

ACTIVE/ADVENTURE



GETTING NAKED ON THE WAY

Warning: unclad people on display here! Nudism or naturism (or even FKK in German) is growing in popularity especially in some region. Read about the famous Haulover Beach in Florida, nude Greece as well as about the troubles Swiss villagers experience with hikers “au naturel”.



NATURISM ALL AROUND THE WORLD



Growing from a health and fitness movement in the early part of the 20th century, naturism, or nudism as it is called in some parts of the world, has grown to become a worldwide movement of like-minded people who find a lifestyle without clothing a benefit to mind and body alike.

The International Naturist Federation (INF-FNI), which co-ordinates a group of some 30 national federations, has now over 2.5 million card carrying

members. However, added to that is the greater number of people who for reasons of climate or work commitments can only enjoy the naturist lifestyle for their holiday period and that figure then grows to over 10 million people who would consider themselves frequent naturists.

For the vast majority of these the idea of a holiday confined to the itchy prison of a bathing suit would be unthinkable and as a result there has been a growing trend of holiday locations setting up areas

or centres to cater for such guests. Feedback from such centres shows that the naturist holidaymaker is a group apart, considerate of their fellow guests, careful in the use of the accommodation and extremely aware of the environmental issues surrounding tourism. Often the comment from a hotel or holiday resort offering their first naturist friendly session is that “they are the nicest and friendliest people we have ever met” and bookings of further sessions are renewed quickly.

Leading destinations in Europe include Spain, France and Croatia, countries with a warm climate, attracting those who live in the more temperate parts. **SPAIN** has developed recently with its liberal law on nudity and now boasts 500 beaches and 40 private centres catering for naturist guests. In the area of Vera Playa in Almería, for example, there are in excess of 10,000 beds in fully naturist accommodations

FRANCE has established a naturist tradition over many years with clubs and centres now on the coasts, and in mountains and today there are few major towns in France which do not have one or more naturist centres. These vary from the traditional where tranquility is the rule to vast townships offering every amenity.

CROATIA has also established itself as a firm favourite and on its coast from Savudrija to Dubrovnik you can find centres and beaches set aside for the naturist visitor.

Further afield there is a growing interest in such locations as **AUSTRALIA** and **NEW ZEALAND**, offering both centres and an increasing network of homesteads which offer family style accommodation to the naturist or equally the **CARIBBEAN**





where a number of centres have become established and popular.

In the **UNITED STATES** naturism arrived in the 1900s and the American Sunbathing Association, now known as the American Association for Nude Recreation was formed as early as 1931. According to the Roper Organization, some 40 million Ameri-

cans have skinny-dipped in mixed company. Today the AANR represents over 260 clubs, resorts and linked organizations in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean.

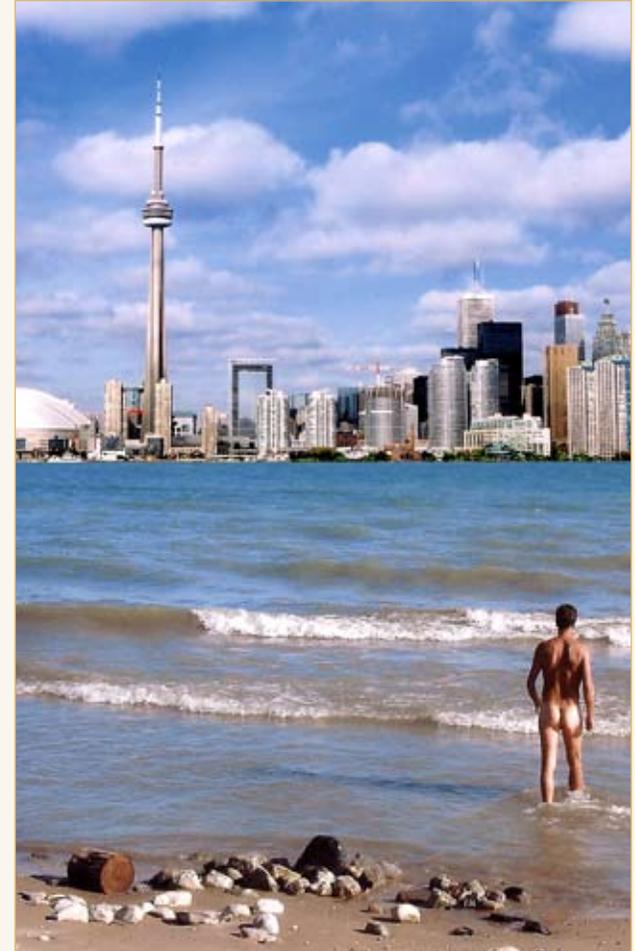
In fact to meet the growing demand over 30 new centres have formed during the past few years and clothes-free or clothing optional cruises have increased from one in 1992 to over seven cruises in 2005.

It is estimated that nude recreation is a \$440 million industry in the States annually. It remains a proud boast that membership of the AANR in the States or indeed any national federation of the INF can be purchased for less than the cost of a bathing suit.

While naturist tourism started out as mainly a camping location, the pressures of modern living mean that more and more guests seek a comfortable location with proper facilities and for these they are willing to pay. Just this past year, the 31st Naturist World Congress was convened outside the United States and Europe and was held in Brazil at the Tambaba beach area, for the first time.

This was a major event in South America jointly sponsored by the Brazilian government to promote this new tourist location. This demonstrates that, far from being the pastime of a few, naturism is moving into the mainstream of the tourist world and governments, in developing areas, are very aware of this and of the income which this green tourism can bring.

Entry to a naturist location is easiest and often discounted if the visitor holds an International Naturist Federation card which can be obtained from any national federation or direct from the INF-FNI



itself. The website www.inf-fni.org also lists a database of holiday locations world-wide to guide potential visitors to enter the world of the naturist.

Photo: AANR, TR archive
By **George Volak**
<http://www.inf-fni.org>



FLORIDA'S HAULOVER BEACH: A TOUCH OF THE RIVIERA IN AMERICA



ming in your own skin – is so limited. Really odd, since so many prominent Americans of the past indulged in nudism: founding fathers (Benjamin Franklin), U.S. Presidents (J. Q. Adams and Theodore Roosevelt), and cultural icons (Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman). As Whitman said, “There comes moods when clothes of ours are not only too irksome to wear, but are themselves indecent.” And what an affront to Nature and to Nature’s God! But there’s one place in Florida where naturists have openly declared their independence.

The designated clothing-optional or naturist area of Haulover Beach Park is a 0.65 kilometer stretch of beautiful Atlantic shoreline where your bare skin is the most fashionable thing to wear, and where no one will question your choice. It’s visited by thousands each day, a mix of local residents and tourists; many tourists are here in South Florida largely because of this beach, and would otherwise be vacationing elsewhere in the Caribbean, or the Greek islands, or on the French Riviera.

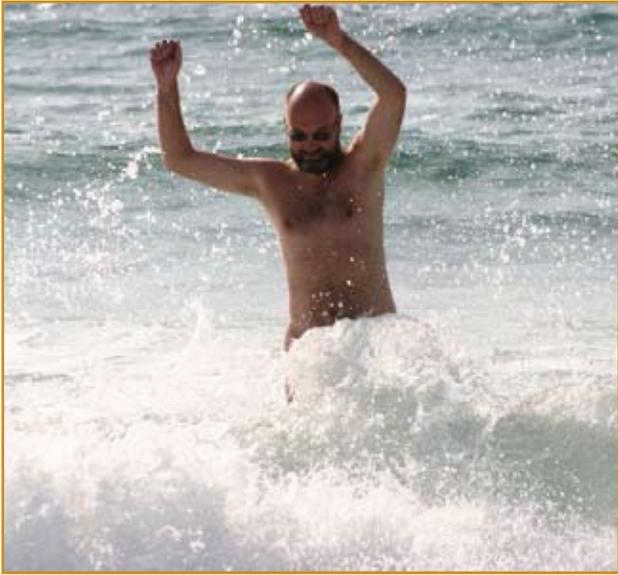
Unlike as at many unsanctioned nude beaches in America, you don’t have to park and hike 3 kilometers, or rappel down a three hundred meter cliff to get to the beach. This naturist beach is only a few hundred meters from convenient parking. (Use of the beach is free; parking costs \$5 per car.) Nor do you need to keep your clothes handy to dress temporarily in case park rangers or law officers appear; when the police drive by at Haulover, just wave and smile, and they’ll smile back at you.

A quiz: the Netherlands (41,543 km²) has 160 of them, while the state of Florida (151,670 km²) in the USA has only one. What could that be? The answer isn’t windmills or tulip farms; it’s designated clothing-optional beaches, where you can swim or sunbathe au naturel. (At least officially and

publicly: Florida has a few remote, unsanctioned beaches naturists use, and dozens of private nudist resorts.)

It may seem odd to most Europeans that in the “Sunshine State” of the “Land of the Free” that “skinny-dipping” – the American term for swim-





The clothing-optional area at Haulover was established in 1991 by South Florida Free Beaches, a local naturist group affiliated with America's national Naturist Society (www.naturistsociety.com). It took a few years for local government and community leaders to realize the naturist beach was not a threat to public order and morality, but a provision beneficial to the community and accepted by a majority of citizens. Former Sunny Isles Beach Mayor David Samson in fact noted in 2002 that "the presence of naturist families significantly cleaned up and improved the area." Within fifteen years,

Haulover Beach usage quadrupled, with significant benefits to the local economy.

Today at Haulover's naturist beach area you'll find a concession offering food and beach chair and umbrella rentals. There are lifeguards and fresh water showers. The naturist organization B.E.A.C.H.E.S. Foundation offers fresh fruit, ice cream, and naturist literature and souvenirs during the weekend, and periodic beach festivals during the year. The water's a warm 30°C (86°F) in the summer, seldom dipping below 21°C (70°F) even

in the coolest months. Haulover is a few miles north of Miami Beach's South Beach, famous for its nightlife and laid-back tropical atmosphere. Cosmopolitan Miami Beach allows women to sunbathe top-free, but for total freedom Haulover Beach is the place to be.

America's a strange place. You can steal millions from investors and wind up with a slap on the wrist, or (maybe) a brief vacation at a "country-club" prison, but take off your clothes to go swimming? Is this small beach in South Florida the only area of sanity and reason left in America?

Information on Haulover's naturist beach is available on the web sites of South Florida Free Beaches at www.sffb.com and of Beach Education Advocates for Culture, Health, Environment and Safety (B.E.A.C.H.E.S.) Foundation Institute at www.beachesfoundation.org.

Photo: SFFB (David Baum, Grey Vanaman), TR archive
By *Michael Kush*



NUDE HIKERS CAUSE A STIR IN THE SWISS ALPS



Many people tend to make the connection between public nudity and the nudist beach. This is understandable, yet the beach is not the only place where one can find nudists. Indeed, there has been quite a stir in the Swiss Alps recently ever since the Swiss police caught a nude hiker last autumn in the small canton of Appenzell.

The immediate reaction, in accordance with the conservative attitudes of many Alpine village areas, was to take action against this person, until the police realised that there was absolutely nothing they could do. There is no law in Switzerland, which states that public nudity is not allowed as long as it is not of a sexual nature.

However, let's not forget that women were allowed the vote only in 1990 in this part of the world and Swiss villages are known for their conservative attitudes. Furthermore, Switzerland is not a large country. For example, it is possible to hike for weeks in Canada without meeting another human being. This is not the case in central Europe. Groups of nudists are certain to meet other people on their trips. It is unavoidable. It seems that the famous



FLY NAKED IN GERMANY?

FKK (Freikörperkultur - Free Body Culture) has a very long tradition in Germany. There are many nude clubs, societies and groups for singles, couples and even families with children. Especially in the pre-1989 era of split Germany, naked bathing and sunbathing belonged to popular leisure activities and the freedom of nakedness at least partially substituted for the lack of political, social and personal freedom. There were even plans for a "nude airline" to the FKK-Mecca, the island of Usedom, yet there were (of course) objections and so the experiment had to be given up. The official reason was "moral doubts".



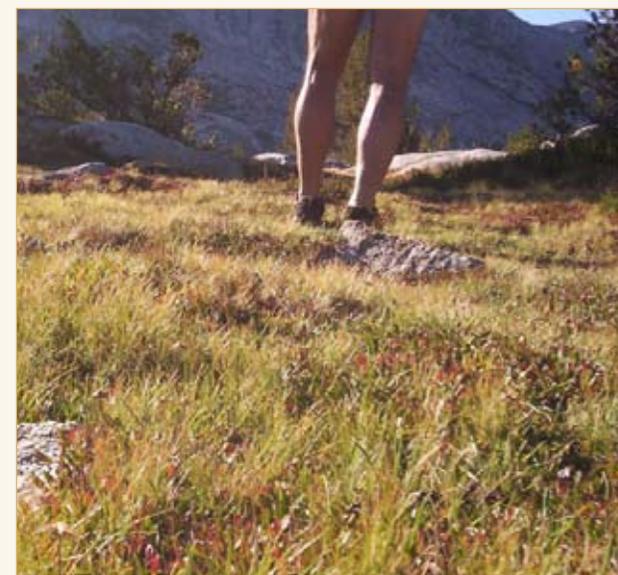


notion of Swiss secrecy applies only to banking and not the body.

The hikers themselves claim that being nude in the Alps is the only way to enjoy the famous mountain range. Wearing just hiking boots and backpacks is for them apparently the most natural way to indulge in some of Europe's most beautiful places. As long as no law is put in place, they will continue to hike in the nude, even in winter.

Despite the local government efforts it seems that Appenzell, the second smallest of Switzerland's 26 cantons, is becoming a nude-hiking mecca. To oppose this trend the local government drafted a new law against public nudity that would give the police power to fine unclad hikers \$160. The proposal will be voted at the end of April when all eligible citizens will express their opinion on naked visitors in their picturesque canton. The authorities want to act quickly, before the hiking season begins to avoid the last year's influx of nude hikers.

<http://www.tourism-review.com>



WHERE TO GO FOR NUDE HOLIDAY? GREECE!

Naturist vacations, while once seen as a narrow travel niche for the over 50's, has now grown into a \$400 million dollar industry with a new trend of young professionals now taking part and enjoying this ever growing market.

Naturist options run from rustic camping retreats to upscale resorts offering the very best in fine dining, spa services and guest accommodation. Most resorts are family friendly, some offering specialised kids programs. You'll also find naturist cruises, spas, and special events.

The International Naturist Federation, which represents millions of naturists around the world, describes naturism (or nudism) as: "A way of life in harmony with nature characterised by the practice of communal nudity, with the intention of encouraging self-respect, respect for others and for the environment."

Naturism as a pastime is thought to be both beneficial for health and wellbeing. Naturism is recreating in the nude, i.e. swimming, sunbathing, exercising or whatever people wish to do. Naturism does not include sexual activities; this is then labelled hedonism and is not part of a standard naturist lifestyle.

Naturist resorts have been in existence as far back as 1891 and were started in British India. Now there are resorts and clubs all over the world with the largest numbers distributed throughout France, Spain and Croatia.

France has innumerable naturist camping resorts, the largest being the 'city' of Cap D'Agde



in the south of France thought to hold over 3000 visitors staying in a wide range of accommodation from camping and static homes to hotels rooms and bungalows. France is a favourite for family naturists with a range of large well equipped resorts offering activities for the whole family. Euronat and La Jenny being two popular choices with families.

Spain is also prevalent with naturist resorts along its southern coast, but it's the Spanish Canary Is-

lands that are often the most popular tourist destination due to their yearlong seasons and miles of sand dune beaches. Magnolias Natura was instantly popular because it was challenging the norm of very large resorts in France and Spain by offering a smaller more friendly location. This resort has a large number of returning guests year on year and is difficult to book at certain times of the year. This show a lack of options for the natur-



ists and when they find a good resort they tend to return.

Greece with its wide range of beautiful islands is one of Europe's most popular holiday destinations, yet the Greeks are somewhat behind when it comes to offering this growing tourist market the opportunity to participate in naturist holidays.

Vritromartis on the Greek island of Crete was opened in 1985 by a very forward thinking Greek. It is a beautiful resort with 85 rooms and apartments which are operated on a half board basis and is the key to offering naturists another country to holiday in.

One of the newest resorts is Vassaliki Naturist Club which was opened by a young British couple on the Greek island of Kefalonia in 2007. With only 12 apartments, this allows the focus to be on quality and service. By also offering a number of activities such as boat trips and group meals, they have found that by their third year, one third of their bookings are by repeat guests.

Opening of this resort and the countless number of stunning and unoccupied beaches that can be found on any Greek island, have helped to make Greece the fourth best naturist destination in Europe, below France, Spain and Croatia. Plus Greece is believed to be one of the countries to have the most potential for growing its naturist market in the future. With this in mind both Vritromartis and Vassaliki have plans to open new resorts in the near future.

The luxury market for naturism has to be in the Caribbean and Mexico. Club Orient on the Caribbean island of St Martin offers guests some of the best quality accommodation and luxury service. A room can cost from €135 to €800 per night and vary



from wooden studios sleeping 3 near the beach to a 3 bedroom luxury garden villa which sleeps seven. Mexico has one of the best adult only all inclusive resorts. 18 of the 42 rooms offer oceanfront swim up suites and food is available from 6am to 10pm from the restaurant with drinks on offer at the swim up bar.

With society becoming more open to nudity and the naked body, Naturism is on the up. From the old nudist colonies we now have a

new and exciting future with the standard of resorts improving all the time and new resorts on the horizon. It won't be long before this once niche holiday will be on sale at all good travel agents!

By Mark and Samantha Taylor
(Vigla Natura Ltd @ Vassaliki Naturist Club)
<http://www.viglanatura.com/>

