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The Five W's of the Perfect Beach Vacation

Travelled by [Jan Ross](#) on 31 July 2014 | [0 Comments](#)



Travelled By

[Jan Ross](#)



Jan Ross has been traveling since she was an infant as her father was a career Marine Corps officer and her family traveled the globe. ...[Find out more!](#)

I'm writing this article in a luxurious, seven bedroom beach house in Gulf Shores, Alabama courtesy of Relax on the Beach called Grand Paradise. It is so close to the Gulf of Mexico that we can step out our back door and, with approximately ten steps, have our feet in the white sand. It is so huge and elegant with its myriad bedrooms and bathrooms and flat screen televisions and fully equipped kitchen that we could live here forever. The two of us are rattling around in this huge house, never even using the expansive upstairs, thinking about how most of our extended family could fit in this house and how all the kid cousins would love the bunk bed room with their own television in the loft.

But we don't have to stay in a gorgeous, seven bedroom luxury beach house to enjoy the beach. Our son and daughter-in-law are actually across the street the beach and from us in the same neighborhood for the week in a charming, sunny yellow beach house aptly named Sunshine. It's not right on the water and it's much smaller but it's cozy and homey and quite, quite lovely.

We have stayed in fabulous, sprawling, luxury hotels in Hawaii and Mexico — hotels that were mere steps from an incredible beach and offered amenities that would boggle your mind. We have stayed in condos near the beach in Hilton Head and Isle of Palms and Destin. Then we've stayed in places like these wonderful beach houses. We enjoyed all those vacations equally. There is a beach vacation out there for everyone. *And everyone needs a beach vacation.* The sun, the sand, the smell of the air, the taste of fresh seafood just pulled out of the water, kids building sandcastles — yes, everyone needs a beach vacation.



Now, just how do you plan one?

Who?

First, think about who is going on the beach vacation. You might think that the bigger the family, the more expensive the vacation. But that isn't

necessarily true. If you have a big family, maybe you can share the cost of a beach house. Relax on the Beach in Gulf Shores offers a huge variety of beach houses in all sizes that would work for any size family. Split the cost of a gorgeous, beachfront condo or house, buy some groceries to make your own meals, and you have a pretty reasonable price for a beach vacation.



What?

If you have small kids in your group, they are honestly very happy playing on the beach for hours. There is no need to stress yourself out planning an elaborate vacation with tons of expensive things for them to do. But if you want to add a few activities to the family vacation, choose a place like the Wild Dunes Resort on Isle of Palms in South Carolina, with miles of unspoiled beaches, beautiful pools and several family friendly restaurants. It's also very close to Charleston where you can visit the aquarium, take a tour in a horse-drawn carriage, or take a cruise out to historic Fort Sumter.



When?

There are two aspects to this one. *When*, as in *can you leave on vacation at a moment's notice?* Hotels and resorts like to have full rooms. It means people are also spending money on food and amenities. So if they have empty rooms, you have some power to negotiate a better deal. Check the website, check online booking sites, then call the hotel or resort directly and see them what's the best they can do. You often get the best price by dealing directly with property. *When* can also refer to *when can you go?* Does it have to be when the kids are out of school? If you can travel in the low season, you're going to get the best prices. Fit in a beach vacation in May, late August or early September and you can get a great price. Many beach locations are really pleasant during those times with fewer crowds and lower prices. Try the Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort in Destin which offers plenty of hotel rooms, condos, and beach houses in addition to a beautiful beach, bike trails, and great shops and restaurants right on the property.

Where?

It's pretty obvious that you're not going to get a great deal during the high season when hotels and resorts make most of their money. You're also not going to get a great deal at the most popular beaches, unless you head to someplace like Door County Wisconsin during the off season. The beaches on Lake Michigan are truly an undiscovered paradise with clear, clean water and just as many sand dunes as the coastal beaches of the south. The United States has plenty of coastlines, so get out a map and check out some of the many beach areas.



Go to the library or the bookstore or browse the Internet for ideas instead of heading to the same beach location every year. You will be surprised at how unique and varied the beaches of the United States can be. From white sand to tan sand, from the cool, dark green Atlantic to the clear blue Gulf of Mexico, each is equally wonderful for a getaway. There are plenty of gorgeous beach areas that your family is going to love – and that you can afford.

Why?

Please. Do we even need this? Of course you want a beach getaway; doesn't everyone? Just ask your kids if they want to go to the beach. Now start planning.

Tell the world!

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