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Palm Beach's presidential presence gives area's tourism a 'Trump bump'

By [Christina Jelski](#) | Mar 04, 2025



The Palm Bar at the Palm House, an Iconic Luxury Hotels property that opened late last year in Palm Beach. Photo Credit: Courtesy of Palm House

A "Trump bump" is transforming the tourism scene in Florida's Palm Beach County, as President Donald Trump's frequent visits to his Mar-a-Lago estate have thrust the coastal destination into the international spotlight.

According to data from CoStar, Palm Beach County hotels saw a 17% surge in RevPAR this January, with the destination achieving the rare feat of outpacing Miami-Dade's typically dominant market.

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Palm Beach County's RevPAR for the month came in at around \$239, while ADR was up just over 7%, to \$313. By comparison, Miami-Dade's January RevPAR was \$203, with ADR for the month hitting \$257.

"That Palm Beach County's average daily rate was that high above Miami-Dade's is nothing short of phenomenal," said Peter Ricci, director of the hospitality and tourism management program at Florida Atlantic University. "We definitely saw a noticeable increase [during Trump's first term], but this cycle has started off far further ahead, and far stronger."

Ricci added that it's not just hotels reaping the benefits.

"Retail is benefiting, auto rentals are benefiting, clubs are benefiting," he said. "Everything is benefiting."



The exterior of the White Elephant Palm Beach. Photo Credit: Courtesy of White Elephant Palm Beach

That's true for the 32-room **White Elephant Palm Beach**, according to managing director Bettina Landt, who said the luxury hotel is fresh off its "best January so far."

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"February is also doing great and March, April -- those are big months for us, but it all looks amazing," Landt said.

Building momentum

While Trump's second term is credited with the recent bump, Palm Beach County's tourism boom was already underway.

Milton Segarra, CEO of Discover The Palm Beaches, said that Palm Beach County welcomed 9.9 million visitors in 2024, nearly 5% higher than 2023's previous record.

Segarra credits the destination marketing organization's (DMO) efforts over the past 12 months to maintain its core feeder markets, such as New York and Boston, while diversifying its visitor base into new and secondary markets. "For example, we have noticed growth from markets from Texas -- Dallas and Houston, in particular-- in the past couple years," he said.

Palm Beach County's tourism leaders are also working to maintain strong international visitor numbers. That could stem a **potential dip from Canada**, its No. 1 international inbound market, followed by the U.K. After President Trump's tariff threats against Canadian goods, prime minister Justin Trudeau encouraged Canadians to vacation domestically.

"Based on numbers we have received from tour operators and some of the airlines, there has been a small decrease [in Canadian travelers] at this point," Segarra said.



In response, Discover The Palm Beaches is proactively strengthening its Canadian relationships through in-person outreach. Segarra said the DMO is going to Toronto this month to let the Canadian market know that "we are a phenomenal destination to visit, that we have a very, very strong relationship and that we are extremely grateful for the support we have received from the Canadian market."

Domestically, the organization is keeping an eye on its bipartisan appeal. Segarra said a pair of U.S. traveler surveys conducted around the 2024 election revealed encouraging results. "We did have some concern, but our surveys show that both Republicans and Democrats understand that this is a great place to visit," he said.

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High-end developments

The Palm Beaches region is also seeing an influx of high-profile hospitality investments.

Among them are Oracle founder [Larry Ellison's purchase](#) of the [Eau Palm Beach Resort & Spa](#) in Manalapan and [Salamander Collection's acquisition](#) of the [PGA National Resort](#) in Palm Beach Gardens in January.

Additionally, London's Iconic Luxury Hotels opened its [Palm House](#) in Palm Beach in November, while the Oetker Collection's first U.S. flag will debut later this year at Palm Beach's revamped Vineta Hotel.

The [White Elephant's](#) Landt said the region's development is expanding beyond Palm Beach island, with neighboring [West Palm Beach increasingly embracing luxury offerings](#) that complement the area's high-end appeal.

"There are so many great new restaurants that are opening up on the West Palm Beach side, and it's creating a greater assortment of offerings for that luxury traveler," she said, adding that major mixed-use projects, like the upcoming Nora District's restaurant, hotel, retail and office components, are helping to drive the buzz.

Segarra said the county currently has around 20,000 hotel rooms and between 8,000 to 9,000 vacation rentals and other alternative accommodations. He predicts the destination will add up to 2,500 rooms to its inventory over the next few years.

"Competition keeps us on our toes," Landt said, adding that the elevated offerings and increase in tourism "creates more of a year-round destination."