

## **Edgartown Town Tour**

From Oak Bluffs, you can also drive or bike to Edgartown along picturesque Beach Road. On summer days, park for free outside town in the shuttle parking lot near the Triangle (watch for signs) and take a trolley-bus to the village.

You will want to walk leisurely through lovely downtown Edgartown. Start on Main Street at the Dr. Daniel Fisher House, maintained by the Martha's Vineyard Preservation Trust. It serves as an elegant setting for weddings, receptions, and meetings. The Fisher House was built by the Island's richest citizen, who made his fortune in whale oil and banking. It is a fine example of Federal-style architecture.

Closer to town by a few steps is the splendid Old Whaling Church with its towering wooden columns and Greek Revival architecture. It was built in 1843 as the Edgartown Methodist Church, and although church services are still held here, it currently is used as a town meeting place and a site for a wide variety of theatrical productions. The interior is rich, antique, and memorable, from the red plush cushions on old, enclosed wooden pews to the chandeliers suspended from the tall ceiling. Behind the Daniel Fisher House and the Old Whaling Church is the Vincent House Museum (1672), the oldest house on the Island. Next is the Dukes County Courthouse, built of red brick in 1858 and redecorated in 1950, a prime example of New England styling.

After a solid, busy block of shops and restaurants, Main Street intersects with Water Street, North (left) and South (right). We recommend you explore both North and South Water Streets, where you'll find fine old captains' houses that have now been turned into inns or continue as private residences.

Walk out to the end of North Water Street and you'll discover a grand Victorian building, the Harbor View Hotel, the Island's largest hotel. Directly across from the Harbor View are the Edgartown Lighthouse (4), public beach and the harbor, filled with sailboats and yachts throughout the summer.

Turn back to Main Street and continue onto South Water Street to see the spreading, immense pagoda tree that was brought here as a seedling from China by Captain Thomas Milton in the early 19th century. His house, on the left just before the tree, is now part of the Harborside Inn. Further along on South Water Street stands a house built between 1822 and 1836 by Captain Valentine Pease, master of The Acushnet, on which Herman Melville shipped out in 1841. Captain Pease was the prototype of Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*. His house is now a private residence.

From South Water Street, take a right onto Cooke Street and walk past elegant old houses to School Street and the Martha's Vineyard Historical Society and Vineyard Museum. There you will find the historic Fresnel lens that once belonged to the Gay Head Lighthouse. You also will discover the Thomas Cooke house, built around 1765 and used as the office of the Customs Collector in the early 1800s.

The three busiest towns on the Vineyard are said to be “down-Island” (Tisbury, Oak Bluffs, and Edgartown). The more rural, quieter towns are “up-Island.” The name has a nautical origin, as does most of the Vineyard. A vessel runs east “down” the longitudes and runs west “up” the longitudes. See Up-island Tours.