

Title:

Fall Foliage Scenic Drive in Vermont

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Summary:

This fall foliage scenic drive in Central Vermont is a loop tour of about 150 miles. It offers some of the best views in the Green Mountain National Forest, and a whole bunch of surprises along the way.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

This fall foliage scenic drive in Central Vermont is a loop tour of about 150 miles. Although it's possible to do the drive in one day and bypass many of the attractions and rambles suggested, I'd recommend you carve out a weekend to do it justice.

The drive offers some of the best views in the Green Mountain National Forest, which in the fall is dramatic and stunning.

The scenic drive follows mostly Route 12 south from Montpelier to Woodstock, before heading north on Route 100 and 100B back to Montpelier. You'll discover plenty of surprises on the way, but it's no surprise you'll experience some magnificent fall foliage views all along the way.

Okay, start the ignition and let's get going...

Our journey begins in Montpelier, the smallest state capital city in America. Montpelier is on the northern fringe of central Vermont, and is 182 miles from Boston and 198 miles from Hartford. It can be easily reached from Interstate 89.

Take Route 12 out of Montpelier and head south to Northfield Falls. Vermont has many fine examples of covered bridges, but two of them in Northfield Falls can be seen at once, as you look through one to other. This is unique in New England and definitely worth taking the camera out to capture.

Continue on Route 12 making your way to Bethel.

Bethel is one of those Vermont towns that's a natural part of the scenery. Could

this be why it's home to the White River National Fish Hatchery? The hatchery focuses on restoring Atlantic Salmon to the Connecticut River. It's open 8:00am - 3:00pm daily.

From Bethel you'll continue on the final leg of the southern route to Woodstock.

The Woodstock area offers a number of attractions, including Billings Farm and Museum, and Quechee Gorge. Woodstock itself is one of those picture-perfect Vermont villages that's fun just to stroll around checking out the boutiques and restaurants.

The Billings Farm and Museum was established in 1871, and today it's a working farm, and a museum depicting farm life in the late 1800s. Depending on the time you visit the museum has seasonal activities so check ahead to see what's going on the day you plan to arrive.

Quechee Gorge is Vermont's little Grand Canyon. Not quite as big a crack in the ground as in Arizona, but at a mile long and plenty of hiking and walking trails on offer, it's a chance to admire the scenery and stretch the legs. Be sure to walk to the picnic area overlooking the falls for a Kodak moment.

The next 20 miles of the scenic drive takes you cross-country on Route 4 to Killington. Killington is a world famous ski area that covers six mountains. At over 4,200' it offers spectacular views from the summit. There's very few better places to appreciate the fall foliage than at the top of Killington Peak. If it's running take the K1-Gondola from base. You can ride the Gondola daily from late September - early October. Call ahead for schedule or visit their web site at www.killington.com.

Killington is about the halfway point in this tour, and if you decide to linger overnight in the area then the beautiful town of Rutland is close-by with plenty of lodging. Just be sure to make reservations during the heavy visited peak fall foliage season.

The next section of the tour follows Route 100 as it borders the Green Mountain National Forest. You'll pass through the towns of Pittsfield, Hancock, Granville, and Waitsfield as you tour perhaps the most scenic areas and diverse terrain you'll see on this drive.

Just North of Hancock and close to Route 100 on Route 125 is Texas Falls. The trail to the falls is an easy hike and offers marvelous views anytime of the year, but especially during fall foliage season when the colors dazzle.

The larger Moss Glen Falls is just north of Granville a few miles up from

Hancock. The drive from Hancock towards the falls is a two-lane winding road that passes through a seven-mile stretch of rough wilderness, and worth taking at a slow and easy pace.

The final leg of this central Vermont scenic drive from Granville to Middlesex and back to Montpelier continues to provide startling scenery and great photo opportunities. Route 100B connects with Route 100 just south of Moretown village, and you'll take 100B north to Middlesex and then join Interstate 89 for the quick hop back into Montpelier.

This fall foliage scenic drive offers oodles of opportunities for detours and backroad excursions. My advice is to give yourself the time to get distracted and follow a few inviting roads leading away from busy highways, and become a Vermonter for a few days. You'll appreciate a fall Vermont and understand why the people that live here wouldn't trade it for any other place in the world.

Vermonters quip the state really has five seasons - spring, summer, fall, winter, and the famous mud season. But my personal favorite in Vermont is the fall. Take this tour and you'll understand why.