



TRAVEL

MONTAUK POINT: The Great Ocean Escape



By Richard Levy

Need a break? Escape to Montauk. In fact if you try to escape any further, you'll fall into the Atlantic Ocean. Located way out on the very tip of Long Island, Montauk is surrounded by pristine ocean and endless powdery, un-crowded beaches. No less an authority than National Geographic rates the Long Island seashore from The Hamptons to Montauk Point among the top 10 beaches in the world— and, it's just three hours away! Unlike the trendy, pretentious Hamptons, (where you might possibly run into folks you don't want to run into), in Montauk, you can actually relax, kick back and be yourself. (Yes, you can leave your Manolo Blahniks at home.) One of the things I love about Montauk is that you don't absolutely need a car to have a good time here: Taxis will take you wherever you would like to go.

Where to stay? I love the rustic and charming Daunt's Albatross Motel, smack in the middle so you can walk to everything: just two short blocks from the beach and two short blocks from town. The hotel offers large, very clean rooms with a small kitchen, a coffee maker, cable with HBO, a lovely pool, BBQ grill and bikes to explore Montauk. A complimentary breakfast of fresh bagels and coffee will be available for guests after July 1. Hosts Jimmy Daunt and his son Leo will treat you like family. (It's very reasonable, so book early; they're filling up for July and August.)

The Hampton Jitney, departs from points in Manhattan and drops you in town, two short blocks from the Albatross Motel. (I will tell you why I love the Hampton Jitney later.) The Atlantic Terrace and the Ocean Surf Motels are nearby and also moderately priced.

If your budget allows, there are three marvelous, luxury hotels. My favorite is Gurney's Resort & Spa, the only luxury resort located on the beach with a world-class Spa. Chief Concierge Maureen and her staff will help make your time there fabulous in every possible way. There's also the luxurious Montauk Yacht Club and the austere, old world Montauk Manor.

Taking a long walk along the waters



Montauk Harbor Courtesy of The Montauk Chamber of Commerce

edge is one of my favorite things to do out here, anytime of the day. (It's better than Meditation and you don't need a Mantra.) Montauk is home to the historic 108-foot Montauk Lighthouse that has served as a seafarer's beacon for over 200 years. Designated by George Washington and Congress in 1792, the lighthouse is now a National Landmark and has a small museum inside. Walk all the way to the top for fabulous ocean vistas.

Montauk is a fisherman's paradise. The area is dotted with fresh water ponds stocked with white perch along with large and small-mouthed bass. There's great fishing in the salt water of Lake Montauk. A surf-casters dream come true, you can catch huge fish off any of Montauk's many beaches. (The

best time is dawn or twilight when the fish are feeding.) Bring your catch to Wok & Roll Chinese restaurant in town and the Chef will prepare it for you Chinese style. Both the Lazy Bones Party Boat and Viking Five Star offer an enjoyable half or full day of fishing. And even if you don't love fishing, taking a lovely ride out to the middle of the idyllic Atlantic Ocean is worth the cost of the trip. Boats leave 8:00 am or Noon and supply everything you need to fish. You can rent just about any kind of boat on Montauk: zippy speedboats, sailfish, large sailboats or you can charter a party boat for the day. Wonderful "Whale Watching" cruises sail from Montauk on Sunday's from 9:30 -- 3:30 pm July and August. Call Viking Five Star for reservations.



The Hampton Jitney



Montauk Lighthouse

Montauk also has some of the best horseback riding you've ever enjoyed. Ride on picturesque trails with panoramic ocean views or canter along the beach. For reservations call The Deep Hollow Ranch. For golfers there's the 18-hole championship length panoramic golf course, Montauk Downs—considered one of the 10 best municipal golf courses in the country. Tennis buffs can warm up for the U.S. Open at Montauk Downs State Park, where the 6 Har-Tru courts for rent \$23 hour; \$13 for Seniors.

The seaside town of Montauk is lined with charming shops, lovely boutiques, nautical stores and restaurants. (There is a fabulous clam bar on the harbor.) Ladies, make reservations at Gurney's Resort & Spa for a couple of hours pampering, while your husband is out fishing.

The Village Green in the center of town is the setting for free Monday night music concerts, presented weekly throughout the summer, by local groups. One day, hike or rent bikes at Mike's Bikes and explore the many trails in the woods or along the beach. Hiking Montauk's marvelous trails is one of my favorite escapes. Go to Hither Hills State Park and take the "Walking Dunes" Trail that reaches a height of 80 feet. Remember that it is very important to do a thorough "tick check" following hiking or biking through the dunes, grasslands or woods.

Consider taking a romantic sunset cruise or scenic day-trip to Block Island, just a 45-minute boat ride away. Explore unspoiled Block Island on rented bikes or just take a hike and stop for

a seafood lunch overlooking the water.

A little known fact is that during World War II we maintained a Naval Base on Montauk that was constantly on the lookout for German U-Boats. We were worried about German spies coming ashore at night in Montauk and there is supposedly a U-Boat sunk off Montauk. (Don't ask me what happened; the details are still classified.)

As you can imagine, "Seafood Rules" in Montauk and I always look forward to their sensational restaurants. My very favorite restaurant is the romantic East-By-Northeast restaurant with views of scenic Fort Pond. They serve inventive, delicious farm-to-table food and their presentation of every course is so breathtaking, you feel guilty about eating them. Start with the sushi. (Best I've ever had). Then order the "Feisty Camille" roll with shrimp tempura, cucumber and avocado, topped with lobster salad. The "Mango Tango" roll consists of real King Crab, avocado and cucumber, topped with mango, soy seaweed and mango Yuzu sauce. My favorite appetizers are their delicate Octopus Carpaccio, to-die-for Duck Tacos and the amazing Steamed Brisket Buns. My favorite entrees include their acorn fed Heritage Pork Belly with salsa, pomegranate molasses and baby fennel salad; and the pan-roasted tilefish with spring pea puree and herb roasted Sunchoke. Order the Carl Fisher Burger. Made with Wagyu Beef, aged Gruyere cheese, Foie Gras

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and onions, this has to be the most decadent burger, ever.

The other Montauk restaurant I'm sure to go to every time I visit is Duryea's Lobster Dock, where third generation owner Chip Duryea oversees this "Temple of Lobster." The food is simple, but delicious and nothing is fried. Enjoy your meal along with the lovely sunsets from their dock on Fort Pond Bay. Start with their OMG lobster roll, overflowing with hunks of claw meat. The steamed lobster tastes like it just jumped out of the ocean. (Go for the two-pounder.) Duryea's does not serve beer or wine, so BYOB. You can have an amazing picnic on the beach by ordering lobster rolls and steamed

lobster from the Duryea retail store next to the restaurant. (They even have lobster crackers.)

Swallow East is another restaurant I enjoy, with their great ocean views and even greater "small plates" of gourmet treats. I loved their asparagus fries, butternut squash soup, Mac n' Cheese with Asiago cream and bacon bits. (You'll want all of them.) For lunch go to Six-Six-Eight The Gig Shack on Main Street. I fell in love with their Blackened Fish Montacos, with mango salsa, coleslaw on a crunchy corn tortilla. (Came back twice for them.) as well as the Spicy Tuna Tartar Taquitos, with toasted sesame seeds, avocado, micro greens. Other restaurants you'll enjoy include the Harvest On Fort Pond, sister

restaurant of Harvest in Hastings-on-Hudson. And finally there's the huge Gosman's restaurant, the Montauk icon in the Harbor. (Get a table where you can watch fishing boats passing by with their catch.) For your "bagels n' lox fix" go to Goldberg's in town.

For the best breakfast in Montauk go to the Bird on the Roof Restaurant

to Montauk for a four-day ocean escape, renting a place for July or August, taking a week's well-deserved vacation, or coming out for a day-trip, you couldn't find a more enjoyable, ocean escape.

For an even more relaxing Montauk trip, instead of driving out, do what I do, take the Hampton Jitney

Montauk, which takes three hours and it's the last stop.

Directions to Montauk: Take the LIE to Manorville, Route 27, Sunrise Highway, which is 50 miles to Montauk, including a nightmare "two-lane highway" from the Hamptons all the way out to Montauk. To avoid beach and Hampton's traffic, drive out on Thursday and come back on Monday. Whether you're just coming out to Montauk for a four-day ocean escape or renting a house for the summer, a visit to Montauk is an enjoyable, ocean escape that is close to home: where a two-pound lobster, ten pound striped bass, a charming beach cottage and endless unspoiled, pristine beaches are just waiting for you.

If You Go:

Atlantic Terrace: atlanticterrace.com

Bird on The Roof Restaurant: facebook.com/pages/Bird-on-the-Roof

Daunt's Albatross Motel: dauntsalbatross.com

East By Northeast Restaurant: eastbynortheast.com
Gosman's Restaurant: gosmans.com

Gurney's Inn & Spa: gurneysmontauk.com

Hampton Jitney: hamptonjitney.com

Harvest Restaurant: harvestfortpond.com

Hither Hills State Park: nysparks.com/parks/122

Lazy Bones Party Boat: montauksportfishing.com/lazybones

Mikes Bikes Montauk Chamber of Commerce: MontaukChamber.com

Montauk Downs Golf Course: http://nysparks.com/golf-courses/8

Montauk Downs State Park: http://nysparks.com/parks/29

Montauk Lighthouse: montauklighthouse.com

Montauk Manor: montaukmanor.com

Montauk Yacht Club: montaukyachtclub.com

Ocean Surf Motel: oceansurfresort.com/668

The Gig Shop: 668thegigshack.com

Swallow East: swalloweastrestaurant.com

Wok & Roll Restaurant: mtkwknroll.com

Viking Five Star: vikingfivestar.com

The Deep Hollow Ranch: deephollowranch.com



The Pool at Daunt's Albatross Motel



Blackened local fish Montacos at Six-Six-Eight The Gig Shack

across from Daunt's Albatross Hotel. Order their Eggs Benedict with Smoked Salmon, California Omelette with avocado, mushrooms, cheese, tomatoes, or their super-thin (Crepelike) pancakes filled with fresh blueberries: hands down, the best pancakes in Montauk.

While in Montauk, if you need to know, find or do anything, be sure to call the helpful folks at the Montauk Chamber of Commerce at (631) 668-2428 or visit MontaukChamber.com. So whether you're coming out

from midtown Manhattan right out to Montauk. It's hassle-free and a comfortable way to go to: instead of fighting the traffic, you can sit back, nod off or start that book you never get to read. In less than three hours you're in Montauk. The Jitney serves complementary beverages and snacks and there's a lavatory in the rear. Catch the Jitney at 43 St. and Third Ave. (a block from Grand Central and at several other NYC locations but be sure to reserve early. You can also take the LIRR from Penn Station to



East By NorthEast Restaurant, Montauk



Duryea's Lobster Dinner