



CAPE COD CERTIFIED

CAPE COD CELEBRATIONS

Harwich Cranberry Arts & Music Festival: Your Complete Guide to Cape Cod's Favorite Fall Harvest Celebration

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

If there is one weekend that captures everything worth loving about a Cape Cod fall — the crisp salt air, the blaze of turning marshes, the community pride, the particular joy of buying something handmade from the person who made it — it is the Harwich Cranberry Arts and Music Festival. Running for more than forty years, it is one of the oldest and most beloved harvest celebrations in all of New England, and it draws tens of thousands of visitors to Brooks Park over a single long September weekend.

What the Festival Is

The Harwich Cranberry Arts and Music Festival began in the early 1980s as a modest community fair honoring the town's agricultural identity. Harwich has been cranberry country for well over a century, and the timing of the festival — mid-September, when the bogs are flooded for the water harvest — was never accidental.

What grew from that modest beginning is now a three-day event spanning a full long weekend, typically the second or third weekend of September. There are more than 200 juried arts and crafts vendors, live music running nearly all day on multiple stages, carnival rides, a dog show, antique cars, a 5K road race, and fireworks. It is free to enter.

The Cranberry Connection

Massachusetts grows more cranberries than any state except Wisconsin, and Harwich is at the heart of it. The cranberry harvest is not what most people picture. Cranberries are not hand-picked from dry vines. Growers flood the bogs with water, then use mechanical beaters to knock the buoyant berries off the vines. The berries float to the surface and are corralled by workers in chest waders. From a distance, the flooded field looks like an impossibly red lake.

When to time the water harvest: The water flooding typically begins in mid-September and runs through mid-October. The festival weekend falls right at the opening edge of harvest season.

The Full Festival Schedule

Friday: Fireworks Night

Friday is the lightest day in terms of crowd volume. The headline event on Friday is the fireworks display, which launches after dark — typically around 9 p.m.

Saturday: Peak Day

Saturday is the biggest day by attendance. Every vendor is open, all stages are running, the carnival rides are at full operation.

Sunday: Road Race Morning

The Sunday 5K road race starts early — typically 8 a.m. Sunday tends to draw a slightly smaller crowd than Saturday.

Getting There and Parking

Brooks Park is located on Route 39 in Harwich Center. The address is 90 Recreation Road, Harwich, MA 02645.

The town opens several overflow lots within walking distance. The Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority typically runs festival shuttle service from designated satellite lots to the park.

Practical Tips

- Admission is free
- Dogs are welcome on leash
- Pack a layer regardless of the forecast
- Bring cash

Check the Harwich Chamber of Commerce website (harwichcc.com) for confirmed dates each year.

◆ THINGS TO DO

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