



CAPE COD CERTIFIED

VISITING CAPE COD

A Perfect Day in Provincetown, Cape Cod: Whales, Art, Commerce Street & Land's End

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



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Provincetown sits at the absolute tip of Cape Cod — two miles of curling sand where the Pilgrims first set foot in the New World, where humpback whales surface close enough to soak you with their blow, and where more art per square block exists than almost anywhere else in America.

Morning: whale watch from MacMillan Pier

Get to **MacMillan Pier** early. The whale watch boats depart morning and afternoon, and the morning run typically offers calmer seas and better light. The destination is Stellwagen Bank, a National Marine Sanctuary feeding ground roughly eight miles off Provincetown — humpbacks, finbacks, minke, and occasionally the critically endangered North Atlantic right whale all move through here. Expect the round trip to run three to four hours. Bring a layer — it is always colder on the water than it looks from shore.

Midday: Climb Pilgrim Monument, Then Wander Commercial Street

Back on land, walk up to **Pilgrim Monument**. The tower — 252 feet of Siena granite, completed in 1910, the tallest all-granite monument in the United States — commemorates the moment in November 1620 when the Pilgrims signed the Mayflower Compact. The climb involves 60 ramps and 116 stairs and takes about 15 minutes at a moderate pace.

After the monument, drop back down to **Commercial Street**. The main drag runs more than three miles along the harbor waterfront and functions as gallery row, restaurant row, boutique strip, and people-watching theater simultaneously.

Afternoon: Race Point Beach or the Long Point Walk

Race Point Beach is a National Seashore beach on the north-facing Atlantic side of the Province Lands. It has powerful surf, dramatic dune scenery, and a lighthouse visible from the water.

The other option is **Long Point** at the very tip of the curl — the only west-facing beach on the Atlantic side of Cape Cod. You can reach it via a small shuttle boat from MacMillan Pier (seasonal) or on foot: a 2.5-mile walk out the breakwater and along a sandbar.

Evening: Sunset on the Bay Side, Then Dinner

If you went to Race Point in the afternoon, position yourself somewhere on the harbor-facing (west/bay) side of town for sunset. The west-facing harbor puts the sun down over Cape Cod Bay, and from the pier or the beach at the west end of Commercial Street the light is spectacular.

Practical Notes

- **Parking:** Provincetown parking is limited and expensive in summer. Many visitors take the fast ferry from Boston — 90 minutes each way, no parking headaches.
- **Best season:** July and August are peak. Whale watching runs May through October. Fall (September-October) is genuinely underrated.

- **What to bring:** A wind layer for the whale watch even in summer. Comfortable walking shoes.
- **Timing:** The whale watch fills up. Book in advance in July and August.

For more on what the town offers, see the [Provincetown Town Directory](#).

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