



National Survey Finds Jacksonville Beach Is America's Top Beach Bargain


By MARK BASCH - JACKSONVILLE DAILY RECORD CONTRIBUTING WRITER • MAR 14, 2019

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Jacksonville Beach is the most affordable in the nation, but it's not the only option for Florida residents. HomeToGo.com found 20 of the 50 most affordable beaches are in the state.

Visitors from around the globe are descending on Jacksonville's beaches this week to attend The Players Championship golf tournament.

Most will be prepared to pay premium prices but if they visit restaurants and shops in Jacksonville Beach, they may be pleasantly surprised at what they find.

Our *Jacksonville Daily Record* (<https://news.wjct.org/post/jacksonville-beach-will-roll-out-new-parking-system-march>) news partner reports a survey by HomeToGo.com (<http://hometogo.com/>), a vacation rental search engine, determined that Jacksonville Beach is the nation's most affordable beach destination.

The listing of the 50 most affordable beaches included St. Augustine Beach, ranked fifth, and Fernandina Beach, ranked 30th.

HomeToGo tallied the combined cost of parking, sunscreen, water, fish tacos, beer, cocktails and accommodations to come up with its ranking.

It determined a day at Jacksonville Beach will cost you \$62.92 per person, \$1.44 less than a day at the second-ranked location, Nye Beach in Newport, Oregon.



(http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/wjct/files/styles/x_large/public/201903/230737_standard.jpeg)

A view of Jacksonville Beach.

A day in St. Augustine Beach costs \$71.24 and a day in Fernandina Beach costs \$90.16.

There are 39 U.S. beaches you can enjoy for less than \$100, according to HomeToGo.

Of course, everyone's experience is different and your costs can vary.

HomeToGo determined the price of parking in Jacksonville Beach is \$5, which was the price to park on weekends at four city lots from March to October last year.

The price is changing this year. Jacksonville Beach is implementing a new automated system this month (<https://news.wjct.org/post/jacksonville-beach-will-roll-out-new-parking-system-march>) that will cost between \$3 and \$7 a day on weekends from mid-March to October.

Meanwhile, savvy local residents know with a little patience and perseverance, visitors can find free parking on the streets near their beach destination.

HomeToGo used online restaurant guide Yelp to determine the prices of three fish tacos, beer (12-ounce domestic) and cocktails (a mojito cocktail or the "nearest available alternative") at oceanfront restaurants and bars.

There really aren't a lot of oceanfront dining and drinking venues in Jacksonville Beach but at least one, the Pier Cantina & Sandbar, does have fish tacos on its online menu, as well as a variety of beers and cocktails.

Other items in HomeToGo's basket of beach items include an 8-ounce bottle of SPF 50-plus sunscreen and a 12-ounce bottle of water from local retailers.

The final item is the average cost of accommodations per person per night for a six-person vacation rental near the beach between March 23 and June 22.

Most of the beaches in HomeToGo's top 50 list are in southern cities.

Nye Beach is the only West Coast location in a northern state, while on the East Coast, the northernmost spot is Easton's Beach in Newport, Rhode Island.

But there's no reason for Floridians to bundle up and head north. Twenty of the 50 most affordable beaches are in Florida, according to HomeToGo.

Unfortunately, this would not be the week for locals to plan a quick getaway. Not only is it difficult to find accommodations during The

Players tournament, but any vacant rooms likely will cost more.

“The Players Championship is usually their (hotels’) highest occupancy and also the highest ADR (average daily rate),” said Jared Rice, executive director of the Players.

Rice said 60 percent of tickets sold for the tournament are purchased

outside of the five-county Jacksonville metropolitan area.

The tournament is marketed to golf fans in cities within driving distance of the Ponte Vedra Beach site, like Tampa and Miami, as well as cities with direct airplane flights to Jacksonville like Charlotte and Atlanta.

“As a tournament, we prioritize awareness of the tournament in the region outside Northeast Florida,” Rice said.


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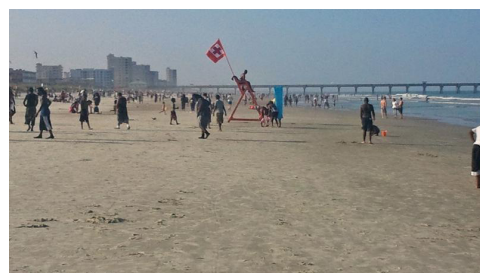
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