



Shifting Sands

Description





There is no

bridge connecting Ocracoke Island to the rest of the Outer Banks nor to the mainland. But for those of us who don't have our own boat or plane, there is ferry service from Hatteras Island on the Outer Banks and from Swan Quarter on the mainland.

From Hatteras, the ferry is free and operates on the hour in non-peak season and on the half hour in peak season between 5 a.m. and midnight. What a great service. And since this is the only way to get from the Outer Banks to Ocracoke, this ferry serves both locals and tourists. On the day we visited the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, we attempted to take the ferry around lunchtime only to find that we'd have to wait about two hours. One ferry had broken down and, since service vehicles get priority there was quite a line for us regular folks. We knew in advance of the possibility that we might not make it onto the ferry and had a plan B to visit the Ocracoke, so we bailed.

On our second try, we took Angel along just in case we got stuck on the Ocracoke side and had a long wait. We'd learned that the ferry ride time had increased from 40 minutes to an hour each way because of a massive sandbar created by Hurricane Sandy. They've been dredging it and making slow progress. Life on the Outer Banks.

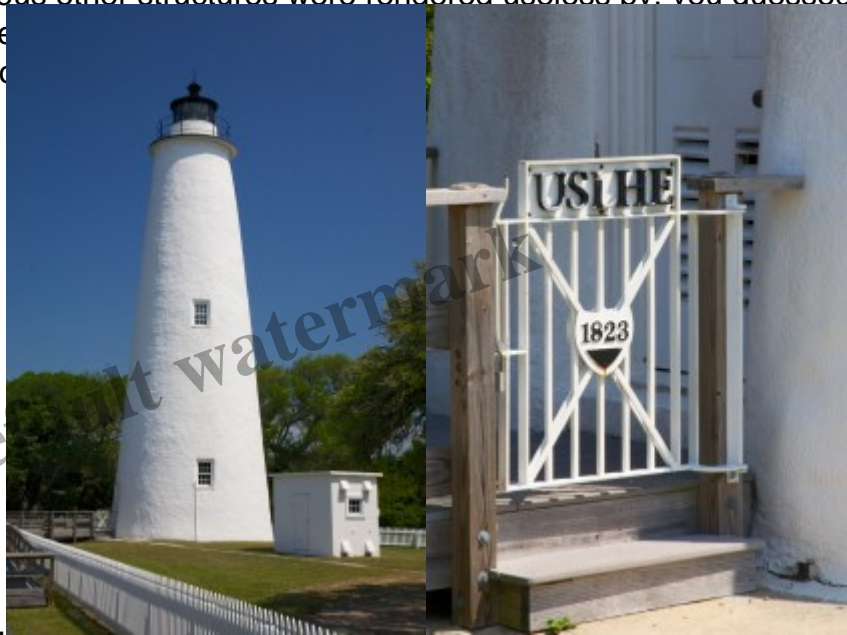
It's quite bizarre to be looking straight at your island destination and watch the ferry turn sharply away from it only to come back around. But we were fortunate to have good weather and it was a very pleasant ride. And, although pets are allowed to leave the car on leash, Angel rode in the car happily with the windows open, and I stayed nearby to make sure she was ok. Her first ferry ride!



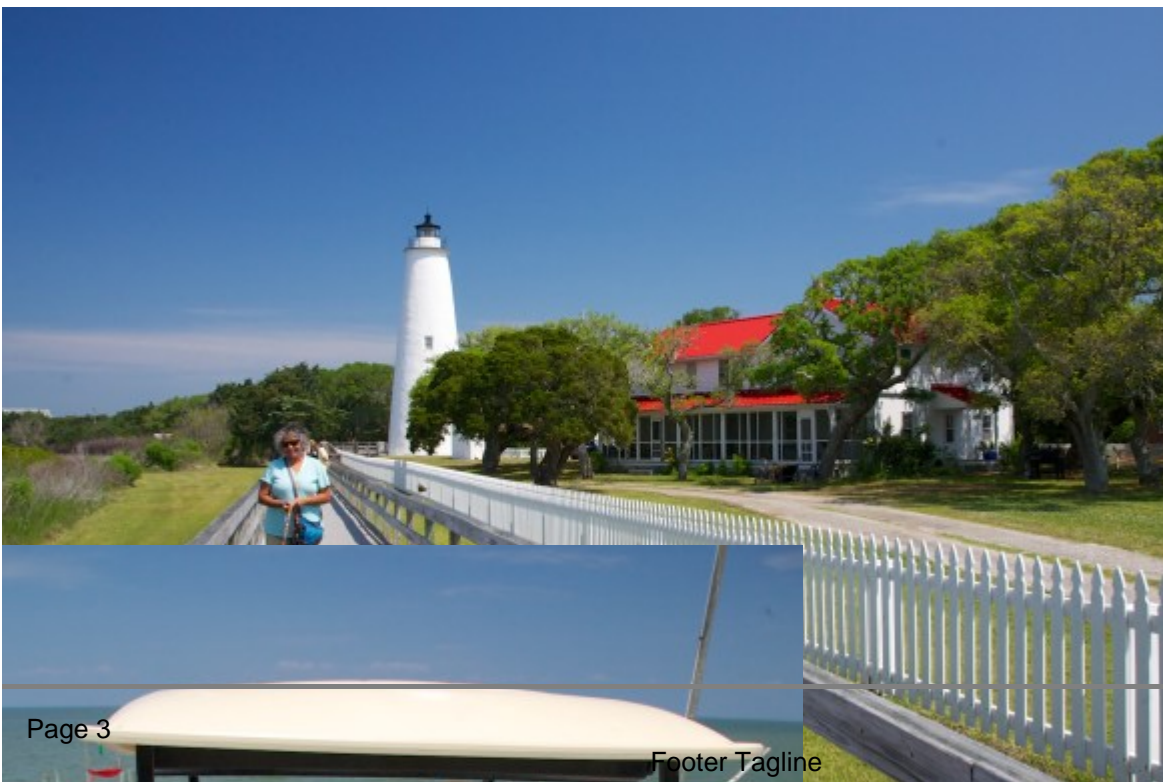


We got to Ocracoke and rode out to town to see the

[Ocracoke Lighthouse](#), first on our list. This is North Carolina's oldest operating lighthouse. The present tower was built in 1822, after various other structures were rendered useless by, you guessed it, shifting sands. It's yet another great example of how things are distinct from each other, and this one is no exception. The lighthouse keeper's house is now

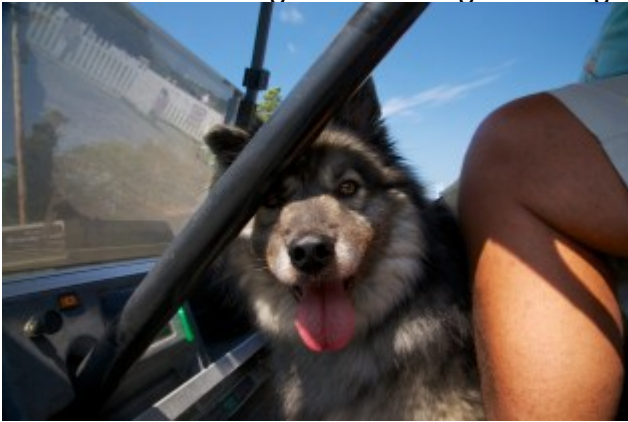


next door to a working lighthouse.



Since Angel was still in initial recovery (eight weeks total, this was the seventh) from her ACL surgery, we rented a golf cart to explore Ocracoke. The town is best explored on foot, bicycle or golf cart, and opportunities to rent bicycles and golf carts are plentiful.

Off we went in our golf cart – Angel’s first golf cart ride! We toured the cute shops and the waterfront



s used to

Did I mention

the great local seafood available in the Outer Banks? Blue fish, c

it, mahi-

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mahi, grouper and some of the best shrimp I've ever had. Yum!





After lunch, we toured around a

bit more then it was time
take the ferry back well b



e long wait and so planned to
in the car on the ride back, there

was such a nice breeze!



This was our last

night in the Outer Banks, so we stowed our stuff said farewell to some nice neighbors and prepared

for our departure the next day.



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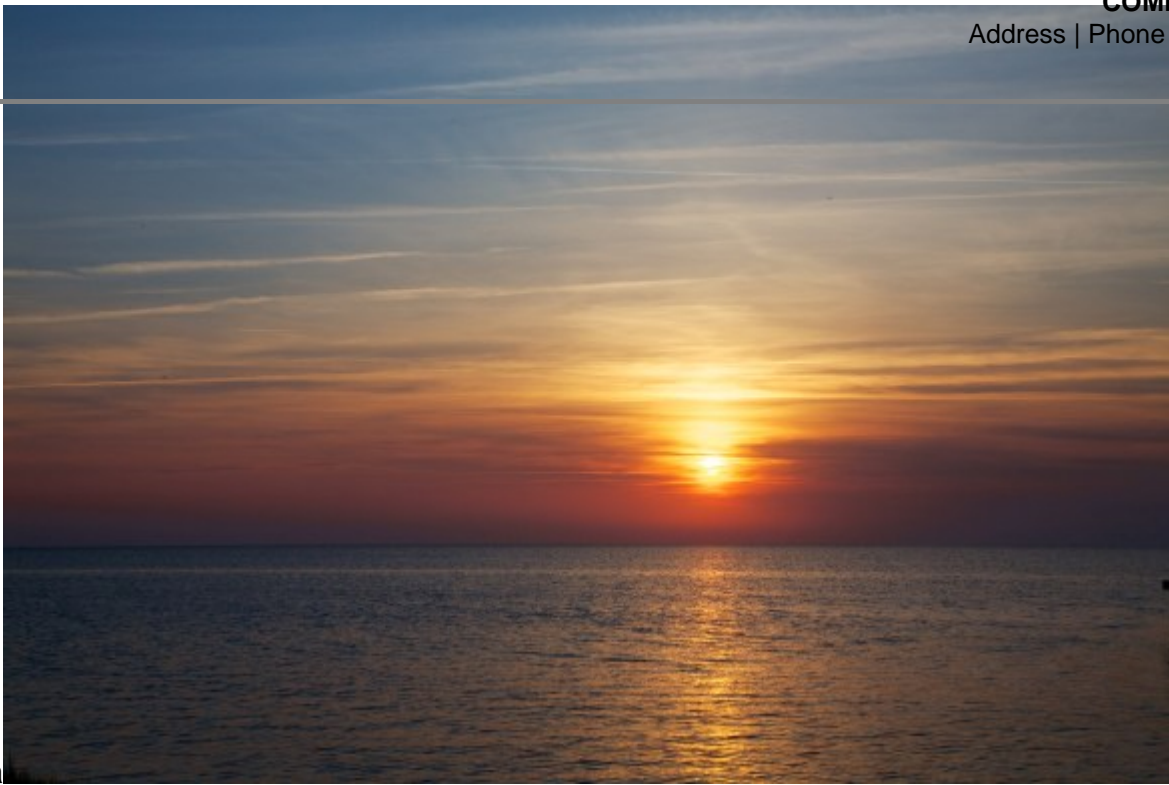
As we got



As we hooked up the car, it started to rain. once again.

As we drove north on N.C. 12 towards the bridge to the

mainland, we drove over a section of sand that had spilled over on the road from the dunes. This place of shifting sands and changing weather intrigues me. I think I'll come back one day.



~ Brenda

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- 1. North Carolina
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Tags

- 1. beaches
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