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VISITING CAPE COD

A Perfect Afternoon in Hyannis: Artist Huts, Harbor & Tap City Grille

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



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Most people pass through Hyannis on the way to somewhere else — catching a ferry to Nantucket, filling a tank, grabbing a quick bite. That’s a mistake. Give the village an honest afternoon and you’ll find a working Cape Cod harbor town with a genuine arts scene, a beach built for wind sports and Bay-side sunsets, and a downtown that rewards slowing down.

Morning: Walk Main Street and the Artist Huts

Park on Sea Street or in one of the municipal lots off Main Street and start on foot. What most visitors miss are the seasonal artist huts clustered along the street in warmer months. These small stalls are run by working Cape Cod artisans — photographers, painters, jewelry makers, potters — and the work is genuinely local.

From Main Street, walk south toward the harbor on Ocean Street. The [JFK Hyannis Museum](#) is worth a stop if you have any interest in the Kennedy family’s connection to the Cape.

Midday: The Harbor Boardwalk

The Hyannis Harbor boardwalk area is where the town’s energy concentrates in summer. Hy-Line Cruises runs ferries to Nantucket from here, and the foot traffic around the terminal is lively on a summer afternoon.

Afternoon: Kalmus Beach

[Kalmus Beach](#), Hyannis’s main public beach on Cape Cod Bay, faces west. Kalmus is also reliably windy, which is why it draws a consistent windsurfing crowd. The beach has a paid parking lot in season — arrive before early afternoon on a July weekend if you want a spot.

If Kalmus feels crowded, Veterans Park Beach is a short walk to the east along the harbor edge and tends to be quieter.

Evening: Dinner and the Bay Sunset

For dinner, Tap City Grille on Main Street is one of the reliable local favorites — the kind of place that fills up with a mix of residents and visitors, which is usually a good sign. The menu runs toward American comfort food with a solid draft beer list. Check their current hours before you go.

After dinner, drive back to Kalmus Beach or find a perch along the harbor boardwalk for sunset. Because Hyannis faces Cape Cod Bay to the west, you get an unobstructed sunset over the water from the beach.

Practical Notes

- **Parking:** Municipal lots off Main Street are your best option downtown. Kalmus Beach has a paid lot that fills fast on summer weekends — aim to arrive by noon or earlier.
- **Best season:** July and August are peak. June and September offer the same attractions with noticeably thinner crowds and easier parking.
- **Ferry timing:** If you’re considering a Hy-Line day trip to Nantucket, book in advance.

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