INSIGHT GUIDES

FLORIDA



CONTENTS

Introduction

The Best of Florida 6
Let the Sun Shine 17
The Floridian People 19

History & Features

Decisive Dates 26
Early Florida 29
New Spain 33
Turf Wars 41
Modern Times 51
The Cultural Landscape 59
Extreme Weather 64
Florida Cuisine 67
The Business of Pleasure 73
Thrill Machines 79
Sports and Outdoor Activities 80

Places

Introduction 91
SOUTH FLORIDA 95
Metropolitan Miami 99
Vizcaya 114
Miami Beach 117
Key Biscayne 125
Art Deco: South Beach Style 126
The Everglades 129
Everglades Ecology 140
Florida Keys 143
Florida's Coral Reef 150
Key West 153
ATLANTIC COAST 163
Fort Lauderdale 165
Palm Beach 173
Lake Okeechobee 181
The Space Coast 183
Daytona Beach to Jacksonville 189
Cumberland Island 198

CENTRAL FLORIDA 207
Walt Disney World Resort 209
Orlando and Its Other Worlds 231
GULF COAST 255
Tampa 257
St Petersburg to Cedar Key 265
Beautiful Beaches 274
Sarasota to Naples 277
Spring Training 290
NORTH FLORIDA 295
Gainesville and North Central Florida 297
Tallahassee and the Panhandle 307

Travel Tips

TRANSPORTATION

Getting There 322
By Air 322
By Boat 322
By Rail 322
By Bus 323
Getting Around 323
Public Transportation 323
Private Transportation 323

A – Z

Accommodations 324
Admission Charges 325
Budgeting for Your Trip 325
Children 325
Climate 326
Crime and Safety 326
Customs Regulations 326
Disabled Travelers 326
Eating Out 327
Electricity 328
Embassies and Consulates 328
Emergencies 328
Health and Medical Care 328
Internet 329
LGBTQ Travelers 328
Media 329
Money 329
Opening Hours 330
Postal Services 330
Public Holidays 330
Telephones 330
Time Zone 330
Tipping 330
Tourist Information 330
Visas and Passports 331
Weights and Measures 331

FURTHER READING

Fiction 332
Natural and Cultural History 332
Other Insight Guides 332

Maps

Florida 92
Metropolitan Miami 100
Miami Beach 118
Everglades 130
Florida Keys 144
Key West 154
Fort Lauderdale 166
Around Fort Lauderdale 168
Palm Beach 174
North from Palm Beach 178
Space Coast 184
Daytona Beach 190
Daytona to Jacksonville 192
St Augustine 194
Walt Disney World 210
Magic Kingdom 212
Epcot 217
Orlando and Surroundings 232
Tampa 258
Busch Gardens 261
St Petersburg to Cedar Key 266
St Petersburg 268
Sarasota to Naples 278
Gainesville and North Central Florida 298
Tallahassee 308
The Panhandle 310
Inside front cover Florida
Inside back cover theme parks

LEGEND

Insight on
Photo Story

THE BEST OF FLORIDA: TOP ATTRACTIONS



△ **Theme parks**. Disney, Universal, SeaWorld, Legoland, and Busch Gardens operate no less than 10 theme parks in Florida. At the center of the theme-park galaxy is Orlando, home of Walt Disney World Resort, which claims more than 50 million visitors each year. See pages 209 and 231.

▽ **Everglades National Park**. Encompassing more than 1.5 million acres (607,028 hectares) of subtropical wilderness, this national park sustains hundreds of plant and animal species, including endangered Florida panthers and West Indian manatees. See page 129.





△ **Key West**. The Conch Republic, Margaritaville, Mañanaland – call it what you like, Key West is always up for a party. Perched at the end of the Florida Keys, the southernmost city is a hub of colorful nonconformity where free spirits find refuge from the mainstream and the rest of us can drop in for a couple of drinks. See page 153.



△ **The Panhandle**. Had enough of the crowds in central Florida? The Panhandle, aka Northwest Florida, has miles of undeveloped beaches and quiet seaside towns to explore at your leisure. See page 311.



△ **Daytona 500**. NASCAR's most prestigious race (and one of the country's biggest sporting events) this is a blistering, 500-mile (800km) contest of driving skill and mechanical prowess. See page 189.



△ **South Beach**. The buff, bronze, and beautiful people gather at the red-hot nightclubs and glorious Art Deco hotels of this exotic neighborhood. See page 117.



▷ **The Dalí Museum**. Let your imagination run wild at this famous museum in St Petersburg, one of the country's finest museums dedicated to a single artist. See page 268.

◁ **Beautiful beaches**. White sugar sand and warm azure waters are the key ingredients of Florida's beaches. With miles and miles of coastline, there's a beach for every taste and occasion. See page 274.





◁ **Kennedy Space Center**. History and science are brought vividly to life at this fascinating complex where you can explore the past, present, and future endeavors of space exploration. See page 183.

▷ **The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art**. A palazzo packed with priceless European art, this art gallery is a tribute to the man known for creating the "Greatest Show on Earth." See page 280.



THE BEST OF FLORIDA: EDITOR'S CHOICE



Mako – Orlando's super-fast shark-themed roller coaster.

BEST BEACHES

Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park. Regularly rated as one of the best in the US, this pristine beach on Key Biscayne soothes the weary soul. See page 125.

Bradenton Beach. At the south end of Anna Maria Key, Bradenton has walkable streets and beaches that attract nesting sea turtles in summer. See page 277.

Caladesi Island State Park. Florida's No. 1 white-sand beach is a boat-in-only experience with a mangrove kayak trail. See page 265.

Sanibel Island. Do the "Sanibel Stoop" to collect lovely shells washed up on the shores of this beautifully preserved island. See page 283.

BEST THRILL RIDES

Cobra's Curse. Busch Garden's popular roller coaster lifts you up 70ft (21 meters), only to hurl you toward snake fangs. See page 262.

Mako. Even sharks aren't scary compared to the fastest, longest, tallest ride in town. See page 236.

Avatar Flight of Passage. Soar through magical landscapes on the back of a banshee in this immersive 3-D experience. See page 224

Race Through New York Starring Jimmy Fallon. Why visit NYC when you can fly over its star attractions in this exciting ride? It's Manhattan like you've never seen it. See page 233.



Caladesi Island State Park.