

Sun, Sand and Surf

Long Island is known for its famed coastline featuring miles of pristine beaches and scenic parks. Whether activities such as swimming, fishing, hiking high wooded bluffs or biking oceanfront paths pique your interest – or if you’re looking for a place to simply soak up some sun, Long Island’s shoreline is easily accessible and adventure-packed for both travelers and locals alike. The North Shore’s high, scenic bluffs brood over the Long Island Sound and boast rocky beaches and calmer waters while the South Shore meets the Atlantic Ocean with miles of smooth white sand beaches and waves that attract surfers from around the globe.

The North Shore’s **Sunken Meadow State Park** in Kings Park draws family crowds to a boardwalk, food concession and beach on calm Long Island Sound waters and offer wooded barbecue areas and scenic bluff-top hiking. North Fork’s **Orient Beach State Park** features a rare maritime forest and a beach on Gardiner’s Bay. A ferry ride away from Greenport or Sag Harbor takes you to lovely **Crescent Beach** on Shelter Island.

Located on the South Shore, **Jones Beach State Park** in Wantagh offers 6.5 miles of white sand beaches and plays host to nearly 6 million visitors each year. Swim and sunbathe by the crashing Atlantic surf or take a dip in Zach’s Bay. Walk, run, roller blade or bike on the two-mile boardwalk or stay late to fish from the pier and take in an evening concert at the 15,000-seat **Nikon at Jones Beach Theatre**. Only a few miles away is **Long Beach**, home to a famous 2.2-mile boardwalk and Atlantic Ocean beach. With easy LIRR access year-round, Long Beach attracts sunbathers, volleyball players, joggers, kayakers and surfers alike.

Celebrity-studded **Main Beach** in East Hampton and **Coopers Beach** in Southampton have both been rated number one in the nation by international beach expert Stephen P. Leatherman of Florida International University – a.k.a. “Dr. Beach.” Be aware both are considered “local” beaches and require a parking fee but you can bike there or take a hotel shuttle. Each year, surfers flock to **Montauk Point State Park** and **Ditch Plains** where waves reach record heights for the eastern seaboard.

Wildwood State Park and **Robert Moses State Park** are other popular South Shore ocean spots. **Fire Island**, designated a federal National Seashore, is a 32-mile-long barrier island located just across the Great South Bay from mainland Long Island. Its 17 small communities, which are only accessible by passenger ferry, are known for their sparkling beaches and lively nightlife.

TIPS FOR VISITING:

At 118 miles long, it’s easy to find your place in the sand. Here are a few tips for navigating peak season beach going:

State Parks such as Jones Beach, Sunken Meadow and Orient Beach are open to all for a \$10/car fee in the peak season. Shoulder season is \$8 and off-season is free.

Local and town beaches such as Coopers, Main and Ditch Plains charge varying fees for non-residents of up to \$30 for peak season access. Check individual town websites for tips on parking.

OUR PICKS:

Family-Friendly: Orient State Park

Surfing & Kite Surfing: Ditch Plains

Outdoor Adventure: Jones Beach State Park

Ultimate Day Trip: Long Beach