



P A N A M A C I T Y B E A C H

PANAMA CITY BEACH, FLA. 2009 Story Ideas

Closer Than You Think, With International Airport Opening Early In 2010

For More Information: 1-800-PCBEACH or www.visitpanamacitybeach.com

A fun-filled beach getaway is within easy reach for travelers looking to stretch their vacation dollar. Just head south to award-winning Panama City Beach, Fla., beckoning with 27 miles of sugar-white sand bordering the clear, emerald-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

This Northwest Florida destination is home to a TripAdvisor® 2008 Top Two beach in America - St. Andrew's State Recreation Area. Perfect for travelers of all types, Panama City Beach has everything, from hiking trails, championship golf and family attractions to world-class spas, restaurants and shopping venues. Water activities abound too in this prime destination for sport fishing, snorkeling, diving, kayaking, boating and more.



On the horizon is an international airport, expected to be the first one to open in the U.S. since 9/11. Slated to make its debut early in 2010, the airport will make Panama City Beach easily accessible to millions of travelers worldwide. The eco-conscious terminal is designed with the goal of being the nation's first to achieve LEED certification.

As part of Panama City Beach's revitalization trend, visitors here find new oceanfront spas, restaurants, shops and accommodations to fit all budgets. Options range from charming beach cottages to luxurious multi-bedroom condominiums with private balconies affording spectacular views of the Gulf of Mexico.

In addition to stunning beaches and predictably sunny weather, Panama City Beach hosts world-class events, drawing thousands of visitors year-round. There's always something fun happening here, thanks to the destination's ever-changing calendar of unique activities. Visitors enjoy everything, from national fishing tournaments and international triathlons to seafood festivals, classic car shows, outdoor concerts by the sea and more. New for 2009 is the Seabreeze Jazz Festival, April, one of the nation's largest smooth jazz celebrations.

A WAVE OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS

Construction is progressing ahead of schedule on the new Panama City – Bay County International Airport, on track to open in May 2010. The state-of-the-art, eco-friendly airport is expected to be the first to open in the U.S. since Sept. 11, 2001. It will provide travelers with better service and more competitive fares from major domestic markets and abroad.

Located on Panama City Beach's expansive West Bay, the eco-friendly terminal will highlight the destination's natural beauty. A 40,000-acre nature preserve will be created in conjunction with the airport. Called the West Bay Preservation Area, the refuge will offer the largest expanse of undeveloped coastline in Florida. It will provide permanent protection for the areas around West Bay, including 33 miles of shoreline and 44 miles of tributaries and creeks. In addition to preserving water quality and biodiversity, the sanctuary will feature large expanses for hiking, fishing and bird watching.

For shopping and dining enthusiasts, Pier Park completed its second phase of construction in 2008. Located in the heart of town, this open-air complex spans nearly one million square feet, making it Northwest Florida's largest shopping/dining/ entertainment venue. Visitors enjoy a park-like setting with spectacular Gulf views. A mix of popular national chains and favorite local boutiques and eateries are offered, including Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville, Ron Jon Surf Shop, Candymaker Candy Stores, Hofbrau Beer Garden and Guy Harvey's Island Grill, which debuted April 2009.

Choices abound in accommodations too, options range from cozy beach cottages to new luxury condominiums. Room inventory is expected to climb to 21,400 this year, with the opening of upscale beachfront resorts and condominiums offering breathtaking views of the Gulf of Mexico.

FAMILY ATTRACTION ACTION

Families find affordable fun in the sun year-round – from marine attractions, water parks, zoos and pirate cruises to boating, fishing, snorkeling, diving and parasailing.

Popular family attractions include Gulf World Marine Park, where families learn about marine preservation and enjoy up-close-and personal encounters with dolphins, sea lions, reptiles, tropical birds and more. At Shipwreck Island Waterpark, guests enjoy thrills and spills at one of Florida's largest water theme parks. For more action and adventure, visitors cruise Gulf waters aboard the Sea Dragon, an authentic 85-foot pirate ship, with cannons blasting and pirates hanging from the rigging. There is also ZooWorld Zoological & Botanical Park, home to more than 250 animals, including rare and endangered species. Other attractions include Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium, housing fascinating finds from around the world. Additionally, Coconut Creek Family Fun Park offers miniature golf and one of the country's largest human mazes.

EVENTS SHINE YEAR-ROUND

Visitors who venture beyond the sand and surf find there's always something fun going on in Panama City Beach, including: music and food festivals, arts and crafts fairs, world-class sporting events, car shows, motorcycle rallies, holiday fests and more. The Seafood, Wine and Music Festival serves up fresh seafood, local wines, concerts by nationally acclaimed artists, and family activities. Emerald Coast Cruizin' classic car and hot rod show features thousands of cars, live music, swap meets and more. New events for 2009 included the Seabreeze Jazz Festival, one of the nation's largest jazz celebrations.

HOLE-IN-ONE FOR GOLF

For golfers, Panama City Beach offers pristine greens, reasonable fees and plenty of choices for all skill levels. With five championship golf courses – including the only Nicklaus-design course in Northwest Florida -- the destination has been recognized by *Golf Digest* magazine as one of America's top three golf towns.

DINING TO PLEASE ALL PALATES

Dining enthusiasts toast Panama City Beach's blossoming culinary scene. In this destination known as the "Seafood Capital of the South," award-winning restaurants abound. Chefs fuse bold flavors and fresh seafood to create signature dishes in unique settings. One restaurant features a 25,000-gallon saltwater aquarium, while others boast dramatic Gulf views. One family-friendly restaurant is housed in a full-scale replica of Sir Francis Drake's Spanish galleon, *The Golden Hind*, serving up panoramic views of Panama City Beach's Grand Lagoon.

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