

A TRAVEL MAGAZINE FOR MEMBERS 2016 ISSUE

# SOJOURNS<sup>®</sup>

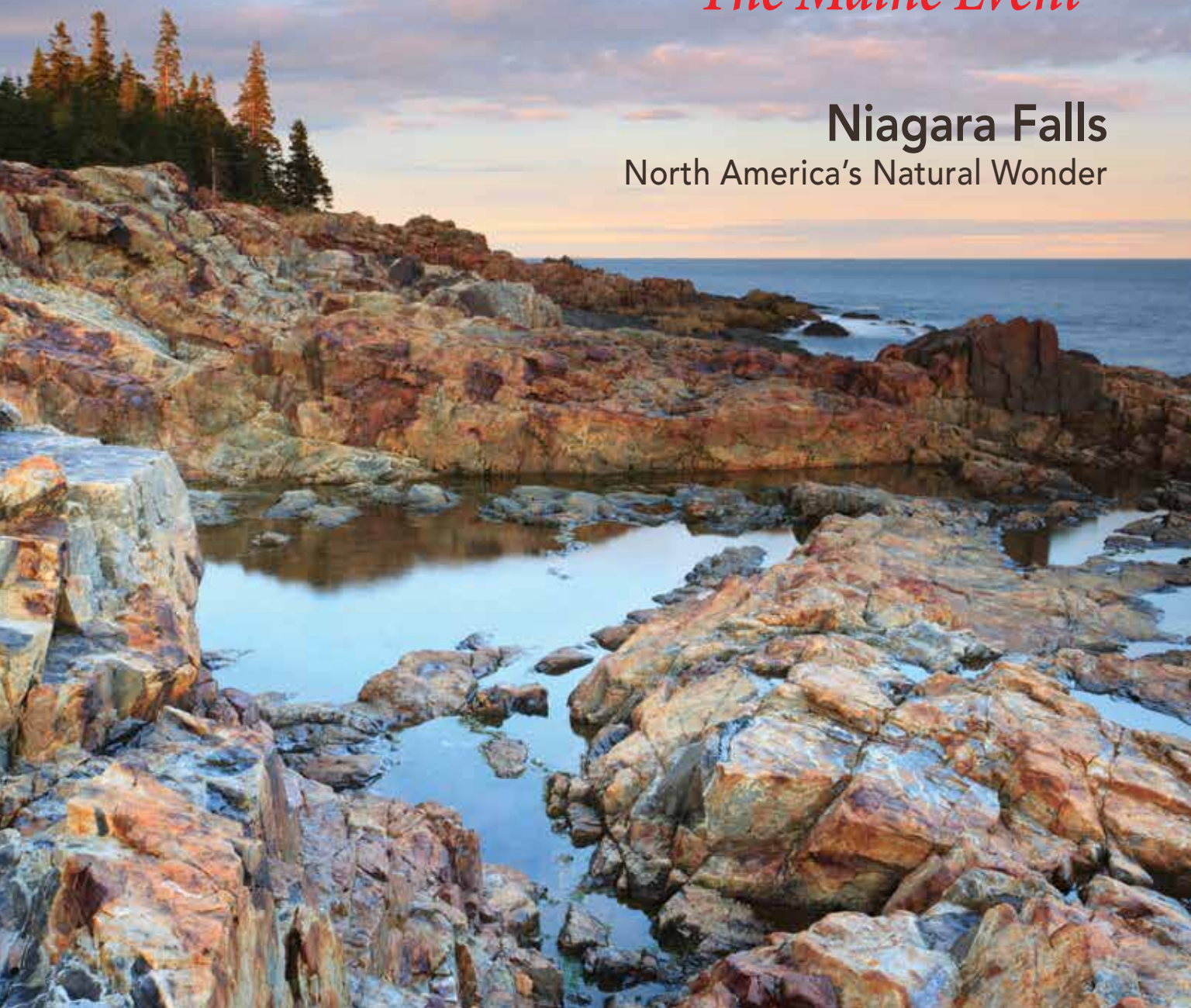


## BAR HARBOR

*The Maine Event*

## Niagara Falls

North America's Natural Wonder





# HORSES, HATS, & HOSPITALITY: DUDE RANCHES

(BPT) – Planning a trip for 2016? While the beach is warm and a cruise ship is lovely, you’ve done those trips before. This year you want something unique that will create lasting memories and bring you closer to your family.

“More people are visiting dude ranches due to the desire to do something out of the ordinary,” says Colleen Hodson, from The Dude Ranchers’ Association ([www.duderanch.org](http://www.duderanch.org)). “These aren’t the ranches from City Slickers. High-end ranches across the country average 45 guests. You get to know everyone. By the end, you’ll have friendships and memories to last a lifetime, and you will reconnect with your family in a way you never thought possible.”

Travelers enjoy getting a taste of the dude ranch experience blended with a heaping serving of other popular vacation-type activities. Today’s dude ranches cater to a diverse crowd with attractions, services, and things to do that travel far beyond the trail.

“Dude ranches are the original Western adventure vacation,” says Hodson. “Though guest expectations have changed and ranchers have had to change with them, the core principles of dude ranching remain the same: horses, hats, hospitality, heritage, honesty, and heart.”

There are a lot of dude ranches to choose from and The Dude Ranchers’ Association can help you find the perfect one to suit your family’s unique personality.

Visit [www.duderanch.org](http://www.duderanch.org) or call 1-866-399-2339.

In addition to discovering the beauty of nature and gazing into a crackling fire, here are other top reasons dude ranch vacations are a top trend for 2016:

## Indulge the Taste Buds

Home-cooked cuisine that oftentimes features ingredients from the ranch brings new meaning to farm-to-table eating. From family-style meals to gourmet al fresco dining, the food is a central part of the dude ranch experience.

## Embark on a once-in-a-lifetime adventure

You can learn traditional ranching skills like riding a horse, driving cattle, and throwing a lasso, but adventures on a dude ranch don’t stop there. Some ranches offer overnight pack trips, rodeos, target shooting, zip lining, and white-water rafting.

## Enjoy exclusive fishing

Casting your line has never been more relaxing than at a dude ranch. The vast acres on these private properties often include secluded rivers and ponds ripe with fish. Forget about battling overcrowded hot spots—the water will be all yours.

## Embrace an R&R mindset

While the unique dude ranch activities will keep you busy, there comes a time when cowboys and cowgirls just want a little rest and relaxation. Fortunately, many ranches now offer luxury spa services so you can enjoy a little pampering.

## Bond over some friendly competition

Looking for a fun way to connect with your family and other guests? Friendly competition can be found in many forms on dude ranches, from roping contests to talent shows. If lassoing a speeding calf isn’t your forte, you can sing, tap, or joke your way to local stardom in a talent show.

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**FEATURE**  
BAR HARBOR  
THE MAINE EVENT

2

**AMERICANA**  
MANCATIONS IN THE  
LONE STAR STATE

8

**VANTAGE POINT**  
HORSESHOE BEND  
Arizona

10

**CITYSCAPE**  
ATLANTA GEORGIA  
Where City Sophistication  
Meets Southern Charm

12

**PARKS VIEW**  
NIAGARA FALLS  
North America’s Natural Wonder

16

**IN GOOD TASTE**  
MARVELOUS MAPLE  
Tapping Into Canada’s  
Favorite Syrup

20

**EXCURSION**  
FLORIDA  
VACATION IDEAS  
to Make Everyone Happy

21

**ON THE COVER:** Waves crash on the rocks of  
Otter Point, Acadia National Park. Photography: Shutterstock

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■ The four-masted schooner *Margaret Todd* cruising in Bar Harbor. Photography: Courtesy of Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce



# BAR HARBOR

## THE MAINE EVENT



44° 23' 9" N 68° 12' 34" W

*By Mary Spinei*

**BAR HARBOR, MAINE** is a refreshing vacation destination, especially in August when most of the U.S. sizzles with heat and humidity. August is also blueberry season featuring Maine's tiny, tart blueberries, sometimes referred to as "Maine Caviar."

The gentle ocean breezes, azure skies, and breathtaking vistas made it a playground for wealthy citizens of the early 20th century, rivaling Newport, Rhode Island. However, a visit to "Bah Habah," as the natives call it, is a relaxing getaway any time of year—it's "The Maine Event!"





■ Sunrise over Cadillac Mountain in Acadia National Park.  
Photography: Courtesy of Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce

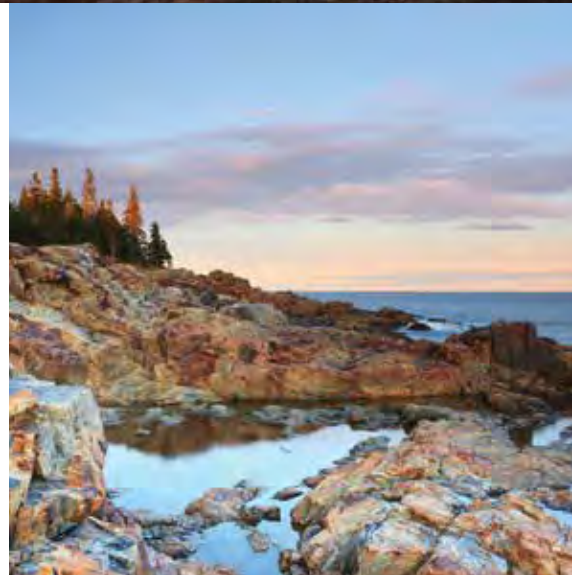
## HISTORY

The Wabanaki tribe referred to the area as Pemetic, which translates to “range of mountains” or “mountains seen at a distance.” In 1604, French explorer Samuel de Champlain ran aground near what is now Otter Cliffs, and named the island Isles des Monts Deserts, meaning “island of barren mountains.”

The English arrived in the late 1700s and named it Eden, after Sir Richard Eden, an English statesman. It was renamed Bar Harbor in 1918, after the sand and gravel bar, which is visible at low tide and leads across to Bar Island. Bar Harbor consists of almost 28,800 acres on the northeastern part of Mount Desert Island.

In the mid-1800s and early 1900s the rugged mountain scenery and maritime vistas attracted artists, sportsmen, and the elite, who erected opulent estates and gardens that are still visible today.

The Shore Path, a walkway accessible near Agamont Park, borders grand mansions and lush landscapes where the Rockefellers, Morgans, Vanderbilts, and Astors spent their summers to get away from the heat of New York City. Today, anyone can enjoy hiking along the 1/2-mile Shore Path which starts near the historic Bar Harbor Inn, and hugs the rocky shoreline providing spectacular views of the ocean, mansions, and the Porcupine Islands.



■ Otter Point, Acadia National Park.  
Photography: Shutterstock

“ Gentle ocean breezes, azure skies, breathtaking vistas, and lobster dinners served with an ocean view... ”

## ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

George Bucknam Dorr is known as the father of Acadia National Park, because he spent most of his life advocating for the conservation and designation of the land as a National Monument. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson created Sieur de Monts National Monument. As the first superintendent of the Trustees, Dorr built the Spring House at Sieur de Monts in 1909 and worked with John D. Rockefeller, Jr. to build the carriage road system that is still used today for hiking and biking. Rockefeller donated one-third of the land in Acadia National Park.

There’s a free Island Explorer Shuttle Bus service that whisks travelers (in season) to various locations in the park and around town. Stop at the Acadia National Park Visitor Center for a free 15-minute audiovisual program or a free map of the area. The map contains extensive information about the park, including the best time to hear the roaring surf of the Thunder Hole, and the best hiking spots.

Visitors can drive around and park at the various lots for a short hike, or camp in the area for longer hikes. Hikes vary

from the easy Ocean Path, with access at the upper parking level of Sand Beach, to the arduous Beehive Trail where hikers climb up rocks using iron handholds. There are two other beaches in the area, Echo Lake Beach, which has smaller crowds and a view of Beech Mountain, and Seal Harbor Beach, a 20-minute drive from Bar Harbor with great views of expensive yachts. The free Shuttle Bus makes regular stops at all three beaches.

Bicycle enthusiasts can rent bikes at Acadia Bike, Bar Harbor Bicycle Shop, or Southwest Cycle in downtown Bar Harbor for a quick cycling trip, or a 27-mile ride on the Park Loop Road in Acadia National Park with ocean views. There are also 43 miles of carriage roads that take cyclists past lakes, forests, and mountains. Motorized vehicles are prohibited, so the only traffic consists of forest animals and hikers.



■ Jordan Pond, Acadia National Park. Photography: Shutterstock





■ Stewman's Lobster Pound, Bar Harbor Regency Hotel.  
Photography: Shutterstock



Photography: Courtesy of Bar Harbor Chamber of Commerce



Photography: Shutterstock



Photography: Shutterstock



Photography: Courtesy of Acadia Air Tours

### BLUEBERRY LOVER'S PARADISE

Bar Harbor is a lobster-lover's paradise year-round, but in August, it's a blueberry-lover's paradise! Tourists can buy these tiny, fragile berries at roadside stands, or purchase blueberry preserves at local shops and grocery stores such as Hannaford's Supermarket, Cool as a Moose gift shop, and The Bar Harbor Tea Company, to name a few. Most stores ship their blueberry products throughout the U.S. But the best way to enjoy Maine's blueberries is in the fresh pies, pancakes, muffins, and breads made at local restaurants and cafés.

After feasting on a delicious lobster dinner with blueberry pie for dessert at Stewman's Lobster Pound on the grounds of the Bar Harbor Regency Hotel, take a sunset cruise on the four-masted schooner *Margaret Todd*, where you may be asked to hoist the sails. There is something for everyone in Bar Harbor, from coastal kayaking tours, whitewater rafting, rock climbing, fishing, and whale watching, to just relaxing on the beach at sunset.

### ...AND BEYOND

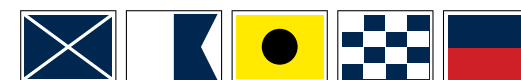
Bar Harbor is "The Maine Event;" however, venture a few miles north along State Highway 3 to Acadia Air Tours located at the Hancock County-Bar Harbor airport for the airplane ride of a lifetime. Flight selections include a two-passenger open cockpit biplane, a two-passenger glider, or a four-passenger Cessna. Take a romantic sunset flight, or learn how to fly a Waco biplane with the help of a licensed instructor. Bar Harbor's stunning scenery is even more breathtaking from the air.

The Cessna 182 Skylane accommodates up to four passengers, and offers three flight options: The 15-minute Bar Harbor Flight soars past the tree-covered hills, sheer rock cliffs, and lapis-colored water of Mount Desert Narrows, Eagle Lake, Cadillac Mountain, and the head of Somes Sound. The 25-minute Acadia Tour continues south to include views of Mount Champlain, Great Head, Otter Cliffs, Sand Beach, the Cranberry Islands, Seal Harbor, and Northeast Harbor. The most popular flight is the 45-minute Lighthouse Tour, which flies over seven lighthouses. Taking a scenic flight is a magnificent way to end a Bar Harbor vacation!

### DOWNTOWN BAR HARBOR

A visit to Bar Harbor's charming shops and restaurants is a relaxing way to end the day after hiking and biking in Acadia National Park. The Island Explorer Shuttle Bus stops at the Village Green, which is surrounded by shops, galleries, and restaurants. The Bar Harbor Town Band provides free musical entertainment every Monday and Thursday evening from 8 to 9 p.m. (weather permitting) in July and August. Summer also features several arts and crafts fairs where local artists sell their work. The Downeast Maine Fine Arts Festivals are held on the grounds of the Bar Harbor Inn on the weekends of August 12-14 and September 10-11.

When sunny skies turn gray, check out the Abbe Museum featuring Maine's Indian heritage. The museum's exhibits span 10,000 years of the history, art, and archaeology of the first people to discover Maine's beauty. It's open year-round with reduced winter hours, and has a museum shop where tourists can purchase crafts made by Maine's native people. Or visit the Atlantic Brewing Company, which offers free tours of their brewery.



M A I N E

### VACATION INFORMATION

For more information on things to do in Bar Harbor, go to these websites:

barharbormagic.com  
acdiamagic.com  
VisitBarHarbor.com  
acadiaairtours.com  
downeastwindjammer.com

# MANCATIONS IN THE LONE STAR STATE

*Football games, tailgating, barbecue, and the onset of cooler temperatures make Texas the perfect destination for any fall guys' getaway.*



CHECK OUT THE **TOP FIVE REASONS** TO PLAN YOUR NEXT "MANCATION" TO THE LONE STAR STATE.



## 1 MILES AND MILES OF BARBECUE

The highlight of every vacation is great food, and Texas has you covered for your next guys' getaway. Check out the Texas BBQ Trail for the best routes to take to ensure you don't go home hungry. Kreuz Market and Smitty's Market in Lockhart, Louie Mueller Barbecue in Taylor, City Market in Luling, and Cooper's Pit Bar-B-Q in Mason continue to top everyone's barbecue bucket list, along with newer favorites like Franklin BBQ in Austin and The Granary in San Antonio.

## 3 WRANGLE THE WILD WEST

Fulfill your cowboy dreams at one of Texas' many dude ranches. Wildcatter Ranch in Graham offers the 'It's Never Too Late to Be a Cowboy' package, allowing guests to rope, ride, and even work cattle with seasoned wranglers. Bandera, the cowboy capital of Texas, is home to dozens of ranches that allow guests to have an authentic Western experience.

## 2 QUENCH YOUR THIRST

There's nothing better than an ice-cold beer on a mild Texas fall day, so why not come discover where your favorite Texas brews are made? The famous Spoetzl Brewery produces the national favorite Shiner beer and offers tours each weekday. Austin is home to several breweries including 512 Brewing, an independent brewery whose tours include a free 512 pint glass; Hops & Grain, which gives tours of its East Austin locale six days a week; Independence Brewing Co., maker of the beloved Convict Hill Oatmeal Stout; Austin Beerworks, best known for its IPAs and can-only policy; and Jester King, whose farmhouse brewery opens its doors for tastings and tours on the weekends.

The Lone Star State also has a number of distilleries to choose from. Waco's Balcones Distillery's Baby Blue Whisky is the first Texas whisky on the market since prohibition, while bourbon fans can't miss Garrison Brothers Distillery in Hye, the first legal bourbon distillery in Texas.



## 4 TEXAS TAILGATING

For a different type of cowboy experience, catch a Dallas Cowboys football game at AT&T Stadium. Football is king in Texas, and whether you attend a Dallas Cowboys, Houston Texans, or a college football game at one of the state's 12 Division I programs, you're sure to experience plenty of excitement.

## 5 CATCH OF THE DAY

Head to the Texas coast for a guys' fishing expedition like no other. From Galveston, take any number of Gulf or deep-sea fishing charters either for a day's worth of fun or an overnight trip. Mild fall temperatures present the perfect time for fishing, and charters include tour guides who are ready to help either expert anglers or novice fishermen. If your group sticks to a day trip, enjoy the rest of Galveston's many attractions, including incredible seafood, miles of beaches, amusements at Galveston's Pleasure Pier, and rooftop bars in the downtown area.

For more information about travel in the Lone Star State, visit [TravelTex.com](http://TravelTex.com).

*Article reprinted with permission from Brandpoint®*





## Horseshoe Bend, Arizona

The only way to experience this spectacular view is with a panoramic lens. Located just 5 miles from the beginning of Grand Canyon National Park in Page, Arizona, Horseshoe Bend is one of Mother Nature's most breathtaking creations. The Colorado River cut through the layers of rock and sandstone to create this u-shaped canyon. Armed with your camera, you can hike the trail to the edge of the canyon and snap a photo of this stunning site yourself.

*Shutterstock/ beboy*



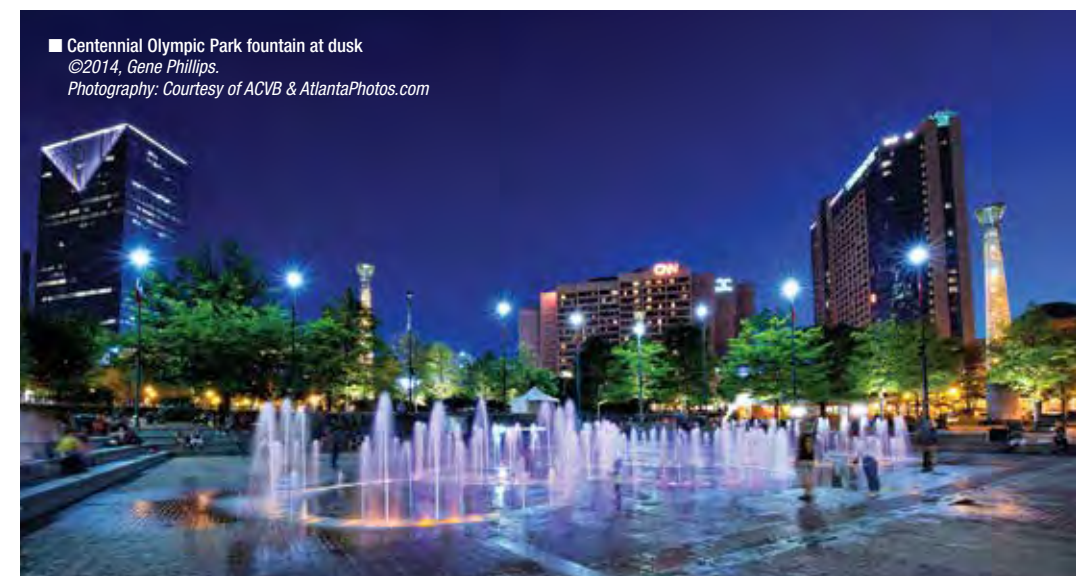


*Atlanta is a great destination for a weekend getaway, but don't expect to squeeze all there is to do into just two days! The city is brimming with history, culture, nightlife, and family fun to fill countless hours of exploring. Atlanta gained international exposure when the city hosted the Summer Olympic Games in 1996, but visitors have long appreciated its unique combination of modern urban style and warm Southern hospitality.*

*By Susan Shawl*

One great strategy for making the most of your time in Atlanta is to check out the amazing concentration of activities found in the Luckie Marietta District of Downtown Atlanta. Named for two of its streets, this neighborhood is a must for any visitor seeking a variety of attractions in a convenient, walkable environment. The district is immediately recognizable for two of its most eye-catching and familiar sights.

The beloved Centennial Olympic Park was constructed as a gathering place for athletes and spectators during the 1996 Olympic Games and remains a favorite destination for locals and visitors alike. The 21-acre park features The Fountain of Rings, an interactive fountain designed to mirror the Olympic symbol of five interconnected rings. Beside the park is the towering SkyView Ferris Wheel, an impressive structure with 42 gondolas giving riders a remarkable view of the city from 20 stories up.



For “all the news that’s fit to... watch,” check out CNN Center, which is the global headquarters of the news giant. You can take a behind-the-scenes tour of the Headline News and CNN newsrooms and see how a live broadcast takes shape from Studio 7 where many CNN daytime programs are produced.

After listening to world news, check out Philips Arena, which is connected to the CNN Center and features concerts and sports events. Music lovers can see concerts from popular musicians and sports fans can catch a Hawks basketball game.

If football is more your style, the Georgia Dome—home to the NFL’s Atlanta Falcons—is right down the street, or you can get in the game at the nearby College Football Hall of Fame. This great new addition to the district allows fans to learn about storied Hall of Fame players, test their physical prowess in the interactive skill zone, and try their hand at broadcasting from the ESPN play calling booth.



“...this neighborhood is a must for any visitor seeking a variety of attractions in a convenient, walkable environment.”

The World of Coca-Cola Museum is another downtown gem. Atlanta is the birthplace of this iconic drink, and the museum delivers all things Coke. From the tasting room and

bottling line demo to the secret recipe vault and art gallery, this place is packed with “pop” culture history and fun activities. You might even run into the famous Coca-Cola Polar Bear who loves to have his photo taken with fans young and old.

For an exciting look at aquatic life, head over to the Georgia Aquarium which is the largest aquarium in the Western Hemisphere. Along with seeing marine creatures ranging from pointed nose stingrays to beluga whales, you can also interact one-on-one with a dolphin and play with an African penguin as part of many hands-on aquarium programs. The exhibit “Journey with Gentle Giants” even



provides a unique opportunity for guests to swim with the largest fish in the sea—the whale shark.

Educational family fun awaits at the Children’s Museum of Atlanta. Creativity and exploration take center stage with activities including painting in the art studio, learning to choose and prepare fresh produce in the “farm” area, and conducting experiments at the Science Bar. There is also an interactive “Gateway to the World” program featuring a climbing structure where children can navigate the layers of the Earth as they learn about geology and astronomy.

Another nearby attraction is the Center for Civil and Human Rights. Established in 2007, the center provides an informative and moving experience with exhibits connecting the struggles of the American Civil Rights Movement to current Global Human Rights initiatives around the world. The center’s galleries include “Rolls Down Like Water,” which explores the struggles of the American Civil Rights Movement and “Voice to the Voiceless: The Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Collection,” which features a rotating selection of personal documents and effects from the life of Dr. King.

This neighborhood is also a great place to enjoy nightlife with plenty of food, drink, and music to help you unwind after a busy day exploring the city. Der Biergarten offers authentic German cuisine and over 18 German draft beers, while Asante serves Chef Marvin Woods’ creative “Coastal Soul” cuisine. STATS is a sports bar where you can watch the game and pour your own beer at a self-serve tap table. SkyLounge at Glenn Hotel is home to an elegant rooftop bar and patio showcasing breathtaking views of the city and some incredible signature cocktails. If you are looking for music, The Tabernacle



©2013, James Duckworth. Photography: Courtesy of ACVB & AtlantaPhotos.com



■ The Georgia Aquarium ©2006, Kevin C. Rose. Photography: Courtesy of ACVB & AtlantaPhotos.com

*The Eternal Flame, which is part of The King Center’s outdoor campus on Auburn Avenue, is located directly in front of the tombstone of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wife Mrs. Coretta Scott King.*



■ Chihuly Fountain at Atlanta Botanical Gardens ©2014, Gene Phillips

■ “Peaches & Pears” at the High Museum of Art ©2006, Kevin C. Rose

■ Fox Theatre ©2011, James Duckworth

Photography: Courtesy of ACVB & AtlantaPhotos.com

is an intimate and historic concert venue featuring music of all genres. The structure was originally built in 1910 as a church and has featured artists ranging from Kendrick Lamar to Wilco.

If you have time to venture outside of the Luckie Marietta District, head to nearby Midtown Atlanta to absorb the wonders of nature at the Atlanta Botanical Garden and

have a picnic lunch at Piedmont Park. Music and art lovers can enjoy a concert by the Grammy award-winning Atlanta Symphony Orchestra at the Woodruff Arts Center, catch a Broadway musical at the Fox Theatre, or view timeless masterpieces from artists such as John Singer Sargent and Henri de Toulouse Lautrec at the High Museum of Art. If all

this activity leaves you craving a snack, grab a shake and chili dog at The Varsity, the world’s largest drive-in restaurant and an Atlanta institution since 1928.

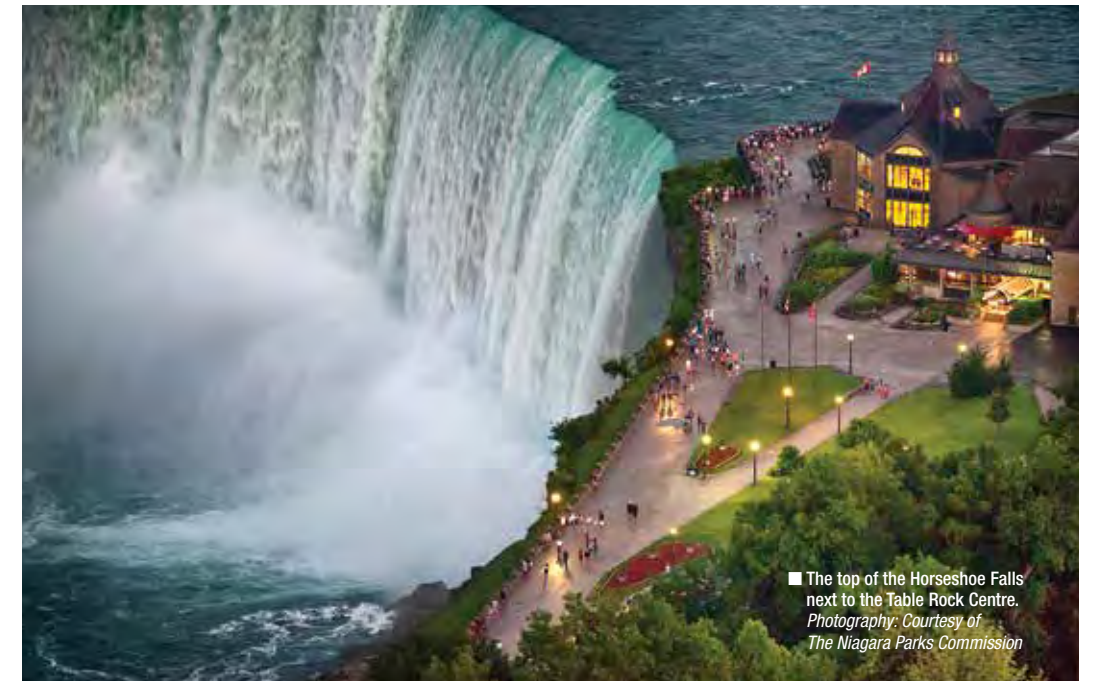
Buckhead is another great neighborhood to visit for high-end retail, diverse cuisine, and interesting attractions. Foodies will delight in Buckhead’s fantastic restaurant scene. From the fresh seafood creations of Atlanta Fish Market and the inventive farm-to-table fare of Aria to the artfully plated sushi of Tomo and comfort food of Buckhead Diner, there is plenty to keep your taste buds happy.

For history buffs, the Atlanta History Center offers numerous exhibitions that allow guests to learn about the city’s complex past through interactive galleries, extensive archives, historic native gardens, and cultural demonstrations.

Atlanta is a place where Southern charm and progressive ideas combine to form a vibrant, welcoming community. There are experiences around every corner that showcase the history, creativity, and diversity of this fascinating city. The possibilities are truly endless, and one trip to Atlanta just leaves you wanting more.







■ The top of the Horseshoe Falls next to the Table Rock Centre. Photography: Courtesy of The Niagara Parks Commission

# Niagara Falls

## North America's Natural Wonder

By Lynn Cicchelli

**Y**ou can't really prepare yourself for the feeling you get when you see Niagara Falls in person. You might have seen pictures of the falls, maybe watched a documentary about them, but until you witness this sight in person you might never fully understand the magnificence and wonder that is Niagara Falls.

Long known as a popular honeymoon destination, the Niagara Falls region in Canada now appeals to a new generation with a street filled with fun activities, breathtaking tours, and even an indoor water park, making this an ideal family vacation destination.

Clifton Hill is like the Times Square of the Falls area. This street leads you down to the majestic falls on the Canadian side and is jam packed with attractions, restaurants,

■ Hornblower Niagara Cruise as it ventures into the falls. Photography: Courtesy of The Niagara Parks Commission

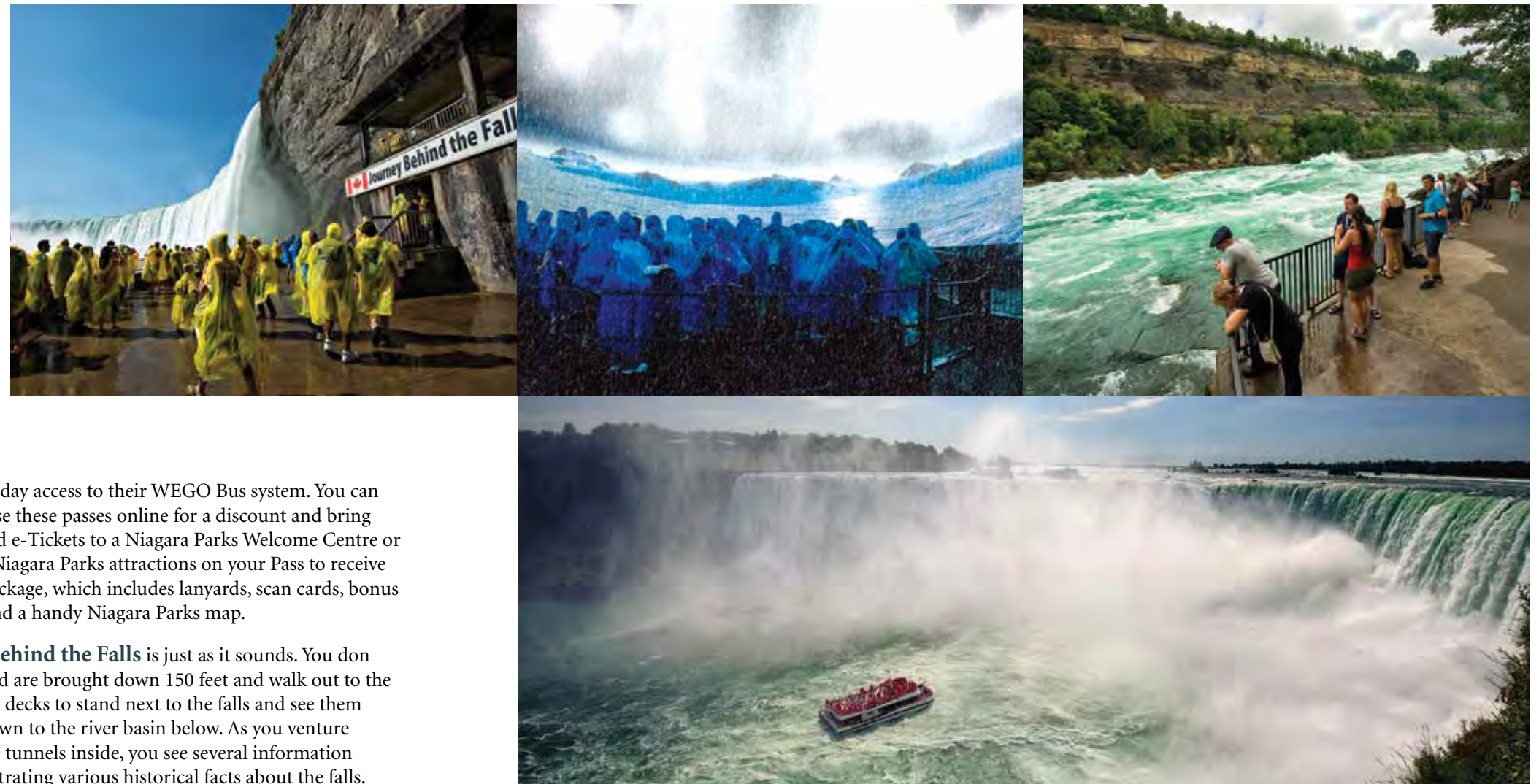


hotels, and more! You'll find numerous arcades, wax museums, haunted houses, souvenir shops, dinosaur miniature golf, and great dining options along the way.

As you make your way down Clifton Hill, you can begin to hear the roar of the falls. You'll start to feel the spray of water from the falls just a few short blocks away. Some tourists walk with umbrellas and others with rain ponchos, but others just take in the mist as a badge of honor. Walking closer to the falls, the roar intensifies and the view is just breathtaking.

On the Canadian side, you can easily view the falls that make up Niagara Falls: the American Falls, the Bridal Veil Falls, and the Canadian, or Horseshoe, Falls. At night, the falls are illuminated in a rainbow of colors.

By far, the best bang for your buck is the **Niagara Falls Adventure Pass**. It includes admission to four top attractions: Journey Behind the Falls, Niagara's Fury (4D multi-sensory movie), White Water Walk, and Hornblower Niagara Cruises,



■ From left to right: Journey Behind the Falls, Niagara's Fury, the White Water Walk, Hornblower Niagara Cruise.  
Photography: Courtesy of The Niagara Parks Commission

as well as 2-day access to their WEGO Bus system. You can pre-purchase these passes online for a discount and bring your printed e-Tickets to a Niagara Parks Welcome Centre or one of the Niagara Parks attractions on your Pass to receive your full package, which includes lanyards, scan cards, bonus coupons, and a handy Niagara Parks map.

**Journey Behind the Falls** is just as it sounds. You don ponchos and are brought down 150 feet and walk out to the observation decks to stand next to the falls and see them crashing down to the river basin below. As you venture through the tunnels inside, you see several information points, illustrating various historical facts about the falls. Within these tunnels, you can walk out to gated landings that let you actually stand behind the falls. Just amazing!

The **Hornblower Niagara Cruise** gets you as close as possible to the falls. (Be prepared to get wet!) This thrilling tour takes you along the American Falls and Bridal Veil Falls and into the center of the Horseshoe Falls to experience these wonders falls firsthand. *(The best time to schedule the Hornblower Niagara Cruise and Journey Behind the Falls is first thing in the morning when the lines are shorter.)*

**Niagara's Fury** is a 4D movie experience that walks you through the history of Niagara Falls and how they came to be. You'll feel the ground beneath your feet rumble, feel the spray and bubble of the river, and view the most awe-inspiring visuals illustrating how nature formed these wondrous falls. *(Book Journey Behind the Falls and then Niagara's Fury right after since they are both located at the Table Rock Centre.)*

Finally, the **White Water Walk** takes you right next to these class 6 rapids (making them the most dangerous). You take an elevator ride down to a boardwalk and stand

right next to these amazing white-capped rapids. There are two observation areas, which offer breathtaking views of this natural phenomenon. *(If you are venturing to the White Water Walk, just know it is several miles away from the other attractions. Rather than walk, it's probably best to hop on the WEGO bus via the Purple Line to get there.)*

There are so many hotels in the area. Your best bet is to find one close to the falls. Parking tends to get a little pricey, but if you stay at a hotel off Clifton Hill or on Victoria Avenue, you can easily walk to the activities in Niagara Centre. *(And if you purchase the Niagara Falls Adventure Pass, you can utilize the WEGO bus system as part of your package!)*

Niagara Falls has now become our family's favorite vacation destination. In the words of my favorite 10-year-old: "It's the coolest place ever!"

## HELPFUL LINKS:

**Niagara Parks** *(purchase the Niagara Falls Adventure Pass here):*  
niagaraparks.com

**Niagara Falls Tourism:**  
niagarafallstourism.com

**Tourism Niagara:**  
tourismniagara.com

**Niagara Canada:**  
visitniagaracanada.com

**Niagara Falls Bridges** *(provides real-time traffic updates on border crossings):*  
niagarafallsbridges.com



■ The Niagara Skywheel located on Clifton Hill provides amazing views of the falls.  
Photography: Shutterstock



# Marvelous Maple

Tapping Into Canada's Favorite Syrup

In case you haven't heard, maple syrup isn't just for pancakes and waffles anymore. The versatility of pure maple syrup is making its way into main dishes, side dishes, desserts, and even cocktails.

Canada produces 80 percent of the maple syrup sold in the world. Now enjoyed in 50 countries around the world, Canadian maple syrup products range from traditional maple syrup to maple butter, maple candy, and a full range of products.

Maple syrup is made from maple sap tapped at the beginning of the season. The maple harvest season only lasts for a period of about 12 to 20 days, usually from early March to the end of April.




## CHEWY MAPLE ENERGY BITES

Number of servings: 48 bites

These chewy and low-fat snacks are a delicious alternative to store-bought energy bars. They are easy to eat on-the-go and provide the necessary fuel to keep you going those long distances. For variation, top these snacks with dried fruit and nuts.

### Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3/4 cup maple sugar
- 1/3 cup  pure maple syrup from Canada
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 2 egg whites
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 ripe banana, mashed with a fork
- Pieces of nuts and dried fruit for garnish

### Instructions

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a medium-sized bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and cinnamon. In another bowl, use an electric mixer to combine the maple sugar with the canola oil and maple syrup. Add the egg whites and beat until smooth and uniform. Gradually fold in the dry ingredients. Then stir in lemon zest and banana. Drop a heaping teaspoon of thick batter onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, leaving 2" of space between each. Add one or two pieces of nuts or dried fruit to center of each disc, if desired. Bake, one sheet at a time, for about 8 minutes or until the bottom of the cookies has browned.

Maple syrup information and recipe courtesy of [purecanadamaple.com](http://purecanadamaple.com)

# FLORIDA VACATION IDEAS TO MAKE EVERYONE HAPPY



Photography: BPT

(BPT) - In one of the world's great ironies, planning a vacation can be one of the most stressful and vacation-demanding activities you can take on - especially if you have kids. With everyone clamoring to do something different, finding the perfect spot can feel impossible. The simple solution? Choose a vacation destination that has something for everyone.

How does one reach this theoretical vacation utopia? Head to Central Florida (and no, we're not talking about Disney - yet). We're talking about Polk County, which sits smartly in the middle of the state, connecting you and your family to every "Florida" thing under the sun. On top of reaching epic crowd-pleaser status, you'll be able to do it all for less, without the traffic and tourist traps. Check out a few highlights from our "stay here, play everywhere" plan.

*For the person who wants to golf:*

### STREAMSONG

If you're traveling with a golf enthusiast, do not leave Streamsong off your list. The resort boasts two courses considered masterpieces within the golf community: breathtaking landscapes designed for beautiful walkability by renowned architects Bill Coore, Ben Crenshaw, and Tom Doak. Peppered with dramatic dunes, twisting fairways, and verdant greens, Streamsong offers two of the best links-style golf courses in the country, according to *Golf Digest*.

*For the child in everyone:*

### LEGOLAND FLORIDA RESORT

Did you know the largest LEGOLAND in the country is located in Winter Haven, Florida? More than 150 acres of this imagination-expanding theme park are waiting to be explored, featuring live shows, "pink-knuckle" roller coasters, a water park, and dozens of other attractions. Although the park is geared towards kids 2-12, there's definite appeal to anyone who grew up with these iconic plastic bricks.

For the full experience, spend a night at LEGOLAND's new 152-room lakefront hotel. While parents relax, kids can work alongside Master Model Builders, hit the pool, and hunt for treasure in their LEGO-themed rooms loaded with hidden surprises. Among other perks, you'll beat the crowds with early admission to the park.

*For the water lovers:*

### THE LAKES (ALL 550+ OF THEM)

Central Florida has more than 135 square miles of lakes and a boatload of ways to enjoy them. Paddleboard through Winter Haven's Chain, a family of sun-dappled lakes connected by a series of canals. Slice through swampland in an airboat on Lake Kissimmee. Soar above the water on a gravity-defying flyboard. Looking for something more low key? Rent a pontoon boat, pack a picnic, and enjoy a sunset cruise. We could keep going.

*For those in search of gators:*

### CIRCLE B BAR RESERVE

Walk, hike, or bike through nature trails encircling lakeside habitats and cypress groves. Alligators, otters, bald eagles, and marsh hares are common sights, and the entire reserve is consistently recognized as one of the best birdwatching locales in the state. Ranked one of the Great Places to See Wildlife by *USA Today*, this place is a photographer's dream.

*As promised, everything else:*

Rent a car and squeeze the most out of your Sunshine State vacation. You'll be able to hit Florida's coastal beaches and major cities like Tampa and Orlando in about an hour.

- Go ahead, do Disney. Mickey's famous parks and resorts are only a 30-minute drive away.
- Satisfy thrill seekers with some of the best roller coasters in the country. Universal Studios, Islands of Adventure, and Busch Gardens are each less than an hour away.
- Surf, sun, and white-sand beaches are waiting for you on either coast.
- Flex your cultural muscle with great art museums in Tampa/St. Pete, including the largest collection of Salvador Dali works outside of Europe.

Head to [visitcentralflorida.org](http://visitcentralflorida.org) for even more details and start planning today!

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■ Moraine Lake, Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada.

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