



Reader's Digest

A Trusted Friend in a Complicated World

52 Quick Trips That Won't Break the Bank



Melissa Klurman

Updated: Jan. 11, 2023

These mini vacations offer big fun on a tight timetable. We've rounded up choices all around the country, so a fabulous vacation is always right around the corner, even if you only have a day or two.

Every editorial product is independently selected, though we may be compensated or receive an affiliate commission if you buy something through our links. Ratings and prices are accurate and items are in stock as of time of publication.

Bite-size breaks for when you're short on time

Looking for a getaway that really feels like you've left home, even if you only have the weekend to work with? These mini vacation ideas around the country work even if you don't have a lot of time, or money, to work with. In fact, these mini-breaks pack lots of vacation vibes into just a few days and won't break the bank to boot. Experts estimate that the perfect [weekend getaways are within 3 hours of your home](#). Check out these easy-to-get-to destinations and get ready to spring into fun. We also have the most [underrated travel destinations](#), the [best weekend getaways in every state](#), the [best family vacation destinations](#), [beach house rentals](#), and [all-inclusive resorts](#). Not sure where to start? Check out these [vacation rental websites](#).



STEPHEN B. GOODWIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Crystal Coast, North Carolina

Why you'll love it: Located along North Carolina's central shore, the Crystal Coast has been a favorite beach destination for generations and represents one of the few remaining natural barrier island systems in the world with 85 miles of sparkling beaches. Base yourself near Beaufort, a 300-year-old town filled with pirate lore (Blackbeard's sunken flagship, *The Queen Anne's Revenge*, rests in its watery grave just miles offshore), and plan a trip to The North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores for an up-close look at what lies beneath the seas.

Budget tip: Kick back for a full day of free fun on the beach!

Where to stay: The Inlet Inn is right on the waterfront in Beaufort and offers water view rooms with private porches starting at \$174 in summer, which includes a continental breakfast delivered right to your room every morning.

[Book Now](#)

WILDLIFE TO SPOT ON NORTH CAROLINA'S CRYSTAL COAST

by Aoife O'Riordan

JAN 12, 2023

© Crystal Coast Tourism Development Authority

News of the legendary Loch Ness Monster making an appearance in Atlantic Beach on [North Carolina's Crystal Coast made](#) waves across the country and, while most likely a whale or eel was spotted, family travelers have all the more reason to visit North Carolina's Crystal Coast to see some amazing wildlife.



The region's most famous animals, [Wild Shackleford Horses](#), descend from the Spanish mustangs brought over by European settlers 400 years ago. These wild horses roam the shores of Shackleford Banks and impress onlookers with their beauty.

Head to [Croatan National Forest](#) for some prime birdwatching opportunities. The forest is home to the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker, as well as osprey, great blue herons and *anhingas*.



The Crystal Coast also features a sea turtle sanctuary, situated on Emerald Isle. Every year, between May and November, loggerhead sea turtles come to the beaches to lay their eggs. These endangered animals require protection, especially when they lay their nests.



Look to the sea to spot the Atlantic Bottlenose dolphin, a popular sea creature that makes the most appearances in winter when they come to the area's inland bays. To see the dolphins up close, book an excursion with [Crystal Coast Ecotours](#) to enjoy a personalized and guided tour of the barrier islands and potentially spot these graceful creatures.