

SIMSBURY Top 15 HIGHLIGHTS

Simsbury is listed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of its “Dozen Distinctive Destinations.” It is also federally designated as a “Preserve America” Community and has been ranked by Money Magazine as one of the best 100 towns in which to live. Here are our top 15 highlights in no particular order.

- **The Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge our #1 town jewel!**

After the town saved a 19th century one-way metal truss bridge when it replaced it with a modern four lane bridge over the Farmington River, volunteers had the idea of decorating it with gardens, flower boxes and hanging baskets. Since its founding in 1996 it has become the go-to place for picnickers, bikers, walkers, yoga, and even weddings and formal dinner parties. The bridge boxes are decorated for the winter, an annual tree lighting ceremony is held in December and next spring, expect to see daffodils around the bridge for the first time. With the town’s 2014 purchase of the Betty Hudson house, we await final plans for the site which we expect will expand grounds around the already beautiful site.

- **Cell Phone Tour (2), Simsbury Historical Society (3) and the home of a future MLK Monument (4)**

Like many Connecticut towns we have a **Historical Society** but ours is a special collection of antique buildings on a two-acre site right in the center of town. The **cell phone walking tour** is of 11 historic buildings on Hopmeadow Street, our main street. The tour includes the recently restored Eno Hall which is on the National Register of Historic Places - a stunning classical revival building with a beautiful cupola clock tower which has

been used as a courthouse, city hall, an auditorium, and as government offices and is still in active use today.

AND did you know that Simsbury was the place where **Dr. Martin Luther King first learned about racial integration when he worked here for two summers picking tobacco.** Simsbury students have produced a documentary on his time here and have almost completed fundraising to create a permanent memorial on the grounds of the Simsbury Historical Society.

- **Bike Friendly Community (5) and Free Bike Program (6)**
Simsbury was the named the first “bike friendly town” in Connecticut by the League of American Bicyclists Cyclists and was rated #1 by Bike Walk Connecticut in its first rating of bike and walk friendly cities and towns. We are one of very few state towns to offer free bikes to both visitors and town residents. In 2014, the League of American Bicyclists recognized Simsbury with a Silver Bicycle Friendly Community award.

- **Site of a unique running/hiking, biking and kayaking triathlon and whitewater kayaking at Tariffville Gorge in Simsbury (7)**
Simsbury is the site of two major outdoor athletic events - the May 17th “Try Simsbury: River to Ridge Tryathlon” and the Annual Whitewater Triple Crown New England Championships in April at the Gorge
- **Simsbury Performing Arts Complex** hosts the annual **Talcott Mountain Festival with the Hartford Symphony (8) AND** a series of **Summer Concerts at Simsbury Meadows (9)** which has featured Harry Connick, Emmylou Harris, Willie Nelson and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

- **Simsbury Free Library – the Simsbury Genealogical and Research Library and Simsbury Cemetery(10)**

A quiet place right in the center of town where people can do genealogical research in a historic building and visit a recreation of Simsbury native William Phelps Eno's office. He is generally recognized as the inventor of the first traffic light and is internationally recognized as the "Father of Traffic Regulation and Transportation Engineering." Next door is the beautiful and historic Simsbury Cemetery with graves dating back to the 1600s.

- **Open Space with Miles of Hiking (12)**

The site of 4 state parks, over 30 % of the town is open space which includes miles of hiking trails maintained by Simsbury Land Trust volunteers. It is also the site of the **McLean Game Refuge** and the **Metacomet Trail**, named after a local Native American Chief, which runs from Meriden to New Hampshire including the entire length of Simsbury. Simsbury also has 10 municipal parks and 40 athletic fields.

- **The Pinchot Sycamore**, the largest tree in Connecticut (13)

The tree is located in a small park on the Farmington River where Route 185 crosses the river. It was named after Gifford Pinchot who was born in Simsbury in 1865 in what is now the Simsbury 1820 House. An ardent environmental preservationist, he later served as the nation's first Chief of the US Forest Service as well as Governor of Pennsylvania for two terms.

- **Talcott Mountain and The Heublein Tower (14)**

Extensive vista in all directions from 165-foot Heublein Tower, former summer home of prominent Hartford family that is being restored to its 1914 splendor. It's a 1.25 mile

hike to the tower and picnic area. It is open seasonally and is visited by approximately 100 thousand people each year.

- Simsbury has become quite the destination for food (15) with **top rated restaurants** including The Mill at 2 T, Metro Bis, Abigail's and Millwright's and a host of other restaurants in Simsbury's center many featuring outdoor dining. We are the location of historic farms featuring eggs and a petting zoo (Flamig), organic vegetables (Hall Farm) homemade ice cream and grass fed beef (Tulmeadow) and a farm and winery (Rosedale)