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### **Wilmington, North Carolina**

Let me begin by saying that the state of North Carolina is pretty special. You have scintillating beaches to the east and glorious mountains to the west with lakes, rivers, farmland, and metropolitan areas in between. There is something here for everyone!

Outdoor enthusiasts of this great state ward off boredom with boating, fishing, hunting, golfing, beach-going, hiking, camping, rock climbing, horseback riding, and white water kayaking, just to name a few activities. Wilmington, being a coastal community, attracts those who are drawn to the ocean and all it has to offer.

### **Who Lives in Wilmington?**

Wilmington appeals to people of all ages and backgrounds, but like other areas that offer a mild climate and endless tee times, it has become a hot spot for retirees. If you are a retiree, you will love Wilmington. If your hair isn't yet gray, you may get a little frustrated with the cataract-laden drivers who can't seem to keep the massive Caddy between the lines. And those outfits! You can see the hot pink and lime green plaid pants coming a mile away!

### **I Hate the Beach...What Else is there To Do?**

In some ways the population growth of Wilmington has improved the area by enticing more retailers, restaurants, and service providers to hang their shingle. For those who consider shopping a cardio workout, we have everything from major department stores to unique specialty shops. For others who strive for self-preservation, Wilmington offers health clubs, yoga and Pilates studios, private chef services, and spas. Restaurants, bars, and night clubs abound with the downtown area – nestled on the Cape Fear River – offering street fairs and a farmer's market.

### **Is Wilmington Still Southern?**

In the midst of this invasion of people from other areas of the country, Wilmington strives to maintain its Southern charm. Specifically, Wilmington is the host of the annual North Carolina Azalea Festival (<http://www.ncazaleafestival.org/>): a celebration of the area's exceptional artwork, gardens, rich history, and culture during five days of entertainment that includes a parade, street fair, circus, concerts, pageantry, and all that is Southern. Other celebrations include holiday flotillas (<http://www.ncholidayflotilla.org/> and <http://www.islandoflights.org/>), fish/shrimp festivals, antique car shows, and dog jogs.

Regional phrases such as "ya'll," "I'll get up with you later," and "might could" can still be heard amidst the more nasal "you guys," "how you doin'?", and "What parta Jersey you from?"

### **What's the Catch?**

Admittedly, there are a few catches. Foremost being the cost of living. North Carolina boasts the second highest gas tax in the country (led by California) while Wilmington (and Asheville, NC) home prices are 20% above the cost of housing in the remainder of the state. The housing costs reflect the basic economic principle of supply and demand. The demand is tremendous while the supply is limited (but improving with new subdivisions breaking ground daily).

The influx of retirees has driven the demand, thus inflating the home prices and increasing the property taxes. And, if you wish to live on the water or anywhere near it you need to be Daddy Warbucks with pockets as cavernous as the deep, blue sea.

Another catch is that since Wilmington thrives on tourist dollars and retiree's golf fees, there are not many career options for those of us still working. If you are a massage therapist or boat dealer, this is the place for you. However, if you are an aerospace engineer or a manufacturer...you may want to take I-40 West to Raleigh.

Single friends tell me that it "sucks" to be solo in Wilmington. They lament that there aren't enough unattached people here, and that it is difficult to find a mate. So, for those single folks looking for the perfect Mr. or Mrs. Right you may find yourself settling for a rum drink and a big plate of Carolina fried shrimp instead.

Overall, Wilmington is a laid-back place in which to live with gorgeous scenery, a plethora of outdoor activities, and superb weather!

***Joanna Cain, BSN, RN is a nurse and professional writer living in Wilmington, North Carolina with her husband and beloved Chocolate Labrador Retriever, Walter. You may visit Joanna's Website at <http://www.auctorialpursuits.com/> or send her an e-mail at [jcain@auctorialpursuits.com](mailto:jcain@auctorialpursuits.com).***