

From Monster Trucks To Outdoor Drama: Three Days On The Northeast Coast

Currituck and Dare Counties are tucked into North Carolina's northeast corner, and feature fun on both the Inner and Outer Banks. Touch a monster truck, see where man first took flight, or climb to the top of a historic lighthouse. It's all possible on this three day trip!

3-Day Itinerary

Day 1

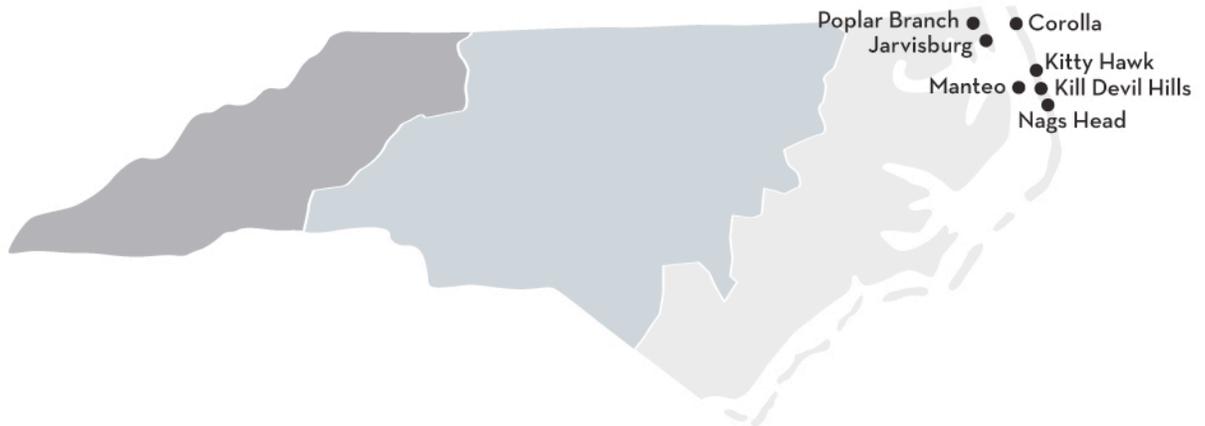
Get an up-close look at some monster trucks, sample local wine, and take in a toe-tapping musical performance.

Day 2

An historic lighthouse and some wild horses await in **Corolla** as you go as far north as the beach road will take you.

Day 3

Stand in the spot where Orville and Wilbur Wright made history, then explore an aquarium and find The Lost Colony.



With so much to see and do in the area, we recommend the following 3-day itinerary. Enjoy your visit by mixing and matching events to your particular interests. Be sure to check days and hours of operation for each venue.

Day One

If you're a monster truck fan, you probably already know all about The Grave Digger. But did you know that the original Grave Digger was built out of spare parts in an old garage in **Kill Devil Hills** in 1981? Today, you can learn all about the Grave Digger and the sport of monster trucks at the **Digger's Dungeon** on Highway 158 near **Poplar Branch**. You can buy Digger gear, take your picture with a monster truck, and maybe even get an autograph from Dennis or Adam Anderson, creators of the Grave Digger.

Those whose tastes run a little more genteel will find what they're looking for a little further south at **The Cotton Gin** in **Jarvisburg**. Here you will find room after room of collectable dolls, baskets of all sizes, stuffed animals, handmade quilts, Christmas ornaments, wooden crafts, and candles, all in a country market atmosphere. Also on the site is the **Sanctuary Vineyards**. Visitors can taste wines from the vineyard inside the Cotton Gin, and then view the three acres of land now growing Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Norton, Traminette and Chardonelle grapes.

Next, cross over Currituck Sound and into **Kill Devil Hills** for dinner at the **Outer Banks Brewing Station**, which in April 2008 became America's first wind powered brew pub. Stay for the live music here or wander over to the **Outer Banks Music Showcase** in nearby **Kitty Hawk**, home of regular family-friendly variety shows.

Day Two

Today, head north on Highway 12 all the way until it ends in the Outer Banks town of **Corolla**. So get out of the car and explore the beach! Corolla's beaches are clean and vast, with fine sand that gently slopes to the sea. If you have the time, go scouting for the wild horses that roam the coast here, descendants of Spanish Mustangs that survived shipwrecks in the 1600s. A local guide can help you find some of the 90 horses that remain in the herd.

Later, head back into town to see the **Historic Corolla Village**. Among the many things to see and do here are the **Currituck Beach Lighthouse**, which has guided ships in and out of Chesapeake Bay for more than a century. Climb the 214 steps of the lighthouse for amazing views of the Atlantic Ocean, Currituck Sound, and the Outer Banks, or explore the history of coastal lighthouses with the museum exhibits inside the base and the first two landings.

Also in the village is the historic **Whalehead Club**. The 21,000-square foot art nouveau home is decked out in bold yellow paint and a striking copper roof, restored to the way it looked when completed in 1925. Explore the unique history of this home and its original owners, Edward and Marie Louise Knight.

After a full day of experiencing Corolla, head back into **Kitty Hawk** and rest up for tomorrow.

Day Three

Start off the day at the **Wright Brothers National Memorial**. It was here, on these windy coastal hills on December 17, 1903, that Wilbur Wright made the world's first flight in a powered, controlled, heavier-than-air plane. You can feel history in the air as you walk the grounds of the memorial, gaze up at the 60-foot-high granite pylon and browse the exhibits on the painstaking process the Wright Brothers endured to get humanity off the ground.

Now go explore your own flights of fancy at **Jockey's Ridge State Park** in **Nags Head**. This is the tallest natural sand dune system in the Eastern United States, and one of the most significant landmarks on the Outer Banks. Fly a kite here or attach yourself to one and go hang gliding. Or, stay on the ground and take the **Tracks In The Sand**, a 1.5 mile hiking trail that takes you over the dunes to the soundside and back.

Head west on Highway 64 and stop for lunch at **Basnight's Lone Cedar Café**, located on the causeway between **Nags Head** and **Manteo**. Then, continue onto Roanoke Island and visit the **North Carolina Aquarium on Roanoke Island**, where you can get a closer look at the ecosystems that give the NC Coast its unique environment. You'll even see a one-third scale replica of the infamous ironclad the *USS Monitor*.

From there, head over to the **Elizabethan Gardens** created by the Garden Club of North Carolina. It's set up as a living tribute to the colonists who settled here in 1587 and then mysteriously disappeared. Highlights include the thatched gazebo, Shakespearean herb garden, antique garden statuary, flower-bordered walkways, and formal sunken garden.

While you're paying tribute to the Lost Colony, head on over to the **Roanoke Island Festival Park**, an interactive family attraction that celebrates the first English settlement in America. The centerpiece of this 25-acre park is the **Elizabeth II** – a re-creation of one of the seven English ships from the Roanoke Voyage of 1585. After a full day of exploration, grab some dinner in **Manteo**.

If you're visiting in the summer months, there's one more chance to experience the story of the first colonists – head to the **Waterside Theatre** and catch the outdoor drama **The Lost Colony**. The production recounts the actual historical events of the colony and combines it with the fictional story of the colonists' spirit, courage, and dreams of freedom. This was the first outdoor drama in the country and has been running for more than 70 seasons. With its spectacle of drama, dance and song, some say this production is the forerunner of the modern American musical.

Now, it's time to get some rest for your trip back to the mainland. But you're headed home with a personal glimpse into the unique people, places and history of this place we call the Northeast NC Coast!

For more information:

North Carolina's Northeast
www.visitncne.com

Currituck County Tourism Bureau
www.visitcurrituck.com

Dare County Tourism Authority
www.outerbanks.org

Where to Eat:

Outer Banks Brewing Station (Kill Devil Hills) – lunch, dinner
Basnight's Lone Cedar Café (Nags Head) – lunch, dinner

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