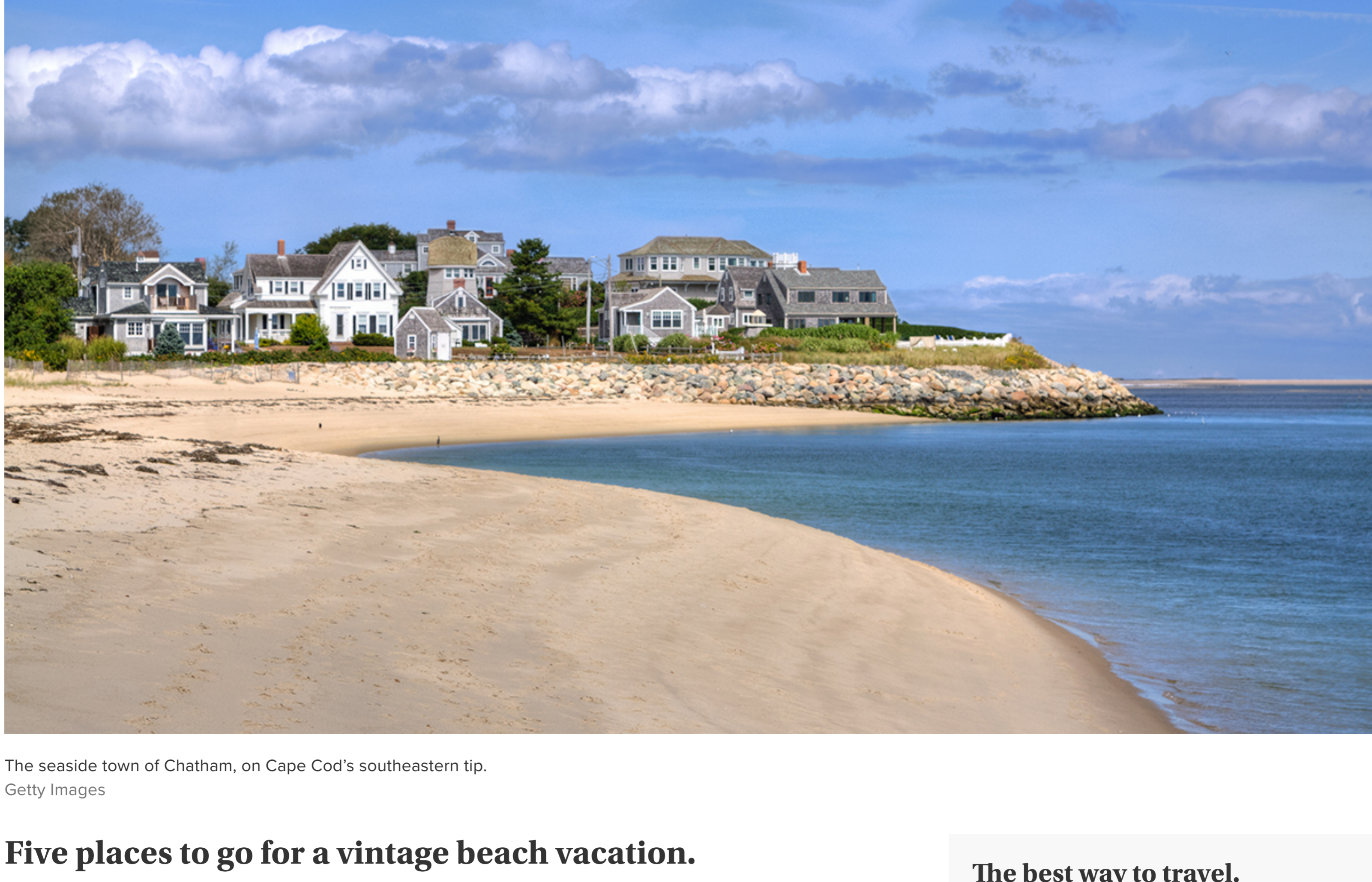


# Our Favorite Coastal Getaways in New England

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Family Hotels



The seaside town of Chatham, on Cape Cod's southeastern tip. Getty Images

## Five places to go for a vintage beach vacation.

Nothing feels more enticing right now than a good old-fashioned beach holiday, be it a nature-centric family jaunt or a tropical, adults-only getaway. For travelers craving a little nostalgia, New England's coastal harbor towns fit the bill. In lost-in-time resort escapes like Kennebunkport and Cape Cod, village ice cream stands draw a crowd, visitors pop in and out of family-run restaurants and sundry shops, and the biggest scene of the day is the fishermen hauling in their catch around lunchtime.

"New England has always been a popular summer destination for those in search of beautiful beaches and simple pleasures such as seafood shacks and old-fashioned Main Streets," says Virtuoso travel advisor Shawna Owen. "This summer, travelers are gravitating towards holidays closer to home. They're realizing that you don't have to travel far to feel far away. Small-town America feels good right now."

Here, five coastal New England spots perfect for a summer getaway.

### Cape Cod, Massachusetts

Shingled storefronts ablaze in patriotic flags, beachgrass-fringed sand dunes, and lighthouses for days. With the landscape largely unchanged in decades, the fifteen towns that comprise Cape Cod – including quaint Chatham – exude a heady dose of Americana.

**Highlights:** Come to Cape Cod for the beaches, stick around for the inimitable charm and bounty of fresh seafood. The most scenic stretch in Chatham is Lighthouse Beach, which sits just below its 48-foot-tall namesake. For families seeking calmer waters and more amenities, Harding's Beach is a better option. Getting out on the water is equally delightful: Ask your advisor to arrange a day on a sailboat – seals and sharks are plentiful in these parts, so keep an eye out. Many local outfitters combine guided boating with beachcombing on nearby uninhabited islands. For naturalists, it's a treat to visit the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge. The saltmarsh sandflats and freshwater wetlands are a haven for migratory songbirds and seabirds, including glossy ibis, godwits, dowitchers, and piping plovers. Embrace Cape Cod's throwback spirit with an evening at the Wellfleet Drive-In, a relic from 1957 where movies are projected onto a 100-foot screen.

**Where to Stay:** The elegant, 217-room Chatham Bars Inn sits on 25 acres overlooking Pleasant Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, with its own quarter-mile private beach, a fleet of boats, and enough restaurants (and beachfront clamcakes) to avoid culinary ennui. Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily, a \$100 spa credit, and more.



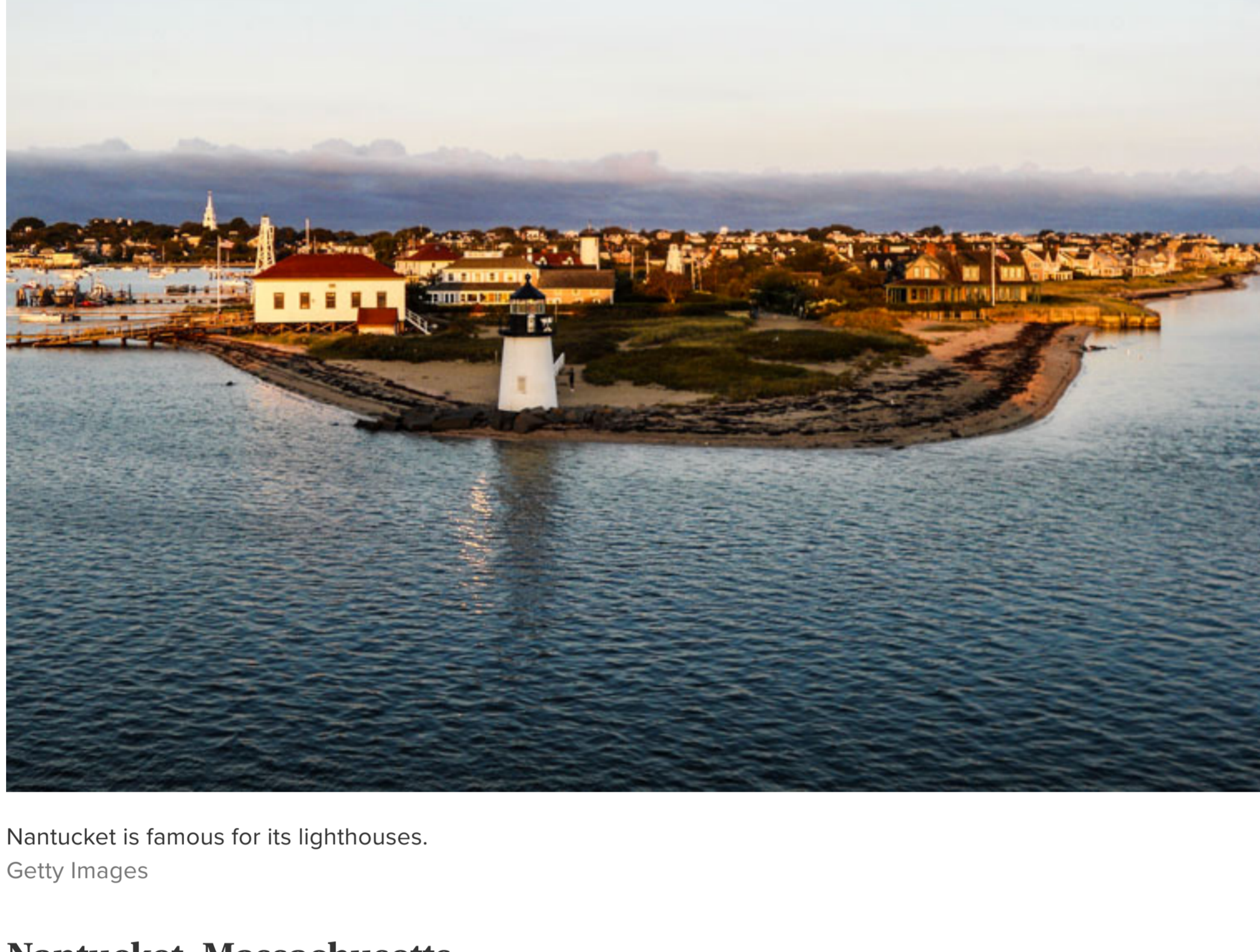
Waterfront cottages at the White Barn Inn.

### Kennebunkport, Maine

This classic, southern Maine retreat is about as laid-back and picturesque as it gets.

**Highlights:** In Kennebunkport, beach-going is the main (or *Maine*) event. Gooch's is the largest and most populated, its massive waves a magnet for surfers. Just south, Mother's Beach is bookended by large rock formations which translates to gentler waves and tidal pools, a plus for small children. Goose Rocks is the most secluded of the three, with a tranquil three-mile stretch of sand that's fit for a good stroll. (Want something a little more intense? A hike along Kennebunkport's jagged coastline is another good idea.) Don't miss the Parson's Way Trail, which begins at Dock Square and winds around the coast and past President George H. W. Bush's private compound. If you want to get on the water, have your Virtuoso travel advisor arrange a guided kayak or stand-up paddleboard tour with a local outfitter. At high tide, travelers can paddle "backward" on the Kennebunk River, one of the few remaining tidal rivers along coastal Maine.

**Where to Stay:** The 27-room White Barn Inn, Auberge Resorts Collection, occupies an oceanfront, 150-year-old farmhouse overlooking the Kennebunk River. Guests love the inn's coastal-themed culinary program (ice cream churning class, anyone?) and daily sailing excursions. Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily, a private kitchen tour of the inn's White Barn restaurant, a \$100 hotel credit, and more.



Nantucket is famous for its lighthouses. Getty Images

### Nantucket, Massachusetts

This historic whaling town is the stuff of coastal fantasies: pitched-roofed, cedar-shingled homes, cobblestoned streets, and one of the highest concentrations of pre-Civil War buildings in the country. While certainly glamorous, Nantucket's preppy clientele still revere a seafood shack lunch and a low-key day at the beach.

**Highlights:** To explore, rent a bike in town and whiz past the bougainvillea hedges, seashell-kissed pathways, and iconic lighthouses on the way to lunch at Bartlett's Farm or 167 Raw's food truck. And of course, be sure to map out a proper beach plan of attack. Jetties Beach is ideal for families with young kids, with calm water, lifeguards, volleyball nets, a playground, bathrooms, and a boardwalk lined with casual restaurants. Surfers and kiteboarders can find good conditions at Surfside Beach or Cisco Beach; the latter has its own surf school. Other essential activities: a meander down the scenic Sconset Bluff Walk's private homes and rose-covered fishing cottages, and a day on the water – your Virtuoso travel advisor can arrange a private boat charter.

**Where to Stay:** Virtuoso travel advisors can work with villa company Luxury Retreats to arrange private accommodations in Nantucket, such as a seven-bedroom farmhouse down the street from Jetties Beach with a chef's kitchen, a playground, and a saltwater pool. Virtuoso travelers receive a \$200 concierge services credit.



Ocean House sits on 13 acres overlooking the Atlantic Ocean.

### Watch Hill, Rhode Island

Quiet, unassuming Watch Hill sits high on a bluff surrounded by three bodies of water – the Atlantic Ocean, Little Narragansett Bay, and the Pawcatuck River.

**Highlights:** Sun-dappled days unfold at the beach, naturally, the favorites being Watch Hill Beach, East Beach, or Napatree Point, which is also a wildlife preserve for migratory birds. Boating, namely sailing, is wildly popular here – your Virtuoso advisor or hotel concierge can sort out the arrangements. Travelers can also kayak in the Pawcatuck River or in Winnapaug Pond, visit the Watch Hill Lighthouse, trek through the Ninigret National Wildlife Refuge (a former training airfield for World War II pilots), and take a spin on the Flying Horse Carousel, the oldest continually operating carousel in the country.

**Where to Stay:** Coastal-cool rooms and elegant public beach draw travelers to Ocean House, a 69-room blufftop hotel with its own private beach. Guests also have access to The Preserve, a 3,500-acre outdoor playground featuring sporting clay courses, fly-fishing ponds, an equestrian center, an 18-hole golf course, and rock climbing areas. Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily, a \$100 hotel credit, and more.



Boats moored at Perkins Cove. Getty Images

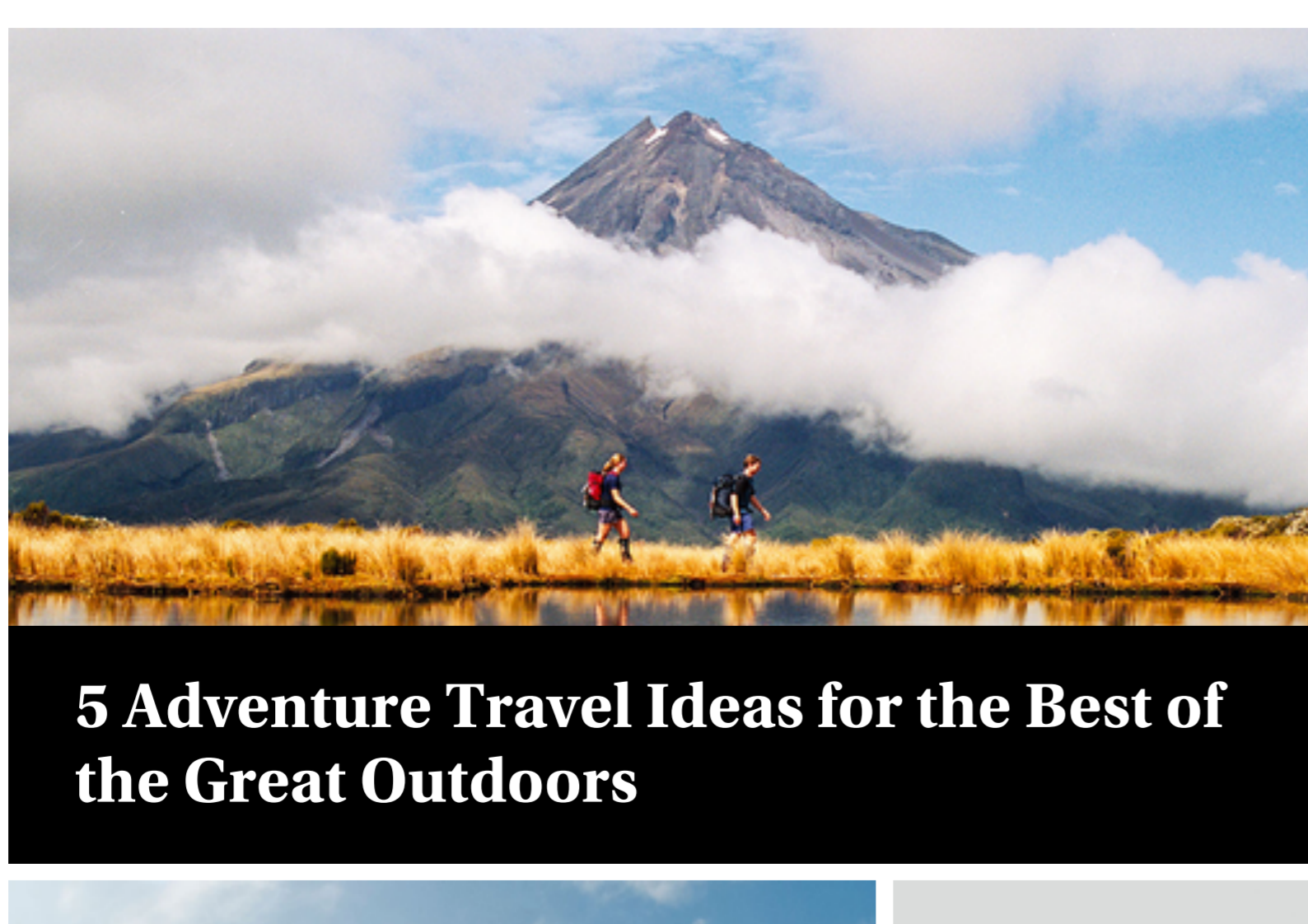
### Ogunquit, Maine

This town's memorable stretch of craggy beach, immortalized in the paintings of Edward Hopper and Marsden Hartley, is manna for naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts.

**Highlights:** For travelers willing to tear themselves away from the glorious, tide-pool-speckled beach, traveling, estuary kayaking, selfing, deep-sea fishing, and whale-victorian keeper's excursions await. Don't miss a trip to the Cape Neddick Lighthouse and its Whaling keeper's cottage, or a walk down Marginal Way's rugged shoreline to the fishing village of Perkins Cove, where lobster-boat captains return with their catches. This corner of Maine is a birder's paradise: Rachel Carson Wildlife Refuge is a sanctuary for sharp-tailed sparrows, egrets, herons, and shorebirds; and in the deciduous forest and pocket wetlands of nearby Mount Agamenticus, birdwatchers can spy hawks and bald eagles.

**Where to Stay:** At the edge of Cape Neddick, the 226-room Cliff House Maine deals in postcard-worthy views and a contemporary-nautical aesthetic. Guests spend their stays by the pool or cliffside hot tub, on sea kayaking and biking excursions, or roasting snacks by the oceanfront s'mores pit. Virtuoso travelers receive breakfast daily, a \$100 spa or hotel boutique credit, and more.

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