

Fun and games: Sports abound in South Carolina's popular Myrtle Beach area

If deciding where to go on a vacation is an annual dilemma, Myrtle Beach is sure to fulfill the desires of every active family member's varying ages and personalities. Though long referred to as the "seaside golf capital of the world," the Myrtle Beach area has a new moniker -- Sportstown USA -- thanks to Sports Illustrated magazine and the National Recreation and Park Association. Offering hundreds of thrilling options, such as zooming around a racetrack, hitting a golf ball, tennis, horseback riding, observing wildlife and nature by bike and even dolphin-watching cruises, Myrtle Beach provides your ticket to fun.

Sixty Miles of Beaches Across 12 Communities

Naturally, the fun begins at the Myrtle Beach area's No. 1 attraction -- 60 miles of coastline. The Grand Strand's beaches provide visitors with all the necessary resources for an ideal getaway. It's no wonder the Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina has been named the "World's Best Beach" by Yahoo! Travel and "Favorite Beach Town" by Southern Living.

Just Add Water: Sail, Surf, Kayak, Dive

Sailboat, Jet Ski, canoe and kayak rentals are offered up and down the Grand Strand. For those looking to descend below the water, there are several historic shipwrecks that can be explored via scuba diving. Strap on your scuba gear and explore the submerged hulls of the Hebe, a Dutch merchant ship; St. Cathan, a British submarine chaser; and the Richmond, a passenger ship that sank off the shores of the Grand Strand. Those who'd rather keep their adventures above water can choose from parasailing, surfing, boogie-boarding, wind surfing and kite surfing.

Hook, Line and Sinker: Fishing

Fishing along the Grand Strand can be enjoyed from one of eight fishing piers located along the beach. There are also backwater creeks between Georgetown and Little River that provide great crabbing opportunities. More serious anglers can board a boat for bottom fishing, or venture all the way to the Gulf Stream, just 60 miles offshore, for true deep-sea sports fishing experiences. Also, each year, visitors can enjoy the Grand Strand Fishing Rodeo. Anglers of all ages enter for a chance to win cash and other prizes totaling more than \$20,000. From April to October, fisherman can enter their catch caught from pier, surf, inlet or deep sea. Participants could win monthly decals, shoulder patches, cash and merchandise.

For more information about Myrtle Beach fishing trips, parasailing or water activities, contact:

- Action Water Sportz, www.actionwatersportz.com; (843) 294-2859
- Banana Capt. Dick's at Crazy Sister Marina, www.capt dicks.com/bananaboat.html; (843) 651-3676
- Banana Boat Express, www.expresswatersports.com; (843) 357-7777
- Black River Outdoors Center, www.blackriveroutdoors.com; (843) 546-4840
- Blue Wave Adventures Dolphin Watch Tour, www.bluewaveadventures.com; (843) 340-7713
- Capt. Ricky Long's Charters, www.capt ricky long.com; (843) 249-1889
- Crazy Sister Marina, www.capt dicks.com; (843) 651-3676
- Downwind Sails, www.downwindsailsmyrtlebeach.com; (843) 448-7245
- Explorer Cruises, www.crazysister.com; (843) 357-9997
- Express Waterworks, www.expresswaterworks.com; (866) 566-9338
- Fish Hook Charters, www.fishhookcharters.com; (843) 283-7692
- Fisher of Men Charters, www.fisherofmencharter.com; (843) 249-8662
- Island Adventure Watersports, www.islandadventurewatersports.com; (843) 650-7003
- Jet Ski Express, www.expresswatersports.com; (843) 357-7777
- Kayak Express, LLC, www.expresswatersports.com; (843) 357-7777
- Lucky Strike Charters, www.luckystrikesportfishingcharters.com; (843) 249-2049
- Myrtle Beach Watersports, www.myrtlebeachwatersports.com; (843) 651-9915
- Ocean Atlantic, Inc. (Hurricane Fleet), www.hurricanefleet.com; (910) 579-3660

A wide-angle photograph of a sandy beach with gentle waves lapping at the shore. Two people are walking along the water's edge in the distance. The sky is clear and blue.

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- Ocean Watersports, www.parasailmyrtlebeach.com; (843) 445-7777
- Parasail Capt. Dick's at Crazy Sister Marina, www.capt dicks.com/parasailing.html; (843) 651-3676
- Parasail Express, www.expresswatersports.com; (843) 357-7777
- Patriot Jet Boat, www.parasailmyrtlebeach.com; (843) 445-7777
- Pirate Adventures of Myrtle Beach, www.myrtlebeachpirates.com; (843) 651-3676
- Reel Action Fishing Charters, www.actionfishingmyrtlebeach.com; (843) 997-3077
- Rover Tours Inc., www.roverboattours.com; (843) 546-8822
- Scuba Express, www.expresswatersports.com; (843) 357-7777
- Thomas Outdoor Watersports, www.mbjetski.com; (843) 663-RIDE
- Voyager Fishing Charters, LLC, www.supervoyagerdeepseafishing.com; (843) 249-5504
- Waterway Power Sports, www.waterwaypowersports.com; (843) 315-4448

A Pier to Remember

Whether dangling your feet on the end of the dock, catching a boat tour, renting a jet ski, embarking on a dolphin watch cruise or just enjoying the ocean scenery; the communities of Myrtle Beach offer up plenty of piers and locations to catch whatever wave you wish:

- Apache Pier, www.theapachepier.com; (843) 497-6486
- Second Avenue Pier, www.secondavenuepier.com; (843) 445-7437
- Springmaid Beach Pier, www.springmaidbeach.com; (843) 315-7156

Batters Up: Professional and Youth Baseball

Myrtle Beach Pelicans

The Myrtle Beach Pelicans is a Chicago Cubs Class A affiliate who call TicketReturn.com Field in Myrtle Beach their home. The team's season begins in April and wraps up in September. Along with exciting sports action, fans are treated to between-inning entertainment that is fun for the whole family. For more information, call (877) 918-TIXX or visit MyrtleBeachPelicans.com.

The Ripken Experience

The Ripken Experience opened in June 2006 as one of the nation's top youth sports facilities, boasting six youth- and three regulation-size baseball fields. This unique experience brings tournament play and baseball camps to the Myrtle Beach area. Residents and visitors are also invited to watch more than 20 youth baseball and softball tournaments annually at The Ripken Experience fields. Each is modeled after one of the game's historic ballparks: Polo Grounds, New York; Comiskey Park, Chicago; and Forbes Field, Pittsburgh. All of the fields are made from FieldTurf®, the game's most advanced artificial surface. For more information, telephone (843) 918-7815 or visit TheRipkenExperience.com.

Nothin But Net: Basketball

Beach Ball Classic

The Beach Ball Classic is a holiday tradition that Myrtle Beach has played host to for 35 years. This basketball tournament is held at the end of December and attracts the top high school teams in the nation. This tournament has included future NBA superstars like Kobe Bryant and Jason Kidd. For more information, go to www.beachballclassic.com.



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Zoom, Zoom: Amateur Auto Racing

Myrtle Beach Speedway

Spectators can enjoy professional and amateur racing on a half-mile, tri-oval asphalt track sanctioned by NASCAR. Races are scheduled every Saturday from April through September, with special events adding to the fun. Adding to the excitement, visitors can now drive a real racecar or ride as a passenger for a NASCAR Experience. For more information, call (843) 236-0500 or visit MyrtleBeachSpeedway.com.

Putt Putt: Miniature Golf

Golf fans of all ages can choose from a myriad of miniature golf themes. Myrtle Beach offers everything from man-eating dinosaurs and lava-spewing volcanoes, to high-seas adventures aboard pirate ships. The Grand Strand is considered the miniature golf capital of the world with 35 miniature golf courses from which to choose, including a sample below:

- Cane Patch Par 3 & Driving Range, www.myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com; (843) 315-0301
- Captain Hook's Adventure Golf, www.myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com; (843) 913-7851
- Dragon's Lair Fantasy Golf, www.myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com; (843) 913-9301
- Jungle Safari Golf, www.myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com; (843) 315-0311
- Jurassic Golf, www.myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com; (843) 913-5333
- Midway Par 3, www.myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com; (843) 913-5335
- Shipwreck Island Adventure Golf, www.myrtlebeachfamilygolf.com; (843) 913-5330

For a complete list of sports facilities in Myrtle Beach, visit: www.VisitMyrtleBeach.com/sports.

For additional information on the Myrtle Beach Area, visit www.VisitMyrtleBeach.com or call 1.888.Myrtle1