

# Dining, shopping and nightlife in Montauk

August 5, 2014 10:37 AM

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Brooklyn indie bands -- and the occasional rock star -- play concerts at Surf Lodge on weekends in the summer. (Credit: Aaron Zebrook)

Guys with thick glasses and beards. Women in vintage clothing from various eras. Bicycles everywhere. Indie bands doing free summer shows. The scene screams Brooklyn, specifically hip and happening Williamsburg, but the actual locale is Montauk. But, please, don't refer to this as a hipster world, at least not while in town.

The term "hipster" refers to a type of city-based person whose style defies mainstream culture. However, hipsters don't like to be called hipsters. And some locals aren't sure it's applicable.

"Hip? What's hip about them?" asks Donna Matlock, 49, who moved to Montauk from Tennessee three years ago.

"The crowds are changing for sure," says Emily Martinez, a 19-year-old Montauk native, adding, "This was a quiet town when I was growing up. Now the energy is much busier, and the roads can't handle the extra traffic."

Despite the influx of city folk, Montauk remains a place devoid of fast-food drive-thrus, traffic lights and all-night convenience stores (save the one 7-Eleven). David Orion Traver, a 32-year-old DJ who has lived in Brooklyn since 2004, regularly comes to Montauk to relax with his fiancée and her family: "It has a small-town feel, and it's laid-back and family-oriented," but adds, "although that vibe seems to be changing the past few years."

Plenty of local dining, shopping and nightlife options are still in the hamlet, many of which are attitude-free and reasonably priced. "No one here cares if you're driving a luxury car, or if you eat only in expensive restaurants, or need to be seen," says Cassandra Thatcher, a 20-year-old Manhattan resident and student living and working in Montauk for the summer. "It's perfect for younger people just getting out of college."

As the old community contends with the urban influx, Montauk has become a place where nature and rural options meet city chic and trendy style. Here's a guide to "classic," old-school Montauk as well as spots with some "city" hip.

## **SHOPPING**

### **MELET MERCANTILE OUTPOST**

102 Industrial Rd., 631-668-9080

#### **CLASSIC OR CITY**

**THE DEAL** This well-kept secret, in an industrial area along the north edge of Fort Pond, holds a stockpile of vintage clothing, art pieces, jewelry and other items.

### **WHALEBONE CREATIVE**

65 Tuthill Rd., [whalebonecreative.com](http://whalebonecreative.com)

#### **CLASSIC OR CITY** Classic and City

**THE DEAL** Owned by Montauk-born graphic artist and surfer Jesse James Joeckel, the store sells casual surf-skater clothing under his Whalebone brand, which is also his "brand," as he custom-prints his items in-store with a silk-screen machine.

### **FUDGE N STUFF**

7 The Plaza, 631-668-4724

#### **CLASSIC OR CITY** Classic

**THE DEAL** This 30-year-old business is famous for its homemade fudge, chocolates, milkshakes and candies.

## DINING

### GOSMAN'S DOCK

500 W. Lake Dr., 631-668-5330

**CLASSIC OR CITY** Classic

**THE DEAL** Seafood is king at Gosman's, a Montauk mainstay since the '50s that has three restaurants, a clam bar and a fresh fish market, including the Topside Bar.

### NAVY BEACH

16 Navy Rd., 631-668-6868

**CLASSIC OR CITY** City (but with classic nods)

**THE DEAL** With a New American menu, the food is a modern experience. Dining outdoors on the sand of Fort Pond Bay, the decor isn't just Montauk-inspired, but Montauk itself.

### THE HARBOR RAW BAR & LOUNGE

440 W. Lake Dr., 631-668-8260

**CLASSIC OR CITY** City

**THE DEAL** Open only since May, this New American small-plates spot has been party-friendly with DJs and mostly Brooklyn-based bands on weekends and Sunday Champagne brunches.

### SHAGWONG RESTAURANT

774 Main St., 631-668-3050

**CLASSIC OR CITY** Classic

**THE DEAL** This casual Montauk landmark has been serving a menu that has plenty of turf among its surf dishes since the late '60s.

## **PARTY RESORT STYLE**

### **Surf Lodge**

183 Edgemere St., 631-483-5037

### **CLASSIC OR CITY** City

**THE DEAL** Casual meets chic at this upscale hotel with a restaurant serving eclectic food, a bar, a patio with wide water views and a fire pit, but the crown jewel is its weekend concert calendar featuring breakout Brooklyn indie bands and the occasional rock star.

## **GURNEY'S MONTAUK RESORT & SEAWATER SPA**

290 Old Montauk Hwy., 631-668-2345

### **CLASSIC OR CITY** Somewhere in between

**THE DEAL** Although it has been in business year-round since the 1920s, Gurney's offers many modern amenities, including a seawater pool, a spa, upscale dining and parties that take place either afternoons or evenings, some on its Atlantic Ocean beach.

### **ALSO TRY**

**RUSCHMEYER'S** (161 Second House Rd., 631-668-2877) has a bohemian feel with trendy appeal, including bicycles for rent and yoga. For a little more luxury, **MONTAUK BEACH HOUSE** (55 S. Elmwood Ave., 631-668-2112) hosts daytime parties on weekends based around DJs who are either celebs or have a high hip factor.

## **BARS AND CLUBS**

### **THE SLOPPY TUNA**

148 S. Emerson Ave., 631-647-8000

### **CLASSIC OR CITY** Neither. Its personality is "everybody party hard."

**THE DEAL** The Sloppy Tuna has a restaurant that serves a full menu and features DJs and live music, and, with no dress code, it's come as you are. Expect lines, massive crowds and wild times.

## ALSO TRY

Year-round local bars pride themselves on their unpretentious ways, so skip arriving in overly hipster style when patronizing such pubs as **LIAR'S SALOON** (401 W. Lake Dr., 631-668-9597), **THE DOCK** (482 W. Lake Dr., 631-668-9778) or **THE POINT** (697 Montauk Hwy., 631-668-1500).

## TAKE THE FAMILY

### THE BEACHES

**CLASSIC OR CITY** As classic as it gets

**THE DEAL** The hamlet of Montauk is surrounded by shoreline, but Kirk Park Beach is the only town beach that doesn't require a parking permit (nonresidents pay \$10). However, Hither Hills State Park also is an option (\$10 as well), with many amenities, including a playground, campgrounds, trails for hiking, biking, horseback riding and fishing. You can surf at Hither Hills, too, which is good to keep in mind, for while surfing is a major pastime in Montauk (the popular spot to catch waves is Ditch Plains Beach), parking for nonresidents is no easy feat.

### MONTAUK LIGHTHOUSE

**CLASSIC OR CITY** More than classic, it's iconic

**THE DEAL** Often used as a symbol of Montauk, the lighthouse was authorized by the Second U.S. Congress in 1792 under President George Washington and was completed in 1796. A major tourist stop, it features a museum and gift shop; for all visitors' details, check out [montauklighthouse.com](http://montauklighthouse.com)