

Boating Destination Atlantic City, New Jersey

Go boating in Atlantic City NJ for its dining, shopping and gambling opportunities.



While high rollers sometimes call Atlantic City, Las Vegas East, cruising boaters see the gambling mecca differently. Sure you can play the slots and tables 24/7, but we like AC for its reliable easy entrance off the Atlantic on an otherwise not-so-friendly Jersey shore. We've had a major heart-stopping experience running the channel at Manasquan and never even considered Barnegat, but we like Atlantic City as a stopover whether we're heading north or south. Cruising up or down the coast you can't miss the high rise casinos spanning the skyline, now accentuated with sleek white windmills that power the waste management plant. On our last visit we noticed new bright red self-erecting cranes signaling the construction of an addition to the skyscape.

Absecon Inlet has a short direct channel approach off the ocean that is wide and straight. Coming from the North stay offshore until you reach the sea buoy G"1" to avoid the shoal extending seaward on the north side of the channel. Once inside you've got the choice of dropping the hook in the Rum Point anchorage or staying at a marina, two nice alternatives.



A sandy beach lines the starboard side of the channel and

a sharp right turn after passing R"12" brings you into a narrow cut leading to a well protected anchorage at Rum Point. This channel is well used but the approach looks dicey when you notice the maze of makeshift markers. The entrance passes close to the beach and we could clearly read "Newsweek" on the cover of the magazine a guy sitting in a beach chair was reading. Once inside there's plenty of room to drop the hook with good protection.

Turn to port to enter Clam Creek and you can't miss seeing the Farley State Marina on the starboard side. Trump Marina Casino operates the marina, which has over 600 floating slips. Just walk across the street from your slip and you can play the tables, run the slots or enjoy the entertainment. The atmosphere of fresh air and clanging halyards at the docks contrast with the neon glow of the machines and casino cacophony. A large "Dream Big" sign encourages positive thinking. Inside there's plenty of restaurants to choose from - buffets to better-than-fine dining - that cater to the throngs of first-time visitors and regulars, many toting crockpots and toaster ovens redeemed from the casino's rewards programs.

On the port side of Clam Creek sits the Historic Gardner's Basin with marina slips, a crafter's village, restaurants, shops and the Atlantic City Aquarium. Across from the Coast Guard Station and beyond is Kammerman's Atlantic City Marina with slips, fuel and repair services. This side of the Basin is also home to the commercial clammers fleet.

The Jitney, a baby blue mini-bus that operates 24/7, services both Trump's Farley State Marina and Gardner's Basin. For \$2 you can get around and see the whole of the city including the Absecon Lighthouse, New Jersey's tallest lighthouse. The recent restoration includes a replica of the Lightkeeper's dwelling and a museum.

And of course there's the famous Boardwalk, a wide wooden walkway open to the ocean on one side and flanked by casino resorts, restaurants and arcades on the other. Along the way open paths lead directly to the sandy beach. In the center of the Boardwalk two yellow lines mark the path for their unique rolling chairs used by tourists to see the sights without walking. They're similar to the bike-taxis or rickshaws but are powered by pushers who walk behind the chair. You can rent bikes or ride your own on the Boardwalk but only in the morning until 10:00a.m. when foot traffic picks up.

We saw every major entertainment venue offered at the casinos with nightlife headliners like Michael Bolton and Seinfeld and daytime cooking forums with Paula Deen. You want to be rejuvenated from a tough day on the boat, the resorts have spas and whirlpools to ease your aches and rejuvenate your spirit.

Shopping opportunities abound from pricey specialty boutiques to a 100-store factory outlet mall.

In the late afternoon the Steel Pier, an amusement park on the Boardwalk opens and it's a place where you can reconnect with the kid in you. Remember the Ferris Wheel and Tilt a Whirl? You'll find them along with a host of other Oh-my-gosh rides.

Atlantic City is a one-of-a-kind destination for power cruisers where you can stroll on the beach or the Boardwalk or take your chances at the slots or a Blackjack table. But gambling is not required for a good time.