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The Best of Cape Cod, Nantucket & Martha's Vineyard

Only 70 miles long, Cape Cod is a curling peninsula that encompasses hundreds of miles of beaches and more freshwater ponds than there are days in the year. The ocean's many moods rule this thin spit of land, and in summer, it has a very sunny disposition indeed. And little wonder. The "arm" of the Cape has beckoned wayfarers since pre-Colonial days. More than 17 million visitors flock from around the world to enjoy nature's non-stop carnival, a combination of torrid sun and cool, salty air.

On the Cape, days have a way of unfurling aimlessly but pleasantly, with a round of inviolable rituals. First and foremost is a long, restful stint at the beach (you can opt for either the warmer, gently lapping waters of the bay or the pounding Atlantic surf). The beach is generally followed by a stroll through the shops of the nearest town and an obligatory ice-cream stop. After a desalinating shower and perhaps a nap (the pristine air has a way of inspiring impromptu snoozes), it's time for a fabulous dinner. There are few experiences quite so blissful as sitting at a picnic table overlooking a bustling harbor and feasting on a just-caught, butter-dripping, boiled lobster.

Be forewarned, however, that the Cape can be a bit too popular at full swing. Although it's hard to fathom why the settlers waited nearly 3 centuries to go splashing in the surf, ever since the Victorians donned their bathing costumes there's been no stopping the waves of sun-, sand-, and sea-worshippers who pour onto this peninsula and the Islands beyond every summer.

Experienced travelers are beginning to discover the subtler appeal of the off season, when the population—and prices—plummet. For some, the prospect of sunbathing with the midsummer crowds on sizzling sand can't hold a candle to the chance to take long, solitary strolls on a windswept beach, with only the gulls as company. Come Labor Day (or Columbus Day, for stragglers) the crowds clear out, and the whole place hibernates until Memorial Day weekend, the official start of "the season." It's in this downtime that you're most likely to experience the "real" Cape. For some, it may take a little resourcefulness to see the beauty in the wintry, shuttered landscape (even the Pilgrims, who forsook this spot for Plymouth, didn't have quite the necessary mettle), but the people who do stick around are an interesting, independent-minded lot worth getting to know.

As alluring as it is on the surface, the region becomes all the more so the more you learn about it. One visit is likely to prompt a follow-up. Although you can see all of the Cape, and the Islands as well, in a matter of days, you could spend a lifetime exploring its many facets and still just begin to take it all in. Early Pilgrims saw in this isolated spot the opportunity for religious freedom, whaling merchants the watery road to riches, and artists the path to capturing the brilliance of nature's palette. Whatever the incursions of commercialism and overdevelopment, the land is suffused with spirit, and it attracts seekers still.

Narrowing down possible “bests” is a tough call, even for a native of the region. The selections in this chapter are intended merely as an introduction to some of the highlights. They’re listed from closest to farthest along the Cape, followed by the Islands. A great many other outstanding resorts, hotels, inns, attractions, and destinations are described in the pages of this book. Once you start wandering, you’re sure to discover bests of your own.

1 The Best Beaches

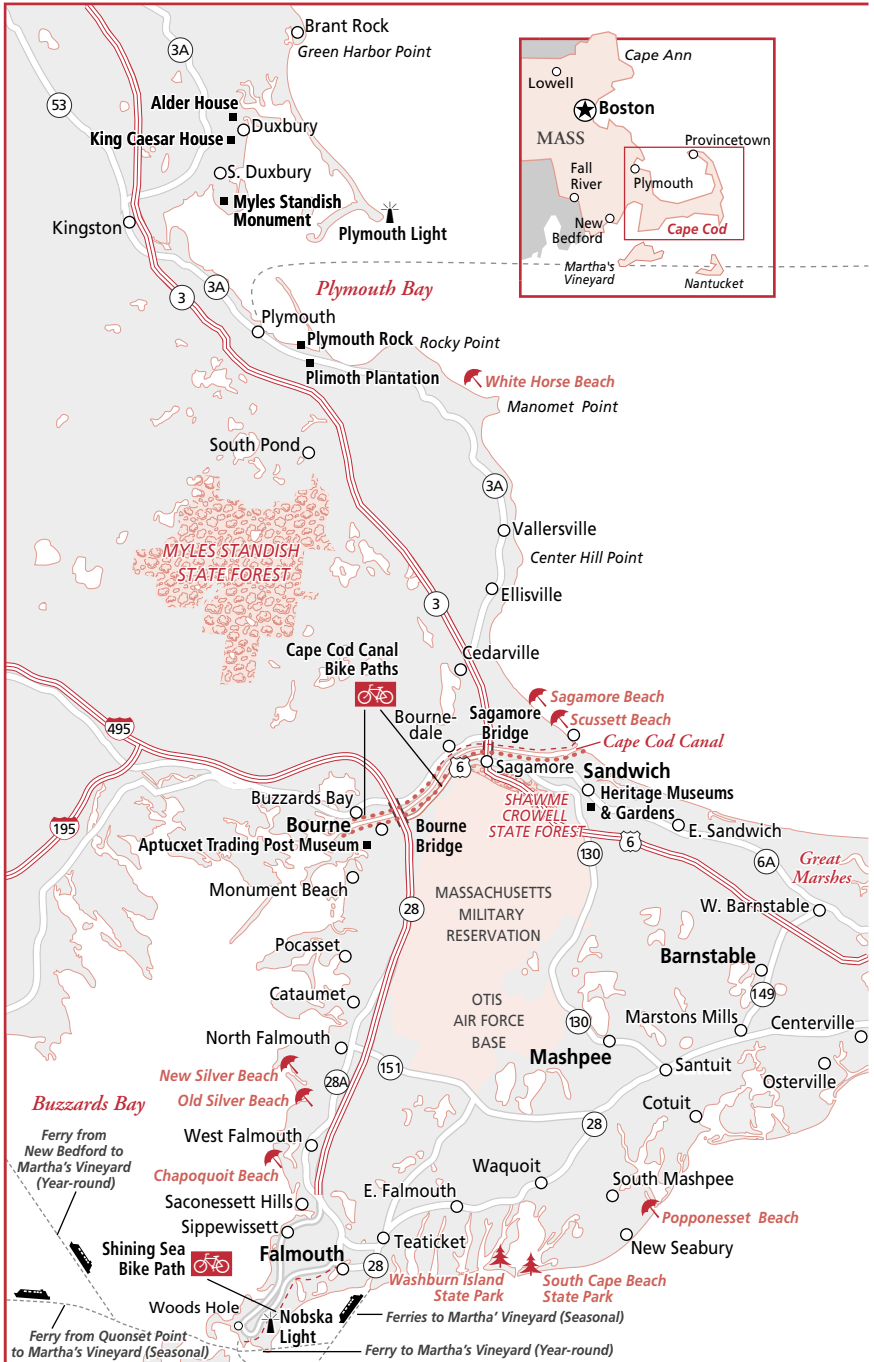
It is difficult to identify the best beaches without specifying for whom: fearless surfers or timid toddlers, party types or incurable recluses? The bayside and sound beaches, for instance, tend to be much more placid than those on the ocean, and thus preferable for little ones who only plan to splash and muck about.

- **Sandy Neck Beach:** This relatively unpopulated, 6-mile barrier beach, extending from the eastern edge of Sandwich to shelter Barnstable Harbor, features pretty little dunes seldom seen on the bayside. Hike in far enough (but avoid the nests of piping plovers), and you’re sure to find a secluded spot. Adventurous types can even camp overnight with permission (☎ 508/362-8300). See p. 72.
- **Falmouth Heights Beach:** On a clear day, you can see Martha’s Vineyard from this hip beach in Falmouth’s most picturesque neighborhood. Grand turn-of-the-20th-century homes compete for the view with newer motels, and the beach fills up with families throughout the day. Off season, this beach is virtually deserted, perfect for romantic arm-in-arm strolling. See p. 88.
- **Nauset Beach:** Located along the outer “elbow” of the Cape, this barrier beach descends all the way from East Orleans to a point parallel to Chatham—about 9 miles in all, each mile increasingly deserted. The entry point, however, is a body

squeeze: It’s here that the young crowd convenes to strut their stuff. Administered by the town of Orleans, but still considered part of the Cape Cod National Seashore, Nauset Beach has paid parking, restrooms, and a snack bar. See p. 172.

- **Cahoon Hollow Beach:** Spectacular Cahoon Hollow Beach on the rough, frigid Atlantic Ocean is a winding trek down a 75-foot dune. See p. 190. One Wellfleet favorite, which boasts a most unusual music club housed in an 1897 lifesaving station is called **The Beachcomber**—referred to fondly as the ‘Comber, or better yet, ‘Coma (☎ 508/349-6055). Twenty-somethings are the primary patrons, but lingering families also enjoy the reggae and rock that start to leak out late in the afternoon on summer weekends. See p. 199.
- **Race Point Beach:** Free of the sexual politics that predominate the beaches closer to Provincetown (certain sections of Herring Cove Beach are tacitly reserved for gays or lesbians), Race Point—another Cape Cod National Seashore beach at the northernmost tip of the Cape—is strictly nondominational. Even whales are welcome—they can often be spotted with the bare eye, surging toward Stellwagen Bank. The Province Lands Visitor Center at Race Point (☎ 508/487-1256) has particularly good views. See p. 208.

Cape Cod



Brant Rock
Green Harbor Point
Alder House
King Caesar House
Duxbury
S. Duxbury
Myles Standish Monument
Plymouth Light
Kingston

Cape Ann
Lowell
Boston
MASS
Fall River
New Bedford
Martha's Vineyard
Provincetown
Plymouth
Nantucket

Plymouth Bay

Plymouth
Plymouth Rock
Plimoth Plantation
White Horse Beach
Manomet Point

MYLES STANDISH STATE FOREST

Cape Cod Canal
Bike Paths

495
195

Bourne
Bourne Bridge
Sagamore Bridge
Sagamore
Sagamore Beach
Scussett Beach
Cape Cod Canal

Buzzards Bay
Aptucket Trading Post Museum
Bourne
Monument Beach
Pocasset
Cataumet
North Falmouth

MASSACHUSETTS MILITARY RESERVATION
OTIS AIR FORCE BASE
Sandwich
Heritage Museums & Gardens
E. Sandwich
W. Barnstable
Great Marshes

Barnstable
Marstons Mills
Centerville
Santuit
Osterville

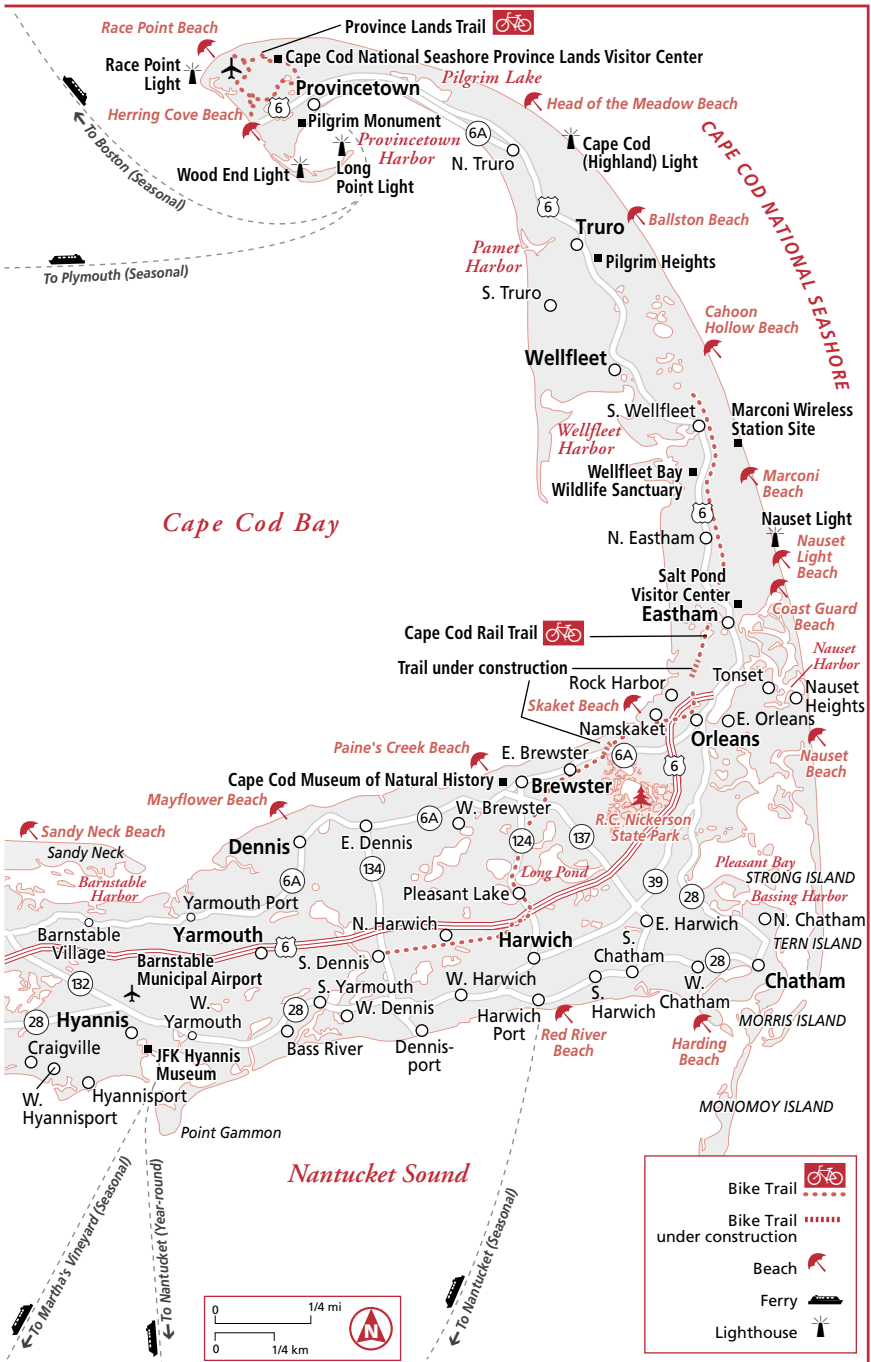
Mashpee
Cotuit
South Mashpee
Popponesset Beach
New Seabury

West Falmouth
Chapoquoit Beach
Saconessett Hills
Sippewissett
Falmouth
Teaticket
Waquoit

Woods Hole
Nobska Light
Washburn Island State Park
South Cape Beach State Park
Ferry to Martha's Vineyard (Seasonal)
Ferry to Martha's Vineyard (Year-round)

Buzzards Bay
Ferry from New Bedford to Martha's Vineyard (Year-round)

Shining Sea Bike Path
Ferry from Quonset Point to Martha's Vineyard (Seasonal)



- **Jetties Beach:** Nantucket's beaches as a rule have the best amenities of any beaches in the region; most have restrooms, showers, lifeguards, and food concessions. For families and active types, Jetties Beach (just a half-mile from the center of town) can't be beat. Offering boat and windsurfing rentals, tennis courts, volleyball nets, a playground, and great fishing (off the eponymous jetties), it's also scenic (those jetties again) with calm, warm water. See p. 235.
- **Aquinnah Beach** (formerly **Gay Head**) (Martha's Vineyard): These landmark bluffs on the western extremity of Martha's Vineyard (call the **chamber of commerce** at ☎ **508/693-0085** for directions) are threatened with erosion, so it's no longer politically correct to engage in multicolored mud baths, as hippies once did. Still, it's an incredibly scenic place to swim—come early to beat the crowds. See p. 270.

2 The Best Bike Routes

Blessed with many gently rolling hills, the Cape and Islands are custom-made for a bike trek—whether as a way to get to the beach or as an outing unto itself.

- **Cape Cod Canal:** On this 14-mile loop maintained by the **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** (☎ **508/759-5991**), you can race alongside the varied craft taking shortcuts through the world's widest sea-level canal. See p. 72.
- **Shining Sea Bicycle Path** (☎ **508/548-8500**): Connecting Falmouth to Woods Hole by way of the shore and the picturesque Nobska Lighthouse, this 3.3 mile path lets you dash to the ferry or dally at the beach of your choice. See p. 89.
- **Cape Cod Rail Trail** (☎ **508/896-3491**): Reclaimed by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, this paved railroad bed currently stretches some 25 miles from South Dennis all the way to Wellfleet, with innumerable detours that beckon en route. See chapters 5 through 7. **Note:** Two 1-mile sections of the Cape Cod Rail Trail (one in Brewster and another in Eastham) are closed for rehabilitation through spring 2005.
- **Province Lands Trail** (☎ **508/487-1256**): Offering by far the most rigorous workout, this 7-mile network swoops among the dunes and stunted forests at the very tip of the Cape. Take your time enjoying this moonscape. Be sure to stop off at Race Point Beach for a bracing dip, and at the **Province Lands Visitor Center** (☎ **508/487-1256**) as well. See p. 208.
- **Nantucket Town to Madaket** (☎ **508/228-1700**): Only 3 miles wide and 14 miles long, Nantucket is a snap to cover by bike. The 6-mile Madaket path crosses undulating moors to reach a beach with boisterous surf. See “Beaches & Recreational Pursuits,” in chapter 8.
- **Nantucket Town to Surfside** (☎ **508/228-1700**): An easy, flat few miles from town, Surfside Beach is a perfect mini-excursion for the whole family. There are even benches along the route if you'd like to stop and admire the scrub pine and beach plums. When you return to town, pause at Brant Point to watch the yachts maneuver in and out of Nantucket Harbor. See “Beaches & Recreational Pursuits,” in chapter 8.
- **Oak Bluffs to Edgartown** (Martha's Vineyard; ☎ **508/693-0085**): All of Martha's Vineyard is

easily accessible for two-wheel recreationists. This 6-mile path hugs the water almost all the way, so you're never far from a refreshing dip. See "Beaches & Recreational Pursuits," in chapter 9.

- **Chilmark to Aquinnah** (Martha's Vineyard; © 508/693-0085): The Vineyard's awe-inspiring vistas of ponds, inlets, and ocean greet you at every turn as you bike along

State Road and then turn onto the Moshup Trail, a road that takes you along the coast up to Aquinnah. It's a strenuous ride with perhaps the best scenic views in the region. On the way back, treat yourself to a bike-ferry ride to the fishing village of Menemsha. See "Beaches & Recreational Pursuits," in chapter 9.

3 The Best Small Towns & Villages

The prettier towns of the Cape and Islands combine the austere traditionalism of New England—well-tended historic houses punctuated by modest white steeples—with a whiff of their own salty history.

- **Sandwich:** For a "gateway" town, Sandwich is remarkably composed and peaceful. Not-too-fussy preservation efforts have ensured the survival of many of this first settlement's attractions, such as the pond that feeds the 17th-century **Dexter Grist Mill** (© 508/888-4910). Generous endowments fund an assortment of fascinating museums including the multifaceted **Heritage Museums and Gardens** (© 508/888-3300), which is famous for its splendid rhododendrons but has many other exhibits that should interest all members of the family. See p. 74.
- **Woods Hole:** Besides being the Cape's main gateway to Martha's Vineyard, Woods Hole is a world-renowned science community, a charming fishing village, and a bohemian mecca. A proper tour of Woods Hole should include visits to the aquarium and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, a stroll along the bustling harbor, and a drink at the Cap'n Kidd, the Cape's top tavern. See "Falmouth," in chapter 4.
- **Yarmouth Port:** It may look somewhat staid on the surface (Hallet's, the local soda fountain, hasn't changed much since 1889, except to start renting videos), but there are a number of quirky attractions here. A museum features the works of author/illustrator Edward Gorey, a Yarmouth Port resident who died several years ago. There's also the gloriously jumbled **Parnassus Books** owned by vintage bookseller Ben Muse. Stop at **Inaho**, 157 Main St. (© 508/362-5522), all but hidden within an ordinary frame house, for the Cape's best sushi. See p. 130.
- **Chatham:** Only Provincetown offers better strolling-and-shopping options, and Chatham's versions are G-rated. In summer, Friday-night band concerts draw multigenerational crowds by the thousands. This is perhaps the Cape's quaintest town. For a fun natural history lesson, take a boat ride to see the hordes of seals on uninhabited Monomoy Island. See p. 158.
- **Wellfleet:** A magnet for creative artists (literary as well as visual), this otherwise classic New England town is a haven of good taste—from its dozens of shops and galleries to its premier restaurant, Aesop's Tables. All is not prissy, however: certainly not the iconoclastic offerings at the **Wellfleet**

- Harbor Actors' Theatre** (☎ 508/349-6835) or the goings-on at the 'Comber. See p. 200.
- **Provincetown:** At the far tip of the Cape's curl, in intensely beautiful surroundings, is Provincetown. Provincetown's history goes back nearly 400 years, and in the last century, it's been a veritable headquarters of bohemia—more writers and artists have holed up here than you could shake a stick at. It's also, of course, among the world's great gay and lesbian resort areas—people come here for the pleasure of being “out” together in great numbers. If you're uncomfortable with same-sex public displays of affection, this stop might be best left off your itinerary. More open-minded straights will have a great time—Provincetown has savory food, fun shopping, terrific company, and fascinating people-watching. See p. 205.
 - **Nantucket Town:** It looks as though the whalers just left their grand houses, cobblestone streets, and a gamut of enticing shops offering luxury goods from around the world. Tourism may be rampant but without the tackier side effects, thanks to stringent preservation measures. Time has not so much stood still here as vanished. So relax and shift into island time, dictated purely by your desires. See chapter 8.
 - **Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard:** This harbor town on Martha's Vineyard evolved from a Methodist campground that sprang up in the mid-19th century. Pleased with the scenic and refreshing oceanside setting (and who wouldn't be?), the faithful started replacing their canvas tents with hundreds of tiny, elaborately decorated and gaudily painted “gingerbread” cottages. Still operated primarily as a religious community, the revivalist village is flanked by a commercial zone known for its rocking nightlife. See chapter 9.
 - **Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard:** For many visitors, Edgartown *is* Martha's Vineyard. Its regal captains' houses and manicured lawns are symbols of a more refined way of life. Roses climb white picket fences, and the tolling of the Whaling Church bell signals dinnertime. By July, gleaming pleasure boats fill the harbor passing Edgartown Lighthouse, and shops overflow with luxury goods and fine art. Edgartown's old-fashioned Fourth of July parade harkens back to small-town America, as hundreds line Main Street cheering the loudest for the floats with the most heart. It's a picture-perfect little town, a slice of homemade apple pie to go with nearby Oak Bluff's hot-fudge sundae. See p. 267.

4 The Best Luxury Hotels & Inns

- **Chatham Bars Inn** (Chatham; ☎ 800/527-4884 or 508/945-0096): The last of the grand old oceanfront hotels, this is hands-down the most elegant place to stay on Cape Cod. A 5-year, multi-million-dollar renovation has only added to the splendor of this resort. While the luxury suites go for \$1,500 a night, regular rooms can be had for less than a third of that. Lunch at the Beach House Grill, with sand underfoot, is a delight. And by all means, have an evening cocktail on the majestic porch overlooking the Atlantic Ocean. The service throughout the hotel is impeccable, and the best part is that this is a family-friendly place—bring the kids and treat yourself. You only live once. See p. 165.

- **Wequassett Inn Resort and Golf Club** (Chatham; ☎ 800/225-7125 or 508/432-5400): This Chatham institution occupies its own little peninsula on Pleasant Bay and offers excellent sailing and tennis clinics. It is also next to the Cape's newest premier golf course and guests have members' privileges. You'll be tempted to just relax, though—especially if you score one of the clapboard cottages, done in an upscale country mode, right on the water. The on-site restaurant, **28 Atlantic**, is now one of the Cape's best. See p. 166.
- **Captain's House Inn** (Chatham; ☎ 508/945-0127): An elegant country inn that positively drips with good taste, this is among the best small inns in the region. Most rooms have fireplaces, elegant paneling, and antiques throughout; the rooms are sumptuous yet cozy. This may be the ultimate spot to enjoy Chatham's Christmas Stroll festivities, but you may need to book your room a couple of years in advance. See p. 166.
- **Brass Key Guesthouse** (Provincetown; ☎ 800/842-9858 or 508/487-9005): The Brass Key Guesthouse, a compound consisting of five historic buildings, is *the* place to stay in Provincetown. With Ritz-Carlton-style amenities in mind, the owners have created a paean to luxury. These are the kind of innkeepers who think of everything: Pillows are goose down, showers have wall jets, and gratis iced tea is delivered poolside. See p. 215.
- **Cliffside Beach Club** (Nantucket; ☎ 800/932-9645 or 508/228-0618): Right on the beach and within walking distance (about 1 mile) of town, this is the premier lodging on the island. It may not be as fancy as some, but there's a sublime beachy-ness to the whole setup with the simply decorated rooms; the cheerful, youthful staff; the sea of antique wicker in the clubhouse; and of course, the blue, yellow, and green umbrellas lined up on the beach. Every Fourth of July, guests get a front-row seat for the fireworks show at nearby Jetties Beach. See p. 243.
- **Charlotte Inn** (Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard; ☎ 508/627-4751): Edgartown tends to be the most formal enclave on Martha's Vineyard, and this Anglicized compound of exquisite buildings is by far the fanciest address in town, and the only Relais & Châteaux. The rooms are distinctively decorated: One boasts a baby grand piano, and another, its own thematic dressing room. The conservatory restaurant, **L'étoile** (☎ 508/627-5187), is among the finest you'll find on this side of the Atlantic. See p. 283.

5 The Best Hotel Deals

- **Simmons Homestead Inn** (Hyannisport; ☎ 800/637-1649 or 508/778-4999): Bill Putman may be the most personable and hospitable innkeeper on Cape Cod. He is determined that his guests have an excellent vacation, a factor that may make the Simmons Homestead Inn one of the best deals around. A former race-car driver/ad exec, Putman has filled his inn with a merry mish-mash of animals (stuffed, sculpted, or painted). But his passion is cars, and you'll enjoy touring his "museum" of more than 55 red sports cars. See p. 115.
- **Lamb and Lion Inn** (Barnstable; ☎ 800/909-6923 or 508/362-6823): Part B&B, part motel, this historic Cape cottage has been turned into a comfortable lodging

with a pool. Hallways have murals, and rooms are creatively decorated. See p. 117.

- **Isaiah Hall B&B Inn** (Dennis; ☎ 800/736-0160 or 508/385-9928): Fancy enough for the Broadway luminaries who star in summer stock at the nearby Cape Cod Playhouse, this former farmhouse in Dennis is the antithesis of glitz. The great room doubles as a green room—an actors’ hangout—and breakfast is celebrated communally in the country kitchen. The plainer rooms will set you back less than a pair of orchestra tickets. See p. 136.
- **The Orleans Inn** (Orleans; ☎ 508/255-2222): Don’t miss this inn, perched right on the edge of Town Cove. I recommend a room facing the water. Built in 1875, the inn was recently restored to its former grandeur. The water view and great location make this a terrific value. See p. 177.
- **The Inn at Duck Creeke** (Wellfleet; ☎ 508/349-9333): In one of the Cape’s most charming towns, this humble and historic complex offers no-frills rooms, some with shared bathrooms, for bargain prices. With grandmotherly touches like chenille bedspreads, it will make you feel right at home. A good restaurant and a

tavern are also on the property. See p. 197.

- **White Horse Inn** (Provincetown; ☎ 508/487-1790): Look for the blue-shuttered sea captain’s house with the bright-yellow door with the intriguing oval window. The very embodiment of Provincetown funkiness, this inn has hosted such celebrities as cult filmmaker John Waters and poet laureate Robert Pinsky. Rooms are short on amenities (no cable TV here) but long on artfulness. Innkeeper Frank Schaefer has been in Provincetown for 35 years and can give you a quick history of art by pointing out the original works that grace the walls of the inn. See p. 220.
- **The Nesbitt Inn** (Nantucket; ☎ 508/228-0156): Dolly and Nobby Noblit are long-time Nantucketers, whose rooming house harkens back to a simple time on the Island. All of the rooms in the inn have shared bathrooms. See p. 249.
- **Edgartown Inn** (Martha’s Vineyard; ☎ 508/627-4794): This quirky, old-fashioned inn is located in the heart of Edgartown. Smells of freshly baked goodies fill the air, and the staff is friendly and helpful. Most important, prices have stayed reasonable, a rarity on the Vineyard. See p. 286.

6 The Best Restaurants

It wasn’t long ago that “fancy” food in these parts began and ended with classic French. Several spots still uphold the old standards, but the New American Revolution has sparked ever-more inventive ways to highlight local delicacies. The best luxury hotels (see above) all maintain superlative restaurants, and soaring on par with them are the following choices, some chef-owned and all truly memorable.

- **La Cucina Sul Mare** (Falmouth; ☎ 508/548-5600): The constant line outside this Main Street restaurant will be the first hint at its popularity. You’ll soon see why. Chef Mark Ciflone and his wife Cynthia have created a very special establishment, with a top-notch waitstaff and a romantic and fun atmosphere. Mark’s dishes are delicious, from his signature

lasagna to the lobster *fra diavolo*. Portions are huge. See p. 98.

- **The Regatta of Cotuit at the Crocker House** (Cotuit; ☎ 508/428-5715): What most distinguishes the Regatta from its competition is the sensational service, far exceeding most local establishments. In addition, the Regatta of Cotuit has a quintessential old Cape Cod setting—the building was once a stagecoach inn, and the decor is formal Federal style. Food here is consistently excellent, with fresh ingredients, generous portions, and creative preparations. See p. 121.
- **Ristorante Barolo** (Hyannis; ☎ 508/778-2878): This wonderful Italian restaurant is tucked away in an office complex on North Street. The authentic Northern Italian cuisine is carefully prepared and served with style and exuberance. It's a romantic spot for a special dinner but also a good choice for a large group. See p. 119.
- **abbicci** (Yarmouth Port; ☎ 508/362-3501): It's a bit of a shock to find this sophisticated Northern Italian restaurant tucked into an antique Cape on the Old King's Highway. Those in the know have discovered abbicci, though, and it can be tough to get a reservation here on a summer weekend. Instead, go during the week when the skilled staff is a little more relaxed and you can linger over the delicate cuisine and the fine wine that should accompany it. See p. 130.
- **28 Atlantic** (Chatham; ☎ 508/432-5400): This restaurant at the Wequassett Inn and Resort in Chatham has recently undergone a multimillion-dollar makeover, and the results are impressive. Floor-to-ceiling plate-glass windows give diners a panoramic view of Pleasant Bay as they dine in this elegant setting. The menu is loaded with delicacies from around the world. Professional waiters will see to your comfort and thorough satisfaction. See p. 168.
- **The Bramble Inn Restaurant** (Brewster; ☎ 508/896-7644): An elegantly established entry in the Lower Cape dining scene, this is a favorite for those who don't mind a rather steeply priced, four-course, fixed-price dinner. The five intimate dining rooms are decorated with antique china and fresh flowers. Chef Ruth Manchester is a local favorite for her extraordinary, evolving cuisine. See p. 150.
- **Lorraine's** (Provincetown; ☎ 508/487-6074): This is exciting cuisine, part Mexican, part New American and all sensational. Even people who don't like Mexican food should try Lorraine's. Start your meal off with a shot of Tequila from the four-page menu and chase it with their special recipe tomato juice. Now you're off and running. Try something different—you can hardly help it here—like the sea scallops flambéed in tequila and topped with green-chile sauce. See p. 224.
- **Oran Mór** (Nantucket; ☎ 508/228-8655): Chef/owner Peter Wallace has worked his magic on this humble space, transforming it into an elegant and very romantic setting for his unusual and creative cuisine. His eclectic style ranges from very spicy, hot fusion to simple international dishes, with many grilled items on the menu. An excellent sommelier is on hand to assist wine lovers. See p. 253.
- **L'étoile** (Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard; ☎ 508/627-5187): This exquisite conservatory at the elegant Charlotte Inn has long been the best restaurant on the Vineyard, if not the entire region. The fixed-price dinner, a triumph

of French cuisine, may be a tad extravagant, but . . . for a special

occasion, you can't do any better than this. See p. 290.

7 The Best Clam Shacks

- **The Clam Shack** (Falmouth Harbor; ☎ 508/540-7758): The ultimate clam shack sits on the edge of the harbor and serves up reasonably priced fried seafood with all the fixings. Order the fried clams (with bellies, please!), and squeeze into the picnic tables beside the counter to await your feast. See p. 101.
- **Mill Way** (Barnstable Harbor; ☎ 508/362-2760): Sort of a gourmet clam shack, Mill Way offers succulent specialties beyond the usual picnic-table fare. This is a seasonal joint (open May to mid-Oct), and when it's open, it's packed, so go early and hungry. See p. 122.
- **Cap't Cass Rock Harbor Seafood** (Orleans; no phone): Take a photo of the family in front of this shack covered with colorful buoys, then go inside and chow down. Hearty portions of simply prepared fresh fish keep diners coming back year after year. See p. 179.
- **Moby Dick's Restaurant** (Wellfleet; ☎ 508/349-9795): Unfortunately, word has spread about this terrific restaurant, and it can get pretty mobbed here around suppertime. Still, it's a terrific place to

bring the family, screaming kids and all. The clambake special is a 1½-pound lobster, native Monomoy steamed clams, and corn on the cob. Perfect. See p. 198.

- **Sayle's Seafood** (Nantucket; ☎ 508/228-4599): Take a 10-minute walk from town on Washington Street Extension, and you'll arrive at this fish store-cum-clam shack. Charlie Sayles is a local fisherman, and everything here is deliciously fresh. Get your fried clams to go, and eat them picnic-style at the beach. See p. 243.
- **The Bite** (Menemsha, Martha's Vineyard; ☎ 508/645-9239): A travel writer once called it the best restaurant on Martha's Vineyard, perhaps in retaliation for a high-priced meal in Edgartown. Nevertheless, this is a top-shelf clam shack, tucked away in a picturesque fishing village. Order your meal to go and stroll over to the beach, which has the best sunset views on the island. The fried clams are delicious; some say the secret is the batter. Of course, the fish, unloaded just steps away, couldn't be fresher. What more could you want? See p. 278.

8 The Best Shopping

No matter how spectacular the scenery or splendid the weather, certain towns have so many intriguing shops that you'll be lured away from the beach, at least temporarily. The inventory is so carefully culled or created that just browsing can be sufficient entertainment, but slip a credit card into your cutoffs just in case.

- **Chatham:** Old-fashioned, tree-shaded Main Street is packed with inviting storefronts, including the **Chatham Glass Company** (☎ 508/945-5547), where you can literally look over their shoulders as glass treasures take shape, and **Mark, Fore & Strike** for classic and sporty Cape Cod clothes

(☎ 508/945-0568). See p. 164 and p. 112.

- **Wellfleet:** The commercial district is 2 blocks long; the art zone is twice that. Pick up a walking map to locate the galleries in town: **Cherrystone Gallery** (☎ 508/349-3026) tops the don't-miss list. Seekers of low-key chic will want to check out two designers, **Hannah** (☎ 508/349-9884) and **Karol Richardson** (☎ 508/349-6378). See p. 195 and 196. For designer produce and impeccable seafood, peruse the array at the homey **Hatch's Fish & Produce Market** (☎ 508/349-2810 for fish, or 508/349-6734 for produce) behind Town Hall. See p. 199.
- **Provincetown:** Overlooking the import junk that floods the center of town, the 3-mile gamut of Commercial Street is a shopaholic's dream. It's all here, seemingly direct from SoHo: sensual, cutting-edge clothing (for every sex and permutation thereof), art, jewelry, antiques, and more. And whatever you really need but didn't know you needed can be found at **Marine**

Specialties (☎ 508/487-1730), a warehouse packed with surplus essentials. See p. 214.

- **Nantucket:** Imagine Martha Stewart cloned a hundredfold, and you'll have some idea of the tenor of shops in this well-preserved 19th-century town. Centre Street—known as “Petticoat Row” in whaling days—still caters to feminine tastes, and the town's many esteemed antiques stores would never deign to present anything less than the genuine article. See p. 241.
- **Edgartown:** Though it's the dowdiest of Martha's Vineyard's towns, this ferry port boasts the best shops, from **Bramhall & Dunn** for housewares (☎ 508/693-6437) to **The Great Put On** for designer and contemporary women's wear (☎ 508/627-5495); see p. 282. And don't miss Carly Simon's **Midnight Farm** (☎ 508/693-1997) for country home and personal furnishings. See p. 282. You might want to save some cash, though, for the multi-ethnic boutiques of Oak Bluffs or the pricey preppy redoubts of Edgartown.

9 The Best Bars & Clubs

- **Roadhouse Café** (Hyannis; ☎ 508/775-2386): Most consider this the best bar in town and, even better, it's for grown-ups. There is live music nightly in the new “Back Door Bistro” and a sizzling Monday-night Jazz Series popular with locals and those in the know. See p. 122.
- **The Beachcomber** (Wellfleet; ☎ 508/349-6055): Perched atop the towering dunes of Cahoon Hollow Beach, this bar and dance club is one of the most scenic watering holes on Cape Cod. Although the crowd tends to be on the young and rowdy side, the young at heart are also welcome.

You *will* end up on the dance floor, so wear comfortable shoes. See p. 199.

- **Crown & Anchor** (Provincetown; ☎ 508/487-1430): The specialty bars at this large complex span leather, disco, comedy, drag shows, and cabaret. See p. 227.
- **The Chicken Box** (Nantucket; ☎ 508/228-9717): The Box is the rocking spot for the 20-something crowd, but depending on the band or theme (reggae, disco, and so on), sometimes it seems like the whole island is shoving their way in here. Jimmy Buffett has been known to make an appearance late at night

at least once every summer to jam with the band. See p. 258.

- **Offshore Ale Company** (Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard; ☎ 508/693-2626): The Vineyard's first

and only brewpub features eight locally made beers on tap and entertainment 6 nights a week in season. See p. 298.