

Island Walks in Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

10km route comprised of two 5km loops

EVENT ID: 2025 / Y3313

OPEN: April 1 to September 30, 2025

TRAIL DESCRIPTION: Take a ferry from Cape Cod to Martha's Vineyard, and explore the beauty of Oak Bluffs, no car required!

Oak Bluffs is located on the northeast shore of the island of Martha's Vineyard, a 100-square-mile island located three miles off the coast of Cape Cod. Year-round residents, seasonal residents, and hundreds of thousands of short-term visitors live on or come to the island, attracted by the natural, ecological, historical, and cultural features that define the beauty and character of Martha's Vineyard. Oak Bluffs is home to a bustling seasonal waterfront and downtown, and the historic gingerbread campgrounds.

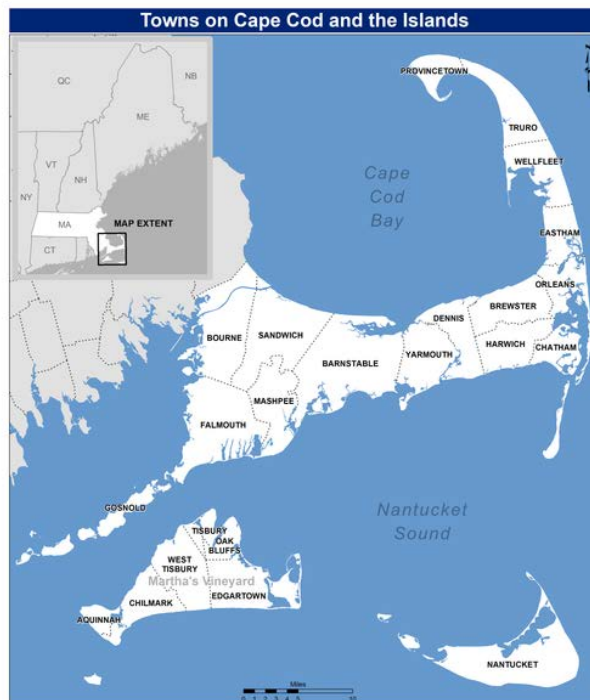


Image Attribution: [Eric, CC BY-SA 4.0](#), via Wikimedia Commons

The 10km walk route is comprised of two 5km loops, both starting and ending at the ferry terminal in Oak Bluffs. The **Gingerbread Cottages loop** features Ocean Park with views of the Atlantic Ocean, residential areas, and downtown with restaurants and ice cream/candy shops, the historic camp meeting grounds around Trinity Park, and the historic Flying Horses carousel, the oldest operating platform carousel in the country. The **East Chop loop** is an out-and-back route along the harbor to East Chop Light, a historic lighthouse standing on a bluff overlooking Vineyard Haven Harbor and Vineyard Sound. It was built in 1878 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. In the early 1800s, a semaphore station was located at this site, giving the lighthouse area the name "Telegraph Hill."

TRAIL RATING: With some dirt paths, the AVA rating of the Cottages loop is 2B, **difficult for strollers and not suitable for wheelchairs**. The East Chop loop has an AVA rating of 1A.

AVA SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

- Lighthouses (East Chop)
- Step to the Beat
- Walking the USA A – Z: O for Oak Bluffs

REGISTRATION: IVV Credit is available with online registration only (<https://my.ava.org>). The online system does not allow Free walkers, a minimal charge is incurred for directions.

START ADDRESS: The walk routes begin from the Oak Bluffs Ferry Terminal **which is located at 1 Seaview Avenue**. See ferry schedules for arrival/departure times.

RESTROOMS: At the ferry terminal, various restaurants, and local shops along the routes.

PARKING: We recommend traveling to the island without a vehicle. Leave your car at the ferry terminal when departing Cape Cod as multiple parking areas are available at or near those terminals.

If you want to see other towns while on **Martha's Vineyard**, there is an extensive bus system with one-day passes sold online and at the Steamship Authority terminals. See vineyardtransit.com

TRAVEL SUGGESTIONS: Depart from ferry terminals in either Hyannis (Barnstable), MA or Woods Hole (Falmouth), MA. *Check websites for current schedule and fees.* This Oak Bluffs walk route on the island of Martha's Vineyard begins at the dock on Seaview Avenue in Oak Bluffs.

Hy-Line Cruises

220 Ocean Street, Hyannis MA 02601
Reservations & Ticketing: 800-492-8082
hylinecruises.com
Hyannis-Oak Bluffs from May to October.
Dock to dock: 1 hour
\$62.00 adult round trip
10-min. walk to dock from Comfort Inn Hyannis

Steamship Authority

1 Cowdry Road, Woods Hole, MA
Ticket Office: 508-548-3788
steamshipauthority.com
To Oak Bluffs only from Woods Hole
Dock to dock: 45 minutes
\$19.00 adult round trip (plus parking)
50-min. drive to Woods Hole from Hyannis

**DIRECTIONS TO THE STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY FERRY
TO MARTHA'S VINEYARD FROM WOODS HOLE**

From Route 495 South:

1. Take Route 495 South (which becomes Route 25) to end.
2. Cross the Bourne Bridge
3. * Go half-way around rotary onto Route 28 South toward Falmouth.
4. Continue on Route 28 South to Woods Hole.
5. Follow signs to Ferry.

From the North (Routes 95/128, and I-93):

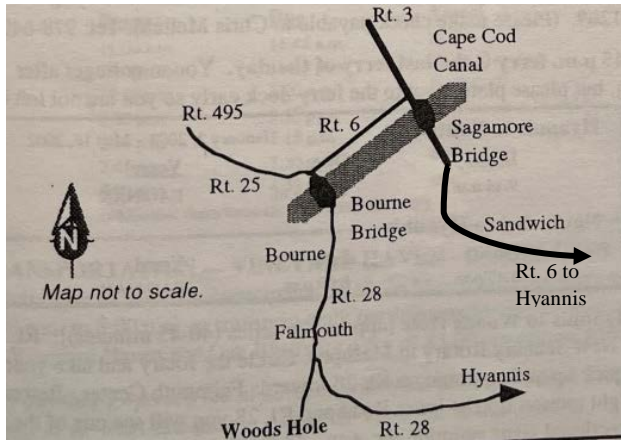
1. Take Route 3 South to just before the Sagamore Bridge.
2. Take Route 6 West toward Buzzards Bay and Bourne.
3. Cross the Bourne Bridge.
4. Follow from * above.

PARKING AND FREE SHUTTLE: Parking rates per day (subject to change) :

Mon-Fri \$16.00
Sat/Sun \$21.00
Palmer Avenue Lot
286 Palmer Avenue
Falmouth MA 02540

Plan to arrive one hour before your departure time to allow time for parking.

Current/real-time parking lot information is readily available as you approach the ferry terminal by logging onto the mobile website at SteamshipAuthority.com, by calling the parking information line at (508) 775-7275 (PARK), or tuning into 1610 AM on your radio.



* * * *

**DIRECTIONS TO HY-LINE CRUISES FERRY
TO MARTHA'S VINEYARD FROM HYANNIS**

From Route 495 South:

1. Take Route 495 South (which becomes Route 25) to end.
2. Cross the Bourne Bridge.
3. Go three quarters around rotary onto Route 6A East (Sandwich Road).
4. Continue on Route 6A East to the Mid-Cape Connector.
5. Right onto the Mid-Cape Connector to Route 6 East.
6. Follow from ** below.

From the North (Routes 95/128, and I-93):

1. Take Route 3 South to just before the Sagamore Bridge.
2. ** Continue onto Route 6 East toward Hyannis.
3. Take exit 68 to Route 132 Iyannough Road.
4. Go half-way around rotary onto Route 28 South Iyannough Road.
5. Right onto Transportation Avenue then left to Hy-Line Cruises off-site parking lot.

PARKING:

Parking rates per day (subject to change):

Off-site \$17.00	Terminal On-site \$28.00
183 Iyannough Road	220 Ocean Street
Hyannis, MA 02601	Hyannis MA 02601

Parking lot information is readily available by logging onto the mobile website at hylinecruises.com/parking or by calling the parking information line at (508) 815-2221.

REMEMBER: you must log back into the Online Start Box at <https://my.ava.org> to finish online registration procedure after completing this event.

Contact Beate (Bea) Hait with questions at beateh1@aol.com or 774-292-9098.

In case of Emergency Dial 911

Copyright © 2025 Walk 'n Mass Volkssport Club. These walk directions may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver and after registering for the event. All other uses are prohibited.

Thanks for attending our walk! If you are interested in other nearby AVA events, in Rhode Island or Massachusetts, please see our website: <https://walknmass.org>

MORE TO EXPLORE!

Other seasonal/year-round volkssport events on Cape Cod:

- **Hyannis** (PSB only); January to December <https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=122986>
- **Provincetown** (OSB only); seasonal April to December <https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=122984>
- **Sandwich Walk** (PSB only); January to December <https://my.ava.org/event-view.php?sn=122988>



Oak Bluffs 5K and 10K Seasonal Walk Routes



Initially a part of Edgartown, Oak Bluffs was known as Cottage City of America. Soon church folk from all over the country gathered here for the Martha's Vineyard Camp Meeting. They came to preach, pray, reflect and repent in a spirit of religious fervor. As stores, hotels, and larger homes sprang up around Cottage City it developed into a resort.

Oak Bluffs owes a lot to those formative years. It is a relatively young town, by island standards, and since its economy had more to do with recreation than with time-honored whaling or shipping trades of Edgartown and Vineyard Haven, it evolved with a much more frivolous, light-hearted air.

Instead of serviceable, weather-hardy saltboxes or dignified captain's houses, Oak Bluffs filled with frilly, even gaudy, multicolored gingerbread cottages - non-winterized "wooden tents" gradually erected to replace the earlier Methodist's canvas ones.

Oak Bluffs businesses also leaned toward pure entertainment-there were theaters, a giant roller skating rink, hotels and a carousel (still in operation).

By the turn of the century, townsfolk were feeling their own needs, separate from Edgartown so community leaders began agitating for separation. In 1880, they broke away and renamed the town Cottage City. In 1907, they renamed it as Oak Bluffs.

As the Vineyard's first summer resort, Oak Bluffs fostered a vacation economy that soon spread throughout the island to replace the disappearing whaling economy.

Gingerbread Cottages Loop (5km)

- 1 FROM THE STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY, TURN LEFT ONTO SEAVIEW AVENUE FOLLOWING THE SIDEWALK OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN.**

Ocean Park Gazebo. Showplace 7-acre-park. The annual fireworks are held here, as well as summer band concerts. The houses reflect the more affluent families in their size and style-Queen Anne and Gothic Revival. Mindful of public spaces, the densely-housed folk of Oak Bluffs set aside little parks everywhere.

- 2 RIGHT CROSSING SEAVIEW AVENUE ONTO NANTUCKET AVENUE.**

- 3 LEFT ON NAUMKEAG AVENUE AT END OF WABAN PARK. Follow dirt road as it crosses several streets with Farm Pond on left, and becomes paved. STREET NAME IS NOW CIRCUIT AVE. CONTINUE TO END.**

- 4 RIGHT ON CIRCUIT AVENUE (no sign). VEIRA PARK ON RIGHT.**

- 5 LEFT ON GRANT LANE (dirt road) (Hiawatha Avenue on right) TO END.**

- 6 RIGHT ON WEST CLINTON AVE, KEEPING PARK ON LEFT & CONTINUE STRAIGHT TO END AT TRINITY PARK.**

- 7 ENTER TRINITY PARK, PASSING COTTAGE MUSEUM ON THE LEFT. BEAR LEFT (go clockwise) AROUND TABERNACLE PARK.**

Cottage Museum (1 Trinity Park). Exhibits show how cottages were furnished for the last 100 years with rocking chairs, bibles, hooked rugs, quilts and historic bric-a-brac.

The Ark (10 Trinity Park) – Owned by Governor William Sprague of Rhode Island during the Civil War. This cottage was the most expensive one to build, costing \$3,500. The name comes from its large size and from the rain which sometimes surrounds it.

Tabernacle in the center of Trinity Park – 1879 open-air auditorium. Originally designed to be built of wood, the Tabernacle, one hundred feet high, 130 feet across, and seating over 3,000, was built with wrought iron and replaced a one-ton tent. On illumination Night, hundreds of Japanese lanterns decorate the Tabernacle and the eaves of other cottages.

- 8 THREE QUARTERS WAY AROUND THE PARK, LEFT ON FISK AVENUE JUST PAST HOUSE #54. Street sign is visible after turning the corner.**

- 9 RIGHT AT COTTAGE PARK TO END.**

- 10 LEFT AT BAYLISS AVENUE (no sign).**

- 11 CROSS CIRCUIT AVENUE IN CROSSWALK ONTO PENNACOOK AVENUE.**

12 BEAR LEFT AT FORK THEN IMMEDIATE LEFT ONTO NIANTIC AVENUE (no sign) TO END.

13 RIGHT ON MASSASOIT AVENUE (no sign).

14 LEFT AT THE “DO NOT ENTER” SIGN ONTO NAUMKEAG AVENUE (no sign). Cross Pequot, Narraganset and Samoset.

15 LEFT AT THE FORK ONTO OCEAN AVENUE AS YOU APPROACH OCEAN PARK.

Dr. Harrison Tucker’s Cottage (1872) summer residence (61 Ocean Avenue). Built by a patent medicine king known for his hospitality. His diaphoretic compound No. 59 was sold across the country. President Ulysses S. Grant once watched the fireworks in Ocean Park from this cottage’s balcony.

16 FOLLOW OCEAN AVENUE, KEEPING OCEAN PARK ON YOUR RIGHT.

17 LEFT ON LAKE AVENUE FOR ONE BLOCK TO LEFT on KENNEBEC AVENUE TO END.

18 RIGHT ON CIRCUIT AVE. TO END. CROSS LAKE AVE. TO CIRCUIT AVE EXTENSION.

19 CROSS OAK BLUFFS AVENUE, CONTINUING STRAIGHT ON CIRCUIT AVENUE EXTENSION.

Before crossing Oak Bluffs Avenue, look to a building on the right (15 Oak Bluffs Ave.) that houses a museum featuring Flying Horses (1876): the oldest operating platform carousel in the country, registered as a National Historical Landmark, with twenty-two wooden horses with real horse hair. Which rider will get the brass ring?

20 JUST PAST THE ISLAND QUEEN DOCK, RIGHT ONTO SEAVIEW AVE EXTENSION TO END AT THE STEAMSHIP FERRY TERMINAL.

******END OF 5KM WALK**** (3.25 miles)**

******10KM WALKERS CONTINUE ON ******

East Chop Lighthouse Loop (5km)

21 WITH THE STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY AT YOUR BACK, CROSS SEAVIEW AVE. TO WALK STRAIGHT UP OAK BLUFFS AVENUE. RIGHT IN CROSSWALK TO ISLAND, THEN RIGHT TO CROSS LAKE AVENUE TO THE BIG DIPPER ICE CREAM & CAFÉ. (23 Lake Ave.)

Civil War Memorial statue (1892). Gift of Charles Strahan, who served under Robert E. Lee and was editor of the now defunct Martha’s Vineyard Herald which was printed in Oak Bluffs. In 1980, the town repainted the statue with life-like colors.

22 LEFT ON LAKE AVENUE (passing Big Dipper Ice Cream) KEEPING HARBOR ON RIGHT.

Oak Bluffs Harbor. Once a swampy, landlocked pond called Lake Anthony, this harbor was opened up to the ocean at the turn of the century. Now it holds as many as 5,000 boats snug and safe during the entire summer. The boardwalk still bustles with little shops as in bygone days.

23 RIGHT ON EAST CHOP DRIVE. Walk on the left side of the road.

24 CONTINUE ON EAST CHOP DRIVE PAST THE “DO NOT ENTER” AND “DETOUR” SIGNS UNTIL YOU GET TO “TELEGRAPH HILL” AND EAST CHOP LIGHTHOUSE.

25 CONTINUE ON EAST CHOP DRIVE TO NAMAS AVENUE (dirt road on the left, just past house number 267 on the right).

26 TURN AROUND AND RETRACE YOUR STEPS TO BIG DIPPER ICE CREAM STORE.

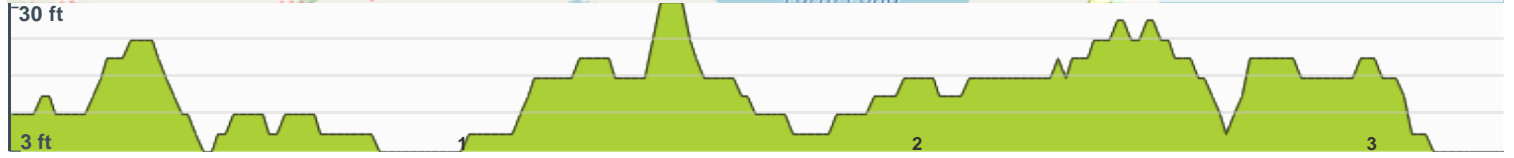
As you pass the harbor, on the right is the Wesley Hotel (1879) (70 Lake Ave.). Built by A. G. Wesley for the sum of \$18,000, the hotel prospered until a November 1894 fire. Three days later, A.G. confessed to arson. He wanted to build an “even larger, more creditable hotel for the community.” The hotel hired A.G. as a cook after he served three years in jail. The sole survivor of the large hotels prominent in cottage city’s heyday was remodeled in 1986.

Also on the right you’ll pass Circuit Avenue. Always the business center of town, it was named for the “circuit” many of the Campground’s preachers rode. The Oak Bluffs Land & Wharf Company laid out most of the town and named it. The first commercial building, the Arcade, is half-way up on the right side.

27 GO STRAIGHT UP OAK BLUFFS AVENUE, CROSSING SEAVIEW AVE, TO THE STEAMSHIP AUTHORITY. TURN RIGHT TO FINISH. (3.23 miles)

Thank you for participating in this event.
For questions or comments, please contact POC:
Bea Hait 774-292-9098, beateh1@aol.com
In case of emergency, call 911

Oak Bluffs Cottage 5K map



Oak Bluffs East Chop Route 5K map

