

Vineyard Haven Town Tour

Every foot of the Vineyard has a rich density of history stacked vertically, so that a building now used as a shop or a theater once may have been a church or a meeting hall, and before that a residence or a bank. The main port is Vineyard Haven which is part of the Town of Tisbury.

The best way to get around the town center is to walk. If you have a car, you can park in the A&P parking lot, not far from the Steamship Authority terminal. Walk along Water Street, which runs in front of the lot, and take the first right at the famous, busy Five Corners.

Just a few buildings up Beach Road is the Chamber of Commerce. Please stop in and visit us for helpful tourist information. Half a block beyond the Chamber, a right turn brings one onto Main Street, a busy and pleasant place, with shops and restaurants and everyday businesses of our main “year-round” town. Main Street has almost no historic buildings, because all the old houses in the area were destroyed in the great fire of August 11, 1883. But along William Street you will find fine, sedate old captains’ houses untouched by the fire. Turn left off Main onto Church Street, and a short walk brings you to the William Street intersection.

Drive or bike through the town center on Main Street toward West Chop and its lighthouse. Along the way, there are a number of old buildings, starting with the small, plain Nathan Mayhew Schoolhouse building on the left, with the landmark Liberty Pole in the front. This building has been a school, a museum, and is now home to Sail Martha’s Vineyard.

Beyond the Old Schoolhouse is the Crowell House, also on the left. It is a large, gray-shingled house with a raised dormer, set close to the street. The Crowell House is famous because one of its rooms, containing a rare over-mantel painting, was removed in its entirety and is now in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

Farther along, on the right side of Main Street, is the short lane that leads to Owen Park. The town band holds concerts in the Park’s charming bandstand on alternate Sundays in the summer. Bike or drive away from town along shaded, pleasant Main Street to the West Chop Lighthouse on the right. It was the last manned light on the Vineyard.

Beyond the lighthouse, the road takes a wide one-way loop, passing large and elegant houses and a tennis court, to a tiny store and post office where it joins Franklin Street. Go back to town along Franklin, past the Mink Meadows Golf Course on your right, and past a number of modern homes. At the end of Franklin, go left on Spring Street. Turn left onto Main and go right on Union to the corner of Water Street.

During the summer, there is a shuttle bus that connects the towns of Tisbury (Vineyard Haven), Oak Bluffs, and Edgartown. It departs here and stops at the Steamship Authority ferryboat landing in Oak Bluffs. Go right on Water Street to Five

Corners, where you may follow the road sign to Oak Bluffs, three miles away. Park wherever you can, minding the parking regulations, and take a walk around this enchanting town. See Oak Bluffs Tour.