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Relax on your Journey to Virginia Beach, with a Myriad of Routes Leading You to the Oceanfront

Alternate highways and byways offer Virginia Beach visitors scenic, peaceful drives

(Virginia Beach, Va., 2009) – Why should your Virginia Beach vacation begin *after* you reach the oceanfront? Travelers driving to the East Coast resort city can avoid the tension of driving and relax right away, thanks to the myriad of peaceful routes leading to Virginia Beach. Rather than the traditional and trafficked Interstate 64, explore the breathtaking scenery, wildlife and historical monuments found along routes 13, 17, 60 and I-664 in Virginia. For additional information on alternative routes, visitors can call Virginia Beach Visitors Services at 800-VA-BEACH from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Or visit www.vbfun.com and click on “*Directions & Travel Tips.*”

For a truly picturesque drive from the north, consider **Route 13** - a scenic stretch of open road through Virginia’s idyllic eastern shore. A trip through Cape Charles offers a look at Virginia’s most untouched nature, as tall trees and grasses line the highway and sea gulls glide in the sky.

Route 13 also is the site of one of the seven engineering wonders of the modern world – the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Stretching 17.6 miles to connect Virginia’s eastern shore to Virginia Beach, the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel has captured worldwide recognition, as it is considered to be the world’s largest bridge-tunnel complex. Aside from crystal blue saltwater as far as the eye can see, travelers can stop at the southern-most island of the bridge-tunnel’s four man-made islands – Sea Gull Island – and enjoy fishing, lunch and shopping.



For nature enthusiasts, stop at any one of the four islands to catch a glimpse of peregrine falcons and harlequin ducks.

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Another alternative route to Virginia Beach from the north is **Route 17**, leading drivers through the heartland of Virginia. Historic towns like Fredericksburg and Yorktown dot Route 17, ensuring visitors a healthy dose of American history on their way to the beach resort. When arriving in the Hampton Roads region, travelers will cross the James River Bridge and can peek at one of the world's largest commercial shipbuilding companies, Northrop Grumman Newport News (you'll notice the towering 900-ton blue crane – also one of the world's largest).

Route 17 also affords travelers the opportunity to connect with **Route 60**, and experience yet more American history with a stop at Colonial Williamsburg or the 1607 Jamestown Settlement. Williamsburg, in addition to the historical attractions, boasts unique shopping experiences and theme parks, such as Busch Gardens and Water Country USA. Stroll through Prime Outlets for name brand merchandise at bargain rates, or opt for hand-crafted merchandise and fine foods and wines at The Williamsburg Pottery. Visitors also can travel **Route 460** through the Virginia countryside, through Petersburg and Lynchburg, to stop and explore the Civil War monuments.

Those eager to get to the beach as soon as possible – and, who can blame them – can pick up **Interstate 664** in Newport News and experience Hampton Roads' *other* bridge-tunnel, the Monitor-Merrimac Memorial Bridge Tunnel. This tunnel, named after the famous Civil War naval battle between USS Monitor and CSS Virginia (formerly known as the Merrimac), consists of a mile-long underwater tunnel and three miles of bridge trestle. Interstate 664 connects with Interstate 264 in Portsmouth, just minutes from the Virginia Beach oceanfront.

When planning a trip to Virginia Beach, travelers can check for road conditions, traffic advisories, lane closures and construction updates at VDOT's Web site, www.virginiadot.org.

For visitors who prefer flying, Virginia Beach is located 20 minutes from Norfolk International Airport, which hosts most major airline carriers and offers 200 flights daily.

So, grab an atlas, along with your beach towel and sunscreen, choose the best route, and let the fun and relaxation begin a bit early this vacation season.

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 Washington, 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 new \$202.5 million convention center. For media information and digital images, click on www.vbpressroom.com.

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