



MEET ME IN MYRTLE: MEETINGS & RETREATINGS UP & DOWN THE GRAND STRAND

With sixty miles of breathtaking beachfront, an international airport with the capacity to welcome 2,200 passengers per day, 89,000 accommodation units at all price levels, and a modern convention center with 250,000 square feet of meeting space and an upscale adjoining hotel, the Myrtle Beach area is an ideal destination to host meetings and group gatherings.

Within the Myrtle Beach area's twelve distinct cities, meeting planners, tour operators, promoters, travel agents and wholesalers will be sure to find a meeting facility and accommodations to suit their needs. More than 20 of the area's hotels and resorts offer functional meeting facilities for groups ranging in size from 10 to 2,000.

For larger groups, the Myrtle Beach Convention Center boasts 250,000 square feet of flexible meeting space. Ranging from a 100,800-square-foot, column-free exhibition hall to 20 breakout meeting rooms and a 17,000 square foot ballroom, the Convention Center can accommodate the needs of most groups. The conveniently located space also offers the latest technology including wireless internet, cable, telecommunications, video conferencing, and an Integrated Services Digital Network. All of these amenities are complimented by accommodations provided by an adjoining, AAA Three-Diamond hotel.

"The Myrtle Beach area hosts hundreds of meetings and conventions each year," said Brad Dean, president and chief executive officer of the Myrtle Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. "The Grand Strand offers a wide array of meeting spaces and accommodations along with world-class golf, dining, entertainment and attractions to round out a meeting or group event."

When professionals can finally afford some downtime from their meetings, the Myrtle Beach area's world-famous ideal climate, wide sandy beaches, and more than 100 golf courses are the perfect relaxing and serene backdrop.

For those who must travel from out of town, the Myrtle Beach International Airport (MYR) makes it as easy as possible for travelers around the country to reach the Grand Strand. Carriers that service Myrtle Beach directly include: Allegiant Airlines, Continental, Delta/ASA/Comair, Direct Air, Northwest, Porter Airlines, Spirit Airlines, United and US Airways.

A MEETING PLANNER'S DREAM

WHERE TO LAY YOUR HEAD

One of the advantages of hosting a meeting in the Myrtle Beach area is the attractive array of lodging options available to groups. The Grand Strand's total tally of guest accommodations is more than 89,000, which includes hotel rooms, condos, beach cottages, golf villas and more. Of these, well over half are hotel rooms.

More than 3,400 hotel rooms – the majority on the oceanfront or with ocean views – are within one mile of the convention center. But one thing to remember when considering Myrtle Beach as a meeting locale is that the area includes 60 miles of coastline, with excellent lodging properties and meeting facilities from one end to the other including waterfront accommodations along the Intracoastal Waterway. Planners can choose from all-inclusive resorts, oceanfront high-rises, luxurious condos, tree-shaded golf villas – even plantations!

A GRAND TIME FOR THE GROUP

Beyond the beach and golf, the destination's biggest draw is its plethora of "there's so much to do!" options. It's a refrain heard time and time again that keeps visitors coming back year after year. This is great news for meeting planners, who know that after-hours activities are nearly as important as the meetings themselves.

A Little Bit of Everything

Two terrific starting points are Broadway at the Beach and Barefoot Landing, best described as multi-faceted entertainment complexes (for those who find shopping, dining, nightlife and attractions entertaining – and who doesn't?). Located in Myrtle Beach, Broadway at the Beach is one of the largest complexes of its kind in the Southeast. Visitors can make the rounds at over 100 specialty shops, 10 nightclubs and 20 restaurants. Barefoot Landing, which lies along the Intracoastal Waterway in North Myrtle Beach, offers equally enticing entertainment options. Barefoot blends the beauty of nature with miles of boardwalk, 100-plus specialty shops and 15 waterfront restaurants.

Outdoor Entertainment

Warm-weather months usher in an entire season of entertaining activities, including playtime at Family Kingdom Amusement Park & Water Park, Wild Water & Wheels and Myrtle Waves water parks and other fun spots. Some are even open year-round, like NASCAR SpeedPark, where you can tear up the tracks in pint-sized racecars.

Many people find pleasure in exploring a destination's landscape or learning about its history and culture. One of the best ways to do this is through a narrated tour, which along the Grand Strand can be in a jeep, pontoon boat, riverboat or motorcoach. Among the fascinating places to explore are antebellum plantations including Hopsewee and Hampton, the 17,500-acre wildlife refuge Hobcaw Barony, the area's two spectacular oceanfront state parks and world-renowned Brookgreen Gardens. Brookgreen is home to more than 900 works by 300 of the greatest names in American sculpture, past and present, with a backdrop for these magnificent works is 50-plus acres of beautiful Lowcountry gardens.

Shopping

Whether it's browsing through chic boutiques, sniffing out brand-name bargains at an outlet store or picking up souvenirs, nearly everyone wants time to shop. Hot shopping spots along the Grand Strand include the brand new upscale shopping complex The Market Common, the area's two expansive Tanger Outlet Centers; Myrtle Beach Mall, Inlet Square and Coastal Grand malls; the aforementioned Broadway at the Beach and Barefoot Landing; and scores of charming Lowcountry shops like the famous Pawleys Island Hammock Shops.

Dining

One of the pleasures of traveling is having the opportunity to sample different cuisines. Along the Grand Strand, that pleasure can be doubled – many times over – thanks to an abundance of fine restaurants.

Since Myrtle Beach spans 60 miles of coastline, it's no surprise that seafood is one of the main entrées. Near the state's northern border is a cache of Calabash-style restaurants, where the seafood is lightly battered, deep-fried and piled high for hearty appetites. This popular style of seafood also has made its way onto menus farther down the Strand. In Murrells Inlet, nicknamed "the seafood capital of South Carolina," diners can feast on succulent seafood fresh from the boats while enjoying a spectacular view of the inlet.

Those craving a lively and fun atmosphere can get their fill in the area's famous theme restaurants, including Hard Rock Cafe, the House of Blues, Planet Hollywood, NASCAR Cafe, Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville and others. Finally,

discriminating diners will find a delightful selection of fine-dining establishments and chic cafes, where they can enjoy superb food in a relaxed atmosphere.

Golf

The name of the game is golf, and one of the most exciting places in the world to play it is the Myrtle Beach area of South Carolina, home to 100-plus spectacular courses. Grand Strand courses bear the signatures of some of the best golfers and course designers in the business, among them Robert Trent Jones, Jack Nicklaus, Pete Dye, Gary Player, Arnold Palmer, Tom Fazio, Greg Norman and Davis Love III. All have taken great pains to protect the natural habitat and wildlife indigenous to the area while creating layouts that are both beautiful and technically challenging. Golfers can tee off beneath moss-draped live oaks and towering long-leaf pines; play alongside the Intracoastal Waterway, Waccamaw River or Atlantic Ocean; catch a glimpse of an antebellum plantation, or a resident alligator. The views will take your breath away.

ADVENTURES IN TEAM BUILDING

Today's meeting groups are constantly on the lookout for exciting and innovative ways to promote team building among participants. The Myrtle Beach area's coastal setting and abundance of outdoor activities make the destination ideal for team-building activities.

With miles of public beaches, two oceanfront state parks, hiking and biking trails, and the ocean, rivers and marshlands, the opportunities are endless. Embark on nature expeditions, camping trips, kayak excursions, deep-sea fishing trips or parasailing. Pump it up with laser tag competitions, Jet Skiing or high-performance Grand Prix racing. Tackle an entire amusement park or a water park. Rent scooters or segways. The only limit is your imagination.

The Myrtle Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau can help facilitate your group's team-building activities by putting you in touch with team building professionals for ideas and opportunities.

For additional information on the Myrtle Beach Area or to receive the Myrtle Beach Meeting and Group Planner Guide, visit www.VisitMyrtleBeach.com or call 1.888.Myrtle1.

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