

BEYOND THE BEACH

A low-key, low-impact getaway
to an Atlantic island paradise



MIKE GALVIN

By Allison Tibaldi

NANTUCKET'S MYTHICAL BEAUTY HAS inspired generations of artists, writers, beachcombers and stargazers. With 82 miles of unspoiled coastline, the island paradise provides breathtaking views and seashell-strewn shores. Visitors return year after year, beckoned by its nautical charm and understated elegance. But dramatic landscapes and

pristine beaches aren't the only story. With no chain stores, fast food or traffic lights, an Americana spirit infuses the quaint downtown. The independently owned shops, eateries and boutiques are reminiscent of when life was just a tad simpler.

For visitors seeking low-impact travel, 32 miles of bike paths, the efficient islandwide WAVE shuttle and a compact, pedestrian-friendly village make it a fine car-optional vacation.

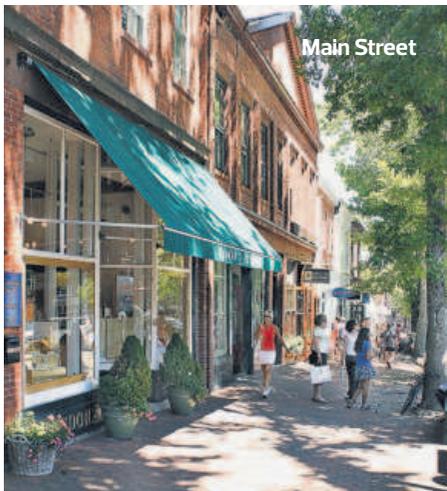
Nantucket is located 30 miles off

the shore of Cape Cod and getting there is part of the fun. Catch the year-round ferry from Hyannis, with more than a dozen daily departures in high season, and you'll be treated to striking seascapes along your breezy journey. The ferry docks at the picture-perfect harbor brimming with seaworthy vessels and you're just a short stroll from the island's premier hotels, beaches and attractions.

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THE BEACHES

The variety and quality of beaches on this 14-mile-long island are dazzling. Nearly all of its beaches, including private ones, are publicly accessible via designated entryways. If you're looking for calm seas, stick to the island's north side, where public beaches such as Jetties and Dionis Beach present tranquil waters. The public beaches on the island's southern fringe can have rough surf with powerful riptides. Kite fliers favor the stretch of sand on the western edge of south-facing Surfside Beach, so you'll be sharing the beach with whimsical flying objects and frolicking families. If you're seeking aquatic adventures, surfers ride the break at south shore's Cisco Beach, where surfboards and stand-up paddleboards can be rented. Novices can take a lesson from the experienced instructors at Nantucket Island Surf School. nantucketsurfing.com



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If the fickle New England weather doesn't cooperate, you can still find engaging indoor diversions that highlight Nantucket's rich maritime history. The Whaling Museum (nha.org) is not just for fans of Melville's *Moby-Dick*. If you're curious about the folklore, traditions and history of Nantucket, you'll find artifacts and exhibits that paint a vivid picture of the island during its heyday as a whaling capital.

Elegant hand-woven rattan and wood baskets — Nantucket Lightship Baskets — are a unique island-made craft and stylistically in tune with the island's Quaker simplicity. You can find these tempting beauties for sale at a number of shops in town (though with astronomical price tags). The best way to gain some insight into their heritage is by viewing the collection at the Nantucket Lightship Basket Museum. Open seasonally. Admission \$5. nantucketlightshipbasketmuseum.org ●

ISLAND LIVING RECOMMENDATIONS

FRESH EATS

Epicureans will find a range of global cuisines, but expect fresh seafood to dominate. Locals flock to casual **Sayle's Seafood** to feast on the ocean-to-plate offerings. Order take-out and dine al fresco on their rustic patio.

► 99 Washington Extension; 508-228-4599; saylesseafood.com

Treat your taste buds to a confection at **Petticoat Row Bakery**, which serves nostalgic baked goods with a home-spun edge, such as lemon squares and oatmeal raisin cookies. Morning buns — buttery croissant dough rolled in brown sugar — are a house specialty.

► 35 Centre St.; 508-228-3700; petticoatrowbakery.com

At **Ventuno**, house made pasta, hearty meats and fresh fish are served in a romantic setting. Start your meal with Nantucket oysters paired with a Campari-infused Italian ice. The radiator di farro is a lush tangle of woody wild mushrooms sautéed with pasta so light it could levitate off the plate. Open seasonally.

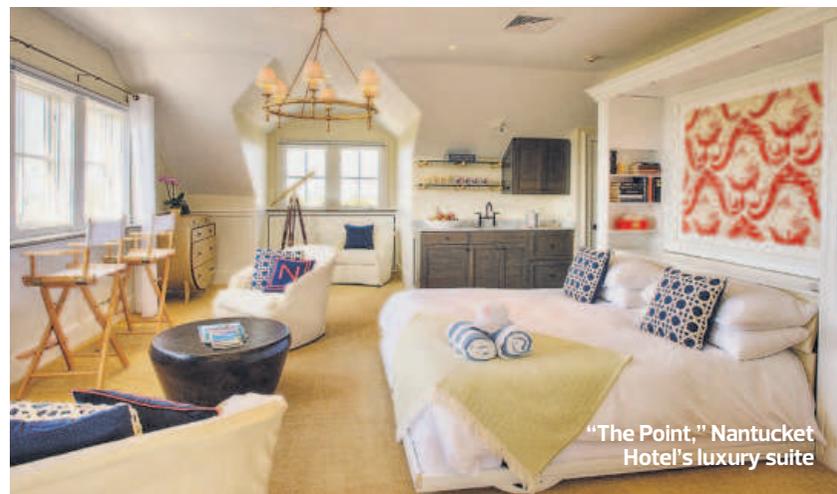
► 21 Federal St.; 508-228-4242; ventunorestaurant.com

POTENT POTABLES

If you're partial to hops and barley beverages, Nantucket has its very own craft brewery, **Cisco**. Give one of their specialty Island Reserve beers a try or sip the English-style Whale's Tale Pale Ale, a balanced thirst quencher.

► 5 Bartlett Farm Rd.; 508-325-5929; ciscobrewers.com

If you require something more



KIT NOBLE PHOTOGRAPHY

fortifying, clink glasses with a local crowd at the **Rose & Crown**.

► 23 South Water St.; 508-228-2595; theroseandcrown.com

COZY DIGS

The 60-room **Nantucket Hotel** blends old-school charm with sophisticated comfort. Complimentary lemonade and cookies are an afternoon delight.

► 77 Easton St.; 508-228-4747; thenantuckethotel.com

If you're looking for lodging that blends Nantucket's past and present with panache, consider the **Jared Coffin House**, housed in an 1845 mansion downtown. The 30 sumptuously furnished rooms in the main building are available seasonally, while 13 rooms in the adjacent Daniel Webster building provide guests with an intimate experience year-round.

► 29 Broad St.; 508-228-2400; jaredcoffinhouse.com

A CYCLING UTOPIA

Family-owned **Young's Bicycle Shop** has been renting two-wheelers since 1931. Owner Harvey Young will happily map out a ride to suit anyone but recommends the 20-mile round-trip ride to the adorable yesteryear village of Siasconset, locally known as 'Sconset.

► 6 Broad St.; 508-228-1151; youngsbicycleshop.com

GETTING THERE

Ride the high-speed catamaran (one-hour) or traditional car-and-passenger ferry (2 hours, 15 minutes) from Hyannis year-round. Additionally, there is seasonal high-speed service from New Bedford and Harwich Port. The interisland ferry runs between Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard from late May until early October.

► nantucketchamber.org/arrive

Nantucket's airport provides year-round service from Boston, Hyannis, Martha's Vineyard and White Plains, N.Y.

YEAR-ROUND FERRIES FROM HYANNIS

Hy-Line Cruises: Daily high-speed ferries year-round, with an additional departure on Friday evening.

► 220 Ocean St.; 800-492-8082; hylinecruises.com

The Steamship Authority: Daily traditional and high-speed ferries in high season.

► 1 Steamboat Wharf; 508-228-0262; steamshipauthority.com

SEASONAL SERVICE:

Seastreak Ferry from New Bedford: operates May 24 through Sept. 4, departs from 49 State Pier.

► New Bedford; 800-262-8743; seastreak.com

Freedom Cruise Line from Harwich Port, Cape Cod: starts in late May.

► 508-432-8999; nantucketislandferry.com



Ventuno's burrata capellaci with spinach, pistachio and parmigiano bread crumbs

ANTOINETTE BRUNO/STARCHEFS