Bicycling in Southport

Southport's waterfront is part of a rich coastal history. Native Americans plied the waters for generations before the Italian explorer Verazzano sailed up the Cape Fear River in 1524 . Roving pirates of the early 1700's took refuge in the secluded creeks and inlets, where the infamous Stede Bonnet, "Gentleman pirate" was ultimately captured. A British garrison was established at Fort Johnson in 1750 to protect Brunswick Town and Wilmington, the upstream ports of call. In 1751, river pilots settled in the area to guide ocean-going ships through the treacherous Cape Fear Channel, a tradition carried on to this day. And, for decades, the local fishing fleet has sailed to port bringing in the daily catch.

Established as Smithville in 1792, the town became Southport in 1887, to reflect its distinction as the southernmost port in North Carolina. Today, as in the past, stately live oaks shade streets lined with victorian mansions and quaint coastal cottages. On the water-front, the "whittlers bench" makes a perfect perch from which to watch flocks of brown pelicans diving for fish. Out beyond the harbor, Old Baldy Lighthouse keeps watch as it has since 1817.

A visit to the attractions listed below will make Southport's history come to life. Numbered to correspond to the locations shown on the map, most are along the designated bicycle routes.

1. *Visitor's Center - Stop here for maps, a visitor's guide and a self-guided walking tour map. (910) 457-7927.*

2. *Southport Maritime Museum - Features a 2,000 year old dugout canoe, pirate lore, a display on river pilots, relics from the Civil War, artifacts from sunken vessels and a collection of ship models. Open all year. Admission is charged for adults. (910) 457-0003.*

3. *Waterfront Park - Shaded porch swings invite visitors to linger and enjoy the cool salt breeze. An evening stroll along the water front is a Southport tradition.*

4. *Fort Johnson - Built by the British in 1749, the fort was burned by American colonists in 1775. Regarrisoned by North Carolina Militia, the fort was the point around which the town grew.*

5. *Old Smithville Burial Ground - Established in 1804, an obelisk marker honors lost river pilots, and aged headstones mark the gravesites of founding families.*

6. *Franklin Square Park - "The Grove" was set aside for public use in 1792. Centuries old live oaks and pure well water from the pump provide a refreshing stopover. A 1904 schoolhouse adjoining the grounds is used as an art gallery.*

7. *Baldhead Island Ferry - Fourteen miles of beaches, a semi-tropical climate and no cars make Baldhead an ideal bicycling environment. Privately operated boats leave hourly for the island. Take your bike or rent one there. For information on ferry schedules and fares, call (910) 457-5003.*

About the Routes

The five and one-half miles of designated bicycle routes follow quiet neighborhood streets, connecting Southport's major attractions. These routes are signed with a green and white bike route sign, similar to the one shown to the right. In addition, two cross-state routes access Southport. The 300-mile Ports of Call route runs near the coast, from South Carolina to Virginia. This route is designated as Bike Route 3, and is posted with signs like the one shown to the left. The 160-mile Cape Fear Run begins southeast of Raleigh and roughly parallels the Cape Fear River, ending in Southport. This route is marked as Bike Route 5.

For information about these Bicycling Highways, and other bicycle touring opportunities, contact:

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Office of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh, N.C. 27611
(919) 733-2804

Laws and Safety Tips

Bicycles are legally considered vehicles in North Carolina. This means that a bicycle rider has the same rights and is required to follow the same laws as the driver of an automobile. Bicycle riders must:

- *ride on the right, in the same direction as other traffic;*
- *obey all traffic signs and signals, including stop and yield signs and one-way directional signs;*
- *use hand signals to communicate intended movements;*
- *yield to pedestrians and emergency vehicles;*
- *when riding at night, equip the bicycle with a front lamp visible from 300 feet and a rear reflector or lamp visible from 200 feet.*

Be sure to wear a bicycle helmet every time you ride your bicycle. Even minor falls can cause serious head injuries.

For additional copies of this map or more information on Southport's attractions and accommodations, contact:

Southport Visitor's Center
107 E. Nash St.
Southport, N.C. 28461
(910) 457-7927

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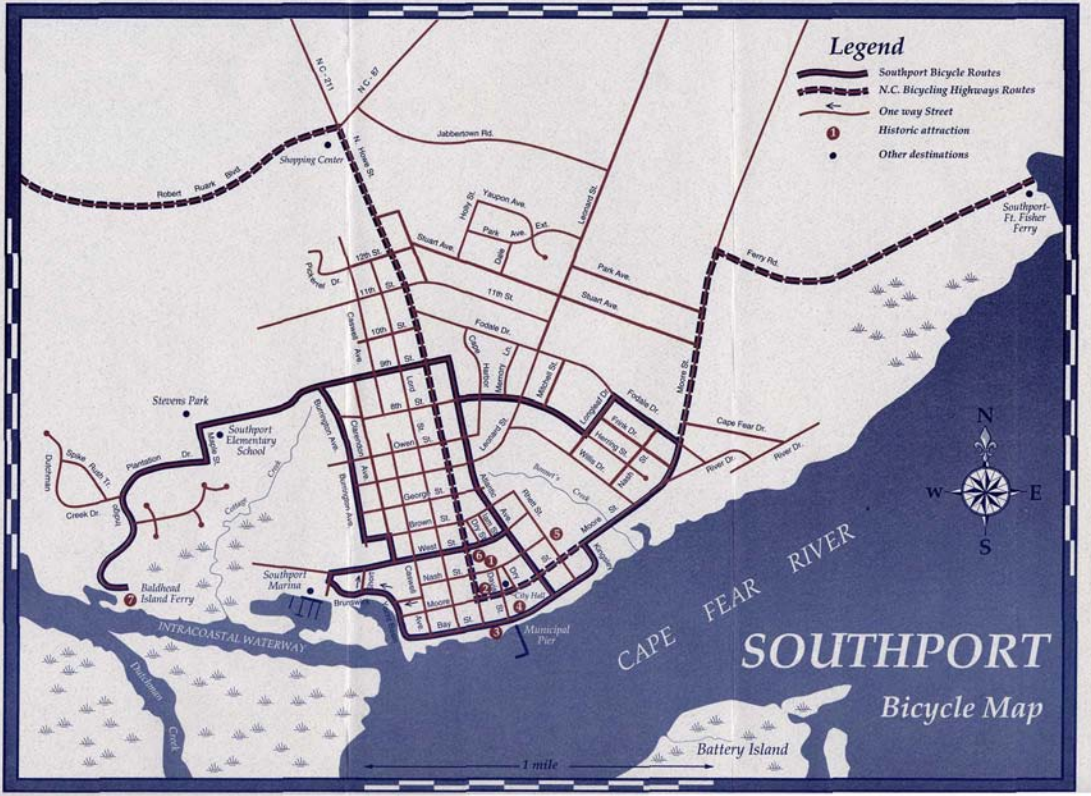
SOUTHPORT

Bicycle Map


Legend
Southport Bicycle Routes
N.C. Bicycling Highways Routes
One way Street
Historic attraction
Other destinations
N.C.-211
N.C.-87
Jabbertown Rd.
Shopping Center
Robert Ruark Blvd.
N. Howe St.
Holly St.
Yaupon Ave.
Park Ave. Ext.
Dale
Stuart Ave.
Leonard St.
Park Ave.
Stuart Ave.
Ferry Rd.
Southport-Ft. Fisher Ferry
12th St.
11th St.
10th St.
9th St.
8th St.
Pickerel Dr.
Caswell Ave.
Fodale Dr.
Cape Harbor
Memory Ln.
Mitchell St.
Moore St.
Fodale Dr.
Cape Fear Dr.
Stevens Park
Southport Elementary School
Maple St.
Plantation Dr.
Spike Rush Tr.
Dutchman Creek Dr.
Burrington Ave.
Clarendon Ave.
Lord St.
Owen St.
Leonard St.
Frink Dr.
Herring St.
Willis Dr.
Nash St.
River Dr.
River Dr.
Bonnet's Creek
Atlantic Ave.
Rhett St.
Moore St.
Kingsley
Cottage Creek
George St.
Brown St.
West St.
Dry St.
Nash St.
Moore St.
Bay St.
Dry St.
City Hall
Municipal Pier
Southport Marina
Brunswick
Baldhead Island Ferry
INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY
Dutchman Creek
CAPE FEAR RIVER
Battery Island
1 mile
N
W
E
S
SOUTHPORT
Bicycle Map

Please be aware:

Although every effort was made initially to choose routes on less traveled roads, some areas of this map may have experienced significant growing. In these locations some of the selected bicycle routes could have increased traffic volumes. The NC Department of Transportation and the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation assume no liability for the increase use of any road on this map. We ask you to, as much as you are able, make yourself aware of the roads you intend to travel on, prior to your trip. To do so you may consider contacting the local government, bike shops or clubs in the area, for advise.

A Note of Caution

The highlighted bicycle routes shown on this map follow roads of the North Carolina highway system. These roads do not include any special accommodations for bicycles such as paved shoulders or designated bike lanes. Care has been taken to select more lightly traveled roads. In a few places, however, short sections of busier roads are used to make connections where no other options exist. These areas are marked with "Share the Road" signs, like the one shown here, to alert motorist to the presence of cyclists on the road. The bike routes are not intended for use by children, as their ability to judge traffic conditions and driver actions is not well developed.

Be predictable, be courteous, and obey all traffic laws, while traveling by bicycle.