

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



CARNAVAL MAINE

Carnaval Maine, a new winter festival to be held Jan. 30-Feb. 1 in Portland, is expected to draw over 10,000 people. Above is a rendering of the Bites & Brews event in an inflatable igloo.

CARNAVAL COMES TO MAINE

BY DIANE BAIR AND PAMELA WRIGHT | GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

What do you do when the temps drop, snow and sleet cover the streets and sidewalks, and everyone just wants to hunker down and stay inside? You throw a party — a big party — and hope that people show up. It's winter: Let's get out and celebrate! So say the folks in Maine, who are hosting Carnaval Maine, to be held in Portland, Jan. 30-Feb. 1, 2020. The winter festival, inspired by the wildly popular Carnaval de Quebec, is the first of its kind in Maine in more than 100 years.

"After 100 years going without a signature winter festival, Carnaval Maine is our re-imagined winter carnival, featuring the region's award-winning artists, brewers, chefs, and more," says Brian Corcoran, CEO of Shamrock Sports & Entertainment, the Portland-based company organizing and managing the event. They've partnered with Office of Maine Tourism and Norway

Savings Bank to present the festival, and are tying in with Carnaval de Quebec (to be held Feb. 7-16) to cross promote both festivals.

The celebration kicks off with the Carnaval Maine Bicentennial Snow Ball on Thursday, Jan. 30, to mark the 200th year of Maine's statehood. The city's Eastern Promenade, a 78-acre, Frederick Law Olmsted-designed green space overlooking Casco Bay, will be transformed into a winter wonderland during the two-day festival. There will be light shows, art displays, ice sculptures, bonfires, and a rail jam, constructed by Sunday River resort. A giant inflatable igloo will house the Bites & Brews events, showcasing Maine's nationally recognized restaurants and artisan breweries. These include Allagash, Bissell Brothers, Maine Beer Box, Maine Beer Co., Rising Tide, and Shipyard breweries collaborating with Urban Farm Fermentory, Central Provisions, Highroller Lobster Co., Luke's Lobster, Scales, and UNION. Another restaurant

is yet to be confirmed.

The event, designed to increase tourism during the slow winter season, is expected to draw more than 10,000 people.

"One of the long-range goals is to grow the festival into a signature winter event that draws visitors from all over to celebrate Maine as a state for all seasons," says Corcoran. "It will be a celebration of art, entertainment, and all things winter."

Two-day general admission is \$20. Bites & Brews tickets are \$65 for each session, and include general admission. The Bicentennial Winter Ball tickets are \$100 and also include general admission. The event will have a charitable component; organizers plan to announce the beneficiary of the event soon. For more information, visit www.carnavalme.com.

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HERE

WHITE MOUNTAIN WINTER DEALS

Savvy travelers can take advantage of two new winter packages offered by The Glen House, located at the base of Mount Washington in New Hampshire. Ski & Stay includes two adult two-day lift tickets to nearby Wildcat Mountain Ski Area and/or Attitash Mountain Ski Area; \$30 credit per room for breakfast at The Notch Grille; and complimentary cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snow tubing, and fat biking at the adjacent Great Glen Trails Outdoor Center. Rates from \$239 per night, based on a two-night stay; available through March 20. Those who prefer to relax in front of a cozy fire while gazing out at the Presidential Range, Winter in the White Mountains offers 20-percent off the best available rate throughout the winter. Want to bring along your canine companion? Dog-friendly guest rooms, with nightly pet fee of \$20, include use of a doggie bed, water bowl, and treats. 603-466-3420, theglenhouse.com/packages-specials

THERE

PRIVATE ISLAND RETREAT

Be among the first to experience the pristine Caribbean at Ray Caye Island Resort, a tropical gem 18 miles off the coast of Belize. Previously known as Hatchet Caye, the luxury 20-room retreat is scheduled to open in January with four newly built oceanfront villas with private plunge pools, six new guest rooms, and six freshly renovated waterfront cabanas. The 7.4-acre private island oasis offers a full mile of



shoreline where guests can explore the surrounding waters, rich in marine life, with unlimited use of complimentary recreational kayaks, fishing kayaks, Hobie Cats, paddle boards, and snorkel gear. Rentals available for motorized water sports such as jet skis and underwater scooters. Scuba gear, diving tours, and more. Amenities include Welcome Center with boutique and lounge; freshwater swimming pool; full-service restaurant; and Wellness Center with fully equipped gym

and fitness area, yoga studio, and spa treatment room. Rates from \$375 includes ground transfer from Placencia airport to boat launch, housekeeping daily, welcome drink. www.ray-caye.com/

SNAZZY SKI HOTEL DEBUTS AT VAIL RESORTS

Skiers heading to Colorado this winter have a brand-new place to stay. Gravity Haus Breckenridge is billing itself as a social club and hotel for modern outdoor enthusiasts. Replacing the former Village Hotel at the base of the resort's Peak 9, the centrally located hotel offers ski-in/ski-out access to Lift 1 as well as being steps away from downtown Breckenridge's lively shopping and dining



scene. Featuring a modern alpine design, the 60 accommodations include private queen and king suites, and all-in-one combination suites with bunk beds and private sleeping areas for families and groups. Ongoing experiences range from outdoor excursions and backcountry hut trips to social programming. Onsite amenities include Dryland fitness and sports recovery center; backcountry discovery center; super trampoline; duckpin bowling; StarterHaus, a co-working space; and casual dining options. Rates from \$235. 888-333-0766, www.breckenridge.com/plan-your-trip/stay/gravity-haus.aspx

LUXE HOTEL OPENS IN HAWAII

It must be the season of new hotel openings: Offering pristine views of the Pacific Ocean and surrounding mountain range, the five-star Halepuna Waikiki by Halekulani boasts 284 rooms and four suites, each with custom artwork by local artists and furnishings in color palettes of white, gray, beige, and blue. Adjacent to the light and airy lobby, the new Halekulani Bakery & Restaurant features state-of-the-art European equipment for crafting its artisan breads, pastries, cakes, and coffees. A chocolate-viewing kitchen will allow guests to observe delicacies being made daily, including chocolate macadamia nut pearls. Amenities include an eighth-floor sun deck and pool; spa treatments at its nearby sister hotel; fitness center; business center; meeting room and guest laundry. Rates from \$350; suites from \$996. 808-921-7272, www.halepuna.com.



EVERYWHERE

TRAVEL OFF THE EATEN PATH

Eat your way around the world with Traveling Spoon, a company that connects travelers with authentic food experiences, from market tours to home-cooked meals to cooking classes. Operating in 50 countries and more than 160 cities across the globe — including Asia, Europe, Central, and South America — Traveling Spoon crafts unique experiences that highlight each destination as seen through the eyes of its locals. Newly announced experiences include truffle hunting and tasting in Istria, Croatia; farm-to-table cooking experience in an organic resort in the Philippines; private wine tour in the ruins of Pompeii, Italy; authentic home cooking in Japan; traditional Mole making in a Zapotec home in Oaxaca; and more. The company also offers a number of savory options for vegan and vegetarian travelers. A perfect gift for foodie travelers, with a gifting feature on its website. Experiences range from \$18 up to \$246 per person. www.travelingspoon.com

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