

FOCUS ON



COURTESY OF MARTIN COUNTY

The Treasure Coast

It's the coast of pirates and plunder. As the historic site of a number of shipwrecks, dating back more than 300 years, some of the most priceless discoveries have been found along what is famously known as Florida's Treasure Coast.

The Past... So why do they call this the Treasure Coast? The short answer is because the coast has a long history of pillaged and shipwrecked ships, laden with treasure and goods. Many have been salvaged or documented, while many more still remain lost to this day waiting to be discovered. The Elliott Museum in Stuart, along with the House of Refuge tell the story of Martin County's history while the St. Lucie County Historical Museum in Fort Pierce houses permanent exhibits from a time long ago.

What made this area so important was its location as a shipping route as the Gulf Stream leads through the straits that parallel Florida's Keys. Attractive to Spanish vessels carrying Gold and Silver coins and jewelry, gems, and many rich goods of all types, the route was also attractive to organized and deadly Pirates. What the Pirates didn't plunder the Hurricanes common to Florida were also to blame for many a lost ship.

The Present... Aside from the breathtaking beaches, the Treasure Coast also offers good shopping, sporting, and numerous other getaway experiences! Eco-tourists should not miss the extensive array of wildlife, which includes the endangered West Indian manatee, loggerhead and leatherback turtles, tropical fish, alligators, deer, and exotic birds. Sports enthusiasts will find boundless opportunities

here - from golf and tennis to polo, motorcar racing, the New York Mets during spring training, and the best freshwater fishing around.

Southern Martin County's well-to-do Hobe Sound, in particular, is a Treasure Coast hot spot with its pristine beaches, banyan-tree-canopied streetscapes, one-of-a-kind antiques shops, and art galleries. Hobe Sound rests at the front door of the Gold Coast and the back door of the Treasure Coast, and it has immediate access to the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway.

Accommodations in Martin County range from a deluxe ocean-to-river beachfront, golf and yachting resort on Hutchinson Island to Stuart's "Old Florida:" bed-and-breakfast inns; from pastel riverside cottages of Jensen Beach to Indiantown's charming landmark country inn. Dozens of locations and budget choices, including a selection of downtown hotels within walking distance of Historic Downtown Stuart, and privately owned oceanfront condominiums that are available for those interested in longer stays.

Martin County Convention & Visitors Center
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ArtsFest is a project of The Arts Council, serving Stuart and Martin County. For lodging information visit, martincountyfla.com.