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10 nude beach myths debunked!

Let's face it: Americans are not entirely comfortable with the idea of nude beaches. Unlike European culture where nudity at beaches is no biggie, Americans often believe that nude beaches are risqué, inappropriate and dirty. Nothing could be further from the truth. While it's definitely not for everyone, we'd like to debunk some of the most common myths that discourage folks from becoming a beachgoer who bares all.

RELATED: [Grin and bare all at North America's 9 best nude beaches](#)

They're full of creepy guys

The #1 myth about nude beaches is that they attract men looking to sneak a peek at some naked bods. Of course men go to nude beaches, but in most cases they aren't creepy and—shocker—women go, too! Travel writer and [LaLaScoop](#) founder Melissa Curtin has been to nude beaches all over the world in Europe, the Caribbean and the United States. "I've never run into creepy men at nude beaches in all of my travels," she says. "Beaches near Ibiza, for example, were populated with carefree men and women of all ages. No one was batting eyes at each other. I was shocked in St. Martin when it was actually mostly women at the nude beaches. When I lived in France, I realized most people are just going to feel good in their own skin, not to ogle over naked bodies."



It's all old people

Coming in a close #2 is that everyone who goes is old. Generally speaking, the older we get the less body-conscious we become so it makes sense to assume old people care less about someone seeing them naked (i.e.: gym locker rooms...). The good news: Millennials are increasingly fearless and free-spirited about nude beaches. For example, 24-year-old UCSB student Noah Juliano often frequents nude beaches in the U.S. along with his fellow millennials. "A lot of people assume nude beaches are full of a bunch of creepy old men or sex-crazed voyeurs," he says. "In all honesty, the majority of people I've seen are younger people just trying to avoid tan lines. I personally go to practice my hatha yoga and meditation, to surrender to the setting sun and to connect to Mother Earth through a very liberating and empowering medium." Spoken like a true millennial!

Everyone will stare and judge me!

One of the biggest fears people have about going to a nude beach for the first time is that everyone will stare. We're constantly being judged in today's world of likes and comments, so it's only natural to worry we'd be judged in our most natural state. No matter what you look like, it takes confidence and self-love to be naked in front of others. "My experience with nude beaches has been the exact opposite of everyone staring and judging me," says Ryan Paul, a 38-year-old entertainment executive in Venice, California. "From what I've experienced, everyone is almost afraid to get caught staring, so no one looks at you and most people are looking down or off into the ocean. Instead of judgment, what I've felt has always been acceptance. It's the exact opposite of what you think. Granted, it takes courage to go full monty, but it's also half the fun."



You HAVE to get naked

Most nude beaches have a combination of people that are clothed, semi-clothed or fully nude. As the former host of VH1's *Dating Naked*, actress Amy Paffrath knows a lot about nude beach culture. "Unlike the contestants on *Dating Naked*, you don't actually have to get naked at a nude beach," says Paffrath. "You can, but you can also just take your top off while you tan. So no tan lines! What's not to love? Then again, you could wear a onesie and no one would care. That's the beauty, the freedom to do you, boo."

They're strictly a European thing

If you've been to a public beach in the US, odds are everyone probably was covering up their goods. But just because no one was topless or exposing their bum doesn't mean nude beaches don't exist right here in good ole 'Merica! There are recognized nude beaches in California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Florida, Texas and Hawaii—and many are insanely popular. This summer, pack your towel and sunscreen, but ditch the swimsuit and visit one of the [best nude beaches in North America](#).

Scandalous acts will happen everywhere

Since 1931, the American Association for Nude Recreation (AANR) has been on a mission to advocate nudity and nude recreation by educating society of their value. As a part of that initiative, the organization encourages proper [nude beach etiquette](#) that is centered around “respect for yourself, others and the environment.” This mantra of respect is vital and important among nudists and at nude beaches. “From my experience, nude beachgoers aren’t looking to hook up at a nude beach or get handsy,” says 27-year-old Miami resident Alex Noel. “They’re going to enjoy feeling free in nature. Harassment is not tolerated and *no* always means *no*. If someone is looking for an experience with a little PDA, many clothing-optional resorts are considered sex-positive and have designated areas.”



Everyone's way too sexually charged

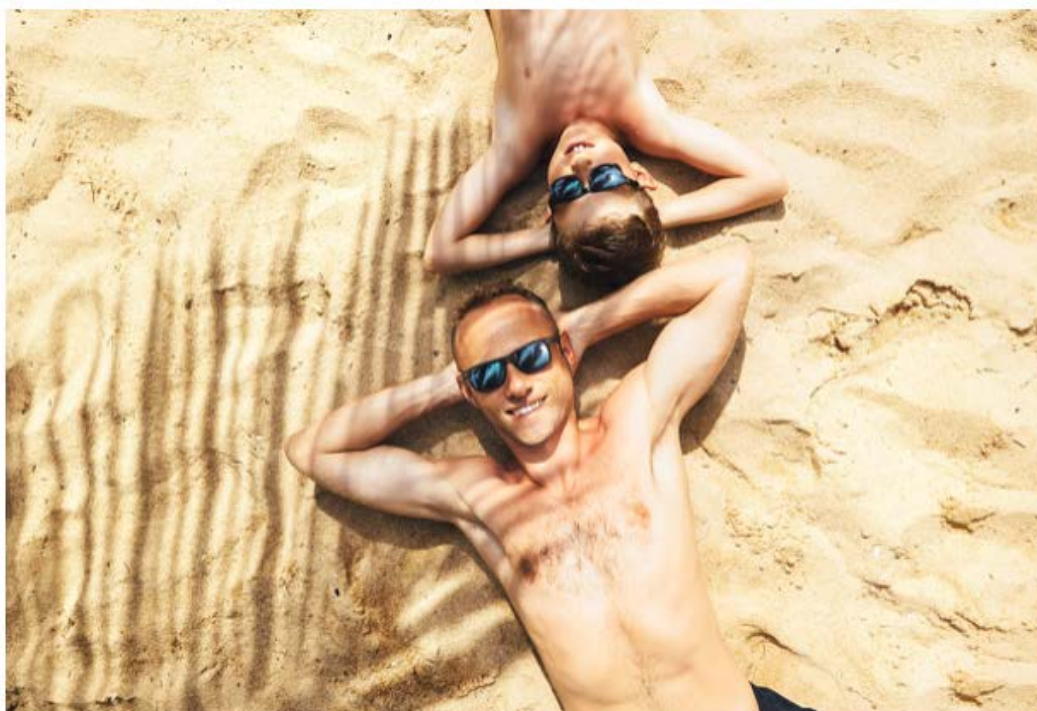
Michelle Facey, Chief Pleasure Officer at [Hedonism II](#), a clothing optional resort outside of Negril, Jamaica has seen it all. With a job title like that, Michelle frequently gets asked all kinds of questions from family, friends and guests including ones on the issue of arousal. “While it is possible, it’s unlikely,” she says. “The more time you spend around nudity, you’ll find that it’s natural and freeing and doesn’t have to be sexual at all. If you do happen to get aroused, no need to be embarrassed.”

My family and friends will think I'm weird

As humans, it's part of our psyche to want to be loved and respected by others, especially those closest to us. If doing something like going to a nude beach might cause others to think negatively of us, we may not risk it (or tell them). David Dwight, a 73-year-old from Washington, used to worry about reactions but now goes on to say, "The people we have told are curious about our lifestyle, but not judgmental. They are very positive about our decision. We often share our adventures with them and they ask lots of questions. Several of our good friends now enjoy it, as well."

Only single people go to nude beaches

The idea that only singles go to nude beaches is just not true. Just ask Tiana and Shannon Harris, a traveling couple and founders of [Power Couple Life](#). These world travelers go to nude beaches all the time. "There are more couples than you would think," they say. "It's a freeing and fun experience for couples to share." Pacific Palisades resident Deborah Wagner loves going to nude beaches with her boyfriend. "As a couple, we love being naked and free with our bodies," she says. "It's an opportunity to avoid feeling any judgement because everyone is naked! It's really a beautiful thing and I would tell other couples to give it a try. How many times are you able to walk around publicly naked in broad daylight and not care or worry you might get arrested?"



Nude beachgoers are exhibitionists

Not at all true. At the end of the day most people are going to nude beaches to enjoy being *au naturale* outdoors and simply to avoid tan lines. The AANR further claims nude recreation is fun, helps your body relax faster, brings you closer to nature, makes packing for travel easier and acts as an equalizer to erase material judgements. 41-year-old Joshua Gerbaldawitz from Seal Beach, CA enjoys going to nude beaches because he says when people shed their clothes, they often let go of trying to impress others. "It's cool talking with other naked people because you have no armor, walls or clothes to hide behind," he says. "It's actually liberating and you're sharing a vulnerable moment. You just start at a deeper level and it cuts through all the BS had you been wearing clothes."

Public nudity laws vary across state and county lines. Some nude beaches are completely legal while others are technically illegal, but not enforced. In some cases, you might be subject to a fine. Please check local city and county websites and visit aanr.com (the American Association for Nude Recreation) for further information.