

# NDW Summer Travel Guide: Navy Recreation Center Solomons

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WASHINGTON – For military and Department of Defense (DOD) members and families in Naval District Washington (NDW) looking for an affordable local summer getaway, Navy Recreation Center (NRC) Solomons offers a little something for everyone.

Stretching along the beautiful Patuxent River 65 miles southeast of Washington, D.C., Solomons is the largest outdoor recreation area run by the Navy, and hosts a variety of amenities including various types of lodging, picnic areas, Point Patience Marina, Sunset Pier, Riverside Aquatics Center, and Adventure Zone Recreation Center.



Frank and Jane Fruh of Waldorf, Md., test their miniature golf skills at a pirate-themed course aboard Navy Recreation Center Solomons. The recreation center, located 65 miles southeast of Washington, D.C., offers a variety of outdoor recreation activities and serves as a local vacation destination for military and Department of Defense members and their guests. (Photo by Shawn Miller)

## Camping

Depending on your personal preference for accommodations, you can choose from several types of lodging. Visitors may rent waterfront cottages, which offer perhaps the most comfortable stay and the best views in the park. Also available are inland cottages, log cabins, bungalows and apartments.

Located near the northern end of the center are the main camping areas with hookup sites for those traveling by RV. Space gets tight, particularly in peak season, and many of the spaces are taken by permanent residents whose RVs have put down roots and satellite TV hookups.

If your definition of camping leans a little more rustic and you want to break away from the more crowded sections, you can opt for the "primitive" camping areas where you can set up tents or try sleeping in one of two "yurts"—circular domed 24-foot-diameter tents said to have been inspired by an ancient Mongolian design.

## Recreation

For activities away from the campsites, head to Adventure Zone Recreation Center for daily activity passes, which allow you use of one of the area's facilities for the day, or opt for a leisure pass, which allows you unlimited access to many of the facilities on Solomons and can be purchased as daily, monthly or seasonal passes. Prices vary with military rank or guest affiliation, but daily passes can be purchased for under \$10.

Adventure Zone offers a 300-yard driving range and a pirate-themed miniature golf course, as well as an arcade inside. Just up Patuxent Drive is the Riverside Aquatics Center, which offers several swimming pools complete with a spiraling waterslide if you're looking to cool off. Head down the hill on the nearby trail to access the beach, where you will find a roped-off swimming area with lifeguards and a better view of the river.

Toward the southern end of Solomons are playgrounds and picnic areas with charcoal grills, a small fitness center and community center. Unfortunately for the picnic area, much of the would-be scenic overlook of the Patuxent River is obscured by trees and brush, so take a walk to the nearby 614-foot Sunset Pier for the views to the west, or for some

fishing.

Rounding out the mainstays of recreation at Solomons is the Point Patience Marina, a 124-slip boat launch at the southeastern end of the recreation center where a day on the water beckons. Marina storage is also available for patrons wishing to store their boats on the facility grounds.

## **Visiting**

To reach NRC Solomons from the Washington, D.C. metro area, take Exit 11A off Interstate 495 to Route 4 south. Reservations may be made by calling (410) 286-7416, and may be made one year in advance by active and reserve service members. Active DOD members and retired military may make reservations six months in advance.

The lodging office offers a variety of items for rental, including bicycles and helmets, camping gear, grills, fishing gear and air mattresses. Snack food and drinks are available for purchase on the facility, but other food options are only available at nearby stores off the installation.

For more information on amenities, guest policies, prices and special events happening throughout the summer at NRC Solomons, visit [www.cnmc.navy.mil/solomons](http://www.cnmc.navy.mil/solomons).