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Cape Cod
What to Read Before You Go

Cape Cod has inspired a vast number of books, from hard-to-find, locally published autobiographical reminiscences to handsomely illustrated coffee-table books from national publishers. You can explore some of these before your trip at your local library, bookstore, or on-line bookseller, but try to make time to visit some of the many excellent bookstores on the Cape. You may well make a special discovery that will illuminate your stay.

General

Cape Cod by Henry David Thoreau

An account of his walking tours in the mid-1880s

The Outermost House by Henry Beston

Chronicles the seasons during a solitary year in a cabin at ocean's edge

Cape Cod Pilot by Josef Berger

Filled with "whacking good yarns" and a lot of useful information

A Place Apart: A Cape Cod Reader edited by Robert Finch

Includes stories about the Cape from dozens of writers

History

Sand in Their Shoes compiled by Edith and Frank Shay

A compendium of writings on Cape Cod life

Of Plimoth Plantation by Governor William Bradford

A 17th century description of the Pilgrim's voyage and early years

Art in Narrow Streets by Ross Moffert

Figures in a Landscape by Josephine Del Deo

Provincetown as a Stage by Leona Rust Egan

Time and the Town: A Provincetown Chronicle by Mary Heaton Vorse

The above four paint the social landscape of Provincetown in the first half of the 20th century, concentrating on the contributions of the many writers, artists and actors

The Enduring Shore: A History of Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard.....by Paul Schneider

Another look at the region's past

The Story of Cape Cod by Kevin Shortsleeve

An illustrated history for children written in rhyming verse

In the Footsteps of Thoreau: 25 Historic and Nature Walks on Cape Cod by Adam Gamble

A useful guide for naturalists and Thoreau admirers

Baseball by the Beach: A History of America's National Pastime onby Christopher Price

A portrait of the Cape Cod Baseball League

Fiction

Moby Dick by Herman Melville

Captures the spirit of the whaling era

Cape Cod by William Martin

A historical novel and mystery following two families from the Mayflower to present

Tough Guys Don't Dance by Norman Mailer

Resuscitation of a Hanged Man by Denis Johnson

Grace Point by Anne LeClaire

The above three novels use Provincetown as a setting

Cape Cod Stories edited by John Miller

A collection of Cape-related short fiction by luminaries such as Poe, Cheever, Plath

Cape Discovery edited by Bruce Smith and Catherine Gammon

An anthology of poetry and fiction by former fellows of the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown

Passing Through by Stanley Kunitz

Many of the poems evoke the natural beauty of the Cape

Memoirs

Heaven's Coast by Mark Doty

Recounts the death of his lover from complications caused by AIDS

A Wild, Rank Place: One Year on Cape Cod by David Gessner

Combines insights about the Cape with reminiscence about battling cancer

The Salt House: A Summer on the Dunes of Cape Cod by Cynthia Huntington

Describes a summer during the first year of her marriage

My Own Cape by Gladys Tabor

Chronicles her life on the Cape

Midnight: A Year with the Wellfleet Police by Alec Wilkinson

Portrays a different side of Cape Life

Natural History

A Place Apart edited by Robert Finch

Outlands: Journeys to the Outer Edges of Cape Cod by Robert Finch

Common Ground: A Naturalist's Cape Cod by Robert Finch

The above two are lyrical books about natural history

The Primal Place by Robert Finch

A meditation about life on the Cape

Death of a Hornet and Other Cape Cod Essays by Robert Finch

Cape Cod: Its Natural and Cultural History by Robert Finch

A National Park Service handbook about the National Seashore and the Cape

In the Company of Light by John Hay

Traces Hay's journey from Maine to Cape Cod

The Run by John Hay

About the life cycle of alewives

Great Beach by John Hay

A Guide to Nature on Cape Cod and the Islands by Greg O'Brien

Has sections by various experts on the area's flora and fauna

Photography

A Summer's Day by Joel Meyerowitz

Winner of the 1985 Ansel Adams Award for Best Photography Book

Cape Light by Joel Meyerowitz

Color landscapes, still lifes and portraits

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