

Tourism

Florida Resumes Tourism Promotion After Hurricane Milton



Dawit Habtemariam, Skift

October 15th, 2024 at 2:45 PM EDT

Skift Take

Visit Florida needs to communicate that many of the state's destinations and attractions are open for tourism while remaining sensitive to those still in the process of rebuilding.



Ask Skift

Summarize this story

What strategies is Visit Florida using to promote tourism after the hurricanes?

What are the expectations for Florida's tourism recovery following the hurricanes?

How... imp

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Visit Florida launched a new campaign Monday to inform tourists that many parts of the state are open and ready to welcome visitors after hurricanes Helene and Milton.

For the next two weeks, the destination marketing organization will share fresh images and videos of destinations that were unaffected or minimally impacted by the hurricanes through social media channels and content creator partnerships. The campaign’s messaging will be “Sun is Shining in Florida,” said Dana Young, CEO and president of Visit Florida, in an email to the DMO’s partners.



The tourism bureau will also resume its planned press trips and its annual "Gift of Florida" campaign, which tries to inspire Americans to book vacations to the state over buying material gifts.



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Visit Florida on Friday launched organic social media campaigns featuring "Stronger than the Storm" messaging for in-state audiences and "Florida is Resilient" for domestic markets.

Damage From Hurricanes Milton and Helene

On October 9, Hurricane Milton made landfall near Siesta Key, Florida, moving across central and southern parts of the state as a Category 3 storm. It caused property damage, evacuations, and power outages in



multiple cities, including Tampa and St. Petersburg. Milton came on the heels of Hurricane Helene, a Category 4 hurricane.

To refine its promotional efforts, Visit Florida plans to survey destination marketing organizations across the state and determine when they will be ready to welcome visitors again.

In the coming weeks, Visit Florida will introduce a crisis recovery initiative, with a planned investment of “several million dollars,” to support impacted destinations, Young said.

The last hurricane to leave a lasting impact on Florida was Category 4 Hurricane Ian in fall 2022. Extensive news coverage of the devastation left many tourists with the impression that most of Florida was not open for visitors. Fort Myers, the hardest-hit destination, has not seen a full recovery in visitation, Young told Skift in April.

Visit Florida’s plans to help tourism rebound from the hurricane comes as it seeks \$100 million in funding from the state legislature, up from its current allocation of \$80 million.

Some Florida Businesses Reopen

In the past week, some destinations and businesses in the impacted areas have reopened. Tampa International Airport and Orlando International Airport resumed full operations on Thursday and Friday, respectively.

On Friday, Disney World and other Orlando-area theme parks reopened.

On Sunday, Visit Tampa Bay posted on X that some of the city’s local businesses are ready to welcome visitors.



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We're grateful for the strength and resilience of our Tampa Bay community. As we come together to move forward, many of our local businesses have reopened their doors and are ready to welcome you back! Supporting them during this time means everything. 

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