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History and natural beauty draw visitors to North Carolina coast



The Bodie Island Lighthouse in Nags Head, N.C., towers over a boardwalk through a marsh inhabited by blue crabs and snapping turtles. Two hundred steps lead to the top of the lighthouse, where visitors view Bodie Island, Pamlico Sound and the Atlantic Ocean.

Provided By Linda Lange



Morehead City, North Carolina, faces Bogue Sound and Sugarloaf Island. Its busy waterfront is a hub for charter fishing and shipwreck diving services. It is home to the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament, one of the largest and oldest sport fishing events in the country.

Provided By Steve Ahillen



A Monomoy surfboat dominates the exhibition area of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum at Hatteras, N.C. Rescue boats played a vital role in the Outer Banks because more than 2,000 ships have sunk in surrounding waters.

Provided By Steve Ahillen



Vacationers in Nags Head, North Carolina, enjoy the surf and golden sand beach at Jennette's Pier. Fishermen catch a wide variety of fish species from the 1,000-foot-long, concrete pier, including drum, bluefish, cobia and king mackerel.

Provided By Steve Ahillen



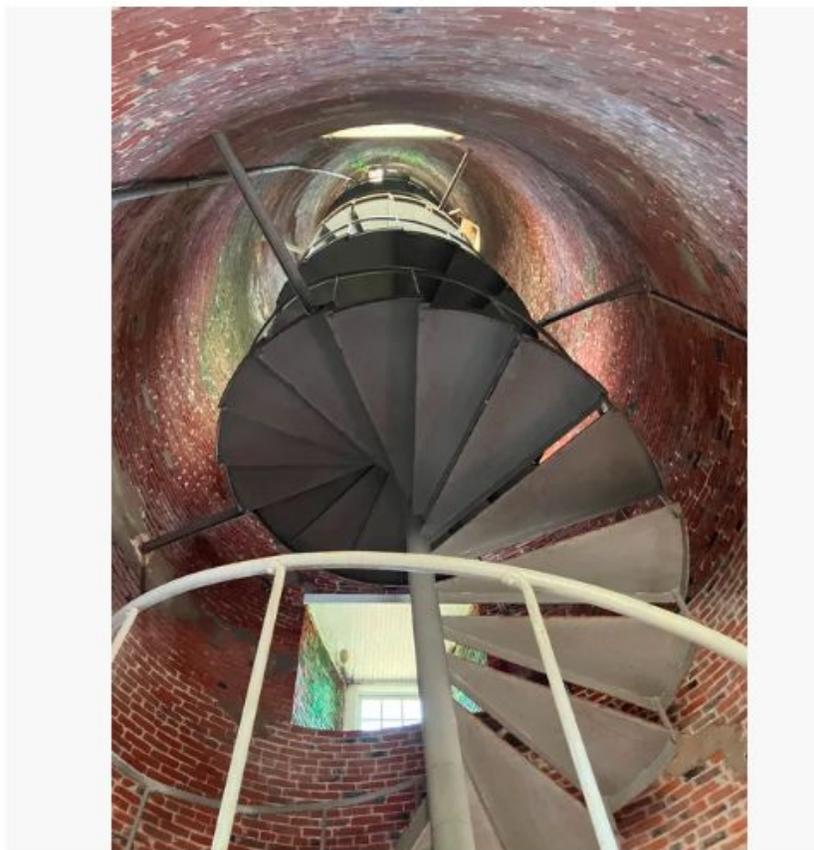
Cannon fire ceased at Fort Macon many years ago. Now a state park, the fortification in Atlantic Beach, N.C., is a popular destination for history lovers, beach-goers, birdwatchers and hikers. Civil War reenactments are held in the summer at the renovated fort.

Provided By Steve Ahillen



Capt. Rob Temple navigates his schooner Windfall II on cruises of North Carolina's Pamlico Sound. He entertains passengers with stories of seafarers in the Outer Banks, including the pirate Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard, who met his doom in these waters.

Provided By [Linda Lange](#)



The stairs of the Ocracoke Island Lighthouse rise to an octagonal lantern crown. The 75-foot-tall beacon is one of the oldest operating lighthouses in the United States. Its light shines across the southern end of North Carolina's Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Provided By [Steve Ahillen](#)



The history of maritime rescue operations in North Carolina's Outer Banks is vividly experienced at the Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station Historic Site and Museum in Rodanthe, N.C.

Provided By [Linda Lange](#)



North Carolina's Outer Banks claims the title of "Kiteboarding and Windsurfing Capital of the East Coast." Steady, strong winds, shallow water and rolling waves beckon watersports enthusiasts to beaches, including those along Pamlico Sound.

Provided By [Linda Lange](#)



Doug Miron, in the guise of Blackbeard's second in command Israel Hands, reveals pirate legends and ghost tales during a guided walk through Beaufort, N.C. According to local lore, ghosts reside in several homes and the Old Burial Grounds in the historic district.

Provided By Linda Lange



A kayaker approaches a wooden covered bridge on Ginguite Creek near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. The quiet waterway slips past an old crab shack and through the Kitty Hawk Woods Reserve.

Provided By Linda Lange



The peacefulness of Ocracoke attracts visitors to this island on North Carolina's Pamlico Sound. A seagull waits for boats arriving at the Ocracoke Seafood Company, the only fish house operation remaining from an industry that dates back to the 1700s.

Provided By [Steve Ahillen](#)



A wild horse grazes in the dune landscape of Currituck County, the northernmost stretch of North Carolina's Outer Banks. The horses, known as Bankers, are descendants of mustangs brought here during the 1500s by Spanish explorers.

Provided By [Steve Ahillen](#)



Visitors observe fish at the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, the largest saltwater aquarium in the state. More than 3,000 specimens of aquatic life, including sharks and green sea turtles, dwell in various habitats.

[Provided By Steve Ahillen](#)



The setting sun casts a golden glow over Roanoke Sound at the Burrus House Inn in Manteo, North Carolina. The all-suite hotel, located in the heart of the Outer Banks, is near pristine beaches, world-class fishing and historical landmarks.

[Provided By Linda Lange](#)



Visitors at the Wright Brothers National Memorial learn about the world-changing achievements of aviation pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright. A monument is located on top of historic Kill Devil Hill where the Wrights conducted gliding experiments.

Provided By [Linda Lange](#)



Facing Currituck Sound, the Inn at Corolla glimmers in the evening light. A shaded nature trail and pier connect guests to watersports and other outdoor activities in the resort area. The inn is located in North Carolina's Outer Banks.

Provided By [Linda Lange](#)