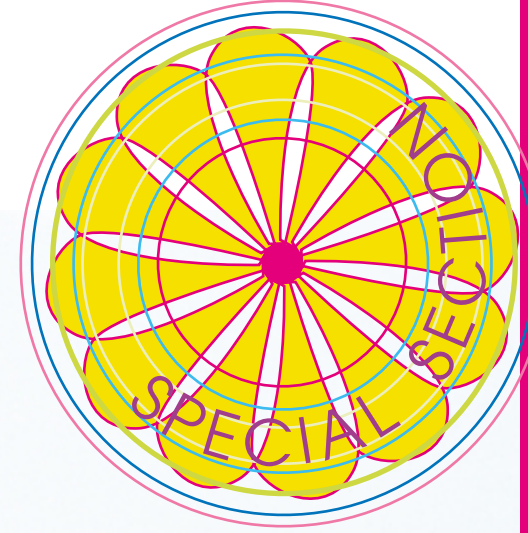


The Beaches of Fort Myers Sanibel
Naples - Marco Island & The Everglades



Southwest FLORIDA



If you've been yearning for a day at the beach with nothing to do but enjoy some sunshine, maybe take a stroll collecting seashells and soaking up nature at its finest, you will find your dreams become reality along Florida's Southwest Coast.

The Beaches of Fort Myers Sanibel embrace nine distinct areas, each with its own unique character. With lots of fun and something for everyone to enjoy, the area includes Sanibel and Captiva islands, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande and Outer islands, North Fort Myers and Lehigh Acres. Families are likely to run out of time before running out of things to do!

Traditionally, the most popular attractions throughout the area have been its unspoiled beaches, award-winning state

parks, and wildlife preserves. In addition to strolling, shelling and bird watching along the shores of **Sanibel, Captiva, Cayo Costa and the area's other barrier islands**, there are many places to explore local waters by sailboat, powerboat, canoe or kayak.

Wandering beautiful beaches in search of sea treasures is a favorite pastime. Before they know it, visitors are doing the "Sanibel Stoop" in search of the area's most popular shells. Families may take a shelling cruise or charter with a captain who knows where to find the best shells. Another treasure is

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the Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum on Sanibel Island (www.shellmuseum.org). With ties to the Smithsonian Institution, this museum is a must for shell enthusiasts. Shells from southwest Florida are displayed along with huge and rare specimens from all over the world.

The Great Calusa Blueway, with nearly 190 miles of clearly marked waterways and trails, provides a chance to explore the area's back bays and estuaries. Here, visitors experience wildlife viewing at its best. Guided tours are available or paddlers may explore on their own as they go through aquatic reserves, wildlife refuges, creeks, bayous, rivers and mangrove forests. Many of the trails follow the course charted some 2,000 years ago by the area's earliest residents, the Calusa Indians. Recognized as among the best U.S. kayaking destinations by both Paddler and Canoe & Kayak magazines, the waterway provides outings that last a few hours to week-long adventures. To enhance the paddling experience, the trail utilizes Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates. Key points are marked along the trail to aid in navigation and detailed maps are available.

Further to the south is Estero Island, home of [Fort Myers Beach](#), long recognized as one of the "world's safest beaches" because of its gently sloping shoreline. Life on Estero is especially suited for family vacations. A must do while visiting the area is Times Square! This highly-traveled pedestrian hub and shopping area finds both bare feet and high heels acceptable. It's a casual town where shops and open-air restaurants scatter along a tree-lined walkway. A great place to go for beach treasures, souvenirs, beach casual styles and decor. Cultural and artistic enrichment opportunities for everyone. "Adults and families are abundant in the Fort Myers/Sanibel area," said Suya Davenport, executive director of the Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau. "We are so fortunate to be living in an area that focuses on the best in life, including the arts. That's what makes this the perfect place to visit any time of the year."

For more information about The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel call toll-free 1-888-231-6933 (U.S. and Canada) or visit www.FortMyersSanibel.com.

The road south leads visitors into Florida's Paradise Coast, otherwise known as Naples, Marco Island, and the Everglades. The splendor of [Naples](#) begins with its powdery white sand beaches, which

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extends from the recreational settings of the parks and public access beaches near downtown Naples to the more secluded seaside havens to the north. Naples beaches are regarded among the finest in the world, and offer visitors a tranquil and beautiful escape from everyday life. Barefoot Beach, just north of downtown Naples, appeared in the top 10 of Dr. Beach's 2006 America's Best Beaches list issued every year by coastal researcher Dr. Stephen Leatherman. Picturesque public boardwalks over the dunes leading to the beach are found throughout the downtown Naples area, offering multiple public access sites for those visitors not staying at a Gulf front resort.

One of the beauties of Naples is that it is surrounded by thousands of acres of private, state and federally preserved land. Within short driving distance you can be bird watching or adventuring at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary, Lake Trafford, Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, Collier-Seminole State Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, Picayune Strand State Forest, or Everglades National Park, with an entrance in Everglades City. Right in town you can get back to nature at popular attractions including the Conservancy of Southwest Florida Naples Nature Center, Naples Botanical Garden, the Cocohatchee Nature Center and Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens.

For those who prefer their green on a fairway, there are nearly 90 golf courses in the Greater Naples area, with the region frequently either first or second in USA rankings of most golf holes per capita. A growing number of public courses provide ample opportunity for visitors to get into the swing, including the new Golf Club at Del Webb at Ave Maria. However, many area resorts either own their own private courses or have affiliate relationships with area private clubs. Many avid golfers have discovered that the best way to obtain tee times at Naples premiere private golf clubs is to choose an affiliated hotel for a visit.

Visiting shopoholics can get their fill of items to be had! Third Street South, Naples business district at the turn of the century is now a recognized historic district, serving as a premier shopping and dining district. This has become a trendy shopping village of more than 100 distinctive shops, art galleries, outdoor cafes and restaurants all within walking distance to the beach. Just a short walk from Fifth Avenue South is historic Tin City. Located at a

waterfront dockside boardwalk, the eclectic tin-roofed shopping and entertainment venue features nautical and nature-themed gift shops, clothing and souvenir shops and casual seafood restaurants on the water. Across the street you'll find Bayfront, Naples newest shopping, dining, arts and entertainment center. Colorful Mediterranean architecture houses a collection of upscale shops complemented by restaurants, bars, art galleries and the newly renovated Bayfront Inn 5th Avenue, all overlooking the Gordon River. Nearby at the Waterside Shops at Pelican Bay, you'll find boutiques, shops and restaurants surrounded by lush landscaping, covered walkways and sparkling waterways. Saks Fifth Avenue anchors numerous elegant specialty shops, with an impressive list of luxury retailers including Tiffany & Co. and Cartier. Nordstroms open its doors at Waterside in November 2008.

Culture abounds in Naples. From theatre to dance, to its 100 art galleries and numerous fascinating museums, greater Naples is recognized internationally as a destination for the culturally minded. Naples was named the #1 Small Art Town in America in 2005 by author and art critic Robert Villani; and Naples was named one of the "Top 25 Cities for Art" in the June 2008 issue of American Style magazine. The Naples Museum of Art houses 15 galleries with both permanent and traveling exhibits. The Philharmonic Center for the Arts brings the finest in music, theatre and dance to Naples each season. The Naples Players, recognized as one of the top community theatre groups in the country, perform at downtown Naples Sugden Theatre. Theater Zone brings Broadway style professional productions to town. Opera Naples has an increasing number of performances. Historical museums abound, featuring information on the areas early inhabitants, the Calusa Indians, as well as early southwest Florida pioneers.

Marco Island, the largest of the Ten Thousand Islands, is located at southern tip of Southwest Florida's Paradise Coast. A beachfront paradise located just north of the Gulf Coast entrance to Everglades National Park and 15 miles south of Naples, the island is surrounded by the Gulf of Mexico on one side and pristine mangrove estuaries on the other.

Marco Island is home to some of the world's most beautiful beaches and offers world-class golf courses nearby, shopping and dining on Marco Island and in nearby

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Visiting **Everglades City** is like stepping into the Florida of days gone by. Surrounded by Everglades National Park, the Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge, Big Cypress National Preserve, the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Picayune Strand State Forest, Collier-Seminole State Park and the

Fakahatchee Strand Preserve State Park, this is a small town on the edge of the Florida wilderness.

Everglades City and nearby Chokoloskee Island provide a glimpse into Southwest Florida's past with several notable museums and quaint small town charm. Known as the Stone Crab Capital of the World, Everglades City's numerous stone crab processing facilities provide ample supplies of this fresh Florida delicacy to restaurants in town and all along Florida's coast during stone crab season each year from October 15 through May 15.

For a free visitors guide or other informa-

tion on the Paradise Coast of Naples, Marco Island and the Everglades visit www.paradisecoast.com, or call 800-688-3600.

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Situated in the Southwest community of Cape Coral, the family friendly **Cape Paradise Resort**, offers its visitors a comfortable, fun and memorable vacation experience. Featuring the largest Tiki Hut in Florida, hotel guests can indulge poolside while listening to live entertainment and enjoying cold drinks. The resort is within minutes of downtown Cape Coral and provides the convenience of nearby watersport rentals and a fishing pier. Room discounts are available for reunions, birthday parties, weddings and special get aways.
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Overlooking seashell strewn beaches, Sanibel Island's **Gulf Breeze Cottages and efficiencies** are ideal for visitors wanting a quaint, comfortable and fully equipped get away. Each one-, two- and three-bedroom cottage features a living room, dining area, central air conditioning, CableTV and VCR. Cottages with kitchens are fully equipped, while efficiency units feature stove top, microwave and refrigerator. All household linens are supplied and there is

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A ride on the Seminole **Gulf Coast Railway!** Operating on more than 100 miles of track throughout Southwest Florida, train visitors can enjoy this destination's breathtaking sights rarely seen while driving. In addition to its mode of transportation, the railway features Murder Mystery rides, daytime excursions and get away packages that include nightly hotel accommodations. The train, which departs from Fort Myers, features an array of upcoming events.
800-736-4853 | 239-275-8487 | www.semgulf.com

In addition to its world-famous golf courses and mesmerizing beaches, Southwest Florida is also known for its captivating cultural community. The Sugden Theater, home of the **Naples Players** is, deemed the best live theater in Southwest Florida. Productions for all members of the family are performed year-round and feature upcoming shows including Cole Porter's Anything Goes

(Mar. 4 - Apr. 4/09) and the summer drama Wit (May 21 - June 14/09).
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