

50th Anniversary in Cape May, NJ: A Gentle, Step-Free Coastal Celebration

Congratulations on 50 years together. This is a relaxed, no-stairs weekend built around comfy beds, ocean views, a scenic boat ride, and a memorable dinner, with everything kept close and easy.

o) Your Details at a Glance

Item	Detail
Dates	Friday, May 22 to Sunday, May 24, 2026 (2 nights)
Group	2 travelers, both over 70
Budget	Up to \$600 total
Must-haves	Step-free access, elevator, comfy beds, ocean view, no stairs, short distances
Special requests	Very gentle pace, short walks, a scenic ride, a good dinner; arriving by car; easy food

A quick, honest note on budget: \$600 total for two nights of lodging plus meals and an activity is tight for an oceanfront hotel in a peak-demand Memorial Day weekend. Below you will find a realistic picture and how to make it work. Memorial Day 2026 falls on Monday, May 25, so your Friday-to-Sunday stay sits squarely in the holiday weekend, when coastal rates run high.

1) At a Glance

What	Pick	Key facts
Lodging	ICONA Cape May, Premium King ADA	Beachfront, elevator, ADA room with roll-in shower, side ocean views. 1101 Beach Ave. Guide value (see 1b).
Scenic ride	Cape May Whale Watcher, Sunset Dolphin Cruise	Departs 6:30 PM, 2 hours, May–October. ADA boarding ramps, accessible restrooms. From \$30/person.
Main attraction	Cape May Lighthouse grounds + accessible Oil House Visitor Center	Adult tower ticket \$12; the Visitor Center/Museum Shop is fully accessible (no climb needed).
Dinner	The Lobster House (dockside seafood)	Open daily; lunch 11:30 AM–3:00 PM, dinner 4:30 PM–9:00 PM (Sun–Thu), 4:30 PM–10:00 PM (Fri–Sat); ADA-compliant main entrance.
Casual meal	The Mad Batter (Carroll Villa Hotel)	Open every day; Breakfast & Lunch 8:00 AM–2:45 PM, Lunch & Dinner from 3:00 PM; accessible bathroom; award-winning breakfast/brunch.

1b) Recommendation and Best Alternative

Recommended: ICONA Cape May. It is the best fit for your must-haves: it is a beachfront boutique hotel with a 24-hour front desk, an elevator, and a dedicated step-free room. The Premium King ADA room features a King bed, sitting chair, bistro dining table, a luxurious marble-style bathroom with a roll-in shower and ADA amenities, plus side views of the Atlantic from the split balcony. That gives you the comfy bed, the ocean view, and genuine no-stairs access in one room, right on Beach Avenue. Designed for couples and families, ICONA offers 56 impeccably decorated rooms with custom furnishings and a crisp white façade with nautical-blue shutters.

Price reality: ICONA's room rates sit behind a live booking widget, so treat the figure as a guide value, not a binding quote. For a Memorial Day weekend Friday and Saturday night, plan on roughly **\$350–\$550+ per night** as a guide value (as of June 2026), which means lodging alone may exceed your \$600 total for two nights. See section 3 for how to reconcile this honestly with your budget.

Best alternative: The Mad Batter's Carroll Villa Hotel or a comparable accessible inn in the historic district. The Mad Batter restaurant is housed in the Carroll Villa, and the building dates to 1882, so confirm an elevator and a step-free room directly before booking. A more budget-friendly fallback is a step-free, elevator-equipped chain hotel just outside the historic core (for example, properties along the Wildwood/Rio Grande corridor a short drive north), which typically run lower than beachfront ICONA rates. For any alternative, confirm: elevator, a ground-or-elevator-served room, bed comfort, and parking, before you book.

1c) Book Now

What	By when	Where / Link
ICONA Cape May, Premium King ADA	As soon as possible (holiday weekend sells out)	reseze.net/... , call (609) 551-0100 to confirm the ADA room and a high floor for views. You will see the binding price for your exact dates and occupancy at the provider's booking step, it changes daily.
Sunset Dolphin Cruise (Sat, May 23)	1–2 weeks ahead	capemaywhalewatcher.com/... , book online; phone (609) 884-5445
The Lobster House dinner	Walk-in (no reservations)	thelobsterhouse.com , arrive early for a window table
Cape May Lighthouse Visitor Center / tickets	Day-of	capemaymac.org/...

💡 **Booking tip:** When you call ICONA, ask specifically for the Premium King ADA room with the roll-in shower and request the highest available floor served by the elevator for the best ocean views. ADA rooms are limited, so a phone call beats the website here.

2) Day-by-Day Plan

Friday, May 22, 2026: Arrive and Settle In

- **Afternoon:** Drive in and check in at ICONA Cape May, 1101 Beach Ave. The 24-hour front desk and elevator make arrival easy, and you can park, settle, and rest. Amenities include an ICONA pantry, a 24-hour front desk, a seasonal shuttle through Cape May, an outdoor heated dipping pool, and Wi-Fi.
 - Map: [Open in maps](#)
- **Evening dinner:** The Mad Batter, 19 Jackson Street, a half-block from the ocean and a short, flat walk or quick drive from the hotel. It is a relaxed, well-loved Cape May classic. The Mad Batter is open every day, with Breakfast & Lunch served 8:00 AM–2:45 PM and Lunch & Dinner from 3:00 PM. Its listed restaurant features include an accessible bathroom, family-friendly service, gluten-free menu options, and outdoor dining.
 - Map: [Open in maps](#)

💡 Tip: Ask the ICONA front desk about the seasonal shuttle; in summer and on weekends it can run you to local restaurants, sparing you the parking shuffle.

Plan B (weather): If it is raining, skip the walk and dine in or near the hotel; the Mad Batter's skylit dining room is a cozy indoor option.

Saturday, May 23, 2026: Lighthouse Views and a Sunset Cruise

- **Morning:** A leisurely breakfast. The Mad Batter is famous for it. The award-winning restaurant offers breakfast, lunch, and dinner year-round, with breakfast vouchers and 30% off dinner entrees for hotel guests. Expect dishes like a Country Breakfast with two eggs, country meats and toast at \$12, a Mad Batter Benedict at \$15, or a Chesapeake Bay Benedict with jumbo lump crabmeat at \$18.
- **Late morning:** Drive to Cape May Point and the Cape May Lighthouse grounds, about 10–15 minutes from the hotel. You do not need to climb the 199-step tower to enjoy it. The lighthouse sits in Cape May Point State Park with staggering views of the Delaware Bay and Atlantic; accessibility details are published by Cape May MAC. For those who choose not to climb, the Oil House on the grounds contains a fully accessible Visitors' Orientation Center and Museum Shop carrying souvenirs, books, and maritime items. If one of you wants the climb, tower admission is \$12.00 for adults and \$8.00 for children 3–12.
 - Map: [Open in maps](#)
- **Afternoon:** Rest at the hotel; enjoy the balcony ocean view or the heated dipping pool.

- **Evening, the scenic ride:** Cape May Whale Watcher's Sunset Dolphin Cruise from Miss Chris Marina, 1218 Wilson Dr. This is your gentle scenic ride: a relaxed, narrated 2-hour loop around Cape May Point at golden hour. The Sunset Dolphin Cruise runs 2 hours, departs at 6:30 PM, in season May through October. It is a relaxing cruise around Cape May to search for bottlenose dolphins and round Cape May Point past the Lighthouse to view Delaware Bay at sunset, scheduled to catch the best evening light. Crucially for you, the vessels have ADA-compliant boarding ramps and accessible restrooms. Pizza and hot dogs are included, and there is a snack bar with drinks. Parking at Miss Chris Marina is free. Sunset cruise tickets start around **\$30/person**; the related Whale & Dolphin Watching cruise lists from \$40. Confirm the exact per-person fare and the May 23 departure at the booking step.

- Map: [Open in maps](#)

💡 Tip: Arrive 20–30 minutes before the 6:30 PM departure to board calmly via the ramp and choose seats near the accessible restroom and out of the wind.

Plan B (weather): Cruises can be affected by weather, and trips are subject to change. If your sailing is cancelled, swap in a relaxed indoor afternoon and shift dinner earlier; the operator's "Marine Mammal Guarantee" lets you rebook a future sailing if needed. Confirm cancellation/rebooking terms when you book.

Sunday, May 24, 2026: Easy Morning and Departure

- **Morning:** A slow breakfast, then a short, flat stroll if the weather is kind. The promenade along Beach Avenue is level and right outside ICONA.
- **Lunch before you go:** The Lobster House, 906 Schellengers Landing Road, an iconic dockside seafood spot overlooking Cape May Harbor and an easy stop on your way out of town. It overlooks the sparkling waters of Cape May Harbor with attentive service and prime seafood brought fresh from the net. The restaurant is open daily, with lunch served 11:30 AM–3:00 PM and dinner from 4:30 PM–9:00 PM Sunday through Thursday and 4:30 PM–10:00 PM Friday and Saturday. Accessibility is good: the listing notes accessible parking near the entrance and an ADA-compliant main entrance. Try the lobster bisque or a crab cake; expect classic seafood pricing (a bowl of lobster bisque has run around \$15).

- Map: [Open in maps](#)

- **Checkout and drive home.**

💡 Tip: The Lobster House does not take reservations and gets busy on holiday weekends, so aim for an early lunch (around 11:30 AM) to walk straight to a harbor-view table well before the 3:00 PM lunch close.

Plan B (weather): If it is pouring, the Lobster House's five indoor dining rooms all offer harbor views, so weather is no obstacle.

3) Practical Notes, Checklist, and Cost Overview

Accessibility and comfort notes

- ICONA's Premium King ADA room and the boat's ADA ramps and restrooms cover your "no stairs" requirement end to end. Confirm the ADA room by phone when booking.
- A note on the ferry: while the Cape May–Lewes Ferry is a famously scenic crossing, as of the current official notice the elevator at the Cape May terminal is under repair, with foot passengers needing an elevator asked to check in at least 30 minutes early so staff can route them to an alternate elevator. The elevator in the Cape May terminal is currently under repair; foot passengers requiring an elevator should check in at least 30 minutes in advance at the ticket counter to be transported to the alternate elevator. For a fully relaxed, step-free scenic ride, the Sunset Dolphin Cruise is the better bet this weekend; keep the ferry as a future-visit idea.

Checklist

- ☐ Book ICONA Premium King ADA by phone, confirm elevator access and roll-in shower
- ☐ Reserve the Sunset Dolphin Cruise online for Sat, May 23 (6:30 PM)
- ☐ Bring a valid photo ID, light layers, and a windbreaker for the evening cruise
- ☐ Note the Lobster House does not take reservations; plan an early lunch
- ☐ Confirm parking at the hotel and free parking at Miss Chris Marina
- ☐ Pack any mobility aids; all chosen venues are step-free or have accessible entrances

Estimated Cost Overview (two people)

Item	Estimate (USD)	Notes
Lodging, 2 nights at ICONA	\$700–\$1,100 (guide value, check the exact date price with the provider)	Beachfront ADA room, peak Memorial Day weekend. Behind a live booking widget.
Sunset Dolphin Cruise (2 × ~\$30–\$40)	\$60–\$80	From-prices per official site; confirm at booking
Dinner, The Mad Batter (2)	\$50–\$80 plus tax and 15–20% tip	Entrées and breakfast items per posted menu
Lunch, The Lobster House (2)	\$50–\$80 plus tax and 15–20% tip	Classic seafood pricing
Lighthouse (optional climb, 1–2 adults)	\$0–\$24	Visitor Center is free; tower is \$12/adult
Fuel/parking	\$20–\$60	Hotel parking varies; marina parking free
Approximate total	\$880–\$1,420+	Lodging is the swing factor

Honest budget verdict: A \$600 all-in total for this exact peak holiday weekend at a beachfront, fully accessible hotel is not realistic; lodging alone is likely to use most or all of it. Three honest ways to stay closer to budget:

1. **Shift dates** off the Memorial Day weekend (a non-holiday May or early-June weekend) to find materially lower ICONA rates.
2. **Trade location for price:** choose a step-free, elevator-equipped hotel slightly off the beachfront (the activities and meals here stay the same, and the cruise still delivers your ocean views).
3. **Keep ICONA but trim extras:** do one restaurant meal instead of two out, skip the optional lighthouse climb, and the activity budget stays small. Either way, the cruise, the lighthouse grounds, and one great dinner remain very affordable; it is the room rate that drives the total.

4) Sources

Accommodation

- ICONA Cape May (official): [icona.com/...](https://icona.com/)
- ICONA booking: [reseze.net/...](https://reseze.net/)

Scenic ride / cruise

- Cape May Whale Watcher, Sunset Dolphin Cruise (official): [capemaywhalewatcher.com/...](https://capemaywhalewatcher.com/)
- Cape May Whale Watcher, Whale & Dolphin Watching (official): [capemaywhalewatcher.com/...](https://capemaywhalewatcher.com/)

Attraction

- Cape May Lighthouse, Cape May MAC (official): [capemaymac.org/...](https://capemaymac.org/)
- Cape May MAC ticketing (official, prices): [cmmac.ticketapp.org/...](https://cmmac.ticketapp.org/)

Dining

- The Lobster House (official): thelobsterhouse.com and hours: [thelobsterhouse.com/...](https://thelobsterhouse.com/)
- The Mad Batter (official): madbatter.com and hours: [madbatter.com/...](https://madbatter.com/)

Ferry (alternative / future reference)

- Cape May–Lewes Ferry, foot passenger info (official): [capemaylewesferry.com/...](https://capemaylewesferry.com/)
- Cape May–Lewes Ferry, schedules & fares (official): [cmlf.com/...](https://cmlf.com/)

All facts checked as of June 2026. Prices, hours, and sailing schedules can change, so reconfirm booking-critical details (room rate, exact cruise fare and departure, restaurant hours) with each provider before you travel. Here is to 50 wonderful years, and a relaxing weekend by the sea.

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