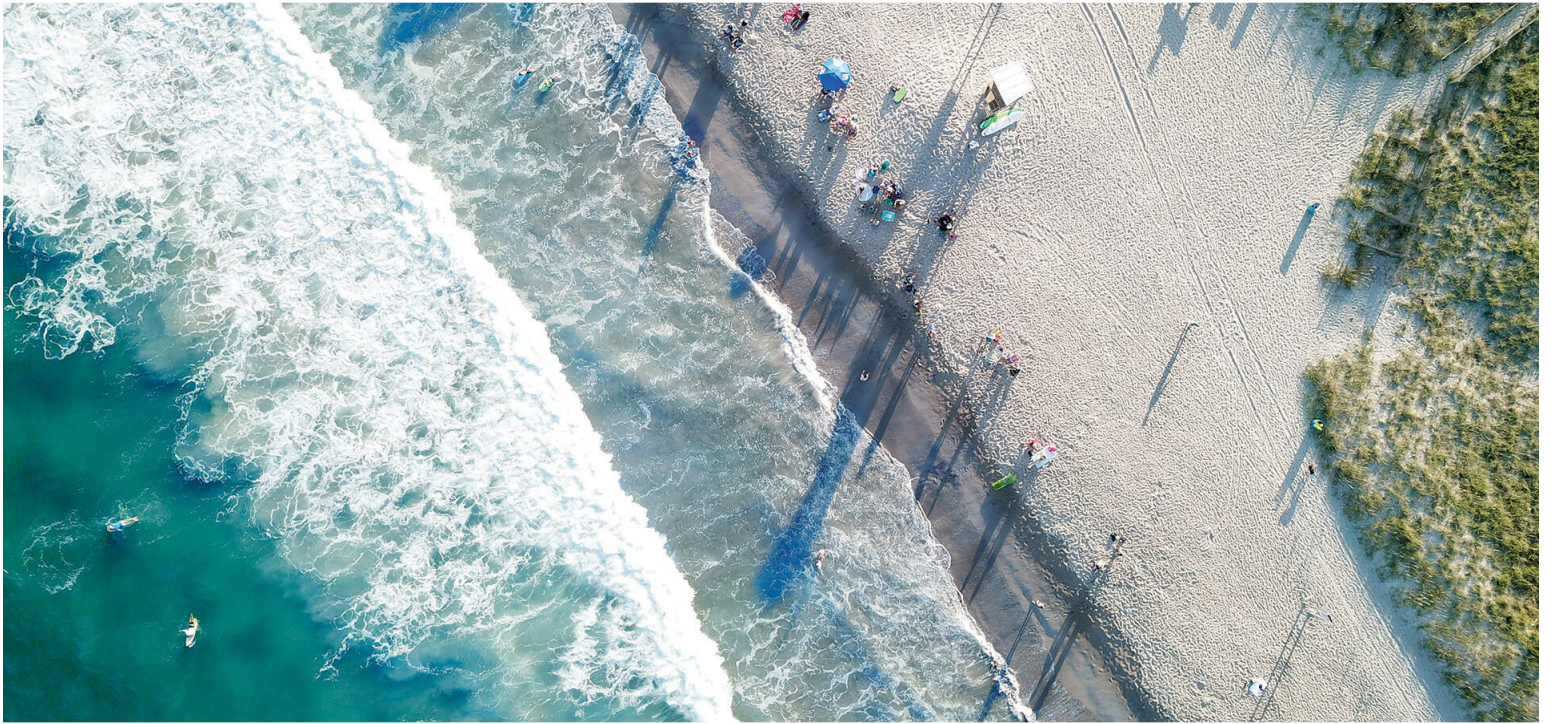


LIVING IN NORTH CAROLINA

50 Simple Summer Pleasures

Stargazing, s'mores, and tomato sandwiches: It's easy to have a spectacular summer in North Carolina. How many items can you check off our seasonal bucket list?

by Our State Staff



Surfers wait for the perfect wave at Wrightsville Beach.

PHOTOGRAPH BY HANK CARTER

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1. Walk barefoot [in the sand](#). At *your* NC beach, of course.



Claim a quiet strip of beach in Corolla. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CURRITUCK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM

2. [Cast a line](#) from a pier. Catching dinner is encouraged (but not required).



For anglers, Lake Junaluska provides a similar lesson in patience. PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT STEPHENS

3. Bring home a peck of [peaches](#) from the [Sandhills](#).



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROMAN SAMOKHIN/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

4. Dive off a dock into a [cool mountain lake](#).



Deep in the Great Smoky Mountains, Fontana Lake boasts 238 miles of shoreline in an unspoiled landscape. PHOTOGRAPH BY MARJE/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

5. Fly a [kite](#) at [Jockey's Ridge](#).



Massive creatures glide over Jockey's Ridge during the Outer Banks Kite Festival. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF KITTY HAWK KITES

6. [Paddle](#) down [a river](#).



Take a scenic paddle down the Yadkin River. PHOTOGRAPH BY PAUL PATRICK/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

7. [Island-hop](#) via ferry.



After the U.S. Navy laid the first paved road in 1942, more roads — and cars — followed. Drivers now follow NC Highway 12 to ferry docks at either end of the island. But the best way to get around Ocracoke is still by bike, golf cart, or your own two feet. PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY CHAPLIN AND CHRIS COUNCIL

8. Take the plunge down [Sliding Rock](#).



Our State contributor Drew Perry and his family at Sliding Rock. PHOTOGRAPH BY TITA RAMIREZ

9. Watch a classic movie at [a drive-in theater](#).



Line up at the drive-in theater with plenty of snacks. PHOTOGRAPH BY STATE ARCHIVES OF NORTH CAROLINA

10. Road-trip down [NC Highway 12](#) or the [Blue Ridge Parkway](#).



With Pamlico Sound to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east, NC Highway 12 extends north of Buxton toward Avon, just visible in the distance. PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS HANNANT

11. [Camp](#) in your [own backyard](#).



PHOTOGRAPH BY DREW PERRY

12. Root for the [home team](#) at a minor league [baseball game](#).



Do you recognize your favorite North Carolina team's mascot? ILLUSTRATION BY ED FOTHERINGHAM

13. Spot [lightning bugs](#) at dusk.



ILLUSTRATION BY PATRICK FARICY

14. Eat a juicy [tomato sandwich](#). Soft bread. Duke's mayo. Salt and pepper. Enough said.



PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT HULSMAN

15. Pick out fresh produce at a [farmers market](#).



PHOTOGRAPH BY ISTOCK/LETTERBERRY

16. Put together a [summer reading list](#).



Members of the Clara Craven Book Club can appreciate the meaning of the Japanese word *tsundoku*: “to stack up books to read in the future.”PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA ROUTH BARZIN

17. Savor a [cold craft beer](#) on a warm afternoon.



Foothills Brewing has been offering flights of craft beer in Winston-Salem for nearly 20 years. PHOTOGRAPH BY J. SINCLAIR PHOTOGRAPHY

18. Eat [Calabash-style](#) fried seafood in Calabash.



The legendary restaurants of Calabash turned this small fishing village into the “Seafood Capital of the World.” Often imitated beyond our borders, their fried fare is a North Carolina original. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF NC’S BRUNSWICK ISLANDS

19. Watch a [thunderstorm](#).



Hopefully, you're watching from somewhere dry and warm. PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW TAYLOR/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

20. [Collect shells](#). Extra points if [you spot](#) a [scotch bonnet](#).



Early in the morning or right after a storm is the best time to find beach treasures. PHOTOGRAPH BY RENATO ARAP/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

21. Have a [picnic](#) at a [state park](#). (There are 42!)



At Mount Mitchell State Park, it's mountains as far as the eye can see. PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM MOORS

22. Make [s'mores](#).



Whether you stoke up the fire at a campsite or rely on the broiler at home, a gooey, toasty s'mores is a summertime must. PHOTOGRAPH BY MUNDUSIMAGES/E+/GETTY IMAGES

23. Cool off in [Linville Caverns](#).



PHOTOGRAPH BY DREW PERRY

24. Go wild at the [North Carolina Zoo](#).



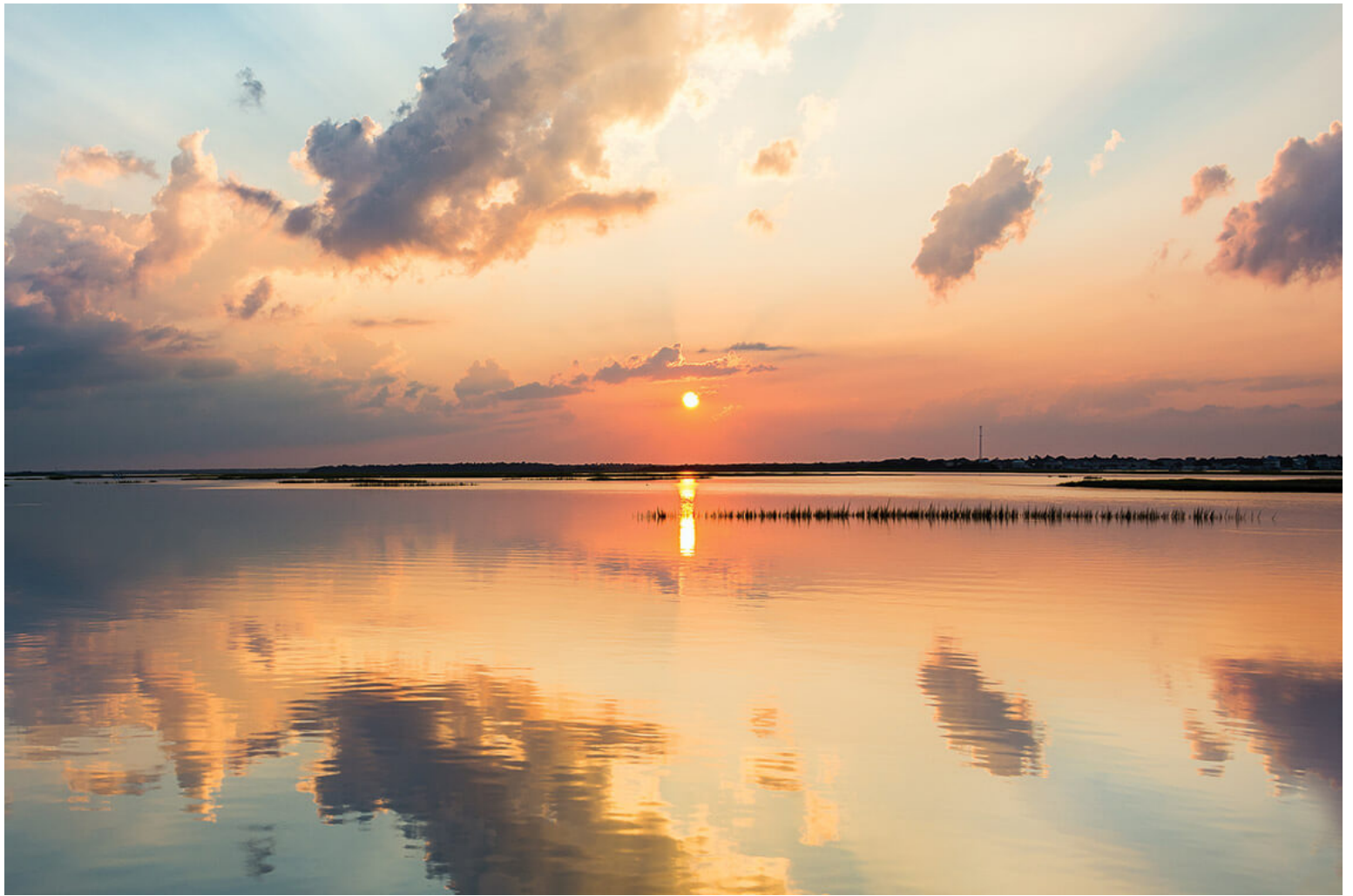
Southern white rhinoceros Linda and her daughter, Nandi, graze on the Watani Grasslands. PHOTOGRAPH BY NATHAN BURNS

25. Watch the sunrise from Clingmans Dome.



An observation deck at Clingmans Dome, located about half a mile from the Appalachian Trail, gives visitors a 360-degree view of the landscape. PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM MOORS

26. Watch the sun set over a sound. Take your pick — Albemarle, Bogue, Core, Croatan, [Currituck](#), Pamlico, Roanoke — or visit all seven.



Bask in golden hour while boating on Bogue Sound near Emerald Isle. PHOTOGRAPH BY J. SILKSTONE PHOTOGRAPHY

27. Sit a spell in a [rocking chair](#). Combine with No. 28 for the perfect afternoon.



Beat the heat this summer at Cone Manor on the Blue Ridge Parkway near Blowing Rock. PHOTOGRAPH BY TIM ROBISON

28. Sip [sweet tea](#) in the shade.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLOTTE & JOHNNY AUTRY

29. Stroll through a [vineyard](#).



Gain a new appreciation for the land where grapes grow, like at Junius Lindsay Vineyard in Lexington. PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF NORTH CAROLINA WINE AND GRAPE COUNCIL

30. Look for [sea turtles](#).



Loggerhead sea turtles hatch on the beach before scurrying quickly to the surf.PHOTOGRAPH BY REBECCA MACK/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

31. Listen to live music at an [outdoor concert](#).



The Steep Canyon Rangers are a Grammy Award-winning bluegrass band from North Carolina.PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA BRENNAN

32. Wander to [a waterfall](#).



Dip your toes in the water at Lower Cascade Falls in Hanging Rock State Park in Stokes County. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOEY SEAWELL

33. Order a [shrimpburger](#) at [Big Oak Drive-in](#) in Salter Path.



Fried shrimp, tartar sauce, slaw, and ketchup on a steamed bun — the shrimpburger is a North Carolina icon. PHOTOGRAPH BY BAXTER MILLER

34. Take a day hike on the [Appalachian Trail](#) or [Mountains-to-Sea Trail](#).



An overlook at the Linville Gorge, along the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN COSTNER

35. Frolic at a [flower farm](#).



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANAGRAM PHOTO

36. Climb to the top of [Chimney Rock](#).



The view from the Opera Box is Chimney Rock State Park's most recognizable: an American flag on top of the rock, billowing above Lake Lure and Hickory Nut Gorge. PHOTOGRAPH BY TOM MOORS

37. Squeeze lemons for [ice-cold lemonade](#).



Which will you choose, watermelon Arnold Palmer or bourbon-rosemary lemonade? PHOTOGRAPH BY MATT HULSMAN

38. Swing in a hammock.



Find a quiet spot along the French Broad to secure your hammock. PHOTOGRAPH BY HUEPHOTOGRAPHY/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

39. Attend a [local festival](#).



Don't miss the Fair Bluff Watermelon Festival happening July 27. ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES OLSTEIN

40. Eat homemade [ice cream](#).



Get our recipe for homemade strawberry ice cream. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELENA BRENT ROSEMOND-HOERR

41. Ride a bike on a [greenway](#).



A segment of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail, the Neuse River Greenway extends from Falls Lake to the Wake/Johnston County line. PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL ROBSON/VISITRALEIGH.COM

42. Watch [fireworks](#). Whether it's over a ball field or a boardwalk, sparks will fly.



The Carolina Beach Boardwalk hosts live music and fireworks on Thursday nights from Memorial Day to Labor Day. PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC ALTER PHOTOGRAPHY

43. Take a [hot dog tour](#). Your order: a [Carolina dog](#) “all the way” — topped with chili, slaw, onions, and mustard.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TIM ROBISON

44. See [wild horses](#) in [Corolla](#) or on [Shackleford Banks](#).



Spot wild horses along the Shackleford Banks near Cape Lookout. PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLES HARRIS

45. Watch an outdoor drama in [Cherokee](#), [Boone](#), or [Manteo](#).



Summer nights mean the return of stirring productions of *The Lost Colony* on Roanoke Island. PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS HANNANT

46. Meander through [gorgeous gardens](#) at Biltmore Estate or [Tryon Palace](#).



Take in the beauty in bloom at Latham Garden at Tryon Palace. PHOTOGRAPH BY TRYON PALACE

47. Reconnect at a [family reunion](#).



In the evening, family members and friends can gather by the fire together at Wrong Way River Lodge & Cabins. PHOTOGRAPH BY JOE BALCKEN AND STEVEN FREEDMAN, COURTESY OF WRONG WAY ASHEVILLE

48. Spend the day [at a museum](#).



In the “Terror of the South” exhibit at the Museum of Natural Sciences, an Acrocanthosaurus (left) battles a sauropod while pterosaurs circle overhead. PHOTOGRAPH BY KAREN SWAIN/VISITRALEIGH.COM

49. Go [berry-picking](#).



Whether you bake with 'em or eat 'em straight from the bush, fresh blueberries are sweet with the taste of summer. PHOTOGRAPH BY HISPANOLISTIC/E+/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

50. Stargaze along [Cape Lookout National Seashore](#).



Cape Lookout Lighthouse was built in 1859 to help mariners find their way through the darkness of the southern Outer Banks. Today, that darkness draws stargazers who marvel at the Milky Way and other cosmic wonders. PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX GU/NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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Our State Staff

Since 1933, *Our State* has shared stories about North Carolina with readers both in state and around the world. We celebrate the people and places that make this state great. From the mountains to the coast, we feature North Carolina travel, history, food, and beautiful scenic photography.

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