

Chincoteague Island On Virginia's Eastern Shore America's #1 Happiest Seaside Town-2014

*You'll Love Our Nature
And Our Heritage!*

Our Discovery

Chincoteague's Accomack County welcome is one of America's earliest records of southern hospitality. Captain John Smith wrote in June of 1608 that he had a pleasant encounter with the Accomack Indian chief known as the Werewowance. Smith recounted that the chief helped his 14-man crew find their way around local islands and inlets and described the chief as "proper and civil." Like our native predecessors, we welcome visitors to discover Chincoteague and all its natural bounty. We were named the 2014 Happiest Seaside Town in America by *Coastal Living*® and voted the #2 Coolest Small Town in America by *Budget Travel* in 2015. TripAdvisor, USA Today, and Country Living are among others who have recognized the uniqueness of our island paradise.

We Want You to Explore

Virginia, America's First Space Coast

NASA launched the first space rocket in 1945 at Wallops Island, Virginia. Orbital Sciences Corporation made commercial space flight a reality on January 9, 2014 when the Antares rocket rose into the Virginia sky carrying the company's robotic Cygnus cargo vessel on its first contracted supply run to the International Space Station for NASA. Orbital's partnership with NASA Wallops Flight Facility and the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport team up to send resupply missions to the ISS. Smaller, sub-orbital rockets are launched periodically from Wallops Flight Facility conducting space and earth science research for NASA partners including the Department of Defense. NASA's Wallops Flight Facility celebrated 70 years of space exploration in 2015.

We're Home to THE Saltwater Cowboys

Chincoteague's Volunteer Firemen protect us daily.

The book *Misty of Chincoteague* and movie that followed brought fame to Chincoteague in the 1940s through present day, but it was the year 1925 when the famed annual pony penning, auction and carnival first began. In the early 1900s, after several disastrous fires on the island, Chincoteague's citizen firefighters bought the best equipment they could afford by hosting their first pony penning and auction. They raised enough money to buy the fire engine that now resides in the Museum of Chincoteague. The tradition of the real saltwater cowboys continues the last week of July every year to benefit the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company. Pony penning has been popular in Chincoteague since the 1700s when livestock owners harnessed and branded their loose herds. The firefighters' stated goal is to keep the town safe against what they call the "evil force" of fire.

****Pony Penning Event winner of the 2017 Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association Ordinary Award.**

We Have Small Town Charm

Chincoteague is as authentic as a small town gets. It's a place where people can relax and enjoy the restorative benefits of the beach, the ocean and its teeming wildlife. Visitors come for the beach and the wild ponies, and when they're ready to get out of the sun, they enjoy Chincoteague's atmosphere of small independently-owned stores, restaurants and art galleries. The federal government has contributed to the preservation of this small town life by managing more than 14,000 acres of oceanfront land and inland marshland.

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge includes artfully designed access points that bring visitors in tune with this productive ecological haven. The Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge and Assateague Island National Seashore help to maintain unique forms of wildlife for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. Birders and wildlife lovers can hook up with fascinating tours of the area's marshland and surrounding waters. Hunting and fishing are vital parts of wildlife management in the refuge.

We're a Great Catch

Seafood businesses are our heritage. In culinary circles, Atlantic Oysters are still called *Crassostrea Virginicus*, or Virginia oysters. To supplement wild oyster crops, aquaculture farms maintain reefs with rocks and shells so shellfish can attach themselves and grow. Millions of market-size oysters come from seeds within a year to two years of aquaculture cultivation – happy news for restaurateurs and oyster lovers. Governor McAuliffe introduced Virginia's Oyster Trail in 2014. "Virginia is for Lovers is about love – pure and simple. For people who love great seafood in a beautiful setting, Virginia is gaining ground as a hot destination for oyster lovers. The commonwealth – already known around the world as a top wine travel destination, is now becoming the oyster capital of the East Coast – [with eight different regions](#) and status as the largest producer of fresh, farm-raised oysters in the country," according to the state tourism website, www.virginia.org.

Two annual festivals celebrate the bounties from the waters around Chincoteague Island. Both are hosted by the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce.

The **Annual Chincoteague Seafood Festival** is held the first Saturday in May and honors "Little Neck" Clams as the featured menu item. www.chincoteaguechamber.com

The **Annual Chincoteague Oyster Festival** is held the Saturday of Columbus Day weekend in October. This event is all about oysters---prepared every way imaginable. www.chincoteaguechamber.com and www.chincoteagueoysterfestival.com

Contact: Evelyn Shotwell, Executive Director, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce
6733 Maddox Boulevard Chincoteague, VA 23336 757.336.6161

eshotwell@chincoteaguechamber.com

www.chincoteaguechamber.com