

The News & Observer

These NC beaches are some of the best in the country, new reports say

North Carolina's sandy shores are making national headlines again, with multiple beach towns earning spots on two recent lists of the best summer vacation destinations in the United States.

In its 2025 rankings of the [Best Summer Vacations in the USA](#), U.S. News & World Report placed the **Outer Banks** at No. 14, applauding the barrier islands' blend of [natural beauty and historical depth](#).

Best beaches in North Carolina

Here's how USA TODAY ranked the best beaches across the state:

1. [Atlantic Beach](#), located along the state's Crystal Coast, won praise for its family-friendly charm, scenic beauty and attractions like Town Park's 18-hole mini golf course.
4. [Indian Beach](#) offers quiet getaways with outdoor activities like kayaking and bird watching.
9. [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#) offers remote camping, shelling and wild horse sightings just off the coast.