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Looking For The Perfect Covid-Safe Activity For Families? Head To Norwalk, Connecticut



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Travel

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A Cuvier's dwarf caiman rests mostly submerged in the "Just Add Water" exhibit. THE MARITIME AQUARIUM AT NORWALK.

Finding things for families to do during Covid is not always easy. Enter [the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk](#), one of the top family-friendly destinations

in the state of Connecticut. It boasts 300 species of aquatic life, including sharks, seals, sea turtles, river otters, and jellyfish. Plus, they have a new 4D theater and a special exhibit that just launched.

Here, what to do and see on your next visit.

All About Slugs



Lettuce nudibranchs are among the live reef creatures to be displayed in “A Slug’s Life: Facing the ...

[+] MARITIME AQUARIUM

Check out the animals on display that come from ocean reefs and freshwater streams in this special exhibit called “A Slug’s Life: Facing the Climate Endgame.” It is a blend of live animals, sculpture, and photography. Stars of the exhibit are a group of mollusks called nudibranchs, also known as “sea slugs”—these creatures are known for their bright colors and unique bodies. Did you know that the world has over 3,000 species of nudibranchs and that they are found everywhere from cold-water habitats to tropical waters, and from shallow waters to deeper than 8,000 feet below sea level? These

nudibranchs are generally less than three inches long but so important to the scientists. Why? Because these little creatures react very quickly to environmental changes, they're considered to be an "indicator species" and researchers can learn a lot about the climate and the world from their behavior.

Learn all about these creatures and marvel at the photographs that were taken by divers from all over the world. In addition to the slugs, the exhibit features other mollusks including octopuses, sea hares, conchs, abalone, giant clams, and snails.

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4D Experience



After watching the 4D movie, visitors can see the eight-foot sand tiger sharks prowl the ... [+] THE MARITIME AQUARIUM AT NORWALK

The aquarium just opened a brand-new 4D movie theater with a new main entrance that includes a little coffee shop selling Starbucks coffees and pastries provided by a rotating lineup of local bakeries. The 179-seat 4D theater has all the bells and whistles including a 3D digital projection, proprietary 4D sensory seats, and other in-theater special effects.

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Currently two films are being shown: *BBC Earth's Shark: A 4D Experience* and *Ice Age: No Time for Nuts 4D*. Visitors don 3D glasses (which are returned and cleaned after every show) and are spaced apart during the movies (cleaning takes place between every show). *Earth's Shark* is 12 minutes in length and showcases the complex nature of these extraordinarily intelligent underwater giants. The *Ice Age* movie features Scrat, the franchise's resident nut-crazed saber-toothed squirrel, as he travels through time on a zany adventure.

The Seals Get a New Home



Tillie, one of the harbor seals at the aquarium. THE MARITIME AQUARIUM AT NORWALK.

Looking for one of the most popular animals at the aquarium? The five harbor seals moved into a new home away from home—the former “Go Fish!” exhibit—so construction could take place on a brand-new 150,000-gallon, two-story habitat on the site of the seals’ original display in Newman’s Own Hall. Currently, the seals are enjoying their temporary home, a 30,000-gallon tank, which is much bigger than their original 19,000-gallon digs.

These are the first changes to the seal exhibit since the aquarium opened in 1988. The brand-new home for the seals, slated to open later this spring, will make it the aquarium’s largest exhibit.

Other Aquarium Highlights





A large display of Pacific sea nettles is among the features of "Journey with Jellies," a popular ... [+] THE MARITIME AQUARIUM AT NORWALK

One of the most popular exhibits is the jellyfish. These gorgeous creatures are fascinating to look at—and did you know that there are so many different kinds? View the Pacific sea nettles the “upside-down” jellies, and more.

Another popular spot is the “Ocean Beyond the Sound,” where the 110,000-gallon exhibit is home to sand tiger sharks (the largest at nine feet), a lemon shark, sea bass, and other larger schooling fish. Don’t be surprised if kids (and adults) don’t want to leave.

The “Shark & Ray Touch Pool” is also open. The aquarium has made this exhibit Covid-friendly by limiting the space in order to allow for social distancing. All visitors are requested to wash hands at the washing stations before and after the touch experience, and staff members maintain six feet of distance when overseeing and explaining the exhibits.

Covid Practices





A gray tree frog THE MARITIME AQUARIUM AT NORWALK.

The aquarium has enacted a number of Covid practices including limiting capacity to help with social distancing. Guests all have a timed ticket; arrival times are listed in 30-minute increments, however, there is no time limit to your visit. Re-entry is allowed only within the timed ticket period. Masks must be worn by guests and staff. Signage assists in social distancing from other visitors in gathering areas such as lines for entry as well as viewing stations at popular exhibits. Everyone is asked to travel in a one-way pattern (signs indicate where to go) to maintain constant one-directional flow throughout the facility. Outside of touch tanks, visitors are asked to touch as little as possible during their visit. Cleanliness and hygiene procedures are in place at the restrooms, gift shop, and Cascade Cafe.

The Maritime Aquarium is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The hours of 10 to 11 a.m. Monday to Thursday are reserved for aquarium members and their paid guests.

Check out my [website](#).



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