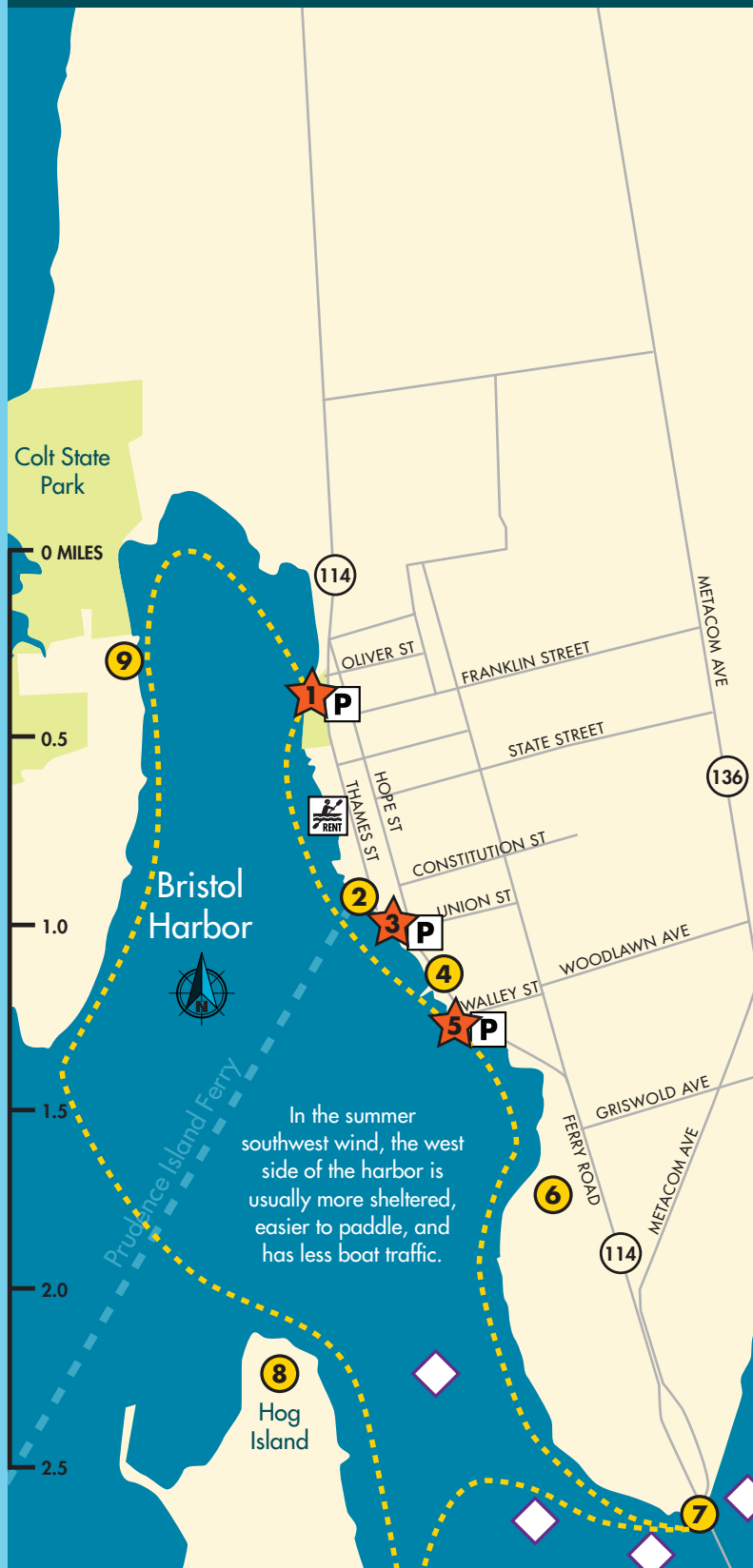


BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND: BRISTOL HARBOR TOURS



In the summer southwest wind, the west side of the harbor is usually more sheltered, easier to paddle, and has less boat traffic.

MAP LEGEND			
	WATER ACCESS		POINTS OF INTEREST
	WATER		WATER TRAIL ROUTE
	CAUTION		CONSERVATION LAND
			ROADS
			PARKING

LEVEL	Beginning to experienced
HARBOR MILES	2-4 miles
TIME	1-4 hours
DESCRIPTION	Flat, occasionally choppy with white caps, tidal currents, weather dependent, southwesterly winds in the afternoons
SCENERY	Historic Downtown Bristol Harbor

BRISTOL HARBOR TOURS

Independence Park 1, at the north end of Thames Street between Oliver and Franklin Streets, is a good starting point for kayakers going out into Bristol Harbor. There is parking for at least 15 cars. The boat ramp here is a launch site for large and small boats and the area can be very busy in the summer. This launching area is at the end of the Bristol Providence Bike Path and is near many excellent restaurants.

Paddling south from Independence Park will take you along the shoreline of Bristol's historic waterfront passing docks, restaurants, churches, mill buildings, condos, mansions and museums including the Herreshoff Marine Museum 4 located a mile south of the park. You will also pass the Prudence Island Ferry Dock 2, the great lawn of Blithewold Mansion 6 and eventually arrive under the Mount Hope Bridge 7. Warning: As you head south of Walley Street Beach 5 past Blithewold towards Mount Hope Bridge the winds often pick up, and this combined with stronger tidal currents can make for challenging paddling conditions, including steep, choppy waves.

Hog Island 8 is a small island south of Independence Park with summer cottages owned by long time Rhode Island families. Hog Island has no electricity or ferry service. It is best to go to Hog and back in the morning, before the southwesterly winds pick up in the afternoon. Please be respectful of private property and be careful not to disturb migratory nesting birds in the salt marshes (and beaches) especially from May through July.

Traveling north from Independence Park will take you to the head of the harbor. If you follow the curve of the shoreline you will begin turning south and will pass Bristol Marine, The Bristol Yacht Club 9 and many beautiful homes.

Union Street Beach 3 is located at the end of Union Street off Hope Street (Route 114) and has parking for four cars. There is a 40' right of way with a small grassy area, benches and dinghy racks that leads to a concrete walking ramp to the beach. The beach is sand and gravel. There is no boat ramp.

Walley Street Beach 5 is located at the extension of Walley Street, off Hope Street (Route 114) and has parking for four cars. The site is a thirty yard wide lawn contained by a seawall sloping down to a set of narrow stone steps that lead to the water. There is no boat ramp but plenty of places to picnic and sunbath with a fabulous view of the harbor. This is a windy site; Kite and wind surfers often launch from this area.

Bristol Kayak Center, 251 Thames St, (401) 245-5100.



BRISTOL HARBOR

Bristol, Rhode Island is one of New England's famous historic ports. The well-preserved waterfront district and surrounding areas contain wonderful old buildings, churches, mills, mansions and ship building facilities that tell the history of Bristol's development since its founding in 1680. Today, restaurants, shops and public parks provide visitors with many options to make Bristol the ideal spot to launch your next paddling experience.



ABOUT BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

Steeped in a [rich history](#) that spans three centuries, Bristol, Rhode Island is a quintessential New England waterfront town. The town center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and with its unwavering commitment to preservation, Bristol continues to maintain the picture-perfect charm of a historic port town. The well-preserved waterfront district contains the commercial enterprises, civic buildings, churches, mills, sailors' shacks and slave-traders' mansions that tell the history of Bristol's development since its founding in 1680.

Bristol holds the distinction of having the oldest, continuous [Fourth of July Celebration in America](#). The Celebration, first held in 1785, was started by Bristolians who actually took part in the Revolutionary War. This fervor continues today as Bristol becomes arguably the most patriotic town in America during the three-week Celebration which culminates in the gala Parade on Independence Day which is watched by over 200,000 enthusiastic people.

Sailing and shipbuilding have played an important role in the life of Bristol since the 17th Century. Today Bristol is the home of [several shipbuilding companies](#) that have local and international reputations for quality and workmanship. In 1995, Bristol became the home of the [America's Cup Hall of Fame](#).

Bristol is the cultural center for Bristol County as it is home to eight fine museums and [Roger Williams University](#). Bristol remains a center of history with many handsome homes built in the 1700s and 1800s, some designed by noted architect Russell

Warren, gracing the tree-lined streets. Visitors come from far away locations to enjoy Bristol's history, stroll along its waterfront, shop in its many stores and dine in its many [fine restaurants](#).

Bristol is situated on a 10 square mile peninsula, shaped like a lobster claw, the maw of which forms Bristol Harbor, with Narragansett Bay to the west and Mount Hope Bay to the east. It is about 12 miles distant from both Providence and Newport. With miles of coastline, 14 parks, and the starting point of the East Bay Bike Path, the town is an excellent choice for a variety of outdoor activities.

HELPFUL HINTS

Several good launching sites are available along Bristol's working waterfront. The DEM launch site on Poppasquash Road or Independence Park on Thames Street are both ideal. Numerous public parks offer safe and comfortable spots to take a break and walk ashore. Clam shacks to fine dining are all within easy reach. Check out the world famous Herreshoff Marine Museum / America's Cup Hall of Fame, and the Blithewold Arboretum in Bristol as well.

Bristol Harbor is always busy with pleasure boats and commercial activities. Please respect other craft and remember that larger boats have the right of way.

A very predictable southwest wind picks up every afternoon, which can make sea conditions uncomfortable. Paddling in the morning is advisable.

ALWAYS WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET AND CARRY A WHISTLE OR OTHER SOUND PRODUCING DEVICE, PREFERABLY ATTACHED TO YOUR LIFE JACKET. PADDLERS SHOULD CHECK WATER LEVEL AND TIDES, WEATHER, AND WATERWAY CONDITIONS PRIOR TO EVERY TRIP. REMOVE WHAT YOU BRING, CLEAN UP MORE IF YOU CAN. PLEASE RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY. REPORT ANY PROBLEMS YOU ENCOUNTER TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES IF APPROPRIATE.

Be sure to visit Bristol's new website for details and attractions: www.explorebristol.com

The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP) protects and preserves Narragansett Bay and its watershed through partnerships that conserve and restore natural resources, enhance water quality and promote community involvement. NBEP supports the RI Blueways Alliance which is dedicated to creating a comprehensive water trail network to link Rhode Island's rivers, lakes and ponds to Narragansett Bay and to the rivers in Massachusetts that flow into the bay. The trail will be used to promote safety, conservation, recreation and economic development. www.ExploreRI.org



Watershed organizations throughout the Narragansett Bay watershed showcase paddling opportunities on downloadable paddle maps. The full list of maps is available at ExploreRI.org.

