



**HISTORIC HARBOR:** A panoramic view of Rockport Harbor and the seaside village of Rockport.

# Visit Rockport

## A small town that makes a lasting impression

By **KERY NUNEZ**  
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My favorite thing about Rockport is walking through Bearskin Neck, a small street lined with quaint little shops and ending at Rockport Harbor. During my teens, I would often sit there basking in the natural beauty feeling a sense of peace.

### A Unique and Historical Place

Rockport became well known largely through artists visiting the seaside town and capturing

its beauty on canvas. The Rockport Chamber of Commerce Web site describes an “uncommonly magical light at sundown” that has inspired renowned painters since the late 1800s.

A popular subject for painters is Motif #1 on Bradley Wharf, a small red fishing shack featured on a 2002 postage stamp entitled “Greetings from Massachusetts.” Paintings of this shack surrounded by local fishing boats can be found in many corners of the world.

Visitors can enjoy this natural beauty by taking a boat cruise, visiting Thacher Island or, for the adventurous at heart, renting a kayak. To capture the full experience of being in this seacoast town drop by Roy Moore’s on Bearskin Neck, pick your own lobster and have it cooked for you. Eat outdoors at lobster-trap-tables while observing the harbor.

You may wish to visit one of the ice cream parlors or home-made candy stores for dessert

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followed by a stroll on the Neck, where you’ll find a number of art galleries and gift shops. There are also two public beaches within walking distance from the downtown shopping area.

Rockport attractions that tourists sometimes miss include visiting Halibut Point State Park with its walking trails and picnic area. The Paper House is also a very unique sight. In 1922, a mechanical engineer decided to make his summer home out of paper. The furniture is also made of paper and the walls are insulated with it.

But this small town represents far more than meets the eye. It has a unique traditional character that is becoming harder to find. For example, back in 1856, then seamstress Hannah Jumper organized women to raid the town with hatchets, destroying every keg or jug of liquor they could find. The raid was in response to how fishermen spent idle months, when it was too cold to fish, passing their time drinking. Since the raid, the sale of alcohol was banned. It wasn’t until July 2005 that Rockport began allowing restaurants to serve alcohol again.

### Preserving Values in a Fast-Paced, Changing World

Dorothy Russell, a senior citizen who moved to Rockport in 1976, resides in the historical Hannah Jumper House. Mrs. Russell told Epoch Times that she wasn’t too concerned about allowing restaurants to serve alcohol, as she didn’t think it would change Rockport. She noted that Rockport hasn’t changed since she arrived. “The beauty of the town; the ocean; the church steeple still rings on the hour for 24 hours; and the 4th of July Parade still has the flavor of old New England.” She added, “If someone is sick or laid up the neighbors bring you goodies.” Russell, who loves to paint, pointed out how the town benefits from the local artists. “They are kinder, gentler and more interesting people and that makes up the fabric of the town.”

Former Selectman Tedd Tarr, who served on the Rockport Community Preservation Committee for several years, said that while Rockport has managed to preserve walking paths in the woods, an open shoreline and annual Christmas pageants, he is concerned that the sale of high price condos and houses could change the character of the town. “People coming in aren’t interested in the history of the community. It is a transient stop. They make quick money in real estate and they are gone in a few years.” He added that this phenomenon was taking place in many small towns throughout New England but noted one distinction about Rockport. “I think we held out for a long time because we are at the end of the island.”

According to Phil E. Hopkins, producer and distributor of music and movies, Rockport is in transition. Hopkins moved to Rockport from Boston in 1992 because he liked how the quaint town preserved its sense of history. In an attempt to capture this history, he is producing a documentary on

people’s attitudes toward permitting alcohol in the former dry town.

Hopkins said he found Rockport unique in a world full of sameness, as he lamented the rise of mega-chains, such as Wal-Mart, pushing out local businesses in so many other regions. He referenced visits to Rockport as a child and said his experience visiting The Paper House was a huge contrast to what youth experience today with “video games and the Internet.” He added, “I always thought the town was special.”

But he concurred with Tarr that changes were taking place, as newcomers buy expensive summer homes and youth have less exposure to the town’s history. “Rockport was one of the last places on the north shore to experience this.” He noted that the senior population did well in preserving the town but it was up to the next generation to decide the town’s future.

Sara Young, Economic Development Manager at the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce, stated that, when compared to other regions, “I would say comparatively Rockport still holds its traditions.” She added, “When you drive through Rockport you still see the older homes [not condos]. You can still see traditional shops that were once fishing shanties. You will feel like you are walking through an old fishing village.”

Whether Rockport will be able hold on to its history is yet to be seen. But the charming town still holds a unique character that has won the hearts of visitors from all over the world. It is definitely worth the trip.



**THE RED SHACK:** Motif #1, a small but famous fishing shack in Rockport Harbor, has been the subject of numerous paintings and even a postage stamp.

### Tips for Visiting Rockport

**Parking:** Downtown parking is limited during the busy tourist season, but there is free parking on Route 127, at the Blue Gate Parking Lot, half a mile after entering Rockport and a ¼-mile distance from downtown open from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. A shuttle is generally available during the season to bring visitors into town.

**Visiting the Region:** Rockport is connected by rail so you can take the train to Boston or visit some other seaside cities in the region. Information on Cape Ann may be found at <http://capeannvacations.com/> or 1-800-321-0133, or The Rockport Chamber of Commerce at <http://www.rockportusa.com/index.htm> or by calling 1-888-726-3922.

**Plan to Stay Longer:** For those who plan to take a long vacation and wonder what to do in this quiet town without a traffic light, you may consider taking boating lessons at the Sandy Bay Yacht Club, seeing a performance at the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, taking a class at the Rockport Art Association, learning to ride a horse at Sandy Bay Stables or spending time at the beach. Depending on where you stay, beaches should be accessible. If necessary, a \$50 seasonal beach parking pass can be obtained from Town Hall.

**After the Season:** An off-season visit will help you save on lodging costs. It will be colder and perhaps even quieter but there are a few activities remaining such as the October Harvest Festival, the Annual Christmas Pageant and New Year’s Rockport Eve.



**OCEAN VIEW:** Private homes and gazebo near Front Beach.



**PANORAMA:** Halibut Point State Park showing the Quarry and Atlantic Ocean.

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**ABUNDANT LAND:** Canada and the United States have an abundance of natural resources, including land. (They are both among the top four largest nations in the world.) “Arable land” is land that is suitable for producing crops. Nineteen percent of the United States is arable land. Which percentage below is closest to the amount of arable land for Canada?

5%    9%    14%

Read The Epoch Times next week for the answer!

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Answer for the quiz of August 3:

**BORDER STATES:**

- The four U.S. states on the border with Mexico are, west to east, California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.
- The six Mexican states on the border with the United States are, west to east (with prominent cities noted), Baja California (Tijuana), Sonora (Nogales), Chihuahua (Ciudad Juárez), Coahuila (Torreón), Nuevo León (Monterrey), and Tamaulipas (Nuevo Laredo)

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