

Massachusetts: Cape Cod & Provincetown

Bike Vacation Only

Coastal forests, breathtaking seashores, and colorful cliffs frame your Cape Cod bike adventure. Cycle the Cape's famous Rail Trail to scenic lighthouses, gingerbread cottages, artists' colonies, and tranquil beaches. Along the way, serene marshes, sweeping dunes, lush lagoons, and breathtaking shores greet you at every turn. Feast on a picnic in the Cape Cod National Seashore National Park. Ride through the Manuel F. Correllus State Forest, a 5,000-acre pine and scrub oak forest crisscrossed with hiking trails. In Menemsha—a working fishing port and setting of the film *Jaws*—absorb the seaside ambiance. And from the brilliantly colored Aquinnah Cliffs, revel in panoramic views of the sea stretched out before you.

Cultural Highlights

Ride the Cape Cod Rail Trail along lovely vistas
Stop at Salt Pond Visitors Center for views of Nauset Marsh and a lesson on natural habitats
Pause for a picnic lunch along the Cape Cod National Seashore
Enjoy a tour and cheese tasting at The Grey Barn and Farm in West Tisbury
Take a spin on the Vineyard's State Beach bike path
Browse the handicrafts of Vineyard Haven's wonderful artisans
Cycle the pastoral pathways of Correllus State Forest on a dedicated bike path
Pedal along the soaring Aquinnah cliffs and through Menemsha fishing village
Visit the Mytoi Japanese Garden on Chappaquiddick Island
Ferry across the Vineyard Sound

What to Expect

This tour offers mostly easy terrain with the occasional rolling hill and the opportunity for some longer moderate rides. Our VBT van support shuttle is always available throughout the trip. During peak season, roughly July 1 to August 25, there is more traffic on the Cape and Islands, but you will get to experience the best weather and have the opportunity to explore lively bike paths, beaches, shops, and restaurants.

Tour Duration: 6 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 5 - 57

Average Cycling Time: 01:15 - 03:30

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 63°/48°, Jun 72°/57°, Sep 71°/56°, Oct 62°/46°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 3.7, Jun 3.6, Sep 3.9, Oct 4.0

DAY 1: Arrive in Chatham, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod / VBT Bicycle Vacation begins

Travel to Cape Cod and the Chatham Bars Inn. If you're flying to Massachusetts, VBT offers a shuttle from Boston's Logan International Airport. The shuttle works on a "show and go" basis and will make its only departure from the airport to the resort at 12:30 p.m. Shuttle reservations are not required or available. Meet the driver outside Terminal C, on the upper (second) level, at the second island out. Your shuttle bus will carry "Access Express" titles, and the driver will be holding a VBT sign.

If you are scheduled to arrive at the airport after 12:30 p.m. or are delayed, you will take a taxi or bus at your own expense. VBT does recommend that guests try to arrange their arrival at Logan International Airport prior to 12:30 p.m. as Chatham is approximately an hour and 45 minutes from Boston (traffic permitting). If you are delayed or your travel plans change, please contact the resort; they will pass your message on to your VBT trip leaders. If you are driving to the Cape, we recommend that you leave your vehicle in Chatham in a lot at the Chatham Bars Inn while there. You will need to move your car to Woods Hole at the remote parking lot near the ferry terminal while on the island on Day 3 of the tour. The cost will be approximately \$15 per day.

Your Cape Cod bike tour begins at our Cape Cod accommodations, Chatham Bars Inn, located in Chatham, Massachusetts. After settling in, meet your trip leaders at 3:30 p.m. for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short warm-up ride and introduction to the area. Your short jaunt will give you your first views of the Atlantic Ocean at the Chatham Lighthouse & Coast Guard Station.

Check in is at 4:00 p.m. Your room may be ready earlier; please confirm with the front desk upon arrival. Later, join your fellow travelers over a welcome reception, followed by dinner at the inn.

Hotel: Chatham Bars Inn

Meals: Dinner

Today's Ride Choice:

Warm-Up Chatham: 5 miles

What to Expect: Your warm-up spin gives you the opportunity to fit your bike, shift the gears and practice riding. You will follow gentle terrain around Chatham and may extend your reel to visit Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge.

DAY 2: Cape Cod Rail Trail / Cape Cod National Seashore

Your cycling this morning takes you from the resort to the Cape Cod Rail Trail. The rail trail follows a former railroad passage to Salt Pond Visitor's Center. The Rail Trail's paved surface, few hills, and well-marked automobile crossings make it ideal for biking.

Much of today's Cape Cod bike route runs through the protected Cape Cod National Seashore. You'll stop en route at the Salt Pond Visitor Center in Eastham. This is Cape Cod National Seashore's primary visitor center, with frequent orientation movies, a well-stocked bookstore, and a comprehensive museum. Offering breathtaking views of Nauset Marsh, the center also offers convenient access to the popular 1.5-mile Nauset Marsh Trail and the Buttonbush Trail. You may extend your ride along a beautiful coastal loop, stopping at Coast Guard Beach, Nauset Light Beach, Nauset Light, and the Three Sister Lighthouses. Stop for an included picnic in the Cape Cod National Seashore National Park. Visit the historic landmark and tidal flats of First Encounter Beach, the site of the first encounter between the Native Americans and Pilgrims prior to their settling in Plymouth. Head back to reward yourself at The Sparrows chocolate shop. You may ride or shuttle back to the inn.

Back at the resort, enjoy some free time to relax around the swimming pool and hot tubs, play some tennis, relax on the beach, or take a stroll into the quaint New England village of Chatham. There are great restaurant options for dinner on your own tonight. Your trip leaders will be happy to help with recommendations.

Hotel: Chatham Bars Inn

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 9 – 57 miles

Morning

Chatham to Doane Rock Picnic Area: 29 miles

Afternoon

Doane Rock Picnic Area to Orleans: 9 miles

Orleans to Chatham Bars Inn Plus: 19 miles

What to Expect: Our morning ride follows trafficked roads to the Cape Cod Rail Trail, which leads all the way to the Salt Pond Visitor's Center on a mostly flat, paved path with clearly marked automobile crossings. The flat 12-mile option passes through sawgrass, sand dunes and wooded glades. Those looking for a long ride may cycle back to Chatham.

DAY 3: Ferry to Martha's Vineyard / Oak Bluffs / Edgartown / Chappaquiddick Island

After breakfast, you'll shuttle (approximately 1.5 hours) to Woods Hole and board a ferry to Martha's Vineyard. (If you have driven to Chatham, you will drive your own car and park it in Woods Hole remote parking and use their complimentary shuttle service to the ferry terminal before embarking the ferry.) "The Vineyard," as locals know it, is New England's largest island, 23 miles long by 9 miles wide. Under the protective arm of Cape Cod, the cold Labrador Current is warded off from the island's shores while waters warmed by the Gulf Stream flow up from the south.

Your leaders will unload your bicycle at the park upon exiting the ferry. Oak Bluffs has been a summer resort since the early 1800s, and its history is reflected in the colorful gingerbread cottages surrounding the village green. The town's Flying Horses Carousel has been in operation since 1884! You'll ride along the State Beach bike path to Edgartown, home of your hotel for the next three nights. Lunch today is on your own; your leaders will offer recommendations for the best local cuisine.

If you'd like more riding time today, board the "Chappy" ferry for a three-minute sail across the 300-yard strait that separates Martha's Vineyard from Chappaquiddick Island. With short trips and no timetable, the Chappaquiddick Ferry is always "on time." The island's main attractions are, of course, the infamous Dike Bridge, and the Mytoi Japanese Garden, set in a lovely pine forest.

Later, return to the inn, settle into your room, and perhaps take a swim in the heated pool. You will have many options for dinner one of Edgartown's celebrated restaurants. Your trip leaders will have suggestions for you.

Hotel: Harbor View Hotel & Resort

Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 14 or 17 miles

Afternoon

Vineyard Haven to Edgartown: 17 miles

OR

Oak Bluffs to Edgartown: 14 miles

What to Expect: Explore Oak Bluffs and its beloved Gingerbread Cottages. From Oak Bluffs, cycle into Edgartown.

Once in Edgartown, take the 'On Time' Chappy Ferry to Chappaquiddick Island. Here you'll want to see Mytoi Japanese Gardens and the infamous Dike Bridge.

DAY 4: Vineyard Haven / Art galleries & crafters

After breakfast and a short shuttle, you'll ride from Vineyard Haven, Martha's Vineyard's only year-round port of entry. Then ride a rewarding loop to West Chop Lighthouse and Lambert's Cove Road. As you cycle along the island's interior, stop in for visits to Chilmark Pottery, Martha's Vineyard Glassworks, Polly Hill Arboretum, the Field Gallery, and the Granary Gallery. The Granary Gallery boasts impressive paintings, sculptures, and photography from more than 300 of the island's most celebrated artists.

Ride to the Grey Barn and Farm for an included tour and cheese tasting. After a picnic lunch prepared by your trip leaders, cycle back to Edgartown by way of the paved bike path through the Manuel F. Correllus State Forest. Located in the center of the island, the park is a 5,000-acre pine and scrub oak forest crisscrossed with hiking trails.

The rest of the day and dinner are at your leisure.

Hotel: Harbor View Hotel & Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 – 28 miles

Morning

Tisbury & West Tisbury: 15 miles

Afternoon

West Tisbury to Edgartown: 13 miles

What to Expect: Ride to Vineyard Haven, the main village of Tisbury and then on to the West Chop Lighthouse. Learn about organic farming on the Vineyard at The Grey Barn and Farm during a tour and cheese tasting followed by a picnic lunch.

Visit local artists and galleries as you ride through West Tisbury.

DAY 5: Menemsha / Aquinnah Cliffs

Today you will be heading “up island.” The term comes from sailing days, when a vessel was running “up” its longitude, sailing west away from the prime meridian. In a similar manner, a ferry always comes “up” from Nantucket, which lies to the east of the Vineyard.

Cycle to the breathtaking Aquinnah Cliffs and beach on the western part of the island. Perhaps the best-known natural feature of the Vineyard, the brilliantly colored cliffs at Aquinnah are a mile long and sprinkled with tropical fossils. The Aquinnah Lighthouse stands atop the cliffs, striking a very dramatic pose, and the beaches below are a delightful spot to picnic and swim.

Along the way, you ride through the fishing village of Menemsha. Used as the setting for the film Jaws, the village continues to serve as a working fishing port and is home to a U.S. Coast Guard station. A fun and convenient seasonal bike ferry connects Menemsha with Aquinnah. Enjoy some free time back at the resort or in town before your farewell celebration dinner.

Hotel: Harbor View Hotel & Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today's Ride Choices:

Cumulative Distance Range: 17 - 47 miles

Morning

Ferry Two Way – Aquinnah Cliffs: 24 miles

OR

No Ferry – Aquinnah Cliffs: 30 miles

Afternoon

Return to Edgartown: 17

What to Expect: Cycle along bike paths and back roads and take a unique bike ferry to the Aquinnah Cliffs. Here you can browse the shops and visit the lighthouse. The views from the escarpment overlooking the Atlantic Ocean are magnificent. Afterward, return to the bike ferry and ride to Menemsha, the backdrop town in the classic film Jaws, and your lunch spot for today. Enjoy the return ride along the island roads through Menemsha, Chilmark, and West Tisbury and along the bike path through Manuel F. Correllus State Forest back to Edgartown.

DAY 6: Ride to Katama Beach / Depart / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

Your Cape Cod bike journey ends after breakfast, where you may join an early-morning ride to Katama Beach, also known as South Beach, and stroll three miles of barrier beach on the South Shore of the island.

After returning to the hotel to check out, you transfer to Oak Bluffs. Your trip leaders can recommend a spot to pick up a packed lunch for your journey back to the mainland, or purchase lunch on board the ferry. After a 45-minute crossing to Woods Hole, a shuttle from Woods Hole Ferry Terminal to Logan International Airport will be provided, departing Woods Hole at 1:05 p.m. We recommend a flight out of Boston no earlier than 5:00 p.m. Guests who parked their cars at the remote parking lot will board a complimentary shuttle service back to the lot.

Meals: Breakfast

Today's Ride Choice:

Cumulative Distance Range: 8 miles

Morning

Katama Beach: 8 miles

Edgartown to Katama Beach Loop: 8 miles

What to Expect: Enjoy an early morning ride to Katama Beach. Cycle through Edgartown for one last outing to the Atlantic shore. Return your bike no later than 9:30 a.m.

Meet in the lobby for an 10:30 a.m. shuttle to Oak Bluffs for lunch on your own and a ferry back to the mainland.

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Chatham Bars Inn (Days: 1,2)

This elegant beachfront resort, which was once a semi-private hunting lodge, has recently been named the #1 Best Waterfront Hotel in the US by USA Today in September 2022. Its gracious and chic rooms feature air conditioning, WiFi access, flat-screen televisions, and Nespresso coffee makers. After rewarding days of riding, relax at the spa, on the private beach, or at the heated oceanfront pool. You may also take advantage of the extensive fitness and games offerings, including tennis courts and a croquet court.

Harbor View Hotel & Resort (Days: 3,4,5)

The Harbor View Hotel & Resort, located in the very heart of Edgartown, is the perfect Vineyard lodging, with its stunning ocean views and refined Martha's Vineyard décor. Your room offers all the amenities you need for a comfortable stay, including a flat-screen television, air conditioning, and bath robes. Bettini Restaurant offers delicious seafood dishes, and you can enjoy a quiet drink at the hotel bar.