

TRAVEL TRENDS

Affordable Family Fun On North Carolina's Coast

(NAPSA)—Travelers planning a family vacation that won't break the bank may want to take a closer look at North Carolina's Crystal Coast in the winter.

This Atlantic beach destination has for generations represented one of the only remaining natural barrier island systems in the world. The islands are strung together with 85 miles of silken coastline along the Southern Outer Banks, 56 miles of which are in the protected Cape Lookout National Seashore.

Family-Friendly Activities

Each year, many families head for a budget-friendly experience along the Southern Outer Banks, an area comprised of Emerald Isle, Atlantic Beach, Morehead City, Beaufort and Cape Lookout. Here, visitors can find "Sweater Weather Savings," presenting affordable attractions and accommodations offerings at more than 40 percent off peak-season rates.

From roaming the streets of the 300-year-old town Beaufort—recently named "America's Coolest Small Town" by *Budget Travel*—to watching wild Spanish mustangs on Shackleford Banks, exploring countless species at the Aquarium and taking a glimpse back into maritime history, the Crystal Coast remains one of the Southeast's best values.

Affordable Attractions

With plenty of wallet-friendly adventures for the entire family, the 85 miles of silken shoreline offer a great backdrop for a wonderful winter escape, with a variety of local attractions under \$10. For example, Fort Macon State Park and the Beaufort Maritime Museum are both free.

Attractions and transportation in the \$4 to \$10 range include the Cape Lookout Ferry, Shackleford



Many families seeking a budget-friendly vacation often head for the Southern Outer Banks of North Carolina—also known as the Crystal Coast—in the winter.

Banks Ferry, the Beaufort Double Decker Tour Bus, North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores, Beaufort Historic Site Homes Tours and Old Burying Ground.

Accommodating Lodging

From seaside cottages and massive beach mansions to oceanfront hotel accommodations and quaint bed and breakfast inns, there are a range of lodging options to suit every lifestyle and budget. A sampling of best available starting rates includes Islander Inn & Suites at \$66/night, Inlet Inn at \$75/night, Hampton Inn Morehead City at \$99/night, Bluewater Vacation Rentals at \$380/week and Emerald Isle Realty at \$550/week.

Travelers on a budget who want to live like millionaires have the opportunity to rent one of the many opulent homes dotting the coastline due to seasonal savings of more than 40 percent. Another option, the quaint bed and breakfast inns in Beaufort allow visitors to immerse themselves in historic surroundings with the most personalized comfort.

To learn more, call (800) 786-6962 or visit www.crystalcoast.nc.org or www.facebook.com/crystalcoast.