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Kure Beach offers a naturally beautiful setting in a peaceful, small-town atmosphere. The coastal community allows visitors to fully relax while exploring nature's playground through outdoor adventures and signature state attractions, including Fort Fisher State Historic Site and the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. Kure 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 KURE BEACH

Exciting Expansions

Home to the Civil War's largest amphibious (land and water) battle, Fort Fisher State Historic Site is undergoing several changes as construction of a new visitors center and conservation lab continue. At 20,000 square feet, the new visitors center will be triple the size of the existing facility. As the most visited historic site in the state, the highly anticipated upgrades will nearly double the exhibit space, as well as add an orientation theatre and a multipurpose room for educational and rental purposes. The original visitors center and grounds remain open and accessible – and the site recently launched a History Highlights tour marked by interpretive signage along the back side of the fort.

A Centennial Milestone

Known as one of the oldest fishing piers along the Atlantic coast, the Kure Beach Fishing Pier celebrates its 100th birthday this year. Initially built in 1923, the 711-foot pier has undergone several phases of reconstruction due to passing time and weather. Owned and operated by the same family for four generations, it is a favorite spot for locals and visitors

to cast a line and purchase gear from the bait shop seasonally – and take in coastline views and walk along year-round for free.

Year of the Trail

North Carolina has declared 2023 the Year of the Trail, and Kure Beach provides picturesque settings for trekking through nature. Explore six miles of protected shoreline spanning the Atlantic Ocean to the Cape Fear River at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. Traverse primitive trails through the salt marsh past a WWII bunker. At low tide, catch sight of the mesmerizing coquina outcropping, a rare rock formation estimated to be more than 12,000 years old.

Adorable Aquarium Additions

The North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher recently welcomed two hatchlings to the loggerhead sea turtle conservation habitat. Pip and Scout were rescued during Carolina Beach and Fort Fisher nest excavations and will help visitors learn the importance of protecting these special sea creatures and their natural environment. In early 2023, the aquarium welcomed three more Asian small-clawed otter pups to its growing Otters on the Edge exhibit, which shares the critical conservation story of these animals.

SAMPLE STORYLINES

Kid-Friendly

Named "One of the Best Family Vacations in the Southeast" by *TripSavvy.com*, Kure Beach is one of those magical places where kids can be kids. Community events like the Boogie in the Park Concert Series, the Cape Fear Kite Festival and the



Island of Lights Christmas Flotilla deliver family fun without the overwhelming crowds and commercialism. Thanks to kid-friendly finds from an award-winning aquarium and oceanfront park to a disc golf course, historic fishing pier and state historic site, families keep coming back year after year.

Landmark Attractions

Kure Beach is home to two of North Carolina's landmark attractions: the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher – named a top aquarium in the U.S. by *Tripadvisor* multiple times – and Fort Fisher State Historic Site. The North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher has more than 2,500 animal residents. Other highlights include Luna, the aquarium's beloved albino alligator; a family of Asian small-clawed otters; loggerhead sea turtle hatchlings; and Adventure Reef, an outdoor interactive play area for kids. Located at the south end of Kure Beach, Fort Fisher State Historic Site was home to the Civil War's largest amphibious battle. Visitors can attend seasonal historical reenactments and take self-guided tours of the fort remains and restored seacoast gun emplacement.

Eco-Tourism

Take a boat or guided kayak tour to Zeke's Island Reserve, a sanctuary for rare shorebirds and protected wildlife. The estuarine reserve, made up of a collection of isolated islands, is home to miles of pristine shoreline and several different habitats, including tidal flats, salt marshes, shrub thicket, maritime forest and sand dunes. Visitors can enjoy a variety of activities there such as kayaking, hiking, shelling, fishing and birdwatching.

Shipwrecks at the Shore

Kure Beach is home to many fascinating sites that can be seen far below the surface, including North Carolina's First Heritage Dive Site – *The Condor*. The Civil War blockade runner is one of the best-preserved shipwrecks on the North Carolina coast and can be explored just off the southern tip of Kure Beach at Fort Fisher. In addition to a host of historic shipwrecks, visitors can discover fascinating prehistoric fossils on the ocean's natural ledges.

Pet-Friendly

Bring your four-legged friend on your next trip to Kure Beach. Beginning spring 2023, leashed dogs will be allowed on the strand from April 1 through Sept. 30 between 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. During the off-season (Oct. 1 through March 31), leashed dogs are allowed on the beach at any time daily. Dogs are allowed year-round at the Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. Your furry friend can run and play off-leash at Joe Eakes Park's Gurney Hood Barking Lot. The area also offers several pet-friendly accommodations.

Ocean Front Park

Ocean Front Park is Kure Beach's largest public green space. Located in the heart of Kure Beach's quaint business district near the town's iconic fishing pier, the park features a boardwalk, a playground for small children, swings, oceanfront benches and public restrooms. One of the biggest attractions at the park is an open-air pavilion with a stage area used for concerts, weddings, yoga classes and educational events. The park hosts special events throughout the year like the Boogie in the Park free concert series, Story Time by the Sea and conservation-focused Turtle Talks.

Solo Travel Serenity

In Kure Beach, solo travelers will find an array of activities and experiences perfect for a personalized getaway. Stop by a local coffee spot, then stroll along the Kure Beach Fishing Pier at sunrise. Join a guided kayak tour to Zeke's Island Reserve or photograph Fisher State Recreation Area's rare coquina rock formation at low tide. Grab a to-go meal from Beach House Burgers or dine on the party-of-one-friendly deck of Big Daddy's Restaurant. Retreat to a cozy one-bedroom rental condo or oceanfront inn after a full day of solo adventures tailored to your individual travel style and interests.

Road Trip Escape

Whether your family is in search of a getaway, your group of friends or significant other is planning a trip or you're contemplating a solo excursion, Kure Beach is the ideal place to escape. It is easy to get to our quaint island town via a quick car ride whether you are already in-state or coming from a neighboring state. Spend the night in a charming inn or vintage motel or stay like a local in one of our vacation rentals. Experience the island's natural beauty with a variety of outdoor and wellness activities or take time to wander through one of the state's signature attractions at Fort Fisher.

Hidden Gems

Escape to one of the few remaining undeveloped stretches of shoreline on the Southern coast at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area, a popular state park for sunbathing, surf fishing, shelling and birding. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are allowed seasonally with required permits. Located near the coast of Fort Fisher, Kure Beach's coquina rock formation is host to a very rare and distinctive mossy hard rock outcropping. Only visible during low tide, the rock is cemented together by seashells and coral with an estimated origin ranging from 12,000 to 80,000 years ago.

