



Golf resorts combine solitude with luxury. Photo by Shaen Adey © Dorling Kindersley

demand. In fact, at the current growth rate of participation, it has been estimated that a minimum of 100 new golf courses must be built each year in the United States to keep up with growing demand.¹⁷ On a national level, both France and Thailand are using affordable and accessible golfing destinations as key marketing year-round draws.^{18,19}

The only significant sports activity that meeting planners say influences their decisions in selecting a resort destination is golf. Why do that meeting planners and others look to golf when making travel plans? Golf is both a recreational activity and a social event. The majority of the time spent golfing is more than just for sport. It is also a social activity and an opportunity to enjoy the natural surroundings. The manicured landscaping and natural settings provide the perfect environment for socializing and relationship building.

A good golf course does more than present a pretty picture. It is designed and operated with the players and employees in mind for enjoyable play and ease in maintenance. The usual layout is in loops, so that the finishing hole is near the beginning one. A golf course at a resort location must be designed with the average player in mind but still be challenging enough to be interesting. It may be pretty to look at, but if it is too difficult to play, guests will become frustrated and not return.²⁰

Building even a basic golf course is a major financial undertaking, while building a golf course as part of a world-class resort requires even more land and facilities and an even bigger financial commitment. For player comfort, a traditional golf course requires somewhere between 150 and 200 acres of gently sloping land. If the right type of land is available, the design and construction of a golf course will require a financial commitment of several millions of dollars to include:

- Parking space for cars;
- A pro shop;
- Restrooms;
- A driving range and practice putting green;
- Golf cart storage;
- Basic food and beverage facilities;