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Tweet: Five ways to enjoy Bald Head Island, NC without hitting the beach #falltravel #nature #baldheadisland

## THE BEST OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES ON BALD HEAD ISLAND THAT AREN'T THE BEACH

Bald Head Island, NC (October2020) – [Bald Head Island](#) may best be known for its 14-miles of sandy coastline, but there is more to this car-free island off the coast of North Carolina than the view from a beach towel. Fall is the perfect time to explore 10,000 acres of maritime forest teeming with wildlife, winding creek systems perfect for kayaking and climbing to the top of the state's oldest lighthouse, [Old Baldy](#). Those looking to enjoy a coastal getaway but want options other than sand and surf can find a wide variety of outdoor adventures throughout this small coastal community. Here are five ways that visitors can enjoy the natural beauty of Bald Head Island:

**Go Fish:** Bald Head Island's unique location situated between the Atlantic Ocean and the Cape Fear River makes it the perfect place for casting a line. Whether deep sea fishing for a king mackerel from a charter fishing boat, flounder gigging from the shoreline, or kayaking for speckled trout from a navigable creek, fishermen of all ages and levels can return with plenty of fish tales and perhaps, dinner. For vacationers who want to try their hand at crabbing or cast netting, the tidal creeks are plentiful with blue crabs. A variety of outfitters and guides based on the island provide boats, gear and instruction for all ages and if you're arriving to Bald Head Island with your own boat, the island's [dockmaster](#) is not only a wealth of information on the ins-and-outs of island fishing but can also help you secure a slip for your boat.

**Take a Hike:** Hiking and beach vacations don't always seem to go hand-in-hand, but with more than 80 percent of the island designated as a nature preserve, with acres of protected marsh, tidal creeks and maritime forests ripe for exploration, a visitor's first stop should be at the [Bald Head Island Conservancy](#). With a mission of conservation, education and preservation, the Conservancy staff can suggest numerous walking trails throughout the island and fill you in on any wildlife, including migratory shorebirds, and

plants you might encounter. The Bald Head Woods Maritime Forest Preserve offers several trailheads and the half-mile M. Kent Mitchel Nature Trail offers plenty of views and a leisurely stroll. Trails range from easy to moderate and lead you through the woods, beneath an enchanting canopy of trees.

**Paddle Power:** With acres of protected marsh and tidal creek ripe for exploration, a paddle through the island's picturesque creeks atop a standup paddleboard or in a kayak (single or tandem) gets the blood pumping and offers an introduction to the marsh ecosystem. Shore birds along with marine life – dolphins often find their way into the creek – are fun to search for while paddling. Stop in The Sail Shop, part of [Riverside Adventure Company](#), and sign up for a tour where the guides help you navigate through the “off the beaten path” creeks, help you identify wildlife and give a brief history of the island. For those visitors who are looking for a little more action than the slow-moving waters of the marshes and creeks, an ocean kayak adventure is a unique experience.

**Get in Gear:** The island's gentle coastal terrain offers bicyclists an easy pedal, but with more than 15 miles of roadway to ride, more experienced cyclists can get their fill too. With no cars allowed on the island, the bicycle is one of the most popular modes of transportation (along with the golf cart) and a perfect way to soak up the island environment. Paved roads weave throughout the interior of the island, the 1.7 mile Forest Reserve Loop Trail provides an off-road experience and riding on the beach with fat tire bikes is a great way to get the legs pumping. Bike rentals are available on a daily or weekly basis through several island outfitters or guests can bring their own on the ferry.

**History Abounds:** Picture-perfect views are easily found all over the island, but visitors who climb the 108 stairs of Old Baldy, are rewarded with breathtaking views of the island, Atlantic Ocean and Cape Fear Estuary. Old Baldy is the most iconic, and photographed, spot on the island. The grounds of Old Baldy also include Smith Island Museum which is housed in a replica of the 1850's lighthouse keeper's cottage and contains artifacts that shed light on the island's rich maritime past.

Bald Head Island is a boat-accessed community located two miles off the coast of Southport, NC. Transportation on the island is restricted to golf carts, bicycles and pedestrian traffic. Of the island's 12,000 acres, 10,000 acres of beaches, salt marsh and maritime forest are protected and will remain undeveloped. To learn more about the island, visit [www.BaldHeadIsland.com](http://www.BaldHeadIsland.com).

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