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Chincoteague Island Virginia

By John C. Banks

Chincoteague Island is a small, friendly, vacation resort along the coast of Virginia, USA. Vacations

to the island can include recreational activities such as shopping, swimming, sunbathing, fishing, clamming, bird watching, nature cruises, biking, hiking, boating, kayaking, miniature golf, Chincoteague ponies, the pony swim, fireman's carnival, Chincoteague decoy and art show, Chincoteague Center's arts and crafts show and more.

The island is known for it's quaint shops and art galleries. Chincoteague area wildlife artists display art such as decoys and other bird carvings, paintings, photographs and sculptured wildlife pieces.

Located within minutes of the resort is Assateague Island, which is occupied by Assateague National Sea Shore and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge covers over 14,000 acres of beach, dunes, marsh, and forest habitat. The majority of the refuge is located in Virginia although 418 acres are on Maryland soil. The refuge also includes Morris Island, Marsh on the Northern part of Chincoteague Island. The refuge extends southward, Assawoman, Metompkin, and Cedar Islands. Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge is one of the most popular refuges in the United States, especially among bird watchers. The refuge is either home to or a stop over point for a array of birds and other wildlife. Ducks, geese, swans, egrets, herons, and dozens of other shorebirds visit or live on the islands.

The most famous Chincoteague Island event is the pony swim and penning, a tradition since 1924. The swim, penning and auction is held on the last Wednesday and Thursday of July. Ponies are rounded up and swim the channel between Assateague and Chincoteague Islands. The animals are penned, inspected, fed and most of the foals auctioned off to qualified buyers. Most of the population of the ponies are returned to Assateague after the penning to roam free for another year.

Assateague Island lighthouse is another attraction for visitors to Chincoteague and Assateague Islands. The lighthouse is located within Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and is a popular tourist stop. The lighthouse is owned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and is still actively used by the United States Coast Guard as an aid to navigation.

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The Lighthouse is 142 feet high on a site 22 feet about sea level. The structure is one of the most attractive and recognizable lighthouses of the USA east coast. Made of brick, it was painted in the red and white pattern in 1967. Nearby is the keeper's quarters. The lighthouse light has had a series of lamp upgrades over the years and presently displays a powerful rotating light visible up to 19 miles away. The Oyster and Maritime Museum in Chincoteague displays the fresnel lens on display which was used in the lighthouse from 1867–1963.

The Chincoteague Island Virginia Oyster Festival is another island attraction. The festival, created by the chamber of commerce, features Chincoteague Island's famous oysters. The event promotes the oyster season, which includes the cooler months of fall, winter and spring. The popularity of the event may require obtaining tickets well in advance as the festival often sells out.

The author is a small business web designer, recreational angler and owner of several outdoor websites. See

<http://www.chincoteague-island.net>

for more information about this vacation resort.

The Perfect Family Vacation?

By John C. Banks

When planning a family vacation along the USA east coast, one of the destinations worth considering is Chincoteague Island Virginia. This beautiful island is located within a few hours of Baltimore, Washington DC or Norfolk Virginia. Located on the eastern shore of Virginia, Chincoteague Island is easy to reach and a relatively inexpensive vacation resort.

Chincoteague Island has something for every member of the family. The island is best known for its wild ponies, made famous by the novels "Misty of Chincoteague", "Stormy" and others. Also famous for its seafood, Chincoteague is home to excellent local oysters, clams, flounder and other delicacies.

Families can spend time together, as well as find activities for any member of the group. Men might enjoy local fishing while ladies explore the shops and boutiques. Kids will be delighted to see and touch local wild ponies, swim at the sandy beaches or enjoy miniature golf or a scooter rental.

Downtown Chincoteague is a mix of art, clothing, restaurants and specialty food shops. Artists display every manner of nautical art, including decoys, wildlife carvings, sculpture, pottery, photographs, paintings and more.

Minutes from Chincoteague is Assateague Island. Sharing the island is Assateague National Sea Shore and Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is one of the most popular USA, especially among bird watchers. Ducks, geese, swans, egrets, herons, and dozens of other shorebirds are seen here. Upon entering the refuge, Birdwatchers can check in at the visitors center, then make the short drive to the beach, explore the seashore and hike the many trails. Of particular interest to

Chincoteague Island Virginia

birders is the Wildlife Loop, which leads thru forest, marsh, and the lagoon.

Beach lovers will find beautiful sandy beaches, both on the oceanside and along Tom's cove. Visitors can swim, sunbathe, walk the beaches, search for shells, and spot wild ponies on the beach and porpoises in the ocean.

Anglers will find Chincoteague to be a good place to take a fishing vacation. There is surf fishing, pier fishing, flounder fishing, deep sea fishing, crabbing, clamming and more. The waters are also a great place to powerboat, sail, jet ski or kayak.

The combination of small town atmosphere, local art, recreation, scenery, abundant wildlife and great beaches make this among the best values in family vacations along the eastern seaboard.

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