



Hampton

CONVENTION & VISITOR BUREAU

Media Release

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The Grand Pirates' Bash and 20th Anniversary Hampton Blackbeard Pirate Festival Returns to Downtown Hampton, Virginia May 31st, June 1-2

--The Event featured on Travel Channel's Expedition Unknown and Named Number Three of the Top Five Pirate Festivals in North America by USA Today Travel celebrates the history of the most daunting colonial pirate in three-day event; Pirates Ashore! --

Hampton, VA- Join the fun of Pirate History and Lore in the coastal seaport city of Hampton, Virginia at The Grand Pirates' Bash and 20th Anniversary Hampton Blackbeard Pirate Festival.

Featured on the October 21, 2015 episode of the **Travel Channel's Expedition Unknown** entitled *Blackbeard's Hidden Gold* (<http://www.travelchannel.com/shows/expedition-unknown/episodes/blackbeards-hidden-gold>) and named number three of the **Top Five Pirate Festivals in North America** by *USA Today Travel* (www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2015/02/24/pirate-festivals/23880041/?csp=travel), the festival celebrates its 20th year of showing off the

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history of the notorious Pirate Captain Blackbeard, Scourge of the Atlantic in 1718 and the trial of his crew by Virginia's Lieutenant Governor Spotswood.

During the latter part of the 1600's and early 1700's, pirates roamed the coastal waters of Virginia and North Carolina in search of ships laden with tobacco and other goods. The marauders terrorized waterways and unsuspecting cargo ships, capturing goods, sailors and ships. Captain Edward Teach, better known as Blackbeard the Pirate, was the most daunting of these menacing outlaws.

Blackbeard was finally captured and beheaded in a violent sea battle in Ocracoke, NC with Royal Navy Lieutenant Robert Maynard in 1718. His severed head was impaled upon a pole near the mouth of Hampton Creek, now known as Blackbeard's Point, to serve as an unyielding reminder that piracy would not be tolerated in Colonial Virginia.

Three-hundred and one years later, beginning June 1, roughly 50,000 seafaring attendees, as well as Blackbeard and his crew, will once again invade downtown Hampton during the 20th Anniversary Hampton Blackbeard Pirate Festival! Meet Blackbeard himself (personified by first-person interpreter Ben Cherry) and more than 300 other authentically-costumed pirate re-enactors as they run rampant on the streets of America's oldest continuous English-speaking settlement.

Start hobnobbing with the Pirates on Friday night, May 31 at **The Grand Pirate's Bash** at The Historic Post Office, 132 W. Queen Street from 7:30 p.m. until 10:30 p.m. in downtown Hampton.

The celebration, a re-creation of Blackbeard's Pirate Parley on Ocracoke, Island, North Carolina in 1718, features a bounty of fabulous Island food presented by Vancosta's catering, and adult beverages. Dance and sing with the Pirates to live music: back by popular demand, we have "Rusty Cutlass" and "The Brigands". Tickets are \$35 in advance and \$40 at the door. Advance tickets can be purchased online at <https://hampton.gov/register/parks>. Check out Blackbeard Festival and Blackbeard's Crew, Inc., on Facebook and the Hampton City website.

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On Saturday, June 1 & Sunday, June 2 continue your Pirate Experience free of charge on the Downtown Hampton Waterfront. Explore **Blackbeard's Pirate Encampment** in Mill Point Park with world class living history interpreters teaching the skills of the sailor of the 1700's. Guests may even have the opportunity to learn how to use a cutlass, load a cannon, or even sing a sea chantey at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern Stage.

World Class Pirate Entertainment this year includes:

The Rusty Cutlass
The Brigands
Chaste Treasure
Clan MacCool Band
Field Musick Virginia Fife and Drum Corps
Fins and Seashells
Pirates of Fortunes Folly
The Natterjacks
The Press Gang
Captain Jack Sparrow and Elizabeth Swann
Circus Siren Entertainment Mermaids
Sword Circle-LLC
Common Stock Entertainments

Gather your Pirate Swag and Fit yourself out at the 17th & 18th century Historical Merchants in the encampment selling Piratical Goods such as clothing, hats, shoes, jewelry, weapon reproductions and leather accessories. Even learn a thing or two from Colonial Craft Demonstrations.

At mid- day join in the **Pirates Procession** through town to the waterfront to witness mayhem on the Hampton River.

Watch through smoke and gunpowder as the Pirate Blackbeard's ship the *Adventure*, and Royal Navy Lt. Maynard's sloops the *Roger* and the *Jane* re-enact **Blackbeard's Last Battle**, a fight to the death between Lt. Maynard and Blackbeard himself.

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The *Adventure* was Blackbeard's true flag ship so it's only fitting that the *Adventure* will be portrayed by Hampton's very own Pirate ship the *Adventure* ! The sailing vessel *Adventure* is owned and operated by Blackbeard's Crew, Inc. of Hampton and has become a semi-permanent fixture on the Hampton River with ongoing retrofitting and customization.

The *MEKA II* will stand in for the *Roger*. The *Meka II* is a 2/3 - scale replica of an 17th Century two-masted Pirate Brigantine and is armed with eight cannons. Her homeport is Beaufort, North Carolina where locals and tourists take pride in her ongoing efforts to preserve maritime heritage.

The *Jane* will be represented by the *Apostle* built by Thomas E. (Tom) Colvin in 1959 in Bayou La Batre, Alabama. Throughout her history, she made many excursions in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico.

At the conclusion of the sea battle a **Dockside Reception** takes place where Blackbeard's severed head will be bestowed upon Virginia Lt. Governor Alexander Spotswood (1710-1722).

Follow the captive crew to join in the **Pirates' Trial** and the escape of William Howard, one of Blackbeard's fellow pirates with ties to Hampton and Ocracoke, and share in the booty from Blackbeard's treasure chest. Hampton's own version of Mardi Gras!

Then wander the streets of Downtown Hampton for Festival Food, Nautical Purchases and Pirate Games and take the young Buccaneers to meet up at **Little Scallywag's Lagoon** at Carousel Park along Settlers Landing Road for treasure hunting, rides, face painting, and more. Returning to entertain this year are Pirate of Fortune's Folly of Pennsylvania, Fins and Seashells Mermaids of Virginia, and more. For all-day fun, a wristband may be purchased for \$5.00

Then head down Queens Way to check out the Blackbeard stage, complete with daytime pirate entertainment. Don't forget about **The Downtown Hampton Block Party**, with musical guest Vinyl Headlights taking place Saturday evening from 7:00 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.

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And stay around Saturday night for The Hampton Blackbeard Pirate Festival fireworks display at 9:00 p.m. over the Hampton River!

Those looking for dock space during the Blackbeard Festival are encouraged to contact marinas located throughout the downtown area, including the Hampton Public Piers (757/727-1276), Customs House Marina (757/636-7772), Bluewater Marina (757/723-6774), and Sunset Boating Center (757/722-3325). Call for details and availability.

The Hampton Blackbeard Pirate Festival schedule is as follows:

The Grand Pirates' Bash (ticketed event) 7:30 p.m. -10:30 p.m. on Friday, May 31; 10:00 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 1; and Noon- 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 2.

For more information on these and other Hampton events and programs, individuals are encouraged to contact the Hampton Visitor Center at 757-727-1102, or the Hampton 311 Call Center at 757/727-8311. For those into surfing the web, visit www.blackbeardfestival.com.

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