



Martha's Vineyard - Step Back in Time

Expanded Itinerary

Jul 14 Fly Detroit/Martha's Vineyard, MA

Our one-stop flight will depart Detroit in early morning, landing on Martha's Vineyard around 10:30 am—we'll have a day of touring before checking in at our hotel in late afternoon.

Our island tour will pass through all six Island towns. The towns on Martha's Vineyard offer surprising diversity, each with its own character and personality. One highlight will be a stop at the Gay Head Lighthouse in Aquinnah, which is recognized worldwide for its dazzling red clay cliffs and natural beauty.

The tour also includes the town of Oak Bluffs, a Victorian era summer resort community with "gingerbread" cottages and a scenic ocean front park. Our walking tour of Oak Bluffs will take us through the fascinating Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association property. Consisting of hundreds of artistic, colorful, one-of-a-kind gingerbread cottages, it contains the most perfectly preserved collection of Carpenter Gothic style architecture in the world. The Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting Association began as the site of Methodist revival meetings back in 1835 and continued through the Civil War era. Thousands flocked to the meetings on Martha's Vineyard and over time they built the Victorian gingerbread village of cottages in the same spot they had once pitched canvas tents. The outdoor Tabernacle and park-like grounds are open to the public. All but one of the cottages are privately owned, but the residents enjoy showing off their beloved summer cottages and answering questions. We will tour the one that is open to the public. We'll also see and have a chance to "take a spin" on the oldest operating carousel in the country, 'Flying Horses', near the harbor in Oak Bluffs. Originally built for Coney Island in 1876, the horses made the trip to Martha's Vineyard in 1884 and have been a permanent fixture since.

Chilmark's unique rolling hillsides and vistas overlook the Atlantic and the Elizabeth Islands. West Tisbury is a typical New England village right out of a Currier & Ives print.

Jul 15 Edgartown (included breakfast, dinner)

This morning we'll take a short walking tour through Edgartown (population 5,000). One of New England's most elegant communities, Edgartown was Martha's Vineyard's first colonial settlement and it has been the county seat since 1642. The stately white Greek Revival houses built by the whaling captains have been carefully maintained. They make the town a museum piece—a seaport village preserved from the early 19th century. Main Street is a picture book setting with its harbor and waterfront. The tall square-rigged ships that sailed the oceans have passed from the Edgartown scene, but the heritage of those vessels and their captains has continued. For the past hundred years, Edgartown has been one of the world's great yachting centers.

On our tour we'll learn about the Dr. Daniel Fischer House, and the Old Whaling Church, a stately landmark built by whaling captains in 1843 and considered to be one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in New England. Near the harbor we'll find one-of-a-kind shops, cafes and galleries in the square of Main Street-North Water Street which you may visit in your free time. Beyond the retail district we'll see lovely gardens and beautiful views of the harbor, as well as the Edgartown lighthouse.

The Vincent House, built in 1672, is the oldest house on the island. It has five rooms furnished with period antiques that depict life throughout the last four centuries.

South Water Street is dominated by a huge pagoda tree brought from China as a seedling by Captain Thomas Milton in the early days of the last century. The house beyond it belonged to Captain Valentine Pease, on whose ship Herman Melville made his only whaling voyage. We'll see the Benjamin Smith house dating from 1760 (it is now the office of the Vineyard Gazette). Use your free time to visit the Martha's Vineyard Museum, or tour a couple of whaling captains' houses which are open to the public. Walk down North Water Street to see the stately, white clapboard Federal-style mansions and as you do check out the many cute shops along the way; most are owner run because chain stores are frowned upon in the Vineyard. If it's a nice day you might wish to rent a bike to tour the town on your own.

We'll meet this evening to enjoy an included dinner.

Jul 16 Edgartown (included breakfast)

Today is a free day so you can indulge your interests. Is it a lovely day? Maybe rent a bike and explore the island in depth on your own. Tour a historic mansion or two, visit the Museum, shop along the waterfront, take a convenient bus back to see more of Oak Bluffs—it won't be hard to fill your time today!

Jul 17 Fly Martha's Vineyard/Detroit (included breakfast)

After a leisurely breakfast we'll head for the island airport and catch a one-stop flight to Detroit.