

# THE INDEPENDENT

## Off Duty: New Haven

The home of one of America's leading universities is a vibrant city

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### Why?

Culture, wealth, history: there's a palpable and integrated sense of all three in New Haven. This attractive Connecticut city wears its past with evident pride. Not only is it one of the oldest planned communities of North America but, of course, it is also home to Yale University.

Founded in 1701, the Ivy League institution spreads out from the 16-acre green that lies at the heart of New Haven. It has educated all the US presidents (so far) since 1989 - as well as psychologists, writers, actors and more, from Benjamin Spock to Naomi Woolf and Meryl Streep.

With the erudition, there's a rich seam of innovation: New Haven was where Webster compiled his first dictionary; where the first telephone switchboard was designed; and where, so Yale students wryly boast, both the lollipop and the hamburger were invented - the latter assertion hotly disputed by Seymour in Wisconsin and Akron in Ohio.

Because of the Yale factor, the city revels in outstanding art galleries and a cultural buzz - classical music, jazz, drama, there's always something happening even in vacation periods. And right now, with New England shaking off the winter and bursting into fresh green life, New Haven is looking particularly pretty.

### What?

For all the privilege associated with Yale, there is an astonishing openness here and visitors are very much welcomed. You can wander much of the campus and enjoy free entry not only to the university's museums and galleries but also to a great many concerts, plays, talks and special film shows (for what's on see [events.yale.edu](http://events.yale.edu)). The university even offers free guided tours conducted by well-versed students (Mon-Fri 10.30am and 2pm and weekends 1.30pm, departing from Yale Visitor Center, 149 Elm Street; [yale.edu/visitor](http://yale.edu/visitor)).

Yale's two great art galleries are on Chapel Street, both housed in acclaimed buildings by the modernist architect Louis Kahn. Yale University Art Gallery (111 Chapel Street; Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Thurs until 8pm, and Sun 1-6pm; [artgallery.yale.edu](http://artgallery.yale.edu)) offers an amazing range from ancient art (Assyrian, Greek, Roman) to African and Asian works and an impressive display of modern and contemporary art featuring Picasso, van Gogh, Cezanne, Jackson Pollock and Donald Judd. The dedicated American galleries are currently under refurbishment, meanwhile, current special exhibitions include Master Drawings from the collection - by Bernini, Boucher, Degas and others (until 8 June).

Almost opposite is The Yale Center for British Art (1080 Chapel Street; Tues-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun noon-5pm; [ycba.yale.edu](http://ycba.yale.edu)). It contains paintings and watercolours by Stubbs and Reynolds among many others; and an extensive range of rare books and manuscripts with 13 books printed by William Caxton and several volumes illustrated by Turner and

Constable. Currently, special exhibitions range from The Female in Modern British Art, with paintings by Burne-Jones, Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and others (until 8 June) to British Orientalist Painting, with rarely seen works by Holman Hunt, Stanley Spencer, Richard Dadd and more (until 27 April).

### Where?

The 19-storey Omni New Haven Hotel at Yale (155 Temple Street; 00 1 203 772 6664; [omnihotels.com](http://omnihotels.com)) has the best accommodation in town. Just off the central green, it presents 306 elegantly kitted out bedrooms and a superb panorama from its top-floor restaurant. Doubles cost from \$280. Less luxurious but well positioned, adjacent to Yale campus, Courtyard by Marriott at Yale (30 Whalley Avenue; 00 1 203 777 6221; [courtyardmarriottat Yale.com](http://courtyardmarriottat Yale.com)) has 160 rooms slightly boxy rooms and offers doubles from \$190.

The hot new downtown dining experience is at Barcelona New Haven, next to the Omni Hotel (00 1 203 848 3000; [barcelonawinebar.com](http://barcelonawinebar.com)). This chic wine bar and restaurant serves tapas dishes such as warm octopus salad and homemade empanadas for around \$7. Meantime Union League Café nearby (1032 Chapel Street; 00 1 203 562 4299; [unionleaguecafe.com](http://unionleaguecafe.com)) is an established gourmet favourite offering contemporary French dishes in an elegant bistro setting. Just down the road, Atticus Bookstore and Café (1082 Chapel Street; 00 1 203 776 4040) is where you'll mingle with Yalies ordering coffee and scones.

Of course, there's more to New Haven than Yale. The city's Little Italy is east of the centre, with most of the restaurant action centred on Wooster Street. Consiglio's (165 Wooster Street; 00 1 203 865 4489; [consiglios.com](http://consiglios.com)) is a much loved old timer that opened in 1938 and serves classic southern Italian cuisine. More or less at either end of the street, two pizzerias have become rival city institutions Sally Apizza (237 Wooster Street; 00 1 203 624 5271) and Frank Pepe Pizzeria

(157 Wooster Street; 00 1 203 865 5762; [pepespizzeria.com](http://pepespizzeria.com)). For an extensive list of eating options see New Haven Visitors Bureau (169 Orange Street; 00 1 203 777 8550; [visitnewhaven.com](http://visitnewhaven.com)).

### Wow

The Sterling Memorial Library (120 High Street) is a remarkable feature of Yale, and indeed New Haven. Architect James Gamble Rogers devised it in the 1920s in the image of a Gothic cathedral – he was intent at the time on recreating Yale as an American Oxbridge. The public can sneak a look inside the nave, complete with stained glass and