

Family-Friendly Fun in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina



With sandy beaches and sunny days galore, this seaside resort town pleases parents and kids alike.

By [Judy Koutsky](#) October 22, 2018

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The Myrtle Beach area, also known as the Grand Strand, consists of 60 miles of sandy beaches, plenty of family attractions and entertainment options, and over 1,800 restaurants. It's no wonder that the area is home to more than 17.2 million visitors annually. With over 215 sunny days per year, Myrtle Beach really is a year-round, family-friendly destination. Here, the 411 on where to eat, play, and stay.

What to Do in Myrtle Beach

[Myrtle Beach Boardwalk](#)

Spending the evening walking around the boardwalk—and taking in its energy and vibe—is truly one of the top pastimes for visitors. The boardwalk has undergone several revitalization efforts and the result is an expanded area with more attractions and eateries. A highlight for us was taking a ride on the [Skywheel](#). The 200-foot-high observation wheel with temperature-controlled glass gondolas really does have amazing views of the coastline (not to mention the air is comfy inside, no matter what the weather outside).

[NASCAR Racing Experience at Myrtle Beach Speedway](#)

Even people who aren't big NASCAR fans will get a thrill out of trying out one of their race cars. You can meet with a Crew Chief and get a taste of what it's like to drive a real NASCAR race car just like fan favorites like Dale Jr., Jimmie Johnson, and Jeff Gordon.

[Wonderworks](#)

This science attraction situated on Broadway at the Beach includes hands-on experiments meant to mimic what it feels like to be in an earthquake and hurricane, fly a NASA space shuttle or fighter jet, and ride a virtual rollercoaster. My kids' favorite exhibit was the ropes course, where they were able to test their bravery while going on challenging tight walks and swinging bridges.

[Family Kingdom](#)

This amusement park was a huge hit with my kids, due in part to the fact that there were 37 rides including plenty of fast-action rollercoasters. There's also an area that targets little kids. Be sure to get the combo pass; it allows you access to both Family Kingdom and its sister attraction, Splashes, the only oceanfront water park in the area.

[Jungle Safari Mini Golf](#)

Myrtle Beach is known as the mini golf capital of the world and with over 50 courses it's easy to see why. We especially liked Jungle Safari, where the course got more challenging as it progressed, but was also a lot of fun to play. The zebra, elephants, lions, and other animals gave it a fun, safari vibe.

Kayaking at Huntington Beach State Park

Huntington Beach is a beautiful state park and one of the best ways to really explore it is via water. We went on a two-hour kayak eco-tour with [Blackriver Outdoors](#). Our guide talked to us about oysters, clams, the marshland, and the birds that populate this area. We even saw the area's resident dolphin—he practically came over said hi. This tour is great for both beginner and seasoned kayakers. Huntington Beach State Park boasts a lagoon, maritime forest, salt marshes, and three miles of the most well-preserved beach on the Grand Strand.

Where to Eat in Myrtle Beach


[Riptydz](#) Oceanfront Grille & Rooftop Bar

Located just feet away from the beach, this restaurant has amazing views of not only the sand and water but also of the boardwalk. There are a variety of fish dishes—super fresh—as well as steaks and pastas. Kids' menus are also available. The rooftop bar has live music nightly.

Restaurants at [Broadway at the Beach](#)

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If you're not quite sure what kind of food you're in the mood for then head to Broadway on the Beach, where there are over 20 restaurants to pick from. We sampled American Tap House and Sweet Carolina's—both had great menus for a family with diverse tastes (salads, burgers, fish and a variety of sharing apps). Other restaurants in the area include the Hard Rock Café and Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville. After dinner, walk around—there's a 23-acre lake and over 100 shops. Nearby is the Ripley's Aquarium, WonderWorks, and a 16-screen movie theater.

[Pirates Voyage Dinner & Show](#)

Whenever I can combine entertainment and dinner it's always a bonus. The Pirate show is an interactive performance with lots of dancing, singing, swimming, jumping, and action. A multi-course dinner served throughout the show includes soup, chicken, sides, biscuits, and dessert.

[Sea Captain's House](#)

If your family is into Sunday brunch, this is the spot to dine. It's been a staple for 50 years and is one of the oldest eateries in Myrtle Beach.

[Nacho Hippo Cantina Maximo](#)

This place is known for having the best nachos in town and not many people would disagree. Their tacos and quesadillas are also super tasty and their sides—especially the sweet potato plantains and their signature slaw—are great to share.

[Lucy Buffett's Lulu's](#)

Located at Barefoot Landing—a waterfront boardwalk that has over 100 shops and 15 waterside restaurants—this eatery opened in June 2018 and is owned by Jimmy Buffet's sister. There's live music and an amazing playground area in the sand (great for keeping young diners entertained), and the service is amazing (my son mistakenly poured cocktail sauce all over his burger thinking it was ketchup and they made a new burger pronto).

[Murrells Inlet Marshwalk](#)

Myrtle Beach is considered the seafood capital of South Carolina and that can especially be seen at Murrells Inlet Marshwalk, where a variety of amazing fish restaurants reside. The setting is also quite pretty—located on a saltwater estuary, there are amazing views of the marshes and wildlife. After your meal, take advantage of the area by partaking in a boating, fishing, or watersport excursion.

[Johnny D's Waffles and Bakery](#)

One of our favorite breakfast spots on the trip was Johnny D's, a family owned, chef-driven local spot. My oldest son had a banana split Belgium waffle while my younger one tried their famous red velvet waffle. I had the omelet and it was delicious and filling. It's a super popular place, but it's well worth the wait to get seated.

Where to Stay in Myrtle Beach

One of the great things about Myrtle Beach is that many hotels are located right on the water and offer both pool and beach access. The [Island Vista Resort](#) has three-bedroom, three-bathroom oceanfront suites which are spacious enough for families who want to spread out. It also has a full kitchen plus a washer and dryer (a great amenity when traveling with little kids who go through multiple clothing changes a day). The resort also has multiple pools and hot tubs, including a lazy river. The location, too, is hard to beat, literally steps away from the beach. They have an on-site restaurant, called Cypress, that serves breakfast and dinner and they also have a pool bar. It's a very family-friendly property.

Caption: The author and her son kayaking.



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Judy Koutsky is an award-winning writer and editor and her work has appeared in over 30 publications, including Conde Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure, Redbook, Parents, Scholastic, and Prevention. She writes often about travel, parenting, health, and lifestyle. Follow her [@JudyKoutsky](#) or visit her website [JudyKoutsky.com](#).

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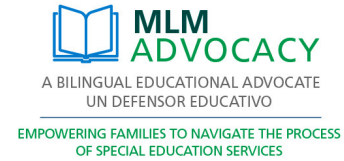
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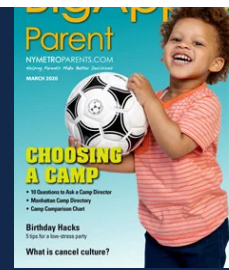
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