

May 13, 2011 - 2011 Summer Beach Guide

Chic at the Shore

The 'quiet resorts' are booming with summer fun that goes beyond the boardwalk

By Stephanie Citron, Special to The Baltimore Sun



Photo by Stephanie Citron

Sunny skies. Warm sand. A bottomless iced tea. An endless sunset.

You'll find all that and more in a visit to the Delaware coast, home to Lewes, Rehoboth Beach, Dewey Beach, Bethany Beach and Fenwick Island — a collection of historic towns that define summer at the shore.

Barely a three-hour drive from Baltimore, the area is the ideal spot for a perfect day at the beach. Each town offers its own distinctive vibe, as well as the adornments of tax-free shopping, inventive eateries and cultural, eco-friendly activities.

Bethany and Fenwick are the "quiet" ones, while Dewey has one of the most vibrant social scenes in the area. Rehoboth is quaint and sophisticated, with upscale shops, spas, galleries and eateries, plus a bustling boardwalk. Meanwhile, Lewes is a throwback to another beach era with its antique shops and museums,

So take your pick of Delaware's offerings. Below are five itineraries.

Girlfriends' getaway

The beach offers everything girlfriends need: fabulous shopping, blissful spas and adventurous dining, with a dreamy sun-sand backdrop. Book your stay at the Boardwalk Plaza Hotel's adults-only floor and enjoy access to the private rooftop pool and hot tub. (2 Olive Ave., Rehoboth, 302-227-7169, boardwalkplaza.com)

Yoga at the beach Grab your mat and towel and check out Sunrise Beach Yoga. (Dewey Beach between Dickinson and McKinley avenues, 302-645-2334, comfortzoneyogacenter.com)

Breakfast in the pink Try the Pink Grapefruit Brulee — half a grapefruit topped with caramelized sugar — or indulge in the Lemon Berry French Toast at oceanfront Victoria's in the Boardwalk Plaza.

Shop till you drop Explore chic boutiques Azura (139 Rehoboth Ave., 302-226-9650, azuraclimbing.net) and Cleo's (247 Rehoboth Ave., 302-227-6840, cleosrehoboth.com) amid Rehoboth's alluring alleyways before heading for the famed outlets. (36470 Seaside Outlet Drive, Rehoboth, tangeroutlet.com/rehoboth)

Get refreshed Order an Eastern Shore Crab Wrap and a fresh fruit salad from gourmet Grub Grocery before you and the girls head to the beach. (305 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth, 302-226-4782, grubgrocery.com)

Have a spa moment You'll emerge scrubbed, sparkling and smelling like a citrus garden from your tangerine and grapefruit body scrub (\$85) — featuring fresh fruit, sugar and almond oil — at Fusion Day Spa. (101 North Boardwalk, Rehoboth, 302-858-0772, fusiondayspas.com)

Make it a ladies night Dancing queens rock the night away at The Starboard bar and lounge. (2009 Coastal Highway, Dewey, 302-227-4600, thestarboard.com)

Romantic rendezvous

Long, lazy walks on beaches. Exploring avant-garde art galleries. Scenic epicurean eateries. Sexy spa treatments. Is there a more idyllic locale for a romantic interlude? To make it even more perfect, check into a sumptuous suite at The Bellmoor Inn & Spa. (6 Christian St., Rehoboth, thebellmoor.com).

Move in sync Paddle your kayaks past historic lighthouses and sites of maritime escapades on a "Kayak History Tour" led by Lewes historian Mike DiPaolo. (17252 N.Village Main Blvd., Lewes, 302-644-7020, questfitnesskayak.com/kayaking)

Rub along together Indulge in a couples massage and a dip in the Magnolia pool at The Bellmoor Spa. (6 Christian St., Rehoboth, 302-227-0323, thebellmoor.com)

Play house Tour the historic Homestead House with its art collection, acres of gardens, galleries and studios at the Rehoboth Art League. (12 Dodds Lane, Rehoboth, 302-227-8408 rehobothartleague.org)

Picnic on the beach Share a "beach food" picnic lunch of seafood wraps from Nourish Market while relaxing on the beach. (37385 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth, 302-227-6282 nourishingidea.com)

Shine a light on love Propose marriage atop Fenwick Island's picturesque lighthouse. (Coastal Highway, Fenwick Island, 302-539-1887 fenwickislandlighthouse.org) For more wow factor, hire a plane with a "pop the question" banner. (ocean-city.com/aerial.htm)

Dine under the stars Enjoy a sunset dinner in a private rooftop gazebo surrounded by bubbling fountains and koi ponds at Cultured Pearl. (301 Rehoboth Ave, Rehoboth, 302-227-8493, culturedpearl.us)

Cuddle up Relax as you enjoy a performance of Gershwin's dreamy "Words & Music" at Clear Space Theater. (20 Baltimore Ave., Rehoboth, 302-227-2270 clearspaceproductions.org).

Have a nightcap Ignore the chocolates waiting on your pillow. Head over to Espuma Martini Bar for a chocolate-covered raspberry martini. (28 Wilmington Ave., Rehoboth, 302-227-4199 espumarestaurant.com).

Family times

Southern Delaware is the ideal antidote for electronics-addicted kids and parents. Combine your visit with a stay at Sea Colony, a self-contained family resort in Bethany Beach featuring indoor/outdoor pools and activities, and you're all set for summer. (302-537-8888, resortquestdelaware.com/sea-colony-vacation-rentals.htm)

Have pancakes with a penguin At the Penguin Diner, there's a penguin paraphernalia shop to occupy the kids until they can order their Chocolate Chip Penguin Cakes. (105 Garfield Parkway, Bethany, 302-541-8017, penguindiner.com)

Set sail Take a pirate expedition aboard The Sea Gypsy. The kids receive hats and treasure maps, then battle pirates with water cannons and search for sunken booty. Tickets are \$25 and reservations are required. (Anglers Marina Lewes, 302-249-3538, piratesoflewesexpeditions.com).

Picnic and play Pick up freshly grilled cheese steaks at Dewey Beach Grill (Coastal Highway, Dewey, 302-227-8519 garysdeweybeachgrill.com) and head for Monigle Park, a family bayside beach with a warm, gentle tide. It's also a favorite recreation spot of local terrapins and colorful small fish. (Reed Street, Dewey, deweybeach.com/monigle-park) '

Hit the track There are go-karts and tracks for every age at Midway Speedway Park, which also has miniature golf and a new lazy river in its water park. Unlimited passes begin at \$25 and discount coupons are available on the website. (18645 Coastal Highway, Rehoboth, 302-645-8064 midwayspeedwaypark.com)

See a show Every night at 8 p.m., family-friendly theater and music performances are under the stars

at Freeman Stage. Tickets \$10-50. (36097 Sand Cove Road, Selbyville, 302-436-3015
freemanstage.org)

Adventure seekers

Active pursuits range from land sports to aquatic adventures along Delaware's beachfronts. Stay at the Avenue Inn (33 Wilmington Ave., Rehoboth, 302-226-2900, thevenueinn.com), which offers guests privileges at nearby golf and tennis clubs, and you've got it all covered.

Wake up on the water Take a sunrise kayak tour through bay coves, paddling past Delaware's two largest trees, estimated to be 750 years old. (Questfitness Kayak, 17252 N.Village Main Blvd., Lewes, 302-644-7020, questfitnesskayak.com)

Fuel up Stop in at Greenman Bistro for a power breakfast wrap made of sauteed organic veggies, tofu and fresh salsa, or a bowl of homemade granola. (12 Wilmington Ave., Rehoboth, 302-227-4909, greenmanjuicebar.com)

Get some wheels Bike to Go provides wheels, maps and guided tours for a vigorous 26-mile ride around Cape Henlopen State Park. Half-day rentals begin at \$25. (174 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth, 202-227-7600 biketogo.com)

Hang ten Cool off and get in touch with your inner "Dude" with surfing lessons at Bethany/Rehoboth Beach Boarding School. (302-745-5804, boardingschoolrb.com)

Go deep Embark on a deep-sea fishing expedition, complete with fish-finder radar and GPS plotters. (Anglers Fishing Center, Lewes, 302-644-5333, anglersfishingcenter.com) Bring your catch to Hook 'Em and Cook 'Em, which will fillet them. (39401 Inlet Road, Rehoboth, 302-226-8220, hookemcookem.com).

Loosen up Indulge in a well-deserved custom therapeutic massage at Avenue Day Spa. An 60-minute session is \$100. (110A Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth, 302-227-5649 avenuedayspa.com)

Surf and turf Swap fish and wave tales with the serious surfers at Nalu Surf Bar over a Big Kahuna Burger with pineapple Spam and lillikoi mustard and a Surfer's slush-lemonade and citrus vodka. (1308 Coastal Highway, Dewey, 302-227-1449, nalusurfbar.com).

—*Stephanie Citron*

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