

Lighthouse Guide

NEW JERSEY



Lighthouse Guide

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NEW JERSEY'S LIGHTHOUSES

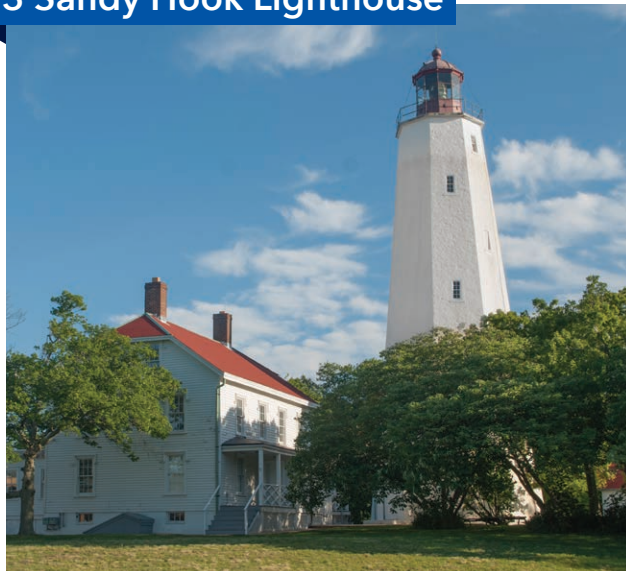
are majestic beacons, silent sentinels that guard time and mariners alike. It's a testament to the craftsmanship of their construction that so many lighthouses survive today, after years of fighting the awe-inspiring force of the sea. Each one that remains tells its own fascinating tale of bygone seafarers and the dangers they faced.

As you plan your next vacation, remember to discover New Jersey's lighthouses. Those open to the public are located in some of the most beautiful and adventurous settings you'll ever visit. Put them on your travel itinerary and you'll agree...New Jersey's lighthouses are still a Must-See!

Lighthouses are many things to many people. To some, they are the seaside sentinels of a bygone era, idyllic landmarks set on picturesque beaches and bluffs. To others, they are a guiding light offering hope and comfort miles out on an often treacherous sea. But no matter what view you hold, everyone agrees on one thing: Lighthouses are simply magical!



#3 Sandy Hook Lighthouse



The Sandy Hook Lighthouse is the oldest operating lighthouse in the U.S. and on the National Register of Historic Places. It is located near the Highlands at the northern end of the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway National Recreation Area. Beautifully well-preserved, this unique octagonal tower dates back to the 18th century and has been in service since 1764. Except for being darkened during the Civil War, Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II, the beacon continuously operates.

The lighthouse is located on the post grounds of Fort Hancock and is just one of many interesting tourist attractions at Sandy Hook. Visitors enjoy climbing 95 steps and a nine-rung ladder to the lens room at the top. The peninsula boasts old concrete gun batteries, the largest American Holly forest on the east coast, excellent surf fishing, hiking trails, a paved bicycle path, sandy beaches, bayside salt marshes and over 300 species of birds. The U.S. Coast Guard owns, operates, and maintains the light.

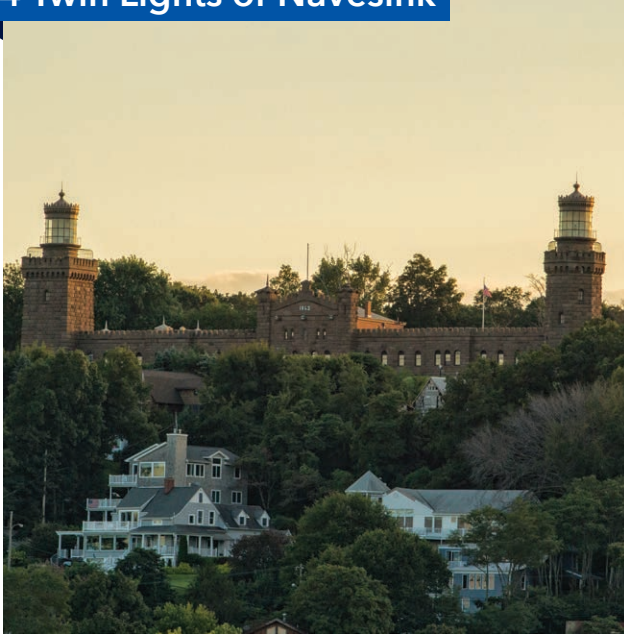
LOCATION 84 Mercer Rd., Highlands

CONTACT 732-872-5970; www.nps.gov/gate/

HOURS Open daily 9 am – 5 pm; Guided tours run every half-hour from 1 – 4:30 pm.

ADMISSION Free (must be 48 inches tall to climb lighthouse).

#4 Twin Lights of Navesink



Monmouth County Public Information & Tourism/Mike Colarusso

Towering 250 feet above Sandy Hook Bay, the Twin Lights remain one of the highest points along the coast, while also marking the location of the country's first Fresnel lens. Not to mention, Guglielmo Marconi demonstrated the first practical use of the wireless telegraph from Navesink in 1899; the first lamps to be fueled by kerosene were used here in 1883; and it was one of the first electrically lit sea-coast lighthouses in the country in 1898.

The present-day brownstone double lighthouses were built in 1862 on the original site of the 1828 Navesink Lighthouses. The attractive building houses a museum of lighthouse and lifesaving station artifacts even though it was decommissioned in 1949. See the spectacular views from atop the medieval-style towers after climbing the 64 steps to the observation deck in the north tower and south tower. Also on the National Register of Historic Places.

LOCATION Lighthouse Rd. off Rt. 36, Highlands

CONTACT 732-872-1814; www.twinlightslighthouse.com

HOURS Open Wednesday – Sunday 10 am – Noon and 1 – 4 pm; Grounds close at 4:30 pm.

ADMISSION Free (donations requested).



Monmouth County Public Information & Tourism/Mike Colarusso

#5 Sea Girt Lighthouse

Nestled within an L-shaped Victorian building, the Sea Girt Lighthouse first shone in 1896, projecting its flashing beacon for 15 miles. Like most lighthouses of that time, its fourth-order Fresnel lens revolved on ball bearings driven by complex clockworks.

Originally built to bridge the 45-mile gap between Barnegat Light and the Twin Lights of Navesink, the square red brick tower attached to a keeper's dwelling was decommissioned in 1945. The interior of the lighthouse has been meticulously restored by a local citizens' committee and furnished in keeping with its historical period. Climb 42 steps to the top and marvel at the breathtaking view.

FACT

MAY 29, 1910
FIRST
WOMAN KEEPER
in the U.S. Lighthouse
Service, Harriet Yates
at Sea Girt.

LOCATION 9 Ocean Ave. & Beacon Blvd., Sea Girt

CONTACT 732-974-0514; www.seagirtlighthouse.org

HOURS Mid-April to Mid-November, Sundays 2 – 4 pm, except holiday weekends.

ADMISSION Free (donations requested).

#6 Barnegat Lighthouse



The 165-foot red and white tower at Barnegat Lighthouse State Park was originally used as a lookout during World War I. Restored to its original splendor in 1988, the lighthouse remains a symbol of the state's proud maritime heritage. The original 40-foot lighthouse was built in 1835 to mark a hazardous shoal as well as the fortieth parallel, a point crucial to transatlantic navigation.

Its beehive-shaped Fresnel lens can be viewed at the nearby Barnegat Light Museum. Six feet in diameter, the 12-foot-high lens is formed from 1,024 separate prisms mounted in bronze fittings. Open year-round, the lighthouse is also on the National Register of Historic Places.

With a pair of comfortable shoes and a bit of nerve, a trip up the 217-step winding staircase of "Old Barney" is well worth it. The view from the top is spectacular! With breathtaking views of Island Beach State Park to the north, 18 miles of Long Beach Island to the south, and a bird's-eye view of Barnegat Inlet from every angle, this attraction is a must-see!

LOCATION 208 Broadway, Barnegat Light

CONTACT 609-494-2016; www.njparksandforests.org

HOURS Open daily: Memorial Day through Labor Day, 10 am – 4:30 pm; remainder of the year 10 am – 3:30 pm.

ADMISSION Call or visit website for details.



#7 Tucker's Island Light

Be sure to visit Tucker's Island Light, a re-creation of the original Atlantic Ocean lighthouse was built in 1848 after the original fell into the sea in 1927 after years of pounding surf and beach erosion. At the Tuckerton Seaport, the lighthouse exhibit tells the history of the U.S. Lifesaving Service, Barnegat Bay pirates and the bay itself. Climb the 42 steps of the tower for beautiful views of the Seaport and Lake Pohatcong.

FACT

BUILT IN 2000,
the current reproduction of Tucker's
Island Lighthouse is
1/3 LARGER,
than original.

Tuckerton Seaport & Baymen's Museum is located on a 40-acre maritime village and features 17 historic and recreated buildings. Connected by boardwalk, the area also features a maritime forest and wetlands nature trail, the Jersey Shore Folklife Center (JSFC), and the New Jersey Surf Museum.

LOCATION 120 W. Main St., Tuckerton

CONTACT 609-296-8868; www.tuckertonseaport.org

HOURS Open daily 10 am – 5 pm.

ADMISSION Call or visit website for details.

#8 Absecon Lighthouse



Like saltwater taffy and the world-famous Atlantic City Boardwalk, the Absecon Lighthouse is NJ's tallest and the country's third tallest masonry lighthouse. The construction was overseen by General George Meade, who later commanded the Union Army at the Battle of Gettysburg. This statuesque 171-foot tower, complete with a distinctive yellow and black color scheme, was the prototype for Barnegat and Cape May Lighthouses.

After it was built in 1857 to mark the dangerous shoals of Absecon and Brigantine, the lighthouse immediately attracted thousands of visitors to climb its 228 steps. The majestic tower retains its original first-order Fresnel lens, making it the only New Jersey light to do so and it's on the National Register of Historic Places.

LOCATION 31 S. Rhode Island & Pacific Aves., Atlantic City

CONTACT 609-441-9272; www.abseconlighthouse.org

HOURS July and August, open daily 10 am – 5 pm and Thursdays until 8 pm; September – June, open Thursday – Monday, 11 am – 4 pm.

ADMISSION Call or visit website for details.



#9 Hereford Inlet Lighthouse

One might mistake the Hereford Inlet Lighthouse for a prime vacation home, if it wasn't for the light standing tall above its Victorian architecture. Built in 1874, the lighthouse was one of the more well-appointed along the Jersey Shore, featuring five fireplaces and beautiful living quarters for the keeper and his family.

The grounds feature a lovely garden of flowers and herbs that continuously lure passersby in. Hereford Inlet Lighthouse now offers a small museum and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Climb the 47 steps to the top to see the gorgeous views of the Atlantic Ocean.

FACT

The light is visible at a distance:

13
NAUTICAL MILES.

LOCATION 111 N. Central Ave., North Wildwood

CONTACT 609-522-4520; www.herefordlighthouse.org

HOURS Mid-May – Mid-October, open daily 9 am – 5 pm. Call for off-season hours.

ADMISSION Call or visit website for details.

#10 Cape May Lighthouse



A visit to historic Victorian Cape May becomes even more memorable when you stop at the Cape May Lighthouse at Cape May Point State Park. Over 2.1 million visitors have climbed the 199 steps to the top of the tower since the lighthouse opened publicly in 1988. Towering 157.5 feet above the southernmost tip of New Jersey, its distinctive beam flashes once every 15 seconds and is visible from 24 miles out at sea.

Built in 1859 under the supervision of First Lieutenant George Meade, the original lens were so large that the keeper actually stood inside it to refuel. Nearby at the Museum of Cape May County, the Fresnel lens specified by Meade is on display. Also on the National Register of Historic Places.

While at the state park, visitors can observe migrating birds and butterflies in the natural area, complete with hiking trails, surf fishing and picnic areas.

LOCATION 215 Lighthouse Ave., Cape May Point

CONTACT 609-884-5404; www.capemaymac.org

HOURS Mid-February – Mid-March, open Saturdays Noon – 3 pm; Mid-March – Mid-April, daily 11 am – 3 pm; Mid-April – Mid-June, daily 10 am – 4 pm; Mid-June – August, daily 9 am – 5 pm; September, daily 10 am – 5 pm; October, November and December, weekends Noon – 3 pm.

ADMISSION Call or visit website for details.



#12 East Point Lighthouse

Guiding commercial fishermen and pleasure boaters since 1849, the East Point Lighthouse stands tall in a picturesque setting along the shore of Delaware Bay. Marking the mouth of the Maurice River and miles from any developed lands, the East Point is the state's second oldest lighthouse.

The lighthouse's distinctive "Cape Cod" features were the inspiration for many of the early lighthouses built on the Pacific Coast. The two-story red brick structure is white in color and topped by a bright red roof and lantern you can't miss. Climb the 17 steps up the winding staircase to admire the beautiful Delaware Bay.

FACT

Originally named the MAURICE RIVER LIGHTHOUSE, present name was initiated in

1913.

LOCATION 10 Lighthouse & E. Point Rds., Heislerville

CONTACT 856-546-7810; www.eastpointlight.info

HOURS April – October, open every third Sunday 1 – 4 pm.

ADMISSION Call or visit website for details.

#17 Finns Point Rear Range Light



Originally constructed in Buffalo, New York, and transported by train and mule-wagon, this unusual wrought-iron open-frame lighthouse was built in 1876 for the mere cost of \$1,200. Part of Supawna Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, the tower stands 115 feet tall and has 130 steps (119 steps in the spiral staircase and 11 steps up a ladder to the lantern room). It featured a 24-inch range lens with a double-wick burner and kerosene vapor lamp emitting 150,000 candlepower.

Nearby you'll find Fort Mott State Park, a 124-acre waterfront park with remaining buildings and gun emplacements from the Spanish-American War, along with trails and fishing. The lighthouse is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

LOCATION 197 Lighthouse Rd., Pennsville

CONTACT 856-935-1487; www.friendsofsupawnarefuge.org

HOURS April – October, open every third Sunday
1 – 4 pm, weather permitting.

ADMISSION Free.

FACT

IN 1981,
a local business-
woman successfully
lobbied Congress to
appropriate funds to
refurbish the
tower.

#18 Tinicum Rear Range Lighthouse



First lit on New Year's Eve in 1880, this light paired with the Tinicum Front Range Light to serve as a key guide for ships heading north along the Delaware River. Its fixed red light and 1,000-watt lamps exhibit 500,000 candlepower from atop an 85-foot-high tower that features 112 steps.

Captain John Birch was the last lighthouse keeper to reside at Tinicum Light in 1933, but remained as a custodian of the light until 1945. Today, the lighthouse is maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard and on the National Register of Historic Places.

FACT

The light was
changed from OIL
to ELECTRIC in
1917.

LOCATION 70 2nd St. & Mantua Ave., Paulsboro

CONTACT 854-423-1505 or 856-423-2545;
www.tinicumrearrangelighthouse.org

HOURS April – October, open every third Sunday
Noon – 4 pm.

ADMISSION Free (donations requested).

Closed Lighthouses

It is a testament to the craftsmanship of their construction that so many lighthouses survive today, after years of fighting the awe-inspiring forces of the sea. Each one that remains tells its own fascinating tale of bygone seafarers and the dangers they faced.

These historic lighthouses can be seen around the coast, but are currently not available for tours and public access. However, that doesn't take away their beauty and importance.

#1 CONOVER BEACON

LEONARDO: The original 1856 structure situated on the beach was paired with the Chapel Hill Beacon to guide ships through the Chapel Hill Channel. It was named after Rulif Conover, original owner of the land. Its wooden tower toppled and in 1941 it was replaced with the present open-frame metal structure, originally called Bayside Beacon that was taken out of service during the 1930's in Keansburg.



Robert English

#2 CHAPEL HILL LIGHTHOUSE

CHAPEL HILL: The Chapel Hill Lighthouse was erected in 1856 and named after a nearby church. Paired with the Conover Beacon located about 1.5 miles north on Leonardo Beach, together they marked the Chapel Hill Channel and entry into Sandy Hook Bay.

The lighthouse stood 224-feet above sea level and featured two chimneys on both ends that flanked its square central tower. It was the last wooden rear range light of its kind in New Jersey. It was decommissioned and replaced in 1957 with an automated tower. In 1959, the lighthouse was sold and is a private residence.

#11 BRANDYWINE SHOAL LIGHTHOUSE

DELAWARE BAY: Built on a caisson of reinforced concrete, the original lighthouse was constructed in 1914. The light was automated in 1974 and now runs on solar power. The original lighthouse built in 1850 was the first in the U.S. constructed on screw piles – auger-tipped metal pilings that were screwed into the sandy bottom of Delaware Bay to form a foundation. Maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard and on the National Register of Historic Places.



Robert English

#13 FOURTEEN FOOT BANK LIGHTHOUSE

DELAWARE BAY: 13 miles out at sea, on the western side of the shipping channel, the keeper's quarters of Fourteen Foot Bank Lighthouse reflect the Victorian era with its quaint three-story structure and "hip-roof" privy set atop a caisson base. The light was outfitted with a fourth-order Fresnel lens and was first lit on December 1, 1886. It was named after the 14 feet of water that covers the shoal bank. Unmanned since 1972, the light remains a key directional aid for ships passing through Delaware Bay. Maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard.

#14 MIAH MAULL SHOAL LIGHTHOUSE

DELAWARE BAY: The legend has it that a man named Nehemiah Maull drowned in a shipwreck near the site of the present lighthouse in the late 1900s. In 1909, a temporary light shone from the cast iron foundation shell. In 1913, the permanent light was exhibited and could be seen for 15 miles from its fourth-order lens. Miah Maull has shown the way for thousands of seafarers and today remains an active aid to navigation. Maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard and on the National Register of Historic Places.



Robert English

#15 ELBOW OF CROSS LEDGE LIGHTHOUSE

DELAWARE BAY: A temporary light was placed in 1907 at the Elbow of Cross Ledge until the permanent light could be completed in 1910. This lighthouse experienced its share of such run-ins with ship collisions. Until 1951, when the lighthouse was abandoned for good during a hurricane, its four-man crew routinely slept in lifejackets because of frequent jolts from passing ships.



Robert English

The final blow was struck in 1953, when a freighter loaded with ore finished off the original red brick dwelling, leaving only the base of the structure and the bottom 10 feet of the light. In 1954, an automated light mounted on top of a steel skeleton was built to replace the damaged structure. Maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard.

#16 SHIP JOHN SHOAL LIGHTHOUSE

DELAWARE BAY: This lighthouse is named after the vessel, *Ship John*, which crashed on this shoal and sank off the mouth of the Cohansey River in 1787. Vessels from nearby rushed into the waters and saved all 60 German passengers and the captain. After the ship sunk, a wooden lighthouse was placed there to mark the shoal, but in 1876 it was destroyed by ice. In 1877, finally a lighthouse was constructed on a caisson foundation. The Second Empire Victorian-style cottage that sits atop this lighthouse features a quaint copper roof and paned windows. Maintained by the U.S. Coast Guard and on the National Register of Historic Places.



Robert English

New Jersey Lighthouse "Firsts"

- **1823:** The Sandy Hook Lightship becomes the first outside lightship in the U.S.
- **1841:** Twin Lights of Navesink becomes the first lighthouse in the New World to be equipped with a Fresnel lens.
- **1850:** The Brandywine Shoal Lighthouse becomes the first completed lighthouse in the country built on a screwpile foundation.
- **1868:** Sandy Hook East Beacon becomes the first lighthouse in the country to be equipped with a steamdriven fog siren.
- **1883:** Twin Lights of Navesink becomes the initial first-order lighthouse to use mineral oil (kerosene) for fuel.
- **1889:** The Sandy Hook Lighthouse becomes the first lighthouse in the U.S. to use the incandescent lamp.
- **1899:** The first wireless (radio) messages to be sent and received in the U.S. were exchanged between operators aboard the S.S. Ponce and Twin Lights of Navesink.
- **1903:** Compressed acetylene dissolved in acetone was first used as fuel at the Sandy Hook South Beacon and Jones Rock Beacon in Connecticut.
- **1921:** The Sea Girt Lighthouse and Ambrose Lightship became the first stations to use a radio fog beacon. A device was also installed aboard the Fire Island Lightship of Navesink.
- **1934:** The Cape May Lighthouse becomes the first lighthouse in the country to be illuminated by a sodium vapor lamp.

FACT

Every October, is the **LIGHTHOUSE CHALLENGE** to visit all the participating locations in one weekend.

LEARN MORE

Visit the New Jersey Lighthouse Society's website to find out more, www.njlhs.org



CHRIS CHRISTIE
GOVERNOR

KIM GUADAGNO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
SECRETARY OF STATE

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