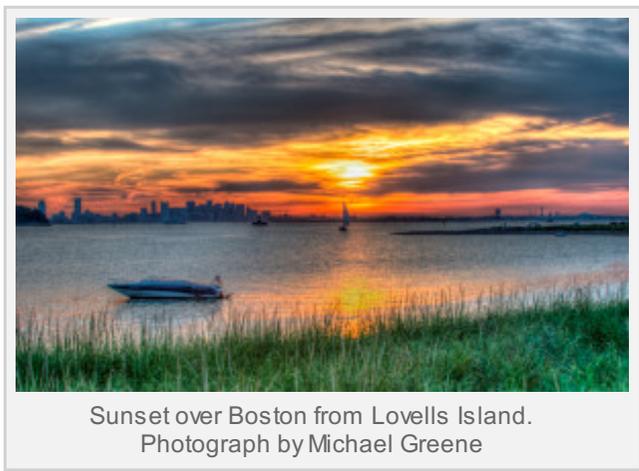


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Add Boston Harbor Islands to Your (Beach) Bucket List this Summer

Posted May 19, 2015 by Cheryl Fenton in Downtown Boston



When you think "island" in the summer, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket come to mind. Then the thought of Route 3 traffic quite literally stops you in your tracks. What's a sea lover to do?

There are plenty of water adventures to be had closer to home. Enter the Boston Harbor Islands.

As the largest recreational open space in Eastern Massachusetts, this system is made up of 34 islands and mainland parks. A half million of your closest friends visit these islands every summer,

while a vast number of wildlife make it their year-round home. You can reach eight of these islands by

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seasonal ferryboat service (thank you, [Boston Harbor Cruises](#)), while 19 islands are accessed only by private boat or specialty charter. Three islands are a no-no for public visits. That's OK. We didn't want to visit those anyway.

The most well known of the Harbor Island is Georges Island, mostly due to it being the site of fort Warren, a historic battlement from the Civil War. The fort is said to be haunted by the Lady in Black. It is also a great grassy place for walks, picnics, and Civil War events. There's also Peddocks Island, one of the largest and most diverse in the harbor with camping, hiking, historic sites and even a few private residences. Lovells Island also has campsites (six smaller and two group sites), as well as an amazing, remote beach and bragging rights as the nearest island to legendary shipwrecks.

Only 30 minutes from Boston, Spectacle Island has one of the few sandy beaches supervised by trained lifeguards in the summer. You can also take in panoramic views of the harbor and Boston from the tallest hill on the Islands. Little Brewster Island is home to Boston Light (1716), America's oldest continually used light station, which beams light 27 miles out into the Atlantic. Take a three-hour Boston Light Climbing Tour that includes a boat cruise, park ranger-led commentary on history and geography, and a chance to climb the 76 steps up to the tower.

Smaller islands Grape, Bumpkin and Thompson all offer their own chances to explore historic ruins, camp, hike and more.

To continually meet visitor interest, the Islands released a new schedule for this summer that is chock full of events. Think tales of Fort Warren's infamous ghost, Civil War lawn games, kite flying from the harbor's highest point, sea kayaking, and the annual Spectacle Island 5K run. There's live jazz every Sunday, plus clambakes, barbecues, yoga, and tours of Boston Light, as a ramp up to its 300th birthday next year. There will also be the new Isles of Art Initiative, which adds 10 public art installations to Fort Warren on Georges Island.

Starting May 9, [Boston Harbor Cruises](#) ferries run to Georges Island from Long Wharf in Boston, while service to Spectacle Island begins Memorial Day weekend on May 23. On a seasonal basis, you can also



Enjoy an afternoon of music featuring two bands from Berklee College of Music on Fort Warren's outdoor stage. Photo courtesy of Boston Harbor Islands.

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reach the islands from the South Shore's Hingham and Hull. Lovells, Grape, and Bumpkin Islands are all part of the Inter-Island Loop, which means you can take a boat from Georges to get there or go directly from Hingham.

Even if you're a giant fan of the south or north shore beaches, try looking around your own city for seaside adventures. The Boston Harbor Islands should definitely be on your (beach) bucket list this summer.

 Boston Harbor, Boston Harbor Cruises, Brewster Island, Downtown Boston, featured, Georges Island, Spectacle Island

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