



Plymouth, Cape Cod and the Islands of Martha's Vineyard & Nantucket



A summer trip to Massachusetts could be well-spent on the beautiful coast! Start by taking advantage of the **new Cape Flyer weekend rail service** from **Boston to Buzzards Bay or Hyannis** – the site of the Kennedy family home. Trains will depart from Boston's South Station every Friday, Saturday and Sunday May-October; return service the same days. capeflyer.com

If you're driving, take your time, stopping along the way to check out the many cranberry bogs throughout **Plymouth County**. Your first stop, however, should be in the town of Plymouth itself. As the

landing location and subsequent settlement for the Mayflower's Pilgrims in 1620, **Plymouth**, just 40 minutes south of Boston, is home to one of the greatest dramas in the founding of America. And, it was here in 1621, where the Pilgrims celebrated what is now known as the first Thanksgiving with their Wampanoag neighbors. Situated about 40 miles south of Boston along Massachusetts' South Shore, Plymouth unfolds along a scenic harbor of blue waters and picturesque boats. In "America's Hometown," you'll get a glimpse of **Plymouth Rock** — and the Pilgrim way of life – at **Plimoth Plantation**. This bi-cultural living history museum offers a re-

created 17th century English Village that includes Colonial interpreters who bring the era to life, a **Native Wampanoag Homesite**, Crafts Center and numerous Museum Shops. The reproduction Mayflower II, a full-scale reproduction of the Pilgrims' original ship is located at State Pier just a stone's throw from Plymouth Rock, that historic piece of granite thought to be the stepping stone for these courageous settlers into the New World. plimoth.org

Continue south to beautiful **Cape Cod**, known for its stunning seascapes, cultural attractions and tranquil lifestyle. Cross the **Sagamore Bridge** from Route 3 onto Route 6 and stop by the classically quaint town of **Sandwich**. Here you can explore the collections of Ely Lilly and some of the loveliest landscapes on Cape Cod at **Heritage Museums and Gardens**. heritagemuseumsandgardens.org Also in Sandwich Center is the **Sandwich Glass Museum**, an exhibit of glass making and the famous collectible glassware that was made here. They offer daily glass blowing demonstrations and a beautiful gift shop. Area art studios also offer glass art and glass blowing demonstrations. sandwichglassmuseum.org

Head directly south to visit the picturesque New England village of **Falmouth**, where you will find activities to suit every taste. Located in the extreme southwest corner of Cape Cod, Falmouth's essence is defined by the sea with 70 miles of winding coastline and nine public beaches. The mild waters of **Vineyard Sound** and **Buzzard's Bay**, warmed by the Gulf Stream, remain comfortable for swimming and windsurfing deep into autumn. A true haven for outdoor enthusiasts and leisure travelers alike, Falmouth's landscape boasts the 12-mile long **Shining Sea Bikeway** that allows cyclists and walkers to wind close to the ocean and through salt marshes. The bikeway ends at **Woods Hole**, at the southernmost tip of town. An historic seaside fishing village, Woods Hole is also an international scientific community, home to the **Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute**. In summer, Woods Hole's wharfs are busy with travelers heading to **Martha's Vineyard**.

Travel down **Route 6A**, a former stage coach route that has remained nearly unchanged for over 200 years. Known as one of America's most scenic roads, this area is home to countless galleries, unique shops and ocean views. Stop at **Barnstable Harbor**, where visitors can take in a whale watch (whales.net) or fishing excursion (ladyjsportfish.com). Pass through the towns of **Yarmouth Port** and **Dennis** taking in historic Cape Cod homes along the way. Visitors to the area frequent the **Cape Cod Museum of Art** (ccmoa.org) or may attend live shows or view new and classic films at the **Cape Playhouse** (capeplayhouse.com) and **Cape Cinema** (capecinema.com).

Continue to Brewster on the mid-Cape where you'll get all the news you need to know on the steps of the **Brewster General Store**, a spot reminiscent of a Norman Rockwell painting. brewsterstore.com Then travel to **Nauset Beach in Orleans**, the beginning of the **Cape Cod National Seashore**, 27,000 acres of protected shoreline that frames the elbow and outer arm of the Cape from Orleans to Provincetown. nps.gov/caco From here, you can rent a bike at one of many bicycle shops and take a leisurely tour of the **Cape Cod Rail Trail**, which stretches from Dennis to Wellfleet. mass.gov/dcr Nauset extends as an undeveloped barrier beach south all the way into **Chatham**. The town of Chatham offers visitors several options. Take a break and walk the well kept streets of **Chatham village**, home to many shops and restaurants, or travel to the shore to visit **Chatham Light House** and the **Chatham Fish Pier** where actual fisherman stand ready to talk about their age-old profession. chathaminfo.com

Stop in Wellfleet, a town center that caters to art lovers and foodies alike with a string of little seaside galleries and restaurants. wellfleetchamber.com The head to the tip of Cape Cod by way of **Truro Vineyards**, where you can taste and purchase local wine, and take a tour of the vineyard. trurovineyardsofcapecod.com

Last stop is **Provincetown**, a vibrant and creative community and world-famous gay and lesbian resort town surrounded by the beauty of the ocean and an expanse of amazing and ever-changing dunescapes. Visitors like climbing to the top of the **Pilgrim Monument** (pilgrim-monument.org), strolling **Commercial Street** for shopping and dining in the eclectic establishments or taking advantage of an abundance of night-life. provincetowntourismoffice.org

Catch a ferry to **Martha's Vineyard** from either **Hyannis** on the mid-Cape or **Woods Hole**. The hundred square-mile Island of lies seven miles off Cape Cod, accessible by ferry or airplane. Multiple personalities—summer and 'other' seasons—captivate visitors year-round. The bustling town of **Vineyard Haven**, one of two ports you'll arrive in if you take a ferry, offers excellent shops, fine restaurants, and a beautiful harbor. The **Tuck & Holand Copper Studio** got its start back in 1974, when Travis Tuck created his first weathervane as a prop for the movie Jaws. Since then, hundreds of evocative figures have been commissioned by those who appreciate this unique artistry. Galleries and artists' studios dot Main Street, and complement the creative feel of this village. Still a pastoral landscape, nearby **West Tisbury** is home to the magnificent **Polly Hill Arboretum**, the **Martha's Vineyard Glassworks**, **Alley's General Store** and the **Field Gallery, outdoor sculpture gallery**.

The town of **Oak Bluffs** is home to the idyllic "**gingerbread**" **cottages**, a beautiful harbor, a diverse arts district and vibrant main street called Circuit Avenue. Here, summer nightlife is hopping, with diverse crowds of students, couples and families dining and relaxing elbow to elbow. From here, hop on a bike and cycle the six miles to **Edgartown**. Built at the foot of the sea, this village – undoubtedly the preppiest on the island – has been one of the world's yachting capitals for more than a century. The architecture, charming alleyways, subdued color, flowering rose bushes, and tiny, one-of-a-kind specialty shops and boutiques, make Edgartown a sophisticated village.

Chilmark is a town of rolling hills and unmatched coastline. Not so long ago uninhabited except for an occasional farm or fishing village, its stone fences lining sheep farms still ribbon the hills. From North Road, the quaint fishing village of **Menemsha** is home to the Vineyard's small commercial fishing community, and boasts such rustic culinary delights as chowder and lobster rolls at Larson's Fish Market and fried clams at The Bite. To get away from it all, head up-island. The **Aquinnah Cliffs**, which are a national landmark, astonished early explorers and have continued to be a source of intense interest to scientists and visitors alike. Originally inhabited by Wampanoag, this town was Noepe, "land amid the streams." Today's **Aquinnah** (also known as **Gay Head**) is home to descendants of Wampanoag who helped settlers and their native history is pervasive. mvy.com

Thirty miles off the Massachusetts coast, the crescent-shaped island of **Nantucket** is a world by itself. Hop on a ferry at Hyannis to start your journey. Nantucket is 50 square miles of incredible natural beauty and unspoiled historic charm. The slower pace of life on the island offers guests ample time to bike or walk to explore the island's lighthouses, conservation land, and unspoiled beaches. In April, the **Daffodil Festival** features three million bright yellow blooms planted by islanders to welcome the arrival of spring. The charm of Nantucket is embodied in its well-preserved architecture, cobblestone streets and its protected moors, plains and beaches. For more than 150 years Nantucket served as the center of the world's whaling industry, and you can see that history first-hand at the **Nantucket Whaling Museum**. nha.org Also in town, discover the **Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum** (nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org) and the **Egan Maritime Institute**, which is devoted exclusively to celebrating Nantucket's seafaring heritage. eganmaritime.org

Head out of town to explore the **Coskata Wildlife Refuge**, best known for its historic lighthouse, many miles of white-sand beaches, and world-class fishing. The Refuge is also a complex ecosystem that features rare habitats, plants, and birds. Rolling maritime dunes cover more than 200 acres and support different associations of bayberry, beach plum, heather, and beach grass. thetrustees.org Rent a bike and head to picture-perfect **Siasconset**, lounge by the beach, or visit the numerous historic lighthouses.