

## TRAVEL

## Cape Hatteras is coastal destination for couples, families

On the Outer Banks of North Carolina there is a legend about the ships that have come to grief in the great autumn storms off those hungry shoals. Over the centuries there have been many; the Banks have more than earned their reputation as the Graveyard of the Atlantic. Most of the graves are in Diamond Shoals just off the point of Cape Hatteras, but the entire hundred-odd mile sweep of coast has devoured its measure of wood and flesh. Myths and specters and apparitions lie as thick as sea fog over the Banks...

— Anne Rivers Siddons  
from her book, *Outer Banks*  
BY DOUG JOHNSON  
STAFF WRITER

Among the structures the sea could have devoured was the famous Cape Hatteras lighthouse. But it has been saved and given a new location about 1,000 yards from the coast, thanks to a massive moving project completed in 1993.

The lighthouse was being threatened by the advancing Atlantic. A huge diamond cable wire saw was used to cut it off its base, and it was rolled inland away from the shifting shore. The move cost about \$12 million, but the National Park Service estimates the landmark is safe for another 100 years.

Cape Hatteras and the Outer Banks are really narrow, shifting spits of sand dunes extending down North Carolina's Coast. One can easily see how a strong storm could open a new inlet that would require a bridge or ferry service.

Indeed, in 1999 Hurricane Dennis came close to doing just that north of Hatteras; you can see the results in a dog leg and new stretch of pavement on the only main road, Highway 12.

The Outer Banks are about vacation homes perched on pilings out of reach of surging surf, about fishing, about isolation, about man gambling with nature—and about those beaches, miles and miles of perfect, hard packed, white sand, Atlantic Ocean beaches.

One of the biggest of mankind's gambles with nature will be celebrated in a few months with the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brothers first powered flight in 1903.

The Wright Brothers Memorial in Kitty Hawk has a small museum (part of which is currently closed for repairs) but you can still visit the wing-shaped memorial and the small ground markers showing the distances of the Wright

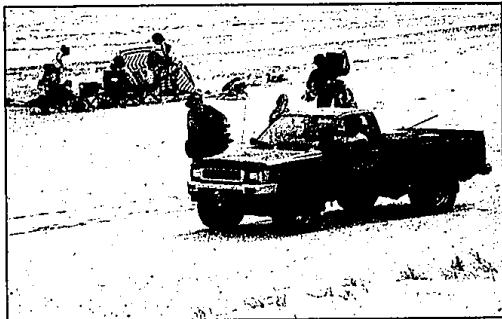


PHOTO BY DOUG JOHNSON

**Location, location, location:** The famed Cape Hatteras lighthouse (right) sits in a safer spot. Check National Geographic, May 2000 for more details. You need a vehicle (above) with high clearance to drive along the Outer Banks beaches.

brothers' first three flights.

As you drive down the narrow strip of land hoping to see the surf at every turn, you may be disappointed. The seashore is blocked by sand dunes so you need to stop and do the short walk over to the beach, or take any one of several drive-overs. The drive-overs are deep sand and only high clearance vehicles with four-wheel drive are recommended.

If you are driving the family sedan, check with Cape Point Exxon in Buxton (252) 995-5695 about renting something suitable for the beach.

#### Hang gliders

The Wright brothers came here for the steady winds, and so do hang gliders and sail boarders. The hang gliders flocked to Jockey's Ridge State Park in Nags Head and make the strenuous hike up the biggest sand dune on the east coast for a chance to catch a breeze. You can rent the necessary equipment and obtain instructions at the park or across the main highway from the park. There are all kinds of rental stores up and down the barrier islands for everything from umbrellas to ocean kayaks.

Restaurants are a mixed bag. Some

are very good, others change owners a lot and you won't find the big chains here except fast food places.

Try Kolley's Outer Banks Restaurant and Tavern in Nags Head, which features a large menu, seafood done right and in a warm atmosphere. In Hatteras try the restaurant above the marina building at Oden's Dock (The Breakwater); they seem to know what they're doing and all tables give you a view of the sunset on the sound. With the right timing you can watch the charter boats unload their catch and glimpse giant pelicans staking out a spot on a piling.

There are plenty of places to stay along the barrier islands. Holiday Inn Express has a nice facility near the ferry to Ocracoke Island. You will not find giant oceanfront hotels like you see in Virginia Beach or Myrtle Beach.

If condos are your style check with Surf or Sound Realty (800) 237-1138.

Some other things to do:  
■ Take the free ferry over to Ocracoke Island. The island is part of the national seashore so they keep the ferry free. Other ferries to other locations charge.

■ Visit Roanoke Island and the town of Manteo. You can go to the Fort Raleigh National Historic Site to see the



history of the Lost Colony, and relive the mystery of Virginia Dare. Kids will also like the newly redone North Carolina Aquarium and its ocean ray touch tank.

■ Take the side roads over to the Atlantic in the older part of Kitty Hawk and see how the water is crashing very near some of the oldest beach homes.

■ Stop at the Pea Island refuge and

watch the giant turtles bask in the sunlight.

The Outer Banks are rich with the legacy of the Wright Brothers, and proof of the eternal battle between sand and sea.

Doug Johnson is a retired Livonia teacher who lives in Plymouth. He works at a variety of temporary assignments for the Observer.

Look to the travel page every Sunday if you're looking for vacation ideas

**ONE WEEK ONLY!**

**SEARS**  
see our great new frame selection at [www.searsoptical.com](http://www.searsoptical.com)

**ANY FRAME**  
**Now \$0.00**

It's no mistake. Now at Sears Optical, get any frame free when you buy Ultralight or Profile® lenses.

We've got hundreds of new frame styles, in designer brands like Lauren Hutton®, Bongo® and Timberland® PRO. They're all here. And they're all free when you buy Ultralight or Profile® lenses. If you haven't seen Sears Optical lately, it's time to look again.

**ANY FRAME FREE** with the purchase of Ultralight or Profile® lenses. Choose any frame in our entire selection.

**\$99.99** Eyeglasses. Any prescription (including contact lenses) with scratch-resistant plastic lenses. Choose from hundreds of frames.

**SEARS Optical**  
SCHEDULE AN EYE EXAM TODAY WITH THE EYE DOCTOR AT SEARS!

**Why is she smiling?**  
**Because now, nearly everyone who needs straighter teeth can be treated\* with Invisalign®.**

Get the beautiful smile you've always wanted, without braces. Invisalign is the invisible way to straighten teeth using a series of custom-made, nearly undetectable aligners. And it's been proven effective in both clinical research and in practices nation-wide. So whether your teeth are too crowded, too far apart, or have shifted since wearing braces, you'll have a new reason to smile.

**Initial smile** **4 months** **8 months** **Final smile**

© 2001 Align Technology, Inc.

**Best of all, now you can get Invisalign® for a special "save as braces" price until October 31, 2001**

**Call me toll-free today for your free appointment:**

**Dr. John Marx**  
1-866-512-1134  
And mention promo code: 50406  
30201 Dequindre Road  
Madison Heights, MI 48071-2282

\*Alone or as part of a combined treatment plan for adults and mature teens.

**invisalign** Start smiling more.