

NEW JERSEY LIFE

Health Beauty

Ready, set,
SUMMER!

SHORE ESCAPES
BEST PLACES TO EAT,
PLAY, STAY + RELAX

GET WET
WORKOUT

GLORIOUS
FOOD
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Tomato Tart,
Peach Salsa +
Cocktails Go "Green"

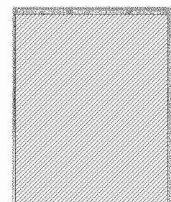
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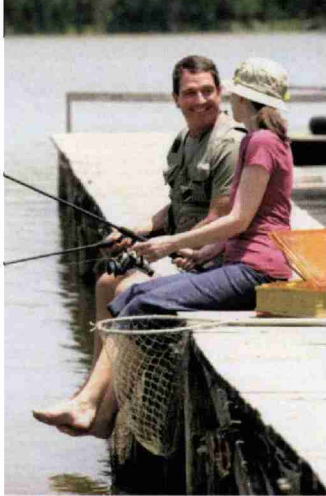
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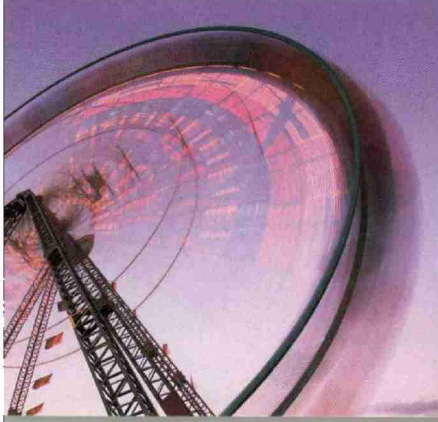
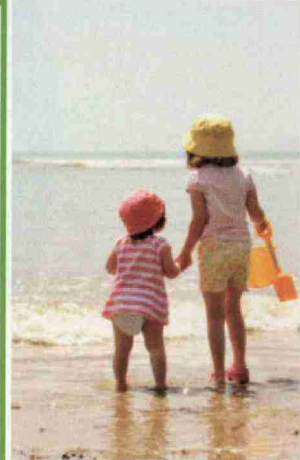


HOW TO HAVE THE Perfect Summer

(AS MAGICAL AS WHEN YOU WERE A KID)

Remember those carefree days of summer vacation, eating festive foods, playing with friends outdoors, feeling the warm sun on your back? Who says the fun has to end when you grow up? This year, recapture the spirit of good old-fashioned summertime. Here are some ideas to get you started.

by Nancy A. Ruhling



Picnic with Friends

For a dramatic backdrop for your picnic spread, few locations come close to the **Delaware Water Gap**, which cuts through a forested mountain ridge.

A picnic is as American as, well, apple pie, and what better way to embrace your patriotic spirit than by taking the ferry to **Liberty State Park** and having lunch in view of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.

At the **Brendan T. Byrne State Forest** in New Lisbon, you can hike across acres of Atlantic white cedar via sandy trails and roads that pass by the remains of the stone or brick buildings that once were the heart of a vibrant town. Then, rest at the picnic areas, which are equipped with tables and grills.

Take a drive to the **Round Valley Recreation Area** in Lebanon, the site of the state's deepest lake, where you can swim, boat, fish, or hike the perimeter. Spend your picnicking afternoon at one of three prime spots: two on tree-shaded grassy knolls and a third on a hill overlooking the reservoir and park. If you want a repeat performance, pitch a tent for the night.

Make Summer Fruit Treats

Summer is jam-making time for Will Mooney, co-owner and executive chef of The Brothers Moon in Hopewell. "I tend to freeze or refrigerate jams instead of bottling them," he says. "But bottling is a great way to save these treats, and you can give them as gifts." Here are two of his favorite recipes. Find more on njlhb.com.

Peach Chutney

"This is especially good with terrines, grilled chicken, or lamb," Mooney says.

Yields 2 1/2 cups

- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp finely chopped garlic
- 2 shallots, finely diced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded, and diced
- 1 1/2 lbs fresh peaches, blanched, skinned & diced
- 1/2 cup sugar

- 1/4 cup brandy
- 1/2 cup cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp salt
- 1/2 tsp pepper

1. Melt butter, add garlic, shallots, and jalapeño and sweat for 1 to 2 minutes.
 2. Add diced peaches. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes.
 3. Add sugar, deglaze with brandy and vinegar.
 4. Cook on low heat until peaches are soft.
 5. Season with salt and pepper.
- Refrigerate for up to 3 weeks.

Simple Blueberry Jam

"Blueberry jam is special because it's such a great way to save the great New Jersey berry into the fall and later," Mooney says.

Yields approximately 1 quart

- 3 cups blueberries
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 tsp fine grated apple peel
- 4 tsp lemon juice

Place a spoon in ice water to chill for testing jam. Pulse blueberries in a food processor until some of the berries are broken up and start to release their juice.

Add sugar and apple peel to crushed berries and stir to combine. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat in a heavy-bottomed pot. Boil vigorously, stirring frequently, until jam reaches its setting point, about 15 minutes. (Bubbles will rise to the surface of the pan; if they get too high, carefully stir jam until they decrease.)

Once the jam reaches 230° F, start checking to see whether it is properly set by conducting the spoon test: Scoop out a spoonful of jam and wait until it reaches room temperature, about 1 minute. Draw your finger through jam. If it immediately runs back together, it is not ready. Once jam is ready, remove from heat and stir in lemon juice.

Bottle as per instructions or refrigerate and consume in a week.

Fine-Dine Alfresco

The Bernards Inn,

Bernardsville. Sit under an umbrella on the terrace and sample the seared ahi tuna with grilled watermelon, homegrown nasturtiums, and sesame in black truffle and miso vinaigrette.

Stone House at Stirling

Ridge, Warren. Roast marshmallows in the fire pits, sit at the illuminated water table that has a flowing stream down the center and watch the night sky from the new Star Room Patio. Or lounge, drink in hand, on the throw pillows in the chic cabanas.

Rat's Restaurant at

Grounds For Sculpture, Hamilton. Choose a seat at happy hour and watch the mist rise over Philip Grausman's 9-foot, cast-aluminum bust of "Leucantha" in a pond framed by weeping willows. The new seasonal, handcrafted cocktails, which include Cucumber Gimlet (organic-crop vodka or gin) and High Tea (jasmine tea, Limoncello, gin, and honey), pair well with the halibut.

Mediterra, Princeton. In the heart of Palmer Square, you dine to the rhythm of the street, with the summer sky as your stage. Grab a sangria and go for the paella or the ever-popular tapas.

Host a Stylish Backyard Soiree

Get grilling! **Lynx's** line of "Easy Lift" gas grills, which include a char-grilling area and lighted hoods, make barbecuing as easy as summer living. (Karl's Appliance, Fairfield, Madison, Orange, Paramus, and Sparta) Be the center of attention at your cookouts with a **Weber Summit Grill**

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Go Fish!

New Jersey's Free Fishing Days during National Fishing and Boating Week are a great excuse to sit waterside on June 11 and 12. On these days, you can fish in any of the state's waters without a license or trout stamp.

Center with Social Area, which is designed as a 9-foot by 6-foot, L-shaped island that includes a grill, side burner, ice bin, trash can, and condiment area. (Mrs. G TV & Appliances, Lawrenceville)

Serve up a cold brew deck-side. **Perlick's 24-inch, stainless-steel refrigerated beer dispenser**, whether freestanding or built into the backyard bar, is the life of the party. (Reno's Appliance, Fairfield and Paterson)

Extend the season with **Dayva's Tower of Fire**, a portable heater that brings a dramatic display of glass-enclosed flames to every event. (Morris Plains Pelican Ski, Pool & Patio)

Play Your Way Around the Fair and Festival Circuit

Southern rock and Southern cookin' comes to North Jersey at **Rock, Ribs & Ridges** at The Hidden Valley Club in Vernon. (June 11-12, rockribsandridges.com)

The 25th annual **State Fair** at the Meadowlands is a family-friendly affair that features free entertainment. (June 24-July 10, njfair.com)

Soar to new heights at the 29th annual **QuickChek**

New Jersey Festival of Ballooning at Solberg Airport in Readington; it's the largest summertime hot-air balloon and music festival in North America. (July 29-31, balloonfestival.com)

The **New Jersey State Fair** at the Sussex County Fairgrounds is the real-deal country fair, complete with animals, shows, down-home contests, pageants, and food, food, food. (Aug. 5-14, newjerseystatefair.com)

Take Me Out to the Ballgame!

Did you know that America's favorite pastime got its start in New Jersey? The first officially recorded, organized match — in 1846 — was played under Alexander Joy Cartwright's rules on **Hoboken's Elysian Fields**. The New York Base Ball Club defeated the Knickerbockers, 23-1. The state's minor league teams — Lakewood BlueClaws, Trenton Thunder, Somerset Patriots, Newark Bears, and the New Jersey Jackals — name a few — offer a great time out with family and friends. Besides the summer night games, the stadiums offer fan contests, refreshments, and fireworks.

Make it a doubleheader:

Hit the tourist attractions on game day. For example, when you make a date to see the **Camden Riversharks**, take a tour of the **Battleship New Jersey** and check out the live sharks at the adjacent **Adventure Aquarium**.

Ahh...Escape with Great Hammock- or Beach-Reads

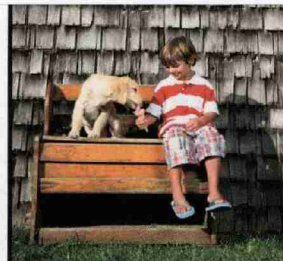
Get lost in these books written by N.J. authors or set in the Garden State:

What a Difference a Dog Makes: Big Lessons on Life, Love and Healing from a Small Pooch, by Dana Jennings of Montclair. Bijou is Jennings' sage miniature poodle, from whom he draws strength and a positive outlook.

The Uncoupling, by Meg Wolitzer. Beds grow cold across a tidy N.J. suburb as the town's women mysteriously experience a sudden lack of passion — and start rejecting their men.

Eyes of the Innocent, the latest mystery by former *Star-Ledger* reporter Brad Parks; the action takes place in — where else? — Newark.

In **Widow's Lament**, prolific Hopewell Township author Joyce Carol Oates abandons fiction for a more personal pursuit: a memoir.



Lick N.J.'s Best Ice Cream Cones

Baumgart's Café, Edgewater, Englewood, Livingston, and Ridgewood. Check out the weekly specials, go for the homemade standards (strawberry, raspberry, and pecan) or select the sorbets (orange or boysenberry).

The Bent Spoon, Princeton, has more than 450 ice cream and sorbet flavors that are served at a warmer temperature to bring out the texture and flavor. Made with local ingredients, there's something new every week. Try the organic blueberry Sweet Sourland Farms maple syrup ice cream, Terhune Orchards nectarine sorbet, or sweet organic-basil ice cream.

Hoffman's Ice Cream and Yogurt, Point Pleasant Beach, Spring Lake Heights, and Little Silver. Rekindle memories of family vacations at the Shore. This summer, look for two of last year's popular flavors of the month — key lime pie and toasted coconut — to be served up all season.

New Jersey-based **Cowabunga Ice Cream** is "designer" ice cream, handmade in 5-gallon batches. The mint chocolate chip is a cool breeze on a hot day; the strawberry probiotic-enriched fat-free frozen yogurt is berry-fresh. cowabungaicecream.com

Pick the Perfect Watermelon

How do you know when a watermelon is ripe? Listen for the ring tone. "I learned this trick when I was a kid: Tap it with your fingers, and when you hear a sharp ring, it's ripe for the picking," says Jim Abma, owner of Abma's Farm Market & Nursery in Wyckoff.

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Climb a Tree

Peter Avelar and Efrain J. Beltre, founders of NJNY Tree Climbing Adventures (njnytreeclimbing.com), have scaled trees all over the state. They play it safe and say you should, too: Get the proper training before tackling the branches. "Recreational tree climbing offers climbers a true bird's-eye view of the forest canopies while allowing you to test your physical strength and endurance," Avelar says. "Climbers may find that they work muscle groups that they may never have worked before." Adds Beltre, "It's relaxing and gives relief from the daily stresses of life. It also provides another excuse to play outdoors and have fun in nature!"

Take a Joyride

Borrow, rent, or buy these summer-fun cars for:

Road trips Mercedes-Benz SLK350 Roadster, Corvette convertible, BMW M3 convertible, Porsche 911 Carrera S Cabriolet
Picnics Jeep Rubicon, Cadillac CTS-V Coupe or Wagon, Fiat 500C, Volvo C70 convertible

Celebrate the Dog Days

In the dog days of summer, Fido deserves some fun, too. **Grab the leash and head to the dog park.** (Visit njlhb.com for one close to you.) Kristen Ripberger, DVM, of Harlingen Veterinary Clinic in Belle Mead, offers these tips for safe socialization and your own sanity:

- Prescreen the park for possible danger and monitor the other dogs'

temperament before letting your dog run.

- Don't mix large and small dogs; look for parks that have special spaces for each size.
- Check the fence height and depth; you don't want your dog to get out.
- Get your kennel cough vaccine and heartworm preventatives and keep your dog away if there's an outbreak of illness.
- Set up play dates with dogs you know.

Light Up the Night

What's summer without fireworks? Mark your calendar for the best across the Jersey night skies.

If you enjoy fireworks, you know it doesn't get any better than those orchestrated by the famous Grucci Brothers. Catch their awe-inspiring display at **Music At Moorland**, Moorland Farms in Far Hills on June 23. The 10th annual

benefit for the Somerset Medical Center Foundation also features open-air dining and classical music by the **New Jersey Symphony Orchestra**.

KaBoomFest (July 1-3) features live performances and family-friendly entertainment leading up to the July 3 Fireworks on the Navesink in Red Bank.

Frank Sinatra Park in Hoboken is a great vantage point to see Macy's 4th of July fireworks display over the Hudson River.

Oceanfest in Long Branch, an all-day, family-friendly festival on July 4, ends with the most spectacular fireworks display on the Jersey coast.

Attend an Old-Fashioned July 4 Parade

Jazz up your bikes with red, white, and blue; blow your kazoos; let your kids bang pots and pans; or don your Rollerblades at Bikes Etc.'s **"Everything Push, Pedal, or Pull Parade"** in Maplewood.

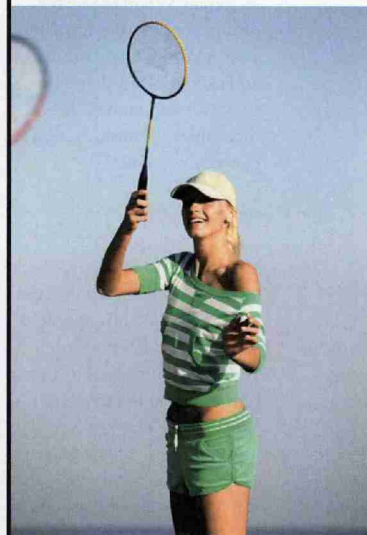
For "The Parade Capital of New Jersey," July 4th is only one of many excuses to hold a parade in **North Wildwood**. The red-white-and-blue theme rules, and prizes are given for the best-decorated bikes, strollers, and wagons.

Founded in 1894, the **Ridgefield Park Independence Day parade** is the oldest in the state and one of the older ones in the nation. It's two parades in one: After a flag-raising

Play Outdoor Games

Summer's the time to burn calories – so says Dr. Damion A. Martins, medical director of sports medicine and executive health at Atlantic Sports Health in Morristown. Martins, who's also director of internal medicine for the New York Jets, crunches the numbers. Here are the average calories a 140-pound woman burns per hour doing these activities:

Croquet: 162
Frisbee: 189
Horseshoes: 189
Walking (at 3 mph): 207
Biking (for leisure, less than 10 mph): 252
Badminton: 284
Jogging (at 5 mph): 504
Ultimate Frisbee: 504
Running a 9-minute mile: 698



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ceremony, there's the Baby and Youth Parade, and then the Civic Parade. Get set for decorated carriages, elaborate floats, tricked-out bicycles, and enough displays of patriotism to make our Founding Fathers proud.

Build Your Best Sand Castle

Get ready for the **New Jersey Sandcastle Contest**, July 13 in Belmar (njsandcastle.com), with these tips from Matt Long, professional sand sculptor and contest participant: "Start with a good foundation. Make a small mound in the sand, add a lot of water, and pound with your hands to pack it tightly. Use forms, which are essentially paint buckets with the bottoms removed, to get the elevations. Invert the form on the pile and fill it with sand and lots of water, tapping it down as you go. When the water drains, start sculpting, using your hands, kitchen utensils, and sand tools to shape the castle's components." See these instructions in action at canyoudigit.com.

Go Sailing

With more than 30 boats, the family-owned and -operated **Nelson Sailing Center** in Island Heights has the largest rental fleet in the tri-state area. sailingschoolnj.com

New Jersey Sailing School & Charter in Bricktown is the state's oldest sailing school, and its instructors have won

the most American Sailing Association awards in New Jersey. It offers private and group lessons, plus ocean training, classroom courses, racing and day-sailing trips. njsailingschool.com

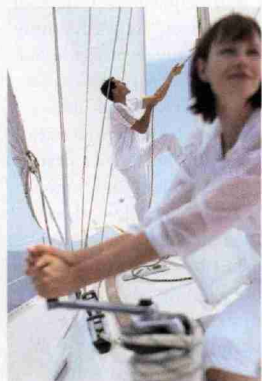
Since 1964, Steve and Doris Colgate, authors of several sailing textbooks, including *Fast Track to Sailing*, have been offering sailing instruction and vacations at the **Offshore Sailing School** at Liberty Landing Marina, Liberty State Park. Steve, an award-winning sailor who was a member of the 1968 U.S. Olympic sailing team, participated in the America's Cup trials and in Transatlantic Races. offshoresailing.com

Prefer to Watch?

Mark your calendar for these sailing events:

June 5: **14th annual Barnegat Bay Festival**, Barnegat Bay

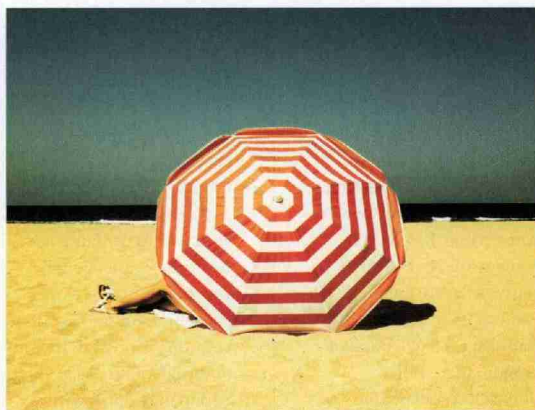
Sept. 10: **Toms River Rotary Club's Sailfest**, sailboat regatta and street fair, Island Heights



Best of the Beach

The Jersey Shore offers more reasons than ever to visit this summer (as if you needed them), with swanky accommodations, ample activities, and delicious, healthy eats. For our favorites, dig in:

by Laura Kiniry and Liz Donovan



Explore the Shore

Scale a climbing wall, scream your way through an upside-down roller coaster, and see the sights aboard a gigantic open-car Ferris wheel on the boardwalk at **Wildwood's Mariner's Landing Pier**. Or rent a beach cruiser from **Surf Buggy Center** (surfbuggycenters.com) in Ocean City and Sea Isle City and pedal along with the ocean breeze. After exploring the boards in

the a.m., ride over to Ocean City's cycle-friendly **Haven Avenue** (bikeocnj.org); look for the colorful mural depicting casual bicyclists and road racers at 15th and Haven. More the water type? **Aqua Trails** (aquatrails.com) hosts guided kayaking tours through Cape May salt marshes, while the intrepid may opt for **Harbor Outfitters'** (harboroutfitters.com) stand-up paddle boarding (SUP) lessons. The company also hosts SUP yoga workshops

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for those who want to practice their downward-facing dog. Drive directly from the road to the sand at **Gateway Sandy Hook, Brigantine Beach**, or **Island Beach State Park**, all of which allow four-wheel-drive vehicles on the beach with a permit. Equestrians can go for a scenic gallop at **Island Beach State Park** — the only state park in New Jersey that allows horses on the beach.

Family-fun and informative, **Sea Isle City's guided beachcombing tours** feature a "Shell & Tell" and tips on protecting the area's endangered sea turtles. LBI's **Alliance for a Living Ocean** (livingocean.org) offers several eco-friendly activities, including the kid-centric Sea Critter Round-Up — a hands-on seining of the bay that often turns up needle fish and sea horses. In Ocean City, parents of young children can take their kids on a pirate-themed voyage aboard **The Sea Dragon** (609.398.7555, piratevoyages.com), where they will help defend the ship and find an underwater treasure (and maybe even watch a scallywag shipmate walk the plank).

Stay In Style

Boasting Egyptian-cotton sheets (woven in Italy) in every room and rain-forest showerheads and river rock floors in the bathrooms, **The Hotel Tides** (hoteltides.com) brings glamour and comfort to your Asbury Park

Best Beaches

To see the sun rise: **Sandy Hook** See the sun set: **Sunset Beach**
 Get away from the crowds: **Brigantine**

beach vacation. Outdoors, luxuriate in the heated pool surrounded by lush, regional grasses. Afterward, enjoy a facial or massage at the spa.

Go surfer-chic at **Bungalow** (bungalowhotel.net) in Long Branch, which appeals to those with a modernist aesthetic. With more than 50 works of original art throughout, this luxury boutique hotel is a vacation for your eyes. A bonus: Guests get access (for a small fee) to Le Club's private beach and it's also steps away from cafes and upscale shops stocking French Connection and Juicy Couture.

Blue Bay Inn (bluebayinn.com) in Atlantic Highlands is a boutique hotel well situated if you love culture and appreciate luxury. The hotel showcases original art and uniquely designed guest rooms. Close by are attractions such as the Red Bank Antiques Center and the Count Basie Theatre.

Seaside Tastes Foodies Will Love

Keep the relaxed vibe going with dinner at all-vegetarian **Kaya's Kitchen** (kayaskitchenbelmar.com) in Belmar. Its pineapple curry is delish!

At **The Coal House** (thecoalhouse.com) in Point Pleasant Beach, dine on hot panini sandwiches filled with roasted red peppers and fresh mozzarella, or join your friends around a table for a large coal-fired pizza encrusted with rosemary, thyme, and oregano. (It even offers vegan, gluten-free, and whole-wheat varieties.)

With free Wi-Fi and tasty wraps, **Twisted Tree Café** (twistedtreecafe.com) in Asbury Park is ideal for whiling away a rainy afternoon. On the run? Order one of its all-natural fruit smoothies (try the Grasshopper!) to go.

Seafood at **Salty's Seafood Market** (732.899.1122) in Point Pleasant is fresh from the boat. In fact, attached to the store is the **Fishermen's Dock Cooperative**, which has been in existence since the '50s and includes many third- and fourth-generation fishermen. Take your food to-go or dine at one of the restaurant's picnic tables. Connoisseurs of clam chowder will appreciate the creamy variety as an indulgent appetizer to the fresh-caught fish specials served up at **The Clam Bar at Smith's Marina** (609.927.8783) in Somers Point (you'll sound like a local if you call it simply "Smitty's"). Expect a wait — unless you order takeout and eat on the picnic benches outside — but patrons agree it's well worth it. Pick up fresh seafood in Manahawkin at **The Mud City Crabhouse** (mudcitycrabcakeco.com), which offers both a fish market and a restaurant, but you'd be remiss to leave



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without sampling the crab cakes here.

Being at the beach means you have the right to be a little lazy. Have your lunch delivered to your beach chair from **Fins** (finsusa.com) in Bradley Beach. The tropical-themed restaurant has a menu that goes beyond cheesesteaks and fries, with everything from seared-tuna tacos to nonfat yogurt smoothies. Health food aficionados can swing by **The Bashful Banana Bakery & Cafe** (bashfulbananacafe.com) on the Ocean City boardwalk for a vegetarian/vegan lunch, topped off with the restaurant's famous Banana Whip. (Tip: order it with peanut chips and all-fruit fudge sauce.)

Relax and Imbibe

Even day-trippers can kick back at the beachfront **Ocean Place Tiki Bar** (800.411.6493), where white apple sangria is served among swaying palm trees. Or head to **Langosta Lounge** (langostalounge.com) on the Asbury Park boardwalk for farm-to-table Thursdays and bottles of locally brewed Beach Haus lager. **Manasquan's Spirit of '76 Wines & Liquors** (spirit76wines.com) stocks organic merlots and six-packs of locally brewed Flying Fish. Savor Fair Trade varietals at **Green Planet Coffee Co.** (greenplanetcoffee.com) in Manasquan (a second location's in Point Pleasant Beach), or visit **The Barbaric Bean** (barbaricbean.com)



in downtown Ocean Grove, where affable baristas brew small batches of fair-trade coffee to order. Get yours with a gluten-free scone, baked in-house from scratch.

Summer Lovin'

Escape to the romantic Victorian era by booking a room at **Tower Cottage B&B** (thetowercottage.com) in Point Pleasant Beach. With 12-foot ceilings and a turret shape, the Tower Suite is especially amorous. Then, request a table for two at **Remington's** (remingtonsnj.com) in Manasquan, whose contemporary American menu highlights Jersey purveyors, including Herbertsville Honey. Or head over to **Moonstruck** (moonstrucknj.com) in Asbury Park. Set in a renovated Victorian shore house, the first floor includes a cocktail lounge with jazz or light piano music.

If you want an overnight stay that offers the whole package, Belmar's **A Dream by the Sea B&B** (adream

bythesea.net) provides hypoallergenic beds, an organic breakfast, and an in-room massage or yoga option. Or book a **Romance Package at Chateau Inn & Suites** (chateauinn.com) in Spring Lake. The hotel's second-floor luxury suites boast a wood-burning fireplace, soaking tub for two, and a balcony. Also, **Serendipity** (609.399.1554, serendipitynj.com), a cozy, romantic B&B in Ocean City, offers more than just a cool name and a great location — its super-healthy vegan/vegetarian breakfast earned the distinction "Best Breakfast in the U.S.A." by Arrington's Inn Traveler Book of Lists. Chart a course to romance as you venture out onto Barnegat Bay on a catamaran sailboat — **Explorer Sail Charter** (973.389.1221) offers afternoon, overnight, sunset, and weekend cruises, all captained by Bob Edwards.

Puppy Love

When it comes to catering to canines, Long Branch is top dog: Book a night at **Ocean**

Get Your Groove On

The Stone Pony (stoneponyonline.com) remains *the* place in town to catch local bands and to get up close and personal with a piece of music history. Bruce Springsteen was one of many music superstars to get his start here, in addition to the Stray Cats, Blondie, and Elvis Costello. On July 2, catch Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. Ocean City's Music Pier was built in the 1920s and still remains a popular venue for shows,

The 23rd Annual Asbury Park Jazz Festival (6/25 & 26) celebrates the history of jazz with musicians such as international star B.D. Lenz and NJ's Carrie Jackson (apjazz.net).

North Wildwood's "Concerts Under the Stars" series begins 7/2 with **The Platters** (northwildwood.com/events/concert.html).

concerts, and special events. Or if you'd rather take the stage yourself, show off your pipes at live band karaoke at **Asbury Blues** (asburyblues.net) in Asbury Park on Thursday nights.

Take advantage of the warm weather and enjoy the salt air at an outdoor concert. The **Somers Point Concert Series** (somerspointbeachconcerts.com) on the William Morrow Beach on Bay Avenue begin on mid-June and continue every Friday night (7 p.m.) throughout the summer.



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The Perfect Cool-Down

Not-to-Miss Shore Event The 8th Annual N.J. Ice Cream Festival serves up all-you-can-eat ice cream tastings for only \$6 (in advance, \$7 day of). The festival includes live music, inflatable rides, ice cream eating contests, and a coloring contest for kids. July 16, downtownomsriver.com

Place Resort (oceanplace.com), where 12 first-floor rooms provide pet-friendly, tiled floors for easy cleaning. Then stroll with your pup over to **Pier Village's Paws & Pose** (pawsandpose.net), an apothecary-like pet boutique stocking wheat-and soy-free treats (book ahead for beach portraits). P&Ps in-house golden retriever, Brody, recommends hibachi grill and sushi bar **Sawa** (sawasteakhouse.com) for lunch. Its outdoor seating is ideal for dining with four-legged friends. Friendly dogs lap up the bar's monthly Yappy Hour at Paws & Pose (expect both wine and biscuits), while Asbury Park's **Wonder Bar** (wonderbarasburypark.com) hosts a similar weekly meet-and-greet on its outdoor "doggy deck." Pups also can cut loose in the adjoining fenced-in yard. Yappy Hour is just one of many animal perks at Cape May's rustic **Billmae Cottage Guest Suites** (billmae.com), where pets get special treatment during their stay.

Four-legged friends are welcome off-leash at several beaches year-round, including **Asbury Park's 8th Avenue Beach**, the non-recreational beaches at **Island Beach State Park**, and **Malibu Beach** — aka Dog Beach — just off the causeway between Longport and Ocean City.

Festivals

Lighthouse International Film Festival (June 3–5, lighthousefilmfestival.org). This three-day festival in LBI features indie feature films, shorts, documentaries, and family films.

Night in Venice (July 16). Ocean City's boat parade is

one of the longest-running in the world and is preceded by the equally exciting **Merchants in Venice Seafood Festival** (July 15). If the crowds are too much for you, instead check out the neighboring town's smaller-scale spoof on the event, **Nightmare in Strathmere** (Aug. 27), hosted by the Strathmere Fishing and

Environmental Club.

Freckle Contest (July 7, oceancitychamber.com). Show off your freckled face at this annual contest at the Ocean City Music Pier. Registration is at 6 p.m.; the contest is at 6:30.

New Jersey State Barbecue Championship (July 8–10). Summer isn't complete without a good barbeque. At this annual North Wildwood contest (njbbq.com), you can enjoy a cookout with the best barbeque chefs in the country. An added bonus is the simultaneous **Anglesea Blues Festival** (angleseablues.com).

U.S. Lifeguard Association National Championships (Aug. 3–6, usla.org). Come out to see lifeguards from all over the country compete at the annual competition that will be held this year in Cape May — its first time in the state since 2003. *

Indulge in the A.C.

Atlantic City may be best known for its casinos and nightlife, but there is more to "Las Vegas of the East" than you might realize.

For instance, many of the area's upscale hotels have luxury spas attached to them. The Borgata (theborgata.com) offers La Toccata, where you enhance your bikini body with an espresso limon slimming body wrap or brighten your complexion with an oxygenating facial. At the Chelsea (thechelsea-ac.com), a boutique hotel that claims to be a "return to glamour," you can go dancing on the Fifth Floor, which includes a Cabana Club and a lively nightclub, and follow up the next day with a soak in the hotel's saltwater pool or with a treatment at its Sea Spa. After trying your luck at Caesars (caesarsac.com) or watching the hotel's Grecian dancers at the Toga Bar, unwind at Qua Baths and Spa, which offers organic treatments with seaweed-enriched products. Canine lovers, take note of the Showboat's New Orleans Tower (showboat.com), where select rooms welcome furry friends with a bevy of amenities, including food bowls and a doggie mat. While Fido enjoys the amenities, guests can enjoy The House of Blues music venue or get a guilt-free chocolate massage or facial at the hotel's Vive Day Spa and Salon.



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