

Escape from New York

Because even the most loyal New Yorker needs to flee the greatest city on earth sometimes.

Wilmington, NC

Airlie Gardens

Indulge your inner bookworm

Opened in 1982, **Old Books on Front Street** is a Wilmington institution. Browse more than two miles of books, snag a first edition for under \$10 or become the ultimate bibliophile via an overnight stay in the literary-themed second-floor loft.

→ 249 N Front St (910-762-6657, oldbooksonfrontst.com)

Shuck it all

If you're hankering for bivalves, head to **Dock Street Oyster Bar**. Locals have voted this spot Best Oyster Bar for nearly two decades, and it boasts a fresh seafood menu that eighty-sixes the fryer in favor of succulent grilled and steamed options.

→ 12 Dock St (910-762-2827, dockstreetoysterbar.net)

Take an old-fashioned stroll

More than 100 years young, **Airlie Gardens** is a true Southern belle that spreads over 67 acres, with massive live oaks, a traditional bottle house created by local artist Virginia Wright-Frierson, romantic walking paths and an annual old-school oyster roast on October 20.

→ 300 Airlie Rd (910-798-7700, airliegardens.org)

Be a vulture for culture

Cameron Art Museum is small but packs a punch, thanks to diverse exhibitions that feature local, national and international artists. Through February 11, catch photographs from upwards of 100 snappers, including Robert Mapplethorpe,

INSIDER SECRETS

Locals give it to you straight.



"Britt's Donuts in Carolina Beach is the best."

—Jason

"Poe's Tavern in Wrightsville Beach is perfect for Halloween."

—Shanen

"Go on a Hash House Harrier Run; it's a social drinking and running club."

—Tom

"Bluethenthal Wildflower Preserve is great for foliage lovers."

—Spencer



Dock Street Oyster Bar

FUN FACT

Lots of films and TV shows have been shot here, including *Dawson's Creek*, *One Tree Hill* and *A Walk to Remember*.

Ansel Adams and Diane Arbus—or spend time roaming the outdoor sculpture park, attending a concert and noshing on delicious bites like local crabcakes from the CAM Cafe.

→ 3201 S 17th St (910-395-5999, cameromuseum.org)

Get ghosted

We don't want to point fingers, but Wilmington is haunted. Down some liquid courage as you chase ghosts and ghastly tales of murder, deception and insanity on the **Haunted Pub Crawl** along the Cape Fear River. The 2.5-hour tour includes stops (but no drinks) within historic Wilmington.

→ 559 Mirror Lake Drive North, (727-822-2083, hauntedwilmington.com). \$17.50.

■ Katherine Alex Beaven

DISCOVER!

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