

# A WORLD OF Oysters

Plan a trip to try some of the East Coast's best oysters, right at the source.



OPPOSITE PAGE: ELIZABETH CECIL. THIS PAGE: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ALISON L. MEAD; ELIZABETH CECIL (2).

For an oyster lover, nothing could be better than an unlimited supply—particularly when the bivalves are pulled right from the water and served in the middle of Vineyard Sound while the sun is setting. This is often how an evening plays out at Cottage City Oyster Farm, where brothers Dan and Greg Martino give Martha's Vineyard visitors an up-close look at the raising and harvesting of oysters. Their tours take you by boat 300 feet offshore to a solar-powered work raft where in exchange for helping shuck oysters, you can eat as many as humanly possible. You can also drink whatever you happen to take along (rosé is never a bad idea).

Whether you visit the farm on the official work-boat tour or on a somewhat fancier schooner (run by the adventure company Farm Field Sea), you'll get to witness the process firsthand: You'll visit the lagoon to see the hatchery, then the brothers will take you farther out to the peaceful waters of the farm, where tiny buoys mark the locations of 100 cages sitting on the ocean floor. After they pull up some of the cages, they'll explain how the oysters are culled and properly shucked. Then, true to their promise, the brothers will let everyone start eating. The farm produces hundreds of thousands of oysters every year, so even a champion eater would barely make a dent in the supply. "If you can get to us," they say, "you can have as many as you want." And they'll likely join you.

### Cottage City Oyster Farm Tour

Tours last 1½ hours and leave from the public launch in the lagoon at Vineyard Haven. \$125; [cottagecityoysters.com](http://cottagecityoysters.com)

### Farm Field Sea Oyster Farm and Aquaculture Tour

Tours last 2½ hours and leave from Vineyard Haven; call ahead to reserve a spot. \$50 per child, \$140 per adult; [farmfieldsea.com](http://farmfieldsea.com)

Greg wears a heavy-duty work glove to protect his hand while he's shucking.



Each cage weighs 400 pounds and holds 1,200 oysters!



The brothers recommend eating the oysters as is, but a splash of mignonette is great, too.

# ROUND OUT YOUR TRIP

Here's a quick guide to the area.

## Where to Eat

### 19 RAW

If you haven't had your fill of oysters, head over to this buzzy joint in Edgartown, which opened last summer and serves 15 different types of oysters from all over New England. [19rawoysterbar.com](http://19rawoysterbar.com)

### BACK DOOR DONUTS

Line up at the "back door" of M.V. Gourmet Cafe & Bakery from 7 p.m. to 12:58 a.m. for the best doughnuts and apple fritters on Martha's Vineyard. [mvbakery.com](http://mvbakery.com)

### RED CAT KITCHEN

The menu here changes daily, depending on what ingredients the chef sources from local purveyors, but you can almost always order his famous "big-ass scallops" and crispy Brussels sprouts. [redcatkitchen.com](http://redcatkitchen.com)

### OFFSHORE ALE CO.

Peanut shells cover the floor of this downtown Oak Bluffs brewery, known for its craft brews, pub grub and live music. [offshoreale.com](http://offshoreale.com)



19 Raw



## The "R" Rule

You may have heard that you should eat oysters only during months that end with the letter *r*—a safety precaution from the days before refrigeration. Experts, including Dan and Greg Martino, insist that this is a dated concept. These days, oysters are very highly regulated: They must be put on ice and remain refrigerated, so there's little risk of getting sick, no matter the month.



The Campground

## What to Do

### THE CAMPGROUND

This area in Oak Bluffs is home to the colorful Gingerbread Cottages, a collection of Methodist camp meeting houses that date back to the 1800s. [mvcma.org](http://mvcma.org)

### FLYING HORSES CAROUSEL

Ride the oldest working platform carousel in the country, built in 1876. If you catch the lucky brass ring, your second ride is free. [mvpreservation.org](http://mvpreservation.org)

### ISLAND ALPACA COMPANY

Visit the alpacas roaming this farm and two-century-old barn and be sure to stop by the gift shop—it's filled with items made with the animals' soft fleece. [islandalpaca.com](http://islandalpaca.com)

## Where to Stay

### NOBNOCKET BOUTIQUE INN

This charming seven-room bed-and-breakfast is just a short walk from the ferry. Explore the island on the inn's complimentary bikes—just keep an eye out for the wild turkeys that roam the streets! From \$350 per night; [nobnocket.com](http://nobnocket.com)

### THE SUMMERCAMP

This super-stylish 95-room hotel in Oak Bluffs features a game room, rope swings and brightly colored beachy furniture, plus tons of porches for lounging. From \$279 per night; [summercamphotel.com](http://summercamphotel.com)



Nobnocket Boutique Inn