



Southport NC: Historic Seaport Turns Best Small Coastal Town, Emerges as Hip Dining Hotspot

Bolivia, NC (April 8, 2014) – There's a reason more than 40 [movies and television productions](#) have chosen the charming coastal town of Southport, NC as their backdrop. With its dramatic views of the Cape Fear River, ancient live oaks draped with Spanish moss, grand Victorian homes on shady streets and proximity to some of [North Carolina's best beaches](#) and barrier islands, [Southport](#) has more than its fair share of picture-perfect Southern allure. This quintessential seaside town has evolved from its 18th century roots as a military and fishing village, carefully preserving its old-world appeal while developing a 21st century vibe with Hollywood tours and pedestrian-friendly streets lined with antique stores, art galleries, and cafes offering locally caught seafood.

A hip dining scene has sprung up in Southport's Yacht Basin, now one of North Carolina's hottest waterfront dining destinations. Stars have taken to social media to share their favorite restaurants on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, even in interviews, introducing Southport to millions of fans. Here are just a few of the popular independently-owned restaurants where visitors can dine like their favorite celebs.

Actor Josh Duhamel and his wife, Black Eyed Peas singer Fergie, are partial to Fishy Fishy and Provisions, as the locals call it. [Fishy Fishy Café](#) is a colorful ode to waterfront dining, beachy decor and quirky folk art. Outside and inside seating offers views of the harbor. A standout salad is Mandarin Beet, with a spicy orange ginger dressing. Appetizers include Seared Tuna Bruschetta, with Guacamole and a Balsamic reduction; and Coconut and Almond-battered Shrimp, served with a Jalapeno-Orange Marmalade. [Yacht Basin Provision Company](#), with its entrances from the street and dock, is a no-frills seafood shack with a chalkboard menu and a line of loyals out the door. Yet the food and the view are extraordinary. Build a meal from the à la carte menu: Crab cakes, conch fritters, grouper salad, wings, burgers...the kind of food favored on a [North Carolina beach vacation](#).

It's no wonder that Ryan Seacrest threw a surprise private six-course birthday dinner for Julianne Hough at [Ports of Call](#) – the eclectic bistro features the cuisine of Spain, Portugal, Morocco, India, Greece and the U.S. The tapas menu includes an unforgettable Sea BLT, a

Lobster and Crab Salad in a Lemon/Tarragon Mayonnaise with Bacon bits over Fried Green Tomatoes. [The Frying Pan](#) has an open dining room with a vista of the Cape Fear River. The menu features sophisticated pan-seared seafood as well as classic Calabash-style dishes – Fried Fish, Shrimp and Oysters. [Mr. P's Bistro](#) features Lowcountry cuisine as well as Crab Dip, Grouper Oscar and Fried Green Tomatoes. The modest storefront doesn't match the extraordinary cuisine and excellent service discovered inside.

Visitors can also walk in the footprints of the stars with four exciting tours. Get a close-up of some of the places made famous by "Safe Haven" and "Under the Dome," via electric carts from [Southport Tours](#) or [Southport Fun Tours](#). Narrated biking tours are offered by [The Adventure Company offers](#), and [Old South Tour Company](#) presents historical walking tours. Showcased are filming locations including iconic homes, the Old Brunswick County Jail Museum, (Cissy Spacek, "Crimes of the Heart") Fishy Fishy ("Dawson's Creek," "Revenge"), Trinity Methodist Church ("Under the Dome," "A Walk To Remember") and the River Pilots Tower (radio station in "Under the Dome"). Don't miss the North Carolina Maritime Museum, which memorializes Southport's nautical history. Locals and visitors love the magnificent pier, where fishing and sunset-watching are the main events, along with festivals and fishing tournaments. [The NC 4th of July Festival](#) draws 40,000 to 50,000 people who are captivated by the small-town spirit and harbor fireworks. The parade is so colorful and all-American it was even incorporated into the movie "Safe Haven."

When it's time to retire for the night, there are plenty of choices as well. Four romantic bed and breakfasts enable guests to experience the splendor of a bygone era, while waking up to a delicious Southern repast. The Victorian-era [Robert Ruark Inn](#) was home to a world-famous syndicated journalist/author who popularized African safaris and whose contemporaries included Ernest Hemingway. Located on the historic waterfront, [Lois Jane's Riverview Inn](#) was built in the 1890s and exquisitely restored by her children a century later. Rocking chairs line the porches for gazing at the sea birds and ships. [The Brunswick Inn](#) is a Federal-style mansion overlooking the Cape Fear River with views of Bald Head Island and the Oak Island Lighthouse. Breakfast is served in a crystal-chandeliered dining room that opens up to the second floor rotunda. [The Southport Inn](#) is a charming restored B&B with an open-kitchen policy and an intimate feel with just three bedrooms and private baths.

Rounding out these accommodations are budget-friendly chains, family-owned motels and golf resorts, all throughout North Carolina's Brunswick Islands. Looking for a beach? Southport is the gateway to the southernmost beaches of North Carolina. Just minutes away is [Oak Island](#), with 10 miles of beaches and more than 60 public beach-access points. Just a little farther south

are Holden Beach, Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach, all offering the perfect North Carolina beach vacation with mini-golf, ice cream stores, restaurants and shops, bike rentals, and plenty of oceanfront, Intracoastal Waterway and mid-island vacation rental homes. For more details, visit www.ncbrunswick.com.

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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