

Gear Up & Dive In with Conquer the Coast, Open Water Swim

Fitness fanatics will find plenty of options in Corpus Christi during the fall season with two major special events, all in one weekend.

The last weekend of September starts with professional and amateur cyclists alike gearing up to bike the Corpus Christi and Coastal Bend coast for the Conquer the Coast bike ride, while swimmers will want to make a splash at the city's first Open Water Swim Festival.

The **6th annual Conquer the Coast** ride takes cyclists on a tour of beautiful Corpus Christi. This year, the 65-Mile Ride or 25-Mile Cruise complete with music and festivities will be Saturday, Sept. 26, 2009. Pedal along the majestic Ocean Drive lined with picturesque homes that dot the Corpus Christi Bay during the 25-Mile Cruise. Another option for cyclists is to choose the daring 65-Mile Ride, which winds its way through Corpus Christi Bay's surrounding coastal communities and fishing villages, including Corpus Christi, Portland, Aransas Pass and Port Aransas with a water view. The 65-Mile Ride begins with a sunrise climb over the Harbor Bridge. The route then takes cyclists across the intercoastal waterway aboard a ferry where dolphins can be seen leaping in the bay below, loops through Naval Air Station-Corpus Christi and finally ends along Ocean Drive. At the finish line, food, music and fun await the cyclists and their supporters! So grab your bike and head to Corpus Christi to Conquer the Coast!

But that's not the only fun fitness event going on in Corpus Christi. The city's first Corpus Christi Open Water Festival will be making its splash!

Dive into the Corpus Christi Bay for the **Corpus Christi Open Water Festival**. The swimming event will feature an instructional clinic taught by four Olympic gold medalists and a 500-yard junior swim at McGee Beach in downtown Corpus Christi on Saturday, Sept. 26. The next day, Sunday, Sept. 27, both masters and youth swimmers will take part in a one-kilometer race, a five-kilometer race and relays with the launch point being at the Corpus Christi Marina. Gold Medalists Brendan Hansen and Aaron Peirsol will host the event. Gold medalist and NBC Olympic broadcaster, Rowdy Gaines, will serve as master of ceremonies, along with Gold Medalist color commentator Brooke Bennett.

The weekend doesn't have to stop with the work-outs at Conquer the Coast and the Open Water Festival, it can continue with a street fest. Families will want to save the date for Bayfest, one of the biggest and best street festivals in the area.

Round up the kids and make it your plan to visit Corpus Christi for the **33rd annual Bayfest**, a three-day outdoor music and arts festival full of family fun and good eats galore. Bayfest runs from Friday, Sept. 25 through Sunday, Sept. 27, 2009 and represents the best of Corpus Christi providing fine festival entertainment for area residents and visitors. Food, beverage and game booths overrun downtown while the Marketplace showcases artisans along the Bayfront. Three stages highlight outdoor performances. This year, special guests Dora and Diego even come for a visit for the Nickelodeon Meet & Greet. There's something for everyone at Bayfest!

Not to mention, Bayfest is one of the few festivals left in the country run by volunteers and whose profits benefit local charities. In its 33-year history, more than \$11.7 million has been raised and each year, it attracts some 110,000 festival-goers.