

Celebrity traveler: Ocean City gets Kamenetz's vote

When it comes to vacation, Baltimore County executive picks classic shore destination

By Stephanie Citron, Special to The Baltimore Sun



Baltimore County Executive Kevin Kamenetz is a Marylander right down to his board shorts.

Born in Lochearn, he attend Gilman School, the Johns Hopkins University and the University of Baltimore School of Law. Elected county executive in 2010, he also served for 16 years as a county councilman.

So it's no surprise that when asked about his favorite vacation destination, he named the state's summertime staple, Ocean City.

He and his wife, Jill, "love to go to beaches," Kamenetz said. "We've always done that; we find them to be our most relaxing vacations. So, Ocean City has become our most reliable and quickest getaway."

We chatted with Kamenetz about his favorite vacation activities — and why he no longer bodysurfs.

How long have you been going down there?

Well, now we're into double digits. It has evolved from when we were single — in fact, we got engaged there.

You did?

Yes, on the beach at sunset.

What makes it a favorite destination?

We love the opportunity to sit and relax, catch up on our reading — someplace we can get to easily. Now, our time at the beach has evolved as our family has evolved. So in the beginning, Jill and I could just spend the entire day in our chairs on the beach and never get up.

And do your kids enjoy it too?

Once we had kids [they have two young sons, Karson and Dylan], we adapted our routine. With our firstborn, we were really careful about the sun — we brought this huge tent where we could put the baby [on the beach]. We were so worried about the waves, the sand and the sun. As the sun moved, we were trying to be diligent about keeping the tent situated over the baby [while] trying not to wake him up. We were both tugging at an opposite end of the tent, carrying it very carefully across the beach when we heard people around us laughing. We realized the baby had just rolled out of the back end and, luckily, landed in the sand. Its one of those things we can now laugh at.

But since then, we've gone from lugging all of the extra chairs and apparatus for the kids to making them lug it all.

What do the kids like to do on the beach?

We've done bodysurfing; early on I participated with them, but over the past couple of years I've learned that it's not a sport for parents. The last time I showed my older son, I ended up tearing up a tendon and found myself at Patient First. Now I just supervise from the sideline.

During what time of summer do you like to go to the beach?

We usually try to go at least once a month in June, July and August. It really makes us feel like we got away in the summer by taking a few shorter trips. We did do a quick getaway once in October. A rare heat wave had hit, and we have these great photos of us on the beach in bathing suits while the beach is totally empty.

Where do you like to stay?

In a condo around 100th Street. We have our favorite local haunts nearby. We usually end up meeting up with friends; there's always someone we know down there.

What do you do off the beach?

I've learned to scrape my body on the amusement rides. On days Jill wants to shop is the day I'll take the boys to the water park. It's really become a nice family tradition.

What are your favorite restaurants?

The best pizza is Lombardi's. We also love Fresco's at 82nd Street. Everything there is really good.

How about the boardwalk?

We have a routine on the boardwalk as well. It involves the kids going through all the games and video [amusements] and the rides. For years, the boys thought the boardwalk just had rides; they didn't know there were stores, or that it is a nice place to walk. Now that they are going for the scarier rides, I've sworn off all rides. Although I will do a Ferris wheel.

What is the one thing you won't travel without?

My BlackBerry. It's evolved from where I would read newspapers on the beach to where I just read my BlackBerry. And Jill is searching for a vacation spot that doesn't have Internet connectivity.

What do you like to read?

Jill's been good about reading books this past year; I've just been sticking with current events.

Where else do you like to go on vacation?

We like to travel, and we generally pick warmer, sunnier spots — like Florida and the Caribbean. We try to get away as much as we can. Usually short trips; I can't go for long periods.

If you go

Lodging

Obviously, there are plenty of accommodations to choose from in Ocean City. You can choose to stay in a hotel or a motel, or rent a condominium or a private house. There are many websites where you can search by location (such as bayside, oceanfront or a specific block), by price, by the number of bedrooms and by the type of lodging. Go to ococean.com/accommodations.

Dining

Fresco's, 8203 Coastal Highway, 410-524-8202, ocfrescos.com. Kevin Kamenetz' favorite Ocean City dining spot offers spectacular sunsets over the Assawoman Bay. Dinner entrees begin at \$18.

Trattoria Lombardi's Family Restaurant, 94th Street Shopping Center, 410-524-1961, lombardisrestaurant.com. This old-school Italian restaurant serves traditional thin-crust pizza and entrees featuring local seafood.

Don't miss

The boardwalk USA Today named it one of the nation's "Top 10 Great Boardwalks." Its 3-mile stretch provides a place for early-morning bike rides, as well as opportunities to see street performers, go to amusements and shops, and eat beach food. ocboards.com

Surfing Learn to hang 10 by taking lessons from an expert, for about \$60 per person, available 8 a.m.

and 9 a.m. Arrange for lessons through Malibu Surf Shop, 410-289-3000. Go to malibus.com/lessons.

Sundaes in the Park This family event combines a free concert, kids entertainment and ice cream on Sundays at 7 p.m. in July and August. Northside Park, 126th Street (bayside). 410-250-0125 or go to atlanticbreezes.com/sundaesinthepark.htm

Free movies on the beach at 27th Street, 8:30pm, Monday-Friday, June 25-Aug.10. 800-626-2326.

Information

For more on visiting Ocean City, go to ococean.com.

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