

Children in the Hamptons



[Long Island CVB](#)

A beach in East Hampton

Smart New Yorkers refer to the Hamptons - the area of Long Island comprising Southampton, Bridgehampton, East Hampton and adjoining villages such as Sag Harbor, Sagaponack and Amagansett - simply as 'The Beach'. No matter what else you do here, the time spent amid the dunes, watching the Atlantic waves roll in, will top it all. Parking is notoriously tricky without a resident's permit, but there are ways around it. One solution is cycling: hire from [Bermuda Bikes Plus](#) and they will deliver to your house or hotel. Another is to aim for beaches with car parks, such as **Sagg Main Beach**, **East Hampton Main Beach** or **Atlantic Beach** in Amagansett, where it is possible to pay and display (about £10 per day). Despite the number of people who flock here during July and August, there's plenty of space in which to relax and teach the children boogie-boarding. Atlantic Beach has a good snack shack, which is a handy spot to pick up lunch - the lobster roll is delicious. For an entirely different experience, enjoy a rare moment of solitude at the very sheltered **Louse Point Beach** in Springs, north of Amagansett, a source of inspiration for artists including Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning; **Napeague Beach** in Amagansett is similarly uninhabited.

Where to eat in the Hamptons

Sandwiches at Mary's Marvelous

When venturing out to eat, top of the list should be [Bay Burger](#) (1742 Sag Harbor Turnpike). Tucked away off the main road linking Bridgehampton and Sag Harbor, it's a dream for classic American food, with grilled-cheese sandwiches, hot dogs and some of the best burgers and milkshakes in the area, as well as soda fountains with free refills and homemade ice cream (for those seeking something healthier, there's a good iceberg-wedge salad). The vibe is Seventies retro, with an old-fashioned black-and-white letter board spelling out the (very limited) menu. Adjacent to the informal main restaurant is a playroom stuffed with toys, a TV playing cartoon favourites on repeat and a Wikki Stix wall where children can leave their names. **The Bridgehampton Candy Kitchen** (2391 Montauk Highway, Bridgehampton) is equally old-school, with a counter and stools where kids perch and eye up ice-cream flavours such as black raspberry and banana. For the best ices around, head to **Scoop Du Jour** in East Hampton, where Jessica Alba, Sarah Jessica Parker and Gwyneth Paltrow have been seen treating their broods. There's even a mechanical rocking horse to keep kids amused while enduring the queues. [Mary's Marvelous](#) has outposts in East Hampton and Amagansett and serves breakfast (bagels, eggs), lunch (salads, sandwiches) and the area's stickiest baked treats (the peanut-butter cookies, pecan squares and coconut cupcakes are particularly good).

What to do in the Hamptons



[Emma Bradley](#)

Children paddleboarding in East Hampton

The big thing in watersports right now is SUP (Stand-Up Paddleboarding). It involves standing on a surfboard and paddling through the waves; it's good exercise for grown-ups and great fun for children, too. [Paddle Diva](#), run by the enthusiastic Gina Bradley, operates out of Three Mile Harbor, near East Hampton, and offers kids' clinics, private lessons, races, paddling parties

and guided nature tours through some of the area's calmest waters. There are also SUP yoga classes: essentially yoga practised on the paddleboard, which is terrifying and usually involves a tumble into the water for everyone but the most coordinated. Back on dry land, children can do yoga at various studios; the most enjoyable is [KamaDeva Yoga](#) in East Hampton, which hosts Yoga-tastic Theme Tuesdays when five-to seven-year-olds turn up in the early evening wearing their pyjamas to relax into basic postures, play yoga-themed games and practise their breathing - before tucking into milk and organic cookies, naturally.

[The Children's Museum of the East End](#) in Bridgehampton is a rainy-day godsend, packed with adventures for kids from toddlers upwards. There is a changing schedule of classes and activities, as well as permanent attractions which include lots of dressing-up and exploring everything from native insect life to the area's seafaring past; kids even learn how potato chips (that's crisps to us) are made. And what child wouldn't enjoy taking part in a Saturday-morning splatter-painting class? It's held at Jackson Pollock's former home, known as the Pollock-Krasner House, in

Springs. **The Goat on a Boat Puppet Theater** in Sag Harbor runs art and puppetry classes for children, as well as shows, playgroups and family workshops aimed at instilling a love of the creative arts.

Crabbing is big in the Hamptons, and local hardware shops will provide all the equipment, including rods and the wire from which you dangle your bait: raw bacon. Two of the best crabbing spots are Sagaponack Pond and Georgica Pond. Feeding the ducks on David's Lane Pond in East Hampton is another pleasant way to while away the hours.

Where to shop in the Hamptons



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A Hamptons shopping street

One of the very best activities in the Hamptons is probably the simplest: browsing the endless stalls of ridiculously lush produce that line the roads. Local delicacies such as cherry tomatoes, peaches, watermelons and corn on the cob should be on your shopping list, and children will love helping to fill the basket. There are also outstanding **farmers' markets** in East Hampton (in the car park of Italian restaurant Nick & Toni's) and Amagansett (just off Main Street), selling fruit and vegetables, freshly caught fish, meat for the perpetual barbecues people have in their

yards here, and sweets and cakes that will make your teeth tingle. Stock up on incredible salads and sandwiches at **Schmidt's Market** - even ordering them is an adventure - or book the in-house catering for dinner parties; specialities include a classic lobster bake.

Southampton and East Hampton are the main shopping hubs on this part of Long Island, with plenty of options for the young ones. The [Lilly Pulitzer](#) shop in East Hampton is the perfect place to buy preppy takes on kids' clothes such as tunics, swimsuits, sundresses and frilly shorts; the designer is given ample mention in the tongue-in-cheek *Official Preppy Handbook*. You'll also find outposts of other classic American favourites including **J Crew**, **Ralph Lauren**, **Calypso St Barth** and **Tory Burch**, and on East Hampton's Main Street there is a branch of [Dylan's Candy Bar](#), a utopia for children, owned by Ralph Lauren's daughter and filled with every sweet under the sun.

Where to stay in the Hamptons



[Alamy](#)

A beach house in Southampton

There's a clutch of little-known hotels in East Hampton, if that's what you are after: [The Mill House Inn](#) (doubles from about £135) is a superbly pretty B&B done up in a chic seaside style;

[East Hampton Point](#) (two-bedroom cottage from about £460 a night) has 13 cottages, seven suites, a swimming pool, tennis court, gym, restaurant and even a playground. The two-bedroom [Carriage House](#) at 1770 House (from about £495) is a great option for families. But, in truth, hotels are not really the done thing here. It's all about houses: the bigger, the better. In fact, ogling all the local millionaires' palaces, which are particularly stupendous along a road named Gin Lane in Southampton, is a fun thing to do. Websites such as www.vrbo.com and www.homeaway.co.uk enable visitors to connect directly with Hamptons' homeowners and allow you to rent by the week. For greater peace of mind, you can use the services of an agent, but you will usually have to rent by the month. [Corcoran](#) knows the area inside out and has dibs on some seriously impressive beach houses. Another option, especially for those intending a shorter visit, is [Gansett Green Manor](#) (three-bedroom cottage from about £280) in Amagansett, which has private studios, suites and cottages scattered across two acres of pretty gardens just off the main street. It is like a commune where kids can go free-range and roam around in a pack, as everyone gathers together in the garden; it's not at all unusual to see families who have only just met sharing an evening barbecue.

Getting to the Hamptons



[Getty](#)

The Hampton Jitney

Ideally, skip the migratory traffic from NYC on Route 27 and hire a chopper from [Helicopter Flight Services](#), but otherwise the [Hampton Jitney](#) is an experience in itself, an air-conditioned, fully Wi-Fi'd, upmarket bus ride. It departs from various places across Manhattan, as well as from all the airports in the NYC area. It's how the Sex and the City girls made their way east and is hard to fault. But bear in mind that, particularly with children in tow, a hire car is useful to have in the Hamptons, where attractions are spread out between Southampton at the near end and Montauk at the furthest point. There is also a train service from Penn Station, just below Midtown, but this is less convenient. Early spring and late autumn, when the last New Yorkers have headed home, are some of the best times to visit.

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