

## Sizzling story ideas

### African American History & Gullah Geechee Culture

Myrtle Beach is filled with rich, fascinating African American and Gullah Geechee history. The Gullah Geechee people are the descendants of slaves who live in the Lowcountry region of South Carolina and Georgia, which includes both the coastal plain and the Sea Islands. Visitors are able to explore museums, farms, plantations, shops and exhibitions dedicated to educating the public about these historic cultures. Individuals can become acquainted with the cherished music, food and storytelling to learn about the unfamiliar Gullah society that continues to live on as well as observe recreated lives on farms. There are numerous tours and exhibitions that illustrate the different lifestyles of the two meaningful cultures.

### Arts and Culture

Within a varied nation, the south is a place rich in history that has defined the strong cultural landscape of Myrtle Beach. From the craftsmanship of glass blowing in Conway and on Pawley's Island, to the stately rice plantations with endless stories to tell— and even the coming together of a community to compete for the Grand Strand's best Chicken Bog – Myrtle Beach is redolent of its heritage, and, with Southern Hospitality in mind, welcomes visitors to indulge in its local customs. Consider stopping by the Myrtle Beach Art Museum for the latest "Dixie Dugan: A Retrospective" and "Hurricane Hugo: The Batiks of Leo Twigg's Commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary" exhibits. The Hurricane Hugo exhibit features a series of nine batik paintings created by Dr. Leo F. Twigg's the year following Hurricane Hugo's devastation to South Carolina's Lowcountry, his childhood home.

### The New Myrtle Beach

Myrtle Beach has grown more than 35 percent over the past decade and has become one of the fastest-growing family and vacation destinations in the United States. Known as the "Grand Strand," the area is continuously developing and embracing numerous new attractions, accommodations and events. In May 2010, the destination welcomed a brand-new oceanfront boardwalk and promenade downtown, spanning 1.2 miles of oceanfront property and kicking off a revitalization of the classic downtown area. The revitalization efforts have sparked new business and attractions including the iconic landmark the Myrtle Beach Skywheel, a 200-foot-high observation wheel with 42 temperature controlled glass gondolas providing breathtaking views of the coastline. The following year was a momentous year for the Myrtle Beach area, offering visitors an enhanced vacation experience with the opening of major new attractions such as WonderWorks, SkyWheel Myrtle Beach, Dolly Parton's Pirates Voyage and a new location for Legends in Concert. The momentum continued as the Myrtle Beach International Airport completed a large expansion in April 2013 doubling gate capacity and the opening of the new Horry County Museum located at the former Burroughs School, a historic landmark on the National Historic Register. Airlines such as Spirit Airlines, Porter Airlines and Allegiant Air are increasing the number of flights as well as adding more destinations flying to Myrtle Beach. Coming up in 2015, the area is excited to see an expansion of Ripley's Aquarium adding 550 square-meters to the facility including a penguin exhibit, the opening of the new Indoor Sports Complex adjacent to the Myrtle Beach Convention Center and welcoming the Hilton Grand Vacations Club, a new timeshare resort in central Myrtle Beach.

### Family Travel

Myrtle Beach has been long renowned for its numerous attractions and activities for every interest. Whether your preferences include riding a roller coaster, zooming around a racetrack, hitting a golf ball, observing wildlife and nature, or relaxing on the beach or at a water park, the Myrtle Beach area provides a ticket to fun for everyone in the family, young and old. A few new attractions in 2014 include the new 'Swarm' exhibit at Ripley's Aquarium, the renovated Horry County Museum and the Hollywood Wax Museum which opened the summer of 2014.



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### **Carolina Coastal Cuisine**

Throughout the last decade a culinary revival has been flourishing throughout the Myrtle Beach area with local chefs altering traditional Lowcountry dishes to add a more modern flare. This “Carolina Coastal Cuisine” prides itself in using fresh local seafood and produce, rice, sweet potatoes, grits, country ham, peanuts and fruits such as peaches and berries. Local, favorite chefs are using unique timeless recipes passed down for generations while adding their own 21st century interpretation. Popular, restaurants are emerging throughout the Myrtle Beach area incorporating beloved cuisine from the Carolinas as well as flavors from around the world to create a memorable and unique dining experience. While restaurants up and down the Myrtle Beach area prepare this cuisine, one of the most interesting spots to experience it is Murrells Inlet, seafood capital of South Carolina, 25 minutes’ drive south of central Myrtle Beach. Murrells Inlet is in the heart of the Lowcountry and used to be visited by the infamous pirate Blackbeard. A boardwalk aptly called The Marshwalk winds through the wetlands, offering stunning vistas and glimpses of wildlife and waterfowl. Consider stopping by area restaurants such as Wicked Tuna (for an incredible view of the Marshwalk), Aspen Grille (fine-dining experience) or Bliss (located in Murrells Inlet).

### **Golf for One and All**

The Myrtle Beach area boasts more than 100 of the most unique, challenging and picturesque golf courses in the world, making it a premiere destination for golf enthusiasts and aficionados with more than four million rounds of golf played annually. The destination is also home to seven of the Top 100 Courses in America, as rated by *Golf Digest*. Golfers can experience the beauty of oceanfront holes or stand in the midst of giant live oaks draped in Spanish moss on the site of a colonial rice plantation – making the game as memorable as your vacation. The area is also a popular family golf destination which boasts a Kids Play Free program in the summer months at more than 40 courses where play is free for those 16 and under when accompanied by a paying adult. In addition to the traditional golf courses, Myrtle Beach offers kids of any age to play at one of our countless (more than 50!) miniature golf courses proving the area is the miniature golf capital of the world.

### **The Great Outdoors**

The Myrtle Beach, South Carolina area is home to some of the most bountiful natural beauty in the United States; add its temperate climate and you’ve got a recipe for outdoor attractions that are easily enjoyed by visitors year-round. From bird-watching in the state parks, to strolling through Brookgreen Gardens or the Murrells Inlet Marshwalk, there is much to discover and appreciate in the Myrtle Beach area’s great outdoors. Plus, make sure to stop by one of the great parks in the area such as Huntington Beach State Park (the prime spot for birding enthusiasts) or the Myrtle Beach State Park.

### **Green Myrtle Beach**

Many accommodations and attractions are striving to become more eco-friendly and considerate of visitors’ needs. Local resorts and hotels are becoming part of eco-friendly organizations, one being the iStayGreen association, which recognizes businesses for their environmental efforts. iStay Green evaluates the eco-friendliness of properties based on sustainability of operations, pollution, water and energy conservation, recycling, and promoting and educating on proper environmental decisions. There are currently 93 properties represented by iStayGreen in Myrtle Beach, and businesses are continuing to promote and improve their eco-friendly endeavors.

### **Roads Less Traveled**

Visitors seeking a change of pace from a traditional beach vacation need look no further than the Myrtle Beach area. Try visiting one of the lush, undiscovered vineyards in Conway to get a taste of true, South Carolina wine or take a helicopter flight over the gorgeous Carolina coast and treat yourself to a whole new definition of “ocean-view.” The Myrtle Beach area is comprised of 12 distinct communities all of which offering a variety of off-the-beaten path attractions and activities, making every visit like the first time.



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### **Wedding and Honeymooners Paradise**

Myrtle Beach is becoming one of the most popular destination wedding and honeymoon locations in the United States. Destination weddings have increased in popularity over the past ten years; no longer are couples returning to the bride's hometown for their wedding. Instead, couples are choosing to have their weddings elsewhere so family and friends can combine attending the wedding with an extended weekend or vacation. Planning a blended family wedding, military wedding or just looking for a memorable experience with value? The Grand Strand has much to offer for the perspective couple planning a destination wedding. Whether the wedding has traditional, historical or a contemporary flair, there's an appropriate venue for everyone's dreams.

### **Craft Beer Scene**

When looking for the best places to find craft beer, you're probably thinking Denver or Seattle or even Portland, Oregon. You wouldn't think of the under-the-radar Myrtle Beach, South Carolina brew scene. Throughout the last several years, several new breweries and restaurants have popped up in the area offering an assortment of craft beer options. Consider stopping by New South Brewery for a free guided tour and tasting or the Homebrewer's Pantry which has anything a homebrewer could need. Or, if wine is more your speed, try local favorite La Belle Amie Vineyard in Little River or newcomer Duplin Winery, set to open in spring 2015.