



# News Release

*Cape May County, New Jersey*

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For Immediate Release

## **The Jersey Cape is still one of the best values for family vacationing anywhere**

A national economy in a slump and soaring gas prices don't have to put an end to the family vacation. Not too far away – less than a tank-full of gasoline – is the Jersey Cape, where recreational, educational and economical opportunities abound. Whether it's the free beaches in The Wildwoods, an exploration of the county's bayside or a visit to the Cape May County Park Zoo, visitors to the Jersey Cape don't need to spend a lot of money to have a whole lot of fun. What's more, children have the opportunity to find their own diamonds – of the Cape May variety.

“Cape May County is truly the best vacation spot for any family – whether they're on a budget or not – because we're easily accessible from so many places on the East Coast, we have high-quality accommodations and businesses, the number of special events and attractions we have is enormous and of course, because we are the seashore,” said Diane Wieland, director of tourism for Cape May County.

While it's true that most visitors to the Jersey Cape pick the area for its natural beauty, situated on New Jersey's peninsula at the south, there's much more to Cape May County than lazy days on the beach. Some vacationers prefer to spend their entire visit on the beach by day and in the area's fine restaurants and nightclubs by night. There are many, however, who come away from a vacation on the Jersey Cape with more than they

bargained for. From Cape May Point to Ocean City, the Jersey Cape is filled with free, or nearly free, activities and attractions to satisfy any interest and any budget.

(more)

Page 2, best values

## 10 Free or Nearly Free Things to do at the Jersey Cape

### 1. **CAPE MAY COUNTY PARK AND ZOO**

Filled with hundreds of animals from all over the world, the zoo is surrounded by a park, which has picnic areas, a playground, trails and biking paths. For a nominal fee, the littlest ones can even ride on a train or a carousel as part of the Zoo's newest attractions. Visitors can spend an entire day at the county's zoo, which is free and open everyday from 10 a.m. until 4:45 p.m. and Wednesday night until 7:45 p.m.

### 2. **TAKING IN NATURE'S SIGHTS**

Cape May is THE location for observing birds in North America, favored by such celebrated naturalists as John Audubon, Tory Peterson and others. More than 400 different species have been seen on the peninsula during the fall migration and the area is known for spectacular flights of peregrines, merlins, ospreys, and sharp-shinned hawks. Cape May Point is one the premier places with marked, easy-to-follow trails to help even the novice birder spot ducks, swans, osprey, and other shore birds and wildlife along the way.

The Wetlands Institute, at the entrance to Stone Harbor, is an educational – but fun – treasure that entire families can enjoy. The Institute, which admits children free with paying adults, is dedicated to education and preservation of the Jersey Cape's environment. World-renown researchers make the Wetlands Institute their home in the summer. Families can view exhibits, take ecological tours or participate in a long list of special events offered at the Wetlands Institute.

### 3. **FREE MOVIES ON THE BEACH**

Free movies under the stars are part of the summer event line-up in Sea Isle City. Bring your favorite blanket or beach chair to JFK Blvd. & Pleasure Avenue at Dusk and enjoy the latest screen favorites.

If one free movie per week isn't enough, take Ocean Drive to the historic landmark City of Cape May where the family can relax with a pail full of popcorn instead of sand and watch movies under the stars at the beach at Stockton Street every Thursday in July and August.

(more)

Page 3, best values

#### **4. HUNTING FOR CAPE MAY DIAMONDS**

At the southern tip of the Cape is Sunset Beach, where the area's only stone-bearing beach is located. The stones at Sunset Beach have been polished during their travels that took them hundreds of years until they met their resting place on Sunset Beach. There are all sizes, colors and varieties, but the most famous are the beautiful quartz stones, better known as Cape May Diamonds. Once professionally cleaned and polished, Cape May Diamonds look like genuine diamonds and children and adults alike have enjoyed collecting them for generations.

#### **5. BAYSIDE BEACHES**

Surprisingly, the Atlantic Ocean does not hold exclusive claim to beaches in South Jersey. Beautiful, less traveled beaches also abound on the bay side of the peninsula, cooled by the waters of the Delaware Bay. Unlike the ocean beaches, the bay side beaches are primarily unprotected, so swimming should be done so with caution. These bay side beaches, which stretch from Sunset Beach into Lower Township, are perhaps the most breathtaking because they are used primarily for fishing and walking, rather than swimming and sunbathing. Untouched by beach-cleaning vehicles and much less traveled by visitors, these beaches are less restrictive and provide great spots for wind surfing, jet skiing or skipping along in a colorful Hobie Cat.

## **6. STROLLING THE BOARDWALKS**

While there is a charge for rides on boardwalk amusement piers and water parks, the Cape's boardwalks in Ocean City and The Wildwoods offer amusements at costs

lower than comparable facilities. Strolling the "boards" in Ocean City and the Wildwoods to absorb the sights and sounds of the seashore at its best is free, and on family nights, the entertainment is free too! Free entertainment in the Wildwoods happens every Wednesday from 7 to 9 p.m. at Cedar Avenue. Every Thursday through Labor Day, visitors can enjoy free entertainment, including live bands, magicians, karaoke, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in Ocean City. The Wildwoods summer

Fireworks extravaganza is a real crowd pleaser and takes place every Friday night at 10:30 a.m. at Pine Avenue and the Boardwalk.

(more)

Page 4, best values

## **7. CONCERTS AND DANCE PARTIES**

The Jersey Cape invites the littlest to the biggest ones in the family to rock around the clock from Monday through Saturday all summer long in free concerts and dance parties hosted by Sea Isle City and Avalon.

Sea Isle City hosts two free family fun events billed as "Summer Concerts Under the Stars" on Monday and Wednesday nights from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Promenade and JFK Boulevard. On Thursday nights all summer long, everyone in the family can shake their groove thing at the Family Night Dance Parties from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Promenade and JFK Boulevard.

On Friday and Saturday in the summer, the Borough of Avalon shows visitors why it is cooler by a mile as the town invites visitors to get sand in their dance shoes and enjoy a free concert at 30<sup>th</sup> Street on the Beach from Noon to 3 p.m.

## **8. SPECIAL EVENTS**

Whether it is on the Beach or Boardwalk or in a special venue like the Ocean City Music Pier or the Wildwoods Convention Center, everyone in the family can find fun to be extremely affordable or free simply by checking the special events calendar at [www.thejerseycap.com](http://www.thejerseycap.com)

## **9. TREK THROUGH HISTORY**

Nearly every seashore town at the Jersey Cape has a historical society or historical museum that vacationers may visit to learn a little more about the local history.

The Cape May County Historical Museum, along Route 9 in Cape May Court House, has no admission fee and has a large collection of documents and artifacts that trace the county's history to before the Revolutionary War.

Historic Cold Spring Village in Lower Township, just north of Cape May, offers visitors a glimpse of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century village with working trades and craftspeople. There is a small admission fee to the village, but it's well worth the cost to have children sit in a class at a one-room schoolhouse; watch a blacksmith create shoes for one of the village's horses or pet the farm animals on the village grounds.

(more)

Page 5, best values

## **10. ENJOYING AN ARCHITECTURAL TRIP BACK IN TIME**

Well-known for its bed and breakfast inns and large quantity of historic architecture, the City of Cape May is one of the few municipalities that, as a whole, is considered a national historic landmark. Visitors are free to roam the streets of Cape May on their own to gaze at the exquisite buildings, but the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts, housed in the Physick Estate near the entrance to the city, has a variety of walking and trolley tours for a nominal price.

Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon no longer play Beach Blanket Bingo but the motels with the pink and aqua color schemes, colorful neon signs and swaying plastic palm trees are still here, with memories of a '57 Chevy, saddle shoes and golden age of endless summers in the Wildwoods. More than 200 Doo Wop style-buildings are clustered in the Wildwoods, a resort town famous for its boardwalk and beaches. Motels with names like the Starlux recall the Space Age and architectural features that seem to defy gravity are winning national recognition for the 1950s, a time like no other in America's history.