

# Big Ed, Big Art, Big Stars: Explore the North Carolina Piedmont and Coast

From the Piedmont to the Coast, experience craft havens and craftspeople as well as beautiful beaches. Tour, taste, shop and enjoy the history and beauty of North Carolina.

## 5-Day Itinerary

### Day 1

Venture through a museum and savor fine fare in Raleigh

### Day 2

Visit Smithfield for Ava Gardner and delicious Johnston County Ham

### Day 3

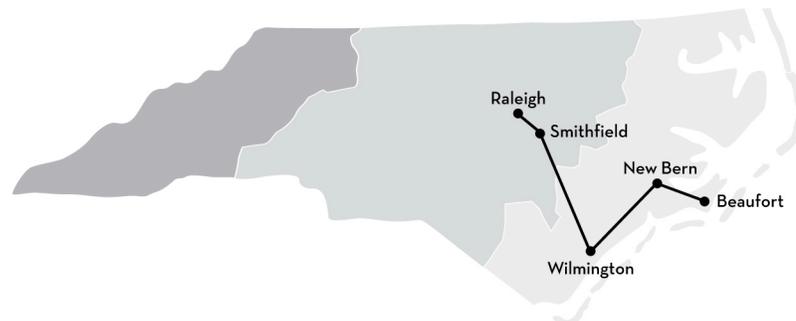
See Wilmington sights

### Day 4

Visit New Bern and the Crystal Coast

### Day 5

Tour historic Beaufort



*With so much to see and do in the area, we recommend the following 5-day itinerary. Enjoy your visit by mixing and matching events to your particular interest. Be sure to check days and hours of operation for each venue.*

### Day One

#### Raleigh:

Explore compelling exhibits that capture the spirit of North Carolina and its people at the **North Carolina Museum of Art** in Raleigh. The museum reopens in April of 2010 after an ambitious expansion that included a brand

new, 127,000 square foot building to house the institution's permanent collection. This expansion also transformed the existing building into a center for temporary exhibitions, collections management, education, and administration. Lyrical gardens and outdoor galleries were created in a landscape for art and artist-conceived environmental projects. Upon completion, the 164-acre campus will be the nation's largest art museum park, with walking paths, bike trails, ecological projects conceived with artists, and site-specific commissioned works of art in a rolling green landscape.

The museum's restaurant, **The Blue Ridge**, is a great stop for lunch. Be sure to save room for dessert! After lunch, move on to the **North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences**, the Southeast's largest natural history museum. Here you will see the world's only Acrocanthosaurus; the first dinosaur ever discovered with a fossilized heart, "Willo"; plus crawling critters from butterflies to tarantulas.

## **Day Two**

Start your day at **Big Ed's City Market**, a cherished Raleigh establishment featuring authentic Southern country cooking. Wrap your taste buds around classics like homemade biscuits, cornbread and molasses and, of course, sweet iced tea. With so much selection, as Big Ed puts it, "If you leave here hungry, it's your own fault!"

### **Smithfield:**

Now you're off for a short drive – under 45 minutes – to "meet" a star! The **Ava Gardner Museum** in Smithfield is devoted to an extensive collection of memorabilia spanning Ava Gardner's career in movies and her private life. Born in Smithfield, this North Carolinian defined a golden age in Hollywood. Enjoy one of Ava's films while at the Museum and have lunch at the **Smithfield Ham Shop**, home of the world-famous Johnston County Hams.

Make your way to historic Wilmington for a casual dinner at one of many fine-dining spots along the Cape Fear River.

## **Day Three**

### **Wilmington:**

What better way to start the day than with another "Big Star," the **Battleship North Carolina**. Enjoy a tour of the WWII memorial and be sure to visit the gift shop.

Then on to the **Louise Wells Cameron Art Museum**, the pinnacle of visual arts in southeastern North Carolina, dedicated primarily to collecting, preserving and exhibiting the art of North Carolina. Also on the grounds of

the museum are restored Confederate defensive mounds built during the Battle of Forks Road in the last days of the Civil War.

Lunch among the sharks and other sea creatures at the **North Carolina Aquarium** at Fort Fisher. Be sure to ask about the **lighthouses** in neighboring area of **Southport** and **Bald Head Island**.

#### **Day Four**

##### **New Bern:**

Depart for **New Bern**, and while en route, we recommend a stop to visit **Poplar Grove Plantation**, a restored 19<sup>th</sup>-century peanut plantation. Then head to New Bern to spend an afternoon in this colonial capital of the Carolinas. Have lunch in the charming Chelsea Restaurant, then tour the restored **Tryon Palace** (North Carolina's first capitol) and view the town's beautiful historic district before heading to **North Carolina's Crystal Coast**, where you'll find plenty of opportunities to enjoy a seafood dinner on the water.

#### **Day Five**

##### **Beaufort:**

Finish your trip in **Historic Beaufort** and the **Beaufort Historic Site**. Beaufort is one of North Carolina's oldest towns, and its architecture, colonial history and colorful people tell its stories well. Be sure to stop and enjoy lunch at **Clawson's 1905**, home of a truly memorable seafood bisque.

For More Information:

The Greater Raleigh Convention & Visitors Bureau  
[www.visitraleigh.com](http://www.visitraleigh.com)

The Johnston County Visitor Bureau  
[www.johnstoncountync.org](http://www.johnstoncountync.org)

The Cape Fear Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau  
[www.cape-fear.nc.us](http://www.cape-fear.nc.us)

Crystal Coast Tourism Authority  
[www.sunnync.com](http://www.sunnync.com)