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A mocktail guide for the sober curious - INNER BANKS

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Fact: You can find an alcoholic beverage at pretty much any restaurant or bar on the beach, but what if you aren't in the mood for alcohol? Maybe you simply want to enjoy time out at your favorite bars and restaurants with friends without the risk of drunken regrets or tomorrow's fuzzy head. Perhaps you're refraining for health reasons or because you're the designated driver, pregnant, part of the "sober curious" movement or just aren't into drinking. This beverage-happy beach town has plenty of refreshing and creative imbibements for you. Below are a few places where flavorful sipping comes into the limelight and booze takes a backseat, so you can kick back with a cold bevy, no ID required.

Avenue Waterfront Grille

Avenue Waterfront Grille, located at the waterfront shops in Manteo, is a go-to spot for healthy vegan and vegetarian options. Owner Maria Williamson, who owns the restaurant with her husband Chef Thomas Williamson, is also a well known yoga teacher on the Outer Banks. She has an affinity for gluten-free and healthy cooking. Their health-conscious, fresh options don't stop at the food menu. They offer a couple of great mocktail options, including a lavender

lemonade made with Meyer lemons, sugar and a house-made lavender tea, pomegranate soda and ginger soda, all finished off with a splash of lime. They also have sparkling adaptogenic water with herbs that include muscle relaxing and stress relieving properties!

Trio Restaurant & Market

Don't eschew going to an intimate, cosmopolitan wine bar if you're not planning to partake in their extensive wine and beer list: Trio has taken you into consideration as well, with an amazing variety of alcohol-free cocktails, wines and beers that are just as tasty as the real stuff. Try their grapefruit and rosemary spritzer, made with nonalcoholic chardonnay, fresh-squeezed grapefruit and rosemary simple syrup, or their lemon lavender and blueberry fizz, which has fresh lemon juice, house-made blueberry-lavender simple syrup and tonic water. Even the Ritual gin and Fever-Tree light tonic is completely alcohol free; it's just botanicals, cucumber, juniper and a touch of spice. If you aren't in the mood for a cocktail they have an amazing Giesen sauvignon blanc and a variety of beers, including a delicious N/A Hazy IPA from Athletic.

Basnight's Lone Cedar Café

Basnight's is a local staple and another restaurant that makes it a priority to offer locally sourced, healthy options, from fresh-caught local fish to veggies grown on local farms, and they don't stop with their food options either. In fact, they offer a nightly mocktail special for their patrons, depending on season and availability. Right now they are offering a mocktail with lemon sparkling, Barritt's ginger beer, and blueberry syrup over North Carolina-grown watermelon ice-cubes. When strawberries were in season, they made the strawberry mojito with North Carolina-grown strawberry ice cubes.

Miller's Waterfront Restaurant

Miller's Waterfront Sunset Bar and Grille, their open air bar located around the back of their traditional restaurant upstairs on the sound side, is a locals' favorite for enjoying a cocktail while watching the sunset over water. Fully open to the sound, their large windows offer a new twist on open air dining, allowing you to feel the coastal breezes while enjoying your mocktail with a view. They offer a few fun alcohol-free cocktails, including the Virgin Island paradise, made with orange juice, pineapple juice, a grenadine float that is layered ever so beautifully and garnished with orange slices and a cherry. They also do a great virgin mojito that manager Mike Midgett says is a favorite of soon-to-be mothers. He highly recommends their virgin agave margarita, which features muddled lemons, limes, oranges, agave syrup, lime juice and is topped off with soda water instead of tequila. Midgett says this is the most refreshing drink for a hot summer's day. They can also do a virgin version of any other drink on their menu, as well, just ask!

Tr3s Tequilas

Tr3s Tequila's is one of the Outer Banks' newest restaurants, opening their doors in June of 2021. Offering an array of Mexican food and a full bar, they're mindful of those who want to sip a fruity drink without the spirits - just check out their full virgin daiquiri menu. It offers an endless list of flavors from passionfruit to mango, guava to watermelon and plenty more. We hear the banana daiquiri is to die for. They are frozen, blended and great with chips and guac after a hot day at the beach. I recommend splurging on the jumbo size!

These aren't the only places either. Outer Banks Distilling in Manteo and The Blue Point in Duck will make mocktails upon request. Bad Bean's house-made margarita mix is amazing without alcohol, and Swells'a Brewing in Kill Devil Hills has some healthy-ish canned sodas that look like craft beers along with kombucha on tap. These places make it easy to have an evening out with the entire group, and your body will still thank you the next day.

Trio's Grapefruit Rosemary Spritzer combines tart and savory elements into a refreshing, alcohol-free beverage. Haley Winslow/Jennycroftonphoto The mocktail at Basnight's Lone Cedar Cafe comes garnished with fresh, locally sourced watermelon. Vicki Basnight/COURTESY

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