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CULTURE

25 Most Popular Beach Towns in America

BY TOM FISH ON 4/15/21 AT 7:00 AM EDT

Mega Pod Of Common Dolphins Seen Off California Coast
01:12

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CULTURE HOLIDAYS FLORIDA

Life's a beach for those lucky enough to live close to sun themselves on golden sands or swim in cobalt-blue waters.

While many U.S. beaches are considered world-class, their nearby towns have become holiday hubs in their own right.

Stretching from coast to coast, these beach towns cater to every conceivable taste, from quaint coastal communities for culture vultures, to action-packed subtropical climes for adrenaline junkies.

Anna Maria Island, Florida

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Beautiful sunny day in Anna Maria Island, Florida. This This barrier island on Florida's Gulf Coast.
JAVIER_ART_PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

This barrier island on Florida's Gulf Coast is quaint, uncrowded and uncluttered, presenting excellent opportunities for soaking up some sun in space.

Visitors to Anna Maria Island can shop at one of the state's largest discount malls, sample fresh Florida seafood prepared with local flair and relax in local parks and preserves where the wildlife-viewing is unparalleled.

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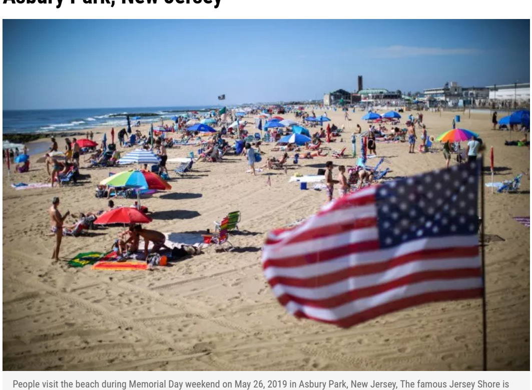
Asbury Park, New Jersey



People visit the beach during Memorial Day weekend on May 26, 2019 in Asbury Park, New Jersey. The famous Jersey Shore is lined with sandy beaches
KENA BETANCUR/GETTY IMAGES

The famous Jersey Shore is lined with sandy beaches and quiet towns, such as the small seaside community Asbury Park.

But there is more to the town than its Instagram-able beachside, as Asbury Park also boasts a vibrant art and music scene and an assortment of independent boutique shops.

Cannon Beach, Oregon

Sand drawing artist and avant-garde chef Jim Denevan works on an early morning drawing in Canon Beach, Oregon. Tourists have the opportunity to spot tufted puffins on Haystack Rock jutting out of the ocean
BRENT STIRTON/GETTY IMAGES

Cannon Beach is the picture-perfect coastal city, perhaps best known for its long and pristine sandy shore.

Tourists have the opportunity to spot tufted puffins on Haystack Rock jutting out of the ocean, while the headland to the north presents romantic views of small coves and the local lighthouse.

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Carmel-by-the-Sea, California

The rocky coastline at Point Lobos State Natural Reserve in Carmel, California, The state's rich, anything-goes culture is best embodied by Carmel-by-the-Sea's community
MICHAELJUST/GETTY IMAGES

Carmel-by-the-Sea is the quaint beach city on California's Monterey Peninsula known for its Point Lobos Natural Reserve, majestic views of the coast and—further inland—redwood forest.

California's rich, anything-goes culture is perhaps best embodied by Carmel-by-the-Sea's community famed for showcasing its rich artistic heritage.

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Chincoteague, Virginia

This shot captures the relaxing serenity found in Chincoteague, Va. Chincoteague has long been known as a mecca for nature lovers
SACRED SHOTS/GETTY IMAGES

With a pair of nationally protected areas close by, Chincoteague has long been known as a mecca for nature lovers.

The 14,000 acres of Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge offers superb opportunities for birdwatching and fishing while the nearby Assateague Island National Seashore is home to herds of wild horses.

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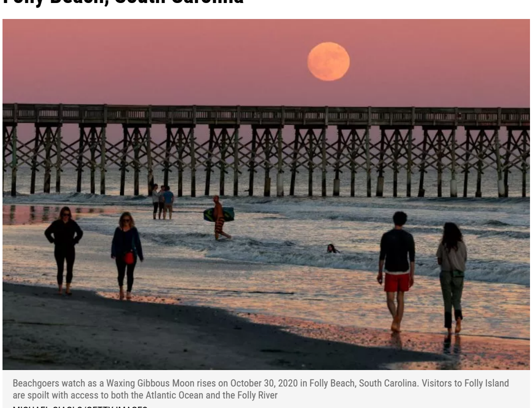
Folly Beach, South Carolina



Beachgoers watch as a Waxing Gibbous Moon rises on October 30, 2020 in Folly Beach, South Carolina. Visitors to Folly Island are spoilt with access to both the Atlantic Ocean and the Folly River
MICHAEL CIAGLO/GETTY IMAGES

Visitors to Folly Island are spoilt with access to both the Atlantic Ocean and the Folly River.

The intersection of the two waterways created six miles of broad beaches around the island's perimeter, allowing tourists the opportunity to surf, fish and explore the 1km-long Folly Beach Pier.

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Gulf Shores, Alabama

Festivalgoers sit in the ocean at the 2017 Hangout Music Festival in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The state's 30 miles perfect beaches on the Gulf of Mexico are an ideal scene for holidaymakers
MATT COWAN/GETTY IMAGES

Alabama's 30 miles perfect beaches on the Gulf of Mexico are an ideal scene for holidaymakers.

And in addition to the area's wide white sandy beaches, the Gulf Shores are a short hop to New Orleans, Atlanta and Nashville, making these towns an excellent addition to a regional tour.

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Haleiwa, Oahu, Hawaii

Haleiwa is widely recognised as the social and artistic hub of the North Shore
MIA VON STEINKIRCH/GETTY IMAGES

Packed with Hawaiian history, Haleiwa is widely recognised as the social and artistic hub of the North Shore.

And no trip to Hawaii's laid-back North Shore is complete without an ice shave at Matsumoto or a bite at one of Haleiwa's famous shrimp trucks.

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Lewes, Delaware

View of downtown Lewes Deleware from bridge with canal. Locals claim the area is among the most beautiful in the entire state
DANA DAGLE PHOTOGRAPHY/GETTY IMAGES

Lewes is found where the Delaware Bay and Atlantic Ocean meet at Cape Henlopen and locals claim the area is among the most beautiful in the entire state.

This pedestrian-friendly town features a small historic district, and an easy-going atmosphere certainly suitable for those eager to avoid the hustle and bustle of busier beach towns.

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Matlacha, Florida

Aerial drone photo of Matlacha residential island, Matlacha. A select few consider Matlacha paradise
FELIXMIZIOZNIKOV/GETTY IMAGES

Despite—or perhaps because—Matlacha lacks the pulling-power of other Florida beach towns, a select few consider this place paradise.

Pretty pastel-hued homes and galleries mingle with fishing boats and nature lovers, lending Matlacha plenty of charm for those who love waterfront living.

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Nags Head, North Carolina

Beach cottages at Nags Head in the outer banks. Stretching almost the entire length of the coast of North Carolina is a string of beach communities and untouched natural landscape
MEINZAHN/GETTY IMAGES

Stretching almost the entire length of the coast of North Carolina is a string of beach communities and untouched natural landscapes known as the Outer Banks.

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Naps Head is a particularly popular vacation spot due to the town's beaches and the attractive sand dunes of Jockey's Ridge.

Narragansett, Rhode Island

Sunset over the Gilbert's Fall Bridge, commonly known as the Newport Bridge, Route Island is flanked by hundreds of miles of coastline filled with cultural richness and natural beauty

THE LIGHTHOUSE/GETTY IMAGES

Despite being America's smallest state, Rhode Island is framed by hundreds of miles of coastline filled with cultural richness and natural beauty.

Visitors to Narragansett can expect to discover some of the area's best surfing, while the nearby Newport is known as the sailing capital of the world.

Ocean Springs, Mississippi

Aerial View of Ocean Springs Harbor from Hospital Hill, Ocean Springs, Mississippi, Gulf Coast, Mississippi, United States of America, North America

DAVID/GRAVITY/GETTY IMAGES

The charming town of Ocean Springs, with many shops and restaurants dotting the tree-lined streets, is a great place for a relaxing visit along the Mississippi coast.

And in addition, the Riviera of the South is within easy reach, meaning visitors can mix dolphin watching with maritime history.

Ocean City, Maryland

Aerial view of Ocean City, Maryland, USA

Aerial view of Ocean City, Maryland. Ocean City, MD is one of the most popular beach resorts on the East Coast and is known for its long boardwalk and its beaches.

ANYKEYSTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

Ocean City presents a compelling case for being the quintessential American beach town.

The locale boasts a modern boardwalk, a beach offering a wide range of exciting activities and an enviable reputation for some of the best martin fishing in the U.S.

Ogunquit, Maine

Aerial view of Ogunquit Beach, Ogunquit, Maine, United States of America, North America

BOB THOMAS/CORBIS/GETTY IMAGES

A former turn-of-the-century artists' colony, the sleepy beach town of Ogunquit is a place where wildflowers bloom along the coast.

The village is packed with cottages and old clapboard buildings sitting beside the sea, offering views of meandering sailboats and the lighthouse.

FIFTEEN ▼

Old Saybrook, Connecticut

Lynde Point Lighthouse, Old Saybrook, Connecticut. This covered bridge has a wealth of historical and cultural sites to offer

LUCIO PINTO/GETTY IMAGES

Old Saybrook was settled in 1635, making this site where the Connecticut River meets Long Island Sound one of Connecticut's oldest towns.

And found only an hour and a half from New York City, this coastal town has a wealth of historical and cultural sites to offer against the bucolic backdrop of a peaceful marina.

Paia, Maui, Hawaii

Hawaiian landscape and palm tree at Hookipa beach in Paia Maui. The tiny town is one of Paia's quirky, heavy, hippie, surfer, artistic and environmentally conscious vibe.

FRANCIS JALICHANDRA/GETTY IMAGES

The historic town of Paia offers quirky shops heavily influenced by hippies and surfers.

The beach town is also the perfect place to explore Maui, the Hawaiian island associated with gorgeous beaches, some of the world's most beautiful golf courses and awe-inspiring waterfalls.

Rehoboth, Delaware

Aerial view of people on Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Rehoboth Beach is the town's popular outdoor spot for generations

CHERISH BANNAN/GETTY IMAGES

Long a little outside the mouth of the Delaware Bay on the Atlantic Ocean's shore, Rehoboth Beach has been a popular vacation spot for generations.

A particular highlight is Rehoboth Beach's boardwalk, a hub of activity named in the Top 10 boardwalks in the U.S. by National Geographic.

Rincón, Puerto Rico

Aerial View of Surfers Enjoying Perfect Waves, Rincón, Puerto Rico. Rincón is a popular surfing destination in Puerto Rico's Western Coast

FRANCISCO ALVARADO/

Found in the Porta del Sol region of western Puerto Rico, Rincón has been a mecca for surfers ever since the 1968 World Surfing Championships put it on the map.

Domes, Indicators, Spanish Wall and Dogman's are among the beaches where tourists can watch in awe as surfers crest seven-meter swells in winter.

Santa Barbara, California

Aerial view the open water beach resort town the coastal city of Santa Barbara Beach in May 1 2009 in Montecito, on south of Santa Barbara, California

DAVID MCNEW/GETTY IMAGES

Situated between the Santa Ynez Mountains and the Pacific Ocean on the Central Coast of California, Santa Barbara presents sweeping ocean panoramas paired with Spanish-style architecture less than 100 miles from LA.

Peaks of red tile roofs punctuate the landscape of lush green rolling hills that sweep down into stunning sandy beaches and a working harbor.

Saugatuck and Douglas, Michigan

Perched upon the eastern shore of Lake Michigan in a blacktop of stunning natural beauty, Saugatuck and the immediate adjacent Douglas are towns rich in both character and culture.

Saugatuck and Douglas are therefore ideal destinations for those looking for a beach town offering both adventure and relaxation.

Shi Shi Beach, Washington

Sunset View of Tide Pools Washington Coast, Sitka's Shi Shi Beach, Near Neah Bay Washington

ERIC_NATE/FLICKRRS

Ignoring the fact Shi Shi Beach is located within Olympic State Park instead of a beach town, this public shore practically becomes its own city with the number of visitors attracted by some of the best ocean views in the U.S.

Tybee Island, Georgia

Sunset Beach Scene With the Lighthouse at Dusk, Tybee Island is a coastal escape featuring sandy beaches, a lighthouse and Georgia's oldest and tallest lighthouse.

BEN PIERCE/GETTY IMAGES

Tybee Island is a coastal escape featuring sandy beaches, a fishing pier and Georgia's oldest and tallest lighthouse.

This tiny attractive island also boasts a laid-back vibe and the Fort Pulaski Civil War monument that can be explored on bike or foot.

Virginia Beach, Virginia

Only hours from Washington D.C., Virginia Beach is a quintessential coastal city.

The area includes three diverse beaches, a pair of state parks, excellent eateries and a wide variety of east coast culture and nature.

Wellfleet and Provincetown, Massachusetts

Lighthouse and Ocean View Landscape in Wellfleet Beach on Wellfleet, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA, Wellfleet and Provincetown offer excellent scenery and beautiful beaches

THE IMAGE BANK/GETTY IMAGES

Wellfleet and Provincetown offer excellent access to Cape Cod, a breezy peninsula jutting out like a curved arm into the Atlantic Ocean.

This bucolic stretch of Massachusetts coast has remained almost untouched by the development that has transformed the Cape into one of the busiest summer beach destinations in New England.

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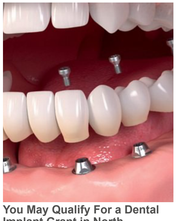

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Bodycam footage released on Thursday shows a police officer in Chicago shooting the 13-year-old boy.

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Bodycam footage released on Thursday shows a police officer in Chicago shooting the 13-year-old boy.

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