

## FreeStayMaine

*Outreach to cruise passengers encouraging them to return to Maine for an extended land based vacation*

### Lodging and Business Partners Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is FreeStayMaine and who are the people behind it?**

The CruiseMaine Coalition, the Maine Port Authority, The Maine Office of Tourism, The Maine Tourism Association, and the Maine Innkeeper's Association in cooperation with the University of Maine's Center for Tourism Research and Outreach, and the regional tourism professionals representing the participating establishments in Maine, recently launched FreeStayMaine.

The FreeStayMaine program has been developed to encourage cruise passengers to return to Maine for extended land based stays. Participating businesses can encourage return visits by offering special promotions for the vacationer on the FreeStayMaine website database. This database will reside mechanically and virtually under the Maine Getaways ([www.visitmaine.com](http://www.visitmaine.com)) umbrella. As part of the program, specially designed vouchers that list our website are distributed to cruise ship passengers in Maine's cruise ports (the member ports are listed on [www.cruisemaineusa.com](http://www.cruisemaineusa.com)). The program will be financially supported in part by the Maine Office of Tourism's Regional Marketing Maine Partnership Program, the Maine Port Authority and various match partners.

Joining the program, which has the full endorsement of all the aforementioned partners, is simple!

#### **Why support this program?**

In 2002, the UMaine Department of Resource Policy and Economics issued an economic impact study of passenger spending in Bar Harbor. From that study, they extrapolated specific gathered data and created another report which highlighted the passenger's likelihood to return to a port visited while on a cruise.

The reports findings indicated that:

- over 33% (nearly 33,000) of the passengers intended to visit Bar Harbor for an extended vacation within 2 years of the initial visit.
- the average cruise passenger earns and spends more than the typical Maine tourist. The surveyed passengers lived an average of over 1,200 miles from Bar Harbor. This campaign clearly reaches out to a market segment of people desiring to visit Maine who do not live within the Maine Office of Tourism's typical market outreach areas.

We want to encourage increased tourism based economic impact from these cruise passengers by offering and providing them with land based vacation opportunities throughout our state.

We will be working with the University of Maine's Department of Research Policy & Economics and the new Center for Tourism Outreach and Research to collect the data on the number of people who actually return for a land based vacation, which port their voucher originated from, where they are from and what region of the state they return for a vacation to. The CeTRO will then issue another study based on the reported findings. This will be a minimum of a three year program.

#### **Who can participate in the program?**

Any business in Maine which may be of interest to the tourist can join the program –this includes **hotels, guest houses, excursions, tour operators, restaurants, cafes, attractions, and car rental companies** – in fact, any services which may be used by visitors to Maine.

### ***How much will it cost me to participate?***

It will cost you nothing to have an active listing in the online database of contributing properties and attractions. As a member of the program, **you will be required to report when someone uses the voucher for lodging at your place or uses your services.** You are asked to remind the traveler to bring the voucher with them and present it to you upon registration. This will ensure the voucher is not used more than once and will assist in tracking the number of successful bookings generated from this outreach. If you are offering lodging, it is required that you offer a minimum of one free night's stay within your package.

### ***How does my information get presented to the consumer?***

When you join the program, all we need from you are the details of your business and the special promotions you wish to offer to guests. Your business will then be added to the program and receive all of its benefits, including direct marketing of the program to over 120,000 cruise passengers annually and access to the data generated from the UMAINE's CentRO reports.

Your listing will be added to the well-visited [www.FreeStayMaine.com](http://www.FreeStayMaine.com) website. This site will feature details about your business, along with photographs and information about the specials you offer. What's more, as with the Maine Getaways program you can easily **edit this page yourself!** If, for example, you have a special offer which applies for a certain time of year only, you can access your webpage, add the special promotion and publish it to the web, in less time than it takes to write an email! **With this facility capability, you can make sure that your rates, your contact information and your special promotions are completely up-to-the-minute.**

Your own personal, self-editing webpage on our high-profile and well-promoted site is just one of the benefits FreeStayMaine offers you.

Your business will benefit from the high exposure of FreeStayMaine's marketing campaign, which has the sole intention of encouraging cruise visitors to enjoy Maine for a land based vacation experience. This includes the creation of special promotional vouchers which are going to be distributed to cruise passengers in our ports. These vouchers will feature the website address [www.FreeStayMaine.com](http://www.FreeStayMaine.com). The vouchers entitle the holder to the various offers available on the website. Anyone who receives a voucher, simply logs on to the FreeStayMaine website, reports the number on the back of the voucher and their home zip code is eligible to search the database and receive your special offer.

### ***How will the consumer know about the program?***

Along with direct distribution to the cruise passengers at our waterfront facilities, special signs will be commissioned and placed at strategic points surrounding the cruise port areas promoting the program to the cruise passenger. The CruiseMaine Coalition will include the program in its entire online and multi media advertising programs, and at travel trade shows- yet another example of the high-profile offered by the FreeStayMaine program.

Joining this program brings you multiple benefits and requires little effort and no cost on your behalf. To join, simply fill out the online form.

Within just a few days we will contact you to welcome you to the FreeStayMaine program, show you your FreeStayMaine listing and acquaint you with your user name and password which will enable you to edit your details. The state of Maine attracts over 120,000 cruise passengers annually, this is a captive market that earns on average \$100,000.00 per household annually, and visits Maine from non-traditional market source areas such as Texas, California, Ohio, and Florida so we urge you to join us in this fantastic program now!