

Southern Living

The 50 Best Beach Towns In The South

Discover our readers' favorite beach towns, from peaceful islands to fun-filled vacation spots.



Sun, surf, and sand—the ultimate vacation trifecta. Yes, we’re a bit biased, but our region is home to some of the finest stretches of sand and coastal communities in the country. Whether it’s the salty marshes and bustling boardwalks along the [South Carolina coast](#) or the turquoise waters and cobblestone streets along [Florida’s Highway 30A](#), there’s a beach town here for every type of traveler.

These reader-selected beach towns are home to growing food scenes, colorful shopping districts, [postcard-worthy views](#), and endless ways to frolic in the water. Each one has its own unique feel and energy, but you’ll find that all are overflowing with charm. So, if you hear the ocean calling your name, pack your bags, bring your floppiest hat, and leave your worries at the door (you won’t need them where you’re headed).

38. Beaufort, North Carolina



This fishing village with century-old homes, idyllic marinas, and pristine beaches could be plucked from a vintage postcard. You can learn more about the area's seafaring history with a kayak trek across Taylor Creek or a ferry ride to Shackleford Banks, a barrier island that's home to wild horses believed to have descended from those that survived Spanish shipwrecks over 500 years ago.

35. Emerald Isle, North Carolina



Taking the scenic route is inevitable in this easygoing community, where white sands and [blue-green waters](#) reign (hence the name). Perched on the 85-mile-long collection of barrier islands known as the Crystal Coast, this under-the-radar place encourages slow living and quality time by the ocean. Sunbathing and water sports like paddleboarding can be enjoyed in any season due to the mild weather.