

# DEPARTURES

——— Travel ———

## 8 Charming American Towns Known for Their Natural Splendor

From coast to coast, these little-known destinations are perfect for nature lovers road tripping to delightful small towns this year.

Lack of crowds and a desire for [off-the-beaten-path destinations](#) in driving distance from major cities are propelling small towns into the spotlight this fall and winter. According to a [travel safety barometer](#) released Sept. 9 by MMGY Travel Intelligence, safety scores around transportation and lodging are the highest they've been since March. And travelers continue to [favor outside activities](#), too—making small towns with bountiful outdoor scenes (and [beautiful fall foliage](#), to boot) even more enticing for a quick getaway. Here are eight charming small towns nature lovers can explore over the next few months.

# Beaufort, North Carolina



Part of North Carolina's [Crystal Coast](#), along the southernmost Outer Banks (which came into the spotlight this summer with Netflix's hit show by the same name—ironically filmed in South Carolina), Beaufort is a romantic spot to visit any time, but especially in autumn. The oak-lined streets here are green nearly year round, but cooler fall temperatures (think: highs in the low 70s) make activities like biking with [Hungry Town Tours'](#) through this town of 4,400 particularly enjoyable. Book a paddleboarding or kayaking excursion to see the wild horses on Shackleford Banks or take a ferry to Cape Lookout to climb its famed lighthouse for a bird's-eye view of Beaufort. Unwind with a porch pounder, as the locals call an afternoon cocktail on the patio, at the boutique [Inn on Turner](#)—a charming, historically preserved bed-and-breakfast with an expansive double porch complete with rockers for lounging.