



## SIZZLING STORY IDEAS

### ***African American History & Gullah Geechee Culture***

Myrtle Beach is filled with rich, fascinating African American and Gullah Geechee history. The Gullah Geechee people are the descendants of slaves who live in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina and Georgia, which includes both the coastal plain and the Sea Islands. Visitors are able to explore museums, farms, plantations, shops and exhibitions dedicated to educating the public about these historic cultures. Individuals can become acquainted with the cherished music, food and storytelling to learn about the unfamiliar Gullah society that continues to live on, as well as observe recreated lives on farms. There are numerous tours and exhibitions that illustrate the different lifestyles of the two meaningful cultures.

### ***Arts and Culture***

The Myrtle Beach area has a strong and thriving arts and culture scene, from the craftsmanship of glass blowing in Conway to the stately rice plantations with endless stories to tell. Myrtle Beach is redolent of its heritage, and, with Southern Hospitality in mind, welcomes visitors to indulge in its local customs. Consider stopping by the Myrtle Beach Art Museum – which is always free to the public – for its latest traveling exhibition and regular exhibits, Brookgreen Gardens for its impeccable outdoor sculptures and unrivaled gardens, Hopsewee Plantation for a glimpse into historic life, or L.W. Paul Living History Farm for a look at 18<sup>th</sup> century farm life, to name just a few.

### ***Autism-Friendly Myrtle Beach***

Travel can be trying and difficult for families with a child with Autism, resulting in many forgoing the all-important family vacation to keep with their home-life routine. Known as America's Beach, the Myrtle Beach area recognized an opportunity to make simple changes to create a more welcoming and friendly environment for children with autism and their families. Advocated for by local resident Becky Large of the Champion Autism Network (CAN), the town of Surfside Beach became the first Autism-friendly city in the country. From accommodations to attractions to restaurants, dozens of local businesses and organizations now offer discounts, special treatment or even training for their staff to make a vacation more enjoyable (and possible) for these deserving families. Just a few of the noteworthy participants include the Myrtle Beach International Airport, which boasts a private and calming "Quiet Room" outside of baggage claim; the Myrtle Beach Speedway, which offers a first-of-its-kind sensory-friendly suite at the NASCAR track; specially designed surfing lessons offered from Island Inspired Board Company and Adaptive Surf Project; and a new \$3.2-million ADA-approved playground in Myrtle Beach with special attractions for children with disabilities and processing disorders.

### ***Carolina Coastal Cuisine***

Throughout the last decade a culinary revival has been flourishing throughout the Myrtle Beach area with local chefs altering traditional Lowcountry dishes to add a more modern flare. This "Carolina Coastal Cuisine" prides itself in using locally sourced seafood and farm-to-table ingredients. As renowned and award-winning chefs move to the area, popular restaurants are emerging and incorporating beloved cuisine from the Carolinas as well as flavors from around the world to create a memorable and unique dining experience. While restaurants up and down the Myrtle Beach area prepare this cuisine, one of the most interesting spots to experience it is Murrells Inlet, seafood capital of South Carolina, 25 minutes' drive south of central Myrtle Beach. Murrells Inlet is in the heart of the Lowcountry and used to be visited by the infamous pirate Blackbeard. A boardwalk aptly called The Marshwalk winds through the wetlands, offering stunning vistas and glimpses of wildlife and waterfowl. Consider stopping by area restaurants such as Wicked Tuna (for an incredible view of the Marshwalk), Aspen Grille (fine-dining experience), Thoroughbreds Chophouse & Seafood Grille (located in Myrtle Beach), and The Chemist (artfully prepared cuisine with a fun twist).

### ***Craft Scene***

Libations in the Myrtle Beach area are anything but ordinary, from artfully prepared cocktails to small batch brews to distinct Carolina wines. Countless area restaurants serve up expertly prepared drinks, such as The Chemist, which creates imaginative concoctions using dry ice and other fun ingredients. Other restaurants, like American Tap House and Parson's Table, for example, offer an impressive selection of locally sourced beers and world-renowned wines. Another local favorite, New South Brewery, offers free guided tours and tastings of its flight of craft beers. Or, if wine is more your speed, try local favorite La Belle Amie Vineyard in Little River or newcomer Duplin Winery.

### ***The Great Outdoors***

The Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, area is home to some of the most bountiful natural beauty in the United States; add its temperate climate and you've got a recipe for outdoor attractions that are easily enjoyed by visitors year-round. From bird watching in the state parks, to strolling through Brookgreen Gardens or the Murrells Inlet Marshwalk, there is much to discover and appreciate. Make sure to stop by one of the great parks in the area, such as Huntington Beach State Park (the prime spot for birding enthusiasts) or the Myrtle Beach State Park (excellent crabbing along the secluded ocean pier).

### ***Roads Less Traveled***

Visitors seeking a change of pace from a traditional beach vacation need look no further than the Myrtle Beach area. Try visiting one of the lush, undiscovered vineyards in Conway to get a taste of true South Carolina wine or take a helicopter flight over the gorgeous Carolina coast and treat yourself to a whole new definition of "ocean-view." The Myrtle Beach area is comprised of 12 distinct communities all of which offer a variety of off-the-beaten path attractions and activities, making every visit like the first time.

### ***Wedding and Honeymooners Paradise***

Myrtle Beach is becoming one of the most popular destination wedding and honeymoon locations in the United States. The Grand Strand has much to offer for the perspective couple, from the breathtaking Pawleys Island Chapel to the historic Litchfield Plantation, the sandy shores of a public beach to the luxurious Grande Dunes. Whether the wedding has traditional, historical or a contemporary flair, there's an appropriate venue for everyone's dreams.

### ***Wellness Travel***

According to the Global Wellness Summit, wellness travel is growing 50 percent faster than travel as a whole, and these visitors spend 130 percent more on vacations than the average traveler. What they're looking for varies, from fitness and adventure, to mental wellness and relaxation. The beautiful Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina offers hundreds of experiences and attractions geared to impress the discerning wellness traveler. In 2017, during the area's gorgeous first 60 Days of fall – when temperatures are still summer warm, ocean waters are even more inviting, area attractions gain more elbow room, and the area becomes even more affordable – the 60 miles or 96 kilometers of coastline that encompass the Myrtle Beach area will come alive with these wellness experiences, many created especially for the fall traveler. Visitors can indulge in varied outdoor fitness experiences in state parks and adventure attractions; relaxing spa experiences at local hotels and establishments; health-focused sea-to-table and farm-to-table dining; thrilling adventure and water sports activities; and of course the many health benefits of travel in general, especially alongside loved ones. These experiences – available year round in the Myrtle Beach area – will accompany a series of in-market activations, complimentary fitness classes and impressive travel discounts that are only available during the 60 Days of the fall season.

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