

## TRAVEL

## The Amelia Island Plantation

Lavish living,  
earthy twist

Find fun,  
luxury at  
Fla. resort

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AMELIA ISLAND, Fla. — Making everyone happy during a family vacation often is a tall order.

There are plenty of destinations that cater to kids, but parents have to make sacrifices.

And if the family sets its site on a spot where adults play, the children sometimes feel left out.

Well, there is an alternative.

Adults can enjoy long fairways, a relaxing spa, friendly natives and much more.

And for teens and younger children, there are activities ranging from a day camp with arts and crafts and golf clinics to beach bonfires and putt-putt.

All of this and more is on 1,350 acres of beachfront property called Amelia Island Plantation, which is located about a half-hour from the Jacksonville, Fla., airport.

The resort, which strides U.S. A1A in the northeastern tip of Florida, offers an abundance of activities under an enormous environmentally focused umbrella.

In the early 1970s, when Amelia Island Plantation was first developed, the objective was to combine a balance between the ecosystem of northern Florida's beach and marshland with a top-shelf resort with luxurious accommodations and activities. You can dine finely, cut a rug, shop 'til you drop, hit the links, practice your backhand and get a massage — all in one spot.

Amelia Island Plantation features three championship golf courses designed by the likes of Pete Dye, Tom Fazio and Bobby Weed; 23 clay tennis courts that annually are the home to the Bausch & Lomb Championships; and a luxury day spa with its signature Watsu water massage treatment.

Therapists perform massage and stretching techniques on you, while you're floating in a pool. The spa also offers facials, manicures, pedicures and numerous types of body massages.

Anyone new to these treatments will find The Spa at Amelia Island Plantation therapists very accommodating and facilitating. Comfort is the key to a massage, and The Spa therapists put you at ease even before the treatment starts.

And if you're still uncomfortable with a traditional hands-on massage, try a Vichy shower, with a whole array of jet nozzles spraying water all over your body while you're relaxing on a



The Amelia Island Plantation, above, is conveniently located just 30 minutes from Jacksonville, Fla., and boasts all-ages amenities and activities. Below, visitors enjoy a vast golf course overlooking the ocean. At top, guests take advantage of one of the plantation's 23 pools.



comfortable bed-like table. But this AAA four-diamond resort for 23 years

running is not all about pampering yourself. The buildings blend in

harmoniously with the wildlife and its setting. Even the stop signs are green to sig-



leave.

Room service is available 24 hours a day, and numerous restaurants are scattered throughout the plantation, including the Falcon's Nest, a nightclub with an aviation theme.

Suites with kitchens can be stocked by shopping at Marche Burette, a gourmet food market on site, offering fresh fruits and vegetables, freshly cut meat and breads baked daily.

Jewelry, clothing and art shops also are on the property, making Amelia Island a true all-inclusive resort.

And if you're worried about getting around the 1,350 acres of amenities, you can take the shuttles that run constantly throughout the entire property. All you have to do is pick up the phone, request a ride and within minutes, the shuttle picks you up.

Or Amelia's Wheels has bikes and golf carts for rent. A recent addition to Amelia's Wheels is its Segway dealership. The Segway Human Transporter is a two-wheel self-balancing mode of transportation that uses gyroscopes and a rechargeable battery to run.

Standing on the base, you hold on to the handlebars. Lean forward, and you go forward. Lean back, and you stop and then go backward. It has a tight turning radius and a top speed of about 10 mph.

You can buy a Segway at Amelia Island Plantation for about \$4,500, or you can take one of several nature-related tours on the Segways, including a marsh-side safari, seaside excursion or nature trek. Amelia also features a junior Segway tour, which is designed for younger people.

Kids Camp Amelia caters to children ages 3 to 10, offering nature activities, beach games, swimming and arts and crafts. Teen Explorers is a resort program for children ages 11 and older, and includes mini golf or even a trip to the Jacksonville Zoo.

Adults or entire families who decide to venture out of the plantation can take a short ride to Fernandina Beach, an 1880s fishing village that has a 50-block historic district of 19th century Victorian buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

But back on the resort, the list of activities is nearly endless — 54 holes of golf, 23 tennis courts, 23 pools, seven-plus miles of biking and nature trails, 3½ miles of beach, a health and fitness center, luxury spa, shopping, dining, fishing, sailing, kayaking, horseback riding and more.

Plus, you can take advantage of separate children's programs.

Amelia Island Plantation is a tourist's haven, but it does it without all the trappings of commercialism and tackiness you might find at more well-known tourist destinations.

nify the resort's commitment to the environment.

Amelia Island Plantation's Nature Center offers almost two dozen tours and programs related to wildlife and nature, including tours of the pristine beaches and the salt marsh. Tours specifically related to the flora, birds, American Indian culture and star-gazing are available. And you can take many of these tours on bikes or kayaks, or you can just walk.

For accommodations, you can pick a deluxe hotel room in the Amelia Inn and Beach Club or choose a one-, two- or three-bedroom suite in one of the resorts villas. All-inclusive daily rates — which includes just about everything except the spa — ranges from \$297 to \$1,350.

Once you're on the property, you really don't have to