

MIDDLESEX COUNTY EDITION

New-to-Town Guide

Welcome to Middlesex County, New Jersey — everything you need in your first 30 days.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY AT A GLANCE

Location: Central New Jersey, on the Raritan River and Raritan Bay — roughly midway between New York City and Philadelphia

Population: Approximately 863,000 — New Jersey's second most populated county

Municipalities: 25 separate towns, boroughs, and townships (each with its own taxes, schools, and services)

County Seat: New Brunswick — County Administration Building, 75 Bayard Street

Median Home Price: Roughly \$540,000 county-wide in recent reporting; single-family closings tracking near \$575,000 in early 2026

Property Taxes: Billed quarterly — due February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1. Rates vary by municipality.

Best Time of Year: Early September through November. There's crisp weather (60s and low 70s) and local farms are in full swing with apple picking, pumpkin patches, hayrides, and corn mazes. Humidity drops, Mosquitos are less of an issue and parks and trails are comfortable all day long.

GETTING AROUND

Airports

Newark Liberty International (EWR) — Typically 20–40 minutes via the NJ Turnpike or Garden State Parkway.

Trenton–Mercer (TTN) — Small, easy, limited carriers. Good for regional trips.

JFK / LaGuardia (NYC) and Philadelphia (PHL) — Roughly an hour or more depending on traffic.

Rail

NJ Transit Northeast Corridor Line — Metro park (Iselin), Metuchen, Edison, New Brunswick, Jersey Avenue → New York Penn Station.

NJ Transit North Jersey Coast Line — Woodbridge, Perth Amboy, South Amboy → New York Penn Station.

Metro park — The county's busiest hub, and the only local stop Amtrak also serves.

A typical Manhattan commute from a Northeast Corridor station: about 35–60 minutes on the train, plus your drive or walk to the platform. Check www.njtransit.com for current schedules and fares.

Highways

NJ Turnpike (I-95) — Exits 8A, 9, 10, 11, and 12 all sit in Middlesex County.

Garden State Parkway — Exits 105–132 corridor.

Key Routes — US Route 1, US Route 9, Route 18, Route 27, Route 35, Route 287, and I-287.

NEW JERSEY NOTES New Jersey has no self-serve gasoline. An attendant pumps for you. Expect jughandles instead of left turns on state highways, and get an E-ZPass before your first Turnpike or Parkway trip as cash tolls have been severely reduced.

UTILITIES & SERVICES

Electric & Gas

PSE&G (Public Service Electric & Gas) — Serves nearly all of Middlesex County — 1-800-436-PSEG

ElizabethTown Gas — Serves a select area of Middlesex County — 1-800-492-4009

Set up service — Before your closing date; transfers are same-day if scheduled in advance.

Water & Sewer

Middlesex Water Company — Woodbridge, Edison, Metuchen, Carteret, South Plainfield and surrounding areas.

New Jersey American Water — Portions of the county.

Municipal utilities — Old Bridge MUA, Sayreville, Perth Amboy, East Brunswick and others run their own water and/or sewer.

Middlesex County Utilities Authority (MCUA) — Regional wastewater treatment.

Trash & Recycling

Collection is municipal — Schedules, bulk pickup days, and recycling rules differ town to town.

Most towns — Run co-mingled recycling on a weekly or biweekly cycle — download your town's calendar.

Internet & TV

Verizon Fios — Widely available across the county.

Optimum (Altice) — Strong in Woodbridge, Perth Amboy and the eastern corridor.

Xfinity / Comcast — Available in parts of the county.

ESSENTIAL COMMUNITY RESOURCES

NJ Motor Vehicle Commission (there is no “DMV” in New Jersey)

Appointments — Nearly everything is by appointment — telegov.njportal.com/njmvc for office locations.

NEW JERSEY NOTE New residents: transfer your out-of-state license and register your vehicle within 60 days of establishing residency. Bring 6 Points of ID — New Jersey is strict about it.

Hospitals & Urgent Care

Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital — New Brunswick — Level I trauma center
 Saint Peter's University Hospital — New Brunswick
 Hackensack Meridian JFK University Medical Center — Edison
 Hackensack Meridian Raritan Bay Medical Center — Perth Amboy and Old Bridge campuses
 Penn Medicine Princeton Medical Center — Plainsboro

Schools & Higher Education

Public schools — Each municipality runs its own district. School quality and tax rate are the two biggest drivers of price differences between neighboring towns.
 Middlesex County Vocational and Technical Schools — Magnet and career academies with campuses across the county. Admission is by application.
 Rutgers University–New Brunswick — The state university, spanning New Brunswick and Piscataway.
 Middlesex College — Edison — Community college

County & Civic

Middlesex County government — 75 Bayard Street, New Brunswick — middlesexcountynj.gov
 County Clerk — Voter registration, land records, passports
 Libraries — The Middlesex County Library System plus independent municipal libraries. One card, wide access.
 Your municipal building — Dog licenses, parking permits, recycling calendars, recreation sign-ups

PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Middlesex County runs one of the strongest county park systems in New Jersey. These are free, open to everyone, and the fastest way to feel at home.

Roosevelt Park — Edison — Lake, playgrounds, and the amphitheater that hosts the county's summer theater series.
 Johnson Park — Piscataway — River frontage, trails, and ballfields.
 Donaldson Park — Highland Park — Riverside walking and biking.
 Thompson Park — Monroe / Jamesburg — The county's largest, with a lake and trail network.
 Davidson's Mill Pond Park — South Brunswick — Quiet trails and the county's EARTH Center.
 Merrill Park — Woodbridge — Classic neighborhood county park.
 Middlesex Greenway — A rail-trail running through Woodbridge, Edison, and Metuchen.
 Rutgers Gardens — New Brunswick — The university's public botanic garden.
 Raritan Bay Waterfront Park — South Amboy — bay views and the Bayshore promenade.

YOUR TOWN-BY-TOWN CHEAT SHEET

TOWN	KNOWN FOR
Woodbridge Twp.	Ten distinct neighborhoods (Avenel, Colonia, Fords, Hopelawn, Iselin, Keasby, Menlo Park Terrace, Port Reading, Seweran, Woodbridge Proper). Woodbridge Center, a large shopping mall, which gives you access to hundreds of stores, restaurants, and entertainment options.
Edison	International Dining (Indian, Pakistani, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and many more). Menlo Park Mall, just minutes from Woodbridge Center. For entertainment, consider Plays-in-the-park performances and Splash Pad.
Old Bridge	Larger lots and a suburban feel. Home to Cheesequake State Park, Old Bridge Waterfront Park, Laurence Harbor Beach, and convenient access to Route 9 and the Garden State Parkway.
Piscataway	Family friendly neighborhoods and abundant green space. Rutgers University. Home to Johnson Park, East Jersey Old Town Village, the D&R Canal Trail and SHI Stadium.
New Brunswick	Rutgers University, healthcare and nightlife. Home to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital and Saint Peter's University Hospital. A vibrant downtown provides restaurants, entertainment, and NJ Transit access.
East Brunswick	Highly rated schools and family-friendly living. Home to Crystal Springs Family Waterpark, Heavenly Farms Park, Bicentennial Park, and convenient shopping and dining along Route 18.
North Brunswick	Convenience and central location. Home to North Brunswick Community Park, shopping + dining along Route 1, and easy access to Rutgers and Princeton University.
South Brunswick	Top rated schools and spacious suburban living. Home to Woodlot Park, Reichler Park, and Crystal Springs Family Aquatic Center.
Monroe Twp.	Active adult communities (55+) and spacious suburban living. Home to Forsgate Country Club, Thompson Park, and numerous golf courses, parks, and walking trails.
Sayreville	Waterfront recreation and entertainment. Home to Starland Ballroom, Kennedy Park, the Raritan Bay waterfront, and local marinas.
Perth Amboy	Latino culture, exceptional Spanish and Caribbean food, and a historic waterfront. Features a large Dominican and Puerto Rican community, authentic restaurants and bakeries, the Perth Amboy waterfront and marina, and the lively Smith Street shopping district.
Carteret	Entertainment, cultural diversity and a growing downtown. Home to the Carteret Performing Arts & Events Center, a diverse selection of international restaurants, Carteret Waterfront Park and Veterans Pier. A new ferry terminal is also being developed as part of the borough's expanding waterfront.
South Plainfield	Community recreation and a close-knit suburban feel. Home to Spring Lake Park, the community pool, active youth sports programs, and one of the area's best-known Labor Day celebrations.

TOWN	KNOWN FOR
Metuchen	Walkable downtown and small-town charm. Home to award winning Downtown Metuchen, locally owned restaurants, cafes, boutiques, and the Metuchen Town Plaza.
Highland Park	City-like living. Home to a vibrant downtown filled with restaurants, cafés, shops, and everyday conveniences all within walking distance. Known for its active street life, arts community and proximity to Rutgers University.
Plainsboro	Top rated schools, nature, and suburban quality of life. Home to a large Asian American community. Features the Plainsboro Preserve, Penn Medicine Princeton Medical Center and convenient access to the Route 1 technology corridor.
Cranbury	Historic charm and countryside living. Home to a beautifully preserved downtown, Brainerd Lake, colonial-era homes, local shops, and restaurants. Picturesque streets, surrounding farmland, and peaceful atmosphere is just minutes from Princeton and major highways.
South River	Rich Polish and Eastern European heritage. Home to specialty markets, a downtown business district, and neighborhoods shaped by the borough's manufacturing history along the South River.
Spotswood	Outdoor recreation. Home to Devoe Lake, Summerhill Road Park, and quiet neighborhoods. Highly regarded community atmosphere and close proximity to many hiking and biking trails.
Milltown	A longtime Michelin manufacturing heritage as well as a 4 th of July parade. It's one of the oldest continuous Independence Day parades in New Jersey. The borough literally grew around the mill and the brook, which is where the town gets its name.
Middlesex Boro	The annual Middlesex Street Fair. It's one of the borough's signature annual events that draws visitors from surrounding towns. Home to Mountain View Park and Washington Avenue's neighborhood shops and restaurants.
Dunellen	Commuter convenience. Home to Dunellen NJ Train Station, a vibrant downtown filled with local restaurants, cafes, public art, and neighborhood businesses. It has a pedestrian friendly atmosphere and ongoing downtown revitalization.
South Amboy	South Amboy Ferry Terminal. One of the biggest differentiators in Middlesex County. Residents can commute to Manhattan by Ferry. Raritan Bay Waterfront Park features a scenic waterfront with walking paths, fishing, and views of the bay.
Jamesburg	Historic village charm and lakeside living. Home to Lake Manalapan. Most known for its Victorian architecture, railroad heritage, community festivals, and timeless small town character.
Helmetta	Its woodland charm. Home to Helmetta Pond, Helmetta Park, and surrounded by thousands of acres of protected forest in the Jamesburg Park Conservation Area. Features a secluded tucked away feel.

LOCAL FAVORITES

Coffee Shops

Pennstock Coffee Shop & Roastery (Highland Park)

Chapter 2 Coffee Roasters (Piscataway)

LeGrand Coffee House (Woodbridge)

Frappe Joe Coffee Roasters (Edison)

DRIP Café (South River)

R&Beans (Avenel)

Restaurants

Italian – Vincenzo’s Ristorante (Middlesex Borough)

Japanese – Shokudo (Piscataway)

Indian – Delhi Garden (Edison)

Greek - Pithari Taverna (Highland Park)

Chinese – Xie Bae (Edison)

Portuguese – The Portuguese Fisherman (South River)

Mexican – Meximodo (Metuchen)

Ethiopian – Dashen Ethiopian Cuisine (New Brunswick)

Latin – Esquina Latina (New Brunswick)

Steakhouse – Labebe Prime (North Brunswick)

BBQ –Rodgers Real BBQ (Avenel)

Pizza & Bagels

Rocco’s Pizzeria (Avenel)

Antonio’s Brick Over Pizza (Metuchen)

Krispy Pizza (Old Bridge)

Mancini Pizza (East Brunswick)

Brooklyn Boys Pizza & Deli (Edison)

Bagel Pantry (Metuchen)

Bagel Boys (North Brunswick)

Bagel Bazaar (Middlesex)

Oak Tree Bagel Boyz (Edison)

Gem's House of Bagels (Old Bridge)

Gyms & Fitness

Best Overall Strength Gym –KING Strength (Metuchen)

Best Functional Fitness/Cross Fit – CrossFit Barbending (East Brunswick)

Best Harcore Lifting Gym –Diesel Gym (North Brunswick)

Best Group Training – Project Transfrm (Old Bridge)

Best Community Gym - Isolation Fitness (Metuchen)

Best Boutique HIIT – GeneWorks Fitness (Edison)

Most Unique Gym – Willis Athletics (Middlesex)

Places of Worship

There are more than 480 houses of worship in Middlesex County representing dozens of faiths and cultural traditions. This list is meant to be a short guide and is not intended to rank them or place importance on one over the over.

St. Peter's Catholic Church (New Brunswick)

Gayatri Chetna Center (Hindu Temple) (Piscataway)

Masjid Al Wali (Mosque) (Edison)

Congregation Ohr Torah (Synagogue) (Edison)

Gurdwara Singh Sabha (Sikh Gurdwara) (Port Reading)

St. George Greek Orthodox Church (Piscataway)

Groceries & Specialty Markets

Nicholas Markets (Colonia)

RT 28 Farmers Market (Middlesex)

H Mart (Edison)

99 Ranch Market (Edison)

Patel Brothers (Edison/Iselin)

European Homemade Provisions (East Brunswick)

Tropical Supermarket (South River)

George Street Co-op (new Brunswick)

Jersey Gourmet Farm Market (Monroe)

Pet Services

Veterinarian - Cranbury Animal Hospital (Cranbury)

Groomer – Grooming by Alex Co. (South Plainfield)

Dog Boarding – K9 Resorts (East Brunswick)

Dog Trainer – Canine Classics (Central Jersey)

Dog Walker/Pet Sitter – Doo Diligence (Central Jersey)

All-in-one Pet Resort – All Good Dogs (South Brunswick)

Thompson Park Dog Park (Monroe)

Donaldson Dog Park (Highland Park)

Edison-Metuchen Community Dog Park (Edison/Metuchen)

As always, the best way to find your favorite local spots is to get out there and get to know your county.

CONNECT & BELONG

Hyperlocal Facebook Groups

Middlesex County Scanner News

Everything Middlesex County NJ

What's Going On in Edison NJ

Woodbridge Township Residents

East Brunswick Happenings

Old Bridge Township Community

New Brunswick Community Forum

Most Middlesex County towns have at least one very active resident-run Facebook group where locals share recommendations, ask questions, and discuss community events.

Nextdoor

Unlike Facebook, Nextdoor verifies neighborhoods, making it one of the best places for truly local information.

Popular neighborhood groups include:

Pet Loves Club

Highland Park Neighbors

Small Business Networking

Individual neighborhood groups for towns across Middlesex County

Annual Events Worth Circling

Middlesex County Fair (East Brunswick)

Plays-in-the-Park (Edison)

New Brunswick Heart Festival (New Brunswick)

Hungarian Festival (New Brunswick)

Celebrate Middlesex County (Edison)

Raritan Native American Heritage Celebration & PowWow (East Brunswick)

St. George Greek Festival (Piscataway)

Music In the Park (Edison, South Amboy, Jamesburg)

Arts in The Park (Highland Park)

Cranbury Day (Cranbury)

Check each township's event schedule for more local fun.

FIRST 30 DAYS CHECKLIST

Transfer PSE&G, water, and Internet service

Download your town's trash and recycling calendar

Register your vehicle and transfer your license — *Within 60 days*

Register to vote with the Middlesex County Clerk

Register children for school — *Bring proof of residency — deed or lease plus two utility bills*

Get a municipal dog license — *Required annually in most NJ towns, usually by January 31*

Order an E-ZPass

Get a library card

Confirm your quarterly property tax due dates — *Feb 1, May 1, Aug 1, Nov 1*

Find your polling place and municipal building

Introduce yourself to immediate neighbors

ABOUT YOUR REALTOR®

Hi! I'm Leonardo Lara, and after spending 30 years in Brooklyn and Staten Island, I made Middlesex County my home. I know exactly what it's like to compare neighborhoods, commute times, schools, and all the little things you can't get from a non-local or an "I serve all of Jersey" realtor. My goal is simple: to help acclimate you to the neighborhood quickly and easily.

If you're thinking about buying, selling, relocating, or you just have a question about the area; I'd love to be a resource. You'll receive answers from someone who lives and works in these towns every day.

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