

# Forbes

## Black Beard's Ghost Haunts North Carolina's Remote Outer Banks

If your goal in life is to swagger through the world like Captain Jack Sparrow, you must hoist your jolly roger and head to North Carolina's Outer, Outer Banks where the island of Ocracoke and the charming colonial era towns of Beaufort, Bath, Washington and Greenville are celebrating the region's connection with Blackbeard the famous pirate who some say hails from this part of the world.



Three hundred years ago, Edward Teach, better known as Black Beard, the Pirate, ran his flagship aground off the North Carolina coast. Within months he was dead, shot and slashed in an ambush off Ocracoke Inlet.

Author and Black Beard expert, Kevin P. Duffus, ([The Last Days of Black Beard the Pirate](#)), believes that evidence points to the man called Edward Teach being a local landowner's son, whose pillaging (with a hearty band of locals behind him, including a slave named Caesar) was more about economic survival in a British controlled colony than mayhem and murder.



In October 2018, this sand-duned, windswept coast including the island of Ocracoke and the town of Bath, celebrates its 300th anniversary as the land of pirates.

Travelers who love a good tale told well don't have to go exactly on the anniversary as pirate goings-on, go on all the time here.

Travel-like-a-pirate journeys can start in the town of Beaufort, a charming waterfront colonial town where Hungry Town Tours will take you on a walking tour of this quiet and quaint town that once played host to Black Beard and his crew.



Dine at [La Perla](#), a Spanish-inspired restaurant in the Cedar's Inn by candlelight in hurricane lamps and you'll start warming to the feel of old time North Carolina.

[Beaufort's North Carolina Maritime Museum](#) will start you off on your Black Beard pilgrimage with artifacts taken from the wreck of the Queen Anne's Revenge and other maritime oddities that would make Herman Melville's Moby Dick-sized heart pound (the massive, dessicated whale's heart is a major attraction here).

Then head to [Ocracoke Island](#)--the heart of Black Beard Country (and site of a major [Black Beard Festival in October 2018](#)). You get there by the North Carolina Ferry system that is honoring the legend by flying Edward Teach's supposed pirate flag in 2018. There are three ferry routes (some closed in the off season) but none take longer than two hours and some change).

Ocracoke feels charmed and isolated and in former times, its position and inaccessibility gave rise to numerous legends of ghosts and local dastardly doings that can be heard on a local ghost tour. Amy Howard is a local craftsperson who does ghost tours that will make your hair stand on end (ask her to tell you the one about the hotel and its murdered landlady). Some of the tales are from the not so distant past and Howard (who like many on the island is a descendent of original settlers) will tell all the dark secrets--some of which sound like they came from the latest version of American Horror Story. You can find Howard and book a tour at [The Village Craftsman](#) in town (where you can also buy some of Amy's handcrafted brass jewelry).



Walk Ocracoke's windblown, sandy beaches and then head for a good night's sleep at Black Beard's Lodge, one of the island's oldest B & B's, run by Chip Stevens, the descendant of Blackbeard's quartermaster, William Howard. A statue of Blackbeard commemorates his namesake in the hotel lobby.

Then head out to dinner at The Back Porch, almost hidden on a country road, but very much known to locals as the place for seafood and great wines on the island. You'll find all manner of island celebrities, artists, artisans and raconteurs filling this place with a hearty but congenially loud hubbub that seems very much in keeping with the Ocracoke tradition of loving a good tale well told (as well as a pint or a glass of wine well-sipped).

Before you leave the island make sure you walk through the woods at Springer's Point Nature Reserve, where Black Beard's crew most likely hung out and kept watch for local authorities.

A short ferry ride away the towns of Bath, Greenville and Washington all have connections with the Black Beard tale. Greenville is the site of the conservation study of the Queen Anne's Revenge where you can see a real life pirate anchor encrusted with three centuries of sea life in a special conservation tank. The study is being carried on by East Carolina's West Research Campus.



Bath itself is a charming town that is said to have been the last town where Edward Teach lived before being ambushed by the authorities. It's also the town where Edna Ferber got the idea for the book *Show Boat* (that became the musical) because of the local show boats that moored here.

Ferber was said to have claimed that she felt she found a diamond mine when she stumbled upon Bath and its showboat history. Pirate lovers and lovers of great stories of all kinds will feel the same when traveling through this region of North Carolina's coast.

It may get a big more crowded on pirate anniversaries like the 300th celebration of Black Beard but the feeling of being somewhere out of time and beyond the everyday reaches of reality that Shakespeare may have written about when he wrote *The Tempest* is strong here:

*Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,*

*Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.*

You can say the same of the tales and trails of pirates long ago.