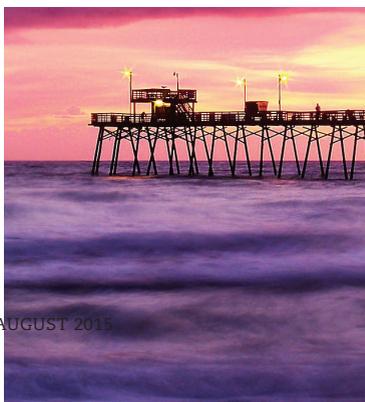


bits 'n' bites

ROAD TRIP WORTHY

Looking for a culinary adventure this summer? North Carolina's gorgeous Crystal Coast has some of the freshest seasonal and sustainable seafood. BY LAURA SCHOBER

Along North Carolina's Southern Outer Banks lies The Crystal Coast, an 85-mile stretch of breathtaking historic towns, beautiful, sandy beaches and quaint oceanside homes. The area is known for its rich history and the charming towns within Carteret County, which include Beaufort, Emerald Isle, Atlantic Beach and Morehead City. Its coastline was once a refuge for pirates who sailed the Atlantic, and to this day, remnants of thousands of sunken pirate ships (including the wreckage of the notorious pirate Blackbeard) lie underwater along the Outer Banks, serving as relics of a lively past. For more than 400 years, fishing has been a huge part of Carteret County's economy. While over 80% of US seafood is imported, you're much more likely to find fresh, seasonal and local catches at restaurants, farmers' markets and grocery stores on The Crystal Coast thanks to its Carteret Catch program. As a partnership between fisheries, restaurants, retailers, distributors and researchers, Carteret Catch supports more than 20 restaurants, from seafood shacks to casual-elegant waterfront restaurants that offer a "catch of the day." If you spot the Carteret Catch logo, you can bet that the fish and shellfish being served is local, sustainable and ocean-fresh. In the summer, seasonal choices such as black seabass, blue crab, clams, Spanish mackerel, mahi mahi and farmed oysters along with yellowfin tuna and shrimp are commonplace on menus across The Crystal Coast. Check out cleaneating.com/blog for more about the area's seafood scene and where to dine while you're visiting.



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