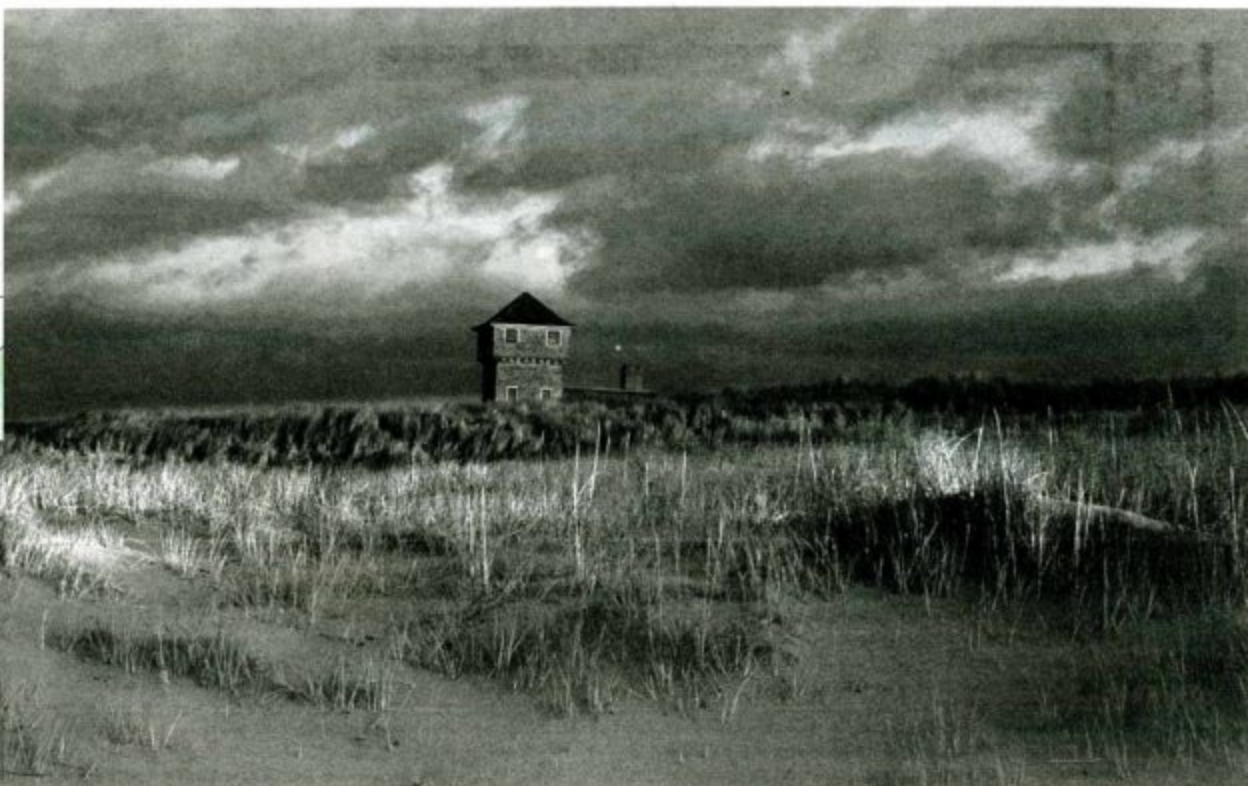


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FOOD

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A TANK AWAY



BILL REGAN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Provincetown's Race Point Beach along the Cape Cod National Seashore offers sweeping views of the dunes and is nearly deserted in the off-season.

Provincetown plays up its quieter side

By Jenn Abelson
GLOBE STAFF

PROVINCETOWN — At this extreme tip of Massachusetts, the population swells from 5,000 to 50,000 each summer as visitors lap up the spectacular sunsets, pristine beaches, funky galleries, and fine dining. These attractions and more are even easier for couples to enjoy once fall is in full swing and the throngs of visitors have dissipated. Provincetown is even stepping up its game to attract off-season tourists, hosting its first annual restaurant week starting Nov. 6 and an organized gallery stroll. The real perks of P-town in the fall: gorgeous foliage, empty beaches, and no reservations needed for dinner.

Stay

Provincetown offers a plethora of fabulous inns and resorts, with plush amenities and sweeping water views. For a sweet spot close to the action on Commercial Street, check out **Carpe Diem Guesthouse** (12 Johnson St., www.carpediemguesthouse.com,

800-487-0132). The mansard home features 19 guest rooms and nine fireplaces, along with a Finnish sauna and massage services. In November, standard rooms start at \$135. Sherry and port are available all day for guests and the inn offers wine and cheese every afternoon. If you want pure serenity away from the main drag, head to **Land's End Inn** (22 Commercial St., www.landsendinn.com, 508-487-0706). The inn is located on top of a hill in the West End with panoramic ocean views, a private sandy beach, and numerous decks perfect for eating breakfast, reading books, or painting. Couples willing to splurge for true indulgence — over \$300 — should opt for the Bay Tower room, featuring a king bed, domed ceiling, two decks, and 360-degree water views.

Dine

Saki (258 Commercial St., 508-487-4870) is the newest sushi joint to hit town. Located inside a renovated church with 20-foot ceilings, Saki specializes in fresh seafood and sushi and

features signature cocktails. Best menu picks include the smoked baby octopus, spicy soft shell crab roll, and flights of sake. Soak up the bizarre atmosphere, which includes large video monitors playing Japanese and Chinese animation, and Bruce Lee movies. **Ross' Grill** (237 Commercial St., www.rossgrillptown.com, 508-487-8878) is a bit more traditional, featuring bistro food on the second floor of Whaler's Wharf. This restaurant offers more than 75 wines by the glass and fabulous views of the harbor. You can't go wrong with the half-pound black Angus burger with Gorgonzola and apple smoked bacon, or the lobster salad on a French baguette.

During the day

Art's Dune Tours (9 Washington Ave., www.artsdunetours.com, 508-487-1950) is your one and only access to some of the coolest natural sights in Provincetown. This tour company, in business since 1946, brings visitors in SUVs along the Cape Cod National Seashore where you can spot wispy beach grass,

beach plums, sand dunes, and hidden shacks where famous artists and writers, including Eugene O'Neill and Harry Kemp, stayed and drew inspiration. Tours are \$25 each and last about an hour. The town is lined with galleries and you can easily spend a day traipsing through shops. Some cool picks include **TJ Walton Gallery** (148 Commercial St., 508-487-0170), featuring a revolving exhibit of works from one of Provincetown's most well-known painters; **Tao Water Gallery** (352 Commercial St., www.tao.watergallery.com, 508-375-0428), offering pieces from over 25 Chinese contemporary artists; and **Galeria Cubana** (357 Commercial St., www.la.galeriacubana.com, 508-487-2822), featuring New England's most comprehensive collection of contemporary Cuban art. A formal gallery stroll is scheduled for Nov. 6.

After dark

The Crown & Anchor (247 Commercial St., www.onlyat.thecrown.com, 508-487-1430) offers the most diverse nightlife

options in one small complex. Listen to Bobby Weatherbee every Friday and Saturday at the piano bar. Crowds swoon around the piano as Bobby belts out classics like "Hey Big Spender" and "All That Jazz." There are at least two television screens for those who can't do without their dose of Boston sports. If you want to get your groove on, check out the Wave bar, a video bar with a dozen video screens, views of the beach and water, or enjoy a game of pool fireside in the off season. **Cape Inn Whaler Lounge** (698 Commercial St., www.capeinn.com/lounge.shtml, 508-487-1711) shows free movies nightly on its 70-square-foot screen. The lounge features free popcorn and a tavern menu (you have to pay for food and drink) and a full bar. Couples can sink back into plush chairs or cuddle on the couches and have some privacy on the upper level. Most films start at 8 p.m. on weekends during the off-season.

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