarrying history, see tools used in the quarrying operation, and enjoy the beautiful views from high atop the rim of Portland's historic Brownstone Quarry.



4. Portland Riverfront Park
Portland.recdesk.com
 Breathtaking view of the Connecticut River, pavilion, picnic tables, band shell, gazebo, labyrinth, and walking path. Home to Portland's "Music on the River" Summer Concert Series.



5. Gotta's Farm & Cider Mill
661 Glastonbury Turnpike
GottasFarm.com
 Established in 1898 and one of CT's "Century Farms". Farm fresh produce, plants, the cider mill, freshly baked pies, breads, and cookies. Gotta's offers pick your own strawberries, peaches, apples, and pears when they are in season.

GOLF

Portland is home to 3 golf courses and two driving ranges.
A. Portland Golf Course, 169 Bartlett Street
B. Fairway Portland West Golf Course and Driving Range, 105 Gospel Lane
C. Quarry Ridge Golf Course, 9 Rose Hill Road;
D. Chris Cote's Golf Driving Range & Performance Center, 1401 Main Street



TRAILS AND HIKING

1. Meshomasic State Forest
 Meshomasic State Forest, Connecticut's first state forest, established in 1903 and now more than 8,000 acres. Signage marks the gravel roads but there is no trail signage, so bring a map and follow it closely. Roadside parking is available at trail/road intersections. The main 3.5 mile trail begins at Reservoir Road and provides a connection for other trails.



Portland offers a great selection of hiking trails. Enjoy level strolls, Connecticut River Views, and waterside pathways. For an interactive map of Portland's many trails and preserves along with location information, length, estimated time to complete, and difficulty scan above.



AIR LINE PARK TRAIL PORTLAND

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Portland

ONE OF THE BEST KEPT SECRETS IN NEW ENGLAND

This quiet Yankee village, somewhat removed from the rest of the world by a sharp curve in the Connecticut River, is an excellent place to live. Rooted by its small town heritage, Portland maintains its nineteenth century appeal, while offering quality, up-to-date services.

Portland offers more than the nostalgic charm of a New England village. It offers the convenience of Central Connecticut, midway between Boston and New York. A short ride gives you access to shopping malls, cultural programs sponsored by top-grade universities, airports, a variety of restaurant cuisine, beaches, ski-slopes, sports arenas, the capital city of Hartford. If theater is what you enjoy, we are not far from Hartford Stage, Bushnell, Hartford Civic Center, Shubert, Goodspeed and Oakdale.



WHERE TO EAT



Portland offers a wide range of dining options. From ice cream to sandwiches, pizza to fine dining, plus a brewery and winery, it's all here! Enjoy ice cream at Dairy Queen just a few miles from the trail 900 Portland Cobalt Road. Seasonal outdoor dining is available at Portland's 3 Golf Courses: The Pub at Portland Golf Course located at 169 Bartlett Street; Fairway Grill at Portland West Golf at 105 Gospel Lane; and Quarry Ridge Restaurant and Grill at 9 Rose Hill Road.

Arrigoni Winery at 1297 Portland Cobalt Road and Concentric Brewing at 91 Main Street offer the opportunity to see the manufacturing process and enjoy their tasting rooms and food offerings. Portland's many restaurants can be found along the Route 66 Business Corridor on Marlborough Street and Portland Cobalt Road and along Main Street in our Village District, all just a short drive from the trail. For a convenient list of all of Portland's restaurants option with addresses, phone numbers, menu selections, and a locator map scan the code above.



TRAIL TIPS

- Air Line Trail Head parking is located at 82 Middle Haddam Rd, Portland, CT 06480.
- Trail is open dawn to dusk.
- An original brownstone bridge stands on Middle Haddam Road.
- An original siding of the Air Line Railroad is located at Marlborough and High Streets.

For additional copies of this map, please email landuse@portlandct.org

AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL HISTORY

In the 1960s, over fifty miles of the rail bed from East Hampton to the Massachusetts border were acquired by the Connecticut State Park System to construct a recreational linear park.

This trail has a colorful past. The "Air Line" was envisioned as a direct line between New York City and Boston. It opened in 1873 and 25 miles shorter, it offered fierce competition to the shoreline rail service from New York to Boston. The mesmerizing, white-painted express train, known as the Ghost Train, made the run between Boston and New York in six hours, a record time for 1884.

The construction of the new rail line contained ambitious feats of engineering, blasting through granite hills, navigating deep valleys and rivers along the route. The Air Line Railroad's "Ghost Train" began in 1891 and was designed to attract wealthy travelers. Luxurious Pullman cars were painted white with gold trim, and the staff of the train wore formal white uniforms.



The catastrophic Great East Thompson Train Wreck on December 4, 1891 clouded the introduction of this fast new rail service. It was one of the greatest train wrecks in American history, and the only train accident to involve four trains. Still, over the next four years, successful businessmen and prominent citizens, including President Benjamin Harrison, rode the increasingly well-known Ghost Train. As it sped across eastern Connecticut, its luminescent cars were easily recognized, especially at twilight.

In the new 20th century, technology increased, railroad engines became faster, rail cars became longer, everything became heavier and after World War II, access to automobiles and interstate highways reduce the profitability of rail travel. The quaintness of the Air Line's winding grades as well as the weight restrictions of the spindly trestle bridges began to show its limitations. During its construction, the Air Line Railroad was expensive and controversial, but its operational costs would lead to its ultimate demise and abandonment. Passenger service on the Air Line ceased by 1937, and the track was completely abandoned by 1965.

Today, visitors enjoy scenic panoramas, village life, wildlife, hiking trails, and the tranquility of the rural landscape. The United States Department of the Interior recognized the southern section of the Air Line State Park Trail as a national recreation trail in 2002.

For more maps in this series, email outreach@ctrcd.org or visit ctrcd.org.



Connecticut
CTvisit.com/MysticCountry



PARKING

Many parking areas serve the Air Line State Park Trail. Some primary locations are:

- THOMPSON**
 - Large parking lot at 121 Riverside Dr, (Rt 12, Mechanicsville)
 - Pull off for a few cars at Air Line trail crossing, 388 Sand Dam Rd
 - 5 car parking lot, located at 662 East Thompson Rd, near the junction of New Rd
- POTNAM**
 - 18 Kennedy Dr, across from Canal
 - 80 Kennedy Dr, directly across from the South entrance of Simonzi Park
 - 98 Kennedy Dr
 - 165 Kennedy Dr (DMV lot)
- POMFRET**
 - 18 car paved parking lot at Pomfret Station, 13 Railroad Ave (off of Rt 169)
 - Parking adjacent to trail, in Town owned paved parking lot, west side of Pomfret Town Hall
 - Parking available in rear of Town owned paved parking lot at Pomfret Community Center, 207 Mashamoquet Rd (Rt. 44)
- HAMPTON**
 - Potter Rd 0.6 mile north of its intersection with Rt 6 in Goodwin State Forest
- WINDHAM**
 - Intersection of Beaver Hill Rd and Windham Rd (Rt 203) in North Windham, at the CT Eastern Railroad Museum and in downtown Willimantic.
- COLUMBIA**
 - Rt 87, Cook Hill Rd and Village Hill Rd
- EAST HAMPTON**
 - Depot Hill, Cobalt; Aldens Crossing (at Rt 16); Forest St (Between Hayes Rd and Childs Rd); Town Hall Rd (Off Main St.); Main Street; Watrous Street; Smith Street (at Cranberry Bog)
- PORTLAND**
 - Parking at 82 Middle Haddam Rd