



CAPE COD CERTIFIED

VISITING CAPE COD

Best Surf Beaches on Cape Cod: Atlantic Side Waves & Where to Catch Them

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

On Cape Cod, not all coastline is created equal. The peninsula hooks northward into the Atlantic, and its eastern, ocean-facing shore receives open-ocean swell with nothing in the way from Portugal. The Outer Cape, protected almost entirely as Cape Cod National Seashore, is where the surf lives.

Why the Outer Cape Has the Best Surf

Cape Cod bay side faces west toward the mainland and holds little to no swell. Nantucket Sound is even calmer. If you are chasing a wave, you drive east.

The Best Surf Beaches

1. Coast Guard Beach — Eastham

Most recognized surf beach on the Cape. Consistent beach break. Shuttle-access only in summer — park at Little Creek lot off Route 6. Lifeguards in season. Arrive by 8am on good-swell mornings.

Level: All levels | **Wave size:** 2–4 ft summer, larger fall

2. Nauset Light Beach — Eastham

Comparable surf to Coast Guard, reliably fewer crowds. Below the red-and-white lighthouse. CCNS parking fees apply.

Level: All levels | **Wave size:** 2–4 ft summer

3. Marconi Beach — Wellfleet

Named for Guglielmo Marconi who transmitted the first transatlantic wireless signal from this bluff in 1903. Wide, fully exposed, reliable surf. No lifeguards. Intermediate-and-above on overhead-plus days.

Level: Intermediate+ | **Lifeguard:** No

4. Cahoon Hollow Beach — Wellfleet

Known as “the Hollow” to regulars. The Beachcomber bar on the bluff has hosted post-session hangs since 1974. Best at mid-to-high tide. Parking fills fast — bring cash.

Level: All levels | **Best tide:** Mid to high

5. Head of the Meadow — Truro

Two sections split by a dune complex. Quieter, more local character. Northern end offers longer rides on good days. CCNS fee applies.

Level: Intermediate+ | **Lifeguard:** Limited hours in season

6. Race Point Beach — Provincetown

The tip of the Cape. Swells from multiple directions simultaneously. Unmatched setting. Strong rip currents possible. No lifeguard. Experienced surfers only.

Level: Experienced surfers | **Lifeguard:** No

When to Go

June–August: 2–4 ft, water reaches low-to-mid 60s°F. Accessible window, highest crowds.

September–October: Hurricane and North Atlantic swells. Heights climb, crowds thin dramatically after Labor Day. Most experienced surfers call fall the real season.

November–March: Cold-water diehards in 5/4 wetsuits. Frequent swells. Often nearly alone at the break.

Shark Awareness

The gray seal recovery has brought great white sharks back in meaningful numbers. Download the SharkTivity app. Avoid surfing near seal concentrations. Heed posted beach closures. Thousands of surfers paddle out every summer without incident — awareness matters far more than fear.

Parking and Access

All CCNS beaches charge a summer parking fee. National Parks annual pass covers entry. Coast Guard Beach requires shuttle from Little Creek lot. Cahoon Hollow is town-managed — bring cash. Race Point is remote — plan accordingly.

◆ THINGS TO DO

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