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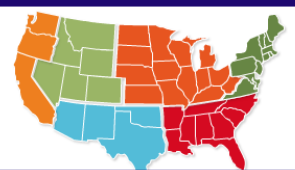
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One Summer, 14 Weekends

By DAVE CALDWELL
This summer is serving up simple and exotic pleasures from scaling a mountain and dancing to folk music to floating down a river, flying a kite and sampling 30 versions of chicken wings.




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The Cape Fear River rambles past historic and picturesque city of Wilmington, N.C., widening and creating slivery barrier islands with river on one side and the Atlantic on the other. Pleasure Island, 12 miles south of Wilmington, has towns of Carolina Beach and Kure Beach as well as pleasurable beaches for catching a tan.



Logan Mook-Bunting/Getty Images

But you can tackle the area by hiking in Carolina Beach State Park (910-458-8206), home to the carnivorous Venus' flytraps. Or you can rent a surfboard or body board at SandBarz Surf and Skate Shop on the Boardwalk in Carolina Beach.

To the south in Kure Beach is the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher and the 712-foot-long Kure Beach Pier (910-458-5524), where you can try to snag mackerel and flounder (\$5 fishing fee). The Sandi Beach Inn, a block away, has rooms for \$95 to \$225 a night.

For a break from beach life, drive into Wilmington for a horse-drawn trolley tour of the city's historic area and a performance of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" at the Shakespeare on the Green Festival (Third Street and Carolina Beach Road; 910-762-6393).

Related Links
SandBarz Surf and Skate Shop
North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher
Sandi Beach Inn

TRAVEL GUIDE: **Wilmington, N.C.** Where are you going this summer?

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