



7 Top-Rated Romantic Getaways in North Carolina

1. Crystal Coast



Carteret County is home to North Carolina's southern Outer Banks as well as its vacation gem the Crystal Coast. Well south of their more frequented siblings, Cape Hatteras and Ocracoke Island, the coastal communities of Emerald Isle, Indian Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, Beaufort, Morehead City, and Atlantic Beach offer couples small-town appeal with big outdoor adventures and plenty of opportunities for romance.

Cape Lookout National Seashore, a 56-mile nature preserve and national park, is a great spot for a picnic. Ferries or charters from the **Harkers Island Visitor Center** take you on the 30-minute ride across Bogue Sound. You skirt right by the famed **Shackleford Banks**, a remote wilderness area that is home to the wild Banker horses. These beautiful creatures have roamed the island for more than 100 years. Upon arrival at the Cape, climb the **Cape Lookout Lighthouse**. The historic "Diamond Lady" is one of the most picturesque in all North Carolina and affords 360-degree views of the reserve.

The oak-lined streets of historic **Beaufort** are wonderful for leisurely strolls. Beaufort, the third oldest town in North Carolina and 12th oldest in the nation, was the setting for romance novelist and New York Times best-selling author Nicholas Sparks' romantic novel *The Choice*. The Ride to Remember bike tour with Hungry Town Tours, is a special tour inspired by the book. You'll pedal past crab boats and yachts at the historic marina and past the romantic waterside gazebo. At the **Fudge Factory** on Front Street, you can slay your sweet tooth with some tasty chocolatey treats.

Overnighting at the Beaufort's historic Pecan Tree Inn delivers a quintessential southern experience. Built into a former Masonic Lodge, the Victorian-flavored bed-and-breakfast has a breezy wraparound porch and immaculate English-style garden - not to mention award-winning breakfast fare.