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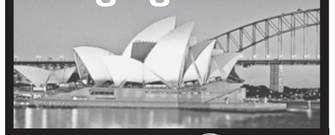
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Santa Monica's top 25 free attractions

CALIFORNIA DREAMING: Close to LA, but a world away in feel, Santa Monica is exciting, but a trip there needn't break the bank

SOME of Santa Monica's top hotels are welcoming guests with a Sun, Sea, Save promotion, offering travellers a third night free and a variety of gratis attraction passes: here's some more stuff to enjoy in Southern California's seaside capital of cool.

1. Grab a towel, sun block and a good book and head out to picturesque Santa Monica Beach, which stretches for 3.5 miles between Venice and Malibu.

2. Take a stroll on Santa Monica Pier, hailed as the oldest pier on the West Coast of the United States. Featured in the Oscar-winning movie, Forrest Gump, the Pier is open all year round and is perfect for viewing a sunset or taking a romantic stroll.

3. Pay a visit to Third Street Promenade by evening. Street performers and entertainers light up this pedestrian-only boulevard with the sound of drums, acoustic guitars, and tambourines. Stop to watch acrobats, dancers, psychic cats and bubble blowers.

4. Window shop along Montana Avenue, a 10-block open-air, retail destination frequented by discerning visitors and affluent Angelenos. Lined with boutiques, celebrities come to get coffee, lunch with friends, or shop for the latest in furnishings and skin care.

5. Walk down Main Street to discover quintessential beach life with a hip, urban edge. Peruse the lively and eclectic boutiques, chic clothing stores and designer showrooms.

6. Sway to the tunes at the Twilight Dance Series on the Santa Monica Pier featuring free evening concerts in the summer from some of your favourite musicians.

7. Make it a summer movie night at a drive-in movie on the Santa Monica Pier. Offered Thursday evenings in September, movies are projected onto a huge screen in the open air.

8. Visit one of Santa Monica's three farmers' markets. Choose from the Third Street and Arizona Market, the Santa Monica Airport Market or the Main Street Market for organic produce and plenty of edibles.

9. Indulge your ears with "Jazz on the Lawn" at Santa Monica City Hall.

10. Enjoy gardens, public art, volleyball, beach tennis, and a playground at the newly unveiled Annenberg Community Beach House.

11. Explore the Pico Boulevard neighborhood with its varied mix of shopping and attractions including a planetarium, Santa Monica College's performing arts venues, boutiques, galleries, and dining options.

12. Cosy up to a series of free events in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Santa Monica Pier. Visitors can enjoy "Lalop at the Pier," "Sideshow at the Pier," "School's Out!" and "La Monica Ballroom Redux" until September.

13. Flex your muscles at the original Muscle Beach, which beckons visitors to test their strength and work on your beach body in an open-air gym along a three-acre stretch.

14. Relax and unwind with a free yoga session in Santa Monica Park.

15. The South Bay Bicycle Trail runs for 22 miles alongside the Los Angeles coast from Will Rogers State Beach to Torrance Co. Beach and provides a unique way to see a long stretch of Pacific coastline and get some exercise.

16. Serve in a game of volleyball at Santa Monica's many volleyball courts, where several US Olympic beach volleyball competitors have trained. Adjacent to the pier, a row of volleyball courts is available to the public on a first come, first serve basis.

17. Hunt for Santa Monica's many green-friendly businesses. Decals in storefronts show that they meet the "green" requirements.

18. Immerse yourself in the arts at Bergamot Station. Visit over 35 contemporary art galleries, studios, and architecture design firms.

19. Explore the Santa Monica Museum of Art's innovative exhibits that foster diversity, and pivotal moments in the history of contemporary art and history.

20. Stop by Camera Obscura – a lifesize, walk-through pinhole camera – only one of three in the US along Palisades Park.

21. Embark on a self-guided tour with the Santa Monica Design District Map, available at any of the three Santa Monica Visitors Centre locations.

22. Visit legendary McCabe's Guitar Shop for live concerts and strum a vintage guitar. Opened in 1958, McCabe's specialises in acoustic and folk instruments and offers thousands.

23. Come and see where historic Route 66 begins! Visit the spot that is home to the plaque of the original US highway that ran from Chicago to Los Angeles.

24. Pick up a Santa Monica Art Trek Map which offers a comprehensive guide to public art works spread around the City.

25. Music to your ears. The award winning Santa Monica Symphony presents four concerts a year at no charge at the Santa Monica Civic Auditorium.

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ST MARGARET'S LODGE
Nice hotel in Forest area. Close to scenic cliff paths & bays. Ideal for exploring the island. Halfboard upgrade only £13pp per night

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2 May - 31 May	£159	£189	£219	£269
1 June - 4 Oct	£179	£209	£239	£299
5 Oct - 31 Oct	£139	£159	£179	£199
1 Nov - 16 Dec	£109	£129	£149	£199

Includes taking your own car on the ferry for FREE. Includes travel on a Saturday (Saturday travel = £30pp extra each way)

by AIR	2 nts	3 nts	4 nts	7 nts
2 May - 31 May	£209	£239	£269	£319
1 June - 4 Oct	£229	£259	£289	£349
5 Oct - 31 Oct	£189	£209	£229	£249
1 Nov - 16 Dec	£159	£179	£199	£249

Includes FREE hire car for first 2 nights. Extra nights hire car part £15 per night. Air holidays = £1pp ATOL fee.

ST PIERRE PARK HOTEL
Luxurious hotel set in 45 acres with health suite, indoor pool, golf course. Excellent food & service. Halfboard upgrade only £20pp per night

by SEA	2 nts	3 nts	4 nts	7 nts
2 May - 10 July	£179	£219	£259	£379
11 July - 30 Sept	£239	£299	£359	£499
1 Oct - 31 Oct	£159	£189	£219	£299
1 Nov - 16 Dec	£139	£169	£199	£249

Includes taking your own car on the ferry for FREE. Includes travel on a Saturday (Saturday travel = £30pp extra each way)

by AIR	2 nts	3 nts	4 nts	7 nts
2 May - 10 July	£229	£269	£309	£399
11 July - 30 Sept	£259	£319	£379	£499
1 Oct - 31 Oct	£209	£239	£269	£349
1 Nov - 16 Dec	£189	£219	£249	£299

Includes FREE hire car for first 2 nights. Extra nights hire car part £15 per night. Air holidays = £1pp ATOL fee.

BOOKING HOTLINE: 0871 871 0071
Holiday Getaways ATOL 3258. All prices per person based on 2 sharing. Booking fee £10 per person. ATOL FEE (air Holidays) £1 per person.

JERSEY DEALS from only £139
only for new bookings made 2May-8May

Waters Edge Hotel ★★★
Superb hotel. Dramatic location overlooking beach and sea at Bouley Bay. Short drive from St Helier. Great food. Incredible views from front facing rooms.

By FERRY and take your car for FREE
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by SEA	2 nts	3 nts	4 nts	7 nts
2 May - 31 May	£139	£169	£199	£289
1 June - 31 July	£169	£209	£249	£369
1 Aug - 31 Oct	£199	£239	£279	£399

(Saturday travel = £30pp extra each way)

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ARRIVALS

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CENTARA Hotels & Resorts is offering a host of benefits and upgrades at properties in Phuket, Krabi, Trat and Samui on a seven-night Exotic Summer Holiday Package. Available until October 31, 2009, with prices from around £192 to £1,093, the package includes: seven nights' accommodation with buffet breakfast; complimentary welcome drink on arrival and a bottle of sparkling wine in the room; complimentary round-trip airport transfer; complimentary set dinner on one night for up to two people; complimentary 45-minute massage at SPA Cenvaree for one person; complimentary room stays for children under 12 years of age sharing parents' room and bedding. The deal is available at Centara Grand Beach Resort & Villas Krabi; Centara Grand Beach Resort Samui; Centara Villas Samui; Centara Villas Phuket; Centara Karon Resort Phuket; Centara Kata Resort Phuket; Centara Chaan Talay Resort & Villas Trat. Details: www.centarahotelsresorts.com/ExoticSummer

LOCAL DEPARTURES

DIRECT Holidays have the following deals available from Scotland: seven nights s/c in Kos from £179, staying at the three-star Chrysoula Apartments in Kefalos, departing Glasgow May 21; seven nights s/c in Crete from £225, staying at the four-star San Constantin Apartments in Gouves, flying from Edinburgh on May 19; seven nights in Tunisia from £385 all inclusive, staying at the three-star Sahara Beach Hotel in Skanes, departing Glasgow on May 24; seven nights in Egypt from £459 all-inclusive, staying at the five-star Three Corners Kiroseiz Resort Hotel in Sharm El Sheikh, leaving from Glasgow on May 21; seven nights in Tenerife from £345 all-inclusive, staying at the three-star Aparthotel Tamaino Tropical in Puerto De Santiago, leaving Glasgow on May 15. Details: 0871 664 7764 or www.directholidays.co.uk

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Complete Canada

■ by SIMON YOUNG

There's more to Canada than Mounties, Maple Syrup and Moose. Mountains for a start. The Rockies are justifiably world famous for their stunning beauty and opportunities to experience the great outdoors and abundant wildlife. The Rockies are also home to some of the world's finest skiing resorts as well as providing unforgettable trekking in the summer months.

The country is huge –4,000 miles from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic coast but its population is only half that of Britain, so getting away from it all is simple.

Country lovers can sample the national parks, go whale watching, polar bear spotting or on an expedition to track down grizzly bears.

While City lovers will be inspired. From Vancouver in the west to Quebec in the east, Canada's cities are vibrant, sophisticated with lots of historical sites to take in.

In short it's a holiday paradise.

And no trip to Canada would be complete without a visit to Niagara Falls. This natural wonder of the world is awe-inspiring. At 188ft high, they are not the world's largest falls but they are exceptionally wide and arguably the most beautiful.

Barrhead Travel's Canada Specialists offer tailor made holidays to Canada from all regional UK airports. City breaks, Self Drives, Rocky Mountaineer Rail Tours and Cruises are a small selection of whats on offer. 2010 is now on sale. Call for details! **www.canadatravelspecialists.com** and phone number **Freephone 0800 542 1516.**

Virgin Holidays **(www.virginholidays.co.uk)** offer trips across Canada and have an offer of seven nights including return flights from London to Toronto staying at the Oakes Hotel overlooking Niagara Falls for £943. Niagara itself is home to some great shops, a casino and wonderful restaurants.

One of the finest ways to explore this vast country is by train. And the most famous of all rail journeys here is the Rocky Mountaineer – a two day adventure from Vancouver, via Kamloops to Jasper with an overnight stop so you don't miss any of the untamed natural beauty. The trains come with huge observation cars to enhance the dramatic landscape

Titan Travel **(www.titantravel.co.uk)** have an impressive array of tours across Canada including a special Rocky Mountain Tour.

It takes in the Rocky Mountaineer train trip as well as three nights in Vancouver, and three nights in Banff, claimed by many to be North America's loveliest small town. This 11-day adventure starts at £1895.

Titan HiTours, the UK's number one award-winning escorted tour specialist offers 29 fully escorted tours to Canada including spectacular rail journeys. Their signature Canadian Rockies and Vancouver tour through the breathtaking Rocky Mountains, lasts 14 days and takes in sights such as Vancouver, Jasper, Lake Louise and Banff from £2015 per person.

To contact **Titan HiTours call 0800 988 5858** or visit **www.titanhitours.co.uk.**

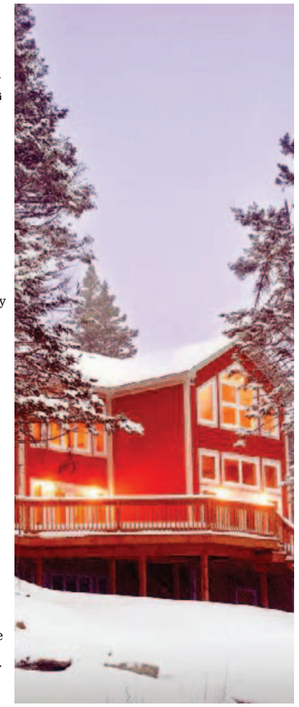
Kuoni **(www.kuoni.co.uk)** also offer some wonderful escorted tours of Canada, including their Eastern Explorer. This takes in the cities of Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, and Ottowa as well as unforgettable river trips in the Thousand Islands, options to go whale-watching at Tadoussac and a day out to Niagara Falls.

For those wanting a slice of old Canada, the place to head is Calgary in July. Calgary is an a dynamic city in the foothills of the Rockies and every summer "Stampede Fever" hits the city, as the world famous Calgary Stampede draws thousands to the 10-day rodeo and western celebration. Check out Bon Voyage **(www.bon-voyage.co.uk)** for great deals to this cowboy carnival and a raft of other excursions across the country.

Many tour operators offer inclusive flights in the Canadian packages, but it is straightforward to book your own flights from the UK and then internal flights to explore this vast country.

Air Canada **(www.aircanada.com/uk/en/home.html)** are the leading airline in the country for both domestic and international flights. They have return flights from Heathrow to Toronto from as little as £373.

(www.canadianaffair.com) have for the past 14 years been offering exceptionally good value trips to Canada and currently have offers on flights from Gatwick to Toronto at just £258 return. They also have fantastic hotel deals and provide a wide choice of train tours across Canada. Their Rocky Mountaineer vacation packages start at just £299.



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As the acknowledged leaders in escorted holidays and rated the UK's number one Canada specialist tour operator, you might expect us to offer more holidays with more choice of departure dates than any other British company. Well of course we do. But what really makes us unique is our attention to detail and service, from choice of itineraries to informed and caring tour managers, with the icing on the cake for Titan clients being the superior quality of our hotels. With our extensive knowledge of the country you will follow the best routes and not miss a single highlight. You deserve not to be disappointed, that is why we suggest you consult our brochure first. Below is a selection of our 29 award-winning tours to Canada.

Canadian Rockies and Vancouver
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- Stay in beautiful Banff with visits to Lake Louise and Victoria Glacier.

Grand Canadian Coast to Coast
17 days from £2195
- Encompass in one visit, the spirit and scenic beauty of Canada from east to west in this comprehensive tour.
- Visit the vibrant cities of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, with included city tours.
- Explore the beautiful city of Quebec, steeped in four centuries of French history and culture.
- Experience the magnificent Niagara Falls.
- Stay in the beautiful Rocky Mountain resorts Banff and Jasper, with visits to Lake Louise, Columbia Icefield and Maligne Lake.

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