

Topsail Island is 26 miles of beach with just three small towns on it. On the south end is Topsail, in the middle is Surf City, and the north end is North Topsail. The fun here is low-key by design. A few of our favorites:

On the island

- **The beach.** Wide, uncrowded sandy beach right outside the door — most of our guests never make it further than this. Surf City is the most populated beach, especially during high season. People are friendly and it's a very communal atmosphere! The north end near the Paradise Palms property has amazing beaches, free parking and heavier waves for body surfing, boogie boarding or surfing. However, if you go to the very north end of the island, the rip tides are dangerous and it's not good for swimming. Beautiful to look at, but too rough to be safe. The very south end of the island on the intracoastal waterway is a beautiful place to catch the sunset!
- **Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Rescue & Rehabilitation Center** in Surf City — meet recovering sea turtles up close. Check seasonal visiting hours before you go.
- **Surf City Ocean Pier** — fishing, or just a sunset walk with ice cream.
- **Missiles and More Museum** in Topsail Beach — the island's surprising rocket-testing history from Operation Bumblebee.
- **Shelling at the south end** of the island near Serenity Point — go at low tide.

-Ghost crabbing- this is a fun, exciting, low cost adventure. Grab a bucket, some nets and some flashlights, and head out to the beach after sunset. At this time of day the crabs will leave their tunnels in the dunes and go to the water for a drink. You can shine the light on the sand and see them moving back and forth. See if you can catch them in the net, which is scarier/more exciting than it sounds! If you like you can collect a few in the bucket, then everyone stands together and releases the buckets back onto the sand. Don't keep them too long, or get too many at a time, but they're hardy and don't seem to mind.

-"Chicken-necking" - this is a fun, often rewarding experience. Go to the Seaview Fishing Pier (<https://seaviewfishingpier.godaddysites.com/>), and buy frozen chicken necks and crab hooks. Attach the chicken neck to the hook and throw it into the water. The crabs will grab ahold of the chicken neck and you can pull them in. You don't need a license for chicken necking! Your max catch is 50 per day, and each crab must be at least 5" tip to tip on the carapace. A great place to do this is in Soundside Park. at 517 Roland Avenue.

On the water

- **Kayaking & paddleboarding** the sound and marsh creeks — calm, shallow water that's perfect for kids. Rentals available in Surf City. This is a great, family owned shop near the duplex: <https://surf50south.com/>
- **Charter fishing** out of Sneads Ferry and New River Inlet — book a day or two ahead in summer.

-Fishing on the island: Here's a helpful link for fishing resources: <https://topsail.fish/topsail-island-fishing-calendar/> You can also fish off the piers, and each of the three piers has a shop that will help you with licenses, daily rates and equipment rental if needed.

- **Surf lessons** — Surf City lives up to the name; several outfits teach beginners in the gentle summer breaks.

Worth the drive

- **Historic Wilmington** (~45 minutes) — riverwalk, shops, and the USS North Carolina battleship.
- **NC Aquarium at Fort Fisher** — the go-to big-day-trip; pair it with the Fort Fisher rec area beaches.

Rainy days

- The sea turtle center or the Missiles and More Museum (above), or head into Wilmington for the battleship and indoor attractions.