



FLY DIRECT  
FROM ABERDEEN  
OR INVERNESS  
TO JERSEY

**JERSEY SUMMER BREAKS** SATURDAY DEPARTURES  
ABERDEEN DEPARTURES  
**6 MAY 2017 THROUGH TO EARLY SEPTEMBER**

INVERNESS DEPARTURES  
**3 JUNE 2017 THROUGH TO EARLY SEPTEMBER**

**Jersey** - the largest of the Channel Islands, and a complete destination in its own right. With a flight time of less than 2 hours from Aberdeen or Inverness you can be enjoying your holiday on the island in no time at all. Beautiful award winning beaches, sea that's a pleasure to swim in and lush countryside that changes colour with the different seasons. Alongside this is a choice of excellent restaurants and exciting shopping which includes household names and chic, trendy stores.

We are pleased to once again offer our readers Jersey summer holidays, with a range of Saturday departure dates from May (June from Inverness) to a selection of accommodation, including 2, 3 and 4 star graded hotels with seaside or town locations, to suit all tastes and budgets.

**Just a few of the main events taking place in 2017**

**Channel Islands Heritage Festival – April & May 2017**  
Relive and learn about the key events from history that have shaped our unique islands.

**Liberation Day – 9 May 2017**  
Join the islanders in celebration of their freedom from the occupation after the Second World War.

**Battle of Flowers – 10/11 August 2017**  
Enjoy the spectacle of one of Europe's most famous flower festivals, with guaranteed tickets to both the Grand Day Parade and the Moonlight Parade.

**International Air Display – 14 September 2017**  
Thrill at the sounds and sights of aircraft old and new streaking across St Aubins Bay, enjoy the static displays, and savour the atmosphere.

**Autumn Walking Festival – Late September 2017**  
A range of beautiful walks for softies through to the more experienced, see the island in a different way, the lush countryside, the views, and the peace and quiet.

**Tennerfest – October & early November 2017**  
If you enjoy good food you will enjoy this festival, top restaurants, bistros, chic cafes, local pubs all compete to produce superb menus from as little as £10.00.

**PRICE INCLUDES:**

- Return flights from Aberdeen or Inverness
- 1 piece hold baggage per person (maximum 20kgs)
- 7 nights accommodation at selected hotel
- Meal plan as chosen
- Return transfers in Jersey
- Local GST tax @ 5%
- All current airport charges



**2\* NORFOLK HOTEL,**  
ST HELIER

8 DAYS FROM  
**£514<sup>PP</sup>**  
flying from Aberdeen

**£506<sup>PP</sup>**  
flying from Inverness

A consistent Top Seller for the last 10 years this popular hotel offers excellent value for money and attracts a high level of repeat guests. The hotel is located just across the road from the Howard Davis Park and within a few moments' walk of the shops.

All en-suite bedrooms have a TV, tea/coffee tray and a number of ground floor rooms are available. The facilities include a lively bar with entertainment 2/3 nights per week, separate lounge area, heated outdoor swimming pool, sun terrace, coffee shop and a small games room.

A lift and large car park are available – early booking is highly recommended for this popular property.



**2\* RUNNYMEDE COURT,**  
ST HELIER

8 DAYS FROM  
**£591<sup>PP</sup>**  
flying from Aberdeen

**£597<sup>PP</sup>**  
flying from Inverness

A privately owned hotel that offers really good value for money and enjoys a great location as it is just a couple of minutes' walk from the Havre des Pas beach, and a 8 - 10 minute walk away from the town.

All of the bedrooms are en-suite and are equipped with a TV and tea/coffee tray. There is a cosy bar, a quiet lounge and at the rear of the property a well maintained garden. The restaurant offers traditional menus featuring local produce.

With its friendly atmosphere and good location it's an ideal choice for a relaxing holiday.



**3\* FORT D'AUVERGNE HOTEL,**  
ST HELIER

8 DAYS FROM  
**£691<sup>PP</sup>**  
flying from Aberdeen

**£653<sup>PP</sup>**  
flying from Inverness

Enjoying a wonderful location right on the sea front at Havre des Pas, the 'Fort' as it is affectionately known is a consistent favourite with readers due to its reputation for friendly, efficient service and quality facilities.

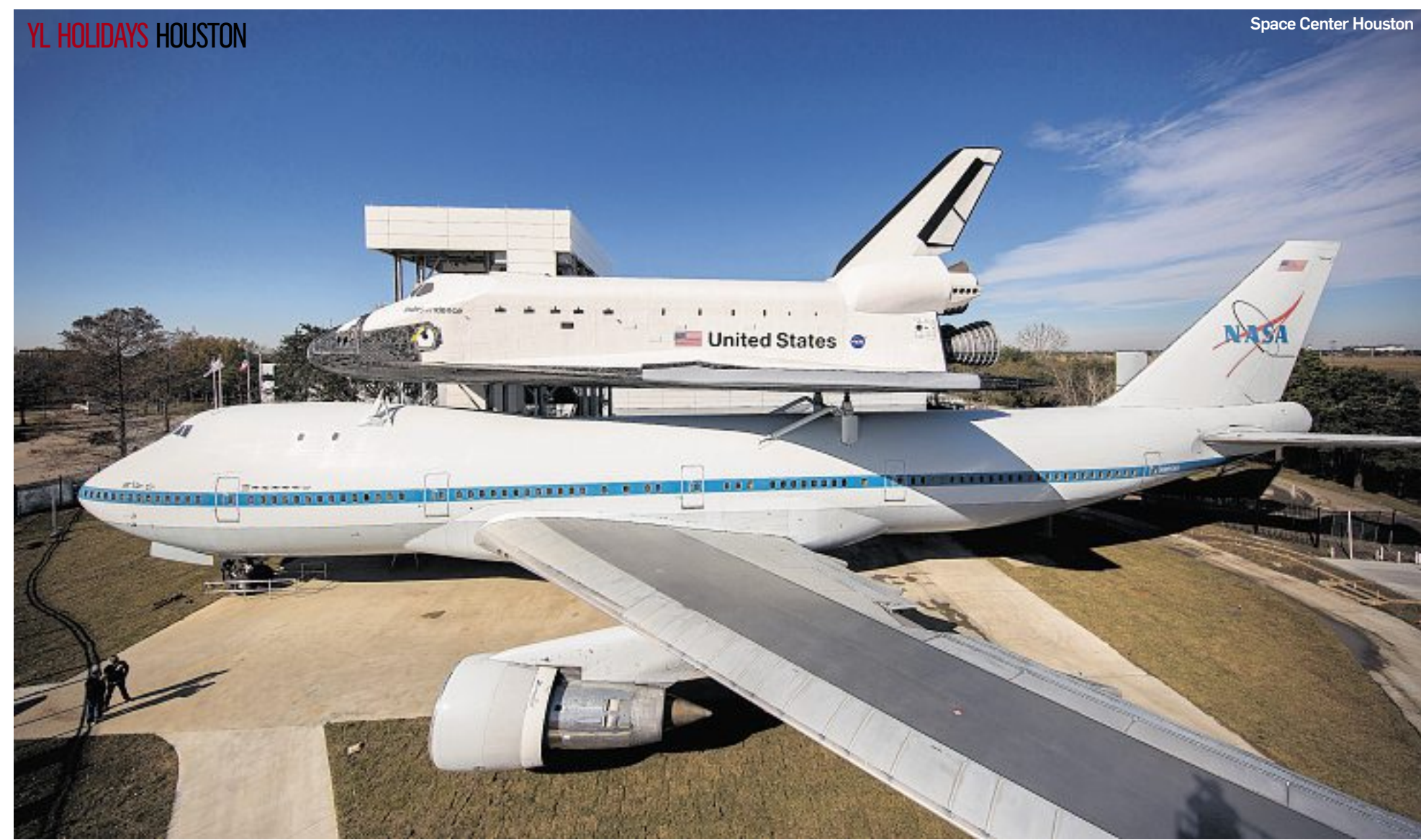
The hotel offers a lift and all en-suite bedrooms have TV and a tea/coffee tray as standard. Many of the rooms offer beach and sea views for a small supplement. Both the restaurant and bar along with the sun terrace overlook the beach, as does the indoor heated swimming pool.

With its excellent sea facing location, EARLY BOOKING is advised.

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# HOUSTON: A CULTURAL MELTING POT

Rita Brown has a ball discovering there is so much more to Houston than just oil

**D**ear Houston, I am so sorry. I took you for granted. I sold you short.

And that's why I'm going to use the next 1,000 or so words trying to make it up to you.

You see for the past two years, I've been a typical Aberdeen business visitor. I fly over once a year for the Off-shore Technology Conference (OTC). And each time I naively thought I was enjoying the spoils of the Texan metropolis. I shopped at the Galleria. I visited the show and I drank margaritas in the hotel bar of the Hilton Post Oak.

But then Visit Houston stepped in with an agenda to show me that Houston was so much more than Marshalls and Maggiano's.

I flew out on Singapore Airline's new direct flight from Manchester to the US oil capital. The flight itself was a rare treat. The food and service were both superb, sending me straight into relaxation mode.

With 2.2million residents, Houston is the fourth most populous city in the United States, trailing only New York, Los Angeles and Chicago. And I soon learned the locals don't let you forget it. In fact, I couldn't have a conversation with anyone, without them letting me know they were on the cusp of over-taking Chicago.

They're proud of their energy-charged economy and it reflects in the amount of new construction flanking most street corners. More than 145 languages are spoken in the cultural melting pot.

On arrival, we were headed straight

for the hotel – the JW Marriot Houston Downtown.

Despite being wedged between Houston's various high rises and sports arenas, the room was absolutely plush.

The deluxe layout gave you ample amounts of space on one of Houston's busiest city streets. A room opened into a double sink and vanity space. The toilet and giant walk-in shower were tucked discreetly behind a sliding door. Two overstuffed, dreamy double beds faced one of the biggest flat screen TVs I have ever seen. A desk and various chairs completed the sleek living space.

But the best part of the hotel is that you didn't have to sacrifice location for the space. You are still on the doorstep of the best beer, barbecue and nightlife you could want from a city jaunt.

And as I soon realised, you don't need a Post Oak postcode to see the best of what Houston has to offer.

Threaded through every rat run, there's culture, food and adventure.

The cultural hotspot prides itself on reflecting the "nation's demographic future".

38.8% of its population is Anglo, 35.9% is Hispanic, 16.7% is African American and 6.7% is Asian or other.

That melting pot of backgrounds and traditions bubbled over into the cuisine on offer.

In three days, I managed to eat myself silly, starting with the Grove, located inside Discovery Green Park.

It prides itself on urban dining. Persuaded by the waiter, I ended up ordering the Beet Hummus to start, accompanied by pistachios, dill, Serrano, sea salt, olive oil and flatbread. For my

main, I had the TX Blackened Redfish. I handed the plates back practically clean and wondered if I could pull off ordering another main for pudding.

With its chic lighting and upscale atmosphere, it makes a great place to do business or entertain.

A short car ride away you will find Jackson Street BBQ, but be warned, during baseball season you'll be lining up down the block to grab one of their famous Dino Bones. Grab a side of creamed corn and slice of Pecan Pie. You can thank me later.

It took sheer willpower to put my fork down and see the sights.

But whether you're sport mad and want to catch a baseball or football game or a Stem geek like myself, the growing city doesn't disappoint.

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YL HOLIDAYS HOUSTON

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Houston, which will be hosting the coveted Super Bowl game this year, is also home to the Space Center Houston.

It's the official visitor centre for Nasa's Johnson Space Center. With more than 400 attractions, including the presidential podium of John F. Kennedy, you'll want to allow yourself enough time to take it all in.

On Fridays, you can meet a real-life astronaut, or head out to Independence Plaza on any day to enter the shuttle replica Independence, mounted on top of the historic and original Nasa 905 shuttle carrier aircraft. It is the world's only shuttle mounted on an SCA and

the only one allowing the public to enter both.

You can visit the centre on the Houston CityPASS, which offers you entry at a discount.

For nature lovers, there's the Bayou City Bike Tours. The veteran-owned company hires post 9/11 veterans as they transition into service. Their experienced tour guides will fit you out with a bike and show you the gorgeous nature spots located alongside Houston's historic skyline. As native Houstonians, they share more than just the trodden paths but the history and insight that makes them love calling Houston their home.

Finally, I couldn't visit Houston without seeing what it had to offer at night – away from the Post Oak lobby.



Above: JR's Bar & Grill. Left: the JW Marriot Houston Downtown. Top: a colourful mural in Downtown Houston

The Downtown Historic Pub Crawl Tour includes three pubs all with amazing cocktails to boot.

For a city that made its name in oil, Houston is determined to create a legacy of diversity and variety.

It is a city that continues to cook, build and create. An oil metropolis that is determined to build unrivalled business reputations in other sectors.

So Houston, I hope you can accept my sincere apologies for pigeon-holing you to one postcode, one conference, because we both know you're so much more.

## HOLIDAY FACTS

Singapore Airlines flies five times weekly from Manchester to Houston, Texas

Flights start at £415pp in Economy and £2,390pp in Business Class. Book by January 31, 2017, travel until June 2017.

With Singapore Airlines codeshare with Flybe, 11 cities in the UK can connect to Manchester Airport and onwards to Houston, including Aberdeen, Glasgow and Inverness

To book or for more information visit [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com)

Houston, the fourth-largest US city, is a dynamic destination home of world-class attractions, restaurants, shopping and renowned cultural and sporting events. Find everything you need for a perfect getaway and grasp the pulse of this cosmopolitan destination at [www.VisitHOUSTON.com](http://www.VisitHOUSTON.com)

Manchester Airport is the UK's global gateway for the north with more than 210 destinations. For information on car parking, hotels, lounges and retail, visit [www.manchesterairport.co.uk](http://www.manchesterairport.co.uk)

## WHAT TO DO

### SPACE CENTER HOUSTON (HOUSTON CITYPASS ATTRACTION)

Space Center Houston is the only place on Earth where you can embark on an out-of-this-world journey through human adventures in space. The centre features a multitude of permanent exhibits, attractions and theatres.

### MINUTE MAID PARK – BEHIND THE SCENES TOUR

This baseball stadium is the home of the Houston Astros. Located in Downtown Houston at Union Station, Minute Maid Park was built to reflect Houston's historical relationship with the railroads and features a vintage, full-sized locomotive that runs along 800 feet of track on the left-field wall.

### GUIDED CITY TOUR

Experience the history and hidden gems with a native Houstonian. Tour guide: Richard Cook, [Texanatours.com](http://Texanatours.com)

### 8TH WONDER BREWERY – TOUR AND TASTING

Located in EaDo and named after the city's iconic Astrodome, this brewery produces seasonal selections and limited-edition offerings.

### BAYOU CITY BIKING TOURS

Buffalo Bayou, the 52-mile slow-moving waterway that was the site of Houston's



Space Center Houston



The Dunlavy

founding in 1836, has become a destination for outdoor recreation near downtown Houston. <http://www.bayoucitybiketours.com/>

### THE GALLERIA

The Galleria is an international shopping destination that welcomes more than 30million visitors each year. The newly renovated space houses 400 stores and restaurants, two high-rise hotels, three office towers and a full-size ice skating rink.

## TO EAT THE DUNLAVY

For a killer brunch set under a canopy of chandeliers, the Dunlavy offers the atmosphere and the culinary chops that pack a punch. Great for those looking for something lighter.

### THE GROVE RESTAURANT

The Grove is located inside Discovery Green Park. The menu designed by chef/owner Robert Del Grande,

features a variety of steaks, seafood and rotisserie specialities.

### JACKSON STREET BBQ

The joint venture is the idea of Houston BBQ legends Bryan Caswell, Bill Floyd and Greg Gatlin. Their combined expertise will surely satiate the hunger of any barbecue lover in a laid-back environment with counter service and good vibes.

### UNDERBELLY HOUSTON – REVIEWER SAYS MUST DO!

Underbelly's restaurant tagline, The Story of Houston Food, sums up the vision: a menu showcasing local ingredients, as well as chef Chris Shepherd's culinary experiences in the city.

### CARACOL

The restaurant, located in the heart of the Galleria area, is a south of the border seafood kitchen that will take your taste buds on a flavourful tour along Mexico's 16 coastal states.

paid jobs. Every one of those jobs, with the exception of the contractor workers, all of those other segments paid on average \$70,000 or above.

So where does he think Houston will be in 12 months' time? Jankowski said: "There'll probably be more mergers, there'll be a few bankruptcies but things will have stabilised by then. People have already accepted that oil is not going to trade at \$100 a barrel. They will be more comfortable with oil at \$50 or \$60, and we still keep plugging along.

"I started studying this economy in March of '81. This is my fifth downturn and I know before I retire I will have at least one or two more. Hopefully not this severe."

# City starting to bounce back

worst of the downturn was the second quarter of this year (2016).

"That doesn't mean we're going to boom again though – at least for not quite a while. I describe the bottom of the downturn for Houston as being like a sponge. It's mushy and if you squeeze it there's still going to be some stuff that comes out.

"We would like it to be more like a basketball on a court, where you get a nice bounce, but no, we're not going to get a nice bounce out of this. It's going to be quite mushy for a while."

To appreciate how hard the sector fell, you just need to look at "For Rent" signs on the commercial marketplace, according to Jankowski. "We date the decline to Thanksgiving Day 2014, because that's when OPEC met and when OPEC decided they were not going to cut production to maintain prices," he said.

"They were going after market share. Oil prices had been slipping prior to that, but when OPEC made the announcement, oil prices plummeted.

"We have seen significant lay-offs in the oil and gas industry here. And the oil and gas industry in Houston consists of different segments. We have exploration and production, oil field services, oil field equipment manufacturing, the manufacturing of oil field metal products and then engineering. And there's this small component of contractor workers. If you add all that together, we've lost close to 80,000 jobs.

"That's a huge loss – 80,000 jobs. And not only have we lost the 80,000 jobs, but they were all well-