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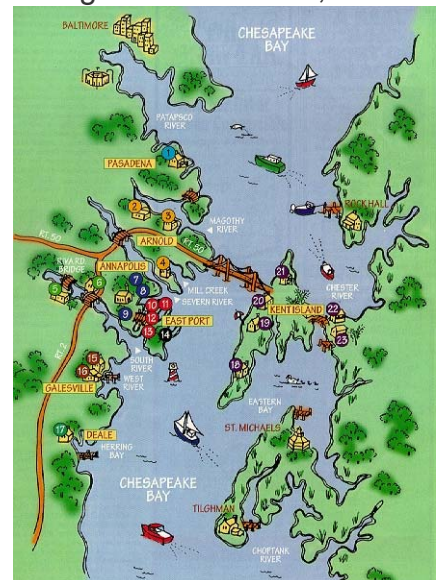
Let's Go Cruising, on the Harbor, Annapolis—America's Boating Capital.

Middle Bay Cruising—

Eastern Bay

Eastern Bay extends northeastward from Chesapeake Bay, connecting the Miles River, the Wye River, Prospect Bay and Kent Island Narrows. The Bay is generally deep in the center and spacious, except for shoals extending from its prominent points, all of which are clearly marked and charted.

Navigation: At the mouth to Eastern Bay, note that the bar extending southeasterly from Kent Point is enlarging. Flashing green bell buoy "1" serves to mark the southern extent of this shoal area, while Bloody Point Bar Light (54 feet high, flashing white every six seconds) stands off to the west. Do not cut the corner between Bloody Point Bar Light and flashing green bell buoy "1" before going up Eastern Bay. This hard-bottomed shoal (2- to 4-foot depths) is drifting farther into Eastern Bay each year, and even if you avoid grounding, there's much more wave action near the shallows than in the deeper water of the marked channel. Just west of Bloody Point Bar Light is an area known as "The Hole," where the deepest point (164-foot depths) in the Chesapeake Bay is located.



To the north, off Eastern Bay, are Cox Creek, Crab Alley Bay and Prospect Bay, all offering anchorage possibilities according to your boat's draft and the crew's inclination to explore. Crab Alley Bay also offers a number of small marinas and boatyards. Most of these are actually on Little Creek, east of Johnson Island at the entrance to Crab Alley Creek.

Anchorage: Outside of its peaceful tributaries, Eastern Bay is large, often long on wind (a blessing or a curse, depending on its force and



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your point of view) and short on anchorages. In winds from the west through northeast, the half-moon-shaped cove southwest of Long Point at the entrance to Eastern Bay (northeast of the aforementioned Kent Point) provides emergency shelter. When a northerly kicks up the Chesapeake Bay into a fuss, this spot fills quickly, especially on weekends. Keep an eye on the depth sounder, and follow the unmarked, deep water that runs north from red nun "2." Drop the hook near the shore in 6- to 8-foot depths with good holding in a mud bottom, and be wary of any wind shift to the south, which will make the spot untenable. Tilghman Creek (on the opposite side of Rich Neck from the town of Claiborne, and around Tilghman Point) is sheltered from all directions, although houses and docks surround the coves, and the entrance is shoaling in spots to depths of about 6 feet. The wharf at the end is a public dock used by workboats. Shipping Creek, north of Romancoke, has pleasant anchorage areas but requires some care at the minimally marked entrance. Little Creek (off of Crab Alley Bay) is too small and shallow to make a good anchorage for cruisers, but Crab Alley Creek farther east has good depths and pretty surroundings. Kirwan Creek, on the south end of Kent Narrows, behind Hog Island, is well-protected and provides a serene marsh setting for an overnight stay, especially in the fall when migrating waterfowl arrive. One caveat prevails: Early morning crabbers may wake you from your bunk here.

Bodkin Island, in Eastern Bay

Bodkin Island in Eastern Bay, at the entrance to Crab Alley Bay southeast of Turkey Point, has had some help in its fight with erosion. The Department of Natural Resources purchased it in 1995, and donations from Ducks Unlimited and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation helped replace a seawall. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will add topsoil and seeds. This island is an important habitat for nesting birds such as terns, egrets, herons and gulls, as well as crabs and juvenile fish, which live in its grass-lined shallows. The area is an excellent spot to cast a well-placed fly for striped bass.

Wye River

The Wye River is famous for its larger-than-average Maryland blue crabs and idyllic cruising grounds, with pretty coves and a surprisingly deep main stem. Historic Wye Island, once a Colonial plantation, is slowly developing with large estate homes, whose owners take care to preserve the island's natural beauty.

Although development has come to the Wye, it takes a more civilized form here than in places closer to the Baltimore/Washington corridor. Attractive houses line the shoreline in a variety of sizes, from modest to palatial, each with at least one dock and a boat. The folks who live here value their surroundings, so disturbances from raucous events ashore are rare. We urge you to adopt the mood of the place; get out the binoculars to enjoy the bird life and the stars.

If you need a marina, this is not the place to go. Drop the hook almost anywhere, but show an anchor light. Since the entrance is easy and the shoals are few, local skippers often come in



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after dark. There are probably more nice anchorages in the various coves and creeks of the Wye than in all of Long Island Sound.

Navigation: Heading southeast from flashing red buoy "4" near Tilghman Point, avoid the well-marked and charted shoal (formerly an island) southwest of the Wye River mouth at Bennett Point. To enter the Wye River, follow a marked passage either north or south of the shoal; deeper water is to the south. Skippers with local knowledge will take a direct route across the shoal between red daybeacon "2" and green daybeacon "3," but we advise you to follow the buoyed deepwater passage two miles south between flashing green buoy "11" and red nun "10" to enter the Wye from the south. Be sure to honor green can "1" on your passage north to the Wye River mouth once clear of the aforementioned buoys. Beyond Bruffs Island, the river splits into two branches around large Wye Island: Wye River proper (locally called the "Front Wye") and Wye East River ("Back Wye"). Deep, winding Wye Narrows connects these two branches at the north end of Wye Island, but a fixed 10-foot vertical clearance bridge and an overhead power line with a 32-foot vertical clearance stop all but the smallest vessels from circumnavigating the island.

Anchorage: Proceeding up the main stem of the Wye River proper, you can pull off the channel almost anywhere to anchor in pretty surroundings and water depths of 8 feet or better. There is an attractive circular anchorage behind Drum Point, and, while it is not as large as the Wye East's Shaw Bay, it has entirely natural shores. Choice spots, for shoal-draft boats only, are Grapevine Cove, an enclosed hurricane hole that might be warm and buggy in midsummer, and Bigwood Cove, farther south. Work your way into Grapevine Cove carefully, as there is an unmarked 2-foot-deep shoal at the entrance. The deeper part of the entrance to Bigwood Cove carries 4-foot depths, with deeper water inside.

Wye East River

The Wye East River, beyond Shaw Bay, has nice houses spaced along both shores, with some natural areas, farms and cornfields visible in between. Particularly handsome homes line both sides of the Wye East River near its entrance.

This river is an immensely popular destination for Bay cruisers, and the natural beauty onshore hereabouts is quite stunning, as the Wye River Natural Resource Management Area (WRNRMA) protects the bulk of the island's acreage. The WRNRMA features hiking paths and nature trails,





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all maintained by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Shaw Bay, off the Wye East

Anchorage: Just east of Bruffs Island, Shaw Bay, surrounded by lovely houses, is a large and popular anchorage. The holding ground is excellent in firm mud, and beachcombing along the sandy rim of the cove is a popular pastime. Many visitors also enjoy the swimming here.

Lloyd, Dividing and Granary Creeks

Anchorage: Lloyd Creek, off the south shore of the Wye East just beyond Shaw Bay, offers a large anchorage, especially desirable on a still summer night when you wish to catch a cool breeze. But beware if a northerly kicks up, because the anchorage is open to the northwest.

A mile and a half beyond Lloyd Creek, Dividing Creek opens to the north. Large-scale charts indicate shoals extending toward the river from points at the mouth of Dividing Creek. It is best to enter mid-channel on a due north magnetic heading. This anchorage is popular with local cruisers and may be crowded on weekends. Deep water continues past the Colonial estate at Wye Heights all the way to the marine facilities at Wye Landing. Several creeks and coves present opportunities for gunkholing and anchoring along the way.

Off the northern shore of the Wye East River past Dividing Creek, Granary Creek has good protection and a dock for shore access if you want to get off the boat and walk.

Miles River

The Miles River is one of the Eastern Shore's busiest waterways when warm weather rolls around. The crown jewel of this storied river is undeniably St. Michaels, but the Miles has much more to offer in the way of excellent anchorages in its many creeks and gunkholes. But again, it is difficult to talk about the Miles River without mentioning St. Michaels first.

St. Michaels, on the Miles River

Getting to St. Michaels is an annual pilgrimage for many Chesapeake cruisers. The town, which lies directly on the shore of the scenic Miles River, hosts a number of important regattas and cruising events each year. It also boasts two excellent harbors, several seafood restaurants and a good deal of Chesapeake-flavored history. The town is oft referred to by Chesapeake Bay locals as "St. Mikes."



Navigation: The channel into St. Michaels is well-buoyed, but the large number of boats, both anchored and docked, may make it look confusing to the first-timer. The restored 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse on the grounds of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM) is an important landmark separating the two harbors at St. Michaels.



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The northern harbor, Fogg Cove, is home to condominiums and the CBMM, each with docks; otherwise, it is mainly an anchorage area. The southern harbor is the St. Michaels harbor proper, with two marinas, the local boatyard and the popular Crab Claw Restaurant.

Dockage: To port on entry and across the harbor from the red-roofed buildings of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is St. Michaels Marina with substantial transient dockage capacity, a pool and patio area, a marine store, a fuel dock and two restaurants on-site. Across a narrow arm of water is St. Michaels Harbour Inn Marina and Spa. Both marinas monitor VHF Channel 16, but reservations are a must on weekends and are always advisable. Higgins Yacht Yard on the inner harbor is the last full-service boatyard in St. Michaels. It has haul-out and repair capabilities, plus limited transient dockage.

Anchorage: Both harbors now have small red and green buoys defining the channels through the mazes of anchored boats. You may anchor to either side of these buoys, but take care not to swing into the channel on a wind shift—marine police write tickets for boats that do. The St. Michaels harbor proper is not very large for the number of boats that crowd it in summer, especially on weekends, and they often anchor very close to one another. Fogg Cove, while a little farther from village attractions (other than the CBMM), is probably a safer place to set the hook. On very crowded days, many boats anchor in the Miles River just beyond green daybeacon “3” in 17 to 18 feet of water.

A water taxi service runs during the season and monitors VHF Channel 71 or answers by phone at 410-924-2198. Note the 6-mph speed limit when transiting the harbor.

GOIN' ASHORE:

St. Michaels, MD



Once a waterman's enclave, St. Michaels has taken its transformation to tourist mecca in a decidedly upscale direction of late. Spas and a winery have joined an evolving array of restaurants and inns in historic homes, on the water or serving chic cuisine.

History: Located on the Miles River (once known as the St. Michaels River), the town is named for the Archangel St. Michael after the Christ Episcopal Church of St. Michael the Archangel parish, founded in the area about 1677. A British factor (a word once used instead of “agent”) named James Braddock purchased and subdivided a land grant in 1778



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that developed into the town just after the Revolutionary War.

At the heart of the town stands St. Mary's Square, a picturesque spot where one of two cannons commemorates one of St. Michael's signature moments, when it famously became known as "the town that fooled the British" during the War of 1812. As the story goes, the British began shelling the little town on August 10, 1813. Residents boosted lanterns into the tops of trees in order to fool the Redcoats into shooting too high.

Evidence of the evening remains at a private Mullberry Street residence called the Cannonball House. A Mrs. Merchant was carrying her baby downstairs as the cannonball tumbled down the same steps after bursting through her roof. The port town, an early shipbuilding center where the swift Baltimore Clippers were built, went on to be a packing house center for seafood and tomatoes (a fine Eastern Shore staple come summer), as well as home to many a waterman.

Culture and Cultural References: Talbot County's conservative creds gained a boost when Vice President Dick Cheney and former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld bought houses in the area.

"Wedding Crashers," with Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn, filmed throughout the area, including at the Inn at Perry Cabin located on the cove at the northern branch of the harbor. Log canoes, once Native American transport and now working boats, are famously raced here.

Attractions: The nine-building, 18-acre Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum provides the premiere collection of Bay boats (including a working boatyard) as well as a detailed look into the region's maritime life. A busy calendar offers lectures and events—and folks traveling with kids should not miss the interactive oyster boat exhibit. The museum is located on the harbor, and cruisers can arrange temporary dockage here (www.cbmm.org).

Pick up a copy of the St. Michael's Walking Tour at the visitor center on Talbot Street and take time to visit St. Mary's Square, replete with its museum and two nearby cannons, including a replica of one that is said to have been used during the War of 1812.



Spas include the upscale Linden Spa at the gorgeous Inn at Perry Cabin, 6,000 square feet of rejuvenation focused on using regional botanicals—including linden trees—in their potions and lotions. It even has its own apothecary. The address is 308 Watkins Lane, 410-745-2200.



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Shopping: St. Michaels is one of the few good provisioning ports on the Eastern Shore. An Acme Supermarket is in the heart of downtown on Talbot Street, and a combined meat market, produce, delicatessen and liquor store called Village Shoppe sits close by. A short walk along Talbot Street also takes you past the post office, several ATM's and a variety of restaurants, pubs and shops. A bicycle shop is about a mile from the docks at the eastern edge of town. There's plenty to be had, from souvenirs on up the scale. Among the mainstays worth a peek are Keepers of St. Michaels, deep in the Talbot Street shopping district, sells Orvis and similar preppy-outdoorsy-style clothes. Ship & Rail, located in the former flour mill at the north end of town sells nautical stuff like ship's models. Guyette & Schmidt, the decoy auction house, also has a retail space featuring many of the highly collectible decoys for which Chesapeake Bay is so well known. It's located at 933 Talbot St.

Restaurants: St. Michaels is full of good restaurants, but a tasting menu should include the following: 208 Talbot (try the prix fixe menu on Saturday nights) at 208 N. Talbot St., 410-745-3838; and Bistro St. Michaels, a chic French restaurant with a local sensibility that brings you a "seafood bar" in waterman's territory, 408 S. Talbot St., 410-745-9111.



Then there's Carpenter Street Saloon, aka "C Street," where you might still catch an authentic waterman in white boots (or a game of pool and live music on weekends), 113 S. Talbot St., 410-745-5111. The Crab Claw Restaurant has been serving seafood and hard crabs from its waterside location since the 1960s (304 Mill St., 410-745-2900).

Foxy's Marina Bar is where the boaters hang out for casual fare on a waterfront dock (125 Mulberry St. 410-745-4340); Characters Café, right downtown serves casual burgers, seafood, chicken and beef (200 S. Talbot St., 410-745-2606).

Noted Maryland Chef Michael Rork has commanded the kitchen at Town Dock Restaurant for years, and you can't go wrong with his creative seafood dishes, enjoyed in a dining room with expansive views of St. Michaels Harbor (125 Mulberry St., 410-745-5577). And for your caffeine fix, try Blue Crab Coffee Co., located in the former Freedom's Friends Lodge at 102 Fremont St., 410-745-4155.

Annual Events: The St. Michaels Food and Wine Festival has grown into an expansive event held at the maritime museum, replete with distinguished chefs from D.C. and New York giving cooking demonstrations, as well as abundant tastings of various goodies (www.stmichaelsfoodandwinefestival.com). Numerous events take place at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, but two favorites are the Antique & Classic Boat Festival in June and the Mid-Atlantic Small Craft Festival in October. Visit www.cbmm.org for more information.



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GOIN ASHORE:

Tilghman Island, MD

A drawbridge at Knapps Narrows guards the entry to Tilghman Island, whether you're entering by road or via the narrows on your boat. Workboats cluster at the harbor there at what's known as the "tonger's basin," while farther on up the island you'll see the skipjacks at the island's Dogwood Harbor. Tilghman retains the feel of the waterman's village it's been for generations. Today, you can find a skipjack to take you out on the water and see how dredging is done.

History: The island, first called "Great Choptank Island," passed into the Tilghman family and earned its name. Oystermen looking for access to the water began moving here, and a waterman's way of life still visible today was established. Seafood packing plants came into importance during the 20th century.

Attractions: Dogwood Harbor is known as the home of the skipjacks. The famous Rebecca T. Ruark, a National Historic Landmark, is docked here. The boat was built in 1886, and Capt. Wade Murphy stays at the helm. For information: www.skipjack.org.

Chesapeake Light Tours operates from Tilghman, taking visitors up and down the Bay for an up-close look at Chesapeake lighthouses.

Tilghman Island Marina rents waverunners, canoes, bicycles and mopeds. The address is 6140 Mariners Court; 410-886-2500. You can also poke your way through Tilghman's watery "back roads" via the Tilghman Island Water Trail map.

Special Events: In late June, head for the Tilghman Island Seafood Festival sponsored by the island's volunteer fire department. And if you miss that, mark your calendar for mid-October and the VFW sponsored Tilghman Island Day to sample oysters, crabs and clams alongside authentic watermen activities like boat docking contests.

Shopping: Find T-shirts and snacks at Fairbanks Bait & Tackle or books at Crawfords Nautical Books (aka the Book Bank). You can also swing over to Harrison's Chesapeake House to browse their gift shop, called Tilghman Island Treasures.

Restaurants: Everybody's talking about the latest incarnation of Bay Hundred Restaurant, located right by Knapp's Narrows Marina (6176 Tilghman Island Road, 410-866-2126). The upscale cuisine at Tilghman Island Inn, also on Knapps Narrows, is not to be missed (on Coopertown Road, 410-886-2141). Harrison's Chesapeake House has a restaurant and inn, where fishermen have schooled up for decades: 21551 Chesapeake House Drive, 410-886-2121.

The Cruzin' Guide is brought to you in partnership by Nor'easter Magazine and Dozier's Waterway Guide. The content in this article has been provided by Dozier's Waterway Guide, Chesapeake Bay 2009 Edition. Refer to your Waterway Guide for complete area details, charts



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