

Travelers' Choice Beaches Awards

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Top 25 Beaches in the United States

1 Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Myrtle Beach boasts some of the best beaches on America's East Coast, which are distinguished by panoramic views of the Atlantic, calm waters and soft white sand. Ideal for swimming and sunbathing, Myrtle Beach also offers plenty of family attractions, making it perfect for beach-lovers with kids.

Don't miss these Myrtle Beach beaches: Myrtle Beach State Park

2 Cape May, New Jersey

Yes, Cape May is, technically, on the Jersey Shore. But it's the antithesis of the Jersey Shore you'll see on TV—instead of nightclubs and tanning parlors, you'll find Victorian mansions and a famous lighthouse.

Don't miss these Cape May beaches: Sunset Beach

3 Panama City Beach, Florida

With more than 27 miles of white, sandy beaches, Panama City Beach describes itself as "The Beach Lovers Beach." Swim, snorkel, dolphin watch, jet ski, or parasail the emerald green waters of the Gulf of Mexico, or sunbathe on the award-winning beaches for which it is famous.

Don't miss these Panama City Beach beaches: Beach at Panama City

4 Miami Beach, Florida

At the shore in Miami Beach, visitors can swim, surf and jet ski in the warm and crystal-clear Atlantic waters. You can also nap on the white sands, work on a tan or simply watch the beautiful people, especially at South Beach, a favorite of models and celebrities.

Don't miss these Miami Beach beaches: Haulover Beach Park

5 Sanibel Island, Florida

Saunter on the shell-speckled sands of tropical barrier island, Sanibel, on Florida's Gulf coast. Quiet, secluded White Beach, with its scurrying

sandpipers, offers a respite from the holidaymaking hordes elsewhere, while Turner Beach lures those with their sights on shells or the day's catch.

Don't miss these Sanibel Island beaches: Bowman's Beach

6 Clearwater, Florida

Swimming in the warm blue waters on Clearwater's Gulf Coast is a refreshing pleasure for kids and grown-ups, and the wide shores here provide ample room for playing on the beach, too. Volleyball, parasailing and waterskiing are all great, but relaxing on the sand and sunbathing aren't bad either.

Don't miss these Clearwater beaches: Pier 60

7 Honolulu, Hawaii

Honolulu is a legendary surfing destination. But even if you don't know a boogie board from a surfboard, you'll find a beach here that appeals to you (and, if you want to learn the difference, you can find a great instructor to teach you). Swimming, kayaking, snorkeling, outrigger canoeing or just sunbathing... it's all available in Honolulu.

Don't miss these Honolulu beaches: Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve

8 Captiva Island, Florida

A bit of the Caribbean in Florida, this beautiful island is connected to Sanibel by bridge and offers a more remote tropical island feel. It's so close you can head over to check out the beach or for a meal at any of the island's fabulous restaurants.

Don't miss these Captiva Island beaches: Captiva Beach

9 Poipu, Hawaii

Kauai's South Shore is home to some of the country's best beaches—for swimming, diving and all sorts of water sports. If sunbathing on a gorgeous beach isn't relaxing enough, try a spa (where many treatments incorporate local ingredients). And if you're in Poipu for a romantic escape, splurge on an oceanview room—the sunsets are spectacular.

Don't miss these Poipu beaches: Poipu Beach Park

10 Siesta Key, Florida

Looking for world class powdery white quartz sand beaches, 100 golf courses within driving distance, and an endless selection of cultural and family activities? Siesta Key is the laid-back beach town that goes above and beyond. Right nearby in Sarasota, you'll find museums, art, wildlife, circuses, opera, ballet, symphonies, theater, film festivals, botanical gardens, baseball spring training... the list goes on.

Don't miss these Siesta Key beaches: Crescent Beach

11 San Diego, California

Beaches and bays dot the coast of California's second-largest city. Top-rated, family-friendly Coronado Beach is set among turn-of-the-century mansions. Other gorgeous sandy spots include Blacks Beach, where sunbathers go au naturel, and La Jolla Shores, popular for snorkeling and kayaking.

Don't miss these San Diego beaches: Torrey Pines State Reserve

12 Wildwood Crest, New Jersey

Wildwood Crest's sandy beaches, clean boardwalk and low-key, old-fashioned atmosphere are a hit with families. And rest assured—Snooki wouldn't be caught dead here.

Don't miss these Wildwood Crest beaches: Wildwood Crest Beach

13 Naples, Florida

Sunny Naples is a popular, sophisticated and charming beach destination on the Gulf of Mexico. It boasts many world-class hotels and resorts along miles of white sand beaches. The ocean surf is gentle and the people are friendly. Shoppers delight in searching for antiques, home furnishings, clothes and jewelry. With its beautiful neighborhoods and grand architecture, the atmosphere is elegant, yet relaxing. Sports enthusiasts spend glorious days pursuing their favorite activity, from golf to tennis to fishing. There are restaurants to suit every taste and budget. Even though it is a busy and cosmopolitan city, Naples offers easy access to secluded islands and the wilderness of the Everglades.

Don't miss these Naples beaches: Barefoot Beach

14 Virginia Beach, Virginia

Virginia Beach has all the elements of a classic seaside resort: gorgeous beaches, a lively boardwalk, plenty of restaurants and nightspots, and amusement rides sure to appeal to kids. Sports enthusiasts will find celebrated golf courses in Virginia Beach and the surrounding area, as well as sea

kayaking and miles of hiking trails. Many believe Virginia Beach is at its best in the off-season, when the town is less crowded but the weather is still mild.

Don't miss these Virginia Beach beaches: Virginia Beach Boardwalk

15 Ogunquit, Maine

Ogunquit's three-mile stretch of beach is one of the longest in Maine, and also one of the least rocky. The water may never warm up, but it's pristine, and this quaint New England town's attractions make it a perfect, picturesque seaside destination.

Don't miss these Ogunquit beaches: Ogunquit Beach

16 Provincetown, Massachusetts

Visit Provincetown and have a blast enjoying some of Cape Cod's best beaches (Race Point Beach and Herring Cove Beach are favorites of TripAdvisor travelers). Plenty of cool boutiques, restaurants and art galleries give this town a fun and funky vibe. It's an exceptionally LGBT-friendly destination as well. One tip: if it's high season, take the ferry or a quick flight from Boston (unless you enjoy spending hours sitting in traffic).

Don't miss these Provincetown beaches: Race Point Beach

17 Hilton Head, South Carolina

With more than 12 miles of white sand and sparkling waters you can explore by boat, canoe or kayak, Hilton Head Island offers a plethora of options for beach lovers. Pitch your umbrella, go bird-watching or fishing or play any kind of water sport along the shores.

Don't miss these Hilton Head beaches: Coligny Beach

18 Laguna Beach, California

The quaint oceanfront town of Laguna Beach prides itself on its laid-back attitude and artistic sentiment. Seals, sea lions, dolphins and people are all attracted to isolated coves along the town's six miles of coastline, and strict prohibitions keep watercraft far from the beaches.

Don't miss these Laguna Beach beaches: Crystal Cove State Park

19 Rehoboth Beach, Delaware

Enjoy an old-fashioned beach vacation, complete with a boardwalk, at one of Delaware's most popular resort towns. Long a traditional summer getaway for families, Rehoboth Beach is now also a favorite of gay and lesbian travelers. Serious golfers will want to test their skills at the Kings Creek Country Club, while Old Landing Golf Course offers great views of the local scenery. Along with enjoying the famous beach and strolling the boardwalk, there's also a nearby amusement park called Funland to check out.

Don't miss these Rehoboth Beach beaches: Rehoboth Beach

20 Kamuela, Hawaii

The Kamuela area of the Big Island has been inhabited for tens of thousands of years. Now known for opulent resorts, luxurious spas, dramatic golf courses, historic former cattle farms and breathtaking nature reserves, Kamuela is a largely unspoiled gem. Mauna Kea Resort Golf Course is the top choice for going green. Other relaxing activities include checking into Spa Without Walls and Mauna Lani Spa, or stretching out on Hapuna Beach. A rental car is the best way to explore Kamuela's many attractions.

Don't miss these Kamuela beaches: Hapuna Beach

21 South Padre Island, Texas

Although South Padre Island is considered the Spring Break Capital of the Southwest, if you avoid those times you'll find plenty to do on 113 miles of beaches, dunes and tidal flats. Treasure hunters thrill at the history buried here, the fishing is great and you can get a great view of it all from Port Isabel Lighthouse.

Don't miss these South Padre Island beaches: South Padre Beach

22 Nantucket, Massachusetts

Windswept beaches, sand dunes, blinking lighthouses and a charming pace of life await on this 50-square mile island. The world's former top whaling port is now designated a National Historic District. Leave the car and take the shuttle or bike around. Seaside cottages, old whaling captains' mansions and historic harbors contain quaint inns, boutique stores, chowder shacks and upscale dining delights. Swim, surf or load up the tackle for Nantucket's excellent striper, bluefish and bonito fishing.

Don't miss these Nantucket beaches: Surfside Beach

23 Nags Head, North Carolina

With eleven miles of sand, it's no surprise the beach is everyone's favorite attraction in Nags Head. This Outer Banks town just south of Kitty Hawk offers ocean fans every sort of shoreline sport, from sailing and kayaking to snorkeling past shipwrecks or hang-gliding over the sand dunes of Jockey's Ridge State Park. Step into the past with a walk through the historic district and enjoy the area's distinct architecture.

Don't miss these Nags Head beaches: Jockey's Ridge State Park

24 Chatham, Massachusetts

This pleasant, walkable town right at the elbow of Cape Cod is a classic New England vacation spot. Bringing kids? Check out calm beaches like Cockle Cove Beach and Harding's Beach. If you're looking for stunning scenery, however, try Chatham Lighthouse Beach. Its tides can be strong (heed the posted warnings), but it's one of the most beautiful beaches on the Cape.

Don't miss these Chatham beaches: Ridgevale Beach

25 Santa Barbara, California

Santa Barbara's beaches have palm trees, wide shores, world-class surfing and annual beach volleyball tournaments--what's not to love? Families should fire up a grill at Leadbetter Beach, swimmers should take a dip in East Beach's calm waters and couples should share a view of the sunset at Butterfly Beach.

Don't miss these Santa Barbara beaches: Shoreline Park