

cocoa beach visitors guide

Cocoa Beach Visitors Guide: Nestled along the Atlantic coast of Florida, Cocoa Beach is a charming seaside destination known for its beautiful beaches, vibrant culture, and numerous recreational activities. Whether you're planning a family vacation, a romantic getaway, or a solo adventure, this Cocoa Beach visitors guide will provide you with all the information you need to make the most of your trip.

Getting to Cocoa Beach

Cocoa Beach is conveniently located about 45 minutes east of Orlando International Airport (MCO), making it easily accessible for travelers. Here are some options for getting to Cocoa Beach:

By Car

- Rental Cars: Numerous rental car agencies operate at the airport. Renting a car gives you the flexibility to explore Cocoa Beach and surrounding areas.
- Driving Directions: From Orlando, take the FL-528 E highway directly to Cocoa Beach. Follow the signs for Cocoa Beach once you exit the highway.

By Shuttle or Taxi

- Airport Shuttles: Several shuttle services are available that can take you directly from the airport to your hotel or vacation rental.
- Ride-Sharing Services: Services like Uber and Lyft operate in the area and can be a convenient option for transportation.

Where to Stay

Cocoa Beach offers a range of accommodation options to suit different budgets and preferences. Whether you're looking for luxury resorts, family-friendly hotels, or budget-friendly motels, you'll find something that fits your needs.

Luxury Resorts

- The Cocoa Beach Resort: Offers stunning ocean views, a private beach, and upscale amenities including a spa and fine dining.
- Hilton Cocoa Beach Oceanfront: Features spacious rooms, a beachfront pool, and direct beach access.

Mid-Range Hotels

- La Quinta Inn & Suites Cocoa Beach: A popular choice for families, this hotel provides comfortable accommodations with a complimentary breakfast.
- Hampton Inn Cocoa Beach/Cape Canaveral: Offers modern rooms and is located just a short walk from the beach.

Budget-Friendly Options

- Motel 6 Cocoa Beach: An affordable choice with basic amenities and a great location.
- Cocoa Beach Suites: Provides cozy suites with kitchenettes, ideal for families or extended stays.

Top Attractions and Activities

Cocoa Beach is famous for its beautiful sandy shores and a variety of activities for visitors of all ages. Here are some must-see attractions and things to do during your visit:

Cocoa Beach Pier

The Cocoa Beach Pier is an iconic landmark featuring shops, restaurants, and an expansive view of the Atlantic Ocean. Enjoy a leisurely stroll, grab a bite to eat at one of the many restaurants, or try your hand at fishing from the pier.

Beaches

- Cocoa Beach: Known for its soft sand and gentle waves, perfect for swimming and sunbathing.
- Alan Shepard Park: A quieter spot with picnic areas and easy beach access, great for families.

Surfing and Water Sports

Cocoa Beach is renowned as a surfing destination. Whether you're a seasoned surfer or a beginner, you can take lessons or rent equipment from local surf shops. Other water sports available include:

- Stand-up paddleboarding
- Kayaking
- Jet skiing

Ron Jon Surf Shop

A must-visit for surf enthusiasts and beachgoers, Ron Jon Surf Shop is open 24 hours and offers a wide range of surf gear, beachwear, and souvenirs. Don't forget to snap a photo with the giant surfboard outside!

Canaveral National Seashore

Just a short drive from Cocoa Beach, Canaveral National Seashore features pristine beaches, wildlife, and hiking trails. It's an excellent spot for nature lovers and offers opportunities for bird watching and fishing.

Wildlife Viewing

- Turtle Nesting Season: From May to October, you can witness sea turtles nesting on the beach.
- Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge: A short drive away, this refuge is home to diverse wildlife and offers hiking and birdwatching opportunities.

Dining Options

Cocoa Beach boasts a variety of dining options, ranging from casual beachside eateries to fine dining establishments. Here's a selection of recommended restaurants:

Casual Dining

- Cocoa Beach Fish Camp Grill: A laid-back eatery serving fresh seafood and Southern-style dishes.
- The Fat Snook: Offers a unique menu with locally sourced seafood in a cozy atmosphere.

Fine Dining

- Ocean 302: A sophisticated restaurant with stunning ocean views and a menu that features fresh seafood and steak.
- Lobster Shack: Known for its fresh lobster dishes and casual vibe, perfect for a romantic dinner.

Family-Friendly Restaurants

- Denny's: A classic American diner that serves breakfast all day and offers a kid-friendly menu.
- Pizza Hut: Always a family favorite, convenient for a quick meal after a day at the beach.

Shopping

Cocoa Beach offers a variety of shopping experiences, from souvenir shops to boutiques. Here are a few places to check out:

Beachside Shops

- Ron Jon Surf Shop: Besides surf gear, it offers a wide range of beach apparel and accessories.
- The Cocoa Beach Surf Company: Great for beachwear and surf gear.

Local Markets and Galleries

- Cocoa Beach Farmers Market: Held on Saturdays, this market features local produce, crafts, and more.
- Local Art Galleries: Explore galleries showcasing local artists and unique finds.

Events and Festivals

Cocoa Beach hosts several events throughout the year, making it a vibrant destination. Here are some notable events you might want to check out during your visit:

Cocoa Beach Chocolate Festival

A delightful event held annually, featuring chocolate tastings, cooking demonstrations, and fun activities for the whole family.

Surfing Competitions

Throughout the year, Cocoa Beach hosts various surfing competitions that draw surfers from all over. Check local listings for specific dates.

Holiday Celebrations

From Fourth of July fireworks on the beach to holiday-themed events, Cocoa Beach celebrates the seasons with flair.

Tips for Visitors

To ensure you have a fantastic trip to Cocoa Beach, keep these tips in mind:

- Pack Sunscreen: The Florida sun can be intense, so be sure to protect your skin.
- Stay Hydrated: Drink plenty of water, especially if you're spending time outdoors.
- Check the Weather: Florida weather can be unpredictable, so plan accordingly and be prepared for sudden rain showers.
- Respect Wildlife: Be mindful of nesting areas and local wildlife, especially during turtle nesting season.

Conclusion

Cocoa Beach is a delightful destination that offers something for everyone, from stunning beaches and thrilling water sports to delicious dining and vibrant local culture. This Cocoa Beach visitors guide should help you plan an unforgettable trip filled with sun, surf, and relaxation. Whether you're looking to relax on the beach, immerse yourself in nature, or enjoy local cuisine, Cocoa Beach is sure to provide a memorable experience. Pack your bags, grab your sunscreen, and get ready for an adventure in this beautiful coastal haven!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the top attractions to visit in Cocoa Beach?

Some top attractions in Cocoa Beach include the Cocoa Beach Pier, Ron Jon Surf Shop, and the Cocoa Beach Surf Museum.

What is the best time of year to visit Cocoa Beach?

The best time to visit Cocoa Beach is during the spring (March to May) when the weather is warm and the crowds are smaller compared to the summer months.

Are there any family-friendly activities in Cocoa Beach?

Yes, family-friendly activities in Cocoa Beach include visiting the Exploration Tower, playing at Lori Wilson Park, and enjoying mini-golf courses.

What are some popular dining options in Cocoa Beach?

Popular dining options include the Fishlips Waterfront Bar & Grill, Coconuts on the Beach, and the Fat Kahuna's Beach Side Grille.

Is Cocoa Beach a good spot for surfing?

Yes, Cocoa Beach is known for its great surfing conditions, especially for beginners, and it hosts several surf schools and rentals.

What outdoor activities can visitors enjoy in Cocoa Beach?

Visitors can enjoy outdoor activities such as kayaking, paddleboarding, fishing, and exploring the nearby Canaveral National Seashore.

Are there accommodations suitable for all budgets in

Cocoa Beach?

Yes, Cocoa Beach offers a range of accommodations from luxury resorts to budget-friendly motels and vacation rentals.

What events or festivals are held in Cocoa Beach throughout the year?

Cocoa Beach hosts several events and festivals, including the Cocoa Beach Art Show, the Cocoa Beach Surf Festival, and holiday celebrations like the Christmas Parade.

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