



Priceless, Not Pricey

SUMMER VACATIONS AT THE JERSEY SHORE: Where the Deals Are

TOMS RIVER, NJ (July 20, 2009) ? For summer 2009, visit the Jersey Shore beach towns of Monmouth and Ocean Counties for a dazzling array of classic vacation spots that will stretch your dollars while brightening your getaway.

With dozens of destinations to suit every visitor, choose from sugary sand beaches, bustling boardwalks, a multitude of historic sites, world class restaurants, wineries, amusement parks, theaters, racetracks, boutique and outlet shopping, boat rides, water sports, deep sea and fresh water fishing and more. This summer especially, the Jersey Shore has an abundance of affordable options. Wherever you go, there's something for everyone and every budget!

The new vacation chic is budget-consciousness. And now that the season is officially underway, the Jersey Shore continues to retain its immense popularity by offering endless choices with an emphasis on the best values. The relaxing sea air and the ambiance of an old time summer vacation can take us all back to simpler times, when life in general was more stress-free and affordable.



From Atlantic Highlands to Long Beach Island, choose the destination that fits your mood and lifestyle, then see how you can save while savoring their individual flavors. Island Beach State Park offers the serenity of an untouched ecosystem; Asbury Park is on the rise with a South Beach hipster vibe; Point Pleasant Beach is all about old-time family summer beach and boardwalk fun. But those are just a few choices!

Indeed, the classic American summer vacation is still attainable at the Jersey Shore, all less than a tank of gas away from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. For an even more economical and stress-free option, many Jersey Shore destinations are easily accessible by train or bus.

New Jersey Transit has created special Beach Packages this summer to make sure you get under the sun in less time, and with more cash in your pocket, by riding the rails. With savings of up to \$6.50 a person, purchase round-trip train rides on the North Jersey Coast Line with beach passes for Long Branch, Asbury Park, Ocean Grove, Bradley Beach, Belmar, or Manasquan. Packages start at just \$17, with departures from Newark, New York City, Hoboken and a number of other North Jersey stations. For complete schedules and pricing, go to <http://www.njtransit.com/summer/jerseyshore.htm>

For a day trip, weekend or an extended escape, the Jersey Shore is the place to go.

Some of the most memorable experiences at the Jersey Shore can be done for little or no cost. After all, the beaches are inexpensive, and the boardwalks are free. There are miles and miles of beautiful hiking, biking, walking paths and kite flying opportunities. If you're into water sports, you can bring your own surfboard or rent for a nominal fee. Want to cook your own fresh crabs? Buy yourself a \$5 crab trap and hang it from your local dock!

At most of the spots along the coastline, you can pack a picnic basket and cooler with affordable refreshments to sustain you through a day of swimming, bodysurfing, beach volleyball, people-watching and combing the sand for seashells.

There are free weekly beach concerts in Sandy Hook, while Sea Bright and Jenkinson's Pavilion in Point Pleasant Beach offer free movies on the beach. But if sun, surf and sand aren't your kettle of fish, there are parks, animal refuges, and campgrounds to satisfy your hunger for fresh air without emptying your wallet. The Ocean County Department of Parks and Recreation offers outdoor activities such as boat tours, beach bashes, and family field trips at places like Cattus Island Park in Toms River.

It's very realistic to spend a day at some of the most notable Jersey Shore locales with just \$25 in your wallet – as much as it can cost for a second checked bag on an airplane! In fact, \$25 can get you a full day in Asbury Park and Ocean Grove combined.

Here's a closer look at some bargains from town to town:

ASBURY PARK

The Beach: Long ignored, it's now a hot ticket, drawing a fun, eclectic crowd that appreciates the trendy new shops and restaurants along the rejuvenated boardwalk mile. It's also one of the prettier beaches around, framed by the majestic Convention Hall and the old Casino



building. Cost: \$5

Restaurants:

O'Tooles Ocean Pub (Grand Arcade at Convention Hall, 1300 Ocean Ave.): Only two items on the menu cost more than \$10 bucks. What a steal! Enjoy the authentic Irish décor with great beachfront views. Try their delicious burgers ½ off on Tuesday and wash it down with one of their daily drink specials.

Happy Hours:

Wonder Bar (Fifth and Ocean Aves): No admission on Sundays to see "Doo Wop on the Deck," with oldies and cars from the old Asbury "circuit." The bar boasts \$3 Yuengling bottles seven nights a week.

CHEAP TIP: Pop into the legendary Stone Pony (913 Ocean Ave.) during the day and buy a little something, like a Stone Pony bumper sticker, to prove you were there (even if Springsteen wasn't.) Cost: \$1

BARNEGAT LIGHT

CHEAP TIP: Barnegat Lighthouse State Park and its immediate surrounds make for a great part of any day trip, whether you're there for the first time or for a return trip. The views are always memorable, either from the base of the red and white beacon or 217 steps up ... 172 feet above sea level. There's also an interpretive center that displays the history of the lighthouse, a maritime forest trail, nature observation, fishing and a picnic area. Summer hours are 8 a.m.-10 p.m,

and 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. for the lighthouse. Cost: \$1

BAYSHORE REGION Parks:

Hartshorne Woods: One of the most spectacular, free recreation areas in the Monmouth County Park System, straddling Highlands and Middletown. Its trails lead to breathtaking, panoramic views of the Atlantic Ocean and New York City skyline from a hilltop spot that is among the highest on the East Coast.

FORKED RIVER Off-Beach Excursions:

Popcorn Park Zoo (1 Humane Way). Animal lovers can visit this non-profit in Lacey, where the nominal admission fees — ranging from \$4 to \$5 — go to help the abused, abandoned, injured and sick animals that find refuge there through the Associated Humane Societies.



JACKSON TOWNSHIP

Six Flags Great Adventure & Wild Safari: One of the East Coast's top Amusement Park destinations has a Big Six Pass this year which lets you visit six times for the price of a one-day adult ticket — just \$49.99! Use the pass to return for concerts, special events and Fright Fest. Visit on six regular operating days through November 1. An undeniable deal!

KEANSBURG

Keansburg Amusement Park & Runaway Rapids: Free admission daily with ride discounts Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. Tuesday is Kiddie Day, with unlimited kiddie rides all day and night for a \$12.95 bracelet (thrill rides \$18.95). Friday is Family Day, where you can ride all the rides for \$18.95, or just show up for Friday Night Madness (7 p.m.-midnight) for \$11.95.

OCEANPORT

Monmouth Park Racetrack: "The Shore's Greatest Stretch" is not only home to heart-pounding horse-racing excitement, but it's also to "Family Fun Days." Every Sunday and Holiday from Noon - 4 P.M. the park offers FREE activities including pony rides, face painters, clowns, a bounce house, and live music. Grandstand admission is \$3.00, and children under 12 are always admitted free.

MANASQUAN Restaurants:

Leggetts Sand Bar (217 First Ave.): Lots of bar seats to have a satisfying bite. They have a nightly specials like "Pasta Night" for \$7.75 or "Prime Rib & Steak Night" for \$10.75. To boot, they have daily specials on their famous brick oven pizzas.

Happy Hours:

O'Neill's Bar, Grill and Guesthouse (390 E. Main St., Manasquan): Take advantage of O'Neill's five-hour happy hour from 4 to 9 p.m. Fridays with \$5 martinis, \$5 Coors Light pitchers and a \$5 food menu. The bar frequently has live entertainment with no cover charge.

Outdoors:

Edgar Felix Bike Path : If you have your bike, take it from the car, and ride to the nearby Edgar Felix for some scenic and peaceful exercise. Or, you can drive and park at the path's Main Street parking lot. Either way it's a nice, quiet retreat for a short ride or stroll. Cost: Free



POINT PLEASANT Museums:

New Jersey Museum of Boating (1800 Bay Ave., #12): Before heading to the boardwalk, a nice stop informative getaway is the Museum of Boating, housed in the historic Johnson Brothers Boat Works. The modest-sized museum celebrates the state's rich boating history through various and rotating exhibits. It's open everyday from 10 a.m.-4 p.m and it's free

POINT PLEASANT BEACH

The Beach: Weekdays at Jenkinson's Beach can be a perfect combination of peace and quiet and people-watching, with enough space to get your tan on but enough crowd to keep things interesting. With the ocean in front of you and a bustling boardwalk behind you, it is the quintessential Jersey Shore experience. Beach fee: \$6.50.

Restaurants:

Surf Taco (1300 Richmond Avenue): Stretch your lunch dollar by avoiding boardwalk nosh in favor of this Zagat-rated coastal cuisine, considered one of the best bangs for the buck in Jersey dining. Get your top quality beef taco, with chips and soda together for just \$4.75.

Boardwalk Destination:

Jenkinson's Aquarium (300 Ocean Ave.) : A great aquarium that just happens to be on the boardwalk. Jenkinson's Aquarium is more than a fun stop for kids. It's got harbor seals, penguins, alligators, sharks and all kinds of coral. All for just \$10

SEASIDE HEIGHTS

The Beach: Compared to some other towns a daily badge is still a bargain. Cost: \$5

Amusements:

Funtown Pier (Boardwalk at Porter Avenue): Looking for cheap eats between rides? Here's the deal: a big pretzel and a 20-ounce drink, for \$1 each. Total cost: \$2.

Casino Pier (800 Ocean Terrace): Tucker the kids out on Mondays & Wednesdays with wristband days - unlimited rides on the pier for \$15 from Noon-6PM. Another great steal is the ride n' slide package - twenty-five bucks gets unlimited pier rides PLUS wet n' wild fun at nearby Jenkinson's Breakwater Beach from 9 AM to 7 PM.



Outdoor Movies:

Movies on the beach at Hierung Avenue: Free on Thursday and Sunday, beginning at dusk, weather permitting. For a schedule, go to www.seasideheightstourism.com.

Cost: Free

Outdoor Concerts:

Concerts on the beach at Hierung Avenue: Free concerts at 7 p.m. every Monday, weather permitting. For a schedule, go to www.seasideheightstourism.com Cost: Free

Surfing:

Baroo Surf (1520 Boulevard): Once you see those waves, you're going to wish you brought your boogie board. They rent them here, along with bikes and surf boards. Cost: \$9 for four hours

Yoga:

Adult yoga (Second Avenue Ocean Beach): Have a stress-free day in Seaside – for free! There are 75-minute classes every Tuesday morning starting in mid-July. Check www.seasideparknj.org for more information. Cost: Free

Crabbing:

The Dock Outfitters, 5 Route 35 South, Seaside Heights: If you spend all your time along the beachfront, you're missing out on half the fun. This bait and tackle shop on the bay side of town can set you up with a crab trap for the day and a bunker or two. To cut costs, BYOB (bring your own bucket.) There's a 150-foot public pier right there. Cost: \$5

CHEAP TIP: Go-carts at Casino Pier (Ocean Terrace and Grant Avenue) are half-price every morning from 10 a.m. to noon. Cost: \$4

SEASIDE PARK

The Beach @ Island State Park: Ten dollars can get a carload of people into the longest stretch of public shoreline in New Jersey on a weekend day, with admission dropping to \$6 per car on weekdays. The 3,000-acre sprawl of white-sand beach and rolling dunes constitutes is the only oceanfront property in the state to remain unmolested by developers.



Happy Hour:

The Sawmill Cafe and Green Room (1807 Boardwalk): The real deal is a slice of pizza and soda — one of the least expensive combos on the Boardwalk. From 4 to 7 p.m. Mondays through Fridays, enjoy a \$1 domestic draft. Or visit from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays to take advantage of \$5 bloody Marys and mimosas with \$2.50 refills.

SANDY HOOK Outdoor Concerts:

Free concerts on Wednesday evenings at Beach Area "E" throughout the summer, from rock to country, R&B to swing.

CHEAP TIP: For \$10, a carload of people can spend a day at Sandy Hook, a sand-spit peninsula on the shore's northernmost tip that offers hiking and biking trails and bird sanctuaries in addition to seven miles of beaches, including a clothing-optional one.

PRICELESS JERSEY SHORE

CAN'T-MISS EVENTS:

SUMMER SATURDAYS

THROUGH AUG. 29

STREETLIFE Red Bank FREE www.redbankrivercenter.org

For the ninth year in a row, StreetLife supports local artists while showing off Red Bank's status as the cultural heart of the Monmouth County area. Introduced in 2001 by Red Bank RiverCenter, this year there are extra StreetLife performances at the Red Bank Train Station, and all over the business. Along with title sponsor Bank of America, other StreetLife sponsors include Monmouth County Arts Council, the Count Basie Theater and Funk and Standard Variety Store located at 40 Broad Street. Artists are selected by representatives from RiverCenter, Bank of America, Monmouth County Arts Council, and the Count Basie Theatre. Info: 732-842-4244

AUG. 22-23

CRAB CAKE FESTIVAL & SHORE CHEF COOK-OFF

Monmouth Park

Oceanport

www.monmouthpark.com



Bring your appetite to Monmouth Park , taste crab cakes and seafood delicacies cooked up by some of the top restaurants in the region, and cast your votes in the People's Choice Awards. Bring the kids. Restaurants and food vendors compete for top honors from judges and you, the public. Part of the Jersey Thoroughbred Festival in beautiful Monmouth Park, this family-friendly event includes live music, lots of fun for the kids and of course thoroughbred racing. Monmouth Park Racetrack, 75 Oceanport Avenue, Oceanport, NJ. General admission \$3 (Age 12 and under free) and free parking. Food prices vary. For all crab cake event and racetrack info, call 732-222-5100.

To learn more about the fantastic travel experiences awaiting on the Jersey Shore, go to www.visitthejerseyshore.com. The Jersey Shore Convention & Visitor's Bureau is a non-profit corporation charged with the marketing and promotion of New Jersey's Monmouth & Ocean Counties as a premier travel destination and is supported in part by a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel & Tourism. www.visitnj.org.