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Spending Two Perfect Days In Atlantic City



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Thanks to popular New Jersey-set TV shows such as *The Sopranos* and *Boardwalk Empire*, Atlantic City has a few stereotypes it's been desperately trying to shake. Your great aunt, and all of her unflattering, decades-old stories about bus trips to A.C., is part of the blame, too. For many years now, East Coast travelers have discounted the city as a sort of tawdry vacationing spot lingering under a plume of cigarette smoke. Because of the city's conscious efforts to give a jolt of cool and youthfulness to the area, those conceptions are being bucked, and a leaner, meaner casino town is shaping up—and for that, we're all winners. Our [Forbes Travel Guide](#) editors recently checked out the Jersey Shore destination and have compiled a 48-hour itinerary to make sure you get the most of your Atlantic City adventure.



Revel, photo courtesy Revel Entertainment Group LLC

Day One

In no place does this Atlantic City 2.0 air permeate more than at [Revel](#), a 47-story, 1,399-room masterstroke that looks more like something for the Vegas Strip than the Atlantic coast. Needless to say, your weekend should start and end here. Revel's list of toys is nearly endless—a 32,000-square-foot spa, 14 restaurants, private gardens, two theaters and five pool areas, including a stunning indoor/outdoor pool. After picking up your jaw and dropping off your bags to the room, stop by Relish or Corso Coffee for a quick morning bite and an espresso, then hit the famed Atlantic City Boardwalk a mere few hundred feet from the resort.

No matter how great a job the Atlantic City tourism board does to spiffy the place's image—though the brunt of Hurricane Sandy's force missed the historic [boardwalk](#) and businesses, the area is only now showing signs of recovery in its tourism and convention markets; the return of the Miss America pageant on Sept. 15, after a six-year run in [Las Vegas](#), certainly will help spread more positive word—there's not a lot anyone can do about the outgoing seagulls that populate the seaside attraction. Shamelessly nibbling at the plates of French fries that each passerby possesses, the bothersome birds do manage to give the place a bit of charm.



Atlantic City Boardwalk, photo courtesy Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority

You can avoid the Alfred Hitchcock-ian scene by hopping a ride on one of the ever-present rickshaws. You'll pass familiar A.C. landmarks Hard Rock Cafe and [Trump Taj Mahal](#) on your way to one of the city's newest attractions: Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville. Though the kick-your-sandals-up concept behind the \$35 million addition to Resorts Casino Hotel might ring kitschy at first glance, step inside the Landshark Bar & Grill (within Margaritaville) and you'll find a delightful food menu—the Baja fish tacos and volcano nachos are quite scrumptious—and a roster of fun alcoholic treats (including the 5 O'Clock Somewhere and the Bama Breeze). After your meal, see the rest of Resorts' facelift, including island-themed slots, performance stages and a tiki bar.

When you get back to Revel, make sure to stop by the concierge's desk to see what's on the resort's entertainment docket for that evening. The weekend we were there, political comedian Bill Maher performed and *Cirque Dreams Revealed* was putting the finishing rehearsal touches on its program (at Revel's The Social venue through Sept. 22). If a show captures your eye, nosh on shrimp scampi at the informal Lugo Italian and then go freshen up for the evening. However, if it's a slow night on the stage, go with a culinary show at [Azure by Allegretti](#). An über-polished establishment with ocean blue hues and beautifully upholstered booths, Azure's staffers are anticipatory without being clingy, and the kitchen is creative with its Mediterranean-inspired menu without being too cute. Allow the sommelier to top off your first night in A.C. with a bubbly recommendation to accompany your whole roasted snapper or pistachio-crust rack of lamb.



Bask by Exhale spa at Revel, photo courtesy Revel Entertainment Group LLC

Day Two

Start your second day with a visit to Revel's Bask by Exhale spa. While detoxifying sessions and muscle-relieving treatments highlight the menu, the most memorable part of the visit will be your time at the bathhouse, a 3,000-square-foot coed lounge area of archways, steam rooms and a Himalayan salt cave that looks like some place Tony Soprano would have loved to escape to.

After your service at Bask, throw on something comfortable and head toward Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa, yet another sleek, Vegas-like establishment that's about a 10-minute cab ride from the boardwalk. Seeing as how you haven't spent much (if any) time on the casino floor since your arrival in Atlantic City, now would be a great opportunity to try your hand at Blackjack or on the slots. Seats are ultra plush. Aisles are wide. The modern feel of the place almost summons your chips.

Adjoining Borgata is The Water Club at Borgata. The cosmopolitan hotel's lobby lounge, Sunroom, is the perfect spot for lunch. Depending on how well (or not so well) you did gambling just may determine if you go with something light (freshly squeezed lemonade) or hard (the Absolut vodka-, tomato- and lemon-packed Water Club Classic) off the drink menu. As for the food, try the chilled watermelon, doused with aged Gouda, Patrón and pine nuts, for an appetizer, and the smoked salmon pizzette (lox, horseradish cream and fresh herbs atop a grilled pita) as your main course.

Instead of heading straight back to Revel, ask the cabbie to detour toward the [Tanger Outlets The Walk](#) on Baltic Avenue. There, you can work off any poor lunchtime decisions while doing a bit of on-the-fly shopping at Brooks Brothers, Coach and Polo Ralph Lauren. Seeing the crowded outdoor shopping area on weekends is further indication of how this isn't your great aunt's Atlantic City anymore.



Knife and Fork Inn, photo courtesy Atlantic City Convention & Visitors Authority

But if you needed one more show of proof, make reservations at [Knife and Fork Inn](#). Though the unassuming corner steakhouse is one of A.C.'s oldest restaurants, a 2005 renovation gives the place a renewed energy while chef John Kuropatwa's philosophy on sustainable fishing is forward thinking. The spice-rubbed salmon and pan-seared diver scallops are mere examples of how everything comes together wonderfully in the kitchen to create the perfect ending to an eye-opening visit to a side of New Jersey you never knew existed.