

Cape Cod: 5 Things to Do on Your Visit

By KELLY HAGAN Aug. 8, 2011



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Cape Cod has long been a favorite summer vacation destination. The picturesque New England towns teeming with charming antique shops and local jaunts attract tons of tourists, but what really makes this spot unique and incredible are the beaches. There are more than 43,604 acres of protected shoreline on the 400-square-mile peninsula that makes up the cape.

Cape Cod's natural beauty is what compelled Gary Accabo of New Haven, Conn., to nominate the area in "Good Morning America's" Most Beautiful Places search. "I have visited Provincetown, Cape Cod every summer since 1977. Race Point is the most gorgeous part of the National Sea Shore. To be there in the evening to experience a sunset is one of the most breathtaking visions to witness. Its beauty is forever etched in my mind," Accabo wrote.

1.

Experience Provincetown's Sand Dunes

The dunes of Cape Cod are well-known, but Provincetown's beaches have some of the largest and most spectacular in New England. Art's Dune Tours packs history and adventure in a one-hour, off-road tour through the dunes of Cape Cod National Seashore Park. Rob Costa, whose father began the family business in 1946, serves as a trusty guide and historian, making the tours a relaxing and fun option for families. Others packages include a sunset tour, and a tour with a Cape Cod clambake.

2.

See Cape Cod by Kayak

Hop into a kayak and take in the natural beauty of the cape at a micro level. For visitors looking for a relaxing adventure and a lesson in ecology, **Dick Hilmer's Explore Cape Cod**, a kayaking company, bridges both worlds with its tours around Nanuet Marsh. You'll paddle through Cape Cod's sheltered rivers and ponds to arrive at some of the best beaches in the country. (You could even see seals!). Tours are offered twice daily and range in price from \$35 to \$49 per kayak.

3.

Take in Presidential History

Devote an afternoon to go back in time and brush up on your presidential history at the John F. Kennedy Museum located in Hyannis. The exhibit looks back at the days President Kennedy spent on Cape Cod and features photographs of the Kennedy clan relaxing on the cape. This year marks the 50th anniversary of Kennedy's creation of the Cape Cod National Seashore, which preserved the beaches of the cape from private development.

4.

All Aboard!

Board in Hyannis and take a ride back in time on the Cape Cod Central Railroad. The railroad has been on the cape for more than 150 years and offers one of the best scenic trips from Hyannis to the Cape Cod Canal at the right price. Take an afternoon train or board the train for dinner service. It's fun for the whole family!

5.

Be a Beach Bum

Coast Guard Beach, located in Eastham, Mass., is a prime spot for swimming, surfing or for a peaceful walk along the sandy coast to the historic Coast Guard Station. The beach has been dubbed one of the 10 best in the United States by many, including "Dr. Beach," Stephen P. Leatherman, a Florida International University professor and coastal expert.

"The picturesque old Coast Guard station still sits atop the glacial bluffs, allowing for a spectacular view down upon the Nauset Spit barrier system and bay. During the summer, beachgoers take quick, refreshing dips in the ocean, as water temperatures only reach 60-70 degrees," Dr. Beach said in his annual list. While not exactly off-the-beaten path, it's worth a visit!