

# Lighthouses and Life Savers on the Outer Banks

Today, North Carolina's Outer Banks is famous for its beautiful lighthouses. Before sophisticated technology, however, these beacons of light were critical to seafarers, helping them keep their vessels from crashing on the dangerous shoals along the Banks. Also valuable was the lifesaving service, predecessor to the United States Coast Guard.

## 1-Day Itinerary

### Day 1

Outer Banks: Bodie Island, Hatteras, Ocracoke



*Time indicators are recommendations only. Feel free to spend as much or as little time as your schedule allows. Be sure to check days and hours of operation for each venue.*

### DAY 1

A short distance south of Nags Head sits the first of three lighthouses, **Bodie Island Lighthouse**. This 156-foot beacon began operation in 1872, and the original Fresnel lens is still in use today, flashing its 160,000-candlepower beacon 19 miles over the ocean.

**Time: 30 minutes**

Continue south across the Bonner Bridge over Oregon Inlet. Take notice of this migrating inlet: it is rapidly moving to the south. This is an ebb-dominated system, meaning more water flows out of the inlet than flows into it.

On Hatteras Island, visit **Chicamacomico Life Saving Station**, one of the original seven lifesaving stations built on the Outer Banks. Step back in time and view the historic building and boathouse that housed services that helped pave the way to the United States Coast Guard. Learn about daring ocean rescues by brave men who dedicated their lives to saving others at sea.

**Time: 1 hour**

Further south, in the village of Buxton, stands the tallest brick beacon on the American coast, standing at 208 feet. Experience the marvelous history of **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse** and learn about its half-mile move away from the ocean in the year 2000. Its beacon can be seen for 20 miles, warning of the perilous submerged sandbars where so many ships have floundered.

**Time: 1 hour**

Bring a picnic lunch and relax on a 45-minute ferry ride to historic **Ocracoke Island**. This is where the infamous pirate Blackbeard plundered many a ship and was eventually beheaded by a British naval captain in 1718 in a slough off the island.

In the fishing village of Ocracoke, you will find the charming **Ocracoke Lighthouse**. This Lighthouse is the oldest operating lighthouse in North Carolina and was the beneficiary of the first Fresnel lenses.

**Time: 30 minutes**

While in Ocracoke Village, visit the graves of four Royal Navy Sailors, whose ship was torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1942. The **British Cemetery**, a 12 x 14 foot plot of land adjacent to the island's cemetery, has since been given to Britain in honor of the men who died so far from their own shores. People were not the only shipwreck survivors who found their way to shore on Ocracoke. Stop by the pasture and keep your eyes peeled for one of the two-dozen **wild ponies** that still reside on the island today.

Catch the ferry back to Hatteras Island and witness the beauty of the barrier islands as you make your way back to shore. Keep your eyes open for the fishing fleet making her way back to Oregon Inlet Fishing Center from a day at sea.

After a splendid day of sightseeing, relax and enjoy fresh seafood from the Gulf Stream waters in one of the many locally owned restaurants.

For more information on these or other locations and events on the Outer Banks, please visit [www.outerbanks.org](http://www.outerbanks.org)