

# Forbes

## North Carolina's Crystal Coast Offers A Novel Spring Break Alternative

Not wanting to be part of a loud college crowd during the spring break vacation, many families opt for destinations other than Florida. North Carolina's Crystal Coast offers a pleasant alternative.



North Carolina's Crystal Coast offers a relaxing spring break destination. CRYSTAL COAST TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY,

Spring break is most often associated with riotous partying at warm-weather locations where hyper-active college students run wild on sun-drenched beaches. Spring break in the United States usually starts in early March and can last until mid-April.

However, spring break vacations are not only for college students. There are many school districts, elementary through high school, that offer their students time off for a spring break thereby providing parents the opportunity to vacation with their families at warm-weather locations. Not wanting to be part of a raucous college crowd, many families opt for destinations other than Florida, Cancun or the Caribbean.

Families would be well advised to ditch the typical spring break crowds and discover a quiet escape along [North Carolina's Crystal Coast](#), where 85 miles of sun-drenched beaches, charming coastal communities and endless adventures await. The destination has something for families with youngsters of all ages whether it be elementary, middle or high school ages, delivering an unforgettable vacation with a mix of both adventurous and relaxing offerings.

These Crystal Coast attractions are well suited for families who desire to spend some quality time together during their spring break vacations.



The region is filled with scenic attractions for all ages. CRYSTAL COAST TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

## Elementary School

Kids can step into the world of pirates at [The North Carolina Maritime Museum](#), where artifacts from Blackbeard's Queen Anne's Revenge ship live. Here, kids can check out the remains of artifacts owned by one of the most feared pirates in history, telling the story of the infamous pirate's reign. At [Fort Macon State Park](#), families can travel back in time to explore a pre-Civil War fort, where they can wander through underground tunnels and witness live small-arms demonstrations, learning about the fort's history in an interactive way. Young children will be captivated by the [North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores](#), where fascinating exhibits highlight marine biology. They can marvel at the "Living Shipwreck" exhibit, featuring a life-sized replica of a German U-352 submarine and Blackbeard's infamous Queen Anne's Revenge, showcased through a stunning 60-foot viewing window. Meanwhile, the playful otters will steal the show as they effortlessly glide through the water.



Paddleboard through miles of pristine waterways. CRYSTAL COAST TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

## Middle School

The Crystal Coast is a great place to enjoy some two-wheeled fun. With dozens of bike paths and trails, there's no shortage of routes to explore. Kids can head to the beaches of Bogue Banks, which offer a whole new level of cycling with more than 20 miles of sand to conquer. Kayak or paddleboard through miles of waterways with Beaufort Paddle, Barrier Island Kayaks or Emerald Isle Paddle Tours. Here, families may spot an abundance of wildlife ranging from dolphins to migrating birds. At the Atlantic Beach Skatepark and Miniature Golf, kids can show off their tricks, cruising on ramps and rails in a safe and welcoming environment or put their skills to the test with some friendly competition in a game of mini golf where creative obstacles and challenges await.



The famous residents on Shackleford Banks are wild ponies. TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE VIA GETTY IMAGES

## High School

Older kids will enjoy time exploring the barrier islands of the Crystal Coast including [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#) and the [Shackleford Banks](#). On Cape Lookout, families can explore the area by UTV, zipping along sand roads and beaches to visit the famous Cape Lookout Lighthouse and its historic district. On Shackleford Banks, keep an eye out for the island's famed wild horses, which are descended from Spanish mustangs brought and abandoned by European settlers in the 1500s. The Crystal Coast is home to some of the most beautiful beaches on the East Coast, with the warm Caribbean waters making it ideal for spring travelers itching for that summer warmth. Whether teens want to soak up the sun on Atlantic Beach or enjoy the premier fishing of Emerald Isle, they're bound to enjoy the pristine waters of the Crystal Coast during their stay in the region.

## Places to Stay

The Crystal Coast offers a wide range of [accommodations](#), including stunning beachfront vacation rentals, affectionately known as sandcastles, where every child can have their own room in these spacious homes. From quaint bed and breakfasts, outstanding hotels, historic beachfront homes, to cozy cottages by the sea, guests can relax near the sand, complete with exceptional services and amenities.

## Dining

A wide variety of [restaurants](#) await the foodie. Feast on freshly caught seafood – there's none better – along the ocean's edge. The area's long history of fishing combined with North Carolina's rich culinary culture has created a landscape of restaurants with roots as deep as the waters



Bike enthusiasts enjoy the quite charm of North Carolina's Crystal Coast. CRYSTAL COAST TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

## Activities

From biking to beach fun, North Carolina's Crystal Coast offers a wide variety of activities far from the maddening crowds.