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Chatham vs. Falmouth vs. Brewster vs. Provincetown: Which Cape Cod Town Is Right for Your Wedding?

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



capecodcertified.com/guides/chatham-falmouth-brewster-provincetown-cape-cod-wedding

Most “best Cape Cod wedding towns” articles read like the writer Googled four hotel names and called it a day. They tell you Chatham is “charming,” Provincetown is “vibrant,” and somehow conclude that you should pick the one that “feels right.” That is useless when you are staring down a \$90,000 food-and-beverage minimum and trying to figure out whether your 78-year-old grandmother can actually get to your venue.

We sell weddings to couples on the Cape every week, and the honest truth is that these four towns are not interchangeable. They sit on opposite ends of the peninsula, attract completely different guest demographics, and have wildly different permit rules, price points, and logistical headaches. Pick the wrong one and you will spend the year before your wedding fighting your own venue. Pick the right one and most of the hard decisions make themselves.

Here is the real comparison, with 2026 pricing.

The Quick Answer

Before the deep dive, the short version most couples need:

- **Chatham** — Classic, expensive, and image-driven. Pick it if you want a Ralph Lauren ad and you have the budget to pay for it.
- **Falmouth** — The logistical winner. Closest to the bridges, the most venue inventory under \$200/person, easiest for off-Cape guests.
- **Brewster** — Bayside calm and the largest single resort on the Cape (Ocean Edge). Best if you want a multi-day family compound feel.
- **Provincetown** — The only real choice for LGBTQ+ couples who want a community wrapped around their wedding. Also the hardest to reach.

How These Four Towns Actually Compare

Factor	Chatham	Falmouth	Brewster	Provincetown
Drive from Boston (no traffic)	1h 55m	1h 15m	1h 45m	2h 30m
Drive in peak Friday traffic	3h 30m+	2h	3h	4h+
Flagship venue	Chatham Bars Inn	Sea Crest Beach	Ocean Edge Resort	Crown & Anchor
2026 per-person F&B (Sat, peak)	\$245–\$295	\$165–\$215	\$185–\$235	\$175–\$240
Typical Saturday F&B minimum (peak)	\$75K–\$150K	\$35K–\$65K	\$55K–\$95K	\$25K–\$60K
Beach ceremony permits	Very restricted	Generous	Moderate	Federal (Seashore)
Lead time to book peak Saturday	16–22 months	10–14 months	14–18 months	12–16 months
Nearest hospital	Cape Cod Hospital (35 min)	Falmouth Hospital (in town)	Cape Cod Hospital (25 min)	Outer Cape Health (urgent care only)
Best for	Polished, traditional	Big guest lists, easy access	Multi-day family stays	LGBTQ+, intimate, walkable

Those F&B numbers are 2026 quotes from venue contracts we have seen this booking cycle, not list prices off a website. They will keep climbing — expect another 6–9% on 2027 dates.

Chatham: The Classic Cape Wedding, With a Classic Cape Price Tag

Chatham is what Boston magazines mean when they say “Cape wedding.” Gray-shingled buildings, navy awnings, the lighthouse, the rolling lawn at Chatham Bars Inn dropping toward Pleasant Bay. There is a reason it is the most photographed town on the Cape.

It is also the most expensive, by a wide margin.

The Venue Reality

Chatham Bars Inn is the anchor. 2026 peak-season Saturday weddings there are running \$245–\$295 per person all-in for a plated dinner, with food-and-beverage minimums between \$90,000 and \$150,000 depending on the room. The Beach House Lawn ceremony fee is \$5,500 on top of that. They book 18–22 months out for June through early September.

Wequassett Resort sits technically in East Harwich but markets itself as Chatham and competes in the same tier — slightly less expensive than CBI, with a more flexible ceremony footprint over Pleasant Bay.

Smaller options like the **Chatham Wayside Inn** or private estate rentals on Stage Harbor exist, but Chatham has very little mid-tier inventory. You are either spending \$200K+ at a flagship resort or you are doing a 40-person dinner at a restaurant.

What Chatham Won't Give You

A real beach wedding. The town tightened its beach permit rules after 2022 and now caps Lighthouse Beach ceremonies at 50 guests, with a permit fee around \$375 and a requirement that you be off the sand by 6:30 PM in summer. Hard-stop. No exceptions for sunset photos.

Pick Chatham if the look matters more than the math. Skip it if you have more than 180 guests and a budget under \$125K.

Falmouth: The Underrated Logistical Winner

Falmouth gets dismissed as “the part of the Cape you drive through.” That is exactly why it is the smart pick for most couples with normal-sized budgets and out-of-state guests.

It is the first town across the Bourne Bridge. Your aunt from New Jersey is not sitting in two extra hours of Route 6 traffic to get there. Your guests can fly into Providence or Boston and be at the rehearsal dinner in 90 minutes. That alone is worth \$15,000 in goodwill.

The Venue Reality

Sea Crest Beach Hotel on Old Silver Beach is the workhorse — \$165–\$215 per person in 2026, F&B minimums starting around \$35,000 on off-peak Saturdays. The ceremony lawn looks directly over Buzzards Bay.

The Coonamessett Inn runs smaller, more intimate weddings — 60 to 140 guests, garden ceremony, plated dinners around \$145–\$185 per person. It is one of the few venues on the Cape where a \$50,000 wedding still feels generous.

Nimrod and **The Quarterdeck** handle rehearsal dinners; **Highfield Hall** offers a mansion-and-gardens option for couples who want something less hotel-feeling.

Beach Permits That Actually Work

Falmouth issues ceremony permits for **Old Silver, Surf Drive, Menauhant, and Bristol Beach** with reasonable rules: \$150–\$300 fee, up to 75 guests at most beaches, no alcohol on the sand (this is universal — do not try to fight it). Apply through the Parks Department by April 1 for a summer date.

Pick Falmouth if you have 150+ guests, your people are flying in, and you want to spend money on the party rather than the address.

Brewster: The Multi-Day Family Compound

Brewster runs along Cape Cod Bay on the north side of the peninsula. The water is calmer, warmer, and much shallower than the Atlantic side — at low tide on Breakwater Beach the bay walks out almost a mile, which is either magical or deeply weird depending on your photographer.

The Venue Reality

Ocean Edge Resort is the entire Brewster wedding story. 429 acres, 90 holes of golf, a private bayside beach, multiple ceremony sites, and enough on-site accommodation (335+ rooms and villas) that you can genuinely house most of a 200-person wedding without anyone needing a car. 2026 packages run \$185–\$235 per person, with F&B minimums in the \$55K–\$95K range on peak Saturdays. The Carriage House handles weddings up to about 230; the Mansion lawn caps around 180 for a ceremony.

Outside Ocean Edge, Brewster is mostly small inns and restaurants — **Bramble Inn, Chillingsworth, The Brewster Inn & Chowder House** — that handle 30 to 80 guests beautifully but cannot scale.

The Bayside Trade-Off

Bay water is calmer but the **bay-side beaches face north**, which means no Atlantic sunset over the water. Your golden-hour ceremony photos will be side-lit, not back-lit. Talk to your photographer before you fall in love with a 5 PM ceremony time.

Pick Brewster if your wedding is really a four-day family reunion and you want everyone in one place. Skip it if sunset-over-the-ocean is non-negotiable.

Provincetown: A Category of Its Own

Provincetown is not really competing with the other three. It is its own thing.

It is the LGBTQ+ wedding capital of New England, and that is not marketing language — there are vendors, officiants, photographers, florists, and venues here who have been doing queer weddings for 30+ years. If you are a same-sex couple and you want a town where nobody is going to give your wedding party a second look, this is the answer.

The Venue Reality

The Crown & Anchor is the headline venue — multiple event spaces, on-site lodging, bar, cabaret. **The Pilgrim Monument & Provincetown Museum** rents the lawn with views over the entire town. **The Provincetown Inn** sits at the very tip with private beach access. Smaller restaurants like **The Mews** and **Strangers & Saints** handle elopement dinners.

2026 per-person numbers run \$175–\$240, with much smaller minimums than Chatham — many P-town venues will do a 40-person dinner without a punishing F&B floor. **National Seashore beach ceremonies** at Race Point or Herring Cove require a federal permit (\$150) plus a special-use application six months out.

The P-Town Logistics Tax

It is genuinely far. Two and a half hours from Boston with no traffic, four-plus hours on a summer Friday. The ferry from Boston (\$95 each way, 90 minutes) is a real option for guests, but it stops running in mid-October. Hotel rates in July and August are brutal — expect \$450–\$700/night for anything walkable to your venue.

Pick Provincetown if community matters more than convenience. Skip it if half your guest list is over 70 or driving in from Connecticut on a Friday.

Don't Miss

The June bug problem. Late May through mid-June is the peak of greenhead fly season on the bay side (Brewster especially) and tick season everywhere else. Outdoor ceremonies in early June look great in the brochure and are miserable in real life. Late June and September are the actual sweet spots — better weather, fewer bugs, lower peak-season pricing.

The Sagamore Bridge construction warning. The Cape Cod Canal bridge replacement project is scheduled to hit major lane reductions through 2027 and 2028. If you are planning a 2026 wedding, you are fine; if you are reading this for a 2027 date, build an extra 90 minutes into every guest's travel estimate and seriously consider Falmouth (Bourne Bridge side) over the four mid-Cape and Outer Cape towns. A Saturday-afternoon ceremony with half your guests stuck on Route 3 is the single most preventable wedding disaster on the Cape, and it is coming.

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