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ECONOMY

Leaders say signs point to roaring Palm Beach County tourism season as wealth heads south

Palm Beach County's tourism industry employs about 90,000 and generates more than \$10 billion in revenues.



Alexandra Clough

Palm Beach Post

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Semper Fi Service Dogs rescues shelter animals to help vets with PTSD, forms of trauma

Semper Fi Service Dogs has paired more than 100 animals rescued from shelters with Palm Beach County veterans coping with PTSD, more forms of trauma.

It's beginning to look a lot like a roaring [tourism](#) season in [Palm Beach County](#) this coming winter — and well into 2026.

The Palm Beach Post

From hoteliers to event planners, county officials say they're expecting the Palm Beaches to notch more visitors, including more wealthy visitors.

And tourism experts are looking forward to more hotel stays. That means more dinners out at restaurants, and more visits to cultural, sports and special events.

And more bounty for a vital segment of the economy. Palm Beach County's tourism industry employs roughly 90,000 and creates an economic impact of about \$11.3 billion each year.



10 Photos

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With watercraft from inflatables to super yachts, the Palm Beach International Boat Show is back.

Extended an extra day this year and utilizing nearby Palm Marina Harbor, the Palm Beach International Boat Show is bigger than ever.

TV show yet another draw for a booming tourism market?

Could new visitors be drawn to the county's breezy lifestyle by the latest season of Apple TV's [Palm Royale](#)? The show's second season, which premiered Nov. 12, provides a fresh look at the Palm Beach's high society in the 1960s.

Tourism officials say it's possible, but they mostly cite the county's rising profile as a business destination, political hub and sophisticated tropical getaway.

They also note that foodies might be drawn to new restaurants throughout the county, such as the Nobu in Manalapan, or the restaurant collection at the just-opened [Nora District](#) in West Palm Beach.

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CityPlace in downtown West Palm Beach will host multiple holiday events through Dec. 31. *Provided By CityPlace*

Meanwhile, on Dec. 5, visitors also will be able to enjoy the New York-based [Eataly Italian market](#) opening at CityPlace in West Palm Beach.

Art lovers don't need to miss their favorite museums in New York, either. Instead, they can pop into the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, the largest museum in the state, to see an impressive new exhibit of Rembrandt paintings.

Officials at Discover The Palm Beaches, the county's tourism marketing arm, say they are upbeat about the coming year.

"We are hearing a lot of great things from our partners who are excited about the upcoming season," said Heather Andrews, Discover The Palm Beach's vice president of destination stewardship and civic engagement. "The forecasts are looking really strong."

Tourism officials cite data to back up their bullish optimism

County tourism officials rolled out the evidence during a Nov. 6 presentation.

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They showcased the industry's momentum in the 2025 fiscal year, which ran from Oct. 1, 2024 to Sept. 30, 2025. During this period, Palm Beach County welcomed 10.6 million visitors, up from the record 9.6 million visitors the prior fiscal year.

In addition, Palm Beach County now leads Miami-Dade and Broward counties in the number of room nights sold and the revenue earned from each hotel room.

In fact, Palm Beach County's revenue per available hotel room, or RevPAR, outpaced the state during the last fiscal year. The county's revenue was \$188 per available room, compared to \$134 for the state. That \$188 figure also is up nearly 11% from the prior year's \$170 figure.

Looking ahead, data tracking shows expected visitor demand is up 1.4% for October through December compared to the same period last year, and up 3.3% for January through March, according to Discover The Palm Beaches.

Peter Ricci, director of the Hospitality and Tourism Management program in Florida Atlantic University's College of Business, praised Discover The Palm Beaches' aggressive marketing campaigns and advanced use of technology to draw attention.

"They do a great job of capturing more than their fair share," Ricci said.



President Donald Trump's weekend sojourns to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach is a boon for Palm Beach County tourism, local officials say. *SAMUEL CORUM/GETTY IMAGES*

Palm Beach County tourism an oasis in the country

Business leaders don't like to call Palm Beach County's economy a bubble. But there's no question the county's fortunes make it a boomtime oasis in a country with a weakening economy.

Nationwide, health insurance premiums are surging while job hiring is stalling. Tariffs have hiked prices on everything from furniture to food.

This higher cost of living is cutting into consumers' discretionary spending, such as vacations. In Las Vegas, tourism officials are bemoaning a recent drop off in visitors.

The number of visitors from Canada, the top international source of visitors for Florida, has slipped.

From January to September 2025, Palm Beach County saw 253,400 Canadian visitors, which was 4.6% less than 2024.

Canadian tourism is expected to remain weaker than previous years thanks to ongoing tariff battles and unfavorable exchange rates. But tourism leaders also hope Canadians might book last-minute trips to Palm Beach County, especially if cold weather predictions for this coming winter hold true.

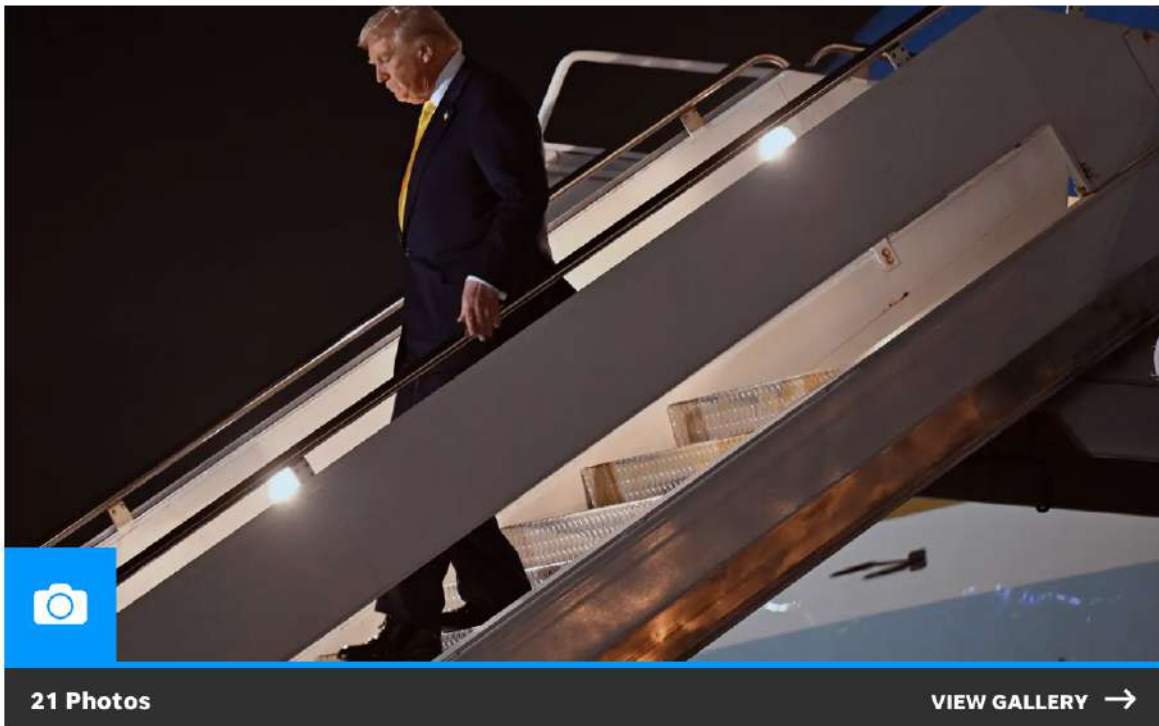
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Why are Palm Beach County travel experts so bullish on the upcoming tourist season? They cite three reasons:

- The county's rising profile globally as a wealthy enclave with new hotels, restaurants and attractions for visitors;
- The continued growth of the county's finance and technology industries;
- The political hub around President Donald Trump and his winter White House, the Mar-a-Lago club in Palm Beach.

That last fact can't be overstated, said Scott Diament, a Palm Beach-based entrepreneur and owner of art trade shows, jewelry stores and real estate brokerages throughout the county.

"This guy makes news all day, everywhere in the world. And he lives here," Diament said of Trump. "It's incredible who he's bringing to our doorstep. And (these visitors) eat at our restaurants and shop at our jewelry stores."



Trump makes 14th trip to Palm Beach County in second term

President Donald Trump makes his 14th trip to Palm Beach County in his second term.

Parsing the Trump impact on the local economy

Ricci agreed. Trump's expected travels to Mar-a-Lago for weekend stays will continue to attract global media that will highlight the county's new wave of amenities, he said.

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It happened during Trump's prior administration, and it's already happened now, Ricci said.

After Trump's November 2024 election win, he planned his new administration at Mar-a-Lago. "The president has another three years in his term," Ricci said. "I think that impact is going to stay."

And it's not just politicians making Palm Beach County a traveler hub.

Ricci said he thinks business leaders who have an office or home in Palm Beach County since the COVID pandemic will further want to cluster here "to be close to power."



Art from the Hiroshi Senju Sundaram Tagore Gallery that will be featured at the Art Palm Beach show in West Palm Beach, Jan. 28-Feb. 1 at the Palm Beach County Convention Center. *Provided By Art Palm Beach*

Palm Beach County tourism bounced back after pandemic

The pandemic was a blow to the county's tourism industry. Hospitality employees lost jobs at hotels and restaurants, and some workers left the industry for good.

But then tourism staged a gradual recovery, helped in part by fresh capital pouring into county hotels, upscale restaurants and new attractions.

The county's pivot to a wealth destination also is helping attract businesses that want to cater to rich residents. In addition to pricey restaurants, there are art galleries, home furnishings stores and design studios.

"This will be the busiest season we've ever had in our history," said Diament, who hosts several art and collectibles shows throughout the country. "And from a South Florida perspective, the economy is the best it's ever been."

Diament said he's sold all his booth space for the three West Palm Beach-based shows he holds in early 2026 at the Palm Beach County Convention Center. They are the Art Palm Beach Show modern and

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contemporary show from Jan.28-Feb. 1; the Palm Beach Show from Feb. 12-17; and the Palm Beach Fine Craft Show from Feb. 13-15.

Meanwhile, more business executives are expected to land in Palm Beach County for meetings and events thanks to help from the Business Development Board Palm Beach County, said Milton Segarra, president and chief executive of Discover The Palm Beaches.

Palm Beach County's business recruitment arm showcases the county's tourism offerings to finance and technology firms expanding or moving to the county, he said.

Businesses are coming to Palm Beach County too

Among the companies pledging to expand into the county are ServiceNow, a Silicon Valley-based AI software firm. In September, ServiceNow revealed plans to [employ up to 850 people in West Palm Beach.](#)

After the announcement, the BDB's Kelly Smallridge took company officials on an extended tour around the county. The tour reinforced the fact that when business executives visit Palm Beach County for work, they also learn about the county's charms.

This includes sporting activities. Not only does Palm Beach County host spring training and professional golf tournaments, plus a signature boat show every spring, the county now has TGL, a new golf league launched by Tiger Woods.

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Sporting events, including golfer Tiger Woods' TGL interactive golf league, is another magnet for visitors to the Palm Beaches. *GREG LOVETT/PALM BEACH POST*

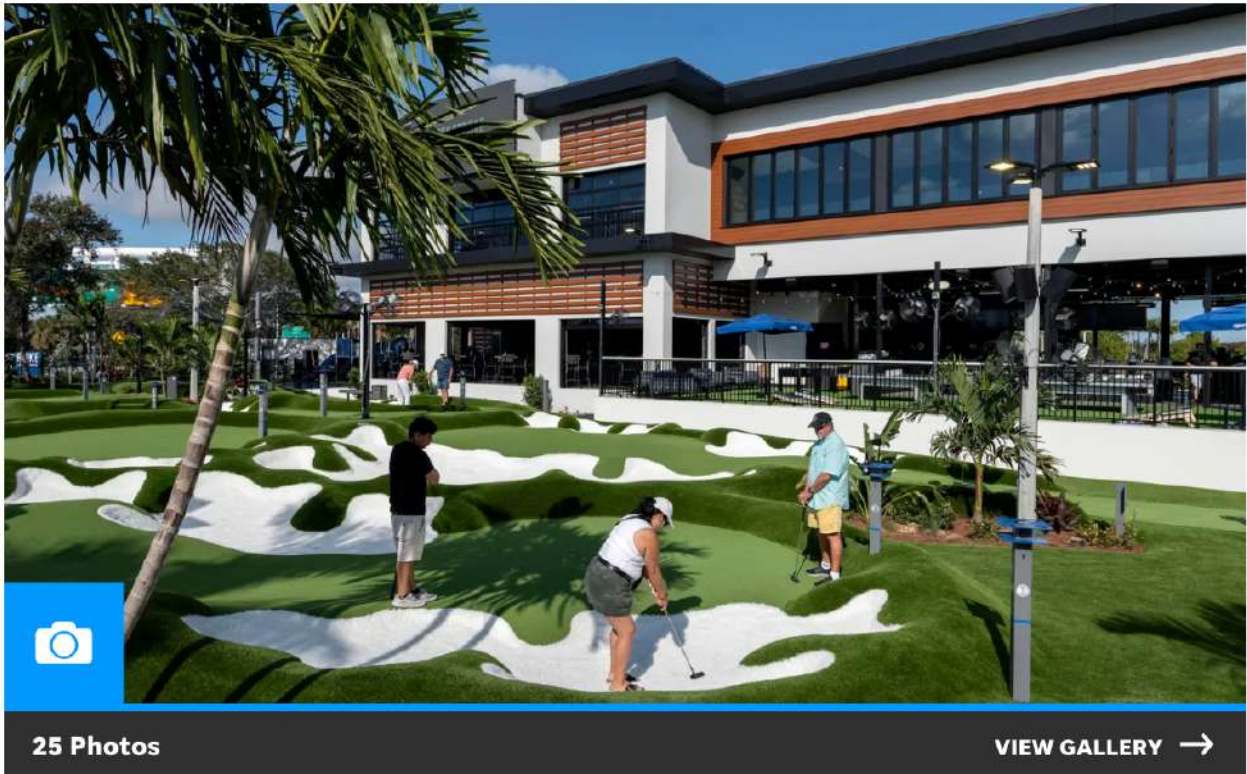


Photos: Watch Atlanta beat New York for TGL's inaugural championship at SoFi Center

Atlanta Drive Golf Club plays New York Golf Club for TGL bragging rights - and there are bound to be celebrities at the SoFi Center in Palm Beach Gardens.

TGL is a mix of traditional golf play with elements of simulated indoor golf, and it has a flagship venue: the SoFi center in Palm Beach Gardens.

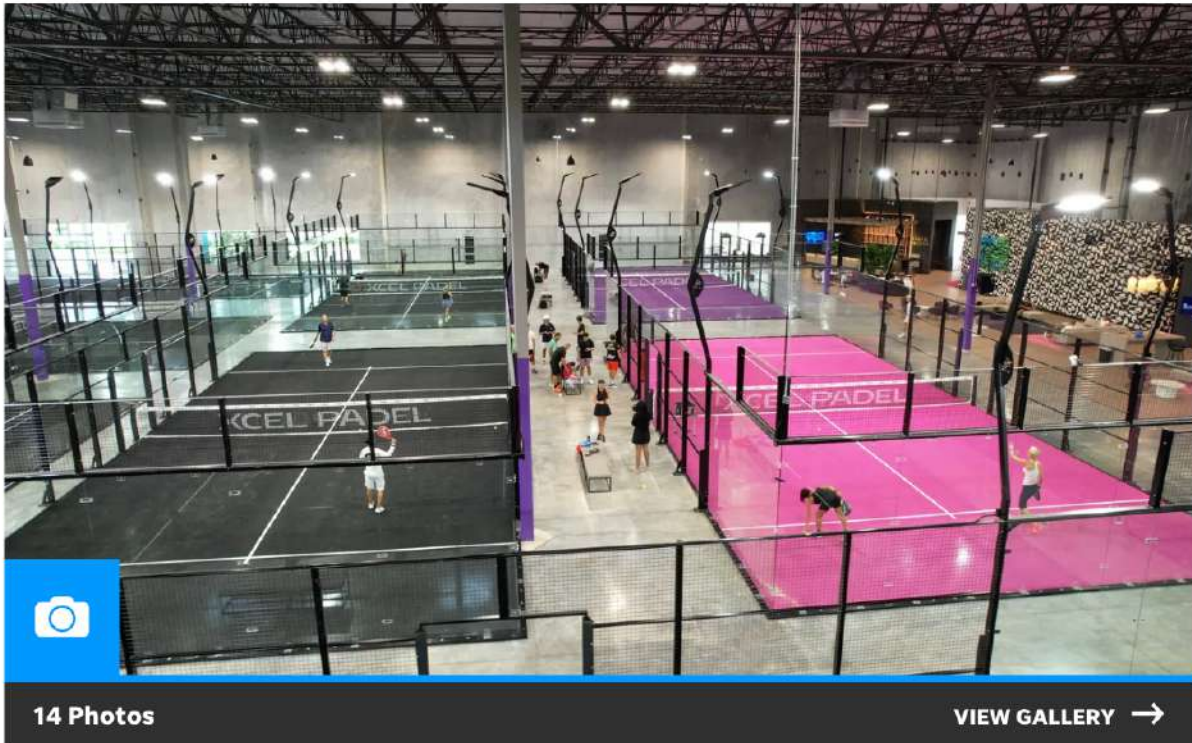
Tourists also can visit Tiger Woods' other venture, PopStroke, a family-friendly golf and dining venue with a new location in West Palm Beach.



PopStroke Golf opens in West Palm Beach

PopStroke golf entertainment owned by Greg Bartoli, Tiger Woods, and TaylorMade Golf Company opens in West Palm Beach.

Or visitors can take in one of many new racquet facilities popping up throughout the county, including Palm Beach Padel, set to open in West Palm Beach in December.

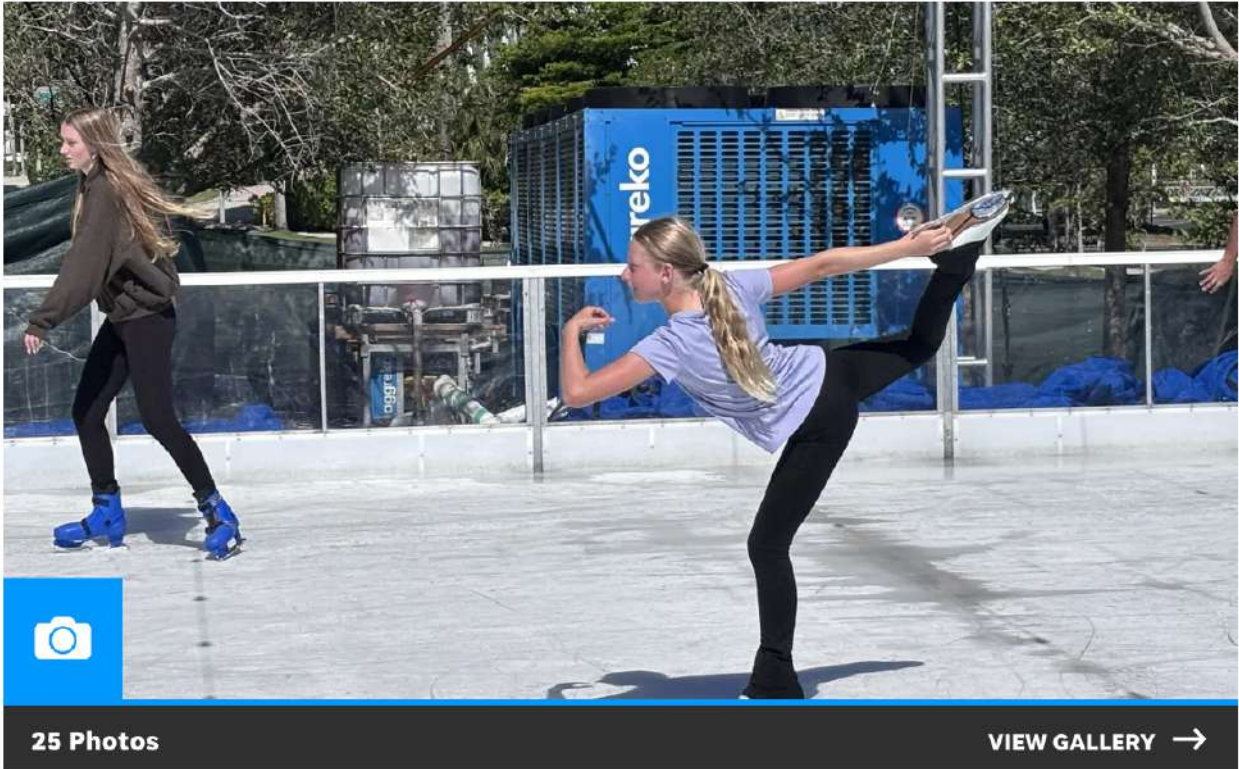


Xcel Padel opens the largest indoor padel facility in the U.S. in Westlake with 10 courts

Exclusive preview: Xcel Padel to unveil the largest indoor padel facility in the U.S. in Westlake with 10 indoor courts and a restaurant.

Those missing winter activities back north can even take in The Ben hotel's second annual Winter Wonderland.

An open space in front of the waterfront West Palm Beach hotel along North Flagler Drive features an ice skating on real ice rink, plus other treats such as shopping and hot chocolate. The event is open through Jan. 4.



See the Winter Wonderland at The Ben in downtown West Palm Beach

The Ben's Winter Wonderland village features an ice rink, boutique shopping in Aspen-style chalets, lounge areas and a holiday tree forest.

Conventions boost hotels, and new hotels draw more events

Conventions and events tied to the Palm Beach County Convention Bureau are expected to surpass last year when the venue booked 306,000 hotel room nights.

The convention center is a big driver of hotel room demand, but new hotels near the convention center also can drive more conventions.

That's the hope, anyway, with a proposal for a second convention center hotel, which would add to the 400 existing rooms at the Hiton.

In October, the Related Ross real estate firm submitted a proposal to Palm Beach County for a 400-room Curio hotel, the luxury boutique property in the Hilton portfolio. A county official said the proposal is being reviewed.

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Rendering of proposed Curio hotel at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach. *Provided By Related Ross.*

Discover's Segarra said doubling the number of hotel rooms by the convention center to 800 could help attract more events to the mid-sized convention center.

'It's a good fit for this destination," Segarra said of the Curio proposal.

Indeed, Related Ross officials expressed optimism that the boutique Curio hotel could appeal not only to luxury leisure travelers but also to business travelers, especially those in the medical, financial and technology fields.

Related Ross President Ken Himmel said he [hopes to lure these professionals](#) to the convention center for business meetings — and the opportunity to stay in a posh Curio property.

With room rates topping \$2,000 a night for some Palm Beach hotels during winter season (think The Breakers Resort), hotels just across the bridges in West Palm Beach could offer luxury accommodations for half that amount, Himmel said.

Related Ross should know. The company is investing deeply in the West Palm Beach hotel market.

In addition to owning the Hilton convention center hotel and proposing the Curio hotel, Related Ross also is buying The Ben Autograph Collection hotel in West Palm Beach.

At The Ben, nightly room rates hover at or near the \$1,000 mark in January and February, according to the hotel's website.

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Guest-room balconies overlook Palm House's expansive pool area at the renovated hotel at 160 Royal Palm Way, which made Time magazine's latest list of the 100 "World's Greatest Places." *Robert Granoff, Provided By Palm*

New hotels and refurbished older ones will greet tourists

While oceanfront and downtown hotels might charge high rates during the winter season, Palm Beach County also has many other properties that offer visitors a range of prices, Segarra said.

At the Delta Marriott by Palm Beach International Airport in West Palm Beach, room night prices hit in the \$500s during one President's Day weekend in February, the peak of the winter tourism season.

At other times during the winter, prices hover in the \$300s to the \$400s per night and much lower than that during the off-season, said Emily Walsh, Delta's director of sales and marketing.

The 199-room Delta hotel appeals to business travelers, sports groups and leisure tourists who want to be near, but not in, pricey downtown West Palm Beach.

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Perhaps in a sign of the country's economic uncertainty, though, group meetings and business events are being booked on a very short-term, in some cases, fewer than 30 days out. "No one wants to commit too far out," Walsh said.

However, if money is no object for business or leisure visitors, they will find new hotels and several upgraded ones along the coast.

On Palm Beach, the Vineta is set to open in December. The former Chesterfield Hotel, now part of Oetker Collection's first U.S. Masterpiece property, features 41 rooms, plus restaurant, nightclub and pool space.

Also new on Palm Beach is The Palm House hotel, which reopened earlier this year after a 17-year hiatus. The Palm House is the first U.S. hotel in Iconic Luxury Hotels' portfolio, part of L+R Hotels, a London-based hotel investment and management company. The company's website lists hotel rooms starting at more than \$1,200 per night in January.

On the mainland, several hotels have undergone renovations, including the Boca Raton Marriott and the West Palm Beach Marriott.

And sometime in mid-2026, visitors will be able to stay at the restored Gulfstream Hotel in Lake Worth Beach.

Built in 1925, the landmark property in the heart of downtown Lake Worth Beach will feature 90 rooms, a seafood restaurant and meeting rooms. The Gulfstream will be part of Marriott's Tribute portfolio.

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Photos: Gulfstream Hotel in Lake Worth Beach through the years

Opened in 1925 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1983, the Gulfstream Hotel has been shuttered since 2005. [Here's a look.](#)

Meanwhile, by October 2026, visitors will be able to stay at the 201-room Nora Hotel in West Palm Beach, or dine at its main restaurant, Pastis.

The famed New York City Parisian-style brasserie is by James Beard Award-winning restaurateur Stephen Starr. A rooftop restaurant and bar planned by Starr also are in the works for the Nora Hotel.

New or improved shopping, dining complexes

The Nora Hotel is part of the newly-created Nora District, a section of West Palm Beach just north of downtown.

The dining and entertainment district features retailers such as fitness centers, boutiques and even a mommy-and-me program, as well as numerous eateries.



Take a look at Nora District's new retailers, restaurants opening fall of 2025

Some areas of the Nora District are nearing completion in West Palm Beach. The district will feature dining, shopping, entertainment and a hotel.

These restaurants range from breakfast places to evening gathering spots, including bars. Most are expected to be open by early 2026.

Nora co-developer Ned Grace said visitors returning to Palm Beach County will be surprised to find this slice of the city so welcoming.

"It's very family-friendly," Grace said.

For visitors from the Northeast, some of the eateries will be familiar, including New York-based Van Leeuwen ice cream, H&H Bagels and Julianna's Pizza.

Just southwest of Nora, CityPlace also is hosting new attractions. The biggest draw is Italian market Eataly in the former Himmel Theater in the heart of CityPlace. Eataly is slated to open on Dec. 5.

Shoppers also will find new surprises, including home furnishings retailers Perigold and Crate and Barrel.

Farther south, in sizzling downtown Delray Beach, visitors discover that the long-awaited [Sundy Village](#) is open.

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The project, at the gateway to downtown Delray on Atlantic Avenue, features several new restaurants. They include Barcelona Wine Bar, French cafe Maman, Delray Beach Craft Brewing and sushi-focused Double Knot.

These eateries are expected to gradually open by the end of 2025 and into the first part of 2026.