

Your Guide to Visiting Atlantic City in the Fall

Hit A.C. for big views, beer gardens and stellar surf fishing.

By [Victor Fiorillo](#) · 9/5/2020

Get our weekly picks of what to do this weekend and the latest on Philly's arts and entertainment scene.



Looking to visit Atlantic City in the fall? Here's everything you need to know.

Photograph by V K / EyeEm / Getty Images

A place that was once all about casinos is now a diverse, multicultural, food-centric oceanfront city for people who actually *like* cities. Plus, easy connections to Brigantine to the north and Downbeach (Ventnor, Margate and Longport) to the south offer visitors a taste of more “traditional” Shore days, too.

Where to Stay

The best rooms in Atlantic City are in the casinos. Alas, this summer saw the temporary closing of the Water Club thanks to COVID, but its sister hotel, the [Borgata](#), is open and also a top-notch pick, in part thanks to its location in the Marina area, about 10 minutes from the boardwalk and the beaches. If you want to stay on the boardwalk (the advantage being that the ocean is right there), your best bets are [Hard Rock](#) and [Caesars](#). (At Caesars, go for a room in the Centurion Tower — they all have ocean views.) In a slightly quieter neck of A.C., you'll find the [Ocean Casino Resort](#) (remember Revel? This is its replacement) and also Bart Blatstein's casino-less [Showboat Hotel](#).

What to Do

Sure, sure, the casinos. But there's lots of A.C. fun that has nothing to do with gambling. Active types will find a breathtaking challenge in the 228 steps at [Absecon Lighthouse](#), the highest lighthouse in the state and one of the highest in the country, while cyclists, joggers and walkers will love the new(ish) boardwalk extension: At the [Ocean Casino Resort](#) (where the boardwalk used to end), the boards go totally non-commercial and offer unobstructed views of crashing waves, jetties and jagged rocks. In fact, you can bike from the far end of that extension all the way down the boardwalk to Ventnor (a four-mile journey, roughly) to stroll the cute downtown or hang on the fishing pier. ([One Stop Bait & Tackle](#) in A.C. rents out rods.) Meantime, if you just want to enjoy a little sand and surf, both Brigantine and the southern end of Atlantic City (including the fantastic Bartram Avenue Beach) are known for great stretches of sand that are rarely crowded in the autumn. You might even find you have the whole place to yourself.

Where to Eat

Every casino-related dining option has been in flux thanks to the pandemic, but you can find great outdoor dining at [Fish & Co.](#) at the Hard Rock (that view of Steel Pier and the Atlantic alone is worth the trip), [Street Eats](#) at the Borgata (think: hipster food trucks), and the alfresco version of longstanding Nero's — known for its Italian dishes, steaks and chops — at Caesars. Beyond casino world, go for the soul food haven that is [Kelsey's](#), high-end Italian (plus excellent pizzas and carpaccio) at [Girasole](#), barbecue-meets-Cajun joint [Bourré](#), and [Dock's Oyster House](#). (And hey, it's oyster season!) Lastly: Some of the best budget-friendly meals in town are at [White House Subs](#), [Tony's Baltimore Grill](#), [Pancho's](#) (where the tortillas are made to order) and [Pho Sydney](#).



Biergarten in Atlantic City.

Photograph by Natalie Chitwood

Where to Drink

It's been beer gardens à go-go lately in Atlantic City, from the Borgata's version in the Marina District to the boardwalk's [Biergarten](#) to [Tennessee Avenue Beer Hall](#) in the hipster-approved [Orange Loop](#), a once-desolate stretch of the city that's now the hot up-and-coming neighborhood. In fact, all summer the Orange Loop buzz centered on a new two-level container bar — built out of shipping containers — set to open on the patio at Bourré in early fall.

Location, Location, Location

One of the biggest advantages to Atlantic City is proximity: At less than an hour's drive from South Philly, it's a solid option if your "getaway" can only be one day.

Don't Miss

Surf fishing. Brigantine, Ventnor and Atlantic City all offer superb opportunities to saltwater-fish from the sand, piers and jetties. And fall is the best season for pulling out beautiful striped bass, fluke and bluefish without having to board a boat. Check out Brigantine's [Riptide Bait & Tackle](#) for gear, bait and local fishing tips.