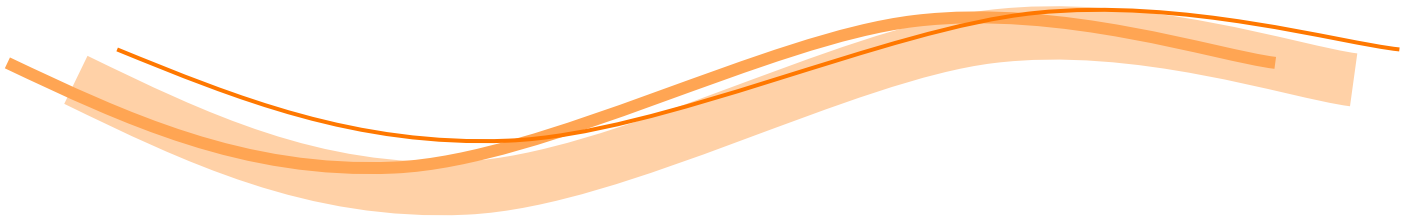




ST.PETERSBURG CLEARWATER



DESTINATION INFO	St. Petersburg/Clearwater in Florida
Location	Florida's Beach is located in the Pinellas County peninsula on Florida's west coast. Home to 26 communities including St. Petersburg and Clearwater, the area is bordered on the east by Tampa Bay and on the west by the Gulf of Mexico. In the center of Florida's Gulf Coast, Florida's Beach is within minutes of Florida's popular attractions - just 30 minutes away is Busch Gardens in Tampa and 90 minutes away are the Walt Disney World Resort, Sea World and Universal Studios Escape.
Geography	Florida's Beach offers 35 miles of white-sand beaches on some 20 barrier islands along the Gulf of Mexico. The area's 345 miles of shoreline around the peninsula encompass the resort communities of Clearwater Beach, Dunedin, Indian Rocks Beach, Indian Shores, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Redington Beach, Belleair Beach, Madeira Beach, St. Petersburg, St. Pete Beach, Safety Harbor, Tarpon Springs, Treasure Island and a host of other colorful communities for day-trips. The semi-tropical setting makes the 280 square miles of Florida's Beach a year-round playground for a variety of outdoor activities.
Name	Peter Demens, a Russian immigrant, brought his small gauge, Orange Belt Railroad to the Gulf Coast of Florida whose new rail service produced a flood of new residents and visitors to the area. Demens named the city St. Petersburg after his hometown in Russia The official name for the area encompassing Florida's Beach is Pinellas County. Pinellas comes from the phrase "punta pinal" or "point of pines," a name given the area by Spanish explorers who sailed the surrounding waters in the early 1500s. Florida's Beach is also known as the "Pinellas Suncoast."
Population	Florida's Beach (Pinellas County) all 26 communities 921,482 St. Petersburg 248,232 Clearwater 108,787
Language	English
Currency	\$1 CDN = \$0.99 US (Jan 12 2008)
Tipping	The custom of tipping is a common practice in Florida: 15% to 20% for waiters; 10% to 15% for taxi drivers; \$1 per bag for bellmen. Occasionally gratuities are automatically added to restaurant checks, but not usually.
Documentation	Passports are now required for Canadian visitors arriving by air; currently Canadians only require photo ID if driving across the border, but a Passport is still strongly recommended and will probably become mandatory shortly.
Time zone	Eastern Standard Time, same as Toronto
Health	Excellent services available but ensure that you have travelers health insurance as health costs in the US can be very high
Safety tips	Orlando is relatively safe for the tourist. One should use the same precautions as when traveling anywhere - try not to travel alone and avoid deserted areas at night

CLIMATE	
General climate	It is safe to say that Florida's Beach enjoys more sunshine than Honolulu. The Guinness Book of World Records credits St. Petersburg with the longest run of consecutive sunny days - 768 days from Feb. 9, 1967 to March 17, 1969
Today's weather	24 degrees Centigrade with sunshine and showers (12 Jan 2008)
Best time to visit	For best accommodation costs: January-April Average \$83; May-August Average \$67; September-December Average \$64

GETTING THERE	The beaches and outlying communities on Florida's Beach are only 30 minutes away from Tampa International Airport, rated one of the nation's best for the past ten years by the International Passenger Traffic Association and other polls.
Flying time	3 hours; CanJet and WestJet to Tampa & St Pete's
Cities	St Petersburg and Clearwater; Tampa
Distances	1500 miles from Toronto and Montreal by road
Ferries	To Caladesi Island And a daily Egmont Key Ferry from Fort DeSoto County Park in US Coast Guard Certified 46 foot ferry Boats. Refreshments/snacks available and there's covered, comfortable seating with an open deck area and an easy ramp access to beach
Car Rental	Car rental from \$52/day, \$74 convertible
Buses	The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority/PSTA (tel. 727/530-9911) operates motorized trolley service along Gulf Boulevard between the Hurricane restaurant in St. Pete Beach and the Sheraton Sand Key Resort (this entire trip, one-way, takes about an hour), where it connects with the Jolly Trolley (tel. 727/445-1200), which continues on Gulf Boulevard through Clearwater Beach. The PSTA trolley runs daily, every 20 minutes from 5am to 10pm, until midnight on Friday and Saturday. Rides cost \$1.25, or you can buy a daily pass for \$3. One-ride fares on the Jolly Trolley are 50¢ per person, 25¢ for seniors.
Passes	You can obtain a number of coupons and passes for added value in St Petersburg when you are down there.

ACCOMMODATION TYPES	There are 54 hotels with 9,912 rooms and 434 motels with 10,735 rooms; Rental condominiums and short-term apartments add another 17,263 units St. Pete Beach and Clearwater Beach have national chain hotels and motels of every name and description. You can also use the Visit St. Petersburg/Clearwater's free reservations service (tel. 800/345-6710) to book rooms at most of them
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TARGET GROUPS	
Kids	Just 30 minutes to Busch Gardens in Tampa and 90 minutes to Walt Disney World Resort, Sea World and Universal Studios; 3.5 hours Kennedy Space Centre Busch Gardens: 1 park pass is \$59 CDN thro WOV. KaTonga – musical tales from the jungle: music, dance, puppetry; Edge of Africa Safari; two of the tallest inverted roller coasters Clearwater Marine Aquarium – 249 Windward Passage, Clearwater.

	Live and model displays of area marine life are on exhibit at this research and rehabilitation facility which frequently houses rehabilitating sea turtles and dolphin. Popular exhibits include tanks containing numerous varieties of fish, baby sea turtles and "Sam" the Bottlenose Dolphin.
Teens	<p>Sea Screamer - Clearwater Municipal Marina, Slip #10, Clearwater Beach, FL 34630. Billed as the world's largest speedboat, this 73-foot craft takes you on both a scenic nature cruise and a thrilling, fast ride in the Gulf of Mexico. \$13.50 for adults; \$9 for kids 5-12</p> <p>Captain Memo's Pirate Cruise: www.captainmemo.com 2 hour cruises (kids \$20, adults \$32) to the less traveled road of briny buccaneers and seafaring seadogs. Set your course with the cool reggae island & steel band music playing throughout the rigging of the Pirates Ransom. Every passenger will enjoy their choice of soft drinks, beer, wine, or champagne, while searching for the bountiful dolphins, while aboard ship. The spirited pirates may belly on up to our full service bar to purchase their favorite libation. The spirited pirates are individually selected by Captain Memo himself. They are chosen not only for their enthusiastic personalities and immeasurable politeness, but also for their knowledgeable seamanship capabilities. Wenches; Panama Pam, Diamond Diane, Money Up Front Michele, Captains; Dastardly Dan, Gangplank Gary, Powder keg Paul and pirates Mutiny Michael, Typhoon Tony, Jewel Thief Julie, Mischievous Melanie, Plundering Pete and Anchors Away Angela are anxious to meet you.</p>
Romance	Island's End Resort – on Pass-a-Grill, cottage retreat and hideaway, step right onto the beach
Honeymoons & Weddings	<p>Don CeSar Beach Resort and Spa – dating back to 1928 and on National Register of Historic Places</p> <p>A wedding license may be obtained between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., at the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Offices are in the Clearwater Courthouse</p>
Seniors	Wonderful destination for Canadian "Snow birds" escaping our winter!

UNIQUES	
Surprising	<p>Friendship Trail - Located at the western end of Gandy Blvd. The "Old" Gandy Bridge spanning Tampa Bay north of St. Petersburg underwent a \$7 million transformation into a recreational park called the Friendship Trail Bridge. The 13,770-foot (2.6-mile) trail is the longest over-the-water recreation trail in the United States. Sharks teeth on Venice Beach with Florida Snow Shovels!</p>
History	<p>From early Native American settlements, to arrival of Spanish conquistadors in the 1500s, to pioneering citrus farmers, railroad barons and entrepreneurial land developers, Florida's Gulf coast has always attracted people in search of opportunity and adventure. Not only did they help build this thriving region, they left a rich and fascinating legacy.</p> <p>Thousands of years before the Spanish came, Native Americans flourished in the area. Burial mounds from the Pre-Columbian Native Americans are preserved throughout the county and can be seen at Philippe Park and Weedon Island Preserve.</p> <p>Hernando de Soto explored the area in 1539. In his search for wealth,</p>

	de Soto reportedly discovered five mineral springs near a large Tocobaga Indian village in what is now Safety Harbor. He named the springs "Espiritu Santo" or "Springs of Sacred Spirit".
Books	"Florida, Eh?" – by Isobel Warren and Milan Chvostek, Cedar Cave Books Frommer's Florida 2007
1000 Places to see before you die	Swimming with manatees at Crystal River, 90 miles to the north
Must Sees	<p>One of Florida's most fascinating small towns and a fine day trip from St. Petersburg or the beaches (it's 30 miles north of St. Petersburg, 23 miles west of Tampa, and 13 miles north of Clearwater), Tarpon Springs calls itself the "Sponge Capital of the World." Greek immigrants from the Dodecanese Islands settled here in the late 19th century to harvest sponges, which grew in abundance offshore. By the 1930s, Tarpon Springs was producing more sponges than any other place in the world. A blight ruined the business in the 1940s, but the descendants of those early immigrants stayed on. Today, they compose about a third of the population, making Tarpon Springs a center of transplanted Greek culture.</p> <p>Sponges still arrive at the historic Sponge Docks, on Dodecanese Boulevard. With a lively, carnival-like atmosphere, the docks are a great place to spend an afternoon or early evening, poking your head into shops selling sponges and other souvenirs while Greek music comes from the dozen or so family restaurants purveying authentic Aegean cuisine. You can also venture offshore from here: Booths on the docks hawk sightseeing and fishing cruises. Make your reservations as soon as you get here; then go sightseeing ashore or grab a meal at one of the multitudinous Greek restaurants and bakeries facing the dock while waiting for the next boat to shove off.</p>

SPORTS ACTIVITIES	<p>Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL); Tampa Bay Devil Rays (baseball); Tampa Bay Lightning (hockey) Baseball Spring Training: March 2008 – Blue Jays in Dunedin info call 727-733-0429 The beaches and climate provide year-round swimming, sailing, water-skiing, jet skiing, windsurfing, parasailing, diving and shelling.</p>
Golf	20 courses within a few minutes drive ; 50 public courses close by; Top golfers from around the world compete in the Tampa Bay Classic, a PGA tour event, in September.
Fishing	More than 300 species of fish can be caught in area waters, noted as one of Florida's premier fishing spots. Light tackle inshore bay and flats fishing charters as well as deep-sea charters available. All guides are licensed charter captains specializing in saltwater sport fishing in the Tampa Bay area. The prolific waters of the Tampa Bay area hold everything from pan fish to the mighty tarpon; 8 hours is \$170 per person
Horse riding	Hire A Pony Riding Academy in Tampa – trail rides and lessons
Hiking	Boyd Hill Nature Trail - 1101 Country Club Way South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705. This area features 216 acres of natural beauty with six trails that lead visitors through Florida's various ecosystems.

	Wildlife abounds in this park and excellent photo opportunities exist on every trail.
Cycling	Pinellas Trail - Located throughout the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. This 37-mile long, 15-foot wide trail is part of the county park system and is one of the longest linear parks in the southeastern United States. It enables visitors and residents alike to bike, in-line skate, jog or walk - all without the hassle and safety concern of being in automobile traffic. There are rental shops for bikes and skates at numerous points along the trail.
Diving	If you don't know where to dive in the Tampa Bay area, Ned DeLoach's "Diving Guide to Underwater Florida" is a must! You can dive on reefs and wrecks with Dive Clearwater (tel. 727/443-6731; www.diveclearwater.com), which also operates the live-aboard boat Plunger V.

CULTURE	
Arts	World-class museums, symphony performances, Broadway shows, rock concerts, ballet and art festivals are presented throughout the year. St. Petersburg's Bayfront Center with the 2,000-seat Mahaffey Theater and an 8,250-seat arena is the scene for many of these activities. Ruth Eckerd Hall, the 2,000-seat theatre in Clearwater's Richard Baumgardner Center for the Performing Arts, offers a wide array of cultural activities.
Music	County and community parks are regular sites for art shows and open-air concerts like the Clearwater Jazz Holiday in October, acclaimed as one of the South's premier jazz festivals.
Films	Ocean's Eleven; American Outlaws; The Punisher; Forever Mine; Summer Rental; To Die For; Filthy; Three-Point Turn; Whispering Thunder; Lethal Weapon 3; Cocoon; Great Expectations; The Break Coupe de Ville; McCinsey's Island; H.E.A.L.T.H
Museums	Salvador Dali Museum - 1000 Third Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. The Dali features the world's most comprehensive collection of work by the famous Spanish master. Valued at more than \$125 million, the collection includes 94 oil paintings, 200 watercolors and drawings and 1,000 graphics, sculptures and objects d'art. The Dunedin Railroad Historical Museum is housed in the original Orange Belt Railroad station that dates to 1889. In Largo, a walking tour of turn-of-the-century Pinellas is found at Heritage Village, a 21-acre site containing a collection of 22 restored buildings and homes. The St. Petersburg Museum of History contains Native American artifacts from the Safety Harbor and Weedon Island sites, exhibits and demonstrations of early pioneer life. The historical and fine arts museum in Safety Harbor, located near a Native American mound, has a variety of exhibits which focus on the area's significance dating back 10,000 years and running through Spanish settlement to Philippe's arrival. Tarpon Springs' Cultural Center and Spongeorama capture the history of the Greek community's sponge diving industry. Scheduled for opening in early 2008 is the Dale Chihuly Gallery at the Arts Center. It is the first permanent "gallery" of work by the Seattle-based artist. It is to encompass 6,000 square feet of space, adjacent to

	<p>the proposed 62,000 square feet for the Arts Center, which is a non-profit educational facility and gallery. Adjoining the collection, The Art Center's "Glass House" will be a demonstration workshop. It is to feature stadium seating, where 100 visitors can watch master artists create glassworks, and an extensive education program for aspiring glass artisans.</p>
Festivals	<p>"Vatican Splendors" Exhibit 2/9/2008 - 5/11/2008 Florida International Museum, 244 2nd Ave. N. St. Petersburg Over 200 works from Saint Peter's Basilica, the Vatican Museums and Swiss Guard, will be at the museum. Presenting a world-class exhibition from the Vatican, of art and historical objects. Many of these treasures have never been seen outside of Italy. St. Petersburg is the first American stop for the largest collection of art, documents and historically significant objects from the Vatican to tour North America. For more information, call 727-341-7900.</p> <p>2008 St. Petersburg Festival of State 4/10/2008 - 4/13/2008 City of St. Petersburg, Downtown St. Petersburg The Festival of States produces events in celebration of St. Petersburg's legacy and future for the enjoyment by the total community to raise money for schools in art and music programs and scholarships in partnership with the City of St. Petersburg and other organizations. Music is the focal point of this springtime festival, the South's largest civic celebration. Joins us for Festival Day Parade, Night Parade, Kid Fest, Harvey's 5K, Coronation Ball, Clown Allen and Awesome Second Time Arounders Marching Band. For more information, call 800-872-3378</p> <p>The 42nd Annual Dunedin Highland Games & Spring Clan Gathering 4/12/2008 - 4/12/2008 Highlander Park, 903 Michigan Blvd. Dunedin So "Ceud Mile Failte" from Dunedin: "A Wee Bit O' Scotland" Come see all the flags, tartan, banners and maps and tents. Piping & Drumming, Dancing, Athletics, Gathering of the Clans, Food and Drink. The Highland Games were implemented in 1966 to raise funds to support the three Scottish bands of Dunedin: The City of Dunedin Pipe Band, The Dunedin High School Scottish Highlanders Band and The Dunedin Highland Middle School Band. For more information, call 727-733-5430.</p> <p>32nd Mainsail Arts Festival 4/19/2008 - 4/20/2008 Vinoy Park, 500 Bayshore Dr. N.E., St. Petersburg The Annual Mainsail Arts Festival features over 200 artists who set up in downtown's Vinoy Park. This festival is nationally ranked in the "100 Best Fine Art Shows," with more than 100,000 visitors enjoying and purchasing quality art and listening to top name entertainment. This free festival features visual exhibits in seven categories, craft demonstrations, a children's arts activity tent and culinary arts/food vendors. Live entertainment includes classic Southern rock, jazz, Rhythm-n-Blues, country rock, and Afro-Cuban rhythms. For more information, call 727-892-5882.</p>

ATTRACTIONS	<p>St. Petersburg: The Pier, Salvador Dali Museum, Great Explorations, Museum of Fine Arts, Bayfront Center, St. Petersburg Museum of History, Sunshine Skyway Bridge, Sunken Gardens, Fort De Soto Park, Derby Lane, Tropicana Field, Florida International Museum, Florida Holocaust Museum, Canoe Escape, Sweetwater Kayaks and Duck Tours</p> <p>Clearwater: Captain Memo's Pirate Cruise, Celebration Station, Clearwater Marine Aquarium, Dolphin Encounter, Pier 60, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Sea Screamer, Sea Life Safari, Show Queen and The Starlite Majesty Dinner Boat</p>
Beaches	<p>Discover thirty-five miles of white sand beaches, home to Fort De Soto Park - America's number one beach in 2005, and to Caladesi Island - America's number two beach in 2006 and 2007</p> <p>Shell Key Preserve - Located south of St. Pete Beach. Named one of the state's most important birding sites by Audubon of Florida, this undeveloped barrier island is known for excellent shelling, sunbathing and bird watching.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Turtles: In a typical year, more than 150 loggerhead sea turtles successfully nest on St. Petersburg/Clearwater area beaches, and of those, more than a third will be found on six miles of undeveloped shoreline on Fort De Soto Beach. Loggerheads are one of five species of endangered sea turtles that lay their eggs on Florida's beaches. While the green, leatherback, hawksbill and Kemp's Ridley can be found in local waters, the loggerhead is by far the most common. Peak nesting time runs May through August.</p> <p>Clearwater's Original Dolphin Encounter - From Clearwater Beach Marina, this is a Clearwater tradition and offers a dolphin-sighting guarantee.</p>
Parks	<p>250 parks</p> <p>Brooker Creek Preserve also offers a nature trail, perfect for day hikes. While Sawgrass Lake Park in St. Petersburg take you back in time, showing the flora and fauna of decades past (and even live alligators of today!)</p>
Gardens	<p>Sunken Gardens: 100 year old botanical garden, 50,000 tropical plants and flowers, flamingos, butterflies; Weedon Island in St. Petersburg offers a 3,000-foot boardwalk will take nature lovers through a mangrove forest to a four-story, 50-foot high observation tower offering panoramic views of Tampa Bay. The park also offers a canoe and kayak trail.</p>
Castles/Forts	<p>Fort De Soto, was built on Mullet Key in 1898 to protect Tampa Bay during the Spanish-American War. The war ended before construction was finished and the fort's cannon were never fired.</p>

OTHER ACTIVITIES	
Shopping	<p>International Plaza and Bay Street – over 200 stores, pedestrianised, 22 miles from St Petersburg.</p> <p>John's Pass Village and Boardwalk - Casual and charming, albeit touristy, this Old Florida, turn-of-the-last-century fishing village on John's Pass consists of a string of simple wooden structures topped by tin roofs and connected by a 1,000-foot boardwalk. Most of the</p>

	buildings have been converted into shops, art galleries, restaurants, and saloons.
Markets	Wagonwheel Flea Market every weekend: 125 acres and 2000 booths
Nightlife	<p>If you haven't already found it during your sightseeing and shopping excursions, the restored fishing community of John's Pass Village and Boardwalk, on Gulf Boulevard at John's Pass in Madeira Beach, has plenty of restaurants, bars, and shops to keep you occupied after the sun sets. Elsewhere, the nightlife scene at the beach revolves around rocking bars that pump out music until 2am.</p> <p>Located five floors above downtown St. Petersburg and nearly a mile out into Tampa Bay, Cha Cha Coconuts is one of the coolest spots in town. This bar/restaurant features entertainment nightly.</p> <p>Dan Marino's Martini Bar, Second Avenue N.St. Petersburg - The place to see and be seen. Listen to the smooth bluesy sounds of a live band while sipping on a Marino Margarita.</p>
Casinos	Opening soon at Treasure Island, The Casino Royale will be a Las Vegas-style gaming vessel featuring over 500 slot machines and table games including Black Jack, Craps, Roulette and Mini-Baccarat; also featured is the Poker room and exclusive High Limit room.

CUISINE	
Food	<p>Lobster Pot, Redington Shores – finest seafood and recommended by Frommer</p> <p>Ted Peters' Famous Smoked Fish – bring your own to be smoked</p>
Wine	Florida Orange Groves , Inc. & Winery in South Pasadena: This family-owned facility produces "citrus-based" fruit wines that are unique in their fermenting process allowing them to stay fresh for years. The facility includes a tasting bar with free wine tasting by appointment. Tours of the small factory where citrus is packaged and the wines are bottled are available year-round.
Restaurants	<p>There are approximately 2,276 restaurants capable of seating a total of more than 200,000 people throughout Florida's Beach. They offer everything from elegant to the most casual, barefoot dining and moonlight dinner cruises.</p> <p>Fourth Street Shrimp Store is perhaps the best bargain for eating in St Pete's</p>

MORE INFO	
Brochures	Phone 1-877-FL-BEACH (1-877-352 3224)
Websites	www.floridasbeach.com www.nolitours.com www.marriott.com

HOTEL PRIZE PARTNER	<p>Marriott Suites Clearwater Beach on Sand Key 1201 Gulf Boulevard, Clearwater Beach, Florida 33767 USA Phone: 1-727-596-1100 Fax: 1-727-595-4292</p>
Location	Escape to the beautiful Gulf Coast at the Clearwater Beach Marriott Suites on Sand Key Florida's only all-suite Marriott. Offering a special resort experience with suite accommodations overlooking Clearwater Bay, this Marriott is a casually elegant destination for a family trip. An aquatic playground showcases a 35 foot cascading waterfall, poolside

	cabanas and the kid friendly Lisa's Klubhouse featuring supervised activities daily. Take in their boardwalk shopping, the many water activities or rent a car at the hotel and explore nearby St. Petersburg and Tampa. Pamper yourself at Antonio's salon and day spa, with your choice of more than 25 spa services. Choose from elegant dining or a casual intimate bayside atmosphere at Watercolour steakhouse and grille all with breathtaking water views.
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 220 suites with private balconies and water views - Suites include a separate living area with a sofa bed, a wet bar, mini-fridge & microwave - Luxury bedding includes a down comforter & upgraded linens - Business amenities include high-speed wireless Internet access, work area & phone with voicemail - Premium cable TV, pay-per-view movies & game consoles - Java Café, proudly serving Starbucks coffee and offering sundries and signature wear
Activities	Onsite amenities include a salon and day spa, tropical pool, several dining options and 20 shops!
Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Java Café: Coffee House featuring Starbucks Coffee. - Kokomos Grille & Bar: American cuisine; Open for lunch and dinner and located poolside. - Lisa's Ice Cream Shoppe: Choose from a variety of Ben and Jerry's flavors, or get them all in Lisa's Beach Bucket Sundae! - Pizza Hut Express: Open for lunch and dinner; Grab a Personal Pan Pizza on the pool deck and for dessert, try Lisa's Beach Bucket Ice Cream Sundae! - Watercolour : Steakhouse open for breakfast, lunch and dinner and serving Certified Angus beef and fresh Seafood

AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNER (CJAD)	WestJet from Montreal to Tampa twice daily CanJet and WestJet with Nolitours from Toronto to Tampa
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CURRENT DEALS	<p>See Hot Deals on FloridasBeach.com website</p> <p>Nolitours include a free intermediate car rental with all Florida vacation packages</p> <p>Nolitours also has the Marriott on sale from Toronto for 21 Jan 2008 at just \$799 + taxes for 7 nights.</p> <p>WestJet has one way fares from Montreal to Tampa on sale currently from just \$129.</p>
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