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Material girl Michelle Obama is a modern-day Marie Antoinette on a glitzy Spanish vacation

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Torres/AP First Lady Michelle Obama smiles while she visits Marbella, southern Spain.

Sacrifice is something that many Americans are becoming all too familiar with during this economic downturn. It was a key theme in President Obama's inaugural address to the nation, and he's referenced it numerous times when lecturing the country on how to get back on its feet.

But while most of the country is pinching pennies and downsizing summer sojourns - or forgoing them altogether - the Obamas don't seem to be heeding their own advice. While many of us are struggling, the First Lady is spending the next few days in a five-star hotel on the chic Costa del Sol in southern Spain with 40 of her "closest friends." According to CNN, the group is expected to occupy 60 to 70 rooms, more than a third of the lodgings at the 160-room resort. Not exactly what one would call cutting back in troubled times.

Reports are calling the lodgings of Obama's Spanish fiesta, the Hotel Villa Padierna in Marbella, "luxurious," "posh" and "a millionaires' playground." Estimated room rate per night? Up to a staggering \$2,500. Method of transportation? Air Force Two.

To be clear, what the Obamas do with their money is one thing; what they do with ours is another. Transporting and housing the estimated 70 Secret Service agents who will flank the material girl will cost the taxpayers a pretty penny.

Perhaps it could be that the Obamas, who seem to fancy themselves more along the lines of international celebrities than actual leaders, espouse a different view of sacrifice. When Michelle Obama accompanied her husband to Copenhagen along with best buddy Oprah Winfrey, she billed the trip - an ultimately unsuccessful bid to bring the Olympics to Chicago - as follows: "As much of a sacrifice as people say this is for me or Oprah or the President to come for these few days, so many of you in this room have been working for years to bring this bid home."

A quick jaunt to Denmark is a sacrifice? What portraits in courage!

The Obama modus operandi is becoming clear.

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From lavish trips to Spain to reportedly flying Bo, the President's Portuguese water dog, on a separate aircraft to vacation with them in [Maine](#), to a date night in [New York City](#) that perhaps cost nearly \$100,000, their idea of austerity is really just the lap of luxury, at least for ordinary folks.

Incredibly, the Obamas have long portrayed themselves as precisely such commoners. Just this month, Obama told ABC the First Couple is "not that far removed from what most Americans are going through." And that "it was just a few years ago that we had high credit card balances, we had two kids, thinking about college. We had our own retirement accounts, wondering if we were going to be able to get enough assets in there."

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