

M V V A C A T I O N

The Martha's Vineyard Beach Guide

2026 EDITION

All 20 beaches — parking costs, town stickers, lifeguard coverage,
dog rules and swimming safety, verified for the 2026 season.



GOLDEN HOUR ON THE MENEMSHA SHORE · CHILMARK

START HERE

Which beach is your beach?

Martha's Vineyard has two very different coastlines. Match the day you want to the right shore, and the island does the rest.

South Shore · the Atlantic

Open-ocean surf, cooler water (62–70°F), dramatic dunes — and real rip currents. This is the coast you come to walk, photograph and watch. We don't recommend swimming here.

North Shore · the Sound

Protected Nantucket Sound water runs 70–80°F in peak summer with gentle waves and mild current — this is where the island swims, and where we'd send you with children.

Best beach by situation

YOUR PRIORITY	BEST BEACH	WHY
Young children — safest water	Owen Park / State Beach	Calm Sound, lifeguards, facilities
Watching real Atlantic surf	South Beach / Wasque	Big-wave drama, best enjoyed from the sand
Dogs in summer	Lobsterville / Fuller Street	The only true summer dog beaches
Zero cost, free parking	State Beach / Inkwell / Owen Park	Free parking, no sticker needed
Sunset views	Menemsha Beach	Famous west-facing sunsets, great food
Seclusion and remote sand	Cape Poge / Long Point	OSV or hike access, few people
Near the Oak Bluffs ferry	Inkwell / State Beach	Short walk from the terminal
Near the Vineyard Haven ferry	Owen Park / Eastville	5-minute walk from the Steamship dock
Surf casting	Wasque / Cape Poge	World-famous striped bass and bluefish
ADA / wheelchair access	South Beach / Owen Park	Beach wheelchairs available

Read the flags — it's not optional

● Green — safe

Normal conditions. Swim near a lifeguard when you can.

● Yellow — caution

Currents or surf are up. Strong swimmers only, stay shallow.

● Red — no swimming

Rip currents are active. Stay out — the flag reflects real-time conditions.

Caught in a rip current? Don't fight it. Swim parallel to the shore until you're free of the pull, then angle diagonally back in.

All 20 beaches at a glance

BEACH	TOWN	PARKING · 2026	LIFEGUARDS	DOGS IN SUMMER	WATER
South Beach (Katama)	Edgartown	Free town lot — full by 9 AM	Yes, 10–5	Banned year-round	Not for swimming
Moshup Beach	Aquinnah	\$30/day lot (walk-in free)	None	No, to Sep 15	Not for swimming
Lucy Vincent	Chilmark	Resident sticker \$100/season	None	No, Jun 15–Sep 15	Not for swimming
Squibnocket	Chilmark	Resident sticker · all after 5 PM	None	Prohibited	Not for swimming
Long Point Refuge	W. Tisbury	\$25/day — reserve online ahead	None	Never (refuge)	Pond side only
Wasque (Chappy)	Edgartown	\$25/day (Trustees)	None	Off-season leash only	Do not swim
Cape Poge (Chappy)	Edgartown	OSV permit \$70/day · \$250/season	None	Leash OK	Not for swimming
State Beach	OB / Edg	Free pullouts — bike instead	Some sections	No, Apr 1–Aug 31	Safe · watch bridge
Inkwell Beach	Oak Bluffs	Free nearby · 5 min from ferry	Check locally	No	Safe
Pay Beach	Oak Bluffs	Free (no fee despite name)	Seasonal	No	Safe
Eastville Beach	V. Haven	Free small lot	None	Generally no	Safe · avoid channel
Owen Park	V. Haven	Free lot in park	Yes	No	Very safe
Menemsha Beach	Chilmark	Free — small lot fills fast	Yes	No	Safe
Lobsterville	Aquinnah	Free — only ~8 spots	None	Leash, year-round ✓	Safe
Tisbury Town Beach	V. Haven	Free limited lot	Yes	No	Very safe
Lambert's Cove	W. Tisbury	Sticker \$75 · everyone after 5 PM	Yes	Before 10 AM, \$5 permit	Safe
Tashmoo Opening	V. Haven	Free — 6–8 roadside spots	None	Off-peak leash — check	Safe · avoid channel
Bend-in-the-Road	Edgartown	Free roadside	Yes	No	Safe
Fuller Street	Edgartown	Free street · walk from town	None	Leash, year-round ✓	Safe · avoid the point
Sengekontacket Pond	Edg / OB	Free pull-offs on Beach Rd	None at pond	Leash generally — confirm	Very safe · watch bridge

The after-5 secret: every resident-only beach on the island — Lucy Vincent, Squibnocket, Lambert's Cove — opens to everyone after 5 PM in summer, free. That's golden-hour light at the most exclusive sand on the East Coast.

THE BEACHES · 1 OF 3

South Shore and the Atlantic

Real surf, real currents, real drama. This coast is for walking, photographing and watching the waves roll in — not for swimming.

1. South Beach (Katama)

EDGARTOWN

Three miles of barrier beach and the island's most dramatic sand. Lifeguards patrol in season, but rip currents form fast and often here — we don't recommend swimming. Come for the long walk and the big-sky light, and stay well clear of the Norton Point breach; the current through it is severe.

Parking Free town lot, full by 9 AM weekends · **Guards** Late Jun–Labor Day, 10–5 · **Dogs** Banned year-round · **Extras** Beach wheelchair at the lot, VTA Beach Bus from Edgartown

4. Squibnocket

CHILMARK

A small, cove-shaped local favorite with rocky headlands and some of the island's best tidepooling at the east end. The shore break drops off suddenly — keep this one for walking and tidepools, not swimming. Residents by day; everyone welcome after 5 PM.

Parking Resident sticker before 5 PM · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Prohibited · **Swim** Not recommended — sudden shore break

2. Moshup Beach

AQUINNAH

Below the Gay Head Cliffs — the island's most photographed shoreline and a National Historic Landmark on Wampanoag tribal land. No lifeguards and strong rips, so leave the swimming for the Sound; come for the beach walk and the view. Keep your distance from the cliff face — climbing or taking clay is illegal, and rangers enforce it. Clothing-optional at the far west end.

Parking \$30/day town lot; park in the village and walk the half-mile path free · **Guards** None · **Dogs** None to Sep 15, then leashed

5. Long Point Refuge

WEST TISBURY

Open Atlantic on one side, a calm, warm pond on the other — and the pond is the one to swim. Kids love it. The mile-long walk in keeps crowds away. Trustees property; book parking online before you drive out.

Parking \$25/day, advance timed reservation required mid-Jun–mid-Sep · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Never — wildlife refuge

3. Lucy Vincent

CHILMARK

Widely called the island's most beautiful beach — bluffs, clean sand, big surf — and its most exclusive: residents-only by day. The customary after-5 walk-in isn't in the official rules, so confirm locally.

Parking Chilmark sticker (\$100/season), no day passes · **Guards** None · **Dogs** None Jun 15–Sep 15 · **Swim** Not recommended — strong rips, no guards

6. Wasque

CHAPPAQUIDDICK

Where the Sound and the Atlantic collide — the most violent currents on the island and world-class surf casting for stripers and blues. Watch the drama; don't swim in it. Reach Chappy on the On Time ferry (\$5 round-trip walk-on).

Parking \$25/day, free for Trustees Contributing members · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Off-season leash only · **Swim** Not recommended

7. Cape Poge Refuge

CHAPPAQUIDDICK

Five miles of wilderness barrier beach, an 1893 lighthouse, nesting terns and plovers — reached only by 4WD with an OSV permit. Pack in everything; there is nothing out here, which is the point.

Access OSV permit \$70/day or \$250/season, high-clearance 4WD, drop tire pressure · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Leash OK, nesting closures apply · **Swim** Not recommended

THE BEACHES · 2 OF 3

North Shore and the Sound

Warm, calm, protected water — the island's family beaches. Sound temperatures reach the mid-70s in peak summer.



8. State Beach

OB · EDGARTOWN

Two miles of free Sound-facing sand along Beach Road, with a bike path running its whole length — the only beach you can pedal to from two towns. The famous “Jaws Bridge” anchors the north end — enjoy the jumping spectacle from the sand (posted signs prohibit jumping) and keep swimmers away from the bridge current.

Parking Free pullouts — biking strongly recommended · **Guards** Certain sections only · **Dogs** None Apr 1–Aug 31

9. Inkwell Beach

OAK BLUFFS

One of America's historically important African American beaches — a cherished gathering place for Black families, intellectuals and civil-rights leaders for over a century. Calm water, gradual entry, five minutes from the ferry.

Parking Free street and municipal lots · **Guards** Historically staffed — confirm 2026 locally · **Dogs** No in summer

10. Pay Beach

OAK BLUFFS

The more developed stretch of the Oak Bluffs waterfront, with changing rooms and the esplanade at your back. Despite the name, it's free — pair a swim with lunch on Circuit Avenue.

Parking Free municipal lots · **Guards** Seasonal · **Dogs** No in summer · **Extras** Changing rooms, restrooms

11. Eastville Beach

VINEYARD HAVEN

A small harbor beach three-quarters of a mile from the Steamship terminal — perfect for a first swim after an early ferry or a last one before you leave. Never swim toward the channel: boat traffic and hard tidal current.

Parking Free small lot · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Generally none in peak season

12. Owen Park

VINEYARD HAVEN

The most family-friendly beach near the Vineyard Haven ferry: extremely calm, shallow harbor water, a playground next door, summer band concerts, and lifeguards. A beach wheelchair is available at the harbormaster's office.

Parking Free lot in the park · **Guards** Yes, seasonal · **Dogs** No in summer · **Extras** Restrooms, picnic tables, bandstand

13. Menemsha Beach

CHILMARK

The island's most beloved evening: calm Sound water, a working fishing harbor behind you, lobster rolls a hundred feet away, and the best sunset on Martha's Vineyard, straight into the sea. Come early — the lot is small.

Parking Free; village street parking · **Guards** Yes, seasonal · **Dogs** No in summer · **Extras** Restrooms, fish markets next door

14. Lobsterville

AQUINNAH

The dog beach: leashed dogs welcome year-round, one of only two such beaches on the island. Long, shallow, calm and blissfully uncrowded — because there are only about eight parking spots. Bike over from Menemsha.

Parking Free, ~8 roadside spots, gone by 9 AM · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Leash, year-round ✓

15. Tisbury Town Beach

VINEYARD HAVEN

A sheltered, warm Lagoon Pond beach the local families use — low-key, lifeguarded, and consistently safe for children. The quiet alternative when the OB beaches are packed.

Parking Free limited lot · **Guards** Yes, seasonal · **Dogs** No in summer

THE BEACHES · 3 OF 3

Coves, ponds and harbor beaches

The in-between waters — warmer, calmer, and home to the island's best-kept local habits.

16. Lambert's Cove

WEST TISBURY

Often rated the most beautiful calm-water beach on the island — a white crescent between pine bluffs. Residents-only by day, everyone after 5 PM, which happens to be exactly when the light is best. Off-leash dog swimming before 10 AM with a \$5 permit.

Parking W. Tisbury sticker \$75/season; free after 5 PM · **Guards** Yes, seasonal · **Note** Unmarked dirt-road access — don't trust the nav app

17. Tashmoo Opening

VINEYARD HAVEN

Where Lake Tashmoo meets the Sound through a narrow cut: warm fresh water on one side, salt on the other, gentle tidal flow between. A local hot-day favorite. Essentially bike-or-walk only.

Parking Free — maybe 6–8 shoulder spots · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Off-peak leash — check current rules · **Swim** Keep kids off the channel

18. Bend-in-the-Road

EDGARTOWN

Edgartown's easy answer: a small, calm, lifeguarded Sound beach right on the bike path, minutes north of downtown. All the swim, none of the South Beach logistics.

Parking Free roadside · **Guards** Yes, seasonal · **Dogs** No in summer

19. Fuller Street

EDGARTOWN

A narrow harbor-mouth strip by the Edgartown Lighthouse, ten minutes' walk from downtown — and the island's other year-round dog beach. The current off the point is strong; keep swimmers and dogs away from it.

Parking Free street nearby · **Guards** None · **Dogs** Leash, year-round ✓

20. Sengekontacket Pond

EDGARTOWN · OB

A big, warm, knee-deep brackish pond behind State Beach — zero waves, maximum toddler. The Jaws Bridge spans the cut where pond meets Sound — a famous summer spectacle, though posted signs prohibit jumping and the current gets swift on a tide change.

Parking Free Beach Road pull-offs · **Guards** None at pond points · **Extras** Ideal for kayaks and paddleboards

DOGS IN SUMMER — THE SHORT VERSION

STRICTLY ENFORCED

BEACH	SUMMER	OFF-SEASON	NOTES
Lobsterville	Yes, on-leash	Yes, on-leash	The reliable Sound-side summer dog beach
Fuller Street	Yes, on-leash	Yes, on-leash	Year-round dog beach in Edgartown
Lambert's Cove	Before 10 AM, \$5 permit	Unrestricted	Off-leash morning swims
South Beach and Long Point	Banned	Banned	Year-round bans — no exceptions
All other Sound beaches	No (Mem. Day–Labor Day)	Generally leash OK	Confirm with each town first

Stickers, fees and how locals save

Town sticker beaches

TOWN	BEACH	2026 STICKER	NON-RESIDENT ACCESS
Chilmark	Lucy Vincent · Squibnocket	\$100/season · \$65/season	After 5 PM daily, free
West Tisbury	Lambert's Cove	\$75/season	After 5 PM daily, free
Aquinnah	Moshup (parking)	—	\$30/day lot; walk-in free

Trustees of Reservations beaches

BEACH	DAY FEE	MEMBERS	NOTES
Long Point	\$25/vehicle	Free (Contributing+)	Reserve online ahead; 1-mile walk in
Wasque	\$25/vehicle	Free (Contributing+)	Via the Chappy On Time ferry
Cape Poge OSV	\$70/day · \$250/season	Discounted	4WD required, sand driving

Does membership pay off? A Trustees Contributing membership (~\$140/yr) parks free at every Trustees beach — it pays for itself in about six visits, or two if you'd otherwise buy day passes for a family week. Buy at thetrustees.org before your trip.

Five ways to beach for free

- **Thirteen beaches cost nothing.** South Beach, State Beach, Inkwell, Pay, Eastville, Owen Park, Menemsha, Lobsterville, Tisbury Town, Tashmoo, Bend-in-the-Road, Fuller Street and the Sengekontacket pull-offs — no sticker, no fee.
- **Ride the Beach Bus.** The VTA's seasonal shuttle runs from Edgartown straight to South Beach for standard fare — no parking stress at all.
- **Bike Beach Road.** The continuous path links Oak Bluffs and Edgartown directly along State Beach. Pick any empty stretch of two miles of sand.
- **Go after five.** The resident-only trio opens free to everyone after 5 PM — arrive at Lambert's Cove at 5:30, swim in golden light, stay for sunset.
- **Walk into Moshup.** Skip the \$30 lot: park in Aquinnah village and take the half-mile path below the cliffs.

Plan the day like an islander

Timing and logistics

- **Beat the lots.** Island-wide, beach parking fills by 10 AM on summer weekends. Arrive before 9 or after 3 — the late-afternoon swim is the underrated one.
- **No car? No problem.** Owen Park and Eastville are walkable from the Vineyard Haven ferry; Inkwell and Pay from Oak Bluffs. The VTA reaches South Beach and State Beach. There’s no Uber or Lyft — local taxis only.
- **Water temps.** Sound beaches: 70–80°F in July–August. Atlantic beaches: 62–70°F. No wetsuit needed for summer Sound swimming.
- **Zero shade.** The Vineyard’s beaches are wide open. Bring an umbrella, reef-safe sunscreen, and more water than you think you need.
- **Beach fires** need a town permit, and are restricted at Trustees properties and most town beaches — ask before you build.

Accessibility

- **South Beach:** free beach wheelchair at the main lot, first-come — Edgartown Parks and Recreation can reserve ahead in peak season.
- **Owen Park:** seasonal beach wheelchair — ask at the harbormaster’s office.
- **State Beach:** firm packed sand in sections allows chairs close to the water.
- **Inkwell and Pay Beach:** flat access from the paved esplanade — the island’s most accessible terrain. The Trustees line for current property status: (508) 627-7689.

Safety, one more time

OUR CALL	BEACHES	WHY
Not for swimming	Wasque, Cape Poge, Squibnocket, Lucy Vincent, Moshup, South Beach, Long Point ocean side	Rip currents and heavy Atlantic surf — enjoy these from the sand
Swim here	Owen Park, Inkwell, Pay, Menemsha, Tisbury Town, Bend-in-the-Road, Lambert’s Cove, Long Point pond side, Sengekontacket	Calm Sound water, gentle entry, most with lifeguards
Sand yes, channel no	Eastville, Fuller Street, Tashmoo Opening, State Beach near the bridge	Lovely beaches with one hard rule: stay out of the tidal channels

Rules move. Parking fees, stickers and dog policies are set town-by-town and can change each season. This guide reflects 2026 policies as verified in spring 2026 — when in doubt, confirm with the town beach department or the Trustees before you go.

M V V A C A T I O N

The island, planned like a local.

This guide is one slice of what we do. The living versions of everything here — with photos, maps and this week's events — are free on the site, updated all season.

The Full Beach Guide

Every beach above, expanded — with photos and the details that change in-season.

mvvacation.com/beaches

Trip Planner

Pick your dates and interests; get a day-by-day island plan with ferry notes, in about a minute.

mvvacation.com/trip-planner

Trip Cost Calculator

Real 2026 prices for ferries, stays and food — know your budget before you book.

mvvacation.com/martha-vineyard-trip-cost-calculator

Events Calendar

Ninety-plus verified island events — fairs, festivals, fireworks and farmers markets.

mvvacation.com/events-calendar

Live Webcams

Check the actual weather on the actual beach before you commit the day.

mvvacation.com/marthas-vineyard-live-webcams

Questions?

Reply to any email from us, or write info@mvvacation.com — a real person reads these.

info@mvvacation.com

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