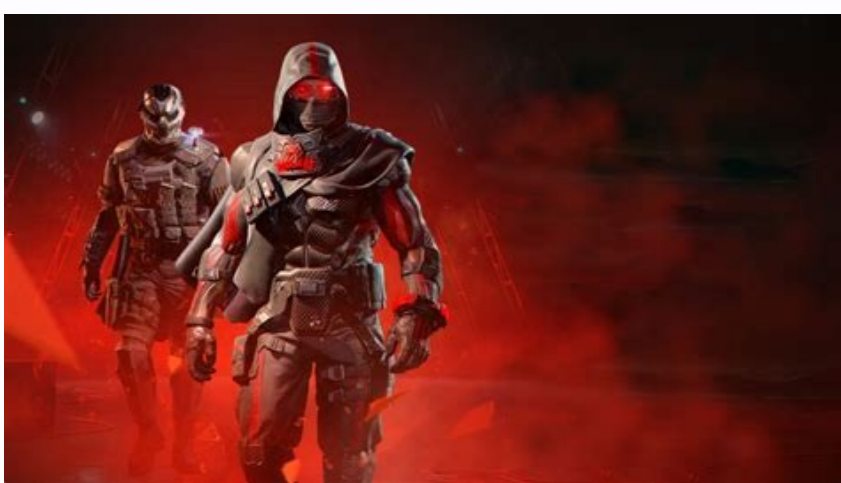


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We may earn commission from links on this page, but we only recommend products we back. Why trust us? Advertisement - Continue Reading Below Yields: 2 servings Prep Time: 0 hours 5 mins Cook Time: 0 hours 10 mins Total Time: 0 hours 15 mins 1 pint cherry tomatoes 1/2 bulb fennel or yellow onion, sliced thin 1/2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil Salt and pepper 2 tsp. prepared olive tapenade 2 cod, halibut, or snapper fillets (6 ounces each) This ingredient shopping module is created and maintained by a third party, and imported onto this page. You may be able to find more information about this and similar content on their web site. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Lay the tomatoes and fennel or onion in a baking dish and toss with the olive oil, salt, and pepper. Sift 1 tablespoon of the tapenade on each fish fillet and lay the fillets in the baking dish with the vegetables. Place the dish in the oven. Roast for 10 to 12 minutes, until the tomatoes are soft and the flesh of the fish flakes with gentle pressure from your finger. Serve each fillet with 1/2 cup prepared couscous mixed with 2 tablespoons toasted pine nuts and chopped fresh basil. Advertisement - Continue Reading Below My father used to say that you were guaranteed good weather if you spotted a boat as you drove across the Cape Cod Canal—the thin strip of water that separates the 70-mile-long peninsula from mainland Massachusetts. As our Ford Pinto station wagon rattled over the Sagamore Bridge, my brother and I would press our foreheads to the window and hope for a sighting. To this day, I religiously scan the water every time I hit the bridge. It's my signal to myself that I have left the real world behind—and it's just as reassuring as that first whiff of briny air or the sight of pine needles mixed with sand along the roadside. When I was growing up, my family rented shingled cottages in Chatham or Dennis, or stayed with friends in a beachfront apartment in Provincetown or a Victorian house in Harwich. A vacation on Cape Cod was all about simple pleasures: fishing off the Chatham drawbridge with my grandfather, putt-putt golfing in Dennisport, watching movies at the Wellfleet Drive-In Theatre (I saw Jaws there and, like half the country, was terrified to go in the water for years afterward). On sunny mornings, we'd debate whether to make the trek to the wide, wild beaches of the National Seashore or head to one of the placid coves on nearby Nantucket Sound. Gray days meant decamping to Provincetown, where my brother and I would create spin-art masterpieces at a toy shop while our parents explored the galleries. No trip to the Cape was complete without a platter of fried clams from a roadside shack. Later I discovered the Hamptons, with its designer shops and sleek nightclubs. The Cape began to feel a bit "ye olde" by comparison; the fudge shops and five-and-dimes didn't have quite the same allure. But something funny happened in my absence: the Cape stayed the same. When I started coming back after years away, I fell in love with its unpretentious charms all over again. Granted, there's now a Marc Jacobs store in Provincetown, but my childhood shell shop remains tucked away behind the saltwater taffy store. And despite the influx of big money in Chatham, the town band still plays in the park on summer Friday nights and local fire trucks still lumber down Main Street in the annual Fourth of July parade. Life hasn't changed much thanks in part to the locals: Cape Codders are a fiercely protective bunch—a reputation confirmed for me firsthand while I was eating day-boat scallops recently at Abba, a restaurant in Orleans. I made the mistake of telling some fellow diners that I was writing a story on the area. Suddenly they were all over me for my credentials. Did I have a place here? (Luckily, my parents bought a house in East Harwich a few years ago.) What was my favorite beach? Lobster roll? Hiking trail? It was quite an interrogation, but I passed. I guess I had earned my stripes—and the right to lead others to my favorite spots. Of course, narrowing down the whole Cape, with its myriad charming villages and hundreds of beaches, gave me butterflies. I know some people will ask why I left out a certain swimming hole or a particular seafood shack. But in my humble opinion, these are the places that best define Cape Cod and the joys of summer. Bounded by Buzzards Bay to the west, Cape Cod Bay to the north, and Nantucket Sound to the south, Cape Cod juts out into the Atlantic Ocean like a crooked arm making a fist. Perhaps to confound outsiders, the names of the four distinct regions don't really make geographic sense. The Upper Cape should be called the West Cape (or the Side Cape), since it runs north to south along the Cape Cod Canal and Buzzards Bay. On the "shoulder" of the arm is Sandwich, the Cape's oldest and most historic town. To the south are the more residential Bourne and Pocasset. In what would be the armpit is Falmouth, though its boutique-lined main street and windswept waterfront facing Vineyard Sound suggest nothing so uninviting. Across a small spit is Woods Hole, a little fishing town and home to a famous oceanographic institute. The only region with a name that actually makes sense, the Mid-Cape really is the middle of the peninsula. Hyannis, that famous Kennedy enclave, acts as Cape Cod's big city—and is therefore often avoided by residents from other parts, unless they need to shop at the mall, get their car repaired, or catch a ferry to Nantucket or Martha's Vineyard. But the place does have a buzzing downtown and the appealing sheltered coves of Hyannisport. (Many towns on the Cape comprise several smaller hamlets, one of them usually designated a "port.") The Mid-Cape also includes the wealthy, whitewashed village of Osterville, Barnstable Village (the largest town on the Cape), family-friendly Dennis, and Yarmouthport, great for shopping and restaurants. Confusingly, this area doesn't just include the lower reaches; it runs from the elbow of the arm all the way north to the crook, at the bay. The best-known town is Chatham, with its delightful downtown, picturesque lighthouse, and shifting Atlantic Ocean sandbars. The Lower Cape's other atmospheric villages are Brewster, nicknamed the Sea Captains' Town (more than 50 of them once lived here); Harwichport, a former whaling center; and Orleans, on a site that allegedly hosted its first European visitor in 1003—Leif Eriksson. Another puzzle: the Outer Cape encompasses both the inner, western side of the forearm, bordering Cape Cod Bay, and the protected Atlantic beaches of the Cape Cod National Seashore on the eastern side. The peninsula starts to get narrower and the landscape wilder in Eastham, which has no town center per se, but plenty of walking trails and beaches. Next up is Wellfleet, a longtime magnet for artists and (curiously) psychotherapists. Bracketed by dunes, narrow Truro is lined with waterfront cottage communities. Last stop: Provincetown, also called P-town, a haven for gay men and women, painters and photographers, writers and poets, fishermen and whale-watchers. The clapboard Chatham Bars Inn, in Chatham, was the first luxury hotel on Cape Cod and is still its toniest address, with prices (and a bit of attitude) to match. The place was opened by a wealthy Boston stockbroker in 1914, and you'll feel transported to his era when you're gazing at the ocean from a rattan chair on the wide porch. Across town on a sailboat-filled inlet, the Wequassett Resort & Golf Club, on Pleasant Bay, is Chatham's other top place to stay. A 1740's Colonial with lanterns has been converted into the main reception area; most guest rooms are in clapboard cottages scattered throughout 22 acres of gardens. The Little Inn on Pleasant Bay in South Orleans is down the road next to a cranberry bog, and sits high on a hill with fantastic views of the shoreline. White slipcovered furniture and pickled-wood ceilings create a beachy vibe. On a clear day you can see Martha's Vineyard from the nine-room Inn on the Sound, atop a bluff in Falmouth Heights. The motel-style Crow's Nest Resort in North Truro isn't the height of style, but its simple rooms have full kitchens—and you can walk right off the back porch and onto the bayside beach. Once run by the Coast Guard to protect boats navigating the Cape Cod Canal, the Wings Neck Lighthouse, in Pocasset, can now be booked by families or other groups. The keeper's cottage has views of the water from every room, three sweet bedrooms with vintage-style coverlets, and a gas grill and picnic table out back where you can cook the lunch you caught that morning. In the center of Sandwich, the Belfry Inn occupies three restored buildings, including a former church and the Painted Lady, a turreted 1882 Victorian house. Chatham's Captain's House Inn feels like a village unto itself; besides its captain's cottage, there's a Greek Revival mansion and converted stables. All the rooms at Eastham's Whalewalk Inn & Spa

are furnished with antiques, the most romantic is the tiny Salt Box Cottage. Ask the owners about the best hike and they'll send you to a place most locals have never heard of. Almost directly across the street from each other, sister properties Crowned Pointe and the Brass Key Guesthouse, in Provincetown, are both compounds of 19th-century houses centered on a pool and gardens. And they both attract a very social (and mostly gray) clientele. The Cape is covered with bungalow communities built in the 1930's through the 1960's. The houses look adorable on the outside, but the interiors often don't measure up. An exception: Eastham's Cottage Grove, whose knotty-pine paneling and vine Buge furnishings channel a Maine camp. The Colony of Wellfleet was originally an art gallery and hostelry for collectors. Ten Modernist cottages with slightly worn Midcentury furnishings are tended by owner Eleanor Stefani, who feels like your eccentric great-aunt. The more recently built, privately owned Cottages at Mau Shop Village, in the New Seabury resort development, are handled by both owners and rental agents. Abba, in Orleans, is widely touted as the Cape's best restaurant. Israeli-born chef Erez Pinhas dips into his heritage for dishes like falafel in a tahini-amba sauce, then spins the globe to Asia; his shrimp-and-lobster pad thai has a cutlike following. The small restaurant fills up fast, so if you can't get a reservation, ask for a seat at the tiled bar. Red Pheasant Inn, in a 200-year-old ship's chandlery in Dennis, sources ingredients from local producers including Not Enough Acres Farm down the road. It's worth the wait for a table at Terra Luna in North Truro, where Raina Stefani serves up creative concoctions like ancho-and-coffee-rubbed New York strip steak or roasted free-range chicken with bread pudding. With 18 tables in a Cape Cod cottage, the Nauset Beach Club Restaurant in East Orleans is a tough reservation to score. Don't miss the northern Italian trattoria's risotto of the day—green peas and fontina cheese one night, wild boar with funghi the next. Set in the basement of a Victorian house, Provincetown's Front Street is owned by Donna Aliperti and Kathleen Cotter, who can usually be seen in the kitchen making dishes like pan-seared salmon with Swiss chard dumplings, white bean coulis, and sage. For sushi as fresh as it gets, Inaho, in Yarmouthport, has the requisite shoji screens and a Japanese garden out back. Another great sushi spot is Mac's Shack in Wellfleet, which also serves dishes like cocount-currut scallops and tuna-mango "martinis." When you're in a peary mood: Chatham's Impudent Oyster, Wellfleet's Wicked Oyster, and Hyannis's Naked Oyster are three of the best seafood sources on the Cape. Try to get a table overlooking the sandy beach at the Ocean House Restaurant, in Dennisport, and go deep into the land of fusion. (Roasted black cod with edamame ravioli and miso-truffle broth, anyone?) Consider a jacket and tie for an evening at Twenty-Eight Atlantic, in Chatham's Wequassett Resort, where dishes range from black-truffle risotto to Chatham day-boat scallops with peekytoe crab, mâche, and a lemon-tarragon emulsion. At the best joints, the menu doesn't vary much—fried, fried, and more fried—plus lobster rolls and coleslaw. Cap't Cass Rock Harbor Seafood is a funky BYOB in Orleans with wood floors, shelves lined with old seashells, handwritten menus taped to the walls, and colorful buoys covering the exterior. Get there on time because the hours are strict (11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch; 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. for dinner). Before you head to the beach, pick up lobster rolls to go from Nickerson's Fish & Lobsters in Chatham. An insider's secret, Sessuit Harbor Café is hidden in a Dennis marina, with picnic tables by the water. Order the fried lobster tail at Arnold's Lobster & Clam Bar, in Eastham—a hit since it opened in 1976. Its new competition is Catch of the Day, in a nearby fish market in South Wellfleet. Liam's at Nauset Beach, set right between the sand and the parking lot, has legendary onion rings. A couple of other addresses to keep in mind: Sir Cricket's Fish & Chips, in Orleans, and Provincetown's Townsend Lobster & Seafood, whose owner, Chris Townsend, runs lobster-catching tours on his fishing boat. Bonatt's Bakery & Restaurant, in Harwichport, is nothing to look at—but its sugarc coated Meltaway rolls are dreamy. Another famously decadent breakfast treat: the buttery, cinnamonoy, muffin-shaped Dirt Bomb donuts at Cottage Street Bakery in Orleans. (Faithful followers have sleuthed out the recipe and make them back at home.) An all-you-can-eat buffet reels them in to Laura & Tony's Kitchen, in Eastham, in an airy 1970's-style A-frame across from the Wellfleet Drive-In Theatre (still showing movies all summer). The Dunbar Tea Shop in Sandwich is perfect for afternoon tea, complete with scones and clotted cream. Antique pots line the walls of the yellow 1800's carriage house. In a tiny cottage with trompe l'oeil rugs painted on the floor, the Brewster Fish House is always packed at dinner; locals know to come during the day. Although it has zero atmosphere, Harwichport's Talk of the Town Café, wedged between a CVS and a hardware store in a strip mall, sells the best cup of chowder on Cape Cod. The neon-lit exterior of the Lobster Pot, in Provincetown, makes it an often-photographed spot. Order the lobster as God intended it—steamed, with drawn butter on the side. When the basket demands foie gras or artisanal cheeses, check out the Brown Jug, a gourmet grocery in Sandwich. They'll also put together a basket for you, complete with cloth napkins and a corkscrew. For simpler fare, try the Osterville Cheese & Sandwich Shop, with a white-and-yellow awning out front and a wide selection of cheeses and wraps. Peter O'Donovan relocated from Ireland to open Chatham's Nantucket Wild Gourmet & Smokehouse, where he cures heavenly organic salmon on-site. Practically every town has an old-school ice cream shop with picnic tables outside. There are vintage black-and-white photos on the walls and birdhouses hanging in the trees at Schoolhouse Ice Cream & Yogurt, in Harwichport, where the intoxicating rum-raisin and Irish-whiskey flavors are for adults only. Sundae School Ice Cream serves unusual varieties like ginger and has three locations across the Cape: the original in Dennisport, plus outposts in Harwichport and East Orleans. In a former blacksmith's shop in Centerville, Four Seas Ice Cream is the place for Kennedy sightings. The Cape has its fair share of gift shops peddling potpourri, T-shirts, and other useless bric-a-brac. But a handful of women are transforming the shopping scene. Former set designer Mari Porcari has curated the most fashionable boutique on the Cape: Weekend, in Orleans, in an 1835 general store with birch display tables and lime-green walls. The eclectic merchandise includes summer dresses by New York designer Tibi, eco-friendly bamboo bowls, and floral-printed organic quilts. Missy Smith and Sarah Rhinesmith Buckley, the owners of Chatham's Midsummer Nights, have a great sense of style. One of the front rooms in their ship captain's house is devoted to sea-inspired clothes from Tory Burch, Trina Turk, and Calypso. Scattered throughout the shop are porcelain sea urchins, steel lanterns, and other gifts that will create the look of the Cape back home. Sisters Ann Hill and Margaret Hill combined their backgrounds in design and fashion to create Yarmouthport's Design Works, which sources from abroad (Scandinavian furniture, Turkish earrings) and close to home (totes made in Maine from old sails). To find shabby-chic cottage décor, check out Joan Potes, the owner's signature Cape Cod toile design appears on fabrics, tiles, and even sinks. The go-to place for brightly colored plates, napkins, glassware, and rugs is Periwinkle, in a two-story house in downtown Wellfleet. Always wondered where your grandmother got that rag rug in her kitchen?Check out Harwichport's Cape Cod Braided Rug Company. Like many resort towns, the Cape has tons of pottery shops. At the pondside Scargo Pottery & Art Gallery in Dennis, you can visit even when the shop isn't open to wander through a peaceful sculpture garden. The Cape doesn't lack for antiques shops, either. One of the most comprehensive is the sprawling Sandwich Antiques Center, whether you want furniture painted by Peter Hunt or vintage firearms. In the center of Sandwich, the Weather Store carries barometers, thermometers, and everything else weather-related, both old and new. Run by actor Tony Curtis's ex-wife, Leslie Curtis Antiques & Design, in Dennis, specializes in wicker. The Brewster Store was converted from a church into a general store in 1866 and still has the requisite porch, coal stove, penny-candy display, and ice cream parlor. You can buy just about anything here—donuts, puzzles, pitchers, and even lighting supplies. In an open-air stand on the side of the highway, Wellfleet's Briar Lane Jams & Jellies is your stop for beach plum jelly, rosehip jam, and cranberry marmalade. A beaded mermaid curtain sets the tone at the kitschy Shell Shop, in Provincetown, opened in 1978 to supply beach houses up and down the Cape with shell-encrusted mirrors and starfish for propping in windows. A symphony of chirping welcomes you to the Bird Watcher's General Store, in Orleans. The staff has tons of personality—if you tell them a joke, they'll give you a free pencil. The protected Cape Cod National Seashore stretches 40 miles, from Chatham all the way north to Provincetown. It was set aside in 1961 by John F. Kennedy. Top strands include North Beach (on a sandbar in Chatham and reachable only by boat) and Provincetown's Race Point (where you can sometimes see whales offshore). Also within the park, in East Orleans, Nauset Beach is beloved for ideal boogie-boarding conditions, as well as Liam's (see Seafood Shack). For calmer waters in Orleans, head to Skaket Beach, where the surf is gentle and there are little tidal pools and flats, as well as a classic beachside seafood shack. Located on Cape Cod Bay in Wellfleet is Duck Harbour Beach, which boasts great views of Provincetown, and generally warmer waters. In Eastham, head to Kingsbury Beach for the ideal quiet beach stroll. This stretch is sandwiched between two private beaches and has no parking lot and no lifeguard, so is less popular than most. In Brewster, Breakwater Beach is always popular in the summer, and known for its mild water temperature and gentle dune-lined stretches of sand. Cold Storage Beach in Dennis is located on Cape Cod Bay, thus providing beachgoers with quieter waters and lots of tide pools. The sand here is very soft, so those who dislike the rocky Cape beaches will be relieved. The six-mile-long, dune-capped Sandy Neck Beach, in West Barnstable and Sandwich, is populated by more piping plovers than people, but also makes for excellent sunbathing. In North Falmouth, the crescent-shaped Old Silver Beach has calm waters that attract families. Craigville Beach, the place to see and be seen in Hyannis, is sometimes called Muscle Beach for its concentration of buff beachgoers. Built on an old railway bed, the 26-mile Cape Cod Rail Trail starts at Route 134 in Dennis and winds through Chatham, continuing north to Wellfleet. There are cyclist-friendly cafes along the way. One of the hidden gems of Cape Cod is Falmouth's Spohr Gardens, laid out in the 1950's by Margaret and Charles D. Spohr and now owned by a charitable trust. An ideal place for quiet contemplation, the six acres of daffodils, rhododendrons, and daylilies edge placid Oyster Pond. Spread across three islands near Chatham, the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge is a protected area for migratory birds and a popular place to walk. If you're planning to beachcomb, check the tide charts so that you don't get stuck; at high tide in some sections, the sand disappears. The Massachusetts Audubon Society's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary runs birding tours, seal-watching expeditions, and canoe trips throughout its 1,200 acres of pine forest and salt marshes. Art's Dune Tours, in Provincetown, take travelers off road through the lunar landscape of the dunes outside town; in the distance you can see the shacks that have been inhabited over the years by Tennessee Williams, Jackson Pollock, and other legends, and are still rented to artists. The bright-yellow vessel operated by Beachcomber Boat Tours offers seal-watching tours or drop-offs of passengers at North Beach (and pickups later). For guided kayak trips with naturalists or sport fishing charters, turn to Goose Hummock, the area's aquatic experts. Rock Harbor in Orleans has planted trees in the surf to mark the channel for boats, and they make for a striking silhouette against the colorful sky. Onlookers at Provincetown's Race Point Beach erupt in applause the moment the sun disappears. To watch with a glass of wine in hand, head to the Chart Room Restaurant, a simple seafood haunt in a marina in Cataumet, where crowds gather on the lawn to toast the spectacle. Add dinner to the experience: at the Red Inn in P-town, the view of the sun setting over the bay is so spectacular that you almost don't even notice how good the food is. (But try the pan-roasted cod with a lemon-garlic confit, served on a bed of rosemary potatoes and applewood bacon.) In Cataumet? Drink at The Chart Room Restaurant. In Falmouth? Stay at Inn on the Sound and visit Spohr Gardens. In New Seabury? Stay at Cottages at Mau Shop Village. In Pocasset? Stay at Wings Neck Lighthouse. In Sandwich? Stay at Belfry Inne, eat at Dunbar Tea Shop, and shop at The Brown Jug. Sandwich Antiques Center, and The Weather Store. In Centerville? Eat at Four Seas Ice Cream. In Dennis? Eat at The Red Pheasant Inn and Sessuit Harbor Café and shop at Leslie Curtis Antiques & Design and Scargo Pottery & Art Gallery. In Dennisport? Eat at Sundae School Ice Cream and Ocean House Restaurant. In Hyannis? Eat at Naked Oyster. In Osterville? Shop at Joan Peters of Osterville and Osterville Cheese & Sandwich Shop. In Yarmouthport? Eat at Inaho and shop at Design Works. In Brewster? Eat at Brewster Fish House and shop at Brewster Store. In Chatham? Stay at Captain's House Inn, Chatham Bars Inn, or Wequassett Resort & Golf Club. Eat at Impudent Oyster, Nickerson's Fish & Lobsters, and Twenty-Eight Atlantic. Shop at Midsummer Nights and Nantucket Wild Gourmet & Smokehouse. Visit Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge and tour with Beachcomber Boat Tours. In Harwichport? Eat at Bonatt's Bakery & Restaurant, Schoolhouse Ice Cream & Yogurt, Sundae School Ice Cream, and Talk of the Town Café. Shop at Cape Cod Braided Rug Company. In Orleans? Stay at Little Inn on Pleasant Bay. Eat at Abba. Cap't Cass Rock Harbor Seafood, Cottage Street Bakery, Liam's at Nauset Beach, The Nauset Beach Club Restaurant, Sir Cricket's Fish & Chips, and Sundae School Ice Cream. Shop at Bird Watcher's General Store and Weekend. Tour with Goose Hummock. In Eastham? Stay at Cottage Grove and Whalewalk Inn & Spa. Eat at Arnold's Lobster & Clam Bar and Laura & Tony's Kitchen. In Provincetown? Stay at The Brass Key Guesthouse and The Crownie Pointe. Eat at Front Street, Lobster Pot, The Red Inn, and Townsend Lobster & Seafood. Shop at Map, Provincetown Book Shop, and The Shell Shop. Tour with Art's Dune Tours and Flyer's Boat Shop & Rentals. Drink at Old Colony Tap. In Truro? Stay at Crow's Nest Resort and eat at Terra Luna. In Wellfleet? Stay at The Colony of Wellfleet and eat at Catch of the Day, Mac's Shack, and Wicked Oyster. Shop at Briar Lane Jams & Jellies, visit the Wellfleet Drive-In Theatre, and tour with Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. Originally built in 1912 for one of Brewster's wealthiest residents, the Ocean Edge Resort & Club (2907 Main Street, Brewster; 800-343-6074 or 508-896-9000; oceaneedge.com) has 338 recently spruced-up rooms inside a stately stucco mansion. Families can also opt for stand-alone villas, set either on the waterfront or around the Jack Nicklaus golf course. A step up from camping, Day's Cottages (271 Shore Road, North Truro; 508-487-1062; dayscottages.com) aren't for everyone; the (nonworking) fireplaces bear graffiti marks from former guests, and the cast-iron beds probably date from the hotel's opening in 1931. But the 22 waterfront bungalows are locally iconic: they've been documented by numerous photographers and painters over the years. Although the dining room itself-set in a former sea captain's house-could use a facelift, the food at The Cape Sea Grille (31 Sea Street, Harwich Port; 508-432-4745; capeseagrille.com) delivers. Try the seared sea scallops with scallion pancake, napa cabbage, grilled peaches, and smoked bacon. The recent (some say overdone) renovations at Abhicci (43 Main Street, Yarmouthport; 508-362-350; abhicci.com) set some locals grumbling that it now resembles a gallery in New York City. But the food is still top-notch: check out the oysters with leeks, pancetta, Pernod, and cream, on the Mediterranean-influenced tapas menu. Buca's Tuscan Roadhouse (4 Depot Road, Harwich; 508-432-6900; bucasroadhouse.com) serves solid—as its name would suggest—Tuscan food like roasted organic chicken with fennel, garlic, sage, and olives. Straight out of the North End of Boston, Ristorante Barolo (297 North Street, Hyannis; 508-778-2878; baroloroopecod.com) is a red-sauce restaurant in a hard-to-find office complex courtyard. A simple pizza parlor, Sweet Tomatoes (95 Route 6A, Sandwich; 508-888-5979; sweettomatoesinc.com) makes a mean white-clam pie. Constructed with wood salvaged from shipwrecks, Landfall, in Woods Hole, is built right over the water. Have a drink on the deck, with the water lapping under your feet, then order the boiled scallops from the no-frills menu (2 Luscombe Avenue, Woods Hole; 508-548-1758; aquarium.nefsc.noaa.gov). Mattakeese Wharf (271 Millway, Barnstable Harbor; 508-362-451; mattakeese.com) is a great local seafood shack, with outdoor tables set alongside boat slips. Set on the Wellfleet town pier, Mac's Seafood (265 Commercial Street, Wellfleet; 508-349-0404; macseaseafood.com) is a local takeout institution. A great place to visit on a rainy day, the Woods Hole Science Aquarium (166 Water Street, Woods Hole; 508-495-2001; aquarium.nefsc.noaa.gov) is the oldest research aquarium in the country. The vintage family photos alone are worth a visit to the John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum (397 Main Street, Hyannis; 508-790-3077; jfkhyannismuseum.org). The Sandwich Glass Museum (129 Main Street, Sandwich; 508-888-0251; sandwichglassmuseum.org) has a gorgeous collection of vintage glass on display. Brewster's Cape Cod Museum of Natural History has demonstrations by naturalists and a resident beekeeper, plus three nature trails through protected woodland and salt marshes and along Cape Cod Bay (869 Main Street, Brewster; 508-896-3807; ccmnh.org). Of the hundreds of galleries across Cape Cod, one of the best is the 46-year-old Kendall Art Gallery (40 Main Street, Wellfleet; 508-349-2482; kendallartgallery.com), occupying a Greek Revival-style house with gardens. Stop by on Saturdays between 6 and 8 p.m. for the weekly openings. Set in a former schoolhouse, P-town's Schoolhouse Gallery (494 Commercial Street, Provincetown; 508-487-4800; galleryschoolhouse.com) focuses on photography—but also exhibits prints and paintings by area artists, as well as modern furniture, jewelry, and mobiles in the adjacent design store. A pair of former New Yorkers owns the Gristmill Gallery, in Eastham, which sells Colonial-era benches and chests, and paintings of local landscapes (2320 State Highway, Eastham; 508-240-0033). The Susan Baker Memorial Museum (46 Shore Road, North Truro; 508-487-2557; susanbakerrart.com) isn't quite a museum; rather, it's the atelier of the artist, who creates 3-D paintings inspired by her travels and Cape Cod scenery. The Edward Gorey House (8 Strawberry Lane, Yarmouthport; 508-362-3909; edwardgoreyhouse.org), the rambling former residence of the famous illustrator, has been turned into a museum. The first floor has an ample display of his pen-and-ink drawings, along with personal photographs and mementos. Performances at the Wellfleet Harbor Actors Theater (1 Kendrick Avenue, Wellfleet; 508-349-9428; what.org) have included productions by David Mamet and Sam Shepard. Last summer, W.H.A.T.—as it's commonly known in these parts—opened a new \$6.8 million stage named after Julie Harris, the theater's longtime honorary board chairwoman. At the Cape Playhouse, also home to the Cape Cod Center for the Arts, the emphasis is on Broadway musicals. Bette Davis famously began her career here, as an usher (820 Main Street, Dennis; 508-385-3911; capeplayhouse.com). With its relatively flat terrain and its network of paved bike trails, the Cape is perfect for family cycling outings. The seven-mile path along the Cape Cod Canal is maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Enter at Pleasant Street in Sagamore. The four-mile Shining Sea Bike Path, from Falmouth to Woods Hole, follows the ocean and runs through woodlands, marshes, and salt ponds. For a more active adventure, catch the eight-mile Cape Cod Province Lands Bike Trail at Race Point. It passes through sand dunes and forests and ends at the ocean. Don't miss the spur that leads to the Herring Cove lighthouse. It's not Napa Valley, but during a tasting at the Truro Vineyards of Cape Cod (11 Shore Road, North Truro; 508-487-6200; trurovineyardsofcapecod.com) you can try some decent wines that are cultivated in the area, plus (for adventurous palates) a special cranberry blend. Some of the wine comes in adorable lighthouse-shaped bottles that can be turned into lamps when you're done. The Cape Cod Lavender Farm (1/2 mile off Weston Woods Road, Harwich; 508-432-8397; capecodlavenderfarm.com), in Harwich, is a little bit of Provence on the East Coast. In a small outbuilding with an honesty box, the farm shop sells a heavenly lavender-lemon marmalade. If you're in the mood for a pint and live music, head to the gritty Chatham Squire (487 Main Street, Chatham; 508-945-0945; thecsquire.com), decorated with license plates from around the world. Local hands perform here a few nights of the week, and the bar menu's quite good. Grab a plate of fried clams or some oysters from the raw bar at the Wellfleet Beachcomber (1120 Cahoon Hollow Road, Wellfleet; 508-349-6055; thebeachcomber.com), which heats up after dark. On Sundays at 4 p.m., the bands start playing; big names like Yellowman, Ween, and the Tom Tom Club have graced the stage. The whimsical Oolala Home (45 North Main Street, Falmouth; 508-495-3888; oolalacapecod.com) carries affordable housewares and furniture like an Offi birch coffee table for \$180. Chatham Pottery (2058 Main Street, Chatham; 508-430-2191; store.chathampottery.com) sells heavy ceramic pieces emblazoned with mermaids, shells, and other maritime motifs. Jobi Pottery (3 Depot Road, Truro, 508-349-2303; jobipottery.com), in Truro, has been making its retro pieces, decorated with small black fish, since 1953. In a small cottage, Continuum (7 Route 28, Orleans; 508-255-8513; oldlamp.com) is crammed with every kind of antique lamp imaginable. Set in an old Victorian home, Jules Besch Stationers (15 Bank Street, Wellfleet; 508-349-1231) has a vast and well-edited selection of cards and journals. Kids love Dr. Gravity Kite Shop (564 Route 28, Harwich Port; 800-438-6419; drgravity.com), the source for board games and inflatable beach floats. The colorful display outside the beachfront Outer Cape Kites (277-A Commercial Street, Provincetown; 508/487-6133) makes for a popular photo spot in P-town. Also in P-town is the Northern Lights Hammock Shop (361c Commercial Street, Provincetown; 508-487-2385; northernlightshammocks.com), a one-room shack carrying every kind of hammock imaginable, including crocheted models from Brazil and travel versions that fold up into a backpack. Chatham's Marion's Pie Shop (2022 Main Street, Chatham; 508-432-9439; marionspieshopchatham.com) specializes in just that—homemade pies. Candy Manor (484 Main Street, Chatham; 800-221-6497; candymanor.com), also in Chatham, serves fluid in every flavor, from plain vanilla to Marshmallow Fluff to Reese's.

