

Fort Lauderdale

A year-round destination goes from spring break raucousness to Fido fun.

By Sandy Robins

IMAGE COURTESY GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

There's a great sense of adventure to spontaneously planning a weekend away. So spoil yourself and your pooch and book a last-minute trip somewhere with a reputation for being Fido-friendly. Fort Lauderdale is a great all-year-round destination. It's no wonder its been nicknamed Fort Lauderdale.

In recent years, the city has focused on being recognized as a year-round international playground. Gone is its raucous image of being a spring break destination. Students are no longer welcomed. Instead, a conscious effort has been made to pander to the pet set and chase after the doggy dollar, thus earning this perennial seaside location the sobriquet Fort Lauderdale.

With its new designer beachfront build-

tipbit

The Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau has an excellent user-friendly website that details the plethora of Fido-friendly venues and attractions and allows you to customize an itinerary to enjoy your stay.

(There's also an iPhone app so that you can check in for activity updates 24/7.)

www.Sunny.org

ings and endless miles of palm tree lined waterways, dog lovers now have a choice of more than 73 pet-friendly hotels, a plethora of restaurants offering canine patio dining, a great dog beach, a super selection of dog parks, doggy day care facilities and camps and wonderful petcentric places to shop.

So call Fido, grab your wallet and come on, let's go! Whatever you've forgotten—you can buy there and have fun doing it.

FIDO Friendly sniffed out the Il Lugano Hotel as a well-located base. This small sophisticated all-suite establishment is just off the beach-lined A1A and offers wonderful views of the boating activity on the Intracoastal Waterway from huge sunny balconies. The concierge is very knowledgeable about all things canine, and the hotel will pamper your pooch with homemade biscuits, a stylish leash to take home along with a fabulous dog-shaped poop bag dispenser (with a full roll of bags). Dog walking and pet-sitting services are available on request.

The waterways are a part of the Fort Lauderdale lifestyle and there is an excellent water taxi service with a taxi stop is within walking distance from the hotel making it very accessible to reach a variety of tourist attractions including the trendy stores and restaurants on Las Olas Boulevard and beyond to the downtown Riverwalk district. A day pass costs \$13 and \$10 for seniors. Small- and medium-size pets travel free.

Your dog will be welcome at a variety of venues on Las Olas Boulevard. The lobster salad at Johnny V will be a meal to remember without sabotaging your calorie count so that you can then go and splurge on ice cream made from imported Belgian chocolate at Galleo, a little farther down the tree-lined street. Be sure to check out the unique Herringbone and Hound boutique that carries original clothes and accessories for both people and their pooches.

Your pooch's wagging tail will be an endorsement of what fun you can have in Fort Lauderdale. So make a note to come back again next year. [f](#)



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