

# 5 Myths About Nude Vacations

## The realities of 'au naturel' holidays

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**Tripso**

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As a college student hiking through the French Alps many years ago, I accidentally uncovered one hotel's shocking secret.

I didn't mean to reveal it. It was a blistering hot day in Grenoble, and my traveling companion, Nate, wandered toward a swimming pool behind the resort while I stocked up on water and provisions. Moments later he returned, pale-faced.

"Chris," he said breathlessly, pointing toward the pool. "There are *breasts* in there."

Yes, there were. The French, like many Europeans, generally think nothing of baring breasts, butt — and more — at the beach, much to the surprise of visiting Yanks. I already knew this, because I had grown up in Europe. But my friend Nate, who was born and raised in the Bible Belt, didn't.

Nudity! There, I said it. If the thought of going *au naturel* on holiday makes you uncomfortable, please don't read on. You'll probably be offended.

Still with me? OK, here are the five leading myths about nude vacations.

**1. Vacationing nudists are just a bunch of perverts.** Hardly. In fact, nudists are everyday people, and there are more of them out there than you think. The [American Association for Nude Recreation \(AANR\)](#), the largest organization of its kind in North America, represents nearly 50,000 members and their families. There are also 270 clubs and resorts for people who want to vacation in the buff — and that's just in prim-and-proper North America.

**2. Clothing-optional resorts are seedy.** Nope. We're talking about mainstream, professionally run properties offering a wide range of wholesome activities. Among them: [Cypress Cove Nudist Resort & Spa](#) in Kissimmee, Fla., which has villas and campgrounds, and even sponsors its own nude bike rally every year. (Its motto: "Just as nature intended.") And [DeAnza Springs Resort](#) in Jacumba, Calif., a 500-acre club with hiking trails, volleyball courts and swimming pools. ("You'll love the way you feel," it promises, "We guarantee it.")

**3. You have to take your clothes off at a nudist resort.** Not necessarily. There's a difference between a clothing-optional club and a clothes-free resort. Clothing-optional means that you can keep your clothes on if you want to - the idea being that it sometimes takes a little time to adjust to nudity (in fact, even devoted nudists sometimes keep their pants on). However, a clothes-free club means a mandatory strip-down. Knowing the difference is important when it's your first

time at a nudist resort. The AANR suggests contacting a club in advance to clarify its policies.

**4. Nudists are mostly senior citizens who are off their rockers.** Actually, most clothing-optional and nudist resorts are extremely family-friendly. For example, at the [White Thorn Lodge](#), in western Pennsylvania, there are a number of activities for the whole family, including volleyball, bocci, pumpkin painting, a Christmas social with Santa, and a potluck dinner (“Meat provided, bring a side dish to share”).

OK, so there are some nudist resorts where you’re likely to find a disproportionately high number of, well, older folks. But as nudism goes more mainstream, a lot of families are embracing the movement. In fact, my former neighbors were nudists. Both parents would hang out in their backyard sans clothes with their two teenage daughters.

**5. Nudists are exhibitionists who want to seduce you.** Trust me, for most people, the odds of getting a date are greatly improved if they keep their clothes *on*. And seriously, how long do you think anyone with criminal intentions would last at a nudist resort? So why do people vacation in the buff? Well, often it’s because they don’t want a tan line. They’re not exposing their bodies to *you* as much as they are to the sun.

The idea of taking a vacation in your birthday suit may take some getting used to. But nudists aren’t deviant septuagenarians and their resorts aren’t sleazy hideaways. The truth is, nudists are often the people next door, and if nothing else, a nude vacation can lead to many new discoveries.

Nate’s encounter with the topless French women apparently left a deep impression on him. Several short years later, he got married and he is now the father of eight children.

And me? I’m looking forward to my next trip to Europe.

*Christopher Elliott is National Geographic Traveler's ombudsman and a nationally syndicated columnist who specializes in solving your travel problems. Got a trip that needs fixing? Send him a [note](#) or visit his [Web site](#). Your question may be published in a future story. Want to sound off about a story? Try visiting [Elliott's forum](#).*