

Mother/Daughter Mud Season Escape



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Courtesy photo

Get out of the spring mud and gray and escape to the sand, sunflowers, sea, and dolphins of Lido Key

MOTHER/DAUGHTER MUD SEASON ESCAPE

By Peggy Newland

Our long mud season in New England is the perfect reason to have a mother/daughter escape to clearwater beaches, white sand, and 80-degree days. Instead of walking in rubber boots on top of melting gray snow and brown grasses, why not substitute flip flops and shorts and sunglasses? The deals are abundant, and the crowds are gone early spring in Lido Key and if you can have a view with flipping dolphins from your oceanfront deck and a Tiki Hut on the cove for happy hour prices, you've got a perfect mini-break from mud.

"Look at that water," my daughter, Haley, says, when we check into Lido Beach Resort in Sarasota, Florida.

"Azure blue with touches of sapphire," I say. So different from our spring, steel-gray waters along Jenness Beach or Rye Harbor.

"Perfect swimming out there," the concierge nods. "Float around with the dolphins."

Our cell phones and laptops are nowhere to be found as we hit the beach immediately, after liberal applications of sunscreen on our winter skin. We collect seashells underfoot and scan the deeper water for any dolphins wanting to play. Our bare feet splash in "non-New England spring" waves and we are entertained by sandpipers as they race around the shoreline. Upon the return, we leap into the "clearest sea ever" and then head to the "Adults-only" pool.

"Remember when I stayed in the kiddie pool?" Haley asks.

"For hours," I say, smiling, as we click happy hour Margaritas under a palm tree, and take a quick nap. Adult daughters are fun travel companions!

At sunset, we grab some blackened fish tacos, homemade pico de gallo and salsa verde, and side of chips from the Tiki Bar, and head to beach chairs for views of blue water and skies changing from pink to deep purple.

"Usually, there are dolphins at sunset," a woman says. "Maybe tomorrow."

This is our mother/daughter goal for the getaway: spy dolphins at sunset.

As we walk back through lush, manicured pathways full of beach sunflowers, multi-colored azalea, pink milkweed, coneflowers, blue daze blooms, and with peaceful gazebos and grouped outdoor couches along naturalistic stream grottos, it's a perfect relaxation zone. We order some crabcakes with key lime aioli and two grouper sandwiches for after-sunset on a comfy couch and then head upstairs. Our room's deck sports two Adirondack chairs overlooking the darkening sea and lit-up Tiki torches, but we decide to fall asleep in plush beds with tons of feather pillows. We keep the sliding door open for Floridian breezes.

The next morning, after a made-to-order breakfast of banana-berry smoothies, and egg sandwiches in Drift Restaurant, with panoramic views overlooking the Gulf, we head out on the free shuttle to St. Armand's Circle for shopping and a quick spin on E-Bikes along the coast.

"This is easy cycling," Haley says as we glide over flat trails past palm trees, bougainvillea, more azalea, and petunia gardens.

We spend the rest of the afternoon dipping in the sea, strolling for more seashell collecting, napping by the pool, sitting in a bubbling hot tub, and then floating in the sea, as friendly pool staff ply us with ice cream, frozen grapes, nachos, and ice water in frosted glasses. At sunset, we head to the beach, and happiness entails as dolphins flip and spin through waves as the sun sinks into the purple sea. We wade up to our waists but don't go further because the dolphins are so happy eating their dinner.

See, I told you they'd come," the same woman says, smiling at us, as she wades knee-level.

"A perfect day," Haley says.

"A perfect ending," the woman nods.

That night, after showers, we dine in Drift, with candlelight and the vibe of celebration of all things spring in Florida. We have shrimp cocktails to start as the Tiki Bar torchlights are lit below. I choose pan-seared local snapper, lump crabmeat, roasted asparagus, wild mushroom pesto, and lemon burro while Haley goes for grilled cobia, polenta, and lobster succotash. We, of course, finish with Key Lime Pie.

"We should do this every spring," Haley suggests.

I couldn't agree more.

Get out of the spring mud and gray and escape to the sand, sunflowers, sea, and dolphins of Lido Key. It will get you ready for our eventual, beautiful New England summer. Whenever it arrives!



Courtesy photos



if you go

Lido Beach Resort.
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Ask for the last-minute rates in the spring and find your escape on the beach.