



Life's a Beach

Everything is better at the Beach.

Did you know that 40% of the US population lives in coastal counties?

That's 127 million people equivalent to the population of Japan.

That does not include those that have easy access to lakes, rivers, and streams.

No matter where you live there are countless opportunities throughout this country to go to and enjoy an endless variety of beaches from the tiny to vast stretches of sand.

I love the beach. Not for baking in the sun, as I burn like a crispy critter and often look like a moveable tent with my hat, long sleeves, and long coverups, when I go to the beach.

If I am not tanning at the beach, why do I love it so?

Growing up on Long Island I am surrounded by some of the most beautiful beaches in the world.

I may be biased, and you may claim that your beach is the best but consider the number and variety of beach choices we have here. We have the white sugar sands of our barrier beaches from the Hamptons to Fire Island, Jones Beach, Long Beach, and Rockaway.



We have the little coves and beaches on the Great South Bay and Peconic Bay.

We have the rocky shores on the Long Island Sound some with high cliffs and bluffs that allow you to see all the way to Connecticut.



There are historic light houses commissioned by George Washington at Montauk and Horton's Point. We fought to save the lighthouse on Fire Island that now houses a museum. Their lights and fog horns saved many ships over the years.

There are boardwalks in some locations for sunrise and sunset strolls for people of all ages and abilities.

There are nature walks with hidden treasures at every turn from Sunken Forests, to nesting areas of endangered wildlife. There are deer, rabbits, and Osprey nests. Bluebird nesting boxes are bringing our state bird back to the beach.

Wild beach roses abound but, be careful of the Poison Ivy which is also in abundance.

We have miles of wild ocean surf and sand dunes that you can walk along listening to the waves.

I love the feel the cool ocean spray on my skin, the way the air smells of salt and seaweed.



Everyday is different at the beach. Sometimes the ocean is calm and small wavelets whisper to me as I walk. Sometimes the ocean roars like thunder as huge waves break one after another on the sand.

I listen to the sound of the surf. There is a rhythm and cadence in the waves. If you close your eyes, you can feel it pulsing within you.

It's like a soothing baseline of a song that is both familiar and unique at the same time.



I love the feel of the sand between my toes. My heels create divots in the soft sand as I walk to the water.

Hot sand becomes cooler as you transition from dry to wet. The waves wash over my feet. Each wave takes a bit of the sand supporting me out to sea as my feet sink deeper and deeper into the sand.

The wet sand is firmer and easier to walk on.

I watch the little sand crabs run to their burrows as each wave comes in only to emerge again when the wave pulls away.

I look for seashells that are unoccupied and sometimes find egg cases from egg laying sharks tangled in the seaweed.



The light catches the silhouette of jellyfish in the wave face. I make a mental note. Beware of the jellyfish sting as it can ruin the day.



There are pieces of driftwood smoothed by the waves. If you are lucky the ocean will reveal a piece of a ship sunk long ago, when you walk on the beach after a storm.

Treasure seekers are out with their metal detectors combing the beach for trinkets old and new.

The seagulls dance on the wind and cry with delight. They say it's good luck to have a seagull decorate you with it's droppings. I can't say I have had that pleasure but, one day my friend was decorated 3 times. Truly lucky indeed...

The seagulls are brazenly trying to steal my food. They move in ever closer. In a bold move one distracts me while another grabs the chip bag and flies away with it followed by the mob.



Just like the ocean, the air is always moving. The onshore or offshore breeze makes it 10 to 15 degrees cooler at the beach. I love the feel of the breeze on my face even as my hair becomes a tangled mess. I tuck it under my hat, it feels damp and salty even if I have not been in the water.

Getting into the water at the beach is about strategy. You can dive right in and allow the cold shock to be over all at one time. The ocean never gets warm on Long Island. Me I usually go in little by little allowing each part of me to adjust to the temperature before taking another step.

Slowly by surely, I move deeper and deeper until the ocean decides, enough already and a big wave finishes the job.

Now it's time to jump with the waves and maybe do some body surfing. I feel the pull of the wave as it is building and start swimming allowing my body to be picked up and pushed forward to the shore.



As I sit in the wash after the wave is finished. I feel the sand in my bathing suit and watch carefully as the next wave comes to shore using it to lift me back into a standing position or find myself knocked down again and again.

I am here to remind you to never turn your back on the ocean as it will surely surprise you if you do.



With all the amazing sights and sounds you can find at the beach. One of my favorites is watching the sunset. Depending on where you are it may be the sunrise that delights you.

At sunset, the sun seems to melt into the ocean, a sizzling fireball turning the sky pink, fuchsia, and gold. The seagulls are silhouettes against the beautiful sky. The color is reflected in the ocean a mirror of the sky.

It is a perfect ending to a perfect day.

I sadly pack up my things and walk back to my car.

I am recharged.

I am at peace.

Because I spent time at the beach connecting with myself and nature.

At the beginning of this summer, I realized that I only went to the beach once last year.

I decided that was not acceptable and made a commitment to go at least 2 times every month.



Going to the beach is not limited to the summertime. In fact, some of the best times at the beach are in the offseason. There are fewer people, less distracting noise from cell phones, and an opportunity to see the beach in a pristine wild state that comes with fall and even winter storms.

I ask you:

- **When was the last time you played hooky and went to the beach?**
- **When was the last time you walked barefoot in the sand?**
- **When was the last time you took out your beach chair or beach bag and shook out the sand from your last beach visit and asked how did the sand get in there?**
- **When was the last time you watched the fog roll in and felt the cool mist on your face?**
- **When was the last time you felt the sand carried by the wind sandblasting you as you watched the waves?**
- **When was the last time you went to the beach?**



Isn't it time for you to go again?

Yes, yes, yes! Now is the time.

It's time to get your life affirming dose of sand, salt, and sea.

Time to connect with nature and feed your heart and soul.

What are you waiting for?

Life's a Beach!



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