

# THE 25 BEST FAMILY GOLF RESORTS

THE FOLLOWING destinations were chosen, first and foremost, for their willingness to encourage families to play together, be it on short courses, with family tee times or in kids-play-free programs. Of course, these resorts also



have all the amenities modern families expect: spas, waterslides, theme parks, kids' camps and beaches. With all these options, you won't know where to start, but if you ask us, golf takes the cake. Everything else is icing. —D.W.

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## PINEHURST RESORT Pinehurst, NC

*Formed in 1895, the nation's most historic golf resort welcomes families with open arms.*

**GOLF** Seven of eight courses (excluding No. 2) have junior tee markers and scorecards. No. 8 is reserved for families after 5 p.m. during the summer and holiday weeks (\$175 per family). Eric Alpenfels, Pinehurst's director of instruction, is a U.S. Kids Golf Top 50 Teacher.

**LODGING** The historic Carolina Hotel has family-size suites and sits next door to the Kids Club and West Lawn Activity Center's kiddie pool and playground.

**BIG DEAL** Kids 12 and under stay, play golf and eat for free with a paying adult.

**FUN STUFF** Vie for low score on the six-hole putting green; sail on the freshwater lake; enjoy a mother-daughter facial.

**EXTRA CREDIT** Pinehurst hosts the U.S. Kids Golf World Championships August 2–4 (800-ITS-GOLF; pinehurst.com).



## KIAWAH ISLAND GOLF RESORT Kiawah Island, SC

*An upscale escape on the South Carolina coast with a lowcountry vibe and accessible legendary golf.*

**GOLF** Four of Kiawah's five courses have

junior tee markers during the summer: on the front nines of Cougar Point (1,322 yards), Turtle Point (1,262 yards) and Oak Point (1,484 yards); Osprey Point has them on all 18 holes (1,470 yards front, 1,473 back). (Children are discouraged from playing

The Ocean Course, which *Golf Digest* has named the country's toughest resort golf course.) The Tommy Cuthbert Learning Center at Turtle Point holds two-day junior golf camps for intermediate players ages 12 to 17.

**LODGING** The Sanctuary at Kiawah Island Golf Resort is a lavish new hotel with an old soul. It has 255 rooms, a family pool, and a nature center. In addition, there are 500 one-to-four-bedroom villas with access to the resort's two pools (but not The Sanctuary hotel pools) as well as discounts on tee times and Kamp Kiawah for kids ages 3 to 11.

**BIG DEAL** In the summer-long Family Tee program, kids 17 and under play free with a paying adult from 6:30 to 7 p.m. (\$45).

**FUN STUFF** Boogie-board in the Atlantic Ocean; take a nature tour; shoot hoops at Night Heron Park; enter a sand-sculpting contest.

**EXTRA CREDIT** Tennis, anyone? Kiawah has one of the nation's top programs (800-654-2924; kiawahresort.com).



## HERSCHEY RESORT Hershey, PA

*The town that chocolate built is over 100 years old, but youth is served at its theme park and golf courses.*

**GOLF** Off Chocolate Avenue, the nine-hole, 2,125-yard Spring Creek Golf Course for kids is only \$12 on weekends. At Hershey Country Club, the East and West courses are suited to better juniors.



KIAWAH ISLAND GOLF RESORT

**LODGING** The Hershey Lodge has child-friendly eateries, an indoor pool and a minigolf course. The historic Hotel Hershey has a more grown-up ambience and a newly expanded spa with manicures, pedicures and facials for teens.

**BIG DEAL** The Family Golf Package includes deluxe accommodations, breakfast, a round per person at the Spring Creek Golf Course, sunset admission to Hersheypark

### WHAT THE SYMBOLS MEAN

- 👨👩👧 FAMILY TEE TIMES
- 👧 JUNIOR TEES
- 🏊 JUNIOR CLUB RENTALS
- 🚲 KIDS' ACTIVITIES
- 👨🏫 JUNIOR INSTRUCTION
- 💰 COST

and admission to Hershey Gardens and Museum, starting at \$139 at the lodge and \$189 at the hotel, per person, per night.

**FUN STUFF** Relax in a whipped-cocoa bath at the spa; ride the Sooperdooperlooper at Hersheypark; eat a corn dog on the new boardwalk; admire a bobcat at ZooAmerica.

**EXTRA CREDIT** The air smells like Hershey's Kisses (800-HERSHEY; hersheypa.com).



## CALLAWAY GARDENS

Pine Mountain, GA

*A cozy, bucolic getaway with world-famous gardens and a first-class nature center.*

**GOLF** All three courses use the U.S. Kids Golf Family Course setup, consisting of two sets of junior tees in front of the reds: Mountain View (3,809 yards front, 2,212 back), Lake View (3,571 yards front, 2,060 back) and the Sky View nine (1,443 yards). Head pro Bud Robison is a U.S. Kids Golf Top 50 Teacher.

**LODGING** Choose from cottages, villas, the Mountain Creek Inn, and the new Lodge and Spa at Callaway Gardens.

**BIG DEAL** The Summer Golf Adventure includes seven nights' lodging, junior and adult clinics, and all-day kids' camp, starting at \$2,521 for a family of five in a two-bedroom cottage.

**FUN STUFF** Feel a bazillion tiny wings on your face at the Cecil B. Day Butterfly Center; watch hawks hunt at the Birds of Prey show; pedal a paddleboat at 65-acre Robin Lake Beach.

**EXTRA CREDIT** The summer kids' day-camp counselors are members of Florida State University's "Flying High" Circus (800-CALLAWAY; callawaygardens.com).



## CELEBRATION

Celebration, FL

*Near Orlando, this Disney-built town boasts what is arguably Florida's most kid-friendly course.*

**GOLF** The Celebration GC's 18-hole course (by Robert Trent Jones Sr. and Jr.) has permanent junior tee boxes at 2,220 yards. There's also a three-hole Junior Course.

**LODGING** The 115-room Celebration Hotel and the new Radisson Orlando Resort Celebration are close to the golf club and have family-friendly atmospheres. Since the course is public, however, you can stay anywhere in the area and still play there.

**BIG DEAL** The junior course is \$1. Adults

must be accompanied by a paying child.

**FUN STUFF** Have a burger and milk shake at the '50s-style Market Street Cafe; ride a bike around town or rent an electric car; take in a movie at the art deco theater.

**EXTRA CREDIT** 400 kids a year take lessons at Celebration GC's Junior Golf Academy (407-566-1200; celebration.fl.us).



## PALMETTO DUNES RESORT

Hilton Head Island, SC

*This 2,000-acre mega-resort has countless condos, three golf courses, two hotels and a marina.*

**GOLF** The Robert Trent Jones Oceanfront Course is the only Hilton Head course with



permanent junior tees (2,625 yards). The George Fazio Course plays 5,273 yards from the forward tees; the Arthur Hills Course plays 4,999 yards.

**LODGING** Rent a villa at the resort, or book a room at the on-site Hilton Head Marriott Beach & Golf Resort or Hilton Oceanfront Resort. The hotels offer golf packages and kids' programs in summer.

**BIG DEAL** The Family Get-A-Way package includes villa accommodations, two days unlimited golf, \$25 gift card, bike rental, one hour of tennis and a golf clinic, starting at \$149 per person, per night, for a family of four.

**FUN STUFF** Kayak at twilight on Broad Creek; bike on the hard-packed beach; slurp oysters at The Salty Dog Cafe in Sea Pines (and don't forget the T-shirt!).

**EXTRA CREDIT** Hilton Head is a natural habitat for bottlenose dolphins (800-875-8726; palmettodunes.com)



## HYATT REGENCY SCOTTSDALE RESORT AND SPA AT GAINEY RANCH Scottsdale

*Big and splashy, with every family amenity under the sun and privileges at a private club.*

**GOLF** Gainey Ranch Golf Club, behind the hotel, has junior tees on all three nines (Lakes, Dunes and Arroyo).

**LODGING** 490 spacious guest rooms, including eight casita suites with rooftop decks, kitchens and barbecue grills.

**BIG DEAL** Kids play for free June 13–September 4, and for \$25 with a paying adult thereafter.

**FUN STUFF** Make a splash in the huge water playground; hunt for treasure in a faux mine; take a gondola ride on the lake, complete with singing gondolier.

**EXTRA CREDIT** Camp Hyatt Kachina gives kids fun lessons in Native American culture and local history, geography and Sonoran Desert flora and fauna (480-444-1234; scottsdale.hyatt.com).



## GRAND TRAVERSE RESORT & SPA Acme, MI

*Recently renovated and nicely appointed, with a great location on Lake Michigan's Grand Traverse Bay.*

**GOLF** Spruce Run has junior tee markers

# Ready for the **BIG** time

*When is your child up to the challenge of playing the same golf course you play? According to Sandy LaBauve, teaching pro at the Kierland Golf Club in Phoenix, she or he should:*

- Hit the ball on her first try most of the time. Repeated swings and misses will hold up play and frustrate both of you (and other golfers).
- Understand pace of play. Let him know that he can't take five practice swings. Make it a game: "Let's finish this hole in 10 minutes." And always let waiting golfers play through.
- Play from a shorter distance. If there are no junior tees, designate a tee area midway down the fairway so she can finish the hole in regulation.

—Ashley Mayo

