

6 reasons to spend your weekend at a Cape museum

One of the great challenges of summer – especially for parents – is figuring out what to do to keep the family happy and entertained. Visiting a museum is a great way to fill up those weekend hours.

There are dozens of museums in the Cape Cod area, offering experiences to interest virtually anyone. Here are six reasons you should check out a museum or two this weekend:

Checking out art decreases stress

Many studies have shown interacting with nature reduces stress. Now researchers are finding involvement with visual art might have a similar effect. According to an article in the Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, researchers studied adults ages 18 to 59 who provided saliva samples to assess cortisol levels as a measurement of stress. The individuals were sampled before and after 45 minutes of art involvement. Cortisol levels decreased after art involvement for 75 percent of participants, indicating a physical reduction in their stress.



You'll learn something

Most museums are designed to educate and to engage their visitors by providing an interactive learning environment. Although the educational process is informal, museum guests typically experience attitude changes, learn about values, acquire knowledge and even develop skills just from walking through a museum and sampling the exhibits.

Some people value experiences over things

Would you rather spend money on stuff, or making memories? Many people choose experiences over things – perfect for a day at a museum. Research data published in The Journal of Positive Psychology examining three studies found people enjoy greater well-being from life experiences and consider them to be a better use of money than buying material goods.

It's a great way to connect with children

Museums can “provide memorable, immersive learning experiences, provoke imagination, introduce unknown worlds and subject matter, and offer unique environments for quality time with family,” according to the National Endowment for the Arts. Museums provide an opportunity for dialogue in a fun environment. Simply asking a child what he or she likes and comparing ideas can prompt free-flowing communication.



There is something for everyone

No matter how unusual or quirky people's hobbies, chances are there is a museum that will peak their interest and spark their imagination. The Cape Cod area has museums dedicated to farming history, art, railroading, gardens, maritime history and life, wildlife, historical figures, glass, sports cars and more. Many museums are also regularly updating displays and exhibits so there are always new things to see and experience.

It's a bargain

While many museums charge entrances fees, the costs are often comparable to other activities like going to a movie or attending a minor league ballgame. Unlike those options, a museum experience is open-ended – once you've paid your

admission you can generally spend the whole day or just a couple hours. Many also offer seasonal passes or family memberships that allow you to visit regularly. And in a world where costs for everything seem to be going up, there are quite a few museums you can visit for free.

Interested in checking out some of the museums the Cape has to offer? The Cape Cod Museum Trail has all the information you need to get started. Plan a visit for this weekend!

Cape Cod Museum Trail

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