



Beyond the Beach: Discover Marsh Madness in North Carolina's Brunswick Islands

January 24, 2014 – As things heat up on the basketball court with March Madness looming, [North Carolina's Brunswick Islands](#) invites families looking for an off-court adventure to glimpse beyond the basic beach vacation and discover *Marsh Madness* for an inspiring spring and summer coastal adventure. Special vacation packages are posted regularly at <http://www.ncbrunswick.com/specials>.

Those seeking new things to do on the North Carolina coast will find that one of the most undiscovered and under-appreciated environments along shore is also one of the most surprising and fascinating -- the salt marsh. The five pristine barrier islands and miles of unspoiled beaches that comprise North Carolina's Brunswick Islands hide their best [coastal adventure](#) on the Intracoastal side. Offering mystery and discovery around every bend, the salt marsh is teeming with life and the perfect setting for new family vacation activities including kayaking, birding, wildlife watching, boating, fishing and crabbing. During your next sea-side visit, check your tide-tables and turn your sights toward the marsh; a closer look is sure to inspire Marsh Madness among even the most diehard of the beach and sand-castle set.

The vast amount of marshland and waterways make North Carolina's Brunswick Islands home to some of the [best kayaking](#) along the coast. The area boasts [several adventure outfitters](#) who can arrange kayak trips for all skill levels and ages. A favorite and novel outing is the twilight marsh kayak trip behind Sunset Beach. Led by [Summertime Adventure Tours](#), kayaks and kayakers alike are bedecked with glo-sticks; guides wear headlamps, and the pink light from the setting sun illuminates the Spartina grass. During daytime paddling outings, kayaking and kayak fishing allow access to areas impassible by larger craft and explore diverse coastal ecosystems with paddling trips to tidal pools and down unique blackwater rivers where salt and fresh water meet.

“As with any coastal or beach activity, check the tides before you head out. Correlate your outbound and inbound trips with the tidal flow for an easier paddle for family members of all

ages; just let the tide carry you along,” says Emma Thomas of [The Adventure Company](#), an outfitter and tour guide based in [Southport](#) that offers black water and salt marsh tours.

For a faster pace, the area’s Intracoastal waterways offer some of the best boating on the North Carolina coast. Views of the salt marsh, lush Spartina grass, and oyster beds glide past on one side, with oystercatchers and plovers dotting sandbars at low tide, while access to the ocean or sound provides a change of scenery.

Often called the “nursery of the sea,” the salt marsh is home to dolphins, fish, turtles, crabs and birds who find food and shelter here. A great area for birding, [Herons, egrets](#), swallows, terns, pelicans, clapper rail, the sora and one of the largest of North Carolina’s water birds, the Federally-endangered wood storks, are among the prized sightings for birders, and the kayak’s clandestine glide lets paddlers often sneak up undetected for a closer look.

The various forms of wildlife are not the only creatures that come to the marsh in search of a meal. North Carolina’s Brunswick Islands is one of the [best fishing areas](#) on the East Coast. Cast a line from one of its iconic fishing piers, or rent a boat to reel in Redfish, Flounder and Trout from the inland, Intracoastal waterways. Or, stuff a crab trap purchased at a local fish monger with a few chicken necks and reap the reward of one of the sweetest delicacies of the sea – a basket full of blue crabs. For those who prefer that others do the catching and cooking, North Carolina’s Brunswick Islands has one of the hottest dining scenes on the North Carolina coast. For the [best waterfront restaurants](#), diners can choose from fun and funky Fishy Fishy to the traditional seafood shack like Provisions or the new Frying Pan at Southport’s Yacht Basin, or head out for the old-school, lightly-fried seafood platters that originated in [Calabash](#).

The perfect accommodations for a foray into Marsh Madness are the spacious and inviting rooms at the [Sunset Inn](#), an intimate B&B overlooking nature’s nursery. Guestrooms here offer the best of both worlds: ever-changing views of the marsh from the screened in back porches, and a sneak peek of the ocean and pristine beach just two blocks from the front door. Other vacation lodging options include [The Causeway Inn](#), [Bluewater Point Motel & Marina](#) offer direct water access, and a vast selection of [vacation rental homes](#) for every taste, some with their own marsh- or creek-side dock, are available on every one of North Carolina’s Brunswick Islands.

With 45 miles of wide, uncrowded beaches to choose from in North Carolina’s Brunswick Islands, it might be tempting to spread a blanket and never leave the sand. Yet after a relaxing

vacation communing with the denizens of the marsh, their serene songs will beckon again and again.

About North Carolina's Brunswick Islands

In the southernmost corner of North Carolina is one of the South's best kept secrets. There is definitely delightful life between the more well-known Wilmington and livelier, busy Myrtle Beach, and here it is serene and scenic. From the Cape Fear River, reaching down to the South Carolina border, North Carolina's Brunswick Islands beckons softly. Five barrier islands – Sunset Beach, Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Oak Island and Bald Head Island provide 45 miles of wide, stunning beaches for the perfect beach vacation. Picturesque Southern small towns like Southport, Calabash, Shallotte and Leland draw visitors with family-owned, one-of-a-kind restaurants, galleries and shops to make the area one of the best vacation destinations along the North Carolina coast. Adding a temperate climate ideal for year-round sports, dining, tournaments and festivals along with fun forts, lighthouses and historic architecture, the stage is set for a perfect coastal getaway. Toss in boating, fishing and golfing, and the trip is instantly reminiscent of yesteryear's beach vacation. Families fall so in love with [North Carolina's Brunswick Islands](#) that they return year after year, generation after generation.

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