



America's Healthiest beach and lake getaways

These budget-friendly destinations have it all: clean sand and water, activities galore, and healthy food. by KAREN CICERO

Whether you have a week or a weekend to get away this summer, we know your vacation time is precious. You want to land where you can truly relax, breathe fresh air, get in some exercise, and eat well. And you want to do it all without breaking the bank. That's why we teamed up with a panel of travel and health experts (see "Our Beach-and-Lake-Getaway Judges," below) to help us find the healthiest of the nation's most popular beach and lake towns. They evaluated air and water quality, the abundance of parks, the cost of a hotel room, and more (see "How We Picked Our Winners," page 166) to zero in on the top-10-healthiest getaways, where rejuvenation and fun are practically guaranteed. When you're ready for that much-deserved vacay, you won't go wrong with one of these 10 shore bets.



A barrier island about 18 miles east of Savannah, lowkey Tybee boasts a 3-mile stretch of beach that our



Island time! The idyllic Tybee Island Lighthouse on Tybee Island, Georgia (above), signals the classic summer pleasures at our top vacation spot, which offers a breathtaking beach with gorgeous water, biking around the Island, and simple, fresh food. At left: A room with a view of Tybee's pristine North Beach.

judges labeled "magnificent," complete with gorgeous water. "The beaches here rarely have waterquality problems," says panelist and water-quality expert Nancy Stoner, who is very picky about where she dips a toe in.

Exercise is a way of life on Tybee. There are sunrise yoga classes on North Beach, and biking is the preferred mode of transportation. "You can leave your car parked and bike just about anywhere on the tiny island," says judge Elizabeth Joy, MD, a family-and-sportsmedicine physician. And if you forget your gear, just rent a ride from one of the bike shops—trailer bikes for the kiddies and roller skates are available, too.

The island also has the

least expensive lodgings, on average, of all the towns on our list. And its eateries serve up an abundance of goodfor-you fare like fish tacos, salads, and veggie-filled sandwiches. "The restaurants serve simple, heart-healthy dishes," says judge Ruth Frechman, RD, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association.

Tybee offers something for

Our beach-and-lake-getaway judges

Nancy Stoner is the project manager of the Natural Resources. Defense Council's annual report. Testing the Waters: A Guide to Water Quality at Vacation Beaches. > Janice Noten is the assistant vice president of national policy and advocacy at the American Lung Association; she directs the organization's annual State of the Air report.

> Ruth Frechman,

RD, a spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, owns On The Weigh, a nutritioncounseling service in Burbank, California.

> Elizabeth Joy, MD,

MPH, is a family-andsports-medicine physician at the University of Utah and spokeswoman for the American College of Sports Medicine's "Exercise is Medicine' Task Force. > Lois Howes, president of the Long Island, New York Chapter of the American Society of Travel Agents, has been a vacation planner for more than 20 years; she currently works at Sterling Travel in Freeport.

> Lynn Abrahamson, MPH, RN, is chairwoman of

the Committee on Affiliates of the American Public Health Association and director of health for the Bristol-Burlington Health District in Connecticut.



QUICK PORK FAJITAS

Cooking Time: 15 Minutes

Not only is this a quick meal, it's healthy too. Ounce for ounce, pork tenderloin is as lean as skinless chicken breast.

Pork tenderloin, about a pound, thinly sliced*

3 Tbsp. Fajita seasoning

1/2 Onion, sliced

1/2 Green or red bell pepper, sliced

4-6 Flour tortillas, warmed

In a shallow bowl, toss pork pieces with fajita seasoning. In a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, stir-fry pork pieces with onion and peppers until vegetables are just tender (about 5-10 minutes). Wrap portions in flour tortillas with salsa.

Make presentation more colorful by using both red and green peppers.

Allow family members to create fajitas to their own tastes by serving with a variety of tasty condiments—sour cream, different salsas, and guacamole.

*Placing pork tenderloin in the freezer for about 20 minutes makes slicing easier.

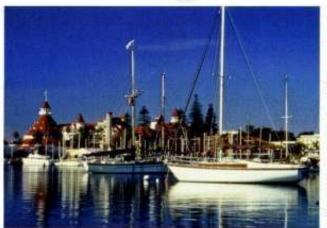
For other dishes that cook in less than 30 minutes, visit us at TheOtherWhiteMeat.com/PorkRecipes.



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Health GUIDE Healthie







Water world: Relax watching the boats coming in and out of tranquil Glorietta Bay in Coronado, California (left). Easygoing Monterey, California (right), is smog-free and has an abundance of marine life.

everyone—and that's why it tops our list of healthy summer escapes.

STAY HERE: Rooms at the 17th Street Inn (starting at \$125 per night) have full kitchens, so you can make your own healthy meals. Want to be near the beach? You can't get closer than the Desoto Beach Hotel (starting at \$179.95 per night).



Coronado

California

CoronadoVisitorCenter.com

The West Coast has no lack of beach towns. But this one, about 2 miles from San Diego, is "a little slice of heaven," says judge and travel agent Lois Howes. The beach is wide, clean, and uncrowded—and you can leave your umbrella at home: Rain is rare in the summer, and the average midsummer temperature is a perfect 78 degrees.

There are plenty of ways to get in exercise, too. "You can try surfing lessons or stick with favorites like tennis or biking," Dr. Joy says. And even the fast food here has a nutritious twist—at Burger Lounge, for instance, the patties are made with grilled turkey or organic quinoa and served on whole-grain buns. Another

thing we love: Trans fats are banned in all the restaurants. (Only third-place Monterey shares this distinction.)

STAY HERE: With childproof rooms, jogging strollers to borrow, and a separate concierge desk for kids, the Loews Coronado Bay Resort (starting at \$249 per night) is about as family-friendly as it gets. Not bringing kids? The historic Glorietta Bay Inn (starting at \$185 per night) is just a block from the beach, and each room has a small fridge where you can stash healthy snacks.



Monterey California

SeeMonterey.com

Talk about a breath of fresh air. "There's very little particle pollution or smog here," panelist Janice Nolen of the American Lung Association says. Plus, smoking is banned on the beach. (Smoking is also banned in Coronado, California, and Zephyr Cove, Nevada.)

Our judges also gave Monterey a thumbs-up for being a national marine sanctuary, where you can scuba dive, kayak, or sail alongside humpback and blue whales. "Seeing the animals brings

How we picked our winners

➤ We started with a list of the 50 most popular beach and lake towns in the country (as defined by the total number of vacation days tourists spend there) from the American Automobile Association. To arrive at our top-10 list, our judges rated places in five categories: quality and cleanliness of air, water, and, sand; range of fitness opportunities, healthfulness of local restaurants, safety measures, including the presence of lifeguards, how close the town is to a major trauma center should an emergency come up, and the crime rate; and affordability of accommodations (based on the average rates in July, provided by Smith Travel Research).

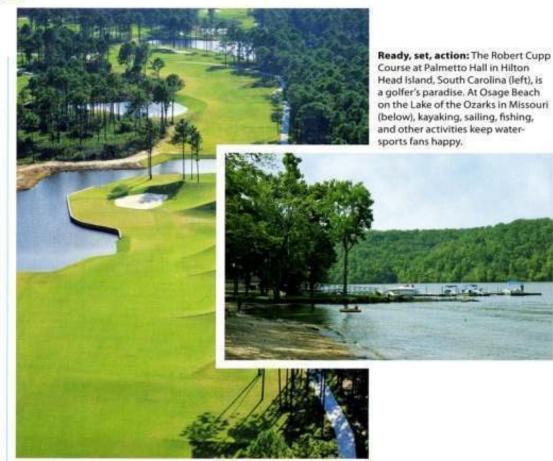


a new joy to water sports," judge Howes says. A waterfront recreation trail, restaurants that serve sustainable seafood, and golf for just \$25 per round at the Peter Hay course are icing on the cake. STAY HERE: The fitness concierge-ves, you read that right—at the Hyatt Regency Monterey Resort and Spa (starting at \$209 per night) will give you running maps of the area and arrange active trips. A cheaper option is Casa Munas (starting at \$160 per night), where there's always free fresh fruit and water in the lobby.

Osage Beach Missouri Funtake.com

Osage Beach is on the Lake of the Ozarks, the most popular summer-vacay spot in the Midwest. But you won't feel crowded: The lake has 1,150 miles of shoreline. The free public beach at Lake of the Ozarks State Park in Osage Beach stood out not only because it's water-sports central-fishing, kayaking, sailing, and more-but because it's absolutely beautiful, with rolling hills and limestone bluffs as a backdrop. "The view is so spectacular, you won't want to leave," judge Howes says.

If you do manage to pry yourself from the park, you can play a round of golf, pick up fresh fruit at one of the many roadside stands, or check out nearby Spa Shikia at the Lodge of Four Seasons, which is nationally renowned for its Japanese garden and treatments.



STAY HERE: Bringing the kids?
Tan-Tar-A Resort (starting at \$100 per night) has two golf courses, an indoor water park, Jet Ski and paddleboat rentals, plus horseback riding. A great B&B alternative is The Inn at Harbour Ridge (starting at \$109 per night), where you can swim or fish right off their dock.

Hilton Head Island South Carolina HiltonHeadIsland.org

If you're a golf nut, Hilton Head is for you. There are 20 public golf courses to choose from. But there's plenty to do for non-golfers, too. Besides 12 miles of beaches, there are 200 tennis courts and 75 miles of bike paths. You can even paddle your kayak through breathtaking salt marshes and lagoons. "It's a fitness enthusiast's dream come true," Dr. Joy says.

And don't worry: There's more than heavy Southern

Your healthy-stay checklist

Don't let a mishap at your hotel or vacation rental ruin the fun. Before you book, make sure these safety measures are in place, says Meri-K Appy, president of the Home Safety Council, a national nonprofit in Washington, D.C.

Hotels

- Childproofing. Some chains like Loews will childproof a room for you prior to arrival if you give them a heads-up. If your hotel doesn't offer this service, bring your own supplies (plug covers, cabinet latches, etc.) and do a childproofing run-through before you let your kids in the room.
- Windows guards. If a hotel doesn't have them installed, they should at least have windows that lock.

Vacation homes

- A carbon monoxide detector. Although this colorless, adorless gas is more of a problem in the winter, it can be an issue if there's a fuel-burning appliance (like a gas stove) around. If a cottage or house you're renting doesn't have a detector, bring along a plug-in unit.
- Water heater, it's often set at 140 to 150 degrees, a temperature that can give a child third-degree burns in two seconds. Play it safe and request that the heater be set at 120 degrees.
- A fence around the pool. You want one that's at least 4 feet high with a gate that locks to prevent kids from accessing the pool when there's no adult supervision.



fare available. "Local fish is very popular here," panelist Ruth Frechman, RD, says. "Some chefs go out of their way to buy produce from farmers in the area." Great spots to try: Signe's Heaven Bound Bakery and Café, which serves veggie sandwiches on its homemade eight-grain bread, and River House at the Inn at Palmetto Bluff, where much of the produce comes from organic or small family farms. STAY HERE: A gorgeous white-sand beach faces the Westin Hilton Head Island Resort and Spa (starting at \$229 per night). Not in your budget this year? The Holiday Inn Oceanfront is about \$50 less per night and has a 24-hour fitness center on-site and bike paths nearby.



This town on the southeastern shore of Lake Tahoe got oohs and ahhs from the judges because of its beaches. The widest, Nevada Beach, spans more than three football fields and is dotted with picnic tables. And the water is so clear at all of Zephyr's beaches that you can see 78 feet beneath the surface.

The view above water is spectacular, too. "You're not looking at beach condos—the Sierra Nevada mountains are right there," judge Howes says. And don't worry about bringing a bunch of gear. You can rent kayaks, parasails, paddleboats, Jet Skis, and other water equipment from many of the marinas in the area.

Craving some really healthy fast food? Visit nearby South Lake, California, where Sprouts Natural Foods Café serves up fresh-squeezed juices, hummus melts, and brown rice bowls.

STAY HERE: Zephyr Cove Resort (starting at \$219 per night) sets up volleyball courts on its strip of beach. If you don't mind staying about a mile away from the water, try the bungalow-style lodging at picturesque Pine Cone Resort (starting at \$110 per night).

Bonita Springs Florida BonitaSprings.com

Calling all beachcombers! Our judges rated this town, which is midway between Naples and Fort Myers, as having the best sand anywhere. "It's like talcum powder," Howes says. "Your feet feel like they're getting a spa treatment when you walk on it. I could go for miles and miles." If you have kids with you, stick around for high tide in the afternoon, when seashells-a foot thick in some places-wash ashore. Our judges also loved that families could take a guided canoe excursion, swim in the calm, warm Gulf waters, or explore the area's parks (1,500 acres of them). You have to look a little harder for healthy-food options here, though, because fast and fried are readily available. One spot our judges liked: Crispers, which offers healthy salads, even for kids.

A bonus: Because the most popular

Five fun-in-the-sun essentials

Be sure to throw these in your bag before heading out for a day on the surf and sand.

- Water shoes. Flip-flops are cute, but it's way too easy to trip and twist your ankle in them. Water shoes give you more support on the sand and in the waves, plus they protect the tops of your feet from getting sunburned and cut by rocks or seashells.
- Wraparound shades. The sun's rays glaring off the water and beach and blowing sand and debris can damage your eyes. "Wraparound sunglasses that block UVA and UVB
- rays are the way to go," says Price M. Kloess, MD, a spokesman for the American Optometric Association. "A couple of years ago, I had to remove a tiny piece of glass from my daughter's comea after a trip to the beach."
- 3. 5PF 30 sunscreen. Be sure it protects against UVA and UVB rays. And when you think you have enough on, squirt out some more because "almost everyone underapplies sunscreen," says Richard Zane, MD, vice chair of
- emergency medicine at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.
- 4. A giant bottle of water. Go ahead—guzzie it. You need twice as much fluid when you're active as you do sitting at your desk. Don't wait until you're thirsty, either, That's a sign that you're already dehydrated.
- Antibacterial gel. if the restroom is out of soap, an antibacterial gel kills germs and bacteria just as well.



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Beach heaven: The powder-soft white sand at the beach in Bonita Springs, Florida, also boasts some of the best seashell hunting around. Perfect for keeping the kids busy while you chill. At right: Stroll along Commercial Street in Provincetown, Massachusettes, and stop in the eclectic shops or catch a play at the local theater. Then hit the beach, which has the cleanest water of any town on our list of top summer-vacation spots.

time to visit Bonita is January through April, you can get good summer rates. In July, lodging averages just \$75 a night.

STAY HERE: Hyatt Regency
Coconut Point Resort and Spa
(starting at \$149 per night)
has its own climbing wall,
around-the-clock fitness center, and volleyball games. If
you don't need all that, opt for
Bonita Beach Resort Motel
(starting at \$62 per night),
where you get a kitchen, too.



WaileaResortAssociation.com

Named after the goddess of Hawaiian canoe makers, the clarity of the ocean in Wailea, on Maui's southern coast, makes for incredible snorkeling. There are places to rent gear all along the beach; just go early for the best chance to catch a glimpse of sea turtles and butterfly fish. Or you can set up a trip with Hawaii Sailing Canoe Adventure to go snorkeling in deeper waters.

There's plenty of action on land, too. The Wailea Golf Club has three award-winning courses—and the town's tennis club has 11 courts and offers lessons. But, by far, the most unique activity is biking 38 miles down Haleakala, a nearby dormant volcano. "Because there are paved trails, anyone in reasonable shape can do it," Dr. Joy says. Plus, there are lots of seafood options, and breakfasts come with tropical fruit.

What's not to love about Wailea? The room rates, which are the highest of all the towns on our list.

STAY HERE: For a total splurge try Grand Wailea Hotel and Spa (starting at \$480 per night). It has an outdoor water park with rope swings, tons of slides, and a

sandy-bottom pool. And at the Wailea Grand Champion Condos (starting at \$210 per night), you can see the golf course from your balcony.



If you're looking for seclusion, this is it. This 4-mile island in Lake Erie has just 367 year-round residents and is only reachable via a 20-minute ferry ride from Marblehead and Sandusky, Ohio (unless you hire a private boat or small plane). You can bike everywhere, hike in the wooded areas, or bring your own scuba gear to explore the offshore shipwrecks. The beach at the state park is cleaned daily and has a play area for pets. "You spend a lot more time doing things than waiting in line," judge Howes says.

There are also plenty of good-for-you food choices for such a quiet spot. Kelleys Island Wine Company has al fresco dining with salads and healthy pizzas. "I love the fact that the owners grow their own herbs on site," Frechman says. Right on the water, Captain's Corner serves its club sandwich on wholegrain bread and has local fish dishes like Lake Erie Perch. STAY HERE: With just 31 rooms, the new Kelleys Island Venture Resort (starting at \$195 per night) is the biggest place to stay here. B&B options like Eagle's Nest cost around \$100 per night.

cost around \$100 per night

Provincetown

Massachusetts

Provincetown.com

This outermost tip of Cape Cod had the highest score in water quality of all our towns. "Both beaches, Herring Cove and Race Point, passed every water-quality test with flying colors," judge Stoner says. Both offer kayaking, sailing, and even sand-dune hiking. But the strong currents and big waves at Race Point are best reserved for advanced enthusiasts. The town is bike-friendly, too. So why did it come in at number 10? The hotels are on the expensive side, and there weren't as many healthy-food options. STAY HERE: At the Land's End Inn (starting at \$305 per night), you can have breakfast overlooking the water. The Anchor Inn Beach House (starting at \$195 per night) will set up gear rentals and water excursions.