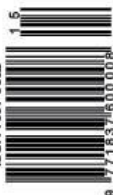


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LUXURY TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE



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INSIDERS' GUIDE TO THE HAMPTONS

The Hamptons: a destination known for expansive beaches, dramatic dunes, multi-million-dollar estates, triple A-list guests and the kind of refined indulgence you'd expect from a place where summer houses rent for six figures each season, writes Kristie Kellahan.

Lining together a necklace of seaside town jewels—Southampton, Sag Harbor, Bridgehampton, Westhampton—on the south fork of Long Island in the state of New York, the Hamptons boast some of the most coveted beachfront real estate in the United States.

As the seasons change of beaches with their call within proximity to New York City, the Hamptons are the summer playground of Manhattan's elite. The journey takes between two and four hours, depending upon your destination and from which part of the city you depart. By the time the dark humidity and soaring temperatures have made August a sticky hell in the concrete city, all the vibrant energy has transferred to the beach. Markets and markets and tubes pile it up with post-river incident cases including Clapham Palace, Sean Combs, Jerry Seinfeld, Lash LeRosa Kiefer, Lily Tomlin, Martha Stewart and Neil McCortney.

A season by the beach
The summer season generally kicks off Memorial Day weekend, celebrated around the final Monday of May, and comes to a close on Labor Day weekend, the first Monday in September. An invitation to visit the Hamptons summer home of a friend, a colleague or a distant contact during the season must not be passed up. Pack a business jet, those old silver-white pants and top on the jet, a comfy coach service that connects Manhattan with the beach towns.

Each village claims to have the best beaches, and with miles and miles of coastline, supremacy is hotly contested. You can't go wrong at Southampton's Cooper Beach or the chic, sunbaked-of Bridgehampton Beach. Montauk has a more laid-back vibe and is traditionally the destination for families and younger visitors with more modest budgets. The beach is always packed on sunny days and the bars stay open until the last surfer calls it a night.



02 c/o The Maidstone gardens
 03 Chic shopping in Southampton
 04 Coopers Beach in Southampton
 Photos 02 & 03 courtesy Long Island CVB
 04 Vintage bikes at c/o The Maidstone
 05 Montauk Yacht Club Resort & Marina

No vacancy

For those of us not on the guest list at sprawling mansion parties, there are plenty of deluxe accommodation options in the Hamptons. c/o The Maidstone in East Hampton has generations of returning guests who love the Scandinavian design. If it's modern luxury you seek, book (early!) for Amagansett's Inn at Windmill Lane. With just seven suites and three cottages, the 'No Vacancy' sign hangs almost every day during the summer season.

Old and young seafarers will enjoy the nautical aesthetic at the Montauk Yacht Club Resort & Marina with its replica lighthouse. And for anyone who loves mixing with the young and beautiful set, the place to be is Shelter Island's Sunset Beach. Owner André Balazs (formerly Uma Thurman's other half) has added all sorts of fun amenities including the resort's own label of wine and a

party seaplane that departs Manhattan regularly for East Hampton. Early nights definitely not guaranteed.

All-American style

Half the fun of the Hamptons is wandering the manicured main streets; window-shopping at Tory Burch, Brooks Brothers and Ralph Lauren stores; and keeping an eye out for passing celebs, boldfaced-name designers and American royalty. Expect to see white-gabled churches alongside luxury handbag boutiques, organic fruit providores and seafarer-themed bars.

Diners and drinkers are spoilt for choice in the Hamptons with high and low options for all tastes and budgets. Seafood shacks are popular on the peninsula, serving up scrumptious lobster rolls, fried oysters and buckets of cold beer. On Sag Harbor's wharf, there's always a line at the Dock

House for steamed lobster. Montauk is teeming with casual waterfront eateries; try Inlet Seafood, Gosman's or the Fishbar. Bostwick's Chowder House is a favourite with East Hampton locals, which includes many a celebrity. Nab a dinner-time reservation at Nick & Toni's if you can – they say the East Hampton restaurant is as hard to get into as an Ivy League college. ♣

Travel file

Accommodation
www.themaidstone.com
www.innatewindmilllane.com
www.montaukyachtclub.com
www.sunsetbeachll.com

Getting there
 United flies from Sydney and Melbourne to NYC via San Francisco or Los Angeles.
www.united.com

From Manhattan, travel to the Hamptons by rental car, coach or Long Island Railroad.
www.hamptonjtimey.com
www.longisland.com/lirr



New York City hot list

Before you make the trip out to the Hamptons, enjoy the best of New York City at these luxe hotels:

- Langham Place, Fifth Avenue**
langhamplacehotels.com
 A prized position and award-winning restaurants.
- Waldorf Astoria New York**
waldorfnny.com
 A legendary grand hotel with a charming history.
- Mandarin Oriental New York**
mandarinoriental.com
 Discretion, elegance and views of Central Park.
- The Carlyle**
the Carlyle.com
 A Manhattan legend, timeless and sophisticated.
- The Peninsula New York**
newyork.peninsula.com
 Chic, classy and a favourite of the city's glam crowd.
- The Pierre, New York, A Taj Hotel**
www.tajhotels.com
 A Georgian grande dame towering over Central Park.