

# Travel Talk: Providence

by Chase Binder



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**Providence...** fabulous city for food, art, shopping, strolling along a vibrant riverfront or walking through historic, tree-lined neighborhoods. Who knew?? Not Bud and me! Our view of Providence had always been restricted to the tired industrial buildings that line I 95 as it runs through the city. We were always on our way somewhere, never even considered stopping.

All that changed in early September when our grandson, Brayden, started at Providence College, one of several world-class colleges and universities that call Providence home. We thought, heck...why not take a drive down and spend a weekend? We'd do a very short "hi and bye" visit to Brayden, then settle in and explore the city. Luckily for us, some dear friends had decades of experience in Providence and offered to come along and show us around. The result was an unexpectedly magic weekend of insanely scrumptious dining, lovely walks, a gotta-see-it revitalized riverfront and gotta-have-it shopping for Italian food on Federal Hill.

For sure, we couldn't see and do it all in one weekend. But we loved, loved, loved the city and will go back as soon as we can. And perhaps we can tempt you to visit with a few images and ideas. Trust us, you'll fall in love!

Photos by Chase Binder



Classic architecture highlights Providence's history.



Bud and travel pal Dick Goduti of Dunbarton start a morning walk at the Waterplace Park Bridge. In 1994 Providence undertook a massive revitalization project, re-routing rivers, adding walkways and bridges to create a welcoming and user-friendly urban space.



The river is framed by multi-level walkways, offering places to meander, rest a while, shop, enjoy some art, grab a bite to eat or a whole meal.



Originally conceived in 1994 by artist Barnaby Evans as part of a First Night celebration, the installation of bonfires has grown from a few dozen braziers to almost 100. Staff and hundreds of volunteers keep the fires stoked, the crowds entertained and the WaterFire evenings lively.



Federal Hill runs from Atwell Avenue to Broadway and celebrates the Italian immigrant community. Enjoy outdoor music, bakeries, al fresco eateries and some of the best Italian food on the planet.



## IF YOU GO

**When:** Providence's signature event is **WaterFire** ([waterfire.org](http://waterfire.org)), an art installation of bonfires that illuminate the three converging rivers in the city center—a stunning backdrop for music and entertainment. Events run May through November (**last one in 2018 is November 10**), Saturdays about twice a month.

**Where to stay:** Friends suggested the **Courtyard Marriott** on Exchange Terrace ([Marriott.com](http://Marriott.com)) which overlooks the river basin and event amphitheater. Rooms with high numbers on high floors (especially room 735) have the best views.

**Where to eat:** We found **Camille's** ([camillesonthehill.com](http://camillesonthehill.com)) to have superb Italian food and a classic old world Italian ambiance—you almost would expect Sinatra to pop in! We also loved **Jacky's Waterplace** ([jackysgalaxie.com](http://jackysgalaxie.com)), a perfect Asian dining experience overlooking the river a short walk from our hotel. For lunch we enjoyed incredible seafood at **Hemenway's** ([hemenwaysrestaurant.com](http://hemenwaysrestaurant.com)) a stroll down the RiverWalk. **Reservations are essential!**

**What to do:** Aside from WaterFire, there's more activity and fun than you can imagine! Providence is home to several colleges and universities, including Johnson and Wales for culinary arts and the noted Rhode Island School of Design. The city infused with classic and cutting edge art, music and food.

***Goprovidence.com is a great place to explore options from accommodations to dining and entertainment.***