

# Canoe / Kayak Guide Quinnipiac River



City of New Haven  
Department of Parks,  
Recreation and Trees

John DeStefano, Jr., Mayor  
Robert D. Levine, Director

## Canoeing Information

### Canoe Zone

Ferry St bridge up to Route 91 & into  
Hemingway Creek

### Trail Length

3 miles roundtrip

### Launch Point

On Clifton Street off Quinnipiac Avenue &  
on Front Street on the west bank at Dover  
Beach Park

## Directions

### From I-91 South:

Exit 7 - left onto Middletown Avenue  
Left onto Ferry Street  
Left onto Grand Avenue to Grand Avenue Bridge  
Left onto Quinnipiac Avenue  
First left onto Clifton Street

### From Downtown New Haven:

Grand Avenue west to Grand Avenue Bridge  
Left onto Quinnipiac Avenue  
First left onto Clifton Street

# Canoe/Kayak Trails of New Haven



## Safety Tips

1. Always wear a life jacket, even if you're a good swimmer.
2. Don't rock or stand up in the canoe.
3. If your boat flips, stay with the canoe.
4. Watch out for brush, fallen trees and other objects that could capsize your canoe.
5. In an emergency, grab anything that floats.
6. Always paddle directly into or away from the wake of larger boats.
7. Keep a safe distance from wildlife!

## For more information, contact:

Outdoor Adventure Coordinator at (203) 946-6768  
[www.cityofnewhaven.com/parks](http://www.cityofnewhaven.com/parks)

# Quinnipiac River

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The word "Quinnipiac" is derived from the language of the Algonquin tribes whose members lived, hunted and fished along the river for centuries. Roughly translated, the term means "long water land", which is probably a reference to the river's extensive, six-mile-long estuary. Historically, the river had an abundant supply of wildlife and fish. The tidal marshes have long been considered the most productive muskrat habitat in the United States. Although the oyster industry dominated in the early 1900's, the estuary also provided habitat for other shellfish, fin fish and crustacea. Over the last 200 years, industry has become a dominant force on the river, using water and water power to spur economic growth and development of river communities. Today, the most commercially utilized species present in the river is the Eastern oyster industry and development increased pollution considerably, but recent efforts to control water pollution have worked to improve the quality of the Quinnipiac's water and bring wildlife back. The river is 38 miles long with a 170 square mile watershed.

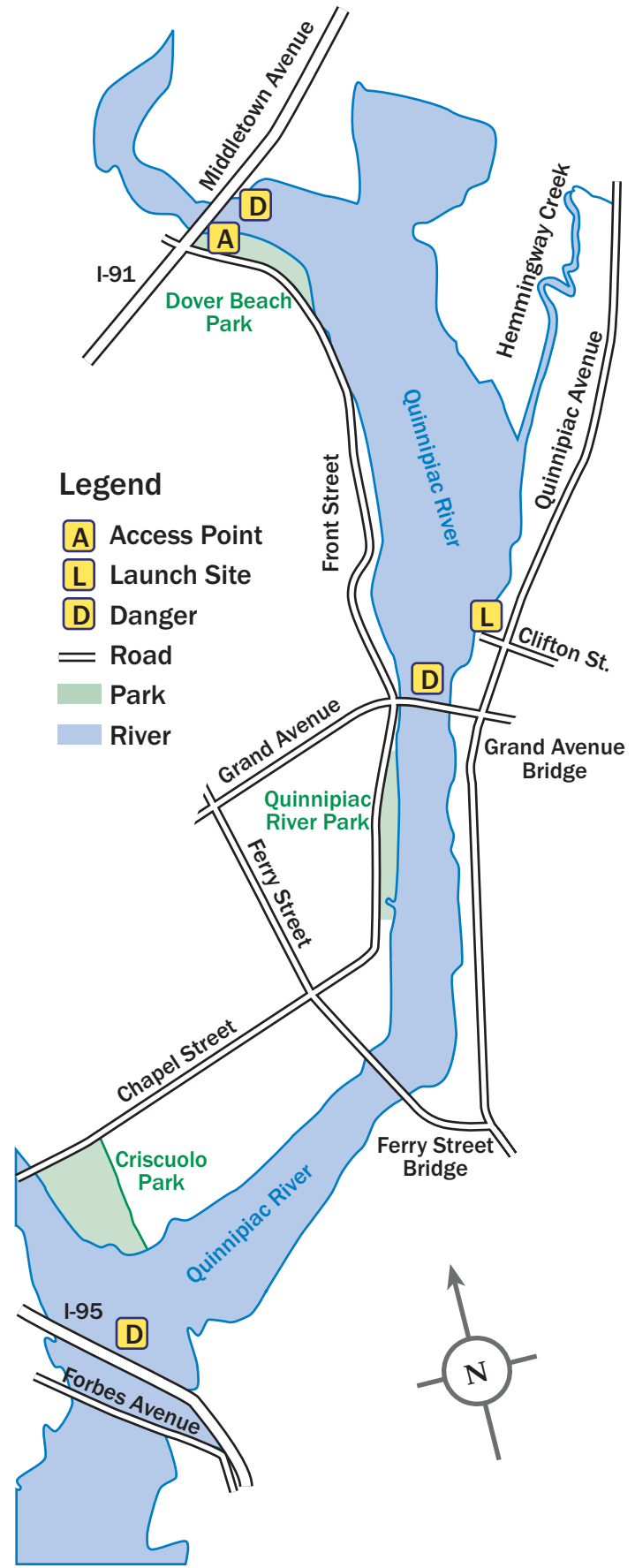
The east side of the river between U.S. Route 91 and the Grand Avenue bridge is the Fargeorge-Quinnipiac Meadows Preserve. This stretch of the river offers a great opportunity to see numerous bird species including ducks, ospreys, gulls, Canadian geese, sandpipers, and occasionally greater and snowy egrets. Also look for marsh wrens and sharp-tailed sparrows nesting in the marsh grasses. The Land Trust area is also prime muskrat habitat, and you may be able to see muskrat dens from the canoe.

Curious paddlers can make their way up Hemingway Creek and some of the other narrow forks along the river's edge. The creeks provide good wildlife viewing opportunities.

The Granis Island Archeological Site, which sits on the east bank just southeast of Hemingway Creek, has provided us with historical artifacts. On the west bank, note Dover Beach Park, a popular park at the turn of the century. Dover Beach has a boat ramp that can also be used for canoe launching.

Heading further south down past the Grand Avenue bridge, the river follows Quinnipiac Park towards the Ferry Street bridge. At this point, the banks of the river take on an industrial presence that continues into New Haven Harbor. Much of the lower marsh was filled for extensive railroad yards and for the disposal of dredge spoils as the harbor was deepened to become a major oil port.

Fishing remains an important industry to New Haven and the Quinnipiac River\* Recreational fishermen can expect to land striper and bluefish in the lower basin of the Q. Look for fiddler crabs scurrying to their holes in the mud banks, and killifish and mummichogs in the shallow waters of the river.



## Canoeing Tips

1. Easiest paddling is on the east side of the river, where the current is less strong and there is much less boat traffic.
2. Be aware of the changes in tides and wind in the lower river.
3. The railroad bridges near U.S. Route 91 should be avoided. They are extremely narrow with swift currents and whirlpools.

## Lower Quinnipiac River