

North Carolina Beach Cheat Sheet

For many Raleigh residents, summer just wouldn't be summer without a vacation at the coast. Lucky for us, the state has beaches in spades. North Carolina's 322 miles of shoreline consist of **more than 25 distinct beaches**, each offering a unique experience, from the lively boardwalk at Carolina Beach to the secluded vacation homes of Bald Head Island. Get to know the coastal towns we're fortunate to have close by this summer. We explore 17 of our favorite North Carolina beach towns and what each has to offer; we know one of them will have everything you want for the **coastal getaway of your dreams**.

Crystal Coast

Indian Beach

In between Atlantic Beach and Emerald Isle lies Indian Beach—known as one of North Carolina's coastal hidden gems, an upscale beach town home to lush maritime forests, luxurious oceanfront homes, soft, white dunes and captivating emerald-hued waters. Its name comes from the discovery of Indian burial mounds before the town was incorporated in 1973.



Where to eat: Big Oak Drive-In & Bar-B-Q, The Crab Shack Restaurant, Anchor Draffthouse & Pizzeria

Attractions: North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, Bogue Banks, Island Water Sports Rentals

Accommodations: Lavish resort condominiums, motels and inns, mobile homes, vacation rentals and campgrounds on the ocean are all available.

Parking: Free public parking lots are offered at most beach access points.

Emerald Isle

Voted North Carolina's best beach by U.S. News, Emerald Isle is a no-frills destination beloved for its 12 miles of family friendly beaches, popular fishing piers, oceanside amenities including grills, showers and picnic shelters, and delicious restaurants to fuel you before or after a long day on the water. Dolphin and wild horse sightings make a trip here all the more enticing.



Where to eat: Caribsea, Kathryn's Bistro & Martini Bar, The Trading Post, Flipperz Family Bar & Grill

Attractions: Emerald Fest, Emerald Isle Woods Park, Bogue Inlet Fishing Pier

Accommodations: Emerald Isle offers only one oceanfront hotel—the Islander Hotel & Resort; primary lodging includes vacation rentals and a couple of small inns.

Parking: The Eastern Ocean Regional Access and Western Ocean Regional Access parking lots charge \$10 per vehicle on the weekends; there is no parking fee on weekdays or at other beach access points.

Atlantic Beach

Atlantic Beach is a family favorite destination for its fun activities including swimming, fishing, biking, water sports rentals and other attractions. There's plenty to do, eat and drink in this lovely town, famous for its beautiful, translucent waters and easily accessible walking trails that help you explore everything the area has to offer.

Where to eat: Shark Shack, Amos Mosquito's Restaurant & Bar, AB Ice Cream & Candy Shoppe, On The Rocks

Attractions: Fort Macon State Park, Hoop Pole Creek Nature Trail, Shackleford Banks

Accommodations: Choose from large chain hotels, cozy inns and homey vacation rentals.

Parking: Daily paid parking lots are dispersed along the beachfront. These are \$2 per hour and only credit/debit cards are accepted (no cash).

