



10 Long Island Escapes to Beat the Heat

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The vast, sandy stretches of the Great South Bay, the rocky beaches of the North Shore, and the cool wines of the North Fork await you this summer on Long Island. When the temperatures rise and you feel the need to escape from the crowds of Time Square, take comfort that respite is just a train ride away. The Hamptons are lovely, but so are a dozen other destinations where you can discover serenity. Here are 10 outdoor activities to help you beat the heat.

1. [Kayak the Nissequogue River](#)

Your trip begins (or ends) at Nissequogue River State Park in Kings Park/Paul T. Given County Park in Smithtown, depending on the tide, takes about two hours. On this calm estuary that runs approximately five miles to the bay, you're likely to spot American black ducks, clapper rails, osprey, herons and egrets, while enjoying some of the most scenic vistas on the island. You'll pass the perfectly manicured lawns of stately homes and the tall grasses of the marshlands. Don't forget to bring your sunblock and hat!

2. [Sip Wine in North Fork](#)

Forget Napa! Long Island's very own Wine Country boasts tasty sips from gorgeous wineries. From the romantic Croteaux Vineyards and the dog-friendly Martha Clara to the stunning Palmer Vineyards, there's something for everyone with nearly 60 vineyards at your disposal. Take a fascinating cellar tour, savor lunch at a local restaurant, and spend the evening sitting on an adirondack chair with a tall glass.



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3. Hit the Waves of Long Beach

When you visit Long Beach for the first time, you'll be surprised to find such a spectacular beach just under an hour from Manhattan. And true to its name, it spans over three and a half miles of warm sands. With the right amount of wind, there's no better place to hit the waves on the island. If you are inspired by the waveriders, take your own lessons at the local surf school. Visit concession stands at the newly fortified boardwalk and, if you prefer more varied cuisine, you can have your meal delivered right to the beach!

4. Hike Sunken Meadow State Park

There are over 100 places to go hiking on the Island, and Sunken Meadow State Park in Smithtown is one of the best places on the North Shore to get lost in the pristine woods. An inlet lies to the east, an equestrian trail to the south, and three miles of beaches await on the Long Island Sound overlooking Connecticut. In the middle of it all lies a 0.75 mile-long boardwalk, ideal for a stroll on cool summer evenings.

5. Enjoy the Grounds of Old Westbury Gardens

Your jaw will likely drop when you lay your eyes on the majestic, Charles II-style mansion at Old Westbury Gardens. The surrounding landscape encompassing 200 acres of gardens, woodlands, ponds, and lakes make this location all the more enticing. Take a guided tour of the home to admire the fine English antiques and decorative arts from more than fifty years of the Phipps Family's residence. Attend an educational program about nature and horticulture, or

check out the outdoor concerts and festivals that take place well into the fall.



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6. Bring your Dog to Sands Point Preserve

There's no lack of magnificent historic buildings on Long Island. The palaces at Sands Point Preserve, set against the backdrop of the bright blue Long Island Sound, are no exception. The 216 acre preserve is open to the public to enjoy the trails and beach to cool down on hot afternoons. The best part? You can bring your pooch for a refreshing swim after an invigorating hike.



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7. Walk the Freeport Nautical Mile

Although hit hard by Hurricane Sandy, Freeport's Nautical Mile bounced back with vigor. The eight and a half mile picturesque waterfront esplanade, just minutes from Jones Beach, now

offers fresh-from-the-boat seafood, colorful restaurants, boat shows, and terrific entertainment, allowing you to travel back to Long Island's maritime past.

8. Catch a Concert at Jones Beach

Jones Beach State Park offers seven miles of endless, white sand beaches and an array of outdoor activities on summer days. The open air Nikon at Jones Beach Theater has a long list of popular concerts every summer so you can enjoy scintillating music under the stars. Catch Josh Groban and Sarah McLaughlin (on the same bill!), Jimmy Buffet, and Rascal Flatts set to a soothing backdrop of sky and sea.



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9. Visit Theodore Roosevelt's Summer Home at Sagamore Hill

Spend an afternoon walking the grounds of Theodore Roosevelt's summer home at Sagamore Hill in Oyster Bay. Take a tour of his house, now a museum filled with memorabilia, and then pay respect to the 26th President of the United States at his resting place at nearby Young's Cemetery. The man loved his dogs, and his estate makes sure that you can enjoy the grounds with your four-legged companions.

10. Take a Live Music Cruise Aboard the Moon Chaser

For the past 25 years, the Moon Chaser has been entertaining guests on the scenic waters of the South Bay. The 65-foot vessel offers live music with some of Long Island's best tribute bands, including Liverpool Shuffle (The Beatles), Desert Highway (Eagles), and The Reckoning (Grateful Dead). Shows include a full buffet, soft drinks, wine, and beer. Comfortable seating in the enclosed main deck, a fully equipped nautical bar, and a canopied sun deck are just some of

the perks you get when you board this cruise.

We hope you take advantage of all the great things Long Island offers this summer! You can always visit [Discover Long Island](#) for more information on how to explore this top-notch destination.

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***About the Author:** Lavanya Sunkara is a writer based in New York. Her love of adventure has taken her all over the world from Australia to Zanzibar. When she's not traveling, she's hiking with her dog, and planning her next getaway. Follow her on twitter @Nature_Traveler. Read her articles at www.nature-traveler.com.*

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