

Recherche voyage

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The off-season charm of Nantucket



The island of Nantucket, so pleasant when the hordes of tourists have left the place.

PHOTO WILLIAM DESOUSA-MAUK, SUPPLIED BY NANTUCKET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Michel Marois

The Press

(NANTUCKET, Massachusetts) If it is popular with tourists in the summer, it is off season that the small island of Nantucket, Massachusetts, really reveals its charms. The calm and the sweetness of life of the island are never more obvious than during a walk on deserted beaches swept by the wind ...

When tourists are gone ... When you travel out of season in Nantucket, not only will you avoid the crowds, you'll also benefit from great rates (though everything is pretty expensive), but in the spring or fall when the weather is more comfortable and fewer tourists, you can really discover the charms and history of this island glorious past.

The novelist Nancy Thayer has lived in Nantucket for more than 30 years, "after

meeting the man of her life," and she particularly appreciates the calm of her island when the tourists have left. "I really like winter here. The " *summer people* " come when the water is hot, the beaches are golden and the weather is quiet. Those who live here year-round, appreciate the howling winds, the raging waves, the few weeks during which the port is frozen and the Coast Guard icebreaker must open the road to the ferry that supplies the island. food and oil.

"For me, winter is delicious, the perfect time to write all day, read the whole evening, enjoy long candlelight meals with friends. And that does not stop us from taking long walks on the beaches, especially when the wind is strong! "

Did not the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson write: "The air of Nantucket blows in your face and in your eyes as if he were happy to see you"?

Difficult to resist the attraction of such a place, and several authors have made the island their residence, including biographers who find the calm and traces of history that help them in their research. Nantucket and its people are an inexhaustible source of inspiration for Elin Hilderbrand and Nathaniel Philbrick, who live on the island. And they are not the first to succumb to his charms.

It is in Nantucket that Herman Melville places the starting point of his masterpiece *Moby Dick* . And the small island of New England also inspired Edgar Allan Poe and Steven Axelrod, among many others.



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Photo William Desousa-Mauk, provided by Nantucket Chamber of Commerce

An upscale destination

Nantucket Island is not just for writers. It is known as one of the most exclusive destinations on the US East Coast. Thayer is inspired by many of those who make up the island's "high society" whose marriages, anniversaries and even divorces are high points of social life.

"Do not we all follow the lives of the people of this" high society "? I think it's quite human to do it, because they are rich and famous, because

normal people have to face. And when they have problems, we find comfort there, as if the bad luck was democratic. " they have beautiful clothes, fabulous jewels, because they seem above the problems that

Thanks to tourism, Nantucket, the world capital of nineteenth-century whaling and a resort for wealthy New England families in the early twentieth century, is now experiencing a third "golden age" . Even if, during the summer season, the small airport of Nantucket is invaded by private jets while the ferries are stormed by hordes of tourists who come a little spoil the tranquility of the place.

Still, these successive "layers" have left many traces, and the center of Nantucket, with its picturesque Main Street, is a bit like an open-air museum.

Before or after the summer, at dusk, when the city is plunged in the fog and we guess the illuminated interiors of beautiful homes, we can stroll away from the crowd, but also a little out of time.

Nancy Thayer just published: *A Nantucket Ballantine Wedding* (Random House)



American Seasons offers a menu inspired by the regional cuisine of the United States, always featuring the products of the island.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY AMERICAN SEASONS

Nantucket, gastronomic capital Nantucket is also a destination of choice for gourmets, and it is oddly off season that you can really taste everything the island has to offer. Every year, in mid-May, a major Wine and Food festival brings together dozens of winegrowers from around the world and many renowned chefs who prepare feasts to showcase the best products. And twice a year, in late spring and early fall, Restaurant Week offers tasting menus of the best restaurants on the island at a fraction of the usual cost. Be careful, you have to book.

American Seasons

There have been several successful chefs since 1988 in the kitchen of what may be Nantucket's best restaurant, and Neil Ferguson, a former assistant to Gordon Ramsay, is the current owner. Away on a quiet street, American Seasons offers a menu inspired by regional cuisine in the United States, always featuring the island's products.

www.americanseasons.com (<http://www.americanseasons.com>)

(<http://www.americanseasons.com>) Proprietors Table

Opened five years ago by two alumni of American Seasons, Michael and Orla LaScola, Proprietors Table takes a more cosmopolitan approach, like the nineteenth century fishermen who brought with them the smells and flavors of all continents. The food and atmosphere are more relaxed, and the cocktails are famous.

<https://www.proprietorsnantucket.com> (<https://www.proprietorsnantucket.com>)

(<https://www.proprietorsnantucket.com>) Boarding House

Seth and Angela Raynor have been serving guests for 28 years in the heart of historic Nantucket in a charming locale or on their beautiful terrace. They offer a "market cuisine" always satisfactory with a service usually impeccable. A nice place to be in the heart of the action.

boardinghousenantucket.com/ (<http://boardinghousenantucket.com/>)

(<http://boardinghousenantucket.com/>) Black-Eyed Susans

Very busy in the morning for its hearty lunches, Black-Eyed Susans also offers in the evening a cuisine that is both creative and unpretentious. Be careful, there are no reservations and you usually have to be ready to wait a while. Rare detail on the island: the restaurant does not sell alcohol, and you can (must!) Bring his wine.

<https://black-eyedsusans.com> (<https://black-eyedsusans.com>)

(<https://black-eyedsusans.com>) Toppers

It is the best-rated restaurant on the island, located in the Wauwinet Hotel, at the very end of Nantucket Bay. The cuisine of Chef Kyle Zachary is very refined, while the service is at the height of a Relais & Châteaux. However, it is also a lot for the sunsets that the customers who can afford it come here.

<http://www.wauwinet.com/dining> (<http://www.wauwinet.com/dining>)

(<http://www.wauwinet.com/dining>) **Bartlett's Farm**

Seven generations of Bartlett have succeeded each other since the early nineteenth century to cultivate what is now the largest family farm in Nantucket. The farm supplies not only the best restaurants of the island, but also a good part of its inhabitants. The farm market offers an impressive variety of fruits, vegetables and flowers, while a growing portion of production is organic.

bartlettsfarm.com (<http://bartlettsfarm.com>)

(<http://bartlettsfarm.com>) **Cisco Brewers**

This artisanal microbrewery, created by the team of Nantucket Vineyard produces a nice variety of beers with the seasons and its local host not only tastings and tours, but also music shows. The owners also own a microdistillery (Triple Eight) whose whiskeys are famous.

<https://ciscobrewers.com/> (<https://ciscobrewers.com/>)



The tiny lighthouse at Brant Point in Nantucket.
Thinkstock Photo

Notebook How to get there

By car, we go to Nantucket via Boston, then, by the roads 3 and 6, Hyannis. From there, take the ferry to Nantucket. It is best to book even out of season. The fast passenger shuttle runs in one hour, while it takes about two and a half hours to get through the car.

Good to know

We can only advise to leave his car in Hyannis. All the interesting sites of the city are within

walking distance, and there are shuttle buses (or bike paths) to reach the beaches or the village of Siasconsett (called Sconsett by the residents), at the other end of the island.

Where to stay

The range of accommodation is very extensive on the island, from charming *bed and breakfasts* in the old houses of the city to luxury hotels. A short walk from the historic center of Nantucket, White Elephant Village offers a variety of rooms, suites and even complete residences to suit all needs and budgets. For a longer stay, renting a house can be an interesting option, especially out of season, when rates are more reasonable.

www.whiteelephantvillage.com (<http://www.whiteelephantvillage.com>)

To visit

The complete list would be long, but here are two must-haves. Housed in former warehouses, the Whaling Museum recalls the history of an industry that made the island's wealth, before losing it from 1846 when a fire fueled by whale oil destroyed most of the city.

And when you're tired of the buzz and the shops of Nantucket, you have to go to the other end of the island, in the small village of Sconset, to appreciate its rose-covered cottages, its old typical houses and the silence that usually reigns in its small streets and trails.

Useful references

> The Nantucket Wine and Food Festival will be held May 16-20.

www.nantucketwinefestival.com (<http://www.nantucketwinefestival.com>)

> There will be two Restaurant Week this year in Nantucket: June 4th to 10th and then September 24th to 30th.

www.nantucketrestaurantweek.com (<http://www.nantucketrestaurantweek.com>).

> Ferry schedules and fares

<https://www.nantucketferries.com/> (<https://www.nantucketferries.com/>)

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