

If it's been awhile since you've had the opportunity to explore sun-kissed beaches, art galleries, fine dining and historic wonders, it's time to schedule a getaway to.....

Fort Myers & Fort Myers Beach

COURTESY OF VISIT FLORIDA

Accessible to travelers via the Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), southeast of Fort Myers, the airport which opened in 1983, is the central gateway to southwest Florida for most major domestic carriers and several international charter operations.

Estero Island, home of **Fort Myers Beach**, long has been recognized as one of the "world's safest beaches" because of its gently sloping shoreline. The sand is particularly soft and white, akin to powdered sugar. During the winter, Estero Bay is home to an extensive shrimp and fishing fleet. Life on Estero is especially suited for family vacations. Here one finds every imaginable water toy, from windsurfer to catamaran and parasailing. Numerous marinas operate boating and fishing charters. Local restaurants benefit from the catch, which generally includes red snapper and grouper.

Anyone suffering from island fever can find instant relief by paying a call to the "City of Palms," **Fort Myers**, with its charming downtown historic river district and expanding hub of urban activity that extends to shopping malls, restaurants and nightclubs.

In-town attractions include the Southwest Florida Historical Museum, river cruises from the downtown yacht basin and the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium.

Recent openings of new attractions and many special upcoming events make this the best time to rediscover this peaceful paradise.

Peak Season runs Jan. 15 through April. (Rates are generally 30 to 60 percent lower during off-peak vacation season, excluding holidays.) Reservations are essential during peak season.

Those seeking accommodations can choose from more than 20,000 rooms ranging from inexpensive motels to idyllic cottages to condominiums and full-service resort properties. 🌴