

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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| 2101 Parks Avenue, Suite 500 | Virginia Beach, VA 23451 | www.vbfun.com |
| | ph (757) 385-4700 | fx (757) 437-4747 |

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Ron Kuhlman Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau | 757.385.4700
Jessica Kraft BCF | 757.497.4811 | jkraft@boomyourbrand.com

2009 Virginia Beach Fact Sheet

Destination Overview



In Virginia Beach, visitors are invited to “Live the Beach Life!” Offering the classic beach vacation, Virginia Beach maintains a long-standing reputation as a family-friendly oceanfront resort. Visitors are greeted by a 300-foot wide beach lined by Virginia Beach’s three-mile concrete oceanfront Boardwalk. After spending lazy days on the beach, the state parks and Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge beckon, enticing visitors to embark on a hiking, kayaking, or biking adventure. Fishing, golfing, whale and dolphin watching, historic landmarks, the Virginia Aquarium and exciting events complete the Beach experience. Virginia Beach offers seaside lodging with spectacular views and delectable seafood dining experiences. With a mild climate year-round, Virginia Beach offers the ideal vacation for every season.

Virginia Beach Convention Center and the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau

The resort city is one of the nation’s premier year-round meeting destinations. The new Virginia Beach Convention Center, completed in January 2007, boasts more than 500,000 sq. ft. of flexible space. As a destination marketing organization, the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) manages the Convention Center, which hosts regional and national trade shows, conventions, sports tournaments and special events, and sponsors some of the city’s major festivals and special events. The CVB is a city department that also plans and implements marketing strategies to attract consumer travelers, convention and meeting groups, as well as group tours.



Location

Centrally located on the East Coast, Virginia Beach is situated in the southeastern corner of the state where Virginia meets the sea and is within easy fly-drive access of two-thirds of the U.S. population. Norfolk International Airport – which hosts most major airline carriers and offers 200 flights daily – is just 20 minutes from the Virginia Beach oceanfront. Virginia Beach is also situated 45 minutes from Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport. For visitors driving to Virginia Beach, the resort city is just four hours away from Washington, D.C. and two hours from Richmond, Va.

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DISTANCE FROM SELECTED CITIES (IN MILES):

| | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Atlanta, Ga. 585 | Chicago, Ill. 900 | Philadelphia, Pa. 260 | Washington, D.C. 200 |
| Baltimore, Md. 250 | Cleveland, Ohio 550 | Pittsburgh, Pa. 445 | Montreal, Quebec 705 |
| Boston, Mass. 550 | Detroit, Mich. 725 | Richmond, Va. 105 | Quebec City, Quebec 860 |
| Charlotte, N.C. 345 | New York, N.Y. 340 | St. Louis, Mo. 920 | Toronto, Ontario 760 |

Ocean and Bay Beaches

With 35 miles of waterfront property, Virginia Beach has long been considered a “classic American beach vacation” spot. In Virginia Beach, a total of 14 miles of beach is free and open to the public. In the Virginia Beach resort area, newly-landscaped pedestrian beach entrances are easy to find, and parking is ample. If your idea of a “day at the beach” is more relaxed, visit Chesapeake Beach (known to the locals as “Chick’s Beach”) for a more tranquil spot along the scenic Chesapeake Bay. Swimmers will enjoy the bay’s protected shallow waters. For a more secluded environment, the Sandbridge area on Virginia Beach’s southern shore is perfect. The pristine shores of Sandbridge are secluded, quiet and just 20 minutes from the main resort area. No hotels. Just breathtaking ocean-view rental homes, condominiums and peacefulness fill the Sandbridge shoreline. Sand sweeps from the shore to the streets where the traffic is less and seagulls leave long-lasting footprints.

Oceanfront Boardwalk

The Virginia Beach boardwalk dates back to 1888, and has been ranked among the “best American boardwalks” by *Discovery Channel*, “Dr. Beach,” *Southern Living* and *Coastal Living*. The concrete thoroughfare is an impressive 28 feet wide and three miles long with a separate bike path, making it ideal for strolling, rollerblading and biking. Entertainment is offered nightly during the summer months and four oceanfront stages at 7th, 17th, 24th and 31st Streets provide live musical acts. For handicapped accessibility, ramps from the boardwalk to the beach are available at every block. Located at 8th, 17th, 24th and 30th Streets are eight-foot wooden walkways that reach the water’s edge. Accessible restrooms are located at 17th, 24th and 30th Streets. Handicapped parking can be found along the main thoroughfare.

**Climate**

The seaside resort’s mild climate year-round adds to Virginia Beach’s appeal as the perfect vacation destination for every season. Of Virginia Beach’s nearly 3 million visitors, 61% percent visit in the shoulder season (after Labor Day and before Memorial Day). For travelers in search of a more relaxed pace, fall, winter and spring are ideal for uncrowded beaches and back-to-nature activities. Winter whale watching, delectable Coastal Cuisine and Holiday Lights at the Beach add to the “cool season” vacation experience.

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AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

| | Air High | Air Low | Water |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| January | 50°F / 09°C | 32°F / 01°C | 47°F / 08°C |
| February | 53°F / 10°C | 33°F / 01°C | 48°F / 09°C |
| March | 59°F / 14°C | 39°F / 05°C | 48°F / 09°C |
| April | 68°F / 19°C | 47°F / 10°C | 48°F / 09°C |
| May | 75°F / 24°C | 56°F / 15°C | 58°F / 14°C |
| June | 83°F / 28°C | 65°F / 19°C | 67°F / 19°C |
| July | 87°F / 30°C | 70°F / 22°C | 73°F / 23°C |
| August | 86°F / 29°C | 69°F / 22°C | 76°F / 24°C |
| September | 81°F / 26°C | 65°F / 19°C | 72°F / 22°C |
| October | 72°F / 21°C | 54°F / 11°C | 67°F / 19°C |
| November | 63°F / 16°C | 44°F / 07°C | 60°F / 16°C |
| December | 55°F / 11°C | 37°F / 02°C | 53°F / 12°C |

Accessibility

Virginia Beach is primarily a drive destination – more than 95% of its visitors arrive by automobile. When approaching from the west, the easiest routes are Interstate 64, U.S. 460 or U.S. 58. From the north and south, convenient routes are Interstates 85 or 95, U.S. 17 and U.S. 13 (crossing the world-famous Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel, a 17-mile span connecting Virginia’s Eastern Shore with Virginia Beach). These routes intersect with Interstate 64, which connects with Interstate 264, leading directly to the Virginia Beach oceanfront. An Amtrak train connection is available in Newport News. Greyhound and Trailways Bus Lines also operate in the area. Beginning at mile-marker zero, recreational boaters can follow the Intracoastal Waterway where the Atlantic Ocean meets the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay into the area. From Virginia Beach, they can travel as far north as Boston, Mass. and south to Brownsville, Texas.

Tourism and Visitor Profile

Tourism is one of the largest economic industries for Virginia Beach. Approximately 2.75 million people visit Virginia Beach annually, spending \$890 million and providing approximately 15,100 jobs within the city. More than 80% of visitors spend over \$500 during their visit to Virginia Beach. Typically, the Virginia Beach visitor is between 35-54 years old, married with children and has an average household income of more than \$85,000. A large majority of visitors arrive from the mid-Atlantic region. The city’s top states of visitor origin in descending order are: Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Maryland, West Virginia, New Jersey, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Kentucky, California, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana. The Northern Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia and D.C. DMA is the top DMA for total visitation, with 15.9% of visitors arriving from that DMA. Summer travelers from Canada make up 8.6% of overall visitation. The average distance traveled by visitors to Virginia Beach was 419 miles and 78.7% were repeat visitors – more than 93% of visitors said that Virginia Beach is a very good or a great place to visit. (*Statistics based on the 2008 Summer Visitor Survey and the 2007 Virginia Beach Tourism Impact Study authorized by the Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau.*)

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Lodging and Dining



Virginia Beach is an accommodating destination, with more than 12,000 hotel rooms, more than 1,800 campsites and several hundred rental cottages — and most offer ocean or bay-front vistas. Nearly 300 restaurants serve up succulent seafood dishes, from fresh Chesapeake Bay crab cakes and steamed shrimp to stuffed flounder and the local favorite, striped bass (also known as “rockfish”). The restaurants celebrate a diverse range of cultures, offering a myriad of choices from Italian, Japanese and BB-Q to Mexican and Indian.

Agriculture is one of the top three industries in Virginia Beach, with miles of green space in the southern end of the city harvesting produce from fresh strawberries to yellow corn and squash. Therefore, the chefs are enticing visitors with the freshest seafood *and* the freshest produce.

Entertainment



Virginia Beach is hot when the sun goes down in. The Verizon Wireless Virginia Beach Amphitheater, with a 20,000 seating capacity, showcases such national recording artists as Elton John, Sheryl Crow and Jimmy Buffett. New to Virginia Beach is the Sandler Center for the Performing Arts, a 1,300 seat performance venue featuring an exquisite grand lobby and outdoor performance plaza. The new venue provides a cultural centerpiece to the city, hosting regional and national artists in dance, music and theater including Tony Bennett, Bonnie Raitt, Itzhak Perlman and the Vienna Boys Choir. Nightclubs in Virginia Beach offer everything from live local bands, Top 40 and jazz to country, comedy and beach music. Virginia Beach's music festivals celebrate cultural diversity.

During summer, *Beach Street USA* provides free nightly family entertainment from the boardwalk to Atlantic Avenue. Roaming jugglers, musical acts, clowns and dramatic acts add a little festival flavor.

Shopping

Virginia Beach's newest downtown area, Town Center, spans 17 city blocks and provides a mix of upscale retail, luxury residential, and an array of outdoor cafes, restaurants and nightlife, along with business-class and deluxe hotels. Virginia Beach also is home to Lynnhaven Mall and Hilltop Shopping Center. Approximately five minutes from the oceanfront, the Hilltop area features several shopping centers with stores such as Williams-Sonoma, Borders, Talbots, and Blue Ridge Mountain Sports. Along Atlantic Avenue, visitors will find quaint boutiques and souvenir shops.



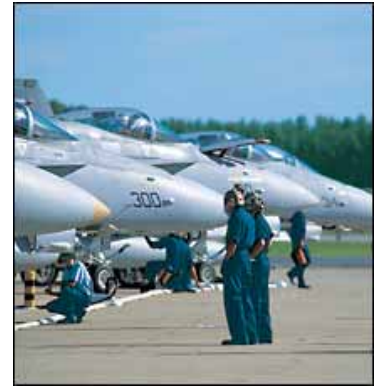
The Arts

Each year, more than 400 artists travel to Virginia Beach for one of the nation's most prestigious events, the Boardwalk Art Show and Festival, ranked as one of the Top 15 fine art shows in the U.S. by *Sunshine Artist Magazine*. The Contemporary Art Center of Virginia's changing exhibits feature painting, sculpture, photography, glass, video and other visual media from internationally-acclaimed artists as well as artists of national and regional renown. Additionally, visitors can experience opera, dance and musical performances at venues throughout the region, including the new Sandler Center for the Performing Arts. Each spring, Virginia Beach also participates as a regional venue in the annual *Virginia Arts Festival*, which brings some of the world's finest performers of classical music, dance, world beat and more to the Hampton Roads area.

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Military Installations

At the jet observation park in Virginia Beach, visitors can watch the Navy's most sophisticated aircraft taking off and landing at Oceana Naval Air Station. It is one of only two master jet bases in the U.S. Navy and is host to the F/A-18 Hornet aircraft. Fort Story was established in 1917 as a coastal artillery post. Its history, however, dates to 1607 when America's first English settlers touched shore there before continuing on to Jamestown. Today, the installation is a training and test site for the Army's Joint Logistics-Over-the-Shore (J-LOTS). Its oceanfront location, two historic lighthouses, First Landing Cross and Battle Off the Capes Monument make it a popular stop for visitors. Other military bases in Virginia Beach include: the Naval Amphibious Base Little Creek, the major operating base for the amphibious forces of the United States Atlantic Fleet and the largest base of its kind in the world; Fleet Combat Training Center, Atlantic, Dam Neck which provides training in the operation and employment of combat direction and control systems; and the State Military Reservation, also called Camp Pendleton, which the state has traditionally allocated primarily for the use of the Virginia National Guard. *Note: Access to military bases may be restricted for public tours and a valid picture ID as well as a vehicle search is required.*



Awards

Throughout the years, Virginia Beach has received numerous accolades. In 2009: Virginia Beach was listed as #9 in the Top 10 Listing of Best Beach Destinations in *Southern Living's* Readers' Choice Awards. In addition, Trip Advisor ranked Virginia Beach #12 in their listing of Best Family Friendly Vacations. In 2008: *Fit Pregnancy* magazine named Virginia Beach #8 in their "Best Cities in America to Have a Baby." Virginia Beach-Norfolk, Va. ranked as America's least stressful metropolitan area, by the American Psychological Association (APA). And *Men's Health* magazine named Virginia Beach the "Sixth Best City to Eat Out." In 2007, the resort city was honored with the following recognitions: Prevention magazine ranked Virginia Beach #10 as one of the Best Fitness-Walking Cities in the U.S.; Virginia Beach is named #14 in BringFido.com's "Top Pet Friendly Summer Vacations of 2007; and *ShermansTravel.com* named Virginia Beach #10 of the Top 10 American Boardwalks. In 2006, *Men's Fitness* ranked Virginia Beach the No. 3 fittest city in America. *Money Magazine* named Virginia Beach the sixth-best big city in the U.S. *Fit Pregnancy* named Virginia Beach the most stroller-friendly city. *Reader's Digest* named Virginia Beach one of the "Best Seaside Strolls" in America. In 2005, *USA Today* recognized Virginia Beach's boardwalk among the Top 10. In 2004, *TravelChannel.com* named Virginia Beach the 5th Best American Boardwalk. Virginia Beach also has received top honors as a convention destination from *Successful Meetings, Meetings & Conventions* and *Black Meetings & Tourism*.

For Information

The official Web site for the Virginia Beach CVB, www.vbfun.com, provides help with online trip planning. Visitors also can call 1-800-VA-BEACH (800/822-3224) for more information. Please visit www.vbmeetings.com for more information about the new Virginia Beach Convention Center. For media information and digital images, click on www.vbpressroom.com.

Virginia Beach entices visitors to "Live the Life" every season of the year! Located in the southeastern corner of the state, Virginia Beach is four hours southeast of D.C. by car and within a day's drive or less from two-thirds of the U.S. population. For visitor information, call 1-800-VA-BEACH (800/822-3224) or visit the Web site www.vbfun.com for online trip planning and more information about Virginia Beach's \$202.5 million convention center. For media information and digital images, click on www.vbpressroom.com.

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