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Six good reasons to visit the historic, artsy Lenox, Massachusetts

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Lenox Library entrance

Lenox Library

A cultural mecca in the 1800s, [Lenox](#) was a summer retreat and lure for the rich and famous. Artists and authors were drawn to this dollhouse New England town. Such notables as Edith Wharton wrote her famed novel 'Ethan Frome' here. Her home, The Mount, is still standing as a popular museum for locals and visitors (see below). Nathaniel Hawthorne also penned his 'House of Seven Gables' in town. Today, world-class musicians, performers, and artists flock to [Lenox](#), with [art](#) galleries galore and a wealth of performing arts festivals.

Both the performing and visual arts are thriving in this jewel town tucked within [Massachusetts'](#) colorful and scenic Berkshires. An ideal time to visit is fall and summer for c

theater and dance festivals-- Lenox's claim to fame. Easily accessible, Lenox is less than 140 miles from both New York City and Boston. This distance by car is 2 ½ hours from Boston, ten minutes north of the Massachusetts Turnpike (Interstate 90) and 3 hours from New York City. There are direct buses from the Port Authority in Manhattan that arrive in Lenox in approximately 3 ½ hours.



Kevin Sprague

Here are **six good reasons** for any arts aficionado and history buff to want to visit Lenox.



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1. Lenox Library- The Library's legend goes back to its beginnings in 1855 before moving into the [historic](#) courthouse in 1874, a Greek revival-style building built in 1815 by Captain Isaac Damon of North Hampton. The building will be celebrating its 200th anniversary, and the Library will be celebrating its 160th anniversary this coming May.

According to the library's Executive Director Sharon, there are plans of a gala birthday celebration on May 30, 2015. An art book about the library will be unveiled, incorporating the work of many notable local artists in several media, and overseen by the children's book team of Eileen and Marc Rosenthal. The book will also include some of the historic archival photos, quotes about what the library means to the community, and some factual information about the building and its history. The original artwork will be auctioned off at the birthday celebration.

2. Shakespeare & Company, one of the larger Shakespearean Festivals in the country, will be celebrating their 38th season with performances from the classical to more contemporary plays—'Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Romeo and Juliet' to 'It's a Wonderful Life.' It also claims to be one of the largest theater-in-education programs in the Northeast, reaching some 50,000 students annually through live performances and workshops. During the summer, the company offers an extensive training for schoolteachers.

3. The Mount, Edith Wharton's Home- First woman to receive a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Yale University, Wharton wrote over 40 books in 40 years, on such topics as architecture, gardens, interior design, and travel. Take a house tour to luxuriate in the Gilded Age with manicured gardens. There are special lectures during summer months, with free concerts and ghost tours on the Terrace Friday and Saturday evenings, from May through October. Check online calendar events.

4. Tanglewood, the summer home of Boston Symphony Orchestra, features world-renown artists during June through August. This has been a cultural enclave of music for 77 years

when the town's 5,025 population triples during the summer months.

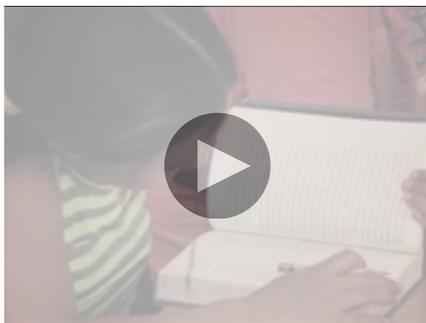
5. Kripalu Institute, though officially in Stockbridge, is just at the edge of town and across from Tanglewood. A yoga and healing haven of training classes, Kripalu offers a wealth of speakers, workshops for education, movement, and relaxation. I just completed an intense 200-hour yoga teacher training in the height of the fall foliage, a time highly recommended. Lunchtime is also an opportunity to explore creativity in movement with free-form dance sessions to live and taped music.

6. Quality Arts & Crafts Galleries are clustered along Church Street. **Hoadley Gallery's** owner creates the most unusual, contemporary vases, and the jewelry cases are filled with a vast variety of one of a kind earrings and necklaces. The **Wit Gallery** showcases large, eye-catching sculptures, paintings, mixed-media, and photography. It feels like a museum with high quality artworks of accomplished local and national artists displayed throughout.

Contact the **Lenox Chamber of Commerce** for more info on upcoming events.

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