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ON THE ROAD

# A Tasty Trek on North Carolina's Crystal Coast | Listen

*Take a beautiful, culinary-inspired bike tour of North Carolina's Crystal Coast*

**N**orth Carolina's Southern Outer Banks—collectively known as the Crystal Coast—offers 85 miles of barrier island shoreline with historic port towns, low-key oceanfront communities, and thousands of acres of protected public lands. A breezy weekend bike tour along 26.5 miles of paved, mostly flat public greenways, boardwalks, and scenic streets lets you explore the area's startling wealth of natural beauty, architecture, restaurants, and beverage spots.



## DAY 1

Check in at the stylish, boutique [Beaufort Hotel](#) where you'll find spacious rooms with private balconies and views of undeveloped islands in the 2,300-acre [Rachel Carson Reserve](#) on Back Sound. Settle in with a craft brew or glass of wine on the waterfront porch at on-site [34 Degrees North](#) restaurant, then take a 2.3-mile evening pedal south to downtown Beaufort through historic neighborhoods brimming with coastal cottages, boat slips, and Victorian homes.

Enjoy soft seating on the cozy, multistory deck at [Rhumbar at Front Street Grill](#) overlooking Taylor's Creek and nearby marinas. Start with a Caribbean-hued cocktail, fresh-caught fried grouper bites with sweet pepper mayo, and a delightfully spicy housemade pimento cheese dip served with pickled okra and crispy lavash crackers. Take in the sunset with a magnificent entrée of sautéed, parmesan-crust local flounder served with seasonal veggies and lemon beurre blanc sauce.

Have a nightcap at [Backstreet Pub](#), a beloved local dive situated off a cobblestoned alleyway and housed in a brick building that dates back to 1870.

## DAY 2

Indulge in a crabcake benedict with country ham and a bloody mary (or two) from 34 Degrees North, then pedal along scenic Taylor's Creek—part of the Intracoastal Waterway—to the Beaufort Historic District. There you'll catch views of elegant, coastal, colonial-style homes from the late 18th and mid-19th centuries that mark the outgrowth of a humble fishing village established in 1709. Turn left onto US 70 just beyond town and pass over a series of islands, protected estuaries, marinas, and channels on the Newport River via the Beaufort and Morehead City high rise bridges.

Pass a complex of small industrial ports to enter the funky, revitalizing town of Morehead City. Take Fourth Street to Evans Street, then follow the sailboat-lined boardwalk—with views of Harbor Channel, protected Sugarloaf Island, and Money Island Bay—past a series of art sculptures honoring 200-plus years of marine history. Take the near-mile-long

Atlantic Beach Bridge over Bogue Sound, then head to the Atlantic Beach Boardwalk and Idle Hour Biergarten. Catch your breath and a North Carolina craft brew with a scrumptious, house-baked soft pretzel on the sandy, palm tree-lined outdoor patio.





## DAY 3

Kickstart your northward return at [Trading Post Southern Food & Spirits](#) with a spicy bloody mary and finger-lickin'-good fried chicken and Belgian waffles drizzled with bourbon-infused honey. Bask in the salt air en route to Atlantic Beach, then stop for lunch and ocean views from the wraparound porch at [Bahia Beach House & Surf Bar](#). A trio of appetizers—crispy crab croquettes, luscious burrata and heirloom tomato salad, and local-caught yellowfin tuna ceviche with pickled onions and lime avocado—washed down with a Hemingway-inspired daiquiri makes it easy to linger.

Recross the bridge then follow Arendell Street to Morehead City's [Arendell Room Bar](#), where veteran “bar chef” Denny Shrock mixes made-to-order artisan cocktails in a dark and moody 900-square-foot shotgun room. Continue to the Beaufort Hotel to spruce up then close out the trip with wine and French-inspired cuisine from chef Jayson Foster at [Beaufort's Blue Moon Bistro](#). The novel elk striploin with Carolina Gold rice, maple carrot puree, shiitake mushrooms, and haricot vert almondine is a dish meant for commemorating the journey.