

## Active Weekend Getaway in Palm Springs

by A GUEST WRITER on 2016/08/23 in ACTIVE TRAVEL, CALIFORNIA

In its heyday, Palm Springs was a magnet for the rich and famous, subsequently earning its nickname, "The Playground of the Stars." Although some may think the city has become somewhat of a cliché, Palm Springs has really managed to maintain a proud "old Hollywood" elegance and even has quite a few options for **active travel**. To see some of the city's best hotspots, today's guest writer, Brette Sember, is taking us on a tour of this beautiful city in the desert.

Once you adjust to the heat (and it really is a dry heat!), you'll find that Palm Springs has an interesting low-key vibe. It doesn't even seem like a city when you drive through. All the buildings are low, the main strip is only a few blocks long, and there are not many people outside walking or doing much of anything in the heat of the day. It feels quiet and gently paced. Things feel laidback, but a lot going on that you don't initially see.



The surrounding mountains around Palm Springs make for some amazing sunsets.

### Take a Trip Back in Time

Palm Springs developed as a getaway for movie stars who were contractually bound to be within 2 ½ hours of the LA area. As a result, there are dozens and dozens of famous homes in Palm Springs. You can take a **self-guided driving tour**, but for the full experience, I recommend a guided tour for all the fun stories and details about what is inside the homes. We took **Celebrity Tours'** half-day tour, which included a break halfway through for a local specialty date shake (delicious!).



One of Liberace's many homes.

If you want to hear stories about the Rat Pack, this is the tour for you. Tour guides do know some more current information, but you'll have to ask if you want to hear about Barry Manilow, Suzanne Somers or any of the reality show Housewives who live in Palm Springs. The company also offers tours of the San Geronio Pass Wind Farm, which is an incredible site with thousands of wind turbines. The celebrity tour goes past the farm so you can take a look and decide if you're interested.

### Visit Heartbreak Hotel

Whether or not you are an Elvis fan, be sure to schedule a tour of the **Elvis Honeymoon Hideaway**. If you take a bus tour, it will drive past it, but I highly recommend scheduling a tour inside the home which is in nearly the exact condition it was when Elvis and Priscilla lived there the first year of their marriage (this is also the home they were living in the day they got married and you'll get to see the escape route they used to avoid the press).



Elvis Honeymoon Hideaway.

This is a trip back in time because it is frozen in the 60s (I was fascinated by the kitchen with the built-in charcoal grill and mixer). The home is also architecturally significant. It's visitor-friendly, photos are welcomed, and you can sit on the giant couch or the bed (THAT bed), or even climb in the weirdly deep tub if you so desire.



That's one large couch!

Make a reservation since it only runs if they know guests are coming, we were lucky enough to be the only ones on our tour. My biggest complaint about Palm Springs is that there are so many amazing celebrity homes, yet this is the only one you can actually go inside. I would have loved to see the inside of Bob Hope's, Liberace's, or Sinatra's homes.

### Hit the Trails

I was inspired by the scenery of Palm Springs: a flat desert with palm trees encircled by mountains. Things are even better once you head up into the mountains. And the best news is, it's 20 degrees cooler up there. For the ride of a lifetime, take the **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway** up 2.5 miles to 8500 feet in the **San Jacinto State Park**.



Beautiful views from the mountains.

The tram rotates 360 degrees twice during the ride so there are lots of great photo ops. Once at the top, you'll find 54 hiking trails and guided nature walks so there's lots of room to wander and enjoy the beauty of the mountains.

You can camp or enjoy snow sports in the winter as well. The visitor's center offers two restaurants, displays, informational films, and terraces to enjoy the view. It's worth the ride up, even if you don't plan to hike or camp, just to stand above Palm Springs and see it spread out before you.

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### Relaxing

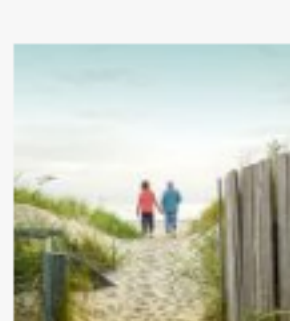
Don't forget to spend some time by the pool while you're in town: every resort has one. If you're feeling daring, stay at one of the many nudist resorts in town. I don't speak from experience, but **Desert Sun** is world-famous.

We enjoyed the pools at the **Triada Palm Springs** where bathing suits are not optional. The best restaurant in town is **Cheeky's**, breakfast and lunch only, Monday through Thursday with lots of healthy and allergy-free options. For dinner, try the **Purple Palm** in the Colony Palms resort. Shopping in Palm Springs is nothing to write home about with a handful of t-shirt shops, but Palm Canyon Drive is lovely for a stroll in the evening.

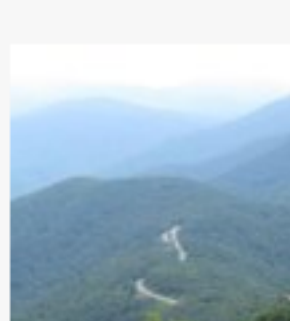
Palm Springs is perfect for an active boomer weekend in which you can mix hiking with celebrity gawking and lazy afternoons by the pool with a cold drink.

*Have you explored beautiful Palm Springs? Join the conversation at the **My Itchy Travel Feet page on Facebook** or send us an email to ask a question or share your experience.*

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### About Brette Sember

Brette Sember is a dedicated travel shopper who blogs about her finds at **Travel Shopper Expert**. She is the author of *The Gluten-Free Guide to Travel*.