

# NORTH OF BOSTON – A NATURAL WONDER

Essex County, just North of Boston, is a magical destination with miles of pristine beaches and fishing villages, two national parks and a national wildlife refuge, plus a stunning New England landscape stretching across 34 distinctive cities and towns. It's a place of cultural richness, storied history, warm hospitality and some of the best seafood on the planet!

Mother Nature has blessed North of Boston with a paradise of sights and sounds blending into ocean and land, where rocky shores shoulder sturdy lighthouses and fishing harbors, and where quaint cities and towns roll out into gentle hills and quiet pastures.

To start your trip, take a ride up the Essex Coastal Scenic Byway, a 90-mile roadway connecting 14 coastal communities from Lynn to Salisbury. A visit to Marblehead takes you back in time with eclectic historic architecture, a stunning harbor and delightful town center. Salem bustles year round with witches, pirates and vibrant arts

and culture. Beautiful Cape Ann features Gloucester, where you can eat lobsters all year round, Rockport's Bear Skin Neck shopping district and Halibut Point Reservation, offering visitors a glimpse of unfettered landscape.

Further north in Ipswich, visit High Street, boasting the oldest homes in America, and lovely Crane Estate and breathtaking Crane Beach, both with stunning vistas. Walking through picturesque Newburyport offers plenty of delicious dining, cycling and shopping. Just beyond, Salisbury Beach and its boardwalk offer fun for the whole family.

Whale watching, fishing excursions and harbor cruises are popular along the coast, especially in Gloucester. Getting out on the ocean is a perfect way to convene with nature, and afterwards, try a lobster roll or lobster dinner, culinary hallmarks of this region.

Trustees of Reservations, a non-profit group supporting land conservation

and stewardship, welcomes visits to its wonderful refuges, farms, parks and islands throughout Essex County. Visit the Crane Pond Wildlife Refuge, or the Crowninshield and Gerry Islands in Marblehead.

Further inland, the Mass Audubon Ipswich River Wildlife lets you explore forests, meadows and drumlins while meandering down river by canoe, and the Georgetown-Rowley Forest has 1,000 acres for hiking and biking.

At family-run and historic farms all across Essex County, you can pick-your-own fruits, enjoy cider and wine tastings, buy fresh produce and baked goods, pet some farm animals, have a picnic and sample some of the best apple cider donuts anywhere!

**Visit North of Boston** has details on these natural wonders and more. If you are planning a vacation this spring or summer, start your adventure at [northofboston.org](http://northofboston.org). Follow VisitNorthofBoston on social media.

*See page 25 for a list of North of Boston events in March.*



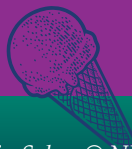
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