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Free and Budget-Friendly Adventures: A Virginia Beach Vacation is Easy on the Wallet

(Virginia Beach, Va., 2009) – During times of recession and economic downturns, vacationers are searching for free and budget-friendly adventures. Regardless of the strength of the markets - Virginia Beach always offers a wealth of activities that are easy on the budget. From exploring the parks and wildlife to lounging on sun-drenched beaches, Virginia Beach beckons you to “Live the Life!” For more information and images, visit www.vbfun.com or www.vbpressroom.com.

Enjoy the Beaches

With 14 miles of open, public beaches – with NO fees – Virginia Beach offers a variety of unique beaches to fit every mood. The newly-landscaped Virginia Beach resort area features live music, street performers, diverse festivals, as well as outdoor cafes and nightlife. 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, the traffic is less and seagulls leave long-lasting footprints.

Back to Nature



With more than 18,000 acres of state parks and a national wildlife refuge, families can embark on many free outdoor excursions. First Landing State Park, the most visited state park in Virginia, offers free monthly educational programs that include hiking, surf fishing, and animal tracking. Bike through Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge or False Cape State Park, and discover miles of unspoiled beaches in an ocean-to-freshwater bay habitat, barrier islands, dunes, freshwater marshes, maritime forests, ponds and ocean beaches. Back Bay and False Cape are home to wild horses, pigs, loggerhead turtles, bald eagles and a variety of migratory birds and endangered species.

Beach Street U.S.A.

The oceanfront comes alive with special themed entertainment along the sidewalks of Atlantic Avenue from 17th to 25th Streets nightly during the summer months. During Beach Street U.S.A., puppets, bands, jugglers, magicians and others entertain crowds right on the sidewalks. Free live concerts and theatrical productions take place seven nights a week along the oceanfront.

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Oceanfront Festivals and Events

Virginia Beach celebrates diversity as it pulsates with a myriad of festivals, celebrations, and cultural events throughout the year. Dance to the beat of salsa, merengue, mamba and bachata tunes presented by some of the best national and regional acts at the annual Latin Festival. Explore the African origins of today's diversified music genres during the Soul Music Beachfest and the Blues at the Beach festival. Groove to Caribbean, Latin, and pop music during the steel band competition at PANorama Caribbean Music Fest. Virginia Beach celebrates the German spirit each year with good food and good drink during Oktober Brewfest. Indulge in pizza, prosciutto and fontina, caprese, eggplant parmesan, lasagna, espresso, gelato and all things Italian at Festa Italiana. Festivals at the oceanfront are free and open to the public so grab your dancing shoes and bring your moves down to the Virginia Beach oceanfront festivals.

Virginia Beach Farmers Market

Experience the rural side of Virginia Beach at the Farmers Market, a country-style, open-air market that features fresh, locally grown produce, dairy products, organic groceries, a meat market, home and garden gifts, jams, and a restaurant year-round. The Old Beach Farmers Market, open from Memorial Weekend through Labor Day Weekend, is located at the oceanfront, just a quick bike ride from the boardwalk and offers heirloom tomatoes, fresh herbs, wines and other fresh produce. Both events are free and special events are held each month.

Historic Homes

Historic homes throughout the city offer a peek into the lives of Virginia Beach's earliest residents. The **Adam Thoroughgood House** (circa 1680) stands on land that was part of an original land grant. Other historic homes still standing in Virginia Beach were constructed later in the colonial period such as the **Lynnhaven House** (1725), the **Ferry Plantation House** (1740) and the **Francis Land House** (late 1700s). All homes are open to the public for tours and host special interpretative programs throughout the year. Admission to the Adam Thoroughgood, Lynnhaven, and Francis Land Houses are \$4 for adults; \$3 for seniors 60 plus; and \$2 for students. Admission for the Ferry Plantation House is \$5 for adults; \$2 for senior citizens and students are free.

Military Aviation Museum

Virginia Beach is home to five military installations, including Naval Air Station Oceana. The Military Aviation Museum, located at the Virginia Beach Airport, is home to one of the largest private collections of World War II and Korean War era fighters, bombers, trainers and seaplanes. Many aircrafts have been fully restored to their World War II condition. Admission to the museum is \$10 for adults, \$5 for students, and seniors and active duty military is \$9.

Contemporary Art Center of Virginia

As one of southeastern Virginia's leading art institutions, the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia's mission is to teach visitors about contemporary art through regularly scheduled changing exhibits, studio art classes, and special events. Regularly changing exhibitions feature painting, sculpture, photography, glass, video and other visual media from internationally acclaimed artists as well as artists of national and regional renown. Founded in 1952, the CACV has produced Virginia Beach's Boardwalk Art Show for nearly 50 years. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students, seniors and anyone with a military ID.

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Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum

Discover another treasure on the Boardwalk, the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum. Located in the historically registered DeWitt cottage built in 1895, the Atlantic Wildfowl Heritage Museum displays art and artifacts documenting migratory wildfowl that pass through Eastern Virginia. Exhibits of wildfowl and shorebird carvings trace the evolution of this unique American art form. Enjoy on-site wood-carving demonstrations, decoys dating from historic times to present day and a collection of exhibits covering the history of Virginia Beach. Admission to the museum is free.

Old Coast Guard Station

Step back in time at The Old Coast Guard Station. Housed in a 1903 former U.S. Life Saving Station, this quaint, oceanfront museum features rescue equipment used by turn-of-the-century surf men to save shipwrecked crews from a watery grave. Learn about shipwrecks that occurred just off the Virginia Beach coast and the history of lifesaving service from World War II to the present day. Take a peek through TOWERCAM, a roof-mounted video camera that zooms in on passing ships dotting the Virginia Beach horizon. The camera affords museum visitors the same view crewmen had from the tower nearly 100 years ago. Admission to the museum is \$4 for adults and \$2 for children ages 6-18.



Virginia Legends Walk

At the oceanfront 13th Street Park, the Virginia Legends Walk honors Virginians, by birth or residence, who made significant contributions to the nation and the world. Celebrated Virginians include Edgar Allen Poe, Arthur Ashe, Ella Fitzgerald, Patsy Cline, Thomas Jefferson and Captain John Smith. Visitors can stroll for free through the Walk.

Virginia Beach Amusement Park

Enjoy an afternoon of thrill rides and games, perfect for the whole family. Located in the resort area right on Atlantic Avenue, the Virginia Beach Amusement Park is home to the Skyscraper extreme thrill ride – one of only seven in the world. Admission to the park is free and ride tickets range from 70 cents to \$1. Most rides require four to six tickets.

Cape Henry Lighthouse and Memorial Park

Peek into the past at the original Cape Henry Lighthouse. Dating to 1791, it's the oldest government-built lighthouse in America. Once you reach the summit, enjoy a panoramic view of the Atlantic Ocean and the Chesapeake Bay – the same view once seen by ship watchers more than 200 years ago. Located on the Fort Story military base, the original Cape Henry Lighthouse is open to the public. Across the road, you'll find the new Cape Henry Lighthouse. Built in 1881, it's the tallest iron-encased lighthouse in the country, and is operated by the U.S. Coast Guard. Adjacent to the lighthouses, visitors also tour the Cape Henry Memorial Park which includes a replica of the First Landing Cross, planted by the first settlers to give thanks for a safe voyage after arriving on our shore in 1607. Admission to the lighthouse is \$4 for adults, \$3 for children ages 3-12, and free for children three and under. *Note: Cape Henry Lighthouse is on Ft. Story military base. Access to military bases may be restricted for public tours, and a valid picture ID and vehicle search is required.*

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Edgar Cayce's Association for Research and Enlightenment

The Association for Research and Enlightenment attracts tens of thousands of individuals from around the world, all coming to investigate the information that Edgar Cayce brought forth in his psychic readings. The A.R.E. can help visitors discover how Cayce's findings are being used today in the fields of health, personal spirituality, intuition, education, and research. Experience a number of events that take place at the A.R.E., which are all free to the public. Test your endurance in a Tai Chi, stretching, or a yoga class, or learn about meditation in one of their free seminars.

Virginia Beach entices visitors to "Live the Life" every season of the year! 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. For media information and digital images, click on www.vbpressroom.com.

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