

Talk of the Town

A Gentlemen's Guide

RUBIK'S CUBE

DID YOU KNOW THAT IT JUST
TURNED THE BIG 4-0?

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LOOK RIGHT ON HOT NIGHTS

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GLORIOUS FOOD
OUR GUIDE TO SUMMER EATING



North Carolina's Crystal Coast

A long, beautiful coastline packed with culture, history and adventure

Summer wouldn't be summer without vacation. It's funny how as soon as the weather gets beautiful, our first inclination is to leave home for at least a week. Of course, when choosing

your summer destination the options are truly limitless. You can go on a cruise, if you enjoy being locked on a ship with that one sick guy who gets everyone else sick. Maybe you'll want to voyage to an island, though the idea of an island is much more appealing during the frigid cold of winter.

However, there's one option right here on the East Coast that isn't that long of a trek, but still feels like a whole different world. In the summer of 2014, there's no better place to go than North Carolina's Crystal Coast, located on the Southern Outer Banks.

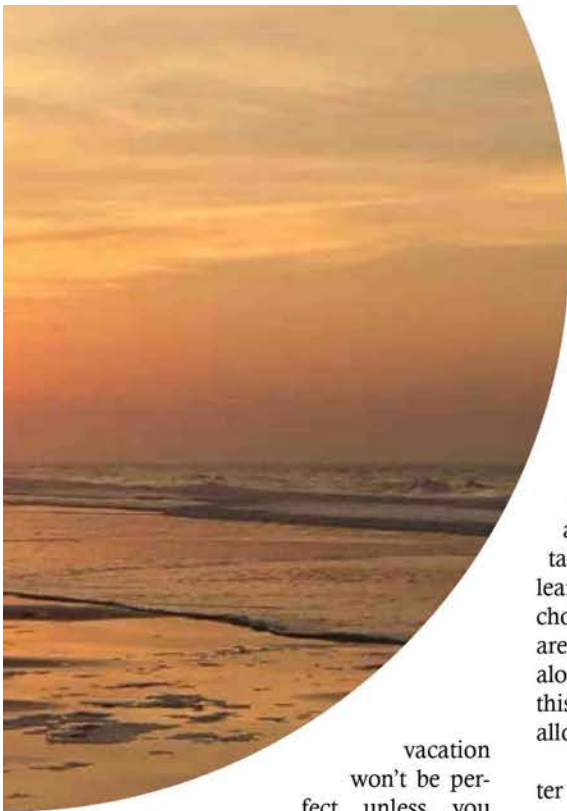
Much like Jersey's Long Beach Island, North Carolina's Outer Banks is a long strip of slender islands separated

from the mainland. What most likely started as a perfect natural defense barrier between the rest of North Carolina and the Atlantic, the Outer Banks has blossomed into a quiet and quaint, yet thriving vacation spot for North Carolinians and others.

After a short flight from Newark Liberty International to Charlotte Douglas Airport, you board a small puddle jumper that takes you to Coastal Carolina Regional Airport. This airport only has two gates, and it is so small that upon entering the building, you can immediately see through to the tarmac and the aircraft that awaits you. Before ever feeling the ivory sands of the Crystal Coast, this airport sets the tone for a stress-free and easygoing vacation.

There is no shortage of smaller hotels, motels, and inns sprinkled along the Crystal Coast. However, your





vacation won't be perfect unless you rent out one of the many available beach cottages that can sleep anywhere from 4 to 16 of your closest friends and family members. With hundreds of available rental properties in its portfolio, Bluewater Vacation Rentals is the go-to for finding the perfect accommodations for you and your family and friends. Offering long-term rentals as well as many other options, Bluewater has properties suited for any need.

If you're the more adventurous type, there are lots of great places to go camping on the Crystal Coast, but we will get to that a bit later.

Almost every cottage on the Crystal Coast looks like it was built or renovated within the past 10 years. Each of them is similar to the new houses we see springing up along the Jersey Shore. Typically, they are three levels with open floor plans that accommodate large seating areas. Bedrooms are generally off to the sides, with the top floor usually home to the master bedroom, and if nothing else, the highest views of the Atlantic.

Many of these weekly rentals also have balconies wherever possible; almost every bedroom has some sort of open-air access. The bottom floor usually exits out to the backyard pa-

tio, where you will also find pools and hot tubs. Of course, there is a stairway leading you directly to the crisp Atlantic waters.

If you wish to do more than just sit on a beach all day, there is no shortage of adventurous activities that showcase the Crystal Coast's beauty. You can rent kayaks and paddleboards just about anywhere. Many of the Crystal Coast's small inlets are perfect for learning how to navigate your craft of choice. These perfect little freshwater areas are calm enough for you to bring along a six-pack or a cigar. Disclaimer: this is probably frowned upon (and not allowed).

If you like to fish, you can charter a boat for the day. Sail out with your buds, family, or just some other fishing enthusiasts, and do whatever kind of fishing you desire with knowledgeable captains that make you feel like you're in Amityville—minus the giant man-eating shark.

The North Carolina Aquarium is the perfect place for the family to get its feet wet while staying on land. With many different exhibits and learning centers, it's a perfect way to learn more about where you're vacationing on a rainy day.

Of course, you can't visit the Crystal Coast without a visit to the Cape Lookout Lighthouse. After a short ferry ride that showcases views of some of our country's only wild horses, and some 207 steps later, you're atop one of the nation's 150-year-old lighthouses. Regardless of the blustering winds, being in it can be quite scary. It simply feels haunted.

An interesting side note: The ferries run on a very specific timetable, so if you miss the last one, you'll find yourself camping out on the beautiful shores. Another side note: If you want to actually plan on camping there, you can do that as well. The ferry captain will drop you off on a secluded island where it's just you and the Spanish horses galloping through the surf. Just let the captain know how many nights of isolated fun you wish to enjoy, and he'll come pick you up at the scheduled time—maybe.

Your rental will most likely come with a huge, well-equipped kitchen, but there is no need for you to cook ev-





ery meal. With fresh catches delivered daily to many of the local restaurants, there are several places you must try while enjoying your relaxing Crystal Coast vacation.

For starters, the Hungry Town Bike Tour is a must. Mount your cruiser, and take a ride through Beaufort, one of America's coolest small towns. Hungry? The trip makes several stops at local restaurants and you get a little taste of each, as well as a refreshing beer or glass of wine. Beaufort is the epitome of charm. You'll stroll through houses older than America itself, many of which are adorned with

plaques commemorating the house's original owners.

After you've finished seeing Beaufort, head over to Fort Macon State Park. Built in 1826, the fort was a part of many of America's earliest battles, including the Civil War. Back in 1862, the Union Army captured the fort and eventually went on to crush the Confederate Army in all facets of the war. For you history buffs out there, this is a must-visit.

Let's get back to the food. Before you leave the Crystal Coast, you need to dine at Amos Mosquito's and Circa 81. Each restaurant has a completely

different vibe, but they are both places that are genuinely excited about their opportunity to serve you delicious food. Arendell Room is a great place to head to for a post-dinner cocktail. The mixologists there have the same eye for detail as anyone in Brooklyn or Manhattan. Bring your guests out in a party bus one night, and you're sure to have the worry-free time of your life.

So, this summer, forget the fist-pumping clowns of the Jersey Shore and the unbearable humidity of Florida, and bask in the serene beauty along North Carolina's gorgeous barrier islands.