

5 North Carolina Beach Towns to Visit in the Off-Season (and Why You Should)

Beaufort



Located on the Crystal Coast, Beaufort is one of North Carolina's oldest towns, and one of the most charming. The town is swirled with colonial-era lore, and about two decades ago one of Blackbeard's most dreaded vessels, the Queen Anne, was discovered in the Beaufort Harbor. Delve deeper into the area's colorful coastal history at the North Carolina Maritime Museum or get a whole other perspective of the town on the Beaufort Ghost Walk. Explore Beaufort's delights by bike with Hungry Town Tours, which offers trips showcasing the town's culinary and historical highlights.

While Beaufort is laden with creature comforts like craft beer and elegant cuisine, the town provides an ideal base for exploring one of North Carolina's wildest stretches of coast, the Cape Lookout National Seashore. The pristine string of barrier islands is about 3 miles offshore. If conditions are too gnarly to make the trip to Cape Lookout, stick closer to town and head for Fort Macon State Park. The formidable stronghold was once tasked with protecting Beaufort from marauding pirates, and the historical site is also laced with hiking trails, which are virtually empty in winter.