



[Cheat Sheet of the Best Beaches for 2012](#)

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Sure, time may seem to stand still when you're relaxing on the pearl-white powder of an exotic beach, a cold drink in hand and the sound of the waves lulling you into a blissful afternoon nap. But time does indeed march on, which leaves only so many hours for the sand-and-surf exploration you crave. That's why we've put together a cheat sheet of the best beaches for 2012. So pack your swimsuit and sunscreen, and then head to one of these sand-strewn hot spots:

For the clam connoisseur: Copalis Beach, Washington

You won't find warm waters and palm trees at this Pacific Northwest beach two and a half hours west of Seattle, but you will find plenty of razor clams, remains from dozens of shipwrecks, and amazing opportunities for storm-watching. Although the population can swell more than 300 percent during fall's clam-digging season, there's still plenty of room for nature lovers who want a rustic bonfires-and-birding kind of getaway. A good bet is the recently renovated **Iron Springs Resort**, a local institution oozing old-fashioned charm with two dozen cabins on the cliffs of Copalis. With kitchens and a clam-cleaning station, the property makes it easy to cook up the fresh meal you've dug for dinner.

[Away.com's Copalis Beach Travel Guide](#)