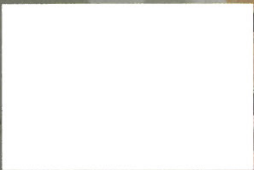


# ATLANTA HOMES & LIFESTYLES

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## COASTAL ADVENTURES

FROM FOREST TO SEASHORE, NAVIGATE ALONG NORTH CAROLINA'S PICTURESQUE SOUTHERN OUTER BANKS

WRITTEN BY *Tucker Berta*



SLIP ON YOUR BOAT SHOES—life is lived on and around the water along the Crystal Coast, North Carolina's Southern Outer Banks. By nature's design, a vacation here demands some form of seafaring, be it motor, paddle or flipper. Otherwise, the OBX lifestyle is far from demanding, and close enough to Atlanta for an easy, accessible getaway.

Outdoorsy types have plenty to explore from Atlantic Beach and Morehead City to Beaufort and Cape Lookout, including a national forest, national seashore and state park all in the same county. Fishermen especially love visiting in June, when the Big Rock Blue Marlin Tournament comes to town. But anglers can charter a boat or cast a line from the beach year-round, in hopes of hooking a story-worthy game fish.

For those who would rather swim next to the fishes, the Southern Outer Banks is known as the Graveyard of the Atlantic and a top (if not *the* top) dive destination in North America. The ocean floor



Every corner of the Crystal Coast reveals stunning vistas. Visitors to the area divide their time among activities including yachting, sea diving and kayaking in the enchanting waters or exploring the local scene via Hungry Town Bike Tours. Also not to be missed is a visit to Shackleford Banks for a glimpse of the wild horses (descendants from stallions brought by Spanish explorers).



is a scuba diver's dream, lined with the remnants of freighters, tankers and even a World War II German U-Boat sunk by the Coast Guard in 1942.

Get to know North Carolina's native woodland environment by paddling through the Croatan National Forest, the only true coastal forest on the east coast. Navigate the marshland trails with eyes peeled for a glimpse of white-tailed deer, wild turkey, black bears, otters or even alligators. Avian life is abundant, too, with ospreys, bald eagles and red-cockaded woodpeckers. There are public campsites and launching areas, but shops such as Hot Wax Surf are one-stops for renting any needed equipment, plus they offer guided tours and lessons.

Back on dry land, Beaufort offers abundant charm, with its Bahamian- and West Indies-style homes and public buildings. Navigate the 12-block historic district (which is on the National Register of Historic Places) either aboard a 1967 English double-decker bus with local narrators or on bicycle.

As you're making dinner arrangements, look for establishments that boast their participation in Carteret Catch, a fish-to-fork venture among local restaurants, retailers and the fishing industry guaranteeing fresh seasonal seafood caught by local fishermen off the Carolina Coast.



### *stay*

Rent a simple cottage or sprawling oceanfront estate via Emerald Isle Realty; [emeraldisle.com](http://emeraldisle.com). Prefer the charm of an inn? Consider Cedars by the Sea on Front Street in the heart of Beaufort; [cedarsinn.com](http://cedarsinn.com).

### *fly direct*

There are direct flights from Atlanta to EWN, the Coastal Carolina Regional Airport in New Bern.

### *visit*

[Crystalcoastnc.org](http://Crystalcoastnc.org) for a full list of resources, from sportfishing and cocktail cruise charters to dive shops and pet boarding.