

# EXCURSIONS

## Fun in the sun

Take a trip to the Jersey Shore

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WeekendPlus Writer

Thanks to the Jersey Shore, tourism is now our state's second largest industry. Ocean County, the second largest, and fastest growing county in New Jersey brags of 45 miles of white, sandy beaches. Easily accessible from all areas north, south, and west of the state via the Garden State Parkway, the lure of the Jersey Shore is always the magnificent sight of the ocean.

"Figures for summer rental properties are up 40% from last year," claims Jeanne De Poola executive director of the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce. "People are coming from all around, in spite of the recession."

No matter where you live, you're always ready for the beach.

Cars travel down the Parkway stacked with surf boards, beach chairs, bed rolls and suitcases. Kids and coolers queue behind toll plazas searching for the soothing smell of salt air and calming ocean breezes available only at the Jersey Shore.

The disjointed coastline runs from Sandy Hook to Cape May.

If overnight stays are not in your budget, plan day trips to the varied beaches. Long Branch, once the summer location for three United State Presidents Wilson, Grant and Garfield offers two miles of boardwalk where you can still sample the Shore's best hot dog at "Max's." Yes, there are some fine restaurants in the area and of course Race Track buffs can catch the daily double at Monmouth Park.

Driving south of Long Branch on Ocean Avenue visitors tend to become overwhelmed by the sight of tremendous manicured lawns and huge Victorian and southern-styled mansions. The town is Deal. A hidden secret is Phillips Beach. For about five dollars patrons can purchase a locker and swim in secluded surroundings. A snack bar, on the premises serves light meals, refreshing drinks, yogurt and icecream. The same fare is available at Loch Arbour. Management does not welcome picnic diners, although many do bring sandwiches and fruit purchasing drinks and dessert from the vendors.

Waves do break at the small, residential towns of Ocean Grove, Bradley Beach, Avon by the Sea, Belmar, Spring Lake, Sea Girt, Manesquan and Brielle. You'll notice, the farther south you go, there will be more room to spread your blanket. Belmar is the most tourist-orientated place with oceanfront motels, amusement parks and boardwalks.

Don't despair if the beaches seem too crowded in Belmar. Go fishing. Belmar has the largest party boat fleet in New Jersey and Manesquan has the Manesquan inlet. While there, you can fish or watch the boats pass by in the popular waterway.

If neither appeal to you, take your bicycle and ride through the area.

Should you be searching for the calm and wonder of Nantuckett or Marthas Vineyard, go no further than Bayhead. Beaches are less crowded. Drive further south on Route 35 and be awed by the magnificent homes overlooking the ocean and bay at Mantoloking.

Yes, there is Jersey Shore Honky Tonk. Seaside Heights is nearly as famous as its south shore neighbor Wildwood. The town is small, but packed with action. Visitors spend the day at the beach, and head for the boardwalk at night. Blaring music, rides, arcades, wheels of chance



Relax in the sun and stroll on the beach at the Jersey Shore, a luxury too many New Jersey natives fail to take advantage of.

and fast food places crowd the one mile strip.

John Milko from Iselin, loves Wildwood. "I love the wheels of chance." You can win anything from a stuffed teddy bear to a television set or CD Player. Prices for the games of chance range from a quarter to a \$1.00. The nightlife is just as exciting as the daylife, with different types of bands playing music from Rock to the fifties and sixties.

When asked about the girls, Johns reply was, "They're beautiful, simply beautiful."

But if you want ultimate pleasure, take a summer day or two and spend it on Long Beach Island. Give yourself a well-deserved mini-vacation. Directions are easy. Take the Garden State Parkway South to exit 63. Turn right on Route 72 and follow the road over the Causeway. Open your car window and take a deep breath. You are about to enter the Jewel of the Jersey coast. Once you hit the Island, you have several choices. Beach Haven is to the right, and Shipbottom, Surf City, North Beach, Harvey Cedars, Loveladies and Barnegat Light are to the left. There are 18 miles of beach, waiting to welcome you. Ride through the towns, and take your choice. Purchase a beach badge from any borough office for just \$2. Senior citizens are admitted free of charge.

Catering to kids, Beach Haven offers the greatest variety of things to do. Fantasy Island Amusement Park features rides and an arcade. Nearby is the islands only waterslide. There are shops for antiques and fashions on almost every corner. Schooners Wharf, Pier 18, (the place for interesting boutiques) and the Dollar Parlor, where no item costs more than three dollars will offer treasures well under your budget.

Find a beach and work on your tan. Cool yourself in the warm waters of the Atlantic, gather shells or try your hand at crabbing.

Everything on Long Beach Island is very casual, including the food. There are places for seafood, ethnic, gourmet, sandwiches or whatever you choose to pack in your cooler. No, you can't have your lunch on the beach, but, there are picnic benches scattered about.

Like all places at the Jersey shore, motels are everywhere. The "vacancy" sign is usually lit during the week. Treat yourself to a one night stay. For weekend excursions, you must guarantee two nights. Prices vary.

Take an outside shower. Take a nap. Have dinner and head for a mini treat. Stop at the "Surf City Five and Ten." Drive down Long Beach Boulevard to Beach Haven. Head for a forbidden delight: a delicious ice cream cone. Don't be intimidated by the crowd at "Skipper Dipper."

Stroll the beaches. Play miniature golf. Visit friends. Find a bench by the seaside and dream. You owe it to yourself to spend a wonderful summer day, deep in the heart of New Jersey.

Mark your calendar

## Priest and conductor

A "Meet the Conductor" opportunity with a unique artist highlights the final of the four "Month of Sundays" events sponsored by Apollo Muses at the Lu Shan Farm in Gladstone.

Sunday, July 26, the program kicks off at 1 p.m. with the New Jersey Shakespeare Festival Next Stage Ensemble. At 2 p.m., Father Alphonse Stephenson will discuss his dual career as priest and conductor of the Orchestra of St. Peter by the Sea (and previous conductor of A Chorus Line on Broadway). After the traditional refreshment break, where artist mingle with the crowd, there will be a piano recital of French music performed by Frank Daykin.

Reservations are required. For more information, call (908) 800-2428.

## Peter's Valley Craft Fair

Scenic Peter's Valley, on the Delaware Water Gap in Northwest New Jersey in Layton, is the site of the Peter's Valley Craft Fair, which will be held July 25 from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on July 25 and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on July 26.

The event features live music, demonstrations, raffles, food and 145 craftspeople exhibiting jewelry, basketry, ceramics, weaving, fiber arts, photography, metal, leather, wood, glass and more. Tickets are \$5 (\$4 for seniors), with free admission for children under 12 and free parking. For more information, call (201) 948-5200.

## Duke Island Pops concert

The New Jersey Pops Orchestra will perform a free program of popular music, including the "1812 Overture" and the themes from Star Wars and Rocky at Duke Island Park in Bridgewater on Sunday, July 26. The music begins at 7 p.m. — bring your own blankets and chairs. For more information, call (908) 722-1914.

## Kid Stuff

### AESOP'S FABLES

Sunday, Aug. 9, 1:30 p.m.  
Theatre at Raritan Valley  
Community College  
Route 28, Branchburg  
(908) 725-3420  
•Great tales from Greece, presented with puppets. Admission \$6.

### BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Aug. 7, 9:30 and 11 a.m.  
Bucks County Playhouse  
70 South Main St.  
New Hope, Pa.  
(215) 862-2041  
•Stage presentation of the fairy tale on which the animated movie was based. Admission \$6.

### CINDERELLA

\$4.50.  
July 28, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.  
Morris Museum  
6 Normandy Heights Rd.  
Morristown  
(201) 538-0454  
•Fairy tale brought to life with music. Admission \$6.25.

### THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

July 28 and 29, 8 p.m.  
Edison School  
800 Rahway Ave., Westfield  
(908) 322-5065  
•Famous tale whose moral is all too telling. Adults \$5, senior citizens and students \$3.

### THE JUNGLE BOOK

July 30 and 31, both days at 1 and 8 p.m.  
Westfield High School  
550 Donan Rd., Westfield  
(908) 322-5065  
•Rudyard Kipling's tales from Africa, brought to life with music. Admission \$5, discounts available.

### KIDS ON BROADWAY

July 24, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m.  
Bucks County Playhouse  
70 South Main St.  
New Hope, Pa.  
(215) 862-2041  
•Show tunes sung by an all-children cast. Admission \$4.50.

### THE WIZARD OF OZ

Tuesday, Aug. 4, 11 a.m.  
Forum Theatre  
314 Main St., Metuchen  
(908) 548-0582  
•Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and all the cast heading down the Yellow Brick Road. Admission \$6.