

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel offers affordable winter packages in an unspoiled island sanctuary

LEE COUNTY, FL—It is at about this time of year when thoughts turn to escaping to a warm destination for a winter vacation. And everyone is looking for ways to save money.

Visitors to The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel will find this winter brings choices of unique packages, value-added amenities and special rates to help keep a vacation within budget at this unspoiled island sanctuary on Florida's Gulf coast.

With exciting attractions, shelling, golf, fishing, unique shopping and art galleries, waterside dining, kayaking and accommodations from quaint cottages to upscale resorts and everything in between, the destination offers money-saving deals beginning with the holidays and through winter.

Check out this sampling of packages that begin with the holidays and run through the winter months:

Seahorse Cottages, Sanibel Island

239-472-4262

www.seahorsecottages.com

Christmas on Sanibel: 5 to 7 nights in a full one-bedroom cottage, complimentary bikes and beach equipment, adult only small property, small secluded pool.

Rates: \$175/night plus tax for up to two adults per cottage.

Valid Dec. 20-27, 2009.

Holiday Inn Fort Myers Airport @Town Center, Fort Myers

239-561-1550

www.hiftmyersairport.com

Edison & Ford Winter Estates Holiday Nights Package: Deluxe king or two queen beds for two, complimentary breakfast for two, two tickets to the Edison & Ford Winter Holiday Lights Tour.

Rates: \$104/night plus tax Dec. 11 - 31, 2009. Rates: \$149 per room including two adult tickets to Edison & Ford Winter Estates available Jan. 1 through April 1, 2010.

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Courtyard by Marriott at Gulf Coast Town Center, Fort Myers

239-332-4747

www.courtyardfortmyers.com

Shut Up and Shop package: A one night stay including breakfast for two each morning, with a \$50 gift card to any shop or restaurant in the Gulf Coast Town Center.

Rates: \$159-179 per night for a room with two queen beds or one king bed. Available through Dec. 31, 2009.

Hampton Inn & Suites Fort Myers Beach

239-437-8888

www.hamptoninn.com

"Rolling Into Nature" package: Accommodations, breakfast, tour of the Everglades, visit to Edison & Ford Winter Estates, VIP coupons for Tanger Outlets.

Rates: \$157 per night through Dec. 15, 2009 and \$225 per night Dec. 16-April 10, 2010 with minimum two-night stay.

Hampton Inn & Suite Fort Myers-Colonial Blvd., Fort Myers

239-931-5300

www.fortmyerscolonialsuites.hamptoninn.com

The Butterfly Estates Package: Accommodations, two adult tickets to the Butterfly Estates, one free gift per reservation upon check in.

Rates: Through 12/31/09 \$159

1/1/10-2/15/10 \$189

2/16-3/31 \$209

4/1-5/27 \$189

Based on double occupancy.

The Resort at Marina Village, Cape Coral

239-765-5400.

www.MarinaVillageResort.com

Grand opening rates at the new Resort at Marina Village start at \$99 per night/double occupancy in a studio suite through Feb. 11, 2010. Rates are also available for one-, two-, and three-bedroom suites.

Historic Island Inn, Sanibel Island

239-472-1561

www.islandinnsanibel.com

January 2010: Three-night special at \$211 per night includes breakfast for two; Feb. 1 - April 30, 2010, \$295 - \$325 per night includes breakfast for two.

Additional adults in room: \$37 per night includes breakfast. Children: 12 and under \$15 per night includes breakfast. Infants at no charge.

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Abaco Beach Villas, Fort Myers Beach

239-463-2611

www.fortmyersbeachvillas.com

Escape the Chill package: Reserve a one-bedroom suite and receive a free upgrade to a beachfront, two-bedroom/two-bathroom resort condominium.

Rates: \$160-\$385 per night for up to six people through Feb. 14, 2010.

Sundial Beach & Golf Resort, Sanibel Island

1-866-565-5093

www.sundialresort.com

Winter Escape package: \$50 resort credit per room for every two nights of stay. Credit applied at time of check-out and valid towards dining, golf, tennis, spa treatments, beach rentals, water sports, kids clubs and other activities.

- \$50 resort credit earned for 2-3 night stay
- \$100 resort credit earned for 4-5 night stay
- \$150 resort credit earned for 6-7 night stay
- \$200 resort credit earned for 8+ night stay

Includes free breakfast for children 10 years and younger. Valid for up to two children per room.

Rates: January 2010 rates from \$179; February/March/April 2010 rates from \$249 based on double occupancy.

South Seas Island Resort, Captiva Island

1-888-707-7888

www.southseas.com

Winter Escape package: \$50 resort credit per room for every two nights of stay. Credit applied at time of check-out and valid towards dining, golf, tennis, spa treatments, beach rentals, water sports, kids clubs and other activities.

- \$50 resort credit earned for 2-3 night stay
- \$100 resort credit earned for 4-5 night stay
- \$150 resort credit earned for 6-7 night stay
- \$200 resort credit earned for 8+ night stay

Includes free breakfast for children 10 years and younger. Valid for up to two children per room.

Rates: January 2010 rates from \$279; February/March 2010 rates from \$349 based on double occupancy.

Lahaina Island Accommodations, Fort Myers Beach

239-314-0444

www.beachfloridarentals.com

Fore the Love of Golf package: Seven nights stay in a 2-bedroom/2-bath condo located directly on the Gulf of Mexico, four rounds of golf at Raptor Bay Golf Club, a Raymond Floyd designed course including: greens fees, cart fees, complimentary practice balls, taxes and gratuities, free DVD's and popcorn, golfer gift pack.

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Rates: \$2,100 plus 11 percent tax per room per week for up to four persons in room. Available Jan. 2 to April 3, 2010. Seven night minimum stay.

Homewood Suites by Hilton Fort Myers Airport/FGCU, Fort Myers

239-210-7300

www.fortmyersairportfgcu@homewoodsuites.com

Circus/Twins Spring Training package: Four VIP Passes to Sarasota Circus located at Gulf Coast Town Center Mall, four general admission tickets for Minnesota Twins spring training game, two-night stay in a one-bedroom suite with two queen beds, pull out couch in the living room, full kitchen and a complimentary hot breakfast buffet each morning.

Rates: \$450 inclusive of tax for up to four people. Available March 1-31, 2010, based on game times and show times. Call for details.

Visitors will also have a chance to take advantage of these recession-proof tips to save on winter vacations at The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel:

- Some of the best activities along The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel are FREE!
Start a shell collection.
Kayak for miles on the Great Calusa Blueway.
Walk miles of award-winning, white sand beaches.
View wildlife in its natural habitat: birds, dolphins, manatees, turtles and more.
Go fishing.
Visit unique art galleries.
Stroll Sanibel Lighthouse boardwalk.
Watch spectacular sunsets and look for the "Green Flash."
Swim/snorkel in the Gulf of Mexico.
Explore J.N. "Ding" Darling Education Center.
- Bring the entire family to the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, one of the most popular area attractions. Visitors discover the more than 6,400-acre refuge on foot or bicycle (\$1 per person) or by car (\$5). Canoe rentals are also available. Visit www.fws.gov/dingdarling.
- Consider renting a condo where money can be saved on meals, as well as on the accommodation for a family or large party. For a list of deals on condos, visit www.FortMyersSanibel.com.

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- When making reservations or purchasing attraction tickets, be sure to ask for discounts (AARP, AAA, etc.).
- Consider staying at a campground and making it an adventure! Save on accommodations at Cayo Costa State Park with nine miles of beautiful beaches and acres of pine forests, oak-palm hammocks, and mangrove swamps, this barrier island park is a Gulf Coast paradise. Fishing, shelling, hiking and biking and nature trails. Accessible only by private boat or ferry. Overnight stays in primitive cabins are \$30 per night; and tent camping is \$18 per night. For ferry information and reservations visit www.floridastateparks.org/cayocosta.
- Family dining without going broke: it can be done! Have the largest meal at lunch. Prices are less. Then go light on dinner. When looking for a restaurant, ask about special offers that might be available. When booking your hotel, select one that offers free breakfast. Make sure the room has a refrigerator for storing drinks and snacks!
- Chill out in one of the area's museums or science centers. Great value: The Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum on Sanibel Island is the most comprehensive museum in the Western Hemisphere devoted solely to shells. It has been rated a "Gem" attraction by AAA and listed in the book "1,000 Places To See Before You Die." Admission is \$7 for adults 17 and older; \$4 for 5-16; children four and under are free. Visit www.shellmuseum.org.
- Spend a warm day in one of the area's state parks. Great value: Lovers Key State Park, just south of Fort Myers Beach. The Travel Channel ranked this beautiful park fourth in the state of Florida. This is one of the area's most pristine parks. Walk the boardwalk over tidal lagoons to a sandy, white beach with sea oats. Hike the nature trail, paddle a lagoon. Visit www.floridastateparks.org/loverskey
- Take a ride on the wild side at Babcock Wilderness Adventures. Great \$\$\$ value: Visitors experience the Telegraph Cypress Swamp and scenic woods on a 90-minute swamp buggy tour. View native wildlife, including panthers, alligators, deer, wild

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turkey, cattle and boars. Learn about native flora and fauna. Daily tours are available by reservation only. \$19.95 for adults; \$12.95 for children 3 to 12. Visit www.babcockwilderness.com.

For details on planning a winter vacation at The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel and to find the best cost-saving deals, visit www.FortMyersSanibel.com .

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Editor's Note: The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel include: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & outer islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. Photography is available upon request.