VIRGINIABEACH.COM

Virginia Beach *with Kids*

The aquarium, parks, playgrounds, and the Boardwalk



A free family guide

Local tips from the family behind virginiabeach.com, online since 1996

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A NOTE FROM VIRGINIABEACH.COM

Welcome

Virginia Beach is a straightforward place to travel with children when the day is planned around more than the sand. The Oceanfront and Boardwalk are the usual starting point, and the city also has a year-round aquarium, oceanfront playgrounds, a well-used public park at Mount Trashmore, and indoor stops for wet weather.

This guide points to those places and to the matching pages already on VirginiaBeach.com. Hours and ticket prices change, so confirm details with each attraction before going.

Read it online at
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Passport to Play, a screen-free magazine for kids

Passport to Play is a travel-inspired, screen-free activity magazine from Global Sprouts. It is a monthly magazine sent by mail, in a simple format that excites children to receive mail. The magazine helps children explore new cultures, build curiosity, and grow into kind humans.

SCREEN-FREE

Hands-on activities that develop creativity, curiosity, problem-solving, and global awareness. No worksheets to print, no apps to download. Every magazine arrives ready to go with 20+ screen-free STEAM activities.

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02

Beaches and the Boardwalk

The easiest first day with kids, from the Oceanfront path to two playgrounds and a calmer Bay beach.

The public beach at the **Oceanfront** and the three-mile **Boardwalk** are the easiest places for a first day with kids. The Boardwalk is a wide path for walking and biking, with globe lampposts, the **King Neptune statue** at **Neptune's Park**, and room to pause without stepping into the street. A closer look at the statue is in the **King Neptune article**.

Two oceanfront playgrounds are especially useful. **JT's Grommet Island Park**, at the south end of the Boardwalk near the **fishing pier**, is designed so children of different abilities can play together. A second playground sits on the sand at **35th Street**, a short walk north of King Neptune. For younger children, the calmer water of the Chesapeake Bay is often easier than the ocean surf; the beach at **First Landing State Park** is one Bay option.



Grommet Island Park

Oceanfront fishing pier

The pier extends from the Oceanfront near Grommet Island Park and is a short stop on a Boardwalk day. Confirm current hours and rules on the **pier listing** before you go.

Surf & Rescue Museum

On the Boardwalk at 24th Street, the **Virginia Beach Surf & Rescue Museum** occupies the old Coast Guard Station and tells the story of lifesaving crews and shipwrecks.

Sandcastles

Families often build sandcastles between the Boardwalk and the water. Practical ideas are in a short **sandcastle article**, which also notes the sand-sculpting tradition at the Neptune Festival.

GOOD TO KNOW

The **accessibility article** covers beach wheelchairs, Boardwalk ramps, oceanfront restrooms, and Grommet Island Park. For a busy Oceanfront day, the **parking page** is useful for planning where to leave the car, especially in summer and during large events. Confirm details with each stop before you go.



03

Virginia Aquarium

A year-round marine park on Owl Creek, with two related outdoor parks next door.

The **Virginia Aquarium & Marine Science Center** is the city's year-round marine park, a short drive from the Oceanfront on General Booth Boulevard. It is a straightforward half-day with children and one of the easier indoor stops when the beach is wet. A longer overview is in the **aquarium article**.

The campus has two public buildings connected by a nature trail. The North Building holds many of the larger exhibits, including sea turtles, sharks, harbor seals, the Restless Planet and Chesapeake Bay galleries, and touch pools. The South Building has jellies, hands-on exhibits, and play areas. Confirm current hours and which exhibits are open on the official site before you go.

Adventure Park

A treetop ropes course and zip-line area next to the aquarium. Confirm current hours and course rules on the official site before you go.

Owl Creek Landing

An observation tower, canopy walk, and children's treehouse area, reached by a walkable bridge behind the aquarium's South Building. Admission is separate from the Adventure Park.

Boat trips

Seasonal trips to look for dolphins or whales are offered at certain times of year. See the **whale watching listing** and the **dolphins article**.

GOOD TO KNOW

The aquarium is on the south end of the city, near **Ocean Breeze Waterpark** and a short trip from **the Boardwalk**. Hours and exhibits can change, including temporary closures, so use the official visitor information and the **aquarium article** when planning the day.

Mount Trashmore & Parks



Mount Trashmore Park

Mount Trashmore Park

Mount Trashmore Park is a city park built on a former landfill. Walking paths climb two grassy hills, and the grounds include playgrounds and open lawn. It is one of the places families already look up most often on this site, especially for park hours. Trail ideas also appear in the **hiking article**. Confirm today's hours on the city's park information before a visit.

Parks and playgrounds

Besides the oceanfront playgrounds and Mount Trashmore, several other public parks are useful with children. The **parks directory** collects these and other places to walk, play, and picnic.

Little Island Park

A city beach park on Sandpiper Road in Sandbridge, with a beach, a play area, and a fishing pier. It is a quieter alternative to the Oceanfront when a family wants sand and space in the same stop.

Bayville Farms Park

A large park in the northern part of the city, with room to run, ballfields, courts, and a skatepark. It is a practical inland option when the Oceanfront is busy.

Great Neck Park

A 70-acre district park along Lynnhaven Bay, with a playground, wooded paths, a gazebo, and a pavilion.

Pleasure House Point Natural Area

A quieter walk through marsh and maritime forest on the Lynnhaven River, useful when a playground is not the goal of the outing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Red Wing Park, on General Booth Boulevard, has the Miyazaki Japanese Garden, the Reba S. McClanan Fragrance Garden, and trails. It does not yet have its own listing on this site; a visit overview is in the **Red Wing Park article**. City park hours can change, so confirm them before you go.

05

Amusement parks, mini golf, and rainy days



Amusement parks

Amusement parks and mini golf

Several seasonal parks and miniature-golf courses sit near the Oceanfront or just south of it. These and similar places are gathered in the **amusement parks directory**. Confirm that a seasonal park is operating for the dates of the trip.

Ocean Breeze Waterpark

A seasonal water park south of the Oceanfront, open in the warmer months and close to the aquarium.

Atlantic Fun Park

A seasonal amusement park at 15th Street. Confirm it is operating for the dates of the trip.

Motor World

Go-karts and other rides, with Shipwreck Golf, a miniature-golf course, on the same property.

Jungle Golf

Another miniature-golf course near the Oceanfront, useful for a shorter evening stop.

Rainy-day ideas

The aquarium is the most obvious indoor stop when the beach is wet. Other indoor options already listed on the site are collected below, and a wider list is in the **rainy-day activities article**.



Rainy-day ideas

iFLY indoor skydiving

An indoor skydiving tunnel. Check the age and size rules before promising the trip.

Ripley's Believe It or Not

An indoor attraction on the Oceanfront, useful when the weather turns.

Apex Entertainment

An indoor entertainment center already listed on the site, with other nearby options at **Dave & Buster's**, **Pinboys bowling**, and **Cinema Cafe**.

Military Aviation Museum

In the Pungo area, this museum displays historic aircraft in hangars beside a grass airfield and works as an indoor-and-outdoor stop away from the Oceanfront.

Topgolf

On Greenwich Road, **Topgolf Virginia Beach** has climate-controlled bays and target games, a useful inland option when the beach day is cut short.



06

Nature trails and farms

Maritime forest, wildlife refuges, a family farm, and the city's year-round market.

First Landing State Park is the closest large natural area to the Oceanfront, with about 20 miles of trails through maritime forest and cypress swamp and a sandy beach on the Chesapeake Bay. A visit overview is in the **First Landing article**, with more trail ideas in the **hiking article**.

Cape Henry Lighthouse

The **Old Cape Henry Lighthouse** was built in 1792 at Fort Story, at the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Confirm current access and hours on the listing before you go, because the site is on a military installation.

Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Farther south, the refuge has dikes and wildlife-viewing paths along the Back Bay shoreline.

False Cape State Park

This park lies beyond Back Bay and is a longer, more remote outing, not a quick playground stop.

Hunt Club Farm

A family farm in Pungo with animal encounters, inland from the Oceanfront.

Virginia Beach Farmers Market

The city market on Dam Neck Road is open year-round, and is a different place from the **Old Beach Farmers Market** closer to the Oceanfront.

GOOD TO KNOW

First Landing, Back Bay, and False Cape each have their own hours and access rules. The **hiking article** is a practical next stop for trail choices, and **Little Island Park** in Sandbridge is another south-end beach option, covered with the city's parks on the previous page.

07

Seasonal events and planning

Seasonal events

The **events calendar** is the place to check what is on during a visit. A year-round starting point is the **seasons overview**.

Spring and summer

Warm-weather festivals and seasonal events are collected in the **spring and summer festivals article**.

Fall

Fall outings, including farms and Halloween, are in the **Fall guide**, with a separate **trick-or-treating safety article** for late October.

Holidays

December and New Year's plans are covered in **holiday events**, **Christmas in Virginia Beach**, and **New Year's**.

Planning tips

A little planning around weather, parking, and access makes a family day simpler. Hours and details change, so confirm them with each attraction before you go.

Weather and packing

The **weather page** helps with packing and with choosing a beach day or an indoor day.

Parking

The **parking page** covers Oceanfront garages, lots, and meters, and is especially useful in summer and during large events.

Accessibility

The **accessibility article** covers beach access, Boardwalk ramps, and related help.

Pets

Families traveling with a dog can use the **Pet-Friendly Guide**.

Lower-cost ideas

A few more low-cost ideas are in the article on **free and inexpensive attractions**.

Visitor Guide

The free **Visitor Guide** gathers beaches, parks, and planning topics in a downloadable PDF. A longer family-travel essay is in **what makes Virginia Beach family friendly**.

Find more on the site

This printed guide matches the online **Kids Guide** at virginiabeach.com/guides/kids/. More Virginia Beach guides: **Pet-Friendly Guide** · **Fall in Virginia Beach** · **Wedding Guide** · **All guides** · **Visitor Guide**.

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