



**STAY ORIGINAL**

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**Carolina Beach** offers visitors something original to explore around every colorful corner. Experience one of the top boardwalks in the country, a scenic state park, eclectic murals, one-of-a-kind events, world-class fishing, miles of beautiful beach - and all kinds of people united by their love of good times. Carolina Beach is just a 30-minute drive from Wilmington, named one of the "Best Small Cities in the U.S." by *Condé Nast Traveler*.

**WHAT'S NEW AT CAROLINA BEACH**

**New Mural Masterpieces**

Since the Carolina Beach Mural Project kicked off in 2020, 14 public murals are complete, with more on the way in 2023. Set to debut in late spring, a mural by renowned artist Brian Lewis will celebrate the "Carolina Shag" and Malcolm Ray "Chicken" Hicks, a pioneer of the dance craze. A mural slated for the fall will illustrate the storied Shoo Fly Train, which once transported passengers from Wilmington to Carolina Beach, while another new mural will highlight native plants. The Carolina Beach Mural Project also plans to launch a new interactive aerial mural experience this summer. In addition, Tasting History Tours will soon offer a new tour highlighting murals throughout the town.

**A Bar-Coffee Shop Hybrid**

The Vault Coffee and Pour House is now open and features a hybrid drive-thru coffee shop plus an indoor beer and wine gathering space. The new spot serves a variety of beverages, including 16 rotating local craft beers on tap. The wine vault holds an impressive curation of wines to take home or sample while lounging in the laid-back seating area.

**Year of the Trail**

Celebrate North Carolina's 2023 the Year of the Trail by traversing the 761-acre Carolina Beach State Park, which boasts 8.5 miles of hiking along nine trails, including two ADA-accessible options, lined with fantastic flora and fauna. This year, the park plans to add a bog garden where visitors can learn about indigenous carnivorous plants before following the Flytrap Trail. Additional trails include Carolina Beach Lake Park's walking path and the town's Island Greenway.

**Freeman Park's Future**

Freeman Park Recreation Area, a well-known beachfront spot for sunbathing, seasonal camping, shore fishing and four-wheel driving in Carolina Beach, recently received a \$4M North Carolina Land and Water Fund grant. The investment will yield long-term benefits by protecting more than 300 acres of the park's wildlife habitats and an unspoiled coastal environment.

**SAMPLE STORYLINES**

**Events and Festivals Year-Round**

Every season brings new celebrations to fun-loving and free-spirited Carolina Beach. The spring Island Arts Festival celebrates all forms of coastal creativity. The Carolina Beach Music Festival, one of the country's longest-running music festivals, starts summer on a high note. The season also brings dynamic events like Fireworks by the Sea and Boardwalk Blast and the East Coast "Got-Em-On" King Mackerel Classic. The festivities continue with the Carolina Beach Dragon Boat



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Regatta and Festival in early fall and the Island of Lights Christmas Flotilla after Thanksgiving weekend, followed by the Island of Lights Festival through New Year's.

### Vintage Experiences for New Generations

The past and present collide happily at Carolina Beach. With more than a century of history, the Carolina Beach Boardwalk is a step back in time that feels fresh with bustling crowds, unique shops and summer delights, including new seasonal amusement rides and the classic Britt's Donuts. New and returning visitors alike will see why *Fodor's Travel* ranked the Boardwalk as one of the country's best boardwalks. Several present-day attractions offer visitors a nod to the past, from the Boardwalk to the Carolina Beach Music Festival to beach motels with modern amenities. This coastal community is ideal for groups like multi-generational travelers. There is plenty to please grandparents, grandkids and everyone in between.

### Kid-Friendly

Carolina Beach is the ultimate all-ages-welcome destination. Families return year after year thanks to kid-friendly finds like the classic Carolina Beach Boardwalk, surfing and stand-up paddleboard (SUP) lessons and seasonal events such as free outdoor movies and fireworks shows. Water tours and cruises bring young minds' history and science lessons to life - and they'll love learning about legendary pirates on a Pirate Adventure Cruise with Island Cruises and searching for fossils on an Island Time Water Tours charter to Shark Tooth Island. Even hard-to-impress tweens and teens will request a repeat visit.

### Nightlife

Experience nightlife at Carolina Beach by visiting local favorites such as the Fat Pelican, voted as one of "The 32 Diviest Dive Bars in America" by *impulcity.com*, thanks to its legendary walk-in cooler and a bar made from a boat. The Fat Pelican also appears in an episode of Amazon Prime's "The Summer I Turned Pretty," which recently filmed its second season on the island. Groove to the tunes of local and regional bands at The Ocean Grill & Tiki Bar - named one of "America's Best Beach Bars" by *Thrillist.com* - and SeaWitch Café & Tiki Bar, which both feature a regular lineup of live entertainment starting in the spring each year.

### Outdoor and Eco-Adventures

Try kayaking, SUP or fishing in Freeman Park's surf or catching waves atop a surfboard. Tony Silvagni Surf School, whose namesake owner ranked as a top-ten longboard surfer worldwide in 2022, offers rentals and lessons for all your watersport adventures. Marvel at the natural wonders of Carolina Beach State Park, home to 13 habitats across 761 acres.

While exploring the park, you'll find the Sugarloaf Trail's 50-foot sand dune and the Flytrap Trail's indigenous carnivorous plants, which the new bog garden will also showcase.

### Foodie Fare

Dining at Carolina Beach goes beyond typical beach fare, and our foodie scene is getting national recognition. Carolina Smokehouse and Fork-n-Cork serve noteworthy barbecue, burgers and other American bites that won the spot a *Food Network* appearance. Soul Flavor Kitchen & Bar brings to life the flavors of the South. Salt Fish Restaurant and Tiki Bar serves Caribbean-influenced dishes made with fresh, local ingredients. Nollie's Taco Joint serves fresh Mexican flavors inspired by the restaurant's laid-back skater vibe. *Yelp* named Island Burger & Bites North Carolina's best cheeseburger. On the sweet side, *Yelp* ranked Carolina Beach's Britt's Donut Shop and Wake N Bake Donuts as two of the "Top 100 U.S. Donut Shops." Sample island cuisine and cocktails by booking a seasonal Tasting History Tour.

### Millennial Getaways

Millennial travelers will find authentic experiences in Carolina Beach. Enjoy delicious cuisine served at trendy, non-chain restaurants like Nollie's Taco Joint - then sip the best local craft brews at Good Hops or The Vault Coffee and Pour House. Toast to good times together while savoring ocean views at the newly reopened High Tide Lounge & Tiki Bar on the Carolina Beach Pier. Snap post-worthy photos of colorful murals and otherworldly Venus flytraps. Adventure on the water with activities ranging from fishing and kayaking to surfing and SUP. Groove to live music while making new friends at one of Carolina Beach's live music venues like The Fat Pelican or the Ocean Grill & Tiki Bar, named one of "America's Best Beach Bars" by *Thrillist.com*. Whether traveling solo or with a large crew, Millennial visitors can choose from oceanfront hotels, retro inns, comfortable vacation rentals and other options to fit any preference and budget.

### Pet-Friendly

With several pet-friendly inns and vacation rentals, Carolina Beach makes bringing along your four-legged friend easy. From April 1 to Sept. 30, leashed dogs are allowed on the beach daily before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m. During the off-season (Oct. 1 to March 31), leashed dogs are allowed on the beach at any time. Freeman Park allows dogs off-leash anytime throughout the off-season. Carolina Beach State Park offers a dog-friendly camping area with miles of hiking trails to traverse with your pooch. Unwind with your pup at Good Hops Brewing, a dog-friendly and family-owned brewery.

