

► Massachusetts

# Nantucket's QUIET ALLURE

*As the days grow shorter and the air becomes cooler, the best of this captivating island is yet to come*

BY ANDREA E. McHUGH

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSAN DUCA

Easy Street, which runs along the harbor, is appropriately named.

There's a certain unexplainable magic that washes over you when setting foot on the island of Nantucket. Just 30 miles off the mainland, "the Grey Lady," as it's dubbed, seems a world away with 82 miles of unspoiled beaches and a downtown not much changed from its whaling days.

Stoplights, neon signs, big box stores and restaurant chains are refreshingly absent. Though the enclave of about 10,000 residents grows nearly eight fold during the summer, there is an unhurried pace along the cobblestone streets and among the iconic saltbox cottages when fall arrives.

Unless you're planning an extended stay, leave the car behind and hop aboard the M/V Iyanough, the Steamship Authority's high-speed passenger ferry. With multiple daily departure times from Hyannis May through December, it takes just one hour to deliver you to the island. Bikes and leashed dogs are welcome aboard and the WiFi will allow you to tie up any loose ends before your arrival.

When time is of the essence, Cape Air, Island Airlines and Nantucket Airlines have daily flights year-round (about 15 minutes to fly from Hyannis), while larger airlines service Nantucket during peak season.

There's no shortage of luxury accommodations that harken back to the island's halcyon days, including The White Elephant Hotel and the new Nantucket Hotel & Resort. But the best way to get the inside scoop and discover local hidden gems is at an inn or bed and breakfast. Many are former sea and whaling captain's homes that have been beautifully restored with 21st-century conveniences.

## ► Massachusetts

Nantucket Island Inns, a trio of centrally located historic homes and bed and breakfasts, include the Periwinkle Inn, the Scallop Inn and the Nantucket Basket. Located just steps from the Nantucket Whaling Museum and with 10 rooms offering a variety of bedding options, the Periwinkle is perfectly suited for a private getaway or for a golfing group.

One of the best ways to experience Nantucket is on two wheels. If you don't bring your own bike, there are plenty of rental outlets. Our innkeeper at the Periwinkle recommended Young's Bicycle Shop on Steamboat Wharf – a family-run institution since 1931.

Nantucket's celebrated bike trails are smooth, wide and well maintained, so with our destination plotted on an easy-to-read map, we headed out of town to Bartlett's Farm, the island's oldest and largest family-owned farm with more than 125 acres of cultivated fields, acres of certified organic fields and greenhouses.



Miacomet Golf Course, right, is scenic and old-school. Siasconset Village, above, is a stroller's delight. Brant Point Lighthouse, bottom left, defines the island's charm.

The success of *Bartlett's Farm Cookbook* prompted the family to open a commercial kitchen that is an ideal spot for a casual lunch best enjoyed outside to take advantage of the hilltop property's gentle coastal breezes. Bartlett's is also where local restaurants, including Cru and Le Languedoc, source their produce. Chef Michael LaScola of critically acclaimed American Seasons sources Bartlett's famous green tomatoes, Swiss chard, turnips and fresh herbs.

Down the road you'll find the Cisco Brewers campus tucked behind a bucolic landscape that ultimately leads to a handcrafted beer, wine and spirits paradise. Three separate tasting nooks in the pastoral setting feature Cisco microbrews (nearly 20 varieties), Nantucket Vineyard Wines (multiple varieties including Sailor's Delight, a balanced blend of Merlot and Syrah grapes aged for 18 months in French oak barrels) and Triple Eight vodkas, gins and a 10-year Notch. The vibe is decidedly laid-back and The Lobster Trap food truck serves lobster rolls, Nantucket Bay scallops and calamari, plus beef or swordfish sliders.





The quaint shops on Main Street are ideal for window-shopping.

Bartlett's borders Miacomet Golf Club, Nantucket's only public, 18-hole, year-round, links-style course. Just three miles from downtown and a mile from the sea, it was recently voted the National Golf Course Owners Association's 2014 New England Golf Course of the year. With wide fairways, the course is attractive to players of all skill levels.

Traditionally, private Sankaty Head Golf Club has welcomed non-members October through May for a fee. The 18-hole links-style course, perched on the edge of Siasconset, is crowned by the iconic Sankaty Head Lighthouse and enjoys a coveted reputation for breathtaking scenery and championship caliber greens.

After working up an appetite on the links, you'll find Nantucket has no shortage of culinary talent. At The Proprietors Bar & Table, executive chef/co-owner Tom Berry artfully combines international flavors with fresh finds from small farms and producers raised specifically for the restaurant. With imaginative, sharable plates and dishes hot off the plancha (the grill), the menu is a culinary ode to the "well-traveled palate," but stops short of pretentiousness. A global wine list along with seasonally driven craft cocktails and small-batch beers on draft makes it easy to find a new favorite.

Nantucket's welcoming arms are a sweet respite in an otherwise hurried world. Though its reputation as a blueblood playground is well earned, it's the island's simpler pleasures that shine in quieter months. ☺

Full & 1/3 advertisers going here