

## Beaufort, North Carolina - the coolest small town in the U.S.!



Beaufort, North Carolina sunset

Recently CNN Travel's Best in America Award for the coolest small town in the USA was **Beaufort, N.C.**, a wonderful, compelling handle for a town of just over 4,000 people. One may well ask why? What makes Beaufort so cool? For starters, to receive this award, a town must embody both hipness *and* a good share of down-home humbleness. It should have a lively arts scene, unique local history and it helps to be an especially lovely destination. Bingo! Beaufort has it all. The town was established in 1709, is the third oldest town in the state, and is home to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Duke University Marine Laboratory, and the Rachel Carson Coastal Reserve. It nestles safely among the state's

southern Outer Banks and its surrounding coves and waters enable carefree navigation by ship and boat to any destination in the area.

At Cape Lookout National Seashore, you will find the very best shelling beaches in the state. Also at the Cape Lookout Lighthouse you can climb to the top for a spectacular view. One hundred twenty wild horses roam here, with a history that dates back nearly 400 years. Believed to be the descendants of Spanish Mustangs brought to the continent by conquistadors, these horses are a marvel of the world of wildlife and are unique to the region. You'll experience an abundance of birds and wildlife that, along with the horses, make the reserve a popular spot for bird watching and wildlife photography. Finally, to simply walk this completely private stretch of beach and listen to the sounds of the wind and the waves is a simple and authentic North Carolina treat.

Our own national seashore at Fire Island, NY protects a 26-mile section of an approximately 30-mile long barrier island separated from Long Island by the Great South Bay. You'll find high dunes, deep forests, and wildlife in this special place, with diverse plants, animals and, of course, people. It seems unbelievably far from the pressures of the big city but in fact it's just a little over an hour away. Fire Island offers a true spiritual renewal to the world-weary.

Nicholas Sparks makes his home in North Carolina, and frequently chooses it as the setting for one of his many novels. His latest book-to-movie adaptation is "The Choice." Don't miss it! The town is the inspiration for the movie's story; thus, your chance to get a feel for "America's Favorite Town" – Beaufort, the gem of North Carolina's Crystal Coast. Beaufort information: 252-726-6350.