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VISITING CAPE COD

How to Beat the July 4th Cape Cod Traffic (And Have the Best Beach Day)

A free field guide from the people who actually live here.



capecodcertified.com/guides/beat-july-4th-cape-cod-traffic-beach-day

Every July 4th weekend, Cape Cod swells. Bridges back up. Parking lots fill by 9am. Most people sit in traffic for two hours and remember it as the bad part.

We went the other way.

The Strategy: Stack Your Day, Leave Late

The key is filling the day with enough good stuff that you don't care when you leave. Plan multiple stops. Commit to staying until after 9pm. The traffic will dissolve.

Stop 1: Craigville Beach — 11am to 4pm

\$30 to park. Access to 5 beaches. Lifeguards. Bathhouse. Sandbar.

Craigville is a Nantucket Sound beach — the water is noticeably warmer than the Atlantic side. On a July afternoon it feels like swimming in a heated pool. The kids found a sandbar about 50 yards out and spent an hour there.

Bring shrimp cocktail, watermelon, snacks. The \$30 day pass covers the whole family and lets you move between all five connected beaches.

Stop 2: Main Street Hyannis — 4:30pm

After five hours of sun, walk Main Street and catch dinner at The Tap City Grille. Kids get burgers and chicken fingers. Adults: steak Caesar salad or a proper burger.

Hyannis also has local artist huts near the ferry terminals worth a slow walk before or after dinner.

Stop 3: Sandwich Boardwalk (Mill Creek) — Sunset

Free. Walk out over the marsh. Watch for crabs at low tide.

Take Route 6A west through Sandwich — slower and quieter than Route 6. The boardwalk stretches over Mill Creek and out to Town Neck Beach. At low tide, kids love hanging over the railing to spot crabs. By sunset, families have small bonfires going on Town Neck Beach, watching the sun drop over Cape Cod Bay.

The original plankwalk was built in 1875. Reconstructed in 1992 as a labor of love. Free parking at the boardwalk lot — arrive before 7pm.

Stop 4: Ice Cream in Sandwich — 9pm

After the sunset, find ice cream in Sandwich and get in the car.

The normal 30-minute drive from Sandwich back home took us 41 minutes. That's it.

The Takeaway

Traffic on Cape Cod in July is worst from noon to 8pm, worst at the bridges. If you're already on Cape, those hours are exactly when you should be at the beach.

The formula: arrive midday, warm-water south-side beach, dinner in Hyannis, sunset at Sandwich Boardwalk, leave after 9pm. Make it the beach, the crabs, the watermelon, the sunset. Get home tired and sunburned at 10pm.

◆ THINGS TO DO

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