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Sunday, June 14th 2009, 4:00 AM



Cool off in the surf at Summer Beach in Hamptons Bays.

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If you're looking to spend your summer on the beach, by the pool, camping or rocking out to your favorite band, head East. [Long Island](#) boasts miles of beaches, along with parks, festivals, fairs and concerts, and it's all just a quick ride away on the [Long Island Rail Road](#).

GETTING THERE

Forget filling the tank - take the train. The LIRR is celebrating its 175th anniversary, so be sure to check out [lirr.org](#) for package deals to beaches and outlet shopping centers.

To save money, buy tickets in advance and travel during off-peak hours (weekends, holidays and weekday trains arriving in [New York City](#) after 10 a.m. and leaving New York City before 4 p.m. and after 8 p.m.). The

Long Island Bus meets 48 LIRR stations and five [MTA](#) subway lines at [Jamaica](#), [Far Rockaway](#) and [Flushing](#) and accepts [MetroCards](#). Visit www.lirr.org/libus.

STAYING THERE

Camping: If you're looking to rough it, or just looking for the cheapest way to secure that ocean view in the Hamptons, pitch a tent in one of Long Island's beautiful parks for just \$15 to \$30 a night.

[Wildwood State Park](#) has 600 acres of forest, biking and hiking trails, and swimming in [Long Island Sound](#). For rates and reservations, call (631) 929-4314. In the Hamptons, try [Cedar Point](#) in [East Hampton](#) (631-852-7620) or Hither Hills in [Montauk](#) (631-668-2554) for their sandy beaches. For more information on all of Long Island's state parks: nysparks.state.ny.us.

Hotels and home rentals: Due to the economic downturn, hotel rooms and summer rentals, even in the glitzy Hamptons, are more affordable and easier to snag. Rates and terms are more negotiable, so be ready to haggle. Renting a beach house with friends and family is a great way to save for the summer. Check out [SummerShareHouse.com](#), longisland.craigslist.org/vac, and vrbo.com (Vacation Rentals by Owner).

If you're just looking to get away for a long weekend, many Hamptons hotels are offering rooms for under \$250. The Enclave Inn (enclaveinn.com), with locations in [Southampton](#), [Bridgehampton](#) and [Wainscott](#), is offering rooms for \$99 a night, Sunday-Thursday, through July 15. Hotel chains are also good sources for bargains. [Holiday Inns](#), with locations in [Riverhead](#) and [Ronkonkoma](#) near the [Splish Splash water park](#), are offering one night free when you stay two nights after joining their rewards club at www.ichotelsgroup.com.

BEACHES

No need to board a flight to reach a sandy destination - just hop on the LIRR. [Robert Moses Beach](#), one of the more serene beaches on Long Island, has five miles of sand, picnic areas and an 18-hole pitch-and-putt golf course; it's just \$19 from [Penn Station](#) and [Brooklyn](#) and \$15 from [Jamaica](#). Or head for popular L.I. spots like [Long Beach](#) (\$19 from [Penn Station](#) or [Brooklyn](#), \$16 from [Jamaica](#)) and [Jones Beach](#) (\$16.50 from [Penn Station](#) or [Brooklyn](#), \$13.50 from [Jamaica](#)) for surfing, boardwalk strolling and a lively bar scene. Visit www.lirr.org/lirr/getaways/BeachPackages for deals.

FESTIVALS

Build a day trip around a summer festival. Sink your teeth into a juicy strawberry covered in chocolate or a fluffy strawberry shortcake, and cheer the crowning of the strawberry queen at the [Mattituck Strawberry Festival](#), Friday through next Sunday (mattituckstrawberryfestival.org). Or take in some of the native culture and history of Long Island at the [Shinnecock Powwow](#) from Sept. 4-7, where you can watch tribal drumming, dancing and crafts demonstrations (shinnecocknation.com). For more festivals and events, visit www.discoverlongisland.com.

CONCERTS

There's no better place to rock out during the summer than "Strong Island." This summer the Nikon Theater at Jones Beach is hosting [Aerosmith](#); the Rock the Bells festival featuring [Nas](#) and the Roots, among others; [Coldplay](#), and [Crosby, Stills and Nash](#). For dates and tickets, visit www.jonesbeach.com.

The "[American Idols Live](#)" tour and the [Jonas Brothers](#) are just two of the attractions heading to the [Nassau Coliseum](#) this summer. For a complete schedule and tickets, visit www.nassaulcoliseum.com.

And if you're in the Hamptons, don't miss acts like [Joan Rivers](#), [Ladysmith Black Mambazo](#) and the NYC Opera at the [Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center](#) (www.whbpac.org).

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny_local/2009/06/14/2009-06-14_the_citys_eastern_backyard_is_filled_with_things_to_do_and_see_.html#ixzz0IW7zysIW&D