



Guido Cozzi/Getty

INSPIRATION

It's not too late to book that beachside vacation.

BY

August 15, 2025

SAVE THIS STORY

All products and listings featured on Condé Nast Traveler are independently selected by our editors. However, we may receive compensation from retailers and/or from purchases of products through these links.

Ask anyone who grew up on the [East End of Long Island](#) or the [Jersey Shore](#), and they'll tell you the best time to hit the beach is actually in September, right at the onset of shoulder season—when the weather gets a bit milder, the crowds flee, and the pace of life mellows down. Fall is a particularly magical time [on the East Coast](#), when [lighthouse lookouts](#) and cliffside walks are bathed in autumnal hues.

While some beach towns become eerily uninhabited in the off-season, others transform into something else entirely—whether that's a prime birdwatching haven, or an unexpected setting for a quirky jazz or seafood festival. There are also certain activities (like [Gilded Age](#) mansion tours in Newport, Rhode Island) that become much more attractive when you're not tempted by clear-clouds-blue-skies weather, and many of the best hotels in these getaway towns offer discounted rates at this time of year, so you'll get a better bang for your buck, too.

ADVERTISEMENT

Oscar Mayer
Deli Fresh

It's Not The Deli, It's Deli Fresh

Oscar Mayer - Sponsored

Hungry?



Read on for a selection of East Coast beach towns to visit from September through November, the most underrated activities to do in each one, and the best places to stay while you're there.

In this article:

- [North Fork](#)
- [Nantucket](#)
- [Kennebunkport](#)

- [Cape May](#)
- [Rehoboth](#)
- [Newport](#)
- [Chincoteague](#)
- [Emerald Isle](#)



The off-season is an ideal time to enjoy North Fork's idyllic nature preserves. [demerzel21/Getty](#)

North Fork, Long Island

Often billed as a less swanky alternative to the Hamptons, the North Fork of Long Island has all the makings of a fall retreat. From Riverhead to Orient, there's ample opportunity for wine tastings, farm visits, scenic hikes, and vintage shopping. Pick up apple cider donuts at [Breeze Hill Farm](#) before taking a brisk trek through any one of North Fork's idyllic nature preserves: [Orient Beach State Park](#), [Sound View Dunes Park](#), and [Laurel Lake Preserve](#) are some of our favorites. Greenport is where you'll want to spend your money, whether on a '70s shift dress at [The Times Vintage](#), or a midcentury-modern coffee table at [Beal & Bell](#). Over at [Silver Sands Motel](#), a rejuvenated 1950s retreat, you can book private oyster tours at Pipes Cove Oyster Farm (some say the bivalves are at their best in the fall months) or a private winery tour and tasting at [McCall Wines](#).

Where to stay in the North Fork:

ADVERTISEMENT

- For a family getaway: [Waterfront oasis in Oyster Bay](#)

Emerald Isle, North Carolina

North Carolina’s Crystal Coast is known for its pristine white sand beaches and clear blue waters. The jewel in the



SUBSCRIBE
SIGN IN
Q

NEWSLETTER
INSPIRATION
DESTINATIONS
PLACES TO STAY
NEWS & ADVICE
CURATED ESCAPES
SHOPPING
CRUISE
WOMEN WHO


SUBSCRIBE FOR ~~+\$2.50~~ \$1 PER MONTH + GET A TOTE! »

Where to stay in Emerald Isle:

- For classic southern comfort: [Beaufort Hotel](#)
- For a romantic retreat: [1950s beach cottage](#)
- For family fun: [Townhouse on Emerald Isle Beach](#)

More Places to Stay

- Want to be the first to know? [Sign up to our newsletters](#) for travel inspiration and tips
- [43 Best Hotels in New York City](#)
- My Favorite Airbnb: [A Modern Architectural Gem in Venice Beach](#)
- [18 Paris Hotels](#) with Incredible Views
- [32 Best Airbnbs Around the World](#), According to Our Editors



[Jessica Sulima](#) is a Commerce Writer at *Condé Nast Traveler*, where she covers hotel and booking content. Originally from New Jersey, she attended the University of Pennsylvania, where she holds a Bachelor’s degree in English with minors in Spanish and Art History. Previously at *Thrillist*, she wrote stories about harvesting ... [Read More](#)

Commerce Writer 

TOPICS BEACHES BEACH HOTELS