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Summer Destination: Atlantic City, NJ

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Summer is the time to get away on a vacation! There is nothing better than to escape all of your responsibilities for a day or two and do an impromptu getaway. And if you don't think that you have time or \$\$\$ to travel, then you're mistaken. One of the closest weekend getaway destinations from New York or the general tri-state area is Atlantic City, New Jersey. Just 2.5 hours outside of NYC, Atlantic City offers an array of entertainment, dining, shopping, and beach experiences. Maxim's mom lives not too far from AC so we travel there quite often throughout the year.

Below is my short guide to where to stay, eat and what to do in Atlantic City.

Where to Stay:

When going to AC, stay at the casinos! Casinos are where all the action happens, and contrary to popular beliefs, you don't even need to gamble to have a good time! Most of the casinos offer tons of amenities and entertainment options inside so you don't even have to leave them during your stay except for enjoying AC beaches during the day. Casinos have restaurants, bars, dance clubs, pools, movie theaters and other unique experiences. Below are the 2 newest casinos (think new amenities!) in AC that I would recommend staying at:

[HARD ROCK CASINO](#)

Hard Rock Hotel and Casino (yes, the same company behind everyone's favorite Hard Rock Cafes) was celebrating their 1 year anniversary in Atlantic City when I stayed there in July and it was a celebration to remember! Everything inside the casino was new and well thought out – cool sculptures and real plants and flowers were peppered through-out – a major A+ in my book!

And no true Hard Rock experience would be complete without the memorabilia – I spotted outfits that Lady Gaga, Madonna and Rihanna wore in their music videos. Childhood sketches of Kurt Cobain, Kiss' outfits and Elvis Presley's Rolls Royce would appeal to true Rock 'n Roll enthusiasts. It's definitely cool to wander around and look at different music memorabilia.



Rooms are clean and spacious. Make sure to book a room facing an ocean and higher up (the tower is pretty high at 41 floors). This will get you the best view and that early morning light perfect for selfies!

[OCEAN CASINO RESORT](#)

Another newcomer on the scene – this casino was opened in June 2018 and it's impressive. Giant mushroom sculptures, gorgeous chandeliers and floor to ceiling ocean views are what I remember the most about the interior and it all somehow works! The main lobby feels super open and spacious with a giant escalator taking you up the floors. It definitely has modern art vibes throughout.

Staying at the Hotel I would recommend the same thing – pick a room with a view and higher up (57 floors in this tower). And definitely, check-out their pool with cabanas available to all of the guests staying at the hotel.

WHERE TO EAT:

At **Hard Rock**, try [Council Oak Fish](#) for a sea-food restaurant with fish sourced by local fishermen or [Kuro](#), an upscale Japanese restaurant with a selection of gluten-free and vegan dining options. For more casual dining, try the infamous [Hard Rock Cafe](#) or [Sugar Factory](#) to grab a photo with their colorful milkshakes

Dinner at Council Oak Fish

At **Ocean**, stop by [Dolce Mare](#), a modern Italian restaurant with stunning views of the Atlantic Ocean, a must to dine out in style. Another great option is [Amada](#), an upscale Spanish restaurant with offerings including a lobster paella and a chef's tasting menu. For more casual dining, try [Villain and Saint](#), a low-key bar with over 30 beers on tap, or [Wahlburgs](#) of the same-name TV show fame.



Dinner at Dolce Mare

Elsewhere in AC, try [Doc's Oyster House](#) for best oysters in Atlantic City, [Buddakan](#) for delicious Asian fusion dishes and a giant buddha in the dining room, and [Gordon Ramsay Steakhouse](#) for surf and turf selection from the famous chef.



Buddakan

THINGS TO DO:

Here are some of my favorite things to do when I visit AC:

1. Shop at [Tanger Outlets](#). Adidas, Aldo, Banana Republic, Brooks Brothers, Columbia, J.Crew, Levi's, Michael Kors, Nike, Puma, and Reebok are just some of my favorite outlets in Atlantic City. You can always score a good deal on previous season's clothes and shoes here. It can take some shopping around but in the past, I've scored my favorite \$40 Adidas sneakers here and Maxim found a brand new Levi's sherpa jacket for \$8!



2. Hit up the boardwalk. When there's nothing to do on a lazy summer Sunday, do what locals do and hit up the boardwalk! Everything from T-Shirt Stores (you know the [ones](#)) to Pizza joints, paintball, arcade games, Ferris wheel, and even [Ripley's Believe It or Not!](#), there's never a dull moment on the boardwalk.



3. Virtual Golf at Ocean Casino. Topgolf Swing Suite, the largest one in America, is a great way to spend quality time with your family and friends. You basically use a real golf club to hit a real golf ball into a giant movie theater screen. Once you hit the screen, your ball turns digital and does what your ball would've done in real life going high and far depending on your hit. I don't really play golf in real life, but it was a fun time hitting the ball. If golf is not your cup of tea, you can also play football, baseball, hockey and dodgeball with zombies!



4. **Beach Bar at Hard Rock Casino.** A fun bar located right on the beach, far enough from the boardwalk but close enough to water. Fun cabanas, tables with beach umbrellas, palm trees and outdoor games make this bar stand out. And their frozen margaritas are delicious!

5. **Casino Floor.** Let's not forget that you are in a casino mecca – have fun and play some games! Start with the slot machines (they even have 1 cent games) to test your luck, just remember to always set the budget and stick to it and play responsibly. If poker or roulette is more up your alley, but they've always intimidated you, many casinos now offer virtual versions of these games which are easier to pick up and play right away.



Ocean Casino

So this was my short guide to doing Atlantic City is style. Hope you found it useful and next time you want to escape NYC for the weekend, hope you check out AC!