

Lighthouses From DC to Corolla

5 ½ hours/465 km

Day 1

Travel from Virginia to the Outer Banks of North Carolina



The North Carolina Outer Banks are a 320 km string of barrier islands along the Atlantic coast.

Arrive in Corolla and visit the **Wild Horse Sanctuary** on a tour to see the Spanish Mustangs. These wild horses are believed to be descendants of 16th century Spanish explorers looking for the new world.

Visit the only NC lighthouse that is still housed in its original structure. With construction completed in 1875, the **Currituck Beach Lighthouse** stands 48 meters tall and was the last major brick lighthouse built on the Outer Banks. The red brick structure, composed of over one million bricks, was left unpainted to distinguish it from other lighthouses. It still serves as a navigational aid today. Climb to the top of the lighthouse and browse the museum shop.

Travel south 45 km to the **Wright Brothers National Memorial** in Kill Devil Hills. It was here on a cold day in December 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright changed the world forever as their powered airplane, "the Wright Flyer," skimmed over the sands for 12 seconds before returning to the ground. Wander through the visitor center, which features full-scale reproductions of the 1902 glider and the 1903 flying machine built by the brothers. Explore the grounds and climb the 27 meter dune to the monument that marks the site where the Wright Brothers conducted many of their famous experiments in flight.

Just south of the Wright Brothers Memorial is the tallest sand dune on the U.S. East Coast at **Jockey's Ridge State Park**. Enjoy hang gliding demonstrations from the largest hang-gliding school in America, **Kitty Hawk Kites**. Watch the hang-gliders, do a bit of shopping, fly a kite or climb to the top of the dunes yourself.

Overnight in **Manteo** (15 min/21.7 km)



Day 2

Manteo to Hatteras



Stroll quaint Manteo, exploring the shops, boutiques and restaurants. Across the inlet, visit **Roanoke Island Festival Park**, an interactive family attraction that celebrates the first English settlement in America. Explore the evolution of Roanoke Island and the Outer Banks from the late 16th century. The site is home to the **Elizabeth II**, a vessel that represents the sailing ship that carried Sir Walter Raleigh's colonists across the Atlantic in 1585. While there, take time to walk around the water and marshes to observe wildlife that call this area home.

Also in Manteo is the **Fort Raleigh National Historic Site**, where Sir Walter Raleigh's explorers established a settlement in 1585. Stop at the **Visitors Center** to learn more about the settlement and their disappearance, earning their name, The Lost Colony. Stroll through the lovely Elizabethan Gardens located on the Fort Raleigh grounds, featuring the Sunken Garden and Queen's Rose Garden, as well as a variety of herbs, wildflowers, plants and graceful statuary commemorating Queen Elizabeth of England and the lost colonists.

Drive south 1 hour / 85 km onto Hatteras Island and explore the natural beauty of the **Cape Hatteras National Seashore**.

The first recommended stop is at the newly renovated **Bodie Island Lighthouse**. The black and white banded lighthouse was built in 1872 and is one of four lighthouses on the Outer Banks. The original lens is still in use today.

Visit the **Chicamacomico Life Saving Station**. View the historic building and boathouse that housed the precursor to the United States Coast Guard.

Overnight on Hatteras Island

Day 3

Drive along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore

As you continue south along the National Seashore, view the spectacular yet fragile natural beauty of the barrier islands. Buxton Village contains one of the nation's best-known landmarks, the magnificent **Cape Hatteras Lighthouse**. This black and white, spiral striped lighthouse holds the distinction of being the tallest brick lighthouse in the United States. The 368 steps of this national landmark are open to climbing in the summer months. While at the



lighthouse, be sure to stop in at the **Museum of the Sea**, housed in former lighthouse keepers' quarters.

Venture to the Village of Hatteras and board the free ferry for the 1/2-hour ride to Ocracoke Island, a favorite haunt of Blackbeard the Pirate, until his death there in 1718. Stop for lunch at a local eatery and wander through this quaint historic town.

In Ocracoke, stop at the **Ocracoke Lighthouse**, nestled in this quaint fishing village along Silver Lake. Built in 1823, this whitewashed tower is the oldest operating lighthouse on the North Carolina coast and the second oldest in the nation. It was the beneficiary of the first Fresnel lenses.

Overnight on Ocracoke

Day 4

Ferry from Ocracoke to Cedar Island (2.5 hours)

Catch the **Cedar Island Ferry** at the ferry terminal on the southernmost point of the island. Reservations are recommended (see contact information below) and you're on your way to the Crystal Coast. From the landing drive to **Beaufort** (pronounced "Bow-Fert") (1 hour/40 km). For reservations on the Cedar Island Ferry, visit <http://www.ncdot.org/ferry>

Arrive at the beautiful **Crystal Coast**, the Cape Lookout region of the southern Outer Banks. You are now on the mainland, and your drive is through great expanses of salt marsh, farmland and fishing villages to historic **Beaufort**. Along the way, notice the waterfowl art, decoy carving and boat building. The cultural heritage of the Down East region is on every front porch.



Begin your time in the Crystal Coast with a two-block walk to the **North Carolina Maritime Museum**. Self-guided or interpreted tours include exhibits of traditional boatbuilding and use. The collection includes artifacts of the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, the flagship of Blackbeard the pirate that was discovered in Beaufort Inlet in 1996. Most of the artifacts are now in the conservation process, but those ready for exhibition are on display. Blackbeard (Edward Teach) plundered many a ship and was eventually beheaded by a British naval captain in 1718. He had just returned to pirating after a hiatus during which he wed his 14th wife and took up residence in North Carolina for several months.

Wander through historic **Beaufort**. See restored buildings like the schoolmaster Samuel Leffers' cottage, the Old Jail, the Apothecary Shop or the 1796 Courthouse. Enjoy souvenir shopping at the **MD King Art Gallery** and the **Old Beaufort Gift Shop**, both located on the historic site.

On to **Fort Macon State Park**, a Civil War fort that serves as a reminder of the importance of the waterways to the history of this coastal area. Ranger programs can be arranged if you have a group. A gift shop and museum are on site.

Journey by boat to the **Cape Lookout Lighthouse** built in 1859, and while there see the **Shackleford Banks wild horses**, the only inhabitants of this pristine place. The horses are only 10-13 hands high – shorter than many ponies – but they are descended from domestic horses from Spain. Like the Spanish Mustangs in Corolla, they have been there for hundreds of years.

Arrive at the **Core Sound Waterfowl Museum** (located beside the Cape Lookout National Seashore Visitor Center). The museum houses a collection of valuable decoys, island heritage, culture and industry displays and a gift shop.

Walk to the **Cape Lookout National Seashore Visitor Center** for a discussion of lighthouse history (to schedule a visit, see contact information below).

Head to **Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild** where you'll meet carvers, see prized waterfowl carvings and decoys, visit the gift shop and enjoy stories and carving demonstrations. Carvers will explain how they learned their art and why it was so important in this island community.

Overnight on the Crystal Coast

Day 5

Drive to Wilmington (2.25 hours/169 km)



Wilmington is a hip and historic film town, home to **EUE Screen Gems**, the largest studio east of California. Open for tours on the weekends, you can see where blockbuster movies and television shows are made. The visitor center can also send you on a self guided tour around the area to view some of your favorite scenes from *One Tree Hill* and *Dawson's Creek*.

With a rich history, the Cape Fear River has served as a major port for hundreds of years and today is still one of the largest on the U.S. East Coast. Stroll along the riverwalk and up into the charming downtown area. Full of independent shops and restaurants, you can't beat the seafood prepared any way you want.

A short drive from downtown Wilmington is **Fort Fisher**. Before its January 1865 fall, **Fort Fisher** protected blockade runners en route to Wilmington. It was the largest earthen fort in the South. Tour the trail at the **Fort Fisher State Historic Site and Civil War Museum** that includes a reproduction of a big Rifled and Banded 32 Pounder Heavy Seacoast Cannon.

At the **Carolina Beach State Park**, wind your way through habitats along nature trails with more than 50 species of trees, shrubs and plants, including the Venus Flytrap – this is the only place in the world the carnivorous plant can be found growing indigenously.

Enjoy dinner in downtown Wilmington or oceanside in Wrightsville Beach.

Overnight in Wilmington

Day 6

Continue to South Carolina