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# PET GUIDE

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# Special Souvenirs

Take a vacation, come home with a pup

BY SARAH SEKULA

BEATRIX NEUHUIS/SHUTTERSTOCK PHOTOGRAPHY MICHELLE GAGLIONE

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hen Sarah Gaglione vacationed in the Turks and Caicos Islands for her 16th birthday, she expected daily dips in the sea, stand-up paddleboarding sessions and morning walks on the beach. What she could not have predicted was

that she'd have a furry companion at her side, and that the four-legged buddy would eventually travel back to her home in Reading, Pa.

With pointy ears like airplane wings and a million facial expressions, her new pal, **Danny the dog**, was irresistible.

He was covered in black fur, except for most of his head and chest,

which looked very much like cookies and cream ice cream, and a silver patch of fur on his back she called his shark fin.

He's what's known as a potcake. Why the funny name? It comes from the fact that locals feed the stray dogs what's left at the bottom of their cooking pots. "They have very special traits in common, like their ears, and the way they lay upside down," says Kate Rader of Hagerstown, Md., who adopted a potcake in 2011. "We call it potcaking or the potcake pose."

The lovable pups roam the islands looking for good homes. And many times those homes come in the form of travelers willing to tote them along on the plane ride back. It's all thanks to an adoption program based in Providenciales called Potcake Place, >





where volunteers give the puppies baths and take them for beach walks.

"There is often a line out front in the morning of people hoping to spend the day socializing a pup," says Rader.

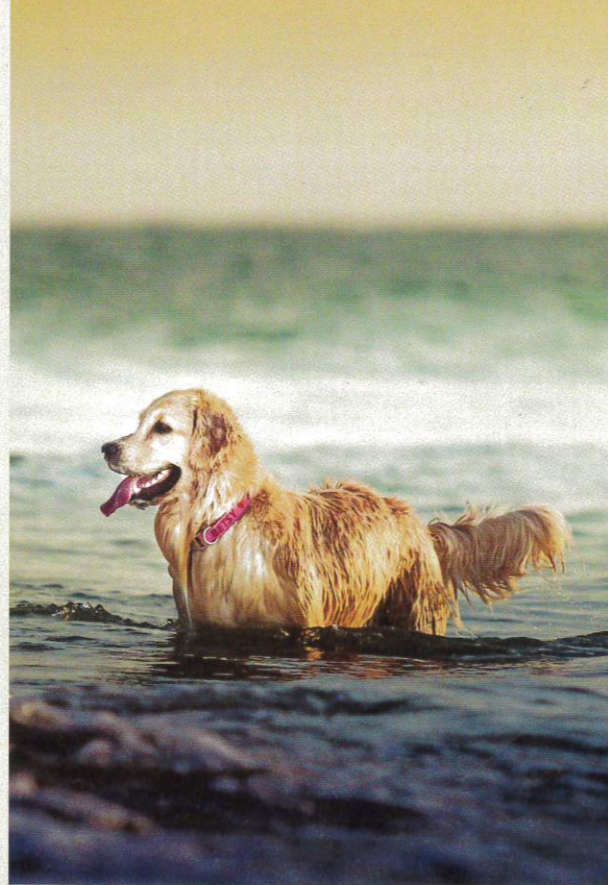
In Gaglione's case, she was fortunate enough to be able to keep Danny at the Gansevoort, the chic luxury hotel where she was staying, for her entire vacation.

"We were treated like royalty while having him there," Gaglione says.

The hotel staff welcomed Danny at the pool and provided a beach bed for him to nap on and a paddleboard to use for a little excursion. And the best part: Because Danny attracted a lot of attention, Gaglione was able to educate other guests about potcakes.

After all that bonding, there was no way she was leaving the island without her new BFF. She booked his flight for \$100, bought a courier bag for \$50 and made a donation to Potcake Place. Voila, he was hers to keep.

These matchups happen all the time on the island. But it's not just in the Caribbean. Vacation adoptions are happening all over the U.S. from Utah to Maine to Miami. Here are a few hotels that partner with pet-adoption agencies that are worth checking out, especially if you are on the lookout to rescue a deserving doggy:



## The Betsy - South Beach

MIAMI  
thebetsyhotel.com

Once a week you can find Betsy Ross and Katie Hepburn, two golden retrievers, stretched out on the terrazzo floor of The Betsy — a swanky hotel in South Beach. They are the chief canine officers, after all. It says so on their joint business card.

The two lucky dogs live on-site at the property across the street from the beach. The four-star, four-diamond boutique hotel is home base for them. Not too shabby.

The hotel's owner, Jonathan Plutzik, has a huge heart for animals and partners with the Miami-Dade County Animal Services to promote adoptions. Every last Saturday of the month you'll see the county's HOPE Express, a mobile adoption unit, parked out front, with five or six dogs and three or four cats.

"Miami Beach is a very pet-friendly community," says Luis Cuellar, shelter program coordinator for Miami-Dade County Animal Services. "Although we do not adopt a pet every time we go there, our presence is paramount to be able to promote our shelter pets."

If you miss the HOPE Express, you can always stop by the shelter. Volunteers can also take part in the Kitten Cuddler program to help bottle-feed kittens.

CARLOS ANDRES CRUZ/LA FOTOFERRERIA

INN BY THE SEA, RED MOUNTAIN RESORT

## Inn by the Sea

CAPE ELIZABETH, MAINE  
innbythesea.com

Inn by the Sea, a stylish resort in the coastal town of Cape Elizabeth, about 3 miles from Crescent Beach, has been welcoming pets for more than 20 years. So when the inn began partnering with the Animal Refuge League of Greater Portland nearly four years ago, it was a natural fit. Since then, more than 140 dogs have found homes.

"Guests love being greeted by a friendly pup, playing with the dogs and walking the dogs," says Rauni Kew, PR and green programs manager at the inn. "Staff members love it, too, and they are proud to support such a special program."

It was puppy love at first sight for Mary Johnson, a Vermont resident who visits the inn often with her mother.

During a 2016 visit, they stopped by the front desk, and a little head popped up from the concierge's lap. Molly, a schnauzer/chihuahua mix, quickly befriended Johnson. After several walks, snuggles and some phone calls home, Johnson finalized the adoption with the shelter.

"She spent the whole ride home on my mom's lap sleeping," Johnson recalls. "She was perfect on the ride home. It was as if she knew she was going home."

These days, she brings Molly to the inn as a guest. Outside, it's common to see several pooches on walks (the inn offers dog walking and dog-sitting services). Indoors, you'll spot guests and their pets dining fireside. And the restaurant menu includes gourmet dishes for animals (meat roaff, anyone?), doggie room service and pet-friendly ice-cream socials.



## Red Mountain Resort

IVANS, UTAH  
redmountainresort.com

When Anne Roderique-Jones and her husband stayed at Red Mountain Resort in 2016, they took private yoga lessons among the red rocks, enjoyed daily swims and hiked the Narrows at Zion National Park. The fact that they also scored puppy time on a "Pound Puppy Hike" was an added bonus.

Guests are paired with a friendly dog from the local St. George Animal Shelter to hike through the scenic Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, a picturesque spot overlooking the city. It's 62,000 acres set aside to protect the Mojave desert tortoise and other rare desert plants and animals. Add canines to the mix, and you've got a perfect morning.

"I wish more hotels offered this," Roderique-Jones says. "Every guest who did this raved about it."

