

Native Footsteps

The story of Connecticut's native tribes is told in the wind and woods - and autumn, the time of harvest, seems an especially good time to find the trail and follow it. From museum exhibits to re-created encampments, the tale of the region's American Indians is rich and fascinating.



Connection Types: History

Seasons: Fall

Driving Tip: Approximately 110 miles

INSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

Begin your search for Connecticut's Indians with a visit to the [Institute for American Indian Studies](#) on 15 wooded acres in Washington. You'll find a replicated Algonkian village, a healing plants garden, nature trails, a chief's longhouse and the 10,000-year story of Connecticut's native population.

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At Hartford's [Connecticut Historical Society](#), the focus is on all things Connecticut, which means there is much to learn and see regarding the region's native peoples. Be sure to see the "Making Connecticut" permanent exhibit, which maps out the state's history from the 1500s onward. There are many good spots for lunch in the area, including [Pond House Café](#) in nearby Elizabeth Park.

CONNECTICUT STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

After lunch, make the drive out to Storrs, where you'll find the [Connecticut State Museum of Natural History](#) on the University of Connecticut's campus. Associated with the museum is the [Connecticut Archeology Center](#), which houses a variety of Native American collections. The Norris Bull Collection, for example, includes a 12-foot dugout canoe carved from an American Chestnut tree, one of only three ever excavated in Connecticut.

SPA AT NORWICH INN

After the long day, why not spend some very pleasant hours overnighting at the [Spa at Norwich Inn](#). Dine well at Kensington's, the inn's celebrated restaurant, and begin your next day with

morning meditation or a walk/stretch and then a treatment (they range from massages to Tarot card readings).

INDIAN BURIAL GROUNDS

Pay a visit to the [Indian Burial Grounds](#) nearby in Norwich. This is the resting place of Uncas, the Mohegan chief who gave the original land for the settlement of Norwich.

MASHANTUCKET PEQUOT MUSEUM AND RESEARCH CENTER

End your getaway by spending time at the spectacular [Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center](#), where 18,000 years of Native and natural history are memorably depicted. Here you'll experience the sights and smells of daily life in a Pequot village, with fishing scenes, a maize field, making arrows, preparing a meal and more. There are depictions of the Ice Age, life in a cold climate and the arrival of the Europeans. The museum is truly one of Connecticut's lesser-known gems.