



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: This picturesque city sits on the shores of the Connecticut River; a Sol LeWitt wall drawing at The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art; The Mark Twain House & Museum



A WEEKEND IN:

Hartford, Connecticut

Literary masters, politicians and even dinosaurs have left their marks on this **HISTORIC TOWN**, which, in turn, will leave an impression on any modern-day visitor.

THE HISTORY of Hartford, Conn., is diverse, filled with revolutionary politics and imagination. This New England city was the wealthiest in the U.S. in the late 1800s and has been home to some of history's most innovative figures — a celebrated past that today blends successfully with a cosmopolitan present. Experience the city's wide range of cultural offerings at any of these renowned local institutions.

EAT/DRINK: **Trumbull Kitchen**, part of the Max Restaurant Group, offers "global comfort food" menus throughout the day, from happy-hour tapas to hearty American entrees. Seasonal cocktails, an extensive wine selection and a beer-pairing menu keep this restaurant on the cutting edge. For upscale casual cuisine and beer, try

City Steam Brewery Café. This American brewpub makes its City Steam beer on-site, with eight to 12 unique, regularly changing drafts available at any given time.

DO: Mark Twain loved Hartford so much that in 1873, he commissioned an opulent Gothic mansion to be built there for his family. Each handcrafted, imported and decadent piece of furniture in **The Mark Twain House & Museum** has a story, and while on a guided tour of the property, visitors can do more than hear about Twain writing his famous American novels — they can see the very room in which he composed them.

Connecticut's **Old State House** has a bevy of distinctions. The original meeting place for the Connecticut General Assembly was also the site of the first witchcraft hanging in the New World

(in 1647) and the opening of the *Amistad* trial (in 1839). The Old State House also features the Museum of Natural and Other Curiosities, which is local painter Joseph Steward's collection of taxidermies and unusual artifacts dating from 1797.

In 1966, a construction worker discovered more than 2,000 perfectly preserved dinosaur footprints from the Mesozoic Era. Today, the 200-million-year-old imprints — designated a Natural Landmark — are on display at **Dinosaur State Park**, located in the markings' original location in Rocky Hill. The park also offers two miles of dinosaur-related nature trails and 10 acres of arboretum featuring plants representative of those that existed during the age of dinosaurs.

SHOP: To pay homage to the famous abolitionist author, the shop at the **Harriet Beecher Stowe Center** offers some of her favorite things. As such, visitors can peruse artwork, dinnerware and the extensive museum store, where they can buy a copy of the writer's most famous work, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Outside, the historic Victorian Gothic-style home and award-winning gardens look as they did when Stowe lived there.

It should come as no surprise that the first public art museum in the United States has an impressive shop. **The Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art** features everything from European art to

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costumes and textiles. Daniel Wadsworth opened this museum in 1844 with his private collection of 79 paintings. Today, The Wadsworth features more than 50,000 remarkable works and collections that showcase some of the world's most recognizable artists.

STAY: Thanks to Hartford's booming insurance industries, downtown hotels are set up for form and function. The newly renovated **Ramada Plaza Hartford-Downtown** feels energized and private. With 350 guest rooms, private parking, event space and the popular **Bistro Z Restaurant** and **Z Bar**, this pet-friendly high-rise offers sweeping views of the city and is only a short walk from Main Street.