



CAPE COD CERTIFIED

VISITING CAPE COD

Getting to Cape Cod Without a Car: Buses, Ferries, and How to Actually Pull It Off

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



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Here's a thing most people don't realize: you can have a genuinely great Cape Cod vacation without ever renting a car. No white-knuckle bridge traffic, no \$40-a-day beach parking, no circling Provincetown for a spot that doesn't exist. It takes a little planning and the right home base, but a car-free Cape trip is not only possible — for some kinds of visits, it's *better*. Here's exactly how to do it.

The ways in without a car

Mode	From	Lands you at	Good for
Bus (Peter Pan / regional)	Boston, Logan, NYC, Providence	Hyannis, Barnstable, Falmouth, P-town	The backbone; cheap and reliable
Fast ferry	Boston (Long Wharf)	Provincetown	The scenic, fun way to P-town
Ferry	Hyannis / Woods Hole	Nantucket, Martha's Vineyard	Island add-ons
Air	Boston, NYC, etc.	Cape Cod Gateway Airport (Hyannis)	Fastest, priciest

The bus is the workhorse — regular service from Boston and Logan Airport down to Hyannis (the Cape's transit hub) and onward to other towns. **The Boston-to-Provincetown fast ferry** is the standout for a P-town trip: ~90 minutes across the bay, no traffic, and a lovely ride.

The key: pick a car-free-friendly base

Not every Cape town works without a car. The two that do it best:

- **Provincetown.** The ideal car-free base. It's compact and walkable, everything's on or near Commercial Street, the beaches are bikeable or a shuttle away, and the fast ferry drops you right in town. Many visitors here never touch a car.
- **Hyannis.** The transit hub. Buses converge here, ferries to the islands leave from here, Main Street is walkable, and it's the one town where "getting around without a car" is genuinely built in.

Woods Hole/Falmouth also works reasonably — walkable, bikeable, ferry to the Vineyard — especially paired with the Shining Sea Bikeway.

Getting around once you're here (car-free)

- **Bikes.** The Cape is built for cycling. The **Cape Cod Rail Trail** (~25+ miles, Yarmouth to Wellfleet) and the **Shining Sea Bikeway** (Falmouth) get you to beaches, towns, and lunch without a car. Rent one and it becomes your vehicle.
- **The CCRTA buses.** The regional transit authority runs routes connecting the towns, plus seasonal beach shuttles. It's not big-city frequent, but it covers the spine of the Cape.
- **Seasonal trolleys and shuttles.** P-town and some beach areas run summer shuttles to the beaches and parking lots.
- **Rideshare** exists but **thins out fast** off the Mid-Cape and late at night, especially off-season — don't build a plan around Uber being there at 10pm in a small town.

How to plan a car-free Cape trip

1. **Base in Provincetown or Hyannis.**
2. **Get there by bus or ferry** from Boston/Logan.
3. **Rent a bike** for local range and beach access.
4. **Use buses/shuttles** for longer town hops.
5. **Add an island day** by ferry (Nantucket or the Vineyard) — both are excellent car-free.

The honest caveats

A car-free Cape trip trades total flexibility for simplicity. You'll be tied to schedules, some Outer Cape beaches and quiet villages are hard to reach, and off-season service drops. But if you base smart and lean on bikes, you skip the two worst parts of a Cape vacation — bridge traffic and beach parking — entirely.

Don't miss: the Boston-to-Provincetown fast ferry. Arriving in P-town by boat, bags in hand, no car to park, is the most relaxing possible start to a Cape trip — and it sets the tone for the whole car-free week.

◆ THINGS TO DO

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