

# NEW JERSEY 101.5

## Red Bank: The coolest things to do in this very hip town

By Toniann Antonelli



(Credit: borough of Red Bank website)

For many years, [Red Bank](#) flew under the radar as far as Jersey Shore tourist destinations go, but a lot has changed recently. Now, the 1.75-square-mile town about 6 miles from the beach is heralded as one of the hippest places in the state to visit.

In fact, Red Bank even earned the distinction as one of *Smithsonian* magazine's "Coolest Towns." So you're probably wondering: what's so great about the Monmouth County town and what, exactly, is there to do when I get there? Well, here are some suggestions.

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### Take in a show or concert

#### Count Basie Theater

From rock and jazz to Broadway tunes and comedy, the [Count Basie Theater](#) on Monmouth Street has hosted bands ranging from legends such as James Brown, Bruce Springsteen and Tony Bennett to the Counting Crows

and “Weird Al” Yankovic. The theater first opened on Nov. 11, 1926 and the venue itself is an historic landmark in downtown Red Bank.

### **Two River Theater**

If plays are more your thing, the Two River Theater on Bridge Avenue is home to a full calendar of plays and is a popular place for budding performers as well as more seasoned actors. The venue also hosts an annual Theater Camp.

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### **It’s all fun and games**

#### **Yestercades**

When was the last time you played Space Invaders or Pac-Man? It really doesn’t matter how old you are, when you’re standing in a room filled with classic arcade games and pinball machines, you’re gonna start digging into your pockets for quarters. [Yestercades](#) on Broad Street, an arcade brimming with machines “straight out of the Golden Age of Gaming” doesn’t require quarters, but they do offer both hourly and day passes.

#### **Trap Door Escape Room**

Imagine being “trapped” in a theme-based room and having to follow clues in order to move on to another room and eventually “escape.” Kind of like a real-life detective drama, escape rooms are gaining popularity for people looking to do something a little different. [Trap Door Escape Room](#) offers different escape scenarios as well as a murder mystery theme that will have participants interrogating “murder suspects.” In short, if you’re a fan of shows like “Law & Order” this is a pretty cool way to spend a night out.

#### **Jay and Silent Bob’s Secret Stash**

Owned by filmmaker Kevin Smith, the [comic book shop](#) on Broad Street is named for the fictional movie duo Jay and Silent Bob, played by Smith and Jason Mewes. The popular store also serves as the setting for Comic Book Men, a reality TV show featuring Smith and his crew from the store.

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### **Hungry (or thirsty) for more?**

#### **JBK Soul Kitchen**

Opened by New Jersey rocker Jon Bon Jovi, [Soul Kitchen](#) is a restaurant with no prices on the menu. Designed for people who can’t normally afford to eat out, the restaurant allows diners to suggest a donation price for their meals or volunteer to pay for their food. Or, for a \$10 donation, patrons can get you a three-course, organic, locally-sourced meal.

#### **The Tasting Room by Faustini Winery**

Visitors to the [Tasting Room](#) are greeted by a “wine enthusiast” who will guide them through a “Wine 101” of sorts. Guests can sample different Napa Valley-based wines and learn how to pair them with their favorites foods such as cheese and chocolates. Reservations are encouraged.

#### **Dublin House**

The Monmouth Street building is historic and the atmosphere is what you’d expect from an Irish pub. For those who just want to enjoy a pint of Guinness with friends, [Dublin House](#) has a bar with plenty of room. There’s also a large dining room for a restaurant-style experience. As for the food – there’s typical pub fare such as burgers, fish-and-chips, salads and shepherd’s pie, as well as specials. The pub also features Irish music and has a room for private parties.

#### **Red Bank Farmers Market**

Every Sunday from now through Nov. 20, several New Jersey farmers, crafters and other food vendors set up shop from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot at the The Galleria Red Bank on Bridge Avenue.

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### **The Arts District**

The [Art Alliance Studio & Gallery](#) features “traditional and non-traditional” artwork. Located on Monmouth Street, the non-profit venue showcases art of various genres by local artists. They also offer art instruction for art enthusiasts of all ages and all skill levels.

### **The Beacon Fine Arts Gallery**

Located on Monmouth Street, the [Beacon](#) houses paintings, sculptures, glass work and other works by contemporary artists from around the world. The atmosphere is relaxed, with paintings and sculptures throughout the venue as well as special exhibits.

### **The Chetkin Gallery**

The Chetkin opened on Wharf Avenue in 1987 and specializes in contemporary European painters. There are two floors of artwork to view, and according to its [website](#), “the ambiance of the gallery is Classical Impressionism, Post Impressionism, and Contemporary Impressionism.”

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