

# Forget Daytona

Excellent spring break alternatives

By Laura Jungman

Does the idea of spending your spring break drinking beer with thousands of mostly naked people on the beaches of Daytona sound unappealing to you? Don't sweat it, there are plenty of other things you can do, like cruising America's back roads or counting sea turtle eggs in Brazil. The first place to look for ideas is your own school's web site. Many universities now have alternative spring break web pages with loads of programs available for you to make the most of your time and possibly give something back to the community.

## Volunteer Vacations

One of the most popular spring break causes is Habitat for Humanity ([habitat.org](http://habitat.org)). Founded in 1976 with a mission to eliminate substandard housing and homelessness from the world, they have built over 100,000 homes and provided low-income families with interest-free mortgages on their new houses. You can take part in Habitat for Humanity's Collegiate Challenge and learn construction skills while helping to build a new home for a needy family. There are many warm locations available, including Florida!

For those of you with a few extra bucks, you can spend your week in an exotic location while donating your time. Global Volunteers ([globalvolunteers.org](http://globalvolunteers.org)) offers short term "volunteer vacations" like teaching English in Greece or planting trees in Costa Rica. EcoVolunteer ([www.ecovolunteer.org](http://www.ecovolunteer.org)) specializes in matching volunteers to international wildlife conservation projects such as wildlife rescue in Thailand or collecting and hatching sea turtle eggs in Brazil. Program fees range from \$600 to \$2,000 per week, plus the cost

of the plane ticket. If you'd prefer to volunteer your time locally, VolunteerSolutions ([volunteersolutions.org](http://volunteersolutions.org)) has a huge searchable database of ongoing volunteer opportunities in select cities.

## Political and Spiritual Retreats

For all you campus activists, check out the Ruckus Society ([ruckus.org/spring-break.html](http://ruckus.org/spring-break.html)), which offers an Alternative Spring Break Action Camp for Student Activists. You can sign up for a week of workshops designed to perfect your rallying and consciousness-raising skills. If you are more spiritually inclined, there is the Mepkin Abbey Retreat ([selfknowledge.org/events/springbreak.htm](http://selfknowledge.org/events/springbreak.htm)). Spend your spring break at this monastery in South Carolina, working hard, meditating and experiencing life as a monk.

## Hit the Road

If you prefer to set out on your own path, there are several web sites to feed your wanderlust. Alternative Routes ([alternative-routes.com](http://alternative-routes.com)) is dedicated to insider travel information, a place where people can share their travel knowledge. Also, GoNOMAD.com ([gonomad.com](http://gonomad.com)) offers resources and information for adventurous travelers. If you want the security of a guided tour, but with an unusual twist, consider Green Tortoise ([greentortoise.com](http://greentortoise.com)), a bunk-bedded bus that offers structured tours of America, complete with gourmet vegetarian food.

Spring break is a wonderful opportunity to forget the stress of the semester, meet interesting people and get a taste of something new. •

## Want More?

Search keyword: Alternatives at [www.steamtunnels.net](http://www.steamtunnels.net)

There are plenty of other things you can do over spring break, like cruising America's back roads or counting sea turtle eggs in Brazil.



From top: Global Volunteers in Arcola, Miss.; a Ruckus participant during a climbing exercise; the Ruckus Democracy Action Camp in the Santa Monica Mountains, July 2000.



Photos courtesy Global Volunteers and Ruckus

# Baby You Can Drive My Car

It's hard—but not impossible—for college students to rent

By Douglas Desmond

If you've ever tried to rent a car and been turned down, you're not alone. Most rental companies will reject anyone under 25 years old for insurance reasons. The incidence of accident or theft is far higher for our age group, and most companies are simply not willing to shoulder the risk.

But you don't have to hitchhike; there are firms out there that will rent to students for a higher price. You'll pay an additional \$5 to \$30 per day—or more—in some states. Also, watch out for insurance coverage that you might be

pressured to buy. Damage to rental cars is already covered by certain homeowner or automobile insurance policies. MSNBC ([msnbc.com/news/305444.asp?cp1=1](http://msnbc.com/news/305444.asp?cp1=1)) has information about avoiding hidden fees or overpaying for your car.

The best place to find rental cars online is [bnm.com/uage.htm](http://bnm.com/uage.htm), which lists student-friendly companies in 36 major cities. If your location isn't included in their list, try Alamo ([alamo.com](http://alamo.com)) or Dollar ([dollar.com](http://dollar.com)), although both have a minimum age of 21 at most branches. Two

other sites

worth checking out are *Smarter Living's Rental Guide* ([smarterliving.com/travel\\_guides/cars\\_overview.html](http://smarterliving.com/travel_guides/cars_overview.html)) and [cars-rentals-discounts.com](http://cars-rentals-discounts.com). Another thing to keep in mind is that the state of New York passed a law to allow anyone over 18 to rent there, although companies are free to charge as high a premium as they wish. Budget, for example, will add an additional \$65 per day. •