

Gloucester, Massachusetts: The "Perfect" Seaport

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Featured Columnist

On the wild and rocky shores of Cape Ann, Massachusetts lies America's oldest seaport, Gloucester. Founded in 1606, Gloucester continues today to be a working seaport, and a great place to spend some time.

We decided to visit Gloucester on a bit of a whim. The town became internationally famous in 2000 when Sebastian Junger's book "The Perfect Storm" was made into a movie starring George Clooney and Mark Wahlberg. We really enjoyed the movie, and its land setting, The Crow's Nest, and always talked about one day visiting Gloucester. The opportunity presented itself in a most unique way.

While planning a recent visit to Cape Cod, we found that we had mistakenly missed a booking night on our reservation. This left us with a day to fill and the need to find a place to stay. So, why not take that extra day and spend it in Gloucester? We could visit the haunts made famous in the movie, and see what else this seaside town had to offer.

A quick call to The Crow's Nest booked us a room for the night, and we were on our way!

Gloucester is about a six hour drive from our house, and other than some traffic around the Boston area, we made it in good time. We arrived slightly before dinnertime, despite a programming error in our GPS (I put the wrong address in!), and we were soon at the [Crow's Nest](#). From the outside, it looks nothing like the movie set. First of all, it is on a street, whereas the movie Crow's Nest was right on the wharf. Also, the front looked different. Ah, Hollywood versus real life! We parked on the street and we went into check in. And when we walked in, it was like walking into the movie! The bar and tables are pretty much just like we hoped they would be.

We checked in and got our key. Now, if you are more accustomed to luxury stays, this will not be for you. The room was around the back, and up a small flight of stairs. It was a basic room, two double beds, bathroom, TV, fridge and microwave. But it was clean and the window overlooked the harbor.

After settling in, we went in search of dinner. We walked down a short way to [The Seaport Grille](#), recommended by the staff at The Crow's Nest. It was right on the water, and I had a lobster roll while Steve

enjoyed steamers. After dinner, we walked around the wharf, taking some pictures and breathing in the fresh sea air. We headed back to The Crow's Nest, where we watched the baseball playoffs and enjoyed an adult beverage. We met a few of the locals and talked to the bartender, who showed us the many pictures and photo albums created when the film was made.

We called it a night and got a good rest in our room. The next morning, we checked out and explored the town. We started on Main Street. This is the heart of Gloucester's shopping district, an area that was revitalized several years ago. The streets are cobblestone, the colors bright and welcoming and the shops eclectic and fun. We ate breakfast at a local diner called The Savory Skillet, and walked the length of the street, stopping to say hello at the Cape Ann Animal Shelter. After our walk, we strolled down to the waterfront, past the police station where a 9/11 memorial as well as memorial benches to fallen heroes are placed in a courtyard.

The harbor held all sorts of treasures. We started out at the Coast Guard Station on Harbor Loop, and walked up the path to Duncan's Point. This is the place where the home of famous Gloucester artist [Fitz Hugh Lane](#) lived and painted. From there you have a stunning view of Gloucester Harbor and Ten Pound Island, home of the lighthouse mentioned in "The Perfect Storm." We strolled down the rest of the wharf. This is a working wharf and not a tourist attraction. We watched fishing vessels being maintained and large bait clams being sorted and loaded. This is also the home of Gorton's seafood company, home of all those fish sticks and crab cakes.

From there, we went to visit Town Hall. This is the heart of Gloucester's government, but it also houses many sculptures and testaments to the maritime industry. The walls are inscribed with the names of the over 5000 fishermen lost at sea.

A quick walk across the square and we were at the [Cape Ann Museum](#), a museum dedicated to art and maritime history. We chose to take a guided tour through the many rooms. Our guide was personable and knowledgeable, and we were fascinated by the history. We learned plenty about what made Gloucester the beautiful seaport it is today.

After the museum tour, which took about an hour, we drive down to Stacy Esplanade, a long narrow strip of land facing the channel of Gloucester Harbor. From there you can view the wharf of Gloucester, the lighthouse on Ten Pound Island, and the [Fisherman's Memorial Statue](#). This statue depicts a fisherman at the wheel of his boat, overlooking the harbor. All around the statue are monuments with the

names of those lost at sea. It is a very beautiful tribute to the men and women who give their lives when the sea turns against them.

It was getting cold and late, and we needed to continue on our journey. We got back in our car and drove south towards our next destination, Cape Cod, where new adventures awaited us. But our short stay in Gloucester gave us a huge taste of this fabulous town, and we will be back to take in even more!

About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

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