

explore • create • enjoy

# NORTH SHORE guidebook



2nd Edition

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*“How glorious it is to blaze a new trail, and suddenly to appear in learned society holding a book of discoveries in one’s hand, like an unforeseen comet flashing through space!”*

—Xavier de Maistre  
*A Journey Around My Room*

**2nd Edition**



## Preface: Stone Collections

**I was taking a stretch break in the middle of nowhere**—halfway up the east fjords of Iceland—when I watched a tour bus disembark two dozen passengers in front of a small cottage bearing a sign for “Petra’s Stone Collection.”

We travel long distances to witness the wonders of the world, and while the world is certainly filled with wonders, we sometimes lend faraway sites an air of prestige that we withhold from the attractions in our own backyards. Would Stonehenge have the same draw if it stood in the center of Blackburn Circle?

This guide is an opportunity to experience the North Shore afresh, “laughing all along the way at the travelers who have seen Rome and Paris.” If you find yourself laughing instead at any of the North Shore destinations, just remember that on the South Shore, over a million people are disappointed by Plymouth Rock each year.

—**Stephen Dagley**

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## explore

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**The Mystery of the Liberty Tree** — History disappears before our eyes. The faded glory of *The Liberty Tree Mall* in Danvers harbors a little-pondered mystery: its namesake, visible on what little original 70's signage still exists, was a life-sized metal and glass elm tree sculpture that slipped through history's fingers and is now deemed lost. Built for the New England pavilion at New York's World Fair (and based on a real, revolutionary-era elm), it stood on the Boston Common before being transplanted to Danvers and eventually inspiring a shopping mall. Sometime in the late 70's or early 80's it was removed from the mall and subsequently vanished from public knowledge. Intrepid explorers can retrace its roots in the hallway between *Best Buy* and *Kohl's*. *Speaking of trees...*

**Endicott Pear Tree** — Agricultural buffs flock to this European Pear tree (*Pyrus communis*), which is thought to be the oldest living cultivated fruit tree in North America. Also in Danvers, find it just beyond the back-left corner of the Mass General Hospital parking lot, surrounded by a chainlink fence (pear-picking prohibited).

**The Paper House** — A local oddity in Rockport shrouded in mystery and old newspapers. A hard-to-quantify portion of this house is made of paper, as well as various items of furniture within. The exact mechanical details are murky, but reviewers say: "weird but totally worth 10-15 min of your time."

**Shoebert's Pond** — Once in a generation we get to witness history being made in our own fresh water ponds. Beverly's destiny changed one week

in September when a gray seal took up residence in Shoe Pond for a week, transfixing the populace and taunting Animal Control. Pilgrimage to the Cummings Center parking lot to pay your respects to our local sea-saint.

**Misery Island** — Ah, island life. Only a half mile off-shore lies a hidden world full of casino ruins, deer, deer tick, trails, and even a bathroom. The decomposing pier on the West Beach used to ferry casino-goers to Misery until it all burned down 100 years ago. From West Beach, paddle your kayak towards Cocktail Cove, following the sound of yacht stereos.

**Wolf Hollow** — Unleash your inner alpha with a visit to a real wolf pack living in the middle of an Ipswich resident's backyard. Tall barbed wire fences separate the natural born killers from the domesticated livestock next door (although neighbors say they've escaped from time to time).

**Gloucester House Boat** — Most house boats are boats that people use as houses. This is a house being used as a boat. Easy parking available at the "Candy House," another relic of the classical North Shore era.

**X-Games** — North Shore residents began noticing these eye-bleed-orange metal "art sculptures" manifest along roadsides sometime during the pandemic. Cummings Properties came forward as the culprit and hinted that there may be as many as a dozen sprinkled throughout our shore. *Can you catch them all?*

**Choate Bridge (1764)** — Possibly the oldest standing bridge in the state, and definitely less rusty than Boston's Tobin Bridge. Lean over and admire the way the sturdy stones hold you firmly above the slowly moving Ipswich River. Home to the eponymous pub.

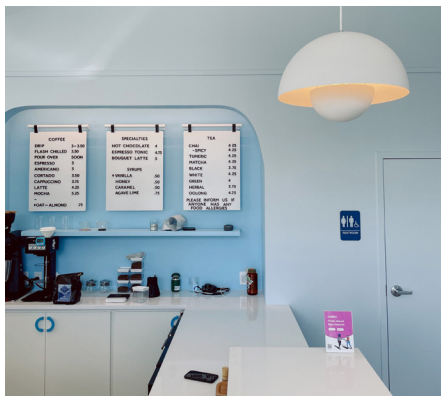
### Lighthouse Spotlight

**Eastern Point** — Presiding over the oldest seaport in America and once occupied by Winslow Homer, this is the classic. Can you spot Puritan Mother Ann on the rocks?

**Annisquam** — Our most Wes Anderson lighthouse complete with a quaint footbridge perfect for symmetrical photos. Pair with Willow Rest.

**Marblehead** — A skeletal lighthouse with spooky green lantern.

**Baker's Island** — Famed for saving *Old Ironsides*, this light is held hostage by unwelcoming island residents who even chased away the Salem mayor.



## eat

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**John's Farm Stand** — Look for the handpainted “fresh pies” signs enroute to Essex. Fruity, flirty and cash only, John is guaranteed to shoot his shot.

**Joe's on a Roll** — In a time when lobster roll prices scratch the stratosphere, how does Joe's continue to offer a sub-\$20 bottom-feeder-bun? Don't question it, just eat.

**Flip the Bird** — A quickly expanding empire of fried chicken converting even the mildest to its spicy marketing and food. Unless you've dabbled on *Hot Ones*, order the angry dust at your peril!

**Bonefish Harry's** — A favorite for after-work mai tais strong enough to spill that hot office goss. Just try to keep cool when the Silver Fox slides in to take your order.

**Hipster Coffee Grand Tour** — Start in Essex with the award-winning beans of **Little Wolf** and its perfected shades of blue. Driving south, grab your riding boots for **Honeycomb** Hamilton and enjoy a scrumptious bakery item with your honey latte. As you enter the Kingdom of Beverly, catch the good vibes with Erik of **Beantrust**, crunch a gourmet toast at **Kid Dream**, or settle into a booth at Beverly's O.G. cafe, **Atomic**. All guaranteed 'gram-worthy.

**The Roof Salem** — Feel like a VIP by riding the elevator to the top of Hotel Salem and sipping a frozé under the stars. Complete the act by ordering the secret churros. *Life hack:* visit around July 4th for 360° fireworks viewing.

**Goodnight Fatty** — Who's the fatty, you or the cookies? This weekend-only cookie and milk pop-up isn't exactly a secret these days, but its a perfect nightcap to an evening at the Roof. *Etiquette alert:* if you topple the oversized jenga, pick it up.

**Beverly Brew Tour** — Rantoul Street is positively sloshing with breweries, so put on your Patagucci and toss a few back:

- **Back Beat** — Tasty BBQ, groovy music, and an unexpected British black market (care for a Cadbury?)
- **Old Planters** — Strong logo, strong collabs, vibey space and a rumoured La Vic's hookup...
- **Gentile** — On the backside of Rantoul, this was one of the first. Make sure to pronounce the 'e.'
- **Channel Marker** — Very small and very specific

**Ice Cream Showdown** — Seasonal ice cream stands are a New England tradition and opinions run strong. *Inside scoop:* man up and order a kiddie.

- **Captain Dusty's** — Classic beach vibes in three locations.
- **Treadwell's** — An urban stand that's open year-round with a wide selection.
- **Cherry Farm** — Driving range, helmet bowls, and mosquitos.
- **DownRiver** — A newer contender with creative flavors when they don't run out of them.
- **Richardson's** — Longstanding king of the hill with mini golf and a petting zoo, but a bit more than a neighborhood stand.

#### **A comparison of area Dunkin Donuts:**

- **Bev Farms** — Slow down, settle in. Leather seats, wifi, and no drive thru (and definitely no beach parking).
- **Hull Street** — The gas station kind.
- **North Bev** — North Shore's smallest free-standing Dunks.
- **Downtown Beverly** — Now only on upper Cabot; part of the Domino's-Stephys-Flippers food coma corridor.
- **Corner of Washington & Norman, Salem** — Home to a tempting downtown parking lot, but a tow is ready and waiting.
- **Food Court Dunks** — Dunkins has admirably made a showing in both the Liberty Tree and North Shore malls. While you probably know which mall to choose, you have to respect Dunks' commitment to a food court otherwise occupied by such eateries as the Army Recruitment Center and *Metro by T-Mobile*.

# Rt. 1 driving tour

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Glide down the Bay State's answer to the Las Vegas strip.

*Driving north to south:*

- **Agawam Diner** — Pies and obesity (cash only).
- **Leaning Tower of Pizza** — If tourists posing with their hands ruined your photos of the original tilted tower, score an unobstructed view of this realistic replica jutting out of Prince Pizzeria and laugh it out at the built-in comedy club, **Giggles**.
- **Kowloon** — Storied haunt of stars such as Jerry Seinfeld, Hulk Hogan and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, this is peak Rt. 1. Ask for the Saugus chicken wings.
- **Hilltop Steakhouse neon saguaro** — The restaurant has been closed for years, but locals petitioned to save this towering sign. Marvel at the scale and imagine getting zoning clearance for this today.
- **The (In)famous Orange T-Rex** — Another roadside symbol saved by public outcry. This bright dino was part of a mini golf course that closed in 2016, but the new owner has pledged to keep it.
- **Auto Excellence Group** — This exotic car dealership stands out like a double-decker Venetian wedding cake in coral pink.

## R.I.P.

Classic kitsch landmarks on Rt. 1 are sadly disappearing every day in the name of modernity. *In remembrance:*

- **Weylu's** — Once a grandiose, palatial Chinese restaurant, it was too big for it's own good and was torn down in 2015.
- **Ferns Motel** — Prototypical sketchy motel with a beautiful 50's sign. It was notably robbed three times, once for just \$27.
- **The Ship** — A multi-story, boat-shaped restaurant built by a retired sea captain in 1930 that was too beautiful to float.





## shop

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**Yarns in the Farms** — the epitome of a local find, this place couldn't exist anywhere else (at least without a name change)

**Essex Antique stores** — Essex is known for two things: antiques and clams. Look for rustic buildings with porches overflowing with innumerable objects of weathered wood.

**Rusty & Ingrid** — Do you even live here if you don't have at least one Rusty & Ingrid print in your living room? They're in Rockport, they're in Salem, they're in your house and nobody's complaining.

**Witch City Mall** — From the internet: "Place has a weird vibe but it's fine." For a true adventure, look for the bathrooms.

**Vintage 211** — This vintage clothing shop in East Gloucester is so underground that its proper name is only verifiable through old news articles referencing it. With no Google Maps listing or visible signage and a website that consists of a blog with no business information, you can find it in the basement level of the old *Beacon Marine Basin* building (on weekends during unlisted hours). Run by two distinguished gentlemen, go for a great assortment of tweed jackets at reasonable prices (cash only, obviously).

**One Stop** — Two locations, one stop. Extensive selection of liquor and party beats. Try to avoid making it onto the slideshow.

**Oak + Moss + Roost** — Banished from Beverly, they're still thriving over the bridge in Salem. Plants, pots, plush toys, candles and irreverent cards make them the ultimate gift shop(s) during the holidays.



## A guide to north shore beaches

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- **Crane Beach** — The big kahuna. Understandably popular, but prices are getting prohibitive. *Pro tip:* befriend an Ipswich resident or steal their car.
- **Good Harbor Beach** — Surf's up, bruh! The rad come here to hang ten all year long and the slightly less athletic enjoy playing Moses with the low tide passage to Salt Island.
- **West Beach** — Mansions, seaweed, and the world's most photographed rotting pier.
- **Singing Beach** — Experience the magical phenomenon of “singing” sand and make sure you don't park in the *Crosby's* lot.
- **Brackenberry Beach** — The “secret” beach.
- **Dane Street Beach** — Beverly's city beach. Go to see and be seen.
- **Wingaersheek Beach** — Tourists visit during the day for the extensive low tide; locals come at night for campfires. The city attempts to deter novices with “no parking” signs where you need to park and by listing fires as “prohibited” on their website, but it's usually chill.
- **Mingo Beach** — Mainly a concrete slab, it's home to the green dragon and is a popular Endicott makeout spot.
- **Dead Horse Beach** — Fittingly, this beach is located in Salem. Being adjacent to the Willows, it enjoys easy access to seafood, ice cream and arcade games. By the same token, it's inescapably within earshot of the patriotic big band performances on summer evenings.



Know of other fun(ny) places  
on the North Shore? Share the wealth:

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Photos courtesy of the author. This guidebook is a personal art project and the author is not responsible for accuracy of information found within. Explore the north shore at your own risk.

*El que lee mucho y anda mucho,  
ve mucho y sabe mucho.*



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