

Great Deals at Miami area Hotels

There are some great deals if you're considering the other coast of Florida for a getaway. Offers include Miami's South Beach, downtown and trendy neighborhood destinations with vacation options that feature family friendly activities, panoramic sunset views while dining and the South Beach lifestyle.

The Raleigh Hotel, South Beach

The Raleigh celebrates its 70th anniversary of fashion, elegance and glamour this year. The oceanfront hotel, with its expansive oasis sanctuary of private cabanas and famed Esther Williams' baroque pool, has been the backdrop for films and photo shoots, and host to countless events.



The Raleigh's Martini Bar was recently named one of the "World's Ten Best" by Details magazine and The Restaurant serves Florida cuisine with a South American influence in a romantic outdoor garden setting.

The offer includes:

- Room rates starting at \$249 (valid through December 31, 2010).
- \$70 Food & Beverage credit per day
- Complimentary room upgrade (subject to availability upon check-in)

For more information, go to www.raleighhotel.com. The Raleigh Hotel, Miami Beach, 1775 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, FL.

In 1940, when The Raleigh hotel was contracted to be built, Frank Delano Roosevelt was fireside chatting, Winston Churchill was delivering some of modern history's best speeches and John Lennon was being born. It was a pre-war boom time in Miami Beach, a period in which nearly 3,000 hotel rooms were built in two years (41 hotels in total).

When L. Murray Dixon, noted architect of the era and creator of many of Miami's trophy buildings, set forth to design this hotel, he most likely didn't realize that his imprint on the Miami Beach landscape would be deeper felt by this project than any of his others. And yet, The Raleigh has endured unlike nearly any other hotel from the era. It remains a favorite amongst locals, amongst celebrities looking for anonymity and amongst guests with an appreciation for impeccable design and the sort of friendly hospitality that makes them feel as if they're home.

While trends have ebbed and flowed, and even as The Raleigh has seen a few facelifts (this is South Beach, after all). The hotel was contracted for \$250,000 in 1940 by the Shore Corp. After construction, the war administration took over and housed many troops at The Raleigh. 41 Hotels (2789 rooms) were built between 1940 and 1942, a period called "Boom over Miami."

L. Murray Dixon, its architect, also created The Grossinger (The Ritz Plaza), The Atlantis, The Tides and The Victor. The Raleigh was situated in what was called "North Beach" at the time. The Oasis was originally called "The Aqua Cabana Club." The Raleigh was a kosher Hotel and the ballroom was a synagogue after the war. Amenities at The Raleigh included dance classes and a card room.

The current Raleigh Hotel has two fine dining restaurants and offer wireless internet available throughout the hotel, pool and cabana areas.

Sonesta Bayfront Hotel Coconut Grove

The Sonesta Bayfront Hotel Coconut Grove is a 22-story boutique hotel with 205 guest bedrooms, and one- or two bedroom suites. The hotel offers amenities including a rooftop fitness center complete with sauna rooms, international sized squash courts that are some of the finest courts in South Florida, a beautiful pool and Panorama Restaurant & Sky Lounge, located on the 8th floor, provides breathtaking sunset and panoramic views of Biscayne Bay, South Beach and downtown Miami.



The travel package offers:

- 20% off of best available rate (from \$124)
- Free valet parking (valued at \$23 per day)
- Online Booking Code: FLA (need valid Florida ID)

For details or to book, go to www.sonesta.com/CoconutGrove.

Viceroy Miami, downtown

Viceroy Miami is the centerpiece of the 10-acre Icon Brickell enclave in downtown Miami. Overlooking Biscayne Bay at the gateway to Miami's financial district, this glamorous urban resort was conceived by South Florida's most prominent developer, Jorge Perez.

The hotel features the exclusive Club 50 Lounge located on the 50th floor with a private pool deck, Michelin-starred Chef Michael Psilakis and Restaurateur Donatella Arpaia's Eos

restaurant, a two-acre outdoor living room and pool terrace and The Spa at Icon Brickell, features 10 treatment rooms for signature Viceroy wellness experiences, 5,000-square-foot water lounge and expansive fitness facility.

The travel package includes:

- Room rates starting at \$175
- Complimentary room upgrade
- Extended checkout at 2 p.m.
- Complimentary valet parking or continental breakfast for two at Bistro-E.

For details, go to www.viceroymiami.com.

Hot Air Ballooning Over the Red Rock Desert in Moab

Moab Adventure Center offers opportunities to explore a red rock playground that borders both Arches and Canyonlands National Parks. Now for the first time, visitors can soar above it all in a hot air balloon.

Hour-long balloon flights that begin at sunrise with set-up and launch give passengers a bird's-eye view of multi-colored sandstone formations, mesas, buttes, deep canyon mazes and natural arches. Rates are \$235 for adults and \$195 for youth six and up.

"It's obvious why Hollywood chooses this set for westerns and contemporary movies," said Brandon Lake, Co-Founder of Moab Adventure Center. "It's truly one of the natural wonders of the world."

Sights include the rugged red rock canyons carved by the Colorado River, fanciful rock towers and arches and often such wildlife as desert big horn sheep, mountain lion, pronghorn antelope and bald and golden eagles.

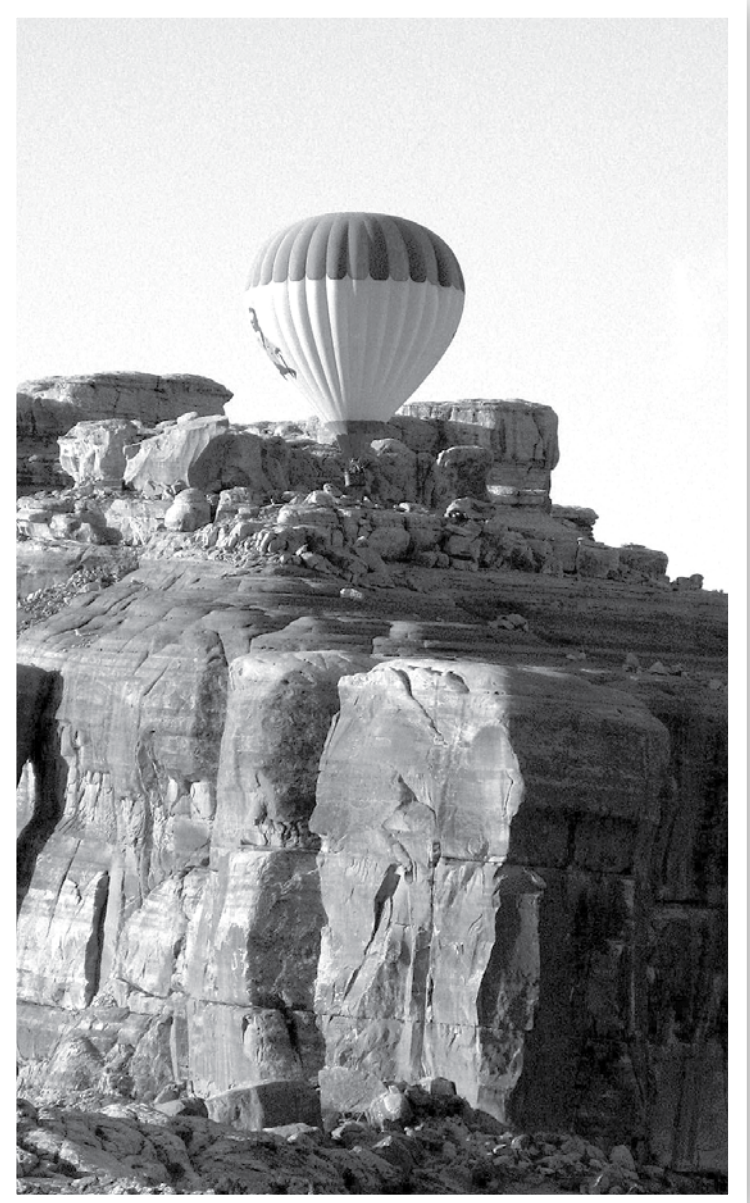
Lou Bartell who owns and pilots the six-passenger balloon explains how he showcases this region. "I enjoy contour or close-to-the-ground flying. This gives a very unique perspective of the landscape. The sensation of climbing over a sandstone butte then suddenly watching the ground drop hundreds of feet below you can only be compared to rock climbing. The biggest difference with a flight in Moab to anywhere else is that you are actually a part of the landscape, not just an observer. Conditions permitting, I also like to fly up to 4,000 feet above the valley floor to give everyone an overview of the entire area."

Bartell assures his guests that credentials for hot air balloon pilots are similar to those for manning fixed wing and rotor-wing aircraft. Pilots must complete a private and commercial ground school and hours of practical training. Bartell maintains a class 2 FAA flight physical for his commercial and instructor ratings. The

balloon is a commercially registered FAA aircraft requiring 100 hours of inspections annually. All repairs and maintenance must be performed by a certified FAA repairman with an FAA repair station license.

The rate includes the flight itself, return transportation to the launch site, a post-flight toast ceremony and digital on-ground and in-air photos (upon request). Moab hot air balloon rides can be combined with two other Moab Adventure Center activities for a 10 percent savings on each. For details, visit www.moabadventurecenter.com.

Moab Adventure Center is a division of Western River Expeditions (www.westernriver.com), an adventure travel company headquartered in Salt Lake City, with operations and offices in Moab, Utah and Fredonia, Arizona. The company is the largest single tour provider



in Moab, Utah. Its programs are available from March through October.

Moab Adventure Center serves active travelers with half, full, and multi-day adventure programs including Moab rafting, Hummer safaris, Arches National Park Tours, canyoneering, Moab mountain biking, Colorado River jetboat tours, horseback riding and hot air balloon rides.

In addition to activities, the Adventure Center also offers Moab lodging and Jeep rentals as well as complete Moab vacation packages

Surrounded by an immense red rock playground, Moab, Utah, is unlike any other place in the world. Its postcard-perfect desert is adorned with giant sandstone formations, canyon mazes, and thousands of natural arches. Several national and state parks are accessible from Moab.

The Moab Adventure Center is located at 225 South Main Street, Moab, Utah. For information and reservations call (866) 904-1163 or send an email from www.moabadventurecenter.com/contact.



Boca Grande Lighthouse

ECONomical Summer Escapes in Eco-Friendly Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands

For the second year in a row, summer vacation planning in Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands is a good value with the Visitor & Convention Bureau's value-driven ECONomical Summer Escapes programs.

The value-added campaign offers savings which stretch on into fall. This year's packages offer even more options, with an assortment of free nights, bonuses and giveaways through October 31.

Some properties are even offering a risk-free vacation guarantee. Details are available at www.charlotteharbortravel.com/summerescapes.

Located halfway between Sarasota and Fort Myers, the area offers world-class fishing and boating, four-star golfing, shopping, a variety of water and outdoor activities, and plenty to do for families and couples. The shell-strewn beaches offer an escape from the crowds, with miles of unobstructed vistas.

Charlotte Harbor is helping its visitors enjoy an ECONomical vacation at an assortment of accommodations ranging from well-known flag hotels to specialty boutique properties to a barrier island resort and private rental homes on the beach. Savings range from an additional free night's stay when booking two or more nights, to an additional two nights free when reserving a five night stay.

To view these specials, visit www.charlotteharbortravel.com/freenight or www.charlotteharbortravel.com/summerescapes, choose your package, then call the property and request the Charlotte Harbor "Free Summer Night Bonus."

To make summer vacations even more care-free, participating accommodations safeguard the purchase of hotel/condo/home rental stays with no-penalty re-booking policies in the event of storms.

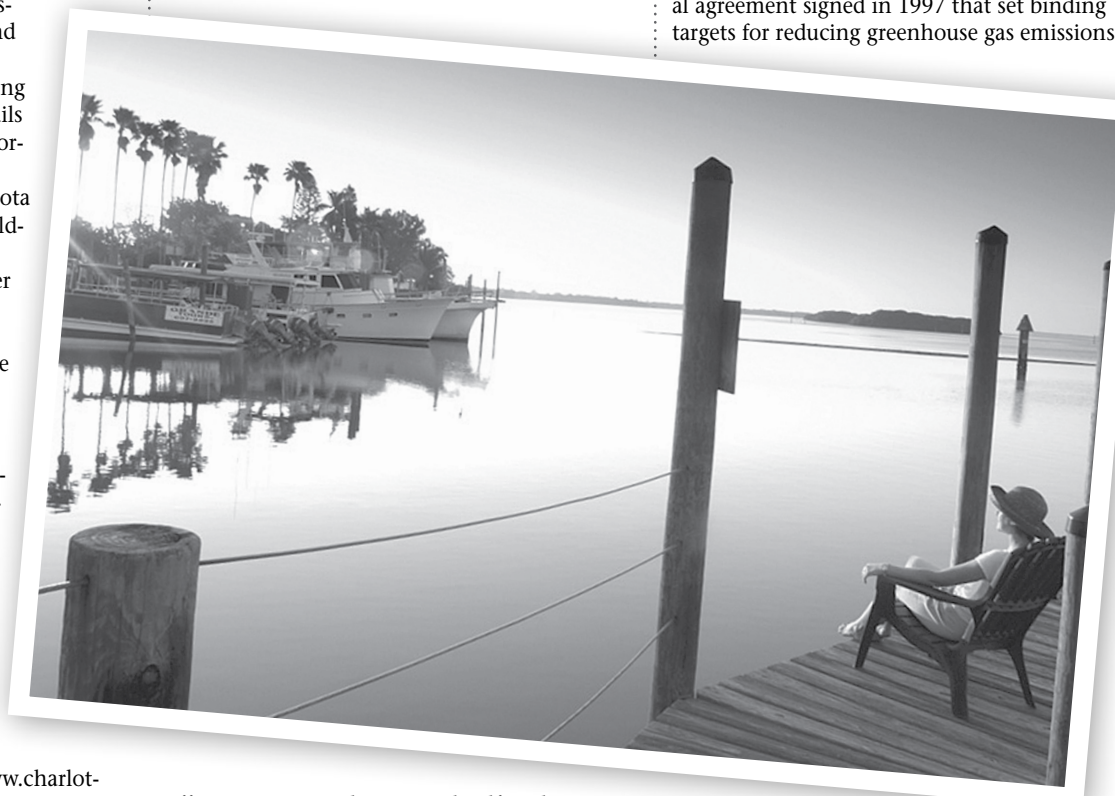
In addition to free additional nights, several hotels are packaging accommodations with activities and attractions. Romantic extras and

spa services and full-day fishing charters in Charlotte Harbor are among the offerings.

Three hotels are offering accommodations and a 2-hour guided kayak tour from a certified outfitter at rates starting at \$70 per person, plus tax, based on double occupancy.

Paddlers can traverse portions of the area's nearly 200 miles of Blueway Trails while exploring river passages and mangrove-edged aquatic preserves. Sightings of dolphins, manatees, rare and endangered birds, sea turtles and other wildlife are common.

The area's beautiful water vistas also offer stunning backdrops for world-class golf. Play a round on any of 20 scenic, challenging courses—some ranked 4- stars by Golf Digest. Each have special summer greens fees, and four hotels are



offering accommodations and golf packages starting at \$164 to \$391 per person, plus tax.

To learn more about all of the Charlotte Harbor specials and packages specific to every taste and budget, including some radio and magazine giveaways, visit the Smart Savings page at www.charlotteharbortravel.com/summerescapes.

The Bureau's 2009 ECONomical Summer Escapes Promotion was honored with a Gold Addy Award from the American Advertising Federation and a Bronze Adrian Award from

the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI).

Located halfway between Tampa and Naples on the Southwest Florida Gulf coast, Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands is a charming collection of nine coastal communities surrounding the state's second largest harbor. Charlotte Harbor & the Gulf Islands was named SAIL magazine's "10 Greatest Places to Sail in the United States" and ranked by Golf Digest as "Third Best Place to Live and Play Golf in America."

For information about area events, activities and attractions, call the Charlotte Harbor Visitor & Convention Bureau, 18501 Murdock Circle, Suite 502, Port Charlotte; (941)743-1900, or call toll free at 1-800-652-6090 for a free Visitor's Guide or visit www.CharlotteHarborTravel.com.

Can Airlines run on cleaner fuels?

Can airplanes be run on cleaner fuels or be electric powered? Are there changes afoot in the airline business to find cleaner fuels?

Given air travel's huge contribution to our collective carbon footprint—flying accounts for about three percent of carbon emissions worldwide by some estimates—and the fact that basic passenger and cargo jet designs haven't changed

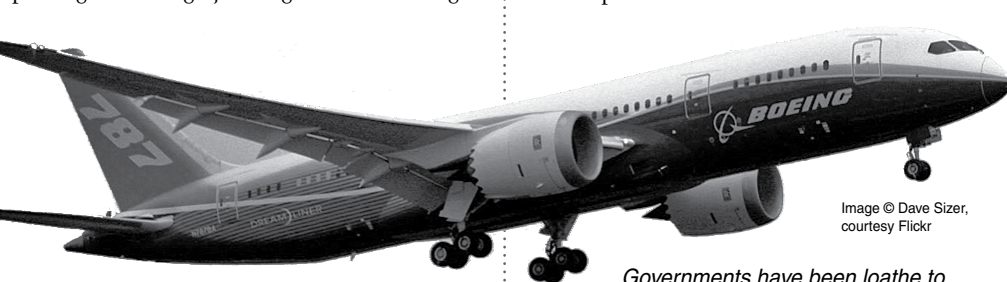


Image © Dave Sizer, courtesy Flickr

significantly in decades, the world is certainly ready for greener forms of flying.

But since air travel emissions were not regulated under the Kyoto Protocol, the international agreement signed in 1997 that set binding targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions,

efficient airplanes. Another airline on the cutting edge of green is Virgin Atlantic, which made news in early 2008 when it became the first major carrier to test the use of biofuels (liquid fuels derived from plant matter) on passenger jet flights. Now Air New Zealand, Continental, Japan Airlines (JAL), JetBlue, and Lufthansa are also testing biofuels.

Even airplane maker Boeing is getting in on the act by developing a carbon-neutral jet fuel made from algae. Boeing's newest commercial jet, the much vaunted 787 Dreamliner (now in final testing before late 2010 delivery to several airlines), is 20 percent more fuel efficient than its predecessors thanks to more efficient engines, aerodynamic improvements and the widespread use of lighter composite materials to reduce weight. Airbus is also incorporating more light-weight composite materials into its new planes.

On the extreme end of the innovation spectrum are zero-emission airplanes that make use of little or no fuel. The French company, Lisa, is building a prototype small plane, dubbed the Hy-Bird, that uses solar power (via photovoltaic cells on the elongated wingspan) and hydrogen-powered fuel cells to fly with zero emissions—and nearly no engine noise. The company claims the Hy-Bird is the first 100 percent eco-friendly plane, and is readying a round-the-world flight punctuated by 30 event-filled stopovers.

Governments have been loathe to impose new environmental restrictions on the ailing airline industry, but some airlines and plane makers are taking steps to improve their eco-footprints. The Boeing Dreamliner 787, pictured here and due to debut in late 2010, is 20 percent more fuel efficient than older models due to more efficient engines, aerodynamic improvements and the widespread use of lighter composite materials to reduce weight.

Even more unusual is the proposed fuel-free plane dreamed up by Mississippi-based Hunt Aviation. The company is working on a prototype small plane that harnesses the natural forces of buoyancy (thanks to helium-filled pontoons) for lift-offs and gravity for landings—along with an on-board wind turbine and battery to power everything in between—to achieve flight without any fuel whatsoever.

Don't look for these futuristic planes on airport runways anytime soon. It will likely be decades before this technology filters its way up to the big leagues. Until then, take a train or bus instead. If you must fly, compensate for your flight's emissions by buying a "carbon offset" from TerraPass or CarbonFund.org, which will use the money to fund alternative energy and other greenhouse-gas reduction projects.

CONTACTS:

- Lisa Airplanes, www.lisa-airplanes.com
- Hunt Aviation, www.fuellessflight.com
- TerraPass, www.terrapass.com
- CarbonFund.org, www.carbonfund.org

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the friendly skies aren't much greener than they were a few decades ago. And most national governments have been reluctant to impose new environmental restrictions on the already ailing airline industry.

Nonetheless, some airlines and airplane manufacturers are taking steps to improve their eco-footprints. Southwest and Continental have implemented fuel efficiency improvements, waste reduction programs and increased recycling, and are investing in newer, more fuel