

Title:

Mystic Seaport - Tall Ships, Whaling, and Preservation

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Summary:

A day at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut is a link to the glorious seafaring past of New England. The Museum of America and the Sea is an entertaining journey through 19th century nautical life as you'll discover in this article...

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Article Body:

A day at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut is a link to the glorious seafaring past of New England. The Museum of America and the Sea is an entertaining journey through 19th century nautical life as you visit the three main exhibits at Mystic Seaport: the historic ships, the authentic seaport village and exhibits, and the preservation shipyard.

The coastline in this part of New England was once home to huge whaling fleets and many were built along these shores. The area of Mystic had its share of shipbuilding yards and the recreation of the seaport village is an authentic and accurate depiction of life in a New England seafaring town.

Open year-round Mystic Seaport is on the Mystic River a short hop from the historic downtown area. Here's what you'll see and how to get the best out of your trip...

THE JEWELS AT THE DOCK

Tall ships still fascinate people and Mystic Seaport has an amazing collection in the museum dock area. I'm drawn like a magnet to these magnificent vessels, and the most popular to tour is the Charles W. Morgan - a wonderful example of a wooden whaling ship. It made 37 whaling trips from its launch in 1841 and before retiring in 1921. Other exquisite Tall Ships in the Mystic museum collection are the Joseph Conrad and L.A. Dunton.

Additional ships beautifully restored with a rich legacy include the Sabino and Emma C. Berry. The Emma C. first launched in 1866, and since then has undergone

many changes as a fishing vessel and a coastal freighter. Allocate plenty of time to tour all the ships as they remain the centerpiece of the Mystic Seaport Museum. And when you're finally ready for a rest take a 30 or 90 minute cruise on the Sabino steamboat as she travels up and down the Mystic River.

THE AUTHENTIC VILLAGE AND EXHIBITS...

A short walk from the ships is the village exhibits and galleries. Painstakingly recreated and authentic, the village consists of many buildings moved from other locations in New England and the Northeast. Stroll around the nautical shops and discover rope making, rigging, cooperage, and the sail loft.

There are over 40 delightful exhibits for you to enjoy, but two must-see displays are the Mystic River Scale Model, and the Shipsmith shop. Further down from the village check out the galleries and make sure you spend time inside both the Voyages and Figurehead exhibits.

The three-floor exhibit of Voyages celebrates the legacy of America and the sea, and how it continues to impact our lives in many subtle ways. And across the street is the Figurehead exhibit, and a wonderful collection of ship carvings. Unfortunately, these carvings are a bittersweet display. The desire for these on ships has dwindled and it's now become an endangered art form.

THE PRESERVATION SHIPYARD...

In the Henry B. duPont Preservation Shipyard many of the old mastercraft shipbuilding skills are still practiced to keep the museum ships in tip top shape. Unfortunately many of these skills are being lost as the economics of our time reduce the need for them. Wooden ships are a thing of the past, and so the wonderful carpentry and shipwright skills have dwindled throughout the world.

But in this corner of the world they are practiced and preserved.

In the yard you'll see a rigging loft, a paint shop, carpenters and metalworking shops, a lumber shed, and an old-fashioned sawmill. The documentation shop contains vital records used by the museum's craftsmen to maintain accuracy as they work on preserving the ships. At the nearby shipbuilding display you'll not only see the keel of the whale ship Thames, but take in a revealing exhibit of the many stages of building a ship.

Mystic Seaport celebrates the historic seafaring past of New England. Its one of my favorite three living museums in New England. The other two are Old Sturbridge Village in Sturbridge, Central Massachusetts, and Plimoth Plantation

and Mayflower at Plymouth, Eastern Massachusetts. All three for different reasons are marvelous experiences of New England's contribution to American history. To discover more about each visit my web site at www.new-england-vacations-guide.com/