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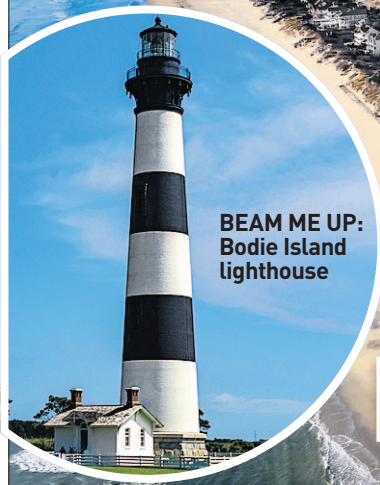


**PACK AND
GO**

America's WILD EAST



ATLANTIC
EDGE: Outer
Banks



BEAM ME UP:
Bodie Island
lighthouse

Natural curiosities of North Carolina

by Lynn Houghton

"OH, my goodness, look! It's a foal!"

A youngster in our group, Samantha, shrieks with excitement as she spots a newborn among a collection of mares. Earnestly, she asks our driver and leader to stop.

"I wish I could," says Paul, our tour guide, frowning, "I will turn around so you can get another look."

He slows down and manoeuvres through soft pale sand then does a sharp U-turn, skimming through the advancing surf. It is a real thrill to see these beautiful animals.

But vehicles that drive on the beach are forbidden by law to stop – in order to protect the wild horses and the pristine coast.

It is quite remarkable to see the wild horses of North Carolina's outer banks on this 4x4 open air truck adventure.

These ponies are descendants of Spanish Colonial horses that survived shipwrecks 500 hundred years ago. They now congregate around Corolla Beach or further north in the Shackleford Banks.

Conveniently, this area is not terribly far from the scattered resort towns along this coast.

Driving towards the Atlantic Coast, the first bridge out to the famed Outer Banks crosses the Alligator River and joins up with a marshy peninsula known as Alligator River Wildlife Reserve. I am slowly but surely surrounded by wild nature.

Large yellow warning signs showing bears drive the message home. After 20 miles, a very long



bridge crosses the Croatan Sound to Roanoke Island then another bridge connects me with the Outer Banks. Beyond the coastline are the infamous shallow waters.

The longest natural sand dune on the East Coast is at Jockey's Ridge State Park, located near Nags Head where I am staying.

Much of this wetland, its flora, fauna, and sea life are protected, including Cape Hatteras National Seashore and the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge.

This isolated place was the domain of pirates, particularly in the



17th and 18th centuries. Blackbeard lived and operated here, meeting a violent end in 1718. Shipwrecks were frequent off the coast, the spoils easy pickings for inhabitants.

Explorers

Lighthouses were soon built to deal with this problem including the Bodie Island lighthouse and the 59m spiral-striped lighthouse on Cape Hatteras, which you can visit.

Look out for names such as Kill Devil Hill, a sand dune where the Wright Brothers set off on their 59 second history-making flight.

On the northern tip of Roanoke

Island, on Albemarle Sound, is the location of the first ever English colony in the New World.

Explorers first came in 1584 and made contact with native Americans. It prompted Sir Walter Raleigh to establish a base in the New World.

In 1585 seven ships loaded with men and women were sent to get a foothold here. But after supply ships failed to reach the colonists on Roanoke Island, these dejected inhabitants returned to England.

Another expedition of 150 people was then sent, led by illustrator John White. After the third colony was set up in 1587, the first English child was born in America – Virginia Dare. Soon after her birth, White returned to London to secure more provisions. But on his return he found the colony abandoned.

There were clues. A post with the marking CROATAN written on it and letters CRO carved on a tree. But no trace of the inhabitants. The structures had been destroyed.

Did the colonists die from disease or starvation or integrate with local tribes? No one knows.

But the story is told in the Lost Colony play, which runs during summer on the site where it all occurred.

A place, these days, you would not want to leave.

FACTFILE: America As You Like It has one week's fly-drive to North Carolina from £1,129pp, including return flights to Raleigh Durham with British Airways, car hire and seven nights' B&B at Holiday Inn Express Nags Head. See americaasyoulikeit.com, outerbanks.org and corollaoutback.com.

TRAVEL TIPS

- **ALWAYS** check the exchange rate before travelling to the US because it fluctuates significantly depending on currency markets.
- **THERE** are great restaurants serving fresh awesome seafood. Check out JK's, which serves high-end surf and turf at a reasonable price.
- **DON'T** miss the wild horse safari tour. There is no guarantee of seeing these beauties because they are wild but it is worth trying to track them. See www.corollaoutback.com.



WILDLIFE RESERVE: Alligator River

My PERFECT day

By TREVOR DAVIES, tourist.

MORNING

Devouring the Sunday papers over a full English at the Sea Cafe in Walmer, Kent, is an ideal start. The fried bread alone would win over the judges on MasterChef. Then it's a stroll around nearby Deal and a late morning coffee.

AFTERNOON

It's Hong Kong for a dim sum feast on a barge in Aberdeen Harbour followed by a sampan boat ride if the waters aren't too choppy.

EVENING

After a bracing walk along the sands at Formby I'd enjoy the eight-course tasting menu at the double Michelin starred Moor Hall restaurant at Aughton, Lancashire. I'd round off the night sipping a Talisker whisky at the The Old Inn, Carlost, on the Isle of Skye.



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YOUR £ ABROAD

Australian dollar	1.79
Bulgarian lev	2.14
Canadian dollar	1.61
Croatian kuna	8.08
Czech koruna	28.18
Egyptian pound	20.12
Euro	1.09
Hungarian forint	358.29
NZ dollar	1.86
Polish zloty	4.72
S African rand	17.98
Swiss franc	1.19
Thai baht	38.27
Turkish lira	6.76
UAE dirham	4.47
US dollar	1.22

These rates are an indication only.