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VISITING CAPE COD

# A Perfect Day in Barnstable, Cape Cod: Historic Villages, Hyannis & the Harbor

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



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Barnstable is the largest town on Cape Cod — not in population, but in sheer territory — and most visitors spend their whole trip here without realizing it. Hyannis is the commercial hub, the ferry port, the Kennedy country. But Route 6A through Barnstable Village is a completely different world: saltbox houses, a courthouse that dates to 1772, and bay views that stop you mid-sentence.

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## Morning: Route 6A and Barnstable Village

Start your morning on the historic King's Highway — Route 6A through **Barnstable Village** — before the antique shops open and the road gets busy. Pull over at the **Sturgis Library** on Main Street (Route 6A). The core of the building dates to 1644, making it the oldest public library building in the United States still operating as a library.

Walk the block east and you'll pass the **Barnstable County Courthouse**, which has anchored this village since the colonial era.

From the village, take a short detour down Blish Point Road to the water. **Blish Point** gives you an unobstructed view across Barnstable Harbor to Sandy Neck, a 6-mile barrier beach. **Sandy Neck Beach** has a trailhead at its parking area off Route 6A in West Barnstable. Arrive before 9 AM in summer if you want a parking spot without the wait.

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## Midday: The JFK Museum and Hyannis Harbor

Head south into Hyannis by late morning. The **John F. Kennedy Hyannis Museum** on Main Street is compact — you can move through it in under an hour — but it's well done. Check hours before you go.

After the museum, walk two blocks south to the harbor. The **JFK Memorial** sits at Veterans Park overlooking the water. Ocean Street runs along the waterfront and has several restaurants with outdoor seating and harbor views.

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## Afternoon: Craigville Beach

For the beach portion of your day, head to **Craigville Beach** in Centerville. It sits on Nantucket Sound, which runs warmer than the open Atlantic. On a July afternoon, the water temperature here is about as good as Cape Cod gets.

If you want a different kind of afternoon, **Kalmus Beach** in Hyannis is the best beach on Cape Cod for watching windsurfers and kitesurfers.

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## Evening: Sunset Over the Sound

For sunset, both Kalmus and Craigville face roughly southwest across Nantucket Sound. Craigville in particular gets a long golden hour in summer — the beach empties somewhat after 5 PM as families head out, and the light becomes something different.

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## Practical Notes

- **Parking in Hyannis:** The downtown area has paid public lots near Main Street and Ocean Street. Arrive before noon on summer weekends.
- **Beach parking:** Craigville and Kalmus both have Barnstable resident sticker requirements or paid day lots.

- **Best season:** Late June through early September for beaches and the ferry. Route 6A through Barnstable Village is worth visiting year-round.
- **Ferry booking:** Hy-Line to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard books up weeks ahead in July and August.

See the full [Barnstable Town Directory](#) for beaches, trails, and local resources across all seven villages.

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