

Features > How to Save on a Trip to the Hamptons



How to Save on a Trip to the Hamptons

Itching to slip away to the Hamptons? Here's how to pull off a budget-friendly trip.



Planning a weekend Hamptons doesn't have to cost a fortune. Find out where to stay, play and eat on the cheap.



The Hamptons may be the playground of the rich and famous, but it's also filled with plenty of laid-back spots, from casual seafood restaurants to charming [inns](#) and idyllic beaches. So, don't be intimidated by the meticulously trimmed hedges concealing 10,000-square-foot mansions or the glamorous galas. After all, Long Island's South Fork was once home to humble fishing communities, and it still welcomes visitors to unwind at its pristine [beaches](#). If you're ready to escape the city heat without draining your wallet, here are a few pointers on how to affordably visit some of the country's most expensive zip codes.

[See: [The 12 Best Cities for a Weekend Getaway.](#)]

Choose a Cost-Effective Way to Get Around

The most economical way to get to the Hamptons is via the Long Island Railroad. If you travel at off-peak times, a one-way ticket from [New York City's](#) Penn Station to the end of the line, Montauk, is only \$20.50. However, if you plan on traveling from village to village, it's wise to have a car. Beach parking permits are extremely expensive (though not as expensive as the fine for parking without one), so travelers should take advantage of free shuttles offered by The Free Ride. During the summer months, these electric trucks run from downtown East Hampton, Southampton and Montauk to local beaches seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Stay in an Off-the-Beaten-Path Hotel or Vacation Rental

Finding [affordable accommodations](#) in the Hamptons can be tough. For last-minute travelers who don't mind dealing with traffic, a good idea is to stay in a chain hotel in Riverhead, a more affordable community and commute the 15 miles east to Southampton, which serves as a gateway to the East End. Home shares are also very popular in the Hamptons as are vacation rental sites like [VRBO.com](#). Still, keep in mind this is only well-suited for travelers who don't mind having many roommates in order to get their share down to \$100 per night. If you would rather have a place to yourself, for around \$300 a night, the Southampton Inn offers an excellent value thanks to its advantageous location. It's just a 30-minute walk or 10-minute bike ride (the hotel offers bike rentals for \$10 per hour) from the town's main beach, Cooper's Beach, which boasts a \$40 per day parking fee. Thrifty travelers who don't mind roughing it can pay around \$30 per night to stay at one of 168 beachfront campsites at Hither Hills State Park or a bayside site at Cedar Point State Park in East Hampton.

[See: [10 Family-Friendly Beach Destinations You Never Considered.](#)]

Take Advantage of Free and Affordable Attractions

Suffolk County's crown jewels aren't its celebrity-owned castle – they're the beaches. Because beach parking can be expensive, it pays to bike or walk from town, though Montauk's Kirk Park Beach is an exception with free parking. While in Montauk, visit the historic lighthouse. If you park after 4 p.m., you can avoid paying the \$10 parking fee and explore the lighthouse before it closes at 5:30 p.m. And if you visit the renowned Parrish Art Museum on Wednesdays, you can enjoy free admission (otherwise, there's a \$10 admission fee for ages 18 and up). Or you can dance the night away thanks to Montauk's free evening summer concert series, which take place on Monday nights at the village green and Sunday nights at Gosman's Dock.

Dine at Casual Local Spots

The hottest high-end Hamptons restaurants, such as Fresno and Nick & Toni's, spare no expense in sourcing the best ingredients – and their menu prices reflect this commitment. While it can be worthwhile to splurge for a memorable meal and rub shoulders with high society (this is the Hamptons, after all), indulgent meals can add up quickly. John's Diner and John's Pancake House in Montauk are popular year-round institutions for travelers on a budget, but perhaps some of the best dollar stretching is done at Villa Italian Specialties in East Hampton, where \$10 can get you a large, satisfying sandwich. For an even cheaper brunch spot, East Hampton native Ashley Murphy recommends picking up fresh produce and goods at the local roadside farm stands or farmers markets. To save even more, stock up on snacks at supermarkets like Stop & Shop in East Hampton and King Kullen in Bridgehampton.

[See: [The Best Family Beach Vacations in the USA.](#)]

Stay Thrifty While Shopping

The Hamptons is known for brand-name [shops](#). While the main streets are lined with sleek designer storefronts such as Brooks Brothers, Coach and Tiffany & Co. there are bargains to be had. Instead of popping into trendy boutiques, head to T.J. Maxx in Bridgehampton or the Tanger Outlets in Riverhead for discounted designer items. The ARF Thrift & Treasure Shop in Sagaponack features designer castoffs from the closets of well-endowed locals and proceeds from sales go toward caring for Animal Rescue Fund's animals.

TAGS: travel, vacations, vacation rentals



+ More



Katie Jackson is a travel writer and media specialist based in Big Sky Country. She's lived and worked in Italy, Ireland, France and Nicaragua, but never long enough to completely nail the local language. You can follow her on Twitter, [@LazyJKatie](#), connect with her on [LinkedIn](#) or find her biking Montana's back roads.