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Provincetown is a place like nowhere else



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Denis Jr. Tangney

Provincetown, or P-town as some locals term it, is located at the tip of Cape Cod. Not only is this the first place where the Mayflower Pilgrims came ashore in the New World, but it also became a center of New England's whaling and fishing industry, one of the oldest U.S. art colonies, and a center for gay and lesbian tourism.

Pilgrims

Dominating the town's skyline is the 252-foot Pilgrim Monument, a tower that commemorates the Pilgrims' first landing in the New World in Provincetown in November of 1620. Before sailing across the bay to Plymouth, they drew up the Mayflower Compact here. A bas-relief depicting the signing of the compact is on Bradford Street directly below the Pilgrim Monument.

The Provincetown Museum at the monument tells of the town's role in Pilgrim and American history. Groups must preregister, and special rates are available for parties of 15 or more.

The 2009 exhibit, "Pilgrims, Patriots, and Products," shows how advertisers have used romanticized images about America's past to sell products.

In the 19th century, especially after the Civil War, Provincetown and its harbor became a center for whaling and fishing. Portuguese sailors, picked up by American ships in the Azores and Cape Verde Islands to fill out their crews, came to Provincetown to live. Additional Portuguese immigrants moved to town to work on the whaling boats and coastal fishing vessels and brought with them their families and traditions. As a result, a strong

Portuguese community in Provincetown began to flourish. The Provincetown Portuguese Festival, an ABA Top 100 Event for 2009, is set for June 25–28.



Photo: David Hosenman

Provincetown Portuguese Bakery is a fixture in town.

The great outdoors

Visitors to Provincetown can enjoy an abundance of natural resources. The Province Lands Visitor Center of the Cape Cod National Seashore is open from May through October and is located about a mile from Provincetown. Group members will be able to take in 360-degree views of the Province Lands dunes, the Outer Beach, and the Atlantic Ocean from the observation deck.

Many groups also book a dune tour of the National Seashore with Art's Dune Tours to experience firsthand the wonders of the dunes and see the dune shacks built early in the 20th century and used by artists such as playwright Eugene O'Neill and poet Harry Kemp.

Whale-watching trips from Provincetown with Dolphin Fleet Eco-Excursions are another favorite outdoor activity. The Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary in the ocean north of Cape Cod is home to several species of whales and an amazing variety of other marine life, including dolphins, sea turtles, deep-sea fish, and sea birds. Birding is also popular on the Outer Cape because it is home to more than 250 species of birds and waterfowl.

Enjoy the arts

Charles Hawthorne established The Cape Cod School of Art in 1899; it was the beginning of the art colony. By 1920, there were seven schools of art, as many artists found a cultural haven in Provincetown. Impressionism, fascination with the light of Provincetown, the beautiful natural landscape, and the authentic, rustic scenes on the piers inspired the romantic art of the period.

Provincetown is home to the Provincetown Art Association and Museum, which houses and exhibits one of the most important 20th-century American art collections, and the Fine Arts Work Center, which offers the largest residency program for emerging artists and writers in the country, summer and fall workshops, and an MFA program in visual arts. Playwrights O'Neill and Susan Glaspell and her husband George Cram Cook formed the original Provincetown Players in 1916.



Photo: David Hoekman

The Provincetown Harbor once was the home port for a large fishing fleet.

Throughout the 20th century and into the 21st, Tennessee Williams and many other playwrights, actors, and directors have written, performed, and directed on the outermost tip of Cape Cod. The New Provincetown Players (formed from a merger of two existing companies in 2005) present productions at The Provincetown Theater.

Today, Provincetown is a haven for artists in every medium — painting, sculpting, theater, writing, and music. The vibrant arts community, atmosphere of experimentation, vast teaching and learning opportunities, and palpable energy draw artists year after year.

Cabaret Fest 2009 featuring Patricia Fitzpatrick, who is a guest columnist for *Group Tour Magazine*, takes place from May 15–17, 2009.

In town

Most of Provincetown’s shops, galleries, and restaurants are located on Commercial Street, which runs parallel to the harbor shoreline. In fact, walking along Commercial Street and browsing in the more than 200

shops and galleries is a fun way to spend an afternoon.

The 1920s and 1930s saw the gay and lesbian presence flourish in Provincetown as contingents of artists, writers, playwrights, poets, novelists, socialists, and radicals began to summer in the town. It wasn’t long before Provincetown became the place to spend the summer months for gay men and women. Soon, many summer regulars purchased guest houses and businesses and became permanent residents. The 1970s marked Provincetown’s rise as the gay and lesbian destination that it is widely considered today.

For motorcoach parking directions, contact the Provincetown Tourism Office.

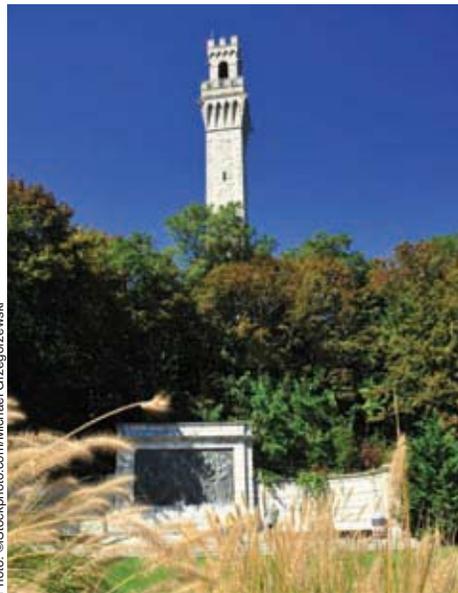


Photo: ©Stockphoto.com/Michael Gizregorzewski

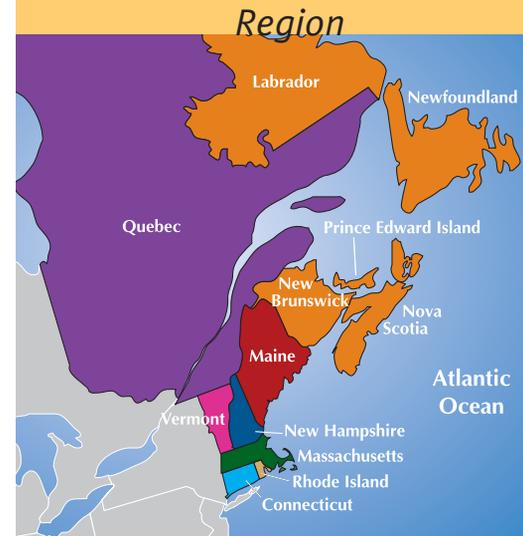
Provincetown can be seen from the top of the Pilgrim Monument.

Provincetown Tourism Office
(508) 487-3298
www.ProvincetownTourismOffice.org



Groups often tour the dunes along the Cape Cod National Seashore.

New England, Quebec & Atlantic Canada



Maine

98

New Hampshire

101

Vermont

104

Massachusetts

107

Rhode Island

115

Connecticut

118

Quebec

120

Atlantic Canada

122