

BEACH Historic Sites

When John Smith and the Virginia Company of London set sail for the New World in December of 1606, the future Jamestown settlers didn't know they'd be blazing a trail for explorers like you. But when they finally arrived in April of 1607 at what is now **Cape Henry** in Virginia Beach, nothing could stop them from coming ashore, stretching their legs and enjoying the feeling of solid ground. That sense of a rock-solid foundation is one we don't take for granted, thanks to reminders at historic sites throughout our city.

See **History listings on page 62** and online at VisitVirginiaBeach.com.

BEACH HISTORY

When you visit the site of the earliest settlers' landing, where the **First Landing Cross** stands to mark the spot, you'll be in viewing distance of the **Cape Henry Lighthouses**. One was the first federally funded lighthouse commissioned by the United States in 1792; its "newer" black and white cast iron neighbor was built in 1881 and has been doing its lifesaving duty ever since. Further south, right on the boardwalk, you can learn more about lifesaving at the **Old Coast Guard Station**, where galleries tell tales of shipwrecks and heroic acts. Also on the boardwalk, the **Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum** preserves both the last remaining boardwalk cottage and a collection of wildfowl art and artifacts, revealing much about early Virginia Beach and our present culture.

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HISTORIC HOMES

It goes without saying that the years since the first landing have seen major changes in lifestyle, but they're yours to experience on a tour of historic homes. Near the banks of the Lynnhaven River, the **Thoroughgood House** (circa 1719) is one of the oldest brick homes in America and reveals how a wealthy Virginia colonist would have lived. The **Lynnhaven House** (circa 1725) is somewhat more modest but a reveals the care and quality the owner put into its construction. At the Georgian/Federal style **Francis Land House** (circa 1805), you'll get a sense of plantation life in the early 19th Century, including period gardens. At **Ferry Plantation** (circa 1830) you can tour the restored home and learn colorful stories of the city's past – ask about Grace Sherwood, the witch of Pungo.



e Stories



MILITARY HISTORY

From the earliest ships to arrive in 1607 and defend themselves against native attacks near Cape Henry, to the 1781 **Battle off the Capes** marking a turning point of the American Revolution, to the 1807 U.S. vs. England skirmish off Lynnhaven Inlet that preceded the War of 1812, our waters have not always been calm. But you may be surprised to learn just how close to our shores the U.S. tanker Tiger was when it was torpedoed and sunk by a German submarine in 1942. Or the inland location of a prisoner of war camp that held 6,000 prisoners over two years during World War II. In fact, military history is kind of a specialty here, where **NAS Oceana** hosts the East Coast's only Master Jet Base,

and flyovers are a regular (and thrilling) occurrence. For in-depth history, the **Military Aviation Museum** rivals any of its kind with a large collection of WWI and WWII era aircraft. Near the oceanfront at 25th Street, **The Naval Aviation Monument** pays tribute to three historic aviation eras.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

For insight into the fight for Civil Rights in education, pay a visit to the **Princess Anne County Training School/Union Kempsville High School Museum**. Exhibits here tell the story of the founding of the area's first high school for African Americans, created by community fund raising in the 1930s, and its continuation

until the 1969 integration of Virginia Beach public schools. For a journey of faith, visit **Ebenezer Baptist Church**, established in 1860 by slaves, and **Morning Star Baptist Church**, founded in 1892 – both are in the process of collecting memorabilia and artifacts to share their history. The experience of enslaved people is also part of the story you'll find at the **Francis Land House** and the **Thoroughgood House**.



BEACH Weddings

What could be more romantic than beginning your forever in the presence of the planet's most enduring force? Having ocean waves in attendance gives the moment special meaning, and we make it easy to pull that moment together. Whether your heart is set on a surfside ceremony or you just want to bring all your guests together to a destination they'll love, we're ready to help.

There are so many beautiful ways to create your perfect moment in Virginia Beach. A dreamy beach wedding with vows exchanged surfside and the first dance in an elegant hotel ballroom. Fairytale forest lights and rustic simplicity on the lawn of a historic home. Sophisticated southern charm with handmade details at a farm venue. A chapel ceremony and arrival by boat for your dockside celebration. (It all really happened – see for yourself at VisitVirginiaBeach.com/beach-weddings.)



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CHOOSE A VENUE

Kissed by the sun or in the glow of a sea turtle habitat. Overlooking an art installation or dolphins swimming in the Chesapeake Bay. Elegance in a ballroom or nature vibes at a beachside park. In a historic home or surrounded by vintage aircraft. Choosing a unique wedding venue will make your Virginia Beach wedding a standout. In addition to a range of hotels, the **Virginia Aquarium**, **Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art** and the **Virginia Beach Convention Center** offer great support services for planning your ceremony and reception.

RESERVE YOUR SPOT IN THE SAND

Imagine the most anticipated, planned-for, detail-rich moment of your life. Now imagine sharing it with strangers in swimsuits who got there first. That doesn't happen when you plan your on-the-beach wedding here. Thanks to the **Beach Wedding Permit**, you'll have guaranteed access to an area of the Resort Beach you can make all your own.



For more about planning a beach wedding, go to VisitVirginiaBeach.com/wedding-planning.

Happy Day



GET THE DETAILS RIGHT

If you can pin it, you can probably achieve it. You can definitely count on high quality and resourcefulness from local florists, caterers, bakeries, photographers, salons, rental providers and more.

ENJOY EVERY MINUTE

From spa days for the bridal party and craft beer tours with the groomsmen, to brunch with the family and walks on the beach with Mom and Dad, there's so much potential for icing on the cake of your wedding experience here - not the least of which is sticking around for a first-class honeymoon. With three beaches to choose from, you can easily skip away to be alone, while your guests continue to enjoy their beach getaway.



BEACH Wellness

All is well at the beach. One of the major benefits of being surrounded by water is being able to take advantage of its restorative healing qualities. We value our natural surroundings and pay tribute to them in our pursuit of a healthy and relaxed lifestyle – and you can, too!

See Wellness listings on page 63 and online at VisitVirginiaBeach.com.

NO ORDINARY WORKOUT

Getting in the water on the Atlantic or on the Chesapeake Bay is an obvious way to experience wellness by the water, and there are plenty of unique and serene spots across our 35 miles of coastline for basking in tranquility to the soundtrack of the ocean waves. Work out by the ocean at **Hillier Ignite Fitness Park** or greet the day with a sunrise yoga session. Step it up a notch with yoga on a SUP (standup paddleboard) or embark on a meditative sunset kayaking excursion. You may even get the chance to ride alongside our dolphin friends while taking in an incredible view and getting a full-body workout.

MAKE THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

It's rumored that Virginia Beach's pristine surroundings and serene spot at the meeting point of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean were the reason legendary mystic Edgar Cayce chose us as the home to his wellness center, which he built here in 1931. Today, **Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment (A.R.E.)** is the hub for all things holistic living. Located just across the street from the beach, the A.R.E. boasts a newly renovated spa and restaurant and hosts year-round retreats, speakers and classes tailored to inspire and enlighten the mind, body and soul, many of which are derived from the beach's natural properties.

YOU DESERVE THIS

Spa treatments offer a great opportunity to take time away from it all – even while on vacation! Relax and refresh your senses with a range of treatments at various local spas. You can even enjoy a view of the Atlantic Ocean at the private spa tower at **Beach Spa**. A quick trip inland from the Resort area or Sandbridge Beach, the **Founders Inn & Spa** provides an array of facials, massages and full-body treatments, while also providing award-winning meals and overnight accommodations. Some local bed-and-breakfasts, like the **Barclay Cottage**, will also happily accommodate a spa treatment for you during your stay.

So sit back, relax and let the beach do the rest.





FITNESS IS WHAT'S SUP

Gliding on top of the water while listening to upbeat music and awakening our senses surrounded by nature, all while enjoying the company of fellow wellness enthusiasts? Sign us up! Whitney Lee, a Virginia Beach native and certified yoga and barre instructor, blended her love for the ocean with her love for fitness, and voila, **SUP Barre** was born – yup, right here in Virginia Beach! Today, she's taking full-body and core-strengthening exercises out of the studio and onto a paddleboard on the water at First Landing State Park. Classes run Monday through Saturday, vary by season and are ideal for all ages and skill levels. Even your four-legged fur-baby can join in on the water fun, thanks to **SUP with Your Pup** classes.

AMAZING RACES

It's no surprise that we've been consistently ranked among America's Fittest Cities. With countless races – from 5Ks and 10Ks to half- and full marathons – Virginia Beach makes for one amazing track.

Early in the year, **Shamrock Marathon Weekend** offers plenty of running action for beginners and marathon trainees alike, with six running events and three special challenges, all culminating with the Shamrock Marathon and Half-Marathon, which provide a scenic course set alongside the Atlantic Ocean.

Later in the year, just in time for Labor Day festivities, the **Rock 'n' Roll Marathon Series** arrives at the beach. The weekend hosts a Health & Fitness Expo and three running events ("Mile on the Sand," 5K and Half-Marathon), all culminating with live performances on the sand during the Toyota Rock 'n' Roll Concert Series, during the **American Music Festival**, the largest outdoor music event on the East Coast.

In the fall, the **Anthem Wicked 10K** boasts a challenging and scenic course and fittingly includes a costume contest and post-race party on the beach. Cap off your running schedule for the year with another festive feat. **The Surf-n-Santa Five Miler** provides a magical trot unlike any other, as runners dash through the oceanfront under the Holiday Lights at the Beach.