

focus on



Southwest Florida...

Known as [Florida's tropical island getaway](#), The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, is a favorite vacation spot for Floridians as well as visitors from across the United States and abroad.

finest shoreline in North America

Sanibel, home to more than 400 varieties of shells that litter the beaches, particularly after an especially high or low tide, is also the home of some of the finest shoreline in North America. Sanibel's main thoroughfare, Periwinkle Way, is Sunday-drive picturesque with interesting shops and restaurants that dot the road, making it difficult to complete the distance without a half dozen sight-seeking stops at the boutiques and art galleries.

The main attraction of adjoining island, Captiva, is there are none. It was here Anne Morrow Lindbergh, wife of the famous aviator, penned her best-selling book, "A Gift from the Sea."

accessible only by boat

Cabbage Key is a near-famous local island that offers a variety of riches, including an inn with restaurant walls, beams and ceilings plastered with \$1 bills. Although the island is accessible only by boat and the inn has only a few guest rooms and cottages, its restaurant and lounge accommodates thousands of visitors each year.

most famous homes

Without a doubt, the most famous homes in the Fort Myers/Sanibel area are those winter residents Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, located on 17 acres at the gateway to down-

town Fort Myers on McGregor Boulevard. Henry Ford's home, "Mangoes," opened to the public in 1990 after an extensive renovation. Ford bought the quaint house in 1916 to spend the winter months visiting Edison. The two properties are separated by a fence the families called "The Friendship Gate."

If it's been awhile since you've traveled south to Naples, Marco Island, and the Everglades, there might be a few surprises in store.

dynamic downtown cafe scene

The breathtaking community of Naples is home to a dynamic downtown cafe scene along Fifth Avenue South and Third Street South, not to mention sightseeing excursions via yachts, small boats and Segways.

Families who have discovered the fun that Naples has to offer will be pleased with the area's newest attractions. Naples Zoo has expanded with a new leopard habitat and The Sun-n-Fun Lagoon water park at North Collier Regional Park provides exciting waterslides, a lazy river and multiple pools for cooling off in the summer months.

the largest of ten thousand islands

Marco Island, the largest of the Ten Thousand Islands, is located at the southern tip of Southwest Florida's Paradise Coast.



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A cooperative effort funded by the Collier County Tourist Development Tax.

Home to some of the world's most beautiful beaches, the area offers immediate access to both the Gulf of Mexico and the mangrove-lined estuaries of the Ten Thousand Islands for shelling, boating, bird and wildlife watching, kayaking and canoeing.

small town 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, Everglades City is a small town of days gone by.

While still enjoying the slow pace of a rural village, Everglades City is undergoing something of a renaissance due to rapidly escalating real estate values. As waterfront property skyrockets in demand, the town's small bungalows are being replaced by elegant multistory Florida Cracker-style homes overlooking the Barron River.

In addition to its unique real estate opportunities, Everglades City is also known as the Stone Crab Capital of the World. Close to half a million pounds of stone crab claws are processed each season between October and May in Everglades City for shipment to other area, for use in local seafood restaurants and for the annual Everglades City Seafood Festival, held every year during the first weekend in February. Lunch and dinner are great reasons to visit Everglades City, with a number of popular seafood restaurants in town. Private pilots even fly in to Everglades Airpark, the town's general aviation airport, to buy stone crab claws "to go" or to enjoy lunch at an area waterfront restaurant.

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel
800-237-6444 | www.fortmyers-sanibel.com

**Paradise Coast of Naples, Marco Island
and the Everglades**
800-688-3600 | www.paradisecoast.com

Did you Know?

>> J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, occupying more than half of Sanibel Island, was named for the Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Jay Norwood Darling, who was also the first environmentalist to hold a presidential cabinet post.

>> Naples is home to the Swamp Buggy Races. Held three times annually in January, March and October, the races feature everything from down home functional swamp buggies to high tech racing machines. The racetrack is a muddy mess that includes a huge puddle called the Sippy Hole - often the downfall of lesser buggies.

>> Naples has been named "The #1 Small



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Art Town in America" by author John Villani in his book The 100 Best Art Towns in America. In choosing Naples as Number 1, Villani cites the area's amazing range of natural splendor along with its sophisticated and serious art galleries, its art fairs, community art centers and the Philharmonic Center of the Arts complex.

>>The peak season for visitors in the area is January through April. From May through December, visitors can find exceptional deals on hotel accommodations. Rates drop by one third to one half of what they are in the peak winter season. Savvy travelers know to take advantage of the great savings on hotel rates and less crowded attractions and beaches.

While visiting Southwest Florida we recommend!

At **Gulf Breeze Cottages**, Sanibel, guests can enjoy the privacy of tropically decorated cottages and efficiencies combined with a convenient locale. Situated directly on the Gulf of Mexico shores, Gulf Breeze Cottages are within minutes to area shopping, dining and walking trails. Cottages range from efficiency, one, two-, three bedroom units and a private beach house for larger groups.

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Considered one of the top 10 community theater groups in the U.S., **The Naples Players** entertains residents and visitors of all ages with their musical, comedy and dramatic arts. In addition to their main stage and cutting edge studio theatre, Naples Players features KidzAct Youth Theatre, with productions like Willie Wonka Junior and Antigone.

Upcoming performances during the Summer 2009, include Thoroughly Modern Millie, a high-spirited musical romp set in the roaring 20s.

For information or reservations, call the box office or visit their Website.

239-263-7990 | www.naplesplayers.com



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American Realty of Captiva, established on Captiva Island by local owners and residents in 1991, began with nine rental cottages and has since grown to representing more than 100 properties ranging from intimate one bedroom cottages to spacious seven-bedroom homes and estates. Locally managed and operated, American Realty has built a loyal owner and customer base. There are Bayfront homes with private docks, beachfront homes with breathtaking sunset views, pool homes and vacation condos with shared pools and tennis courts.

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239-395-2490 | www.captiva-island.com

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ECHO (Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization) is dedicated to fighting world hunger through innovative options, agricultural training and networking with community leaders in developing countries. ECHO seeks to find sustainable options for families growing food under difficult conditions in 180 countries.

ECHO is a non-profit, inter-denominational Christian organization with headquarters in North Fort Myers, Florida. Join them for a 90-minute educational tour of the ECHO Global Demonstration Farm! To learn more visit www.echonet.org.

Awarded designations as the "Best Place to take the Kids" by Gulfshore Magazine and winner of the "nature/education" category of the Naples Daily News Choice Awards, the **Naples Zoo at Caribbean Gardens** offers its visitors much more than animal interaction! As the zoo continues to excite visitors with up close views of wildlife and awe-inspiring exhibits, it's the unique offerings it provides travelers that makes this journey so memorable. The Naples Zoo is the only Florida zoo to display all four of Africa's top predators and is one of the few zoos in the nation that feature Malayan tigers.

239-262-5409 | www.napleszoo.com *

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