



Myrtle Beach

Scenic golf for every level

By Sandra Chambers • Photography by Fritz Tolentino

Years ago, Myrtle Beach, S.C., was a popular golf destination for all-male buddy trips, corporate executive outings and bachelor parties. Men would make their annual golf trek, leaving the wife and kids behind. Today, visitors are discovering a family-friendly golf mecca that also offers upscale entertainment, a bustling nightlife, outstanding restaurants, shopping and sandy beaches where flip-flops are always in style.

Myrtle Beach is unique for its ability to accommodate any level of golfer.

“For those serious golfers who want to play the best courses, the Myrtle Beach area is home to the highest concentration of championship courses in the world,” says Chris King, communications director for Myrtle Beach Golf Holiday. “Many of our courses are also women- and family-friendly, offering five sets of tees.”

Nicknamed Golf Town USA and Seaside Golf Capital of the World, the Myrtle Beach area offers golfers their pick of 100-plus courses stretching along 95 kilometres of white sandy beaches that have become known as the “Grand Strand.”

Along this Strand, golfers will discover three unique areas. The North Strand is quieter. Possum Trot, a budget-friendly family course with a range of challenges from novice to expert, offers open fairways with rolling terrain. Hole No. 18 (a.k.a. “Oh, No”) is a great finish to the course.

The Central Strand includes the city of Myrtle Beach. If what you want is great golf and round-the-clock action, the Central Strand is for you. In addition to ocean waves lapping at your toes, there’s a plethora of restaurants, nightlife, shopping and entertainment venues. Check out the

Grande Dunes Resort Club. Positioned on a high bluff with a spectacular view of the Intracoastal Waterway, this course is friendly to all skill levels with its six sets of tees.

The Southern Strand is known for its upscale, high-end golf courses, accommodations and dining, and is far removed from the hustle and bustle associated with Myrtle Beach. For a pure taste of the Old South, with live oak-lined courses and salty marsh aromas, try Willbrook Plantation; the course is built atop a former rice plantation.

When the golf clubs have been retired for the day, head to the two-kilometre boardwalk in Myrtle Beach where you can soar 60 metres above the Atlantic Ocean in the glass-enclosed SkyWheel. Spend a day or evening at Broadway at the Beach, checking out family attractions



Family-Friendly Golf

Myrtle Beach is home to an extensive “Kids Play Free” program. When accompanied by a paying adult, children 16 years and under can play for free on nearly 50 area courses from June through August. The largest father-son golf event in the world—the Father & Son Team Classic—also takes place in Myrtle Beach. The 17th annual family event is scheduled for July 24 to 26 this year.



Girlfriends’ Golf Getaway

Stay

At the Marriott Resort & Spa at Grande Dunes, which offers oceanfront-view hotel rooms or two-bedroom villas.

Play

- Grande Dunes Resort Course
- Pine Lakes Country Club
- The Dunes Golf and Beach Club

Relax

With a sports massage at the Grande Dunes Hibiscus Spa.

Eat

Treat yourself to dinner at The Brentwood Restaurant & Wine Bistro in Little River, serving low-country French cuisine in a beautiful, but supposedly haunted Victorian house.

Be entertained

Shop till you drop at Tanger Outlets and then enjoy a Broadway-style show at The Carolina Opry or Alabama Theatre.

like WonderWorks, Ripley’s Aquarium (with its moving pathway beneath swimming sharks and rays), Nascar SpeedPark, mini-golf, dining, movies and much more. Of course, South Carolina is all about pirates, so gather the family for a dinner show at The Pirates Voyage Fun, Feast and Adventure, with an original musical score by Dolly Parton. It scores big time with kids, and mom and dad will enjoy it just as much.

✈ **GETTING THERE** WestJet flies to Myrtle Beach twice a week from Toronto.



Just Don’t Call It “Putt-Putt”

Myrtle Beach takes its mini-golf seriously

Myrtle Beach is known for golf, but it has also earned the moniker “Miniature Golf Capital of the World.” There are more than 50 courses along the Grand Strand alone. Driving Route 17 from one end of the Grand Strand to the other, you’ll see everything from pirate ships and erupting volcanoes to fire-breathing dragons.

Whatever you do, don’t dare refer to miniature golf as “putt-putt golf” in this town. Here, miniature golf is a serious sport: Myrtle Beach is home to both the U.S. ProMiniGolf Association and the annual Masters National Pro Mini Golf Championship.

Must-plays along the Grand Strand

Hawaiian Rumble: Home to two national tournaments, this course is designed after the layout of the Hawaiian Islands, and it’s built around a volcano that erupts every 20 minutes.

Mutiny Bay: Pirates are a huge part of the history of the Carolinas and this course, set in a 17th-century town, teaches visitors about famous pirates at each hole.

Mount Atlanticus: Located in the heart of Myrtle Beach, this 75-foot-high course is based on the Lost City of Atlantis, winding through three storeys of an old office building. At the top, players are treated to amazing views of the Atlantic Ocean. —SC

Illustration by Guy Parsons