The Utterly Unofficial Guide to New Haven for Students, Visitors, and General Urbanites
Initial list compiled by Jessica Cole @jessunscripted after four years of exploring as a Yale student.
If you have tips or comments to add, please do! I've left it as a permission-based wiki so it can continue to grow.
You can also find a picture-filled and fully-linked version of this on Roammeo's blog at roammeo.wordpress.com.
Enjoy the city!

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Events

These are the things that come along once or twice a year but are so good you can't possibly dream of missing them.

- **PechaKucha:** PechaKucha was founded by designers in Tokyo as a way to share ideas succinctly and creatively, using 20 images on slides shown for 20 seconds each. PechaKucha now happens in hundreds of cities around the world, including New Haven, and the schedule can be found at http://pkn-newhaven.org/ (sign up for their newsletter to receive reminders!) You can go to watch and eat/drink at the Malaysian restaurant where it is usually hosted, or you can sign up to be one of the presenters yourself.
- **The International Festival of Arts & Ideas**: IFAI is a 15-day festival each June that consists of dozens and dozens of free concerts, very smart lecturers, and public art displays. The vast majority of these concerts, shows, and speakers are completely free (and the best kind of free, meaning "pull your lawn chair and BYOB for a musical picnic on the Green"), and you can go to www.artidea.org to find the day's schedule or sign up for their newsletter to learn more.
- **Restaurant Week**: Twice a year, for a week each time, 30+ of New Haven's best restaurants move to prix fixe menus for lunch and dinner. As a student, this was always my cue to try some of the places that I otherwise couldn't easily afford, and I was never disappointed. Just be sure to compare menus, especially lunch ones, with prix fixe and regular to see where you'll be getting the biggest bang for your buck when you visit. Here's the site for New Haven's Restaurant Week (it's updated each season): http://www.downtownnewhaven.com/?q=restaurantweek, and for other Connecticut-based Restaurant Weeks go here: http://www.connecticutrestaurantweek.com/.

- **Cluefest:** It is difficult to describe the amount of insanity and fun wrapped up in Cluefest. It is New Haven's annual city-wide scavenger hunt, organized entirely by local volunteers through TGWNN, and it is now in its tenth year. Getting involved is free, you get prizes for spirit, speed in solving clues, and wacky costumes, and the whole day ends in a massive celebration that you can only find if you decipher the riddle. Last year more than 300 people participated, including many Yale students, and this year's details can be found here (Cluefest traditionally happens in July): https://sites.google.com/site/newhavencluefest/cluefest-new-haven.
- **City Wide Open Studios**: Artspace, a (you-guessed-it) art-related nonprofit in downtown New Haven, hosts this month-long event twice a year. During CWOS, dozens of artists put up their art in temporary exhibition spaces in more than 60 locations around the city, and viewers can hop from studio to studio across the city (or take one of the more-organized tours) each weekend. See http://www.cwos.org/ for more.
- **CT Folk Festival:** Like folk music? Good. Because New Haven just so happens to host the largest folk festival concert in the state every September in a park just a quick walk/shuttle ride away from campus! CT Folk also hosts Folk Music Fridays all around the city all year, so if this sparks your interest, you should get your twang-embracing self over to http://www.ctfolk.com/ ASAP.
- **Flights of Fancy:** Every few months, you can sign up for a night called "Flights of Fancy." For $10, you get an unlimited number of wine tastings in storefronts all around downtown, along with a chance to win other raffle prizes and get discounts (this author won a $50 restaurant gift certificate to go along with her free "Flights of Fancy" wine glass, for example.) Be prepared to get incredibly tipsy and to have a blast (the two normally go together.) 21+.
- **Holiday Tree Lighting:** Each winter, the Holiday Tree Lighting (with a corresponding giant menorah) takes place on the New Haven Green. There are sleigh rides, free hot cocoa, caroling, and a giant mailbox where you can create, decorate, and mail your letters to Santa.
- **Summer concerts:** Throughout the summer, you can attend free concerts out on the Green. Headliners tend to play at nights, while smaller blues and jazz artists participate in the Blues, Berries, and Jam lunchtime series.
- **Shakespeare in the Park:** Each August, a local theater company called Elm Shakespeare puts on one of the Bard's plays outside in the park. It's free and usually draws hundreds of picnic blankets for the dusk-time performances. Site here: http://elmshakespeare.org/.
- **New Haven Open at Yale:** The New Haven Open is an international tennis tournament that features many of the top players in the world playing in New Haven for about a week each August. It conveniently matches the timing of the New Haven Food and Wine Festival, so it's definitely worth a visit to town as a spectator. Site here: http://www.newhavenopen.com/.
- **Audubon Arts on the Edge:** This is a family-friendly, one-day street fair that happens each June and features food, music/dance/art performances, and interactive crafts. Stop by if you're in the area, or serve as a volunteer. Details can be found at:

http://www.newhavenarts.org/programs/special/audubonarts.html.

- **Cherry Blossom Festival:** D.C. isn't the only one with cherry blossoms! Head to New Haven's historic Wooster Square in April to see the streets coated in pink petals and to watch live bands, eat (generally Italian!) food, and meet and greet the rest of the neighborhood. This coming spring will be the 40th Annual Cherry Blossom Fest: http://www.historicwoostersquare.org/cherryblossomfestival.html.
- **First Thursdays:** Get special deals at Chapel Street shops on the first Thursday of every month: http://www.newhavenshops.com/p/chapel-historic-district.html.
- **Outdoor Movies in East Rock Park:** Friends of East Rock Park (http://www.friendsofeastrockpark.org/) hosts outdoor movie nights regularly during the warm summer and spring months. Occasionally you can find outdoor movies in other areas of the city, such as Chatham Square and the Green - keep your eyes peeled.
- **Rock to Rock:** You + bike + hundreds of other people + biking from West Rock to East Rock (two of New Haven's major parks) + music + food = New Haven's major Earth Day event. Last year, more than 500 people cycled their way across the city and helped to raise more than $50,000 for environmental orgs. http://rocktorock.org/.
- **New Haven Road Race:** Also known as the Stratton Faxon Road Race, this 5k and 20k competition has gone on for more than 20 years. It takes place in September and many students, locals, and visitors participate, including notables like the mayor of the city and the president of Yale: http://www.newhavenroadrace.org/. To find other racing events in CT, check out: http://www.roadracerunner.com/Races/RunningCalendar.aspx?state=ct. Also look out for the nearby East Rock Road Race (http://www.hitekracing.com/eastrockchallenge/).
- **Floating Dance Parties:** I can tell you about them, but ultimately, this is one of those "you just have to be there and be dancing" kind of things. Run by Yale undergrads and publicized through an underground email mere hours before the event, FDPs occur when throngs of people show up at a predetermined location, turn on identical tracks on their music players, and have an outwardly-silent, inwardly-rocking dance party through the streets.
- **Parades:** Expect a parade for Columbus Day and St. Patrick's Day, among others.
- **Spring Salvage:** Each spring, thousands of Yalies move out of their dorms and leave many items of furniture and clothing behind. The university takes these items and offers them to the public all at once, with nonprofits getting first dibs and anyone else who is willing to show up early close behind, at the start of each summer. Details here: http://sustainability.yale.edu/salvage.
- **Elections:** If you're moving to New Haven, you should seriously consider bringing your vote along. CT regularly splits red/blue as a state, and New Haven has very close aldermanic races as a city.
- **BMAD:** BMAD (Bethany Music and Dance) is contra dancing, fiddle playing, barn-raising, foot-stomping, and sometimes maypole-dancing hosted every few weeks at a local folk music homestead. It'll require a car ride from the center of campus, but ZipCar or a nice friend should have you covered and it's well worth the trip. Upcoming dates listed here: http://www.billthedancecaller.com/.

- **Santacon:** You may know Santacon from its counterparts in other major cities, but in case you don't, it's when a ton of local residents dress up in Santa suits and go on a bar crawl that starts at - yes - 10am. Rules include: "Sing Christmas carols on command...Bagpipe Santa is sure to bring the plaid and the pipes." More FAQs here: https://sites.google.com/site/newhavensantacon/.
- **College Night on Broadway:** Shops in the Broadway district stay open late and offer lots of discounts during this semesterly event that brings college students from across the metropolitan area to enjoy deals, live music, free henna tattoos, and thousand dollar prizes to lucky winners. Also spotted here: the cupcake truck. Here's a press release from the most recent event: http://news.yale.edu/2012/09/13/college-night-broadway-feature-discounted-shopping-and-more.

Parks and Outdoor Spaces

The #1 landowner in the City of New Haven is the Parks Department. A whopping 17 percent of the city is set aside for parks of all kinds. If you're craving green space, this section has a few tips on where to find it. Even more can be found at the website of the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Trees (http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/Parks/ParksInformation/index.asp) or by signing up for the Yale Outdoors email list - they're even known to go on treks across the rest of New England in addition to the ones in CT.

- **East Rock Park:** You haven't seen New Haven if you haven't seen East Rock. This is true in a very real sense - hiking or driving to the summit of East Rock (or going on one of many student-led night runs there) allows you to see the entire city spread out below you. Picnic at the top and then head to the Pardee Rose Garden and Greenhouse on your way down - it's a little-known plot of land with hundreds of roses everywhere you look and a fairly romantic gazebo setting, as such things go.
- **West Rock Park:** West Rock Nature Center is believed to be the first urban nature center in the country. What does that mean for you? Thanks to some citizens with a lot of foresight, the city now has 43 full acres of nature trails surrounding a rock ridge, ready for you to explore. It's a great place for a sunrise hike.
- **Edgerton Gardens:** Edgerton Gardens started as a traditional English estate and still has rock walls, gardens, and greenhouses on its property.
- **Lighthouse Point Park:** There *is* a beach in New Haven. And a lighthouse. And a carousel. And they are all located right here. (Sneaky moment of New Haven history: its harbor, which is part of the Long Island Sound, used to be a major part of the city's identity, and British troops landed in the area during the Revolutionary War.)
- **Edgewood Park:** Okay, just one more sneaky urban planning geeky moment of New Haven history. Edgewood Park was planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., son of the famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted as well as a niche celebrity in his own right - he also worked on projects in Acadia, the Everglades, and Yosemite National Park. For laypeople out there, that means he did a pretty bang-up jump in New Haven

and designed the park to have a rose garden, a lily pond, and carriage drives. It's a bit of a hike from downtown but worth it for a long walk or run.

- **Ice skating:** Your two major options if you want to go ice skating in New Haven are the Ralph Walker rink (city-owned) and the Ingalls rink (Yale-owned.) Both offer public skating hours; I believe Walker is the only one that lets you rent skates.
- **Farmington Canal:** 84 miles of railroad tracks are now a walkable/bikeable trail stretching from New Haven all the way to Massachusetts. Find your way to the starting point on the site: http://www.farmingtoncanal.org/.
- **Smaller parks:** The Daily Nutmeg has a round-up of smaller green spaces in the city here: http://dailynutmeg.com/2012/11/14/park-it/
- **Marsh Botanical Garden:** This eight-acre garden, which also includes six greenhouses, offers "tea and tour" visits to their extensive plant collection. It's free to visit and can be easily explored with a group.
- **Psst! The Parks Dept programming:** The Parks Dept runs programs that are either free or very affordable throughout the year. Through them, you can go canoeing and kayaking; learn archery; go showshoeing; etc. Each park's individual site has more details, and this site gives you a broad overview of offerings: http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/Parks/outdooradventure/index.asp.

Destinations

Places or collections of places worth checking out in the Elm City.

- **Leitner Observatory:** The Leitner Family Observatory and Planetarium is open to the public with open viewing hours on Tuesday nights and planetarium shows multiple times a week, including Sunday afternoons. It's walkable from downtown, but a car, shuttle, or bike might be helpful to get there faster. http://leitnerobservatory.org/.
- **Farmers' Markets:** There are five different farmers' markets that happen around New Haven, each in a different neighborhood and at a different time. The stands accept cash, credit, and SNAP benefits. Most markets are seasonal, but the Wooster Square market (the first of the five to form) covers most of the year. Details and schedules can be found here: http://cityseed.org/.
- **360 State, Devil's Gear, and the Elm City Market**: 360 State is a recently-erected apartment highrise in downtown. It also houses a favorite local bike shop Devil's Gear and the Elm City Market, a grocery coop owned by many members of the New Haven community.
- **Thrift stores:** In need of something vintage or just unexpected? Check out Fashionista, the English Building Market, or the Salvation Army, all within walking distance of downtown.
- **Museums:** Where some cities have a Starbucks on every corner (and don't get me wrong, we have *plenty* of coffee shops), New Haven has a museum in nearly every neighborhood. Among those worth checking out:
    - **Eli Whitney Museum and Workshop**: On the site where Eli Whitney (a New

Haven native) constructed the first American factory in 1798, this museum and workshop focuses on experiential learning and hands-on activities.
    - **Yale Center for British Art:** Houses the largest collection of British art outside the UK itself, and a landmark of architecture built by Louis Kahn. Free and open to the public.
    - **Yale University Art Gallery**: Also free and open to the public, the YUAG has incredible collections of art from around the world. Check out the regularly-scheduled speakers, tours, and exhibit openings here and at the YCBA.
    - **New Haven Museum**: Originally founded as the New Haven Colony Historical Society in 1862, the New Haven Museum has its 150th anniversary this year. The museum has artifacts from across the city's history, as well as private rooms of materials for researchers.
    - **Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History**: Check out its dinosaur skeletons, mummies, and 11 million more items in its collection of objects from nature.
    - **Knights of Columbus**: Located at the headquarters of the Knights of Columbus in New Haven, the city of the organization's founding, this museum has primarily Catholic artwork and historical artifacts.
    - **Trolley Museum**: The Trolley Museum is located outside of New Haven proper, but it has a cool array of trolleys and streetcars from Connecticut.
    - **Artspace**: Artspace serves as a regular art display space as well as the organizer and host of the aforementioned City-Wide Open Studios.
    - **Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library**: Such a beautiful space. Such a beautiful Belle-worthy collection of books and manuscripts and art with meaning and history to lose yourself in. The famous authors in the Beinecke collection are too numerous to name, so you're going to have to check them out for yourself in person, on the website, or on the Beinecke's own social media feeds. Don't miss this. It's worth a visit for the marbled light alone.
    - **Creative Arts Workshop**: CAW is not a typical museum, but it does have exhibition space and studios in its building. It's most known for the 300+ arts courses it offers to the community every year.
- **Farms:** Spend time on a farm within city limits at the Yale Farm, Common Ground High School, or in partnership with the New Haven Farms non-profit. Bike to other CT farms on the annual Tour des Farms (http://www.ctfolk.com/tour.html) or find Pick-Your-Own destinations here: http://www.ct.gov/doag/cwp/view.asp?a=3260&q=399080.
- **Restaurants:** To list every great restaurant in New Haven would take a book. Fortunately, someone's written one, and it's called the Fearless Critic: http://www.fearlesscritic.com/newhaven. Alternatively, start with Yelp or the New Haven Restaurant Week list and work your way through. Louis' Lunch (http://www.louislunch.com/) is a cult classic as the home of America's first hamburger, as are the pizza places listed below for their historical significance. Don't forget niche favorites like Miya's Sushi and Mamoun's, and be sure you're up on the happy hour specials using Roammeo or other calendars.
- **Pizza tour:** New Haven's pizza/"apizza" is on most tourist lists of New Haven. Traditional

leaders include Sally's, Pepe's, Modern, and Bar. Try the mashed potato pizza, clam pizza, or just the traditional. And if you're looking for more historical eating spots, try Louis' Lunch, inventor of the hamburger, or if the hour is after midnight, hit up Alpha Delta for a wenzel.

- **New Haven Food Tours:** Choose from three different food tours to get a taste of all that New Haven has to offer. Details and dates here: http://tasteofnewhaven.com/events/
- **Colleges:** There are a bunch of colleges to check out in the New Haven area. These include Albertus Magnus College, Gateway Community College, Yale University, Quinnipiac University, Southern Connecticut State University, University of Connecticut, and University of New Haven. Each one offers its own programs and events for visitors and residents.
- **Live music:** Cafe Nine, Toad's, Bar, Firehouse 12, Olde School Saloon and Bistro, and Stella Blues are all regular hosts of live music during the week.
- **City Hall and the County Courthouse:** These two civic buildings are located on the edges of the New Haven Green. Observe court cases where possible, or sit in on Aldermanic meetings in City Hall.
- **The waterfront:** Walk along Long Wharf and the New Haven Harbor or travel to Lighthouse Point. You can also walk along the banks of the Quinnipiac River. Take a sunset cruise (or themed cruises for fireworks, kids, etc.) and BYOB and BYOPicnic for a great ride on the harbor on one of the available schooners: http://www.schoonerinc.org/public-sails.html.
- **Theater:** Catch affordable, amazing theater in New Haven with the following venues/companies:
    - **Long Wharf Theater**: founded in a vacant warehouse space facing the water, Long Wharf puts on regional theatre.
    - **Shubert Theater**: The Shubert opened its doors in 1914 and quickly became known as a feeder to Broadway, hosting 300+ world premieres and 50 American premieres. These included A Streetcar Named Desire, Oklahoma!, South Pacific, and the Sound of Music. Other performances brought in stars like Humphrey Bogart, Katharine Hepburn, Ella Fitzgerald, Duke Ellington, Clark Gable, Gene Kelly, Robert Redford, James Earl Jones, and John Travolta. Now, the theater has become a destination for traveling shows as well as a leader in local arts programming.
    - **Yale Repertory Theatre**: A professional theatre that has also hosted its fair share of premieres and award winners. See visiting stars as well as local talent and take advantage of the student discount here: http://www.yalerep.org/.
    - **Yale Cabaret**: This is an incredibly intimate theater (you will be mere feet from the stage, with only a few dozen other audience members) full of experimental work created by students at the Yale School of Drama. Head there early for dinner and buy tickets here: http://yalecabaret.org/.
    - **Free campus shows**: Most of the universities in the area (and some high schools - Coop Arts and Humanities High School, I'm looking at you!) have regular free or very-low-cost student-run performances that are pretty high

quality.
    - **A Broken Umbrella Theatre**: One of the coolest community-driven organizations in recent New Haven memory, A Broken Umbrella Theatre was founded by friends who worked together for years before ending up in New Haven. All shows are inspired by local history and have included such creative venues like the public library, a park, a tunnel, and a restored vaudeville theatre. Read more about what they've been up to here: http://abrokenumbrella.org/index.php.
- **Project Storefronts:** A few years ago, New Haven, like many cities, found itself with lots of empty storefronts in some of its busier districts. Rather than let them sit empty, the city came up with a way to effectively lend storefronts to artists and small business owners with ideas on how to use the storefronts in "imaginative and innovative ways." The results have been really interesting and can be found all around the city. Check out the description of the project here: http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/CulturalAffairs/CreativeEconomy/ProjectStorefront.asp and a list of the related events here: http://www.projectstorefrontsnewhaven.com/.
- **Trivia night:** The most famous trivia night in the area is Tuesday night at Anna Liffey's. Also notable: Mory's, Gryphon's Pub at GPSCY, and Black Bear Saloon. Yelp says there might be even more, but I'd need others to vouch (http://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Trivia+Night&find_loc=New+Haven%2C+CT)
- **Karaoke:** Karaoke Heroes, a recently-launched bar with public and private rooms (founded by a lawyer-turned-crooner from Yale, no less), has cornered the daily market here (http://karaokeheroes.net/). Black Bear and Rudy's have also hosted karaoke nights in the past.
- **Coworking spaces:** New Haven's primary coworking spaces are the Grove and the Bourse. There's also a new coworking, Grove-sponsored space for creatives: http://www.chetstone.com/.
- **Ninth Square:** Like much of the city, the Ninth Square district (so named because it was one of the original nine squares of New Haven, which itself was the first planned city in America) grew as a heavily-industrialized area and declined for the same reason. The city decided to reinvest in it and it is now one of the cultural meccas of the city, with restaurants and startups and local storeowners and even its own series of events called On9 (http://www.on9newhaven.com/). The New York Times recently wrote about the Ninth Square district here: http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2012/08/26/travel/20120826-SURFACING.html.
- **Food trucks:** Caseus Grilled Cheese truck and the Cupcake Truck are two of my personal favorites. At lunch, you can find food trucks or carts on almost every busy corner. Yelp also has a good list: http://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=Food+Trucks&find_loc=New+Haven%2C+CT
- **Italian pastries:** Two recommendations: Libby's Italian Pastry Shop (http://www.yelp.com/biz/libbys-italian-pastry-shop-new-haven) and Lucibello's (http://lucibellospastry.com/).
- **Wooster Square:** Everyone in town knows Wooster Square for its Italian history and neighborhood traditions. Oh, and the pizza - definitely the pizza. A short walk across the

bridge from downtown leads you to parks, churches, Italian restaurants and pastries a'plenty, cherry trees, and farmers' markets.

- **State Street:** State Street, especially Upper State Street, is a neighborhood full of local stores and eateries. You'll find people who live in the area mingling with grad students from East Rock and office workers from downtown on a given weekday. Check out one website here: http://www.upperstatestreet.org/.
- **Grand Avenue:** Home to historic houses and diverse populations, Grand Avenue has some of the best ethnic food in the city (try Ferraro's Market http://www.ferraromarket.com/ourstory.htm for your shopping) and hosts many of New Haven's nonprofits, including two personal favs, Junta and All Our Kin. An easy bus ride, walk, or bike ride from downtown that will take you down this main street and towards the river.
- **Westville:** Any place that calls itself "Historic Westville Village" is bound to be tight-knit, artsy, kind of quirky, and welcoming. This neighborhood is a bit out of the center of New Haven but has its own warmth (and mmmm brunch places.) It's also known for its support of creative types. http://www.westvillect.org/
- **Audubon:** Formally zoned as an arts district, Audubon is recognizable for its brick buildings and walkable streets. You can take classes at the Creative Arts Workshop or Neighborhood Music School, drink coffee (or, at night, wine) at Koffee, and volunteer with the Arts Council of Greater New Haven. Here's a list of some of the tenants: http://www.newhavenshops.com/p/audubonwhitney-district.html.
- **Orange Street and bistros:** Delis (try Cafe Romeo) and a historic district make it a street worth walking along in warm weather. Dork historian alert: http://nhpt.org/index.php/site/district/orange_street_historic_district/.
- **Stadiums/sports games:** The Yale Bowl is the only one I can vouch for, but I'm sure there are others. The Bowl has its own role in history -- in addition to being the largest amphitheater built since the Roman Colosseum, it has hosted concerts and may even have been the impetus for the naming of the Super *Bowl*. As this is a guide and not a term paper, I feel no qualms about linking you to this fairly well-cited Wikipedia entry: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yale_Bowl as well as this Yale article, which describes the bowl as having "mythical status": http://www.yalebulldogs.com/information/facilities/yale_bowl/index.
- **Orchestras:** The New Haven Symphony Orchestra, Yale Symphony Orchestra, Yale School of Music, and Yale residential college orchestras all perform throughout the year and invite outside guests to perform with them. Tickets available on each respective group's site.
- **Churches:** New Haven was founded by English Puritans way back in 1638, so it's no surprise that they built their city around church structures like Center Church on-the-Green and Trinity Church on the Green. You can find and tour old churches on and around the Green, and, of course, find newer buildings for followers of any other religion in town.
- **Cemetery:** New Haven's first burial place was right next to its first church - on the Green. There are still bodies buried there, but the primary cemetery in the city is the

Grove Street Cemetery. It's pretty historic in its own right and you can get a tour most days that will help you to find the graves of Eli Whitney, Noah Webster, Roger Sherman, Walter Camp, and more. Details here: http://www.grovestreetcemetery.org/.

- **Libraries:** The New Haven Public Library was built in the grand ole civic style of its courthouses and it's the best bet if you're looking for a quiet place to browse books outside of the college campuses. You can also pay a regular membership fee for private access to the Institute Library, one of the last holdouts of an age of membership libraries (http://institutelibrary.org/).

How to Get Around

Your noble steed awaits. Even if he has been updated for the twenty-first century. These are a few of the easiest ways to get around the city.

- **Public buses:** The public bus system is incredibly affordable and can take you almost anywhere that you need to go. The online trip planner on the http://www.cttransit.com/ website is especially helpful, though I still wish they had better live data on arrival times. If you are a frequent traveler, buy the 10-pass at a discount. There are booths on the Green that make it easy to purchase passes. (Yale students also have access to the free Yale shuttle.)
- **Zipcar:** has cars scattered throughout New Haven. Not the cheapest option if you're riding solo, but worth it if split between friends, especially since gas is included. Order your pass before you need it; it will take time to arrive in the mail.
- **Walking:** It's underrated and devilishly efficient in this city full of one way streets.
- **Cycling:** Rent a bike from Devil's Gear or use your own and join up with one of several cycling advocacy groups to learn the best routes.
- **Union Station:** New Haven's train station is close to downtown (even closer is the State Street Station stop on the MetroNorth) and has buses and trains that go from there to nearly everywhere else in the mid-Atlantic region. A commuter rail into New York City hovers around $13 and an hour forty minutes each way. There's a free shuttle that runs to and from Union Station from the Green to help with the journey
- **Taxis:** Surprisingly reliable for an urban area. Hard to hail unless you happen to be in the right place at the right time, but they'll usually come within 10-20 minutes of calling for them. The most popular company is Metro Taxi, which accepts credit cards and will call you upon arrival.
- **Tweed New Haven Regional Airport:** A regional airport that straddles New Haven and East Haven, Tweed is extremely convenient if you can find a flight that starts or ends there. Otherwise, you'll be heading to Hartford, Newark, or NYC.
- **More info:** More tips on transportation can be found on the Car-Free New Haven website provided by Yale (http://to.yale.edu/car-free) and by stopping by the Info New Haven booth on the corner of the Green.

Basic Facts

If you're a recent transplant, here are a few quick facts about the city. Check out the links to news outlets to learn more.

- **New Haven has a strong mayor governmental structure paired with an elected Board of Aldermen.** The current mayor, John DeStefano, is in his record-setting tenth term of office and has a large amount of control over the budget and appointees of the city, balanced by the 30 aldermen. That many aldermen (spread over a moderately-sized city of roughly 130,000) mean that representation is very neighborhood-specific and it can be difficult for any group to act as an effective check on mayoral control.
- **Connecticut is a unique home for a city.** Like many New England states, Connecticut was historically governed very locally. The state still has more than 160 incorporated towns within it, which means that each individual unit is responsible for its own municipal services and decisions. New Haven, then, has to work with many surrounding municipalities to implement any programs in its metropolitan area.
- **While New Haven has certainly had its share of crime over the years, it is often misrepresented in magazine lists, partly for the aforementioned reasons.** Mark Abraham, who leads DataHaven, wrote a great response on Quora about exactly this: http://www.quora.com/What-is-the-crime-rate-in-New-Haven-CT
- **New Haven is trying some cool school reform right now.** It's always been known for its high number of magnet schools that specialize in everything from aquaculture to farming, and now New Haven is paving ground with its Promise scholarship program and its contract with the teachers' union. To learn more, here are a few relevant articles:
    - "Public School Kids Get A College 'Promise,'" *New Haven Independent*: http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/entry/city_yale_make_a_promise_to_public_school_kids/
    - "The New Haven Experiment" and "New Haven's Teacher Improvement Plan," *New York Times* http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/26/opinion/new-havens-teacher-improvement-plan.html and http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/16/opinion/kristof-the-new-haven-experiment.html
    - "Can Public Schools Really Change?," *Slate* (by local resident and writer Emily Bazelon) http://www.slate.com/articles/business/the_pivot/2012/09/public_schools_vs_charter_schools_has_new_haven_figured_out_a_school_reform_strategy_that_will_succeed_.html
- **The city is best understood as a collection of neighborhoods.** The below image, from DataHaven, can be found in its original form at http://www.ctdatahaven.org/neighborhoodmap.php. Each area of the city has its own fairly distinct character, its own community management committee, and often its own website or set of events. I've also listed a few articles with more information.



- DataHaven has basic facts about each neighborhood here: http://www.ctdatahaven.org/neighborhoodprofiles.php
- The City of New Haven also offers its own collection of maps: http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/Maps/index.asp
- Wikipedia has a pretty good collection of the historic districts: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighborhoods_of_New_Haven,_Connecticut
- Yale has a fairly university-centric description of a few neighborhoods: http://www.yale.edu/livingnh/community/nhprofiles.html
- The *New Haven Independent* regularly tags its stories by neighborhood, and you can browse them using the dropdown menu to the left of their homepage or see an overview here: http://www.newhavenindependent.org/index.php/archives/category/neighborhoods/
- Catherine Osborn '12 took her own tour of New Haven and chatted with several residents who have seen the evolution of the city's public housing over time: http://www.thenewjournalatyale.com/2012/04/rebuilt-and-recultured/
- And a *Mother Jones* reporter wrote a piece on the ghosts of the Oak Street neighborhood, a section of the city that was demolished in the name of urban renewal: http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2000/09/death-neighborhood. (Though there has been considerable talk and planning around building it back up: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/18/realestate/commercial/a-plan-in-new-haven-to-right-a-highways-wrong.html?pagewanted=all)

- **New Haven carries quite an urban renewal legacy.** It received more per capita federal dollars for mid-twentieth-century urban renewal projects than any other U.S. city, added freeways where there were once neighborhoods, and turned parking garages into forms of art. There are more stories and articles here than I could possibly list, but if you are curious, there is a ton to learn about New Haven's role as a "model city" for the rest of the nation and the ways in which that era permanently changed the face of the city.
  - For an excellent read on New Haven's growth and decline in national context that

doesn't focus solely on urban renewal, I recommend Yale prof Doug Rae's "City: Urbanism and its End."
    - The New Haven Oral History project documented the reactions of many residents to urban renewal: http://www.yale.edu/nhohp/modelcity/#
- **New Haven has been known for its fairly stable "eds and meds" economy since the collapse of its industrial base.** Yale University and the Yale New Haven Hospital are the city's two largest employers. There has also been a lot of investment recently in entrepreneurship and bioscience, culminating in the Science Park project, which allows for the reuse of the former 15-acre manufacturing site of the U.S. Repeating Arms Corporation as lab and office space.
- **Check out these high-quality media (or media-tied) sources for regular city news:**
    - *New Haven Independent* (my personal fav, but as a former Urban Fellow who reported with them, I'm biased...still, I'd recommend setting it as your homepage if you're serious about getting to know the city. It's a nonprofit news org with a lifelong reporter at the helm. Also read the comments.)
    - *New Haven Register* (more traditional corporate-owned newspaper)
    - *New Haven Advocate* (alternative weekly - you can find it for free on many street corners)
    - SeeClickFix (a citizen-driven public 311 of sorts in website and app form. Other disclaimer: I worked here, too, so yes I do think they're great.)
    - *La Voz Hispana* (Spanish language newspaper)
    - Channel 8 WTNH (local TV news)
    - Yale student publications like the *New Journal* and the *Yale Daily News* and *Yale Herald* regularly publish articles about the city
    - Individual neighborhoods often have their own websites. For example: http://upperstatestreet.org/visit/ and http://sohunewhaven.wordpress.com/
- **The city is, indeed, known for being a city of "firsts."** First: city planning in America, Frisbee, hamburger, corset, tape measure, phone book, football game, lollipop, open heart surgery, and many more... http://www.newhavenmuseum.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55&Itemid=74
- **New Haven's nickname of "Elm City" is no longer all that accurate.** Many of the original elms that gave the city its name died due to Dutch Elm Disease, though some have been replanted, and there are many other trees that now line the city streets.

Get Involved

Get involved! Explore, volunteer, work, and contribute to these amazing city organizations. **Disclaimer: as with the rest of this unofficial guide, this is not meant as anywhere near a comprehensive list of worthwhile programs or organizations in New Haven. This section in particular represents primarily organizations with which I had personal experience during my time in the city (thus the emphasis on Yalies.) If you have things to add -- please do!!

- **Programs for Yalies:** If you are a Yale student, there are a near-infinite number of ways to get involved with the city. Here are a few:
    - **Ward One Alderman/Alderwoman:** Most of the time, the Ward One alderperson is a current or former Yalie, due in large part to the residence requirements of ward elections. You can run for the position, be on the election team for someone else, or just get in touch with your rep.
    - **Dwight Hall Fellowships:** http://dwighthall.org/fellowships/
        - **Policy Assistants:** Dwight Hall has a work-study/fellowship program that allows you to act as a policy assistant for one of the city's aldermen. For this and all Dwight Hall fellowship programs, find out more info by emailing Dwight Hall coordinators or by visiting the activity bazaars at the start of each semester.
        - **Dwight Hall Urban Fellows** (holla!): A personal and utterly unbiased favorite, this application-only program is a work-study/fellowship commitment to spend 6-8 hours every week over the course of at least two years working at a nonprofit or government organization within New Haven. You'll also get weekly dinners with other fellows and speakers from every part of the city.
        - **Public School Interns:** This is another Dwight Hall-sponsored program that will assign you to one of New Haven's many schools to act as a liaison between it and your fellow students. You'll visit classrooms weekly and have regular meetings with your fellow PSIs.
        - **Early Childhood Education Fellows:** Ten work-study students get to work at local daycare centers that serve low-income children and get together for a weekly meeting on early childhood development and social policy (if you like this, also check out programs at the Zigler Center for Child Development and Social Policy).
    - **FOCUS on New Haven:** Sophomores! Do this orientation program just for you for the week before the year starts! It combines service, learning, eating, and friends-ing in a way I highly recommend. Upperclassmen can act as leaders or be on the planning committee. http://dwighthall.org/focus-on-new-haven/
    - **CityScape Orientation:** A one-day bus tour of the city with free swag and free food for freshmen. Start your four years at the top of East Rock with other Yalies.
    - **Dwight Hall:** There are too many organizations within Dwight Hall to list. A few of my favorites: Yale Hunger and Homelessness Action Project (YHHAP) and all of its umbrella service projects, No Closed Doors, and the Community Health Educators.
    - **PPSF:** The President's Public Service Fellowship is available by application every summer. Fellows are placed with a community organization (much like the Urban Fellows during the year), paid full-time, and invited to weekly dinners in restaurants around the city to meet and talk with prominent New Haven citizens.
    - **Spring Break New Haven:** The Chaplain's Office leads a service/learning trip for a week of spring break for both undergrads and grad students. See this YDN

article for more details: http://yaledailynews.com/blog/2011/03/22/spring-break-in-new-haven-a-success/
    - **Co-Op After School:** Teach New Haven high schoolers after school courses in theater, dance, creative writing, and more. It's a great program, and the kids are super motivated: http://co-opafterschool.org/
- **Find out about the fun things:**
    - **TGWNN (The Group with No Name):** A group of fun people that seems to be at the root of most every new initiative for young adults in New Haven, TGWNN started with the goal of "turning residents into citizens." Now it organizes Cluefest, Santacon, and the biggest holiday party in town. See its emails here: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tgwnn/ and an article about TGWNN here: http://dailynutmeg.com/2012/05/03/tgwnn-on-the-other-hand-i-never-forget-a-face .
    - **New Haven Collective:** This Meetup group is open to anyone and hosts everything from weekly happy hours to hiking expeditions. A great place to find friends if you are new in town. http://www.meetup.com/New-Haven-Collective/
- **Orgs:**
    - **A very short (too short!) list of some of my absolute favorite organizations in the city include:** Youth Rights Media, LEAP, IRIS, the Grove, the Future Project, All Our Kin, Junta, Liberty Community Services, Columbus House, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Our Empty Space, Start Community Bank, United Way, SeeClickFix, CitySeed, New Haven Reads, the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen
- **Government:**
    - **City Hall:** Visit City Hall anytime as an informal observer, or serve in a more formal capacity as an aldermanic assistant or a commission member.

Email Lists and More!

I was a total rookie when I arrived in New Haven and still have a lot to learn. But much of what I do know, and many of the events and organizations that I did discover, came from a series of email lists and other sources of info that I signed up for my freshman year and stuck with all the way 'til now. Here are some recs if you want to be similarly kept in the loop.

- If you're looking for events in New Haven, try Roammeo - this is a shameless plug for a website and app that my startup team is currently working on, but we started it because of our desire to synthesize all of this information about where to go and what to do and to let you find out what's going on no matter where you are. Check us out and download our app here! www.roammeo.com
- TGWNN: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tgwnn/
- Town Green Special Services District: http://www.towngreendistrict.com/
- Tea Leaves: Sign Up Here
- New Haven Independent's weekly newsletter: Sign Up Here

- New Haven and State Affairs email lists: http://communications.yale.edu/email-subscription-service
- Meetup groups in the New Haven area (you can subscribe by joining a group on the Meetup homepage): http://www.meetup.com/cities/us/ct/new_haven/, especially the New Haven Collective
- Friends of East Rock Park (FERP): http://www.friendsofeastrockpark.org/
- Often individual neighborhoods will have their own local lists - check with your neighbors!
- The alderperson in each ward usually runs a newsletter of sorts. Contact your rep to subscribe. Yalies, email alderwomaneidelson@gmail.com to get on the current list.
- Almost every museum in the city has its own email list - see their websites to sign up.
- Yale Sustainable Food Project: http://www.yale.edu/sustainablefood/inv_maillist.html
- CitySeed (Farmers' Market announcements): Sign Up Here
- Our Empty Spaces (pop-up shops and restaurants): https://twitter.com/OurEmptySpaces
- Project Storefronts: Sign Up Here and website here: http://www.projectstorefrontsnewhaven.com/
- New Haven Public Library: http://nhfpl.org/
- The McDougal Public Service Notes: http://mailman.yale.edu/mailman/listinfo/mcdougal-service
- The D-Holla and other Dwight Hall newsletters: http://dwighthall.org/newsletters/
- The Yale Event Management Association (YEMA): http://www.yale.edu/yema/
- Economic Development Corporation of New Haven: http://www.edcnewhaven.com/component/content/article/5-about-the-edc/45-newsletter.html
- New Haven Founders and other local LinkedIn groups (add to your inbox by subscribing to digests): http://www.linkedin.com/groups/New-Haven-Founders-3814513/about
- New Haven Shops: http://www.newhavenshops.com/
- Daily Nutmeg: http://dailynutmeg.com/ (they send out a daily email, too)
- Find individual orgs on websites, Facebook, and Twitter. Especially:
    - DataHaven: http://www.ctdatahaven.org/
    - "Living at Yale" http://www.yale.edu/oiss/life/index.html and "Living in New Haven" http://www.yale.edu/livingnh/ and "The Link Sheet" http://www.yale.edu/postdocs/documents/PD_Links.pdf
    - Department of Arts, Culture, and Tourism: http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/culturalaffairs/
    - New Haven Workers Association // Unidad Latina en Accion: http://blogspot.us2.list-manage1.com/subscribe?u=0245c343046c4023c1cb29024&id=d0cf51dbcc and https://www.facebook.com/ULANewHaven
    - SeeClickFix (create a Watch Area to subscribe to alerts about any part of New Haven)
    - YaleWiki: http://www.yalewiki.org/wiki/Main_Page

Contributor Cred!

An extra thanks to people who are already contributing new knowledge to the Doc (likely as I

type this). Request editing access if you'd like to join!

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