



L-R: Historic Wilmington #1 Best Al Fresco Dining Neighborhood; Port City Marina & Event Pier on the Cape Fear River; Island beaches are just minutes away. (USA TODAY 10Best)

## *City-style or coastal-style? The choice is yours in Wilmington, NC & Island Beaches (Historic Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach)*

What's your style—*city-style* or *coastal-style*? The choice is yours in Wilmington, NC & Island Beaches, one destination with four unique settings. Built along the banks of the scenic Cape Fear River, Wilmington, North Carolina's walkable river district embodies an eclectic mix of culture in a progressive, yet historic setting. More than 200 shops, restaurants, attractions, tours, cruises and convention center are within easy walking distance of our award-winning 1.75-mile Riverwalk. From the riverfront to vibrant cityscapes and classic island beaches, Wilmington's mild climate, natural beauty and historical, cultural and recreational offerings combine to create an authentic and welcoming sense of place. **City + Beaches:** Just minutes away, three colorful island beaches beckon—each with its own coastal vibe: Carolina Beach, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach. Wilmington and its island beaches are close...just a couple of hours drive on I-40, yet a world apart from the big city hustle bustle. Go with the flow and see where the water takes you. For visitor information: [www.GoWilmingtonAndBeaches.com](http://www.GoWilmingtonAndBeaches.com).

### **Intrigued? Here are more story ideas:**

#### **WITH THOUGHTFUL PROGRESS, AWARD-WINNING RIVERFRONT KEEPS GETTING BETTER**

Being voted the #1 Best American Riverfront by USATODAY 10Best Readers Choice is a great honor for the Wilmington Riverwalk, and this vibrant riverfront will soon be better than ever with renovations and expansion. Thoughtful progress along the northern riverfront continues with the new Port City Marina and Pier 33, an event pier/stage and a park with lots of greenspace. Two new restaurants will open later this year, followed by a riverfront Embassy Suites in 2017. A 1.75-mile wood-plank Riverwalk connects the modern northern riverfront with Wilmington's historic district with more than 200 shops, restaurants, attractions, tours, cruises, and the Wilmington Convention Center (adjacent to the marina) all within easy walking distance. The Riverwalk also hosts farmer's markets, craft fairs, concerts and dozens of annual events such as the N.C. Azalea Festival (STS Top 20 Event) in April, Independence Day Celebration in July and Riverfest in October. Visitors can experience Wilmington's historic river district by horse-drawn carriage, Segway, river cruises, walking and motorized trolley tours. There are also ghost walks, culinary, literary, history, beer and movie-themed tours.

#### **WILMINGTON'S BOOMING CRAFT BEER SCENE**

Wilmington is among *craftbeer.com*'s roundup of "**America's Beeriest Beach Towns**" and *SmartAsset.com* ranks it as #7 among "**Best Cities for Beer Drinkers**." In the past couple of years, Wilmington's craft beer scene has boomed, going from one craft brewer—Front Street Brewery (since 1995)—to nine breweries, including: Flytrap Brewing, Broomtail Craft Brewery, Wilmington Brewing Company, Ironclad Brewery, Waterline Brewing Company, Bill's Front Porch and New Anthem Beer Project in Wilmington, and Good Hops Brewery in nearby Carolina Beach. More breweries are slated to open later this year. Visitors can board the Port City Brew Bus for a guided tour of breweries and bottle shops. There's also a new pedal-powered Trolley Pub in Downtown Wilmington and limousine companies that offer transportation only to pubs and breweries. The Wilmington Ale Trail and Wilmington and Beaches Craft Beer page are available for self-guided tours to 'top hops spots.'



## **SPICE UP YOUR VISIT WITH FOOD TOURS & EVENTS**

Historic Wilmington was voted the #1 “Best Al Fresco Dining Neighborhood” by *USA TODAY* 10Best Readers’ Choice awards because of its mild weather, great restaurants and river views. One way to experience several of Wilmington’s best eateries is to sign up for a Taste Carolina Gourmet Food Tour or visit during spring and fall Restaurant Weeks. Foodies will appreciate the variety and quality of dining from the river to the sea. *Scoutology.com* includes two downtown eateries—**manna** (a AAA 4-diamond recipient) and **Rx** (a true farm-to-table restaurant)—on its list of “21 Top 21 N.C. New American Restaurants.” *Thrillist.com* includes a popular midtown restaurant, **Flaming Amy’s Burrito Barn**, among its “33 Best Burritos in America.” Food events include: Wilmington Wine & Chocolate Festival (Feb.), Wilmington Wine & Food Festival (May), Got to Be NC’s Fire on the Dock Competition Dining, Epicurean Evening and Taste of the Town (Sept.); Wilmington Seafood Festival (Oct.); Food Truck Frolic (spring and fall); Riverfront Farmer’s Market (Saturdays, April-November) and other seasonal farmer’s markets in Carolina Beach, Wrightsville Beach, Ogden Park and Poplar Grove Plantation.

## **IRONMAN RACE COMING TO WILMINGTON, A TOP CITY FOR TRIATHLETES!**

*Triathlete* magazine (Jan. 2016) ranks Wilmington #11 in their list of “Best Places to Live for a Triathlete,” citing mild winters, beaches, a 1.75-mile Riverwalk, a cross-city Trail and the Beach2Battleship triathlon. In December 2015, IRONMAN acquired the Beach2Battleship race. IRONMAN’s newest race is now the PPD IRONMAN North Carolina and PPD IRONMAN 70.3 North Carolina, scheduled for October 22, 2016. Dozens of competitions are held throughout the year, including 5k/10k races, marathons and triathlons, as well as fishing and golf tournaments, standup paddle (SUP), tennis and youth soccer championships. More than 54 parks and gardens offer fitness trails, including the 1.75-mile Wilmington Riverwalk and the Gary Shell Cross-City Trail—a 15-mile off-road, multi-use trail that stretches from the river to the sea. Thanks to a temperate climate, athletes of all skill levels can keep active—city-style or coastal-style—in Wilmington and its beaches.

## **ISLAND BEACHES ARE JUST MINUTES AWAY!**

Just minutes away, the island beaches of Carolina Beach, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach are ideal for relaxing, keeping fit and greeting spectacular sunrises. With the ocean to the east, the Intracoastal Waterway to the west and marshes in-between, Wrightsville Beach is a top surf and standup paddle destination. Over on the next island, two state parks at Carolina Beach and Fort Fisher (near Kure Beach) offer hiking and cycling trails and other recreational activities. Our beaches are lifeguard-protected from Memorial Day through Labor Day, and there are abundant opportunities for SUP and surf sessions, boating, swimming, kayaking and world-class fishing with the Gulf Stream offshore. Each beach has its own rich history and unique coastal vibe. Click on these links to find story ideas that are specific to Carolina Beach, Kure Beach and Wrightsville Beach.

**WHAT’S NEW HIGHLIGHTS:** ★**Hollywood East:** Watch for Wilmington locations in recent productions: Nicholas Sparks’ *The Choice* (February), Mattel Entertainment’s *Max Steel* (October), TNT’s “Good Behavior” and HISTORY Channel’s “SIX” (Fall series premiers); ★**Wilmington & Beaches** is among *craftbeer.com*’s “**America’s Beeriest Beach Towns**” with 9 breweries, 8 bottle shops and more on the way; ★**Historic Downtown Wilmington** was voted the #1 “**Best Al Fresco Dining Neighborhood**” by USATODAY’s 10Best Readers’ Choice Awards; ★Cape Fear Community College’s **The Wilson Center** is Southeast NC’s newest and largest performance venue; ★The **2017 Wells Fargo Championship** will be held at Wilmington’s exclusive Eagle Point Golf Club, May 1-7, 2017; ★**Newly Renovated Historic Carolina Beach Boardwalk** expands again in 2016; ★**IRONMAN** purchased PPD Beach2Battleship Triathlon and will present the inaugural 2016 **PPD IRONMAN North Carolina** on October 22 in Wilmington & Wrightsville Beach; ★**Starring Cape Fear!** is a new exhibit at Cape Fear Museum of History & Science (inspired by the NC Museum of History’s Starring North Carolina exhibit) that interprets Wilmington’s 30-plus year filmmaking history (through September 2017); ★The **North Carolina Azalea Festival** celebrates 70 years April 5-9, 2017; ★**N.C. Aquarium at Fort Fisher** celebrates 40 years in September 2016; ★The inaugural **Wilmington Boat Show** will be held Sept. 9-11; ★**For recent Accolades:**

[www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/news-articles/new-notable/recent-accolades-for-wilmington-and-island-beaches/](http://www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/news-articles/new-notable/recent-accolades-for-wilmington-and-island-beaches/)

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