

# Boston Sunday Globe

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## SundayTravel BERKSHIRES

WITH: NEW ENGLAND DESTINATIONS

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## Love is in the air in the Berkshires

By Diane Bair and Pamela Wright  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

Romance truly is in the eye of the beholder. For some, it might be Netflix and chill; for others, it means snuggling in a sleeping bag in a yurt on a mountaintop. Then there's the couple's massage, which sounds wildly romantic until you actually do it. (Cue the sleep-drooling and strange moaning.)

But if you're looking for a weekend getaway that offers the promise of romantic interlude, the Berkshires region of Western Massachusetts rates five hearts. Fall and winter are best, since the tourist crowds thin. And if getting a deal makes your heart beat a little faster, know that prices drop at local hotels and inns after the last scarlet maple leaf has drifted from the trees. Here's some inspiration.

### Hike to a waterfall

There are myriad wonderful hikes in the Berkshires — we like Bash Bish Falls State Park

([www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)) in Mount Washington (in the southern Berkshires near Egremont) because it has a fabulous feature: a 60-foot waterfall, the highest single falls in the state. Use caution on the slippery rocks (no cliff-top selfies, please) so your cozy-couple time at the falls will be happy, not tragic. Bring picnic provisions and make an afternoon of it: Nejaime's Wine Cellars ([www.nejaimeswine.com](http://www.nejaimeswine.com)) in Stockbridge and Lenox offers three posh picnics-to-go, with themes like "French Country." But you can DIY; they have a good selection of cheeses, salads, fresh baguettes, and locally-baked Kiara's Gourmet Cookies.

Another hike we like (this one in North Adams) is the Cascades. It, too, has a waterfall — 40 feet — reachable via a 15-minute walk along a wooded trail that follows Notch Brook. In the fall, you may be the only hikers here, so you can sprawl out on your choice of big boulders and enjoy the gorgeous, secluded setting. (Park at Bray-

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DIANE BAIR FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Brown sugar cake at the Red Lion Inn.

## A trip to the Berkshires is for lovers, and here's the proof

### ROMANCE

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ton Elementary School; the trailhead is a short walk from the parking lot.)

### Bubbly 1

If you've ever entered a cave and thought, "Geez, this would be perfect if it were filled with champagne!" your wish just came true. Last year, the country estate Blantyre opened La Cave, the only sanctioned Dom Perignon champagne salon in the world. Reserve 24 hours in advance for this splurge-worthy experience (\$150 per person for tastings of three different vintages.) You'll enter the Cloisters, a speakeasy-inspired cave with brick-and-stone walls, adjacent to the resort's wine cellar. Sips include exclusive-to-Blantyre selections. Food is as good as you'd expect of a Forbes five-star, ultra-luxury Relais & Chateaux property; think oysters, lobster, wagyu brisket, and caviar service. [www.blantyre.com](http://www.blantyre.com)

### Bubbly 2

If your favorite bubbles are the kind you find in a tub of 120-degree water, preferably after dark, welcome to the hot tub at the Red Lion Inn ([www.redlioninn.com](http://www.redlioninn.com)). Yes, everybody knows this delightfully "Olde New England" inn, a Stockbridge landmark since forever, but you might not realize its romantic potential. Once the tourist hordes have decamped from the rocking chairs on the Red Lion's porch, this hotel feels cozier. The host will seat you at "your" table in the dining room, and offer heartfelt advice on what

to order. The staff will happily direct you to their favorite boutiques, cheese-mongers, and off-the-beaten-track hiking trails. Guest rooms are comfy and eclectic; ours was a fiesta of prints and colors with the all-important excellent mattress. But our favorite spot was that hot tub, surrounded by greenery and pretty much ours alone. Fall rates from \$215 (room with private bath).

### Dinner by candlelight

Pink light bulbs are swell, but candlelight is the ultimate Instagram filter, no? At the Old Inn on the Green ([www.oldinn.com](http://www.oldinn.com)) in New Marlborough, a former stagecoach relay, candlelit dining is a given — they don't have electric lighting in the dining room. Happily, there's electricity in the kitchen, where chef-owner Peter Platt does wondrous things with humble items like cauliflower and calves liver and elevates lamb, beef tenderloin, and duck to peek deliciousness. Prices reflect this (the Saturday night, four-course prix fixe tasting menu is \$78), but the OIOTG is a special occasion kind of place, and considered to be one of the best restaurants in the Berkshires.

### Under the moonlight, the serious moonlight

Hiking under a full moon, with a bonfire and wine tasting: Sounds like the perfect recipe for romance, right up there with long walks on the beach. Moonlight hikes are offered year-round at Hilltop Orchards & Furnace Brook Winery, located in Richmond. Guide Holly Brouker weaves Native American traditions into the journey. Walks

last about an hour to 90 minutes and include a bonfire, live entertainment, and tasting of up to six Furnace Brook wines (over age 21, please). \$14 per person; [www.hilltoporchards.com](http://www.hilltoporchards.com)

### Getting jazzy with it

The lounge at the historic Gateways Inn in Lenox ([www.gatewaysinn.com](http://www.gatewaysinn.com)) is a perfect place to settle in with your sweetie and enjoy some live jazz — its plush couches, grand piano, and handsome mahogany bar create an elegant setting. Shows begin at 7:30 (Friday and Saturday nights) and run for three hours. Bar pours include 180 different whiskeys, craft beers, and a Wine Spectator award-winning wine list.

For other nightlife options, check out the performance calendar at Mass MoCA ([www.mass-moca.org](http://www.mass-moca.org)). World dance parties, alt-cabaret, and avant-garde theater performances are among the events they host. Choose something that's out of your usual entertainment comfort zone, perhaps — research shows that sharing new experiences is a good bonding experience for couples.

### Lush nudes (on canvas)

Alas, the Clark Art Institute's show "Renoir: The Body, the Senses" closes on Sept. 22, but the painter's work is a major part of the Clark's permanent collection — and a great reason to explore (or revisit) this engaging museum. Wander amid European and American paintings, prints, sculpture, drawings, and decorative arts from the Renaissance to the early 20th century. You and your S.O. may not share the same taste in

art, but immersing yourselves in creative masterworks is joyful and life affirming, no?

Psst: The outdoor terrace alongside the Clark's reflecting pool, open 24/7 year-round, is a lovely destination for stargazing. (The pool is filled until late October or so). [www.clarkart.edu](http://www.clarkart.edu); \$20; free for students with I.D.

### Romance packages (you basically show up)

Are you too busy to engineer a romantic getaway? Opt for a package deal: The inn takes care of the details; you two just show up (with a credit card) and enjoy. The newly opened, 64-room Williams Inn in Williamstown is offering a Fall in Love With the Berkshires package that includes two nights' lodging, a one-hour couple's massage at a local day spa, in-room wine, cheese, and chocolate truffles from the Village Chocolate Shoppe, two Williams Inn robes, breakfast each morning and one dinner for two at The Barn, the on-site kitchen and bar, plus two tickets to the Clark Art Institute. From \$599; valid to Nov. 23. [www.williamsinn.com](http://www.williamsinn.com)

Down Stockbridge way, the Red Lion Inn is offering a Peak Pick Package that might a-peel (heh heh) to apple-loving couples. This one includes accommodations, a bottle of French cidre from Furnace Brook Winery, a fall dessert for two — currently, apple pie made in the inn's kitchen. From \$170; valid through Nov. 26. [www.redlioninn.com](http://www.redlioninn.com)

Diane Bair and Pamela Wright can be reached at [bairwright@gmail.com](mailto:bairwright@gmail.com).

**Bubbly 2**

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