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## Fall Is the Ideal Time to Visit These 8 Charming Small Towns in the U.S.

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*From Alaska to Arkansas, here's where to go for perfect fall vibes.*

Summer is far from over, and we're not wishing it away anytime soon. But if you're the type who likes to plan ahead—or perhaps you're tired of being hot and prefer sweater weather—this roundup is for you. One of our favorite ways to revel in the glories of autumn is by visiting a charming small town, one with a big festival calendar, cute B&Bs, independent shops and restaurants, and extraordinary access to the great outdoors. What follows are suggestions for eight small towns across the United States where you can eye fall foliage, visit a whiskey saloon, see rescue lions, and learn Viking cookery.



# Beaufort, North Carolina

This sleepy little pearl on the southern Outer Banks—not to be confused with the South Carolina city of the same name—is home to fewer than 4,600 people. It's the third-oldest town in North Carolina, on the Crystal Coast halfway between Virginia Beach and Myrtle Beach.

Here you can wander the crumbling tombstones in Beaufort's [oldest cemetery](#) or go seashell hunting at the 2,315-acre [Rachel Carson Coastal Estuarine Reserve](#), separated from downtown Beaufort by Taylor's Creek. There are two hiking trails within the reserve, but you can only walk the 1.1-mile Outer Loop trail at low tide; follow the markers from Town Marsh and look for piping plover, herons, and egrets. For food, the weekly [Olde Beaufort Farmers' Market](#), set up in front of the Carteret County Courthouse, runs through November 29.

To explore farther afield, the [Island Express Ferry Service](#) drops passengers off at the uninhabited [Shackleford Banks](#), the southernmost barrier island in [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#), known for its [wild horses](#) (more than 100 at last count). Although its interior is currently closed, the [Cape Lookout Light Station](#), with its unique black-and-white diamond-patterned exterior, is a popular photo op.

## Where to stay

### **Book now:** Pecan Tree Inn

A peaceful B&B with seven rooms in an 1866 house, the [Pecan Tree Inn](#) truly feels like a home. Each room is different—some have four-poster beds, others porches—but all have comfortable queen or king beds and ceiling fans. The included breakfast changes daily and can be enjoyed in the dining room, on the porch, or in the back garden. In the afternoons, expect a spread of treats, including house-made maple butter pecan cookies. The hotel is half a block from the boardwalk and yacht harbor, and it's directly across the street from two popular new American restaurants, [Beaufort Grocery](#) and [Blue Moon Bistro](#).