

A Winter Oasis On Sugary White Sands

(NAPSA)—A shaky economy doesn't have to mean shelving your family vacation. Instead, you can follow the lead of other budget-conscious travelers who have found ways to hit the road without breaking the bank.

A good first step is to find destinations offering discounted rates. For instance, you can save about 40 percent on accommodations as you soak up the rays at a top winter oasis: Florida's Emerald Coast.

Located on the upper Gulf Coast, the destination welcomes winter visitors with inviting temperatures averaging 72 degrees as well as gentle breezes. Unlike other seaside destinations, "value season" runs December through March. And while the area's preferred activity tends to be "relaxing and doing as little as possible," it also offers plenty of enticements. Here's a closer look for those looking to escape the wrath of Jack Frost:

Beautiful Beaches

Stretching 24 miles, the Emerald Coast has been voted "Best Beach in the South" for 13 consecutive years by readers of *Southern Living* magazine. The beaches provide seating for performances by dancing dolphins and sandpipers and picture-perfect sunrises and sunsets.

Delightful Sites

The area boasts family attractions such as the Gulfarium—home to creatures ranging from 600-pound seals to two-ounce clown fish—along with the U.S. Air Force Armament Museum, one of only three American museums dedicated to the display of Air Force weaponry. For more whimsical fun, the Emerald Coast Science Center is a child's science fantasy.



Engineered by Mother Nature: Warm weather seekers can find 297 sunny days per year on Florida's Gulf Coast of Destin, Fort Walton Beach and Okaloosa Island.

Great Golf

Ranked as one of the top 10 "Best Golf Towns in America" by *Golf Digest* magazine, the Emerald Coast offers challenging courses designed by world-renowned architects such as Fazio, Finger, Dye, Couples and Cupp. The area's 1,080 holes of golf can delight putters without being pricey on the wallet.

Gone Fishing

Hailed as the "World's Luckiest Fishing Village," Florida's Emerald Coast harbors the largest and most elaborately equipped charter boat fleet in the state. With more than 20 types of fish, first-time anglers and seasoned "old salts" can delight in deep-sea excursions for as little as \$25 a half day.

Dining Delights

From rickety-shack oyster bars and salt-air cafés to upscale restaurants, these eateries are simple in atmosphere yet spiced with character. Served up with the flavor of Southern hospitality, they are known for their "to-die-for" dishes.

For more information, visit www.destin-fwb.com or call (800) 322-3319.