



Rooms at Jupiter Beach Resort & Spa have a choice of views: the sea or the town, which is particularly pretty at night. JUPITER BEACH RESORT & SPA

Jupiter is family-friendly resort with ‘laid-back vibe’

Florida vacation getaway offers best of everything from amenities to food



ROCHELLE LASH
Checking in

At Jupiter Beach Resort & Spa, life is all about Florida basics at their best.

This vacation getaway excels in a family-centric lifestyle revolving around the Atlantic beachfront, burgers at the pool and water sports at the nearby Blueline Paddle & Surf Co.

It's a compact resort, so everything is steps from the beach. The kids have their own game room and occasional activities, like poolside movie nights. The resort features such grown-up indulgences as spa treatments and Happy Hour with live music on certain evenings. And Jupiter Beach Resort is also a hub for

weddings — an impressive 120 a year.

The growing community of Jupiter is at the northern tip of Palm Beach County. More casual and folksy than its glamorous neighbours Palm Beach or Boca Raton, Jupiter is great for informal dining and fun in the sun and sand. Still, there are exclusive enclaves, where celebs like Céline Dion and Tiger Woods have secluded mansions.

“It’s the laid-back vibe and natural beauty that make it special,” said Scott Schoenen, director of communications for Discover the Palm Beaches, which covers Delray Beach and Highland Beach in the south to Jupiter and Juno Beach in the north.

“Jupiter is so relaxed, you are totally on vacation with simple pleasures like fishing off the Juno Pier or playing with your dog on one of South Florida’s few pet-friendly beaches.”

Jupiter Beach Resort & Spa has a Caribbean look, with dark

mahogany furniture and banana-coloured walls. A nine-storey tower with about 200 rooms and suites, it is the most prominent seaside hotel in town. Every room has a private, glass-fronted balcony and a choice of views: the sea, which is always mesmerizing, or the town, which is particularly pretty at night.

The rooms also have fine Egyptian cotton sheets, pod coffee machines and comfy duvets. Outdoors, guests can enjoy hammocks swaying in the gardens, firepits perfect for s’mores and a beautiful heated pool surrounded by smart blue umbrellas, fountains and a bistro.

Fans of sports, sunshine and fresh air have it made. The Jupiter Beach Resort includes bicycles (good ones, with gears), one tennis court that is lit for night play and a fitness centre. The resort also works with Blueline Paddle & Surf Co., a hip surf shop that runs excursions and lessons on paddleboards and kayakers on the relatively quiet waters of the Intracoastal Waterway.

The spa at Jupiter Beach Resort is the place to be spoiled.

Among favourite services — especially popular as gifts — are the hybrid SweThai massage and the customized esthetics. The Ocean Restorative Facial hydrates and brightens the skin and the Signature Body Renewal boosts circulation with an exfoliation and a massage.

If you can’t tear yourself away from the beach — and there is no good reason to — the poolside Sandbar is an open-air bistro that serves cocktails and has a menu that features steak sandwiches, shrimp salad, fish tacos, lobster rolls and burgers.

Sinclair’s Ocean Grill has an open kitchen and windows on the ocean and pool. Starters include lobster-crab cakes, portobello mushroom with blue cheese and tuna carpaccio. The new dinner menu offers an elegant choice of Florida grouper and snapper, steaks, seared duck breast, seafood pasta and rack of lamb.

Jupiter Beach also does a full menu for room service. Imagine breakfast on the balcony of crab-cakes Benedict or blueberry pancakes. Perfect for families, Papa Luigi’s in-house pizzeria does a dozen toppings, including tiger shrimp, grilled sausage, pine nut pesto and jalapenos.

Jupiter has several unique attractions.

If you yearn for big-time baseball, Florida spring training of the Grapefruit League runs March 2 to April 2 in various locations around the state. At Jupiter’s Roger Dean Stadium,

IF YOU GO

Jupiter is 27 kilometres north of Palm Beach International Airport (Air Canada flies seasonally from Montreal and Toronto) and 110 kilometres north of Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport.

Jupiter Beach Resort & Spa: 800-228-8810, 866-943-0950, 561-746-2511; jupiterbeachresort.com; 5 N. A1A, Jupiter, Fla. It is part of the 15-hotel Opal Collection, which includes The Sagamore Resort in Saranac Lake, N.Y. and Lake Placid Lodge (a Relais & Châteaux).

Price: until Feb 13, hotel rooms \$290-\$550 U.S. per night, (rooms with two double beds can sleep up to four adults or children); suites cost more; \$25 resort fee covers beachfront and chairs, heated pool, steam rooms, Wi-Fi, bicycles, night-lit tennis court, 24-hour fitness room. Packages available with spa, meals. Valet parking, \$15, self-parking is free. Prices are higher during baseball’s spring training and spring break.

Blueline Paddle& Surf Co.: 561-744-7474, blueelinesurf.com; 997 N. Route A1A, Jupiter; paddle-boarding, surfing, kayaking; lessons and guides available.

Tourism: Discover The Palm Beaches: 800-833-5733, 561-233-3000, palmbeachfl.com; Visit Florida: 888-735-2872, visitflorida.com

the Miami Marlins play the St. Louis Cardinals on March 5 (floridagrapefruitleague.com or rogerdeanstadium.com).

The Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse (1860) is a local landmark that organizes climbing tours to the top. Sugar alert: The lighthouse’s Sweet Shop produces its own fudge (jupiterlighthouse.org).

The Loggerhead Marine Life Center is a fascinating animal rescue centre where marine biologists rehabilitate injured sea turtles. Visitors can observe the turtles in a series of outdoor tidal pools, but the big days are when the researchers release the healed turtles back into the sea. More than 1,000 people come to see this show of man-meets-nature (marinelife.org).

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