

# Seastreak to The Shore

by John Michael Vargo

**M**anhattan was melting on a mid July morning and I was escaping to the cool water and breezes of Sandy Hook National Park.

It was an easy, ten-minute walk from Grand Central Terminal to the Seastreak Pier at 34th St on the East River. There I caught the ferry at 8:45 AM, which got me the early bird special. The rate was thirty dollars round trip. Later trips from the same location cost forty six dollars round trip. Children under 5 ride free and fewer than 12 at reduced rates.

The Seastreak Ferry is roomy, fast and stable being a Catamaran. After leaving 34th St. we made a stop at Wall St. After that it was a direct flying trip out of the harbor, under the magnificent Verrazano Bridge. As we were passing the bridge

Below decks I found a clean well organized, air conditioned operation with comfortable seats and a fully stocked bar. Although I cannot imagine why anyone would be looking at TV when the New York City Skyline is whizzing by outside the windows. The ride alone was worth the thirty dollars!

Our destination was the Coast Guard Station pier on Sandy Hook. This station at one time was very busy but today seemed almost abandoned. In the parking lot was a school bus, which we were directed to.

Once we were all seated it took only five minutes to drive to the nearest beach. The entire Sandy Hook National Park is well maintained by the Park Service with portable toilets, drinking water and lifeguards as well as picnic areas. On this weekday morning it looked almost deserted! There are no food vendors, you must carry in your own food and drink.



The beach was clean and hundreds of yards wide. I trudged through the sand working up a sweat. Then, very quickly changed into my swimsuit. On certain parts of this National Park swimsuits are optional.

On this day the Atlantic Ocean was calm, a gentle, mellow surf. A refreshing dip was all it took to satisfy my day.

If you're planning on staying at Sandy Hook National Park overnight there are camp sites, or you can go to a distant hotel in Long Branch, New Jersey or Highland, NJ. I found a LaQuinta Inn at Long Branch, (109 per night) which was a \$40.00 cab ride from the beach.

To avoid expensive cab rides I would suggest you bring a bike to the park. That way you can travel to the various tourist sites such as the Proving Grounds or the Fort Hancock Museum or for that matter the Coast Guard Station.



It is a two-mile walk to the closest community, via the Navesink River Bridge to Highlands, NJ, the nearest community to the park. The larger town of Atlantic Highlands has daily commuter service to Wall Street. Walking the streets of Atlantic Highlands I found trendy shops, restaurants and a well-protected marina. The marina offers daily charter fishing trips.

Seastreak offers Martha Vineyard trips as well as Nantucket Trips from New York City. I cannot imagine

anyone wanting to take their car through all the traffic and congestion to these locations when factoring in the expense and aggravation of summer traffic. This is such a clean, air-conditioned short ferry ride.



#### Sandy Hook Beach Shuttle Service

Complimentary shuttle service provided between the Sandy Hook Ferry Landing and several beaches within Sandy Hook: North Beach, Gunnison Beach, Beach E, and Beach D. Our shuttle buses will be waiting for you upon arrival at Sandy Hook Beach and will bring you to the beach of your choice. We'll pick you up in the afternoon for your return to the ferry.

#### Weekday Shuttle Bus Departures

Beach D	Beach E	Gunnison	North Beach
2:35 PM*	2:30 PM*	2:20 PM*	2:10 PM*
3:40 PM	3:45 PM	3:50 PM	3:55 PM
4:35 PM**	4:30 PM**	4:20 PM**	4:10 PM**

These shuttle departures will take passengers to the ferry terminal in Highlands for the 2:50 PM departure. These shuttle departures will take passengers to the ferry terminal in Highlands for the 4:55 PM departure

#### Weekend Shuttle Bus Departures

Beach D	Beach E	Gunnison	North Beach
3:05 PM	3:10 PM	3:10 PM	3:15 PM
5:05 PM	5:10 PM	5:10 PM	5:15 PM
7:05 PM	7:10 PM	7:10 PM	7:15 PM

For further information on Seastreak and its wide assortment of trips go to [seastreak.com/contact-us/](http://seastreak.com/contact-us/)

Seastreak, LLC. 2 First Avenue. Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716. Phone: 1-800-BOATRIDE (1-800-262-8743)