

Affordable Fun in the Sun
Enjoying Spring Break Without Breaking your Wallet
By Abby Jordan

This winter, my friends and I found ourselves under blankets of snow, wishing that we could be under warm layers of sunshine instead. Yet our hopes of escaping upstate New York's winter wonderland plunged. None of us really had much money to spend on a Spring Break trip. But Spring Break can be affordable.

Our first attempts at finding bargain airline ticket prices failed. Rate hikes are common of peak Spring Break travel times. On the Internet, check out sites like www.travelocity.com, www.expedia.com, www.priceline.com, or www.cheaptickets.com. Inexpensive flights are out there, you just have to look for them. We went to www.priceline.com, where you can say how much you are willing to spend on a ticket. Our tickets to Miami, Florida cost \$210, a great deal for mid-March travel to Florida.

To save the cost of flying, check into the bus, train, or even making the trip by car. Other friends of mine opted to make the drive. \$200 split between four or five will pay for gas and tolls, and what you save by driving will give you spending money.

Once you get where you're going, you'll need a place to crash. Ask around. Find friends or family who live in warmer climates that would be willing to house a few Spring Breakers. My roommate snagged us a place to stay in Boca Raton, Florida with a friend of hers that she knew from high school.

To find hotels or motels in the area you are headed, again, look on the Internet. If you're beach bound, cheaper hotels and motels can be found inland. A hotel with a ten or twenty minute walk to the beach will have much cheaper rates than those oceanside. Remember to find out how far it is to a beach, the nightlife, and other attractions. Also, how far the airport is. If you are flying you will want to be close so that you can find a cheap shuttle or taxi to your hotel.

Camping is another option. You will save on the cost of a hotel, and will get to spend a lot of time outdoors.

Once you're on vacation, you'll find that a lot of the money you'll be spending will be on meals. When you pack, pack lightly. Leave room in your suitcase for things like dry cereal, granola bars, Pop-Tarts, and crackers. These snacks will save you from the costs of restaurants and fast food. Eat the food you brought for breakfast and lunch, and then go out somewhere for a good dinner.

I had a fabulous time in Florida over Spring Break for \$300. But if your budget is higher, you might want to look into a package deal. Hundreds of companies offer low deals to places like Jamaica, Cancun, the Bahamas and others. My freshman year Spring Break I did a package deal for \$500 to Jamaica. We didn't have the nicest hotel, and it was a twenty-minute walk to the beach, but you'll save.

Whatever you decide to do for spring break, you can do it inexpensively. Put away your sweaters and get out the sunscreen! With a little work you can make Spring Break affordable to almost any budget.