

Vermont



Vermont is one of the most picturesque states in the Union, chock full of verdant pastures, red barns, tiny hamlets and quaint villages, set among the lovely background of the Green Mountains. It's also, despite a relatively short season, a wonderful place for the traveling golfer to chase the ball-through-the-meadow. Unlike maple trees, for one example, there aren't many significant airports in Vermont. Burlington in the upper reaches, or Bradley International, actually outside of Hartford, Connecticut, are the two best bets. In either case, grab a National Rental Car, and enjoy an hour-or-two drive heading either north or south, depending, to some of the best mountain golf in New England.

The hamlet of Quechee, a wide place in the road about half an hour from the Killington ski area in the state's central region, is as good a place as any to start. This little burgh is postcard Vermont: meandering streams, lovely waterfalls and wagon wheels, punctuated

by a downtown area endemic to many tourist-centric Green Mountain communities. There isn't a single necessity to be found in the Main Street shops. It's all scented soaps, soft linens, garish tee-shirts and all manner of blown glass, figurines and a wide array of things one might want, but not necessarily need.



The Quechee Club

However golfers need to tour one of the finest 36-hole complexes in Northern New England. [The Quechee Club](#) was designed by the late Geoffrey Cornish, a gentleman, scholar and fine architect best known in New England for modestly budgeted projects with minimal flair. Cornish, who died in 2012 just a few years short of his hundredth birthday, proved at Quechee that you can be as good as your topography though, as his Highland and Lakeland courses are both aesthetically pleasing and formidable. As the name implies, Lakeland winds liberally around Lake Pineo, and the highlight at Highland are a pair of dramatic back nine par 3s that require heroic shots, both uphill and down, over a plunging ravine.



The Quechee Club

The sparkling Ottaquechee River winds throughout the property, influencing play directly or indirectly on a dozen of the 36 holes. A manicured course in Vermont is as rare as a country store without maple syrup, but Quechee is the exception, with numerous plantings and flower gardens adding charm and beauty. It has recovered nicely from a couple of horrendous years not too long ago where the courses were in rough shape after brutal winters and severe flooding. It should be noted that the Quechee Club is a private facility, but allows outside play for guests of a select number of local inns. These include the Quechee Inn, Woodstock Inn, Norwich, Hanover, and several other reputable lodging establishments.



Woodstock Country Club

Founded in 1895, **Woodstock Country Club** is one of the oldest golf course in New England. When Robert Trent Jones Sr. redesigned the original playing corridors, he enhanced the already-panoramic views

of the lush Kedron Valley. Named one of the Top 100 golf resorts in the nation by Golf Magazine, it also happens to be the home town course of 2011 PGA Champion and Ryder Cup stalwart Keegan Bradley, who grew up in Woodstock. Keegan used to jump off the school bus each day with clubs in hand ready to play, and still comes back yearly to host the annual Keegan Bradley Charity Classic every August.



Green Mountain National

Green Mountain National in the town of Killington is certainly worth a visit. This is an alpine thrill ride, with deep forests, meandering streams, and sparkling ponds throughout. The fairways curve, the greens undulate, and the long-range views will induce wobbling concentration. It takes more than one tour of duty to puzzle out the best way to play the course, and time permitting, most players will want to march right back to the first tee at round's end to give it another go. There's no higher praise for a golf course than the desire to head right back out and give it another shot.



Stratton Mountain

Stratton Mountain will always be known as a ski area first and foremost, but interested golfers should check out some or all of the 27 holes at Stratton Country Club, located south of Manchester. Like the aforementioned Quechee, this is another Geoff Cornish creation, three distinct nines known as Mountain, Forest and Lake. This former LPGA Tour stop is a quintessential alpine design, somewhat shaggy and unkempt, with the requisite plunging, twisting fairways, dizzying tee boxes, and rocky outcroppings.

Stratton is a grassy funhouse, and selective perception is required to enjoy it to the fullest. Enjoy the exhilaration of a towering tee ball that hangs suspended over the tree line, or an uphill approach that clears a rushing stream and finds the putting surface. Ignore the occasional goofy hole, or the potential of a soggy fairway that would get a superintendent reprimanded in the flatland. It's worth noting that for those who wish they were better players (IE—100% of all golfers who ever picked up a club) Stratton's Golf School is one of the nation's most established group programs, now more than 45 years old, and generally offers a 4-to-1 teacher/ student ratio for personal attention. Personal attention are hallmarks at some of the area's eateries, dependent as they are on the tourist trade. **Elixir Restaurant** in White River Junction is just such a place, benefitting from the hands-on attention of ownership. Baked figs and chicken liver mousse are go-to starters, while entrees such as the cocoa-dusted petit filet, seared scallops and eggplant Moussaka have won consistent raves from both tourists and regulars alike. You're under lots of pressure when naming

your establishment the [Tip Top Café](#), but management is up to the task. This airy bistro, also in White River Junction, offers legendary fries with aioli sauce, a flash-grilled Caesar salad and a sampling of Vermont-made cheeses as popular starters. Main courses include squash dumplings, sesame pork and ginger meatloaf and baked flounder, among other eclectic items.