

Relax, you're going to Floridaaaaa!

If you only read one thing in getting ready, read and take this Inside Scoop with you. It's packed with tips to ease you on down the road.

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a point of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Don't Leave Home...

...without insurance. It's common for Canadians to assume health care in the US is similar—but there's one big difference. It's a business that will charge you for even the tiniest of bandages. We strongly recommend Maritime Travel medical and cancellation/interruption insurance.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats & upgrades
- advance information/tickets for attractions
- cancellation/interruption & medical insurance, particularly for "snowbirds"
- handling car rental pressure when you're there
- the differences between home rentals & hotels.

Maritime Travel

We Know Travel Best.™

Maritime Travel

Inside Scoop: Florida

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

Now you've booked your getaway, start on the relaxation and the fun, but be prepared. It may sound carefree to be spontaneous, but plan ahead for benefits like seat selection, discounts and the best times to visit (and avoid) attractions. Some helpful tips:

- We know you want value for money in balancing choices and amenities with your budget. No matter what, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are only requests, such as for an oceanview room. These are premium (why upgrade fees apply).
- If you'll visit theme parks, talk with your counsellor as there are *many* combinations of tickets and packages (sometimes "Canadian resident" packages). Ask your counsellor about VIP tours and FASTPASS+ allowing "fast" access to rides: Disney World uses surge pricing—you pay more to go popular days and times kids are off school. Consider other parks: SeaWorld, Discovery Cove, Aquatica and LEGOLAND Florida Water Park and Beach Retreat (approximately 1hr drive from Orlando, between Tampa/Kissimmee)
- *Never* buy tickets or coupons online from resellers—we've heard stories from unhappy people who thought they got a deal but at the park, surprise! Besides the time you'll waste, and mailing charges for scam tickets, parks will refuse entry. You'll pay, again, more than you'd have booked with your counsellor. Booking ahead means less cash is needed onsite.

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags: put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery; over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers. Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml (3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often at airport screening). You may take baby formula or milk if a child aged 2 and under (0-24 months) travels with you. Transport Canada requires one adult to travel for every child under 2.

Items regular travellers pack in carry-on: pens/notebook, disinfectant hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg over borders). Permitted in carry-on: cell phones, laptops, disposable razors, canes and nail clippers. Items you can't take on include corkscrews and sports gear such as golf clubs, baseball bats, and racquets. Check your airline for restrictions

Internet service is available all over the state (and hotels). Most hotels provide hair dryers (so save that room for bringing great deals back) See www.visitflorida.com for local events, maps and updated weather.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—having patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through anything!

Eliminate Car Rental Surprises

Some 95% of travellers to Florida book cars through us so we've got lots of experience and have heard many stories of mysterious happenings when clients get to the counters. **Remember:** car rental companies make money selling onsite upgrades. If you've planned your needs with your counsellor (including drop fees to return the car to a different location) then you're met onsite with glossy photos, you'll pay extra if you upgrade. If you decline and the company is out of your previously chosen car (surprise!) they *must* give you an upgrade without any added fee. Also, don't be persuaded onsite to buy insurance. IF asked to sign an electronic tablet, *ensure* you're not charged for "loss damage waiver" even if you've verbally declined. Before leaving Canada, check your credit card benefits and your own car insurance, and ask your counsellor. The minimum age at many companies is 21 (for an extra fee). **Tip:** Most companies charge for transponders, so buy your own SunPass, move it among vehicles and top it up (and save for next year). Or get a SunPass Mini Sticker transponder—both are cheaper than car rental companies. Sold widely, at Welcome Centers and retailers such as CVS and www.sunpass.com/displayPurchaseTransponderAgreement. **Not renting?** Need airport transfers? Ask your counsellor about airport shuttles and taxis.

Your Airline

As your plane might be coming in from elsewhere and delayed, confirm your flight's departure. CATSA can prohibit items as security risks www.catsa.gc.ca/home and note, "Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and **contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).**" Airline staff are on duty some 2-3hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in (and bag-check) closes 1hr before departure. If late, you're not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served. **Baggage:** Size/weight restrictions for checked and carry-on varies: check with the airline. **Entry & Departure:** Everyone must have a valid passport www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport. Keep a copy of the ID pages or snap a cell picture. Know your exemptions and limits for items you're bringing back www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html such as on duty free alcohol.



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips at www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops

- Your sense of adventure & humour!

Take a Nature Break

There's so much to see, one reason why Florida is ideal for long vacations and appeals to all ages. Rather than trying to see everything and to save driving, plan trips in a radius around you—you'll make new discoveries and find wonderful less commercial attractions, such as the ultra-calming conservatory **Butterfly World** in Coconut Creek with aviaries for tropical birds and gardens. www.butterflyworld.com

Another wonder is **turtle conservation**: <https://conserveturtles.org> in Gainesville, www.gumbolimbo.org in Boca Raton, www.marinelife.org in Juno Beach, www.navarrebeachseaturtles.org Navarre Beach and Indialantic's www.seaturtlespacecoast.org.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadian citizens: Emergency? See <http://travel.gc.ca/assistance/emergency-info>, call Global Affairs 1-800-387-3124 or 1-613-996-8885 (collect if needed), email sos@international.gc.ca.

Wherever I Hang My Hat...

By now, you and your counsellor will have discussed and booked exactly what you want; hotel vacation or convenient self-catering such as a house or condo. While there's usually no daily maid or room service in home-style accommodations, you'll enjoy cost-effective private amenities and space (maybe a private pool?) which are solid advantages when travelling with children and/or family members and friends.

Chose a Hotel?

Hotels offer worry-free vacations—some offer cost-saving efficiency suites with mini-kitchens, but if you can, also dine out (portions are big enough to share) You'll be spoiled with the choices available from luxury hotels or value-for-money motels (you can bring pets to some). For families, consider upgrading to a suite—that extra room allows privacy (and sanity). On the off-chance your room isn't ready when you arrive, start on the fun. Pack swimsuits in carry-on (with sunscreen and hats) or shed clothes, head to the pool or beach: your hotel's front desk will hold luggage.

Home Rental: Décor, Facilities & Equipment

You'll be given directions to a Welcome Center to pick up keys and directions to your vacation home and asked for a credit card deposit: we suggest not giving cash as those are mailed later by cheque (and might take weeks). All units are cleaned before arrivals but if you have a concern, contact the rental office immediately. If you'd like to arrange cleaning during your stay (oh yes, you're on vacation!) arrange it on arrival.

If you lose your key, you may need a locksmith (can be costly) so be careful: it's not as simple as replacing a hotel room key. Residences are decorated by the owners, so just as your taste differs from another, furniture and kitchen equipment varies from unit to unit. All are equipped with enough cutlery, dishes, towels and sheets for the people per beds. Units often do not have extra sheets or towels, so you might need to do laundry. Washers and dryers are available. Note that while kitchens are equipped with standard equipment, you'll find limited supplies of dish cloths (1), tea towels (1 or 2). As well, some appliances or gadgets you might be used to at home may not be here (i.e. blender, toaster oven).

You're expected to supply your own paper products, so other than toilet paper in the bathroom(s) when you arrive, bring or buy toilet paper—it's not standard equipment. Other items you may need to buy or wish to bring from home:

- paper towels, favourite hand/bath soap, personal toiletries, beach towels,
- salt, pepper, spices, sugar, coffee/tea, favourite specialty condiments,
- dish detergent, laundry soap/fabric softener.

Telephones: Most residences have telephones (good for local calls) but you may need to use your credit card. Check with your site's rental office. Otherwise, you might prefer to get roaming packages with your cell phone provider.

Pools: Not all pools have heaters: these must be requested when booking as the charge is pre-booked and paid through your counsellor. While heaters may be on and working, if the temperature drops below 50F/10C degrees, heaters can automatically shut off. No heater heats water to "bath temperature." In most cases the temperature will be mid-70'sF (~23C). If there's a pool cover, it's needed to keep the pool warm; put it on when the pool isn't in use, particularly evenings. Note that any pre-payment is non-refundable, even if the weather becomes unseasonably cold and you don't go out as often as you'd like.

\$\$ Accepted Everywhere

There are numerous banks and all will exchange money and accept Canadian credit and debit cards (try a drive-through!). Be aware of debit withdrawal fees and notify your credit card company of the dates you'll be away. Dress codes are casual but if you need a special outfit, this is the place to buy it. There are great bargains even given the exchange.

Tip: start at the sales racks—there are so many stores and rapid turnover of styles.

Going to the parks? See Maritime Travel's Inside Scoops for both Disney World and Universal Orlando.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don't let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue's local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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