

## Cape Cod: Falling in Love

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Featured Columnist

*"If you're fond of sand dunes and salty air ... Quaint little villages here and there ... then you're sure to fall in love with old Cape Cod ..."*

Patti Page made that song a Billboard hit in 1957, but the lyrics still describe Cape Cod today!

Cape Cod is more than just a vacation destination. It's a way of life, a step back in time, and a place that will take you away from the day to day grind. Although time marches on and the Cape evolves with time, you still can feel the history and a sense of timelessness all over.

You'll travel a congested highway towards the Cape, maybe Route 3 from Boston or Route 195 from Rhode Island. Then, as you approach the Cape Cod Canal, you begin to smell the salt air and see the sand on the side of the road. You are already starting to relax. You cross the Bourne or Sagamore Bridge, and you are there!

Picture an arm bent at the elbow, and you'll have an idea of the geography of the Cape. It is divided into basically three sections: Upper Cape, Mid Cape and Lower Cape. The Upper Cape is the southernmost area, closest to the mainland, and extends to around the Sandwich area. Mid Cape is the middle of the Cape, including Hyannis, Barnstable and Yarmouth, and the Lower Cape is the rest of the Cape, from the elbow north to Provincetown. In addition, two lovely islands, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, make up more of the area's geography.

There's a lot to see and do, and before you go, you need to decide what you'd like from your vacation. Beaches? Shopping? Whale watching? Lighthouses? It's all here! Summer months get very crowded as the Cape is the perfect getaway for Northeast locals. The weather and the beaches are great, and there are wonderful things to do. Off season brings its own special beauty, but you will see many local business shut down for the season. There's still plenty to do, you just need to plan accordingly.

As a vacationer to the Cape, you will notice that there is no shortage of places to stay. From little mom and pop hotels to deluxe condos, you have your pick of lodging. Book early; summer is very popular on the Cape and many places fill up. If you decide to travel off season, keep in mind that the Cape is mostly a summer resort and many places shut down for the long winter months.

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Once you have reserved your lodging, it's time to plan your itinerary. If you are traveling in the summer, be sure to factor traffic into your travel time, especially on weekends. What looks like a 30 minute ride could actually take more than an hour, so leave early for your destinations. If you are traveling in the spring or fall, call ahead to make sure your destination is open for the season.

So let's begin; how about some beach time? [The Cape Cod National Seashore](#) offers pristine beaches and beautiful vistas, stretching nearly the length of the eastern edge of the cape as well as part of the bay side. There are also bike and hiking trails, as well as marshland excursions and ranger guided activities for the young and the young at heart. The bay side (between the cape and the mainland) offers beautiful beaches. Our personal favorite is located in [Sandwich](#). Expect the beaches on the bay side to be a bit rockier and also a bit calmer than those on the Atlantic.

If you are a lighthouse aficionado, you will find many sites to enjoy! Did you know that the Cape has 21 lighthouses, and a history that includes three that no longer exist? Many of these lights are now privately owned, but there are eight that you can visit. For instance, [The Nauset Light](#) is open to the public, as is The [Cape Cod Light](#). Both of these lights underwent a massive transformation in the last 10 years, being moved from their original locations near the cliff edge, where they were in danger of collapsing due to erosion. They are now safely tucked away from the edge and can be toured.

If you think you'd like to spend some time on the ocean, there are plenty of tours and fishing trips. Whale watching is a particular favorite. It is an unbelievable feeling to be up close and personal with some of the largest mammals on earth. Provincetown is home to many tour boats and trips. You can also walk down the main pier and get a glimpse of a working harbor.

And if you have decided that shopping is your thing, you have come to the right location. From the [Wellsfleet Flea Market](#) to the [Cape Cod Mall](#), there's something for everyone. There are plenty of little fun shops, including Annie's Book Stop, a used book emporium on Route 28, [The Crystal Pineapple](#), a jewelry and gift boutique located in West Barnstable and South Dennis and the famous [Black Dog](#) on Martha's Vineyard. From the artsy to the eclectic, you may find your heart's desire in a Cape Cod shop!

So I've saved the best for last; the food! Cape Cod, of course, is all about the seafood. From award winning clam chowder to fresh fish of every variety, there is no shortage of delicious choices. If you're not a

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seafood lover, you can get some wonderful prime rib at Captain Parker's Pub, or [The Yarmouth House](#). Of course, the [Hearth and Kettle](#) is a perennial favorite any time of day. And if you are in Sandwich, stop into [Beth's Special Teas](#) for a delicious treat!

The Cape is an ever changing, ever evolving destination that still maintains its old world flavor. Go for a day, a weekend, a week! You will never forget your time spent on old Cape Cod.

*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.*

Article last updated: 12/24/2009

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