

# Family Getaways

Orlando Edition



Top 10  
Florida  
Beaches



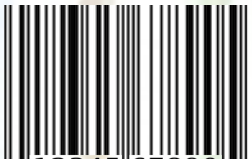
Florida's Foodie Stops

Mardi  
Gras

Family  
Dining

Things  
to Do

February 2015



0 12345 67890 5

\$ 6.95





## Naturally connected.

There's no better place to feel a connection with nature than at our parks. Where fun and laughter are as common as the stunning sights at SeaWorld®. Where thrilling roller coasters soar through the exotic lands of Busch Gardens®. And where underwater adventures give way to wonder and excitement at Aquatica™. Explore the world around you by making memorable connections at all of our parks.

**For the best deals on tickets, visit [SeaWorldOrlando.com](http://SeaWorldOrlando.com) or [BuschGardensTampaBay.com](http://BuschGardensTampaBay.com).**



### Orlando

- Family Dining
- Universal Studio's Mardi Gras 2015
- Unique Things to Do
- Pick Your Own Oranges in Orlando
- A Year of Fun at LEGOLAND
- Orlando Day Trip: Bok Tower Gardens
- Harry P. Leu Gardens
- Kennedy Space Center

### Florida's Foodie Stops

### Top Ten Florida Beaches

### Gulf Coast

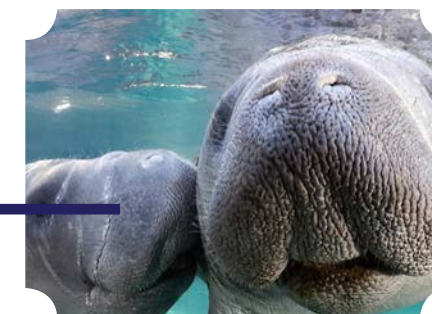
- Sarasota
- Naples
- Fort Myers

### Key West

- Key West Chickens
- Key West Snorkeling
- Ten Best Key Lime Pies
- What is a Conch?

### Calendar of Events

- pg. 4
- pg. 5
- pg. 6
- pg. 7
- pg. 7
- pg. 8
- pg. 9
- pg. 9
- pg. 10
- pg. 12
- pg. 14
- pg. 15
- pg. 16
- pg. 17
- pg. 17
- pg. 18
- pg. 19
- pg. 22



### Editor

Parker Hardy

### Writers

- Daniel Acres
- Emma Gold
- Jane Moe
- Peter Smithe

### Publisher

Katelyn Washington

### Photographers

- Bob Ducks
- Mary July

### Art Director

Lawrence Moon

### Researchers

- Carol Boot
- John Moats
- Suzie Sun

With so many choices in Orlando, visitors and locals alike might have trouble deciding where to take the family for good food and fun. Before you head to your usual spot, take a little inspiration from the magic Orlando offers in one of these kid-friendly restaurants, and turn a meal into a memorable family experience.

## T-REX Café

The newest themed-dining addition to Downtown Disney, T-REX is a time machine to an interactive prehistoric environment. Life-size animatronic dinosaurs, woolly mammoths and aquariums offer something to discover at every turn. Between bites of delicious Layers of the Earth Lasagna or the Gigantosaurus Burger, families will be enchanted by all the creatures found among cascading waterfalls, bubbling geysers and a fossil dig site.



## NBA City

Got a little sports fan in your family? Universal CityWalk's NBA City evokes the classic basketball arenas of the 1940s and 50s, serving excellent American fare that will score points with anyone. Twice named Orlando's best themed restaurant by the Orlando Sentinel, NBA City offers some of the best sandwiches and pizzas in CityWalk with a fun atmosphere that kids love.

## Rainforest Café

Rainforest Café is a feast for the eyes as well as the taste buds! The menu features crowd-pleasers like burgers, pastas, and exotic salads, but tropical treats like the chocolate-y Sparkling Volcano will really wow the whole family. With two locations, one at Disney's Animal Kingdom and the other in Downtown Disney, the lush tropical rain forest comes to life through a combination of animated wildlife and special effects, making it a "wild place to eat and shop."

## Bubbalou's Bodacious Barbeque

A famous Orlando favorite, this finger-lickin' food is served in five Orlando locations. Too yummy not to share, the BBQ options from chicken to sliced pork sandwiches come in kid servings too. With all the southern sides you could ask for and even homemade desserts, Bubbalou's was named one of America's top barbeque restaurants by Zagat's Restaurant Survey, and publications like Southern Living and USA Today.

## Sugar Mill

The Old Spanish Sugar Mill Grill & Griddle House opened in 1961 inside the DeLeon Springs State Park, this distinctive restaurant brings a whole new experience to a family breakfast out. Kids become culinary artists as they create their own pancakes on the personal griddles at each table! With pitchers of homemade pancake batter, the meal makes for a fun and creative family experience that couldn't be easier. Specialty toppings like bananas, peanut butter, pecans and apples add a tasty flourish to each griddle work-of-art, making this breakfast a cherished memory for all.

## Park Plaza Gardens

Indulge in a little mother-daughter bonding or a birthday party fit for a queen at the Park Plaza Garden Tea Room. From delicate finger sandwiches, succulent scones, and of course, delicious hot teas, little ladies and grown-ups alike will love getting the real princess treatment. Afternoon tea, Royal Tea, dessert tea and themed teas are all available from 3 to 5 p.m. daily with a reservation made 24-hours prior.



## Sweet Tomatoes

A family favorite, this buffet-style eatery offers healthy and nutritious options parents want for their kids, but with plenty of yummy sides and even desserts that are perfect eat-your-vegetables bribes! Fresh seasonal soups, salads, hot-from-the-oven baked goods and an ice cream bar make this affordable dining experience a real treat that everyone in the family enjoys. The monthly menu feature for March is "Feel like a kid again," with specialty items like creamy tomato soup and grilled cheese focaccia dippers.



Carnival time is still upon us in Orlando and Universal's Mardi Gras celebration lets guests savor the flavor of the famous New Orleans holiday. From tasting your way through a menu of creole delights to shouting "Throw me somethin' mister" at the top of your lungs, you're sure to get caught up in what Universal calls, "Florida's biggest party."

Happening on select nights, now through April 18, 2015, this event is included with regular park admission into Universal Studios Florida. And if you've never been to Mardi Gras in New Orleans or are a huge fan, you'll be dazzled by the music, entertainment and, of course all of the delicious food.

1. If you want to watch the parade and the band, find a spot on the parade route by the center stage. It's an easier transition to find a spot at the Universal Music Plaza stage to watch the band. People start

reserving spots for the parade early, so leave plenty of time.

2. Get ready to catch those throws, even from the back row. The parade is filled with colorful floats that can be seen from many vantage points along the parade route. And with 1.8 million beads flying through the air, you're sure to get your fill by the end.

3. Universal has added two new "Show Stops" to the parade. You'll have your chance to party with the parade performers like never before  
4. Enjoy the street party. The French Quarter Courtyard (opens at 4 p.m.) is the heart of the celebration with plenty of food booths and live music. Hang out on the benches, take in the music and eat.

5. Taste your way through the festival. New Orleans is famous for its tasty treats and Universal has recreated many of the authentic tastes.

6. One of our favorite dishes is the

Red Beans and Rice with the gulf shrimp. You won't be disappointed with Universal's take on this typical dish of Louisiana Creole cuisine.

7. For a New Orleans twist on a hot dog, we also suggest you grab an Andouille Sausage on a fresh French roll. The grilled onions add an extra kick to this delicious delight.

8. Don't forget to wash down all of that flavorful food with a glass of VooDoo Juice. This refreshing adult beverage is made with flavored rum and fruit juice.

9. Enjoy the music of New Orleans with performances by authentic rhythm and blues and zydeco bands on the Courtyard stage.

10. Party with the street performers. There's plenty of photo ops with some of the most outrageous entertainers outside of the Vieux Carré. The stilt walkers near The Mummy attraction are a fun crew not to miss.

# Unique Things to Do



## iFLY Orlando

Skydive without ever leaving International Drive at iFLY Orlando -- an indoor vertical wind tunnel that gives the very real sensation of flight. Work up a little sense of adventure, learn a little about what it takes to get airborne, gear up and take to the (indoor) skies. Here's how it works: A column of air shoots up through a flight chamber, lifting guests gently into the air. Flyers use techniques taught in a pre-flight training session to steady themselves, change elevation and stay in control. There's no jumping or falling -- participants just step into the flight chamber, lean over and fly. (Or hover about 5 feet off the ground -- it's just that flying sounds better.)

An instructor stays on-hand to help, and the entire adventure is photographed and videotaped. Earn your wings with 2 one-minute flights or arrive with a group of up to 5 and experience 10 one-minute flights. The entire adventure can be experienced in the time of a midday break and promises to be a bit more memorable than a boxed lunch in a conference room.

6805 Visitors Circle  
Orlando, FL 32819 US  
1 407-903-1150



## K1 Speed Indoor Karting

K1 Speed is a revolution in indoor karting, with its award-winning centers, European style racing and professionally designed race tracks. The emission free electric karts are the best available. They reach speeds of 45 mpg, faster than gas karts and without the smog. K1 Speed Orlando with its large lobby area, meeting rooms, racing memorabilia

and exhilarating Indoor Racing Excitement for junior and adult racers alike - is the perfect venue! K1 Speed Orlando will allow novice and veteran drivers alike to experience an authentic racing atmosphere. The center's large indoor track features a challenging combination of long straight-aways and hairpin turns, providing racers with a variety of opportunities to test their fortitude.

When not racing, there is a spacious lobby, which features a video game area, Pit Cafe full of refreshments, official racing memorabilia and comfortable seating areas with club-like lighting, large projection screens and plasma televisions to lounge, relax and enjoy!

9550 Parksouth Court  
Orlando, FL 32837  
Phone: 407-434-7500



## Putting Edge Glow-in-the-Dark Mini Golf

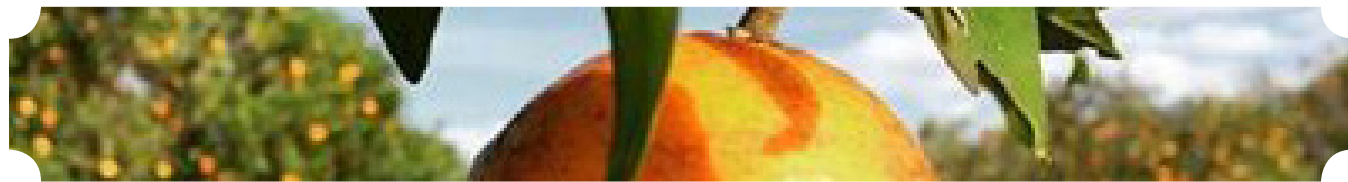
Putting Edge is the world's leader of one of the most successful concepts in the entertainment industry. It provides a new and exciting twist on the traditional game of miniature golf.

We've taken your regular mini golf, set in a Glow-in-the-Dark environment, turned off the lights and turned up the music for an experience like no other. Our challenging, indoor, 18 hole "Glow-in-the-Dark" golf courses add a whole new dimension to the game

of miniature golf. From the moment you walk through the front door, you have left "the real world" and have entered a world full of Fun, Imagination, and Activity. Whether six or sixty, male or female, Putting Edge delivers a high energy, high quality experience that is ideal for birthday parties, an outing with family or friends, special interest groups, corporate functions and more, the possibilities are endless.

Artegon Orlando 5250 International Drive, Suite 43 Orlando, FL 32819  
Phone: 407-248-0700  
Toll Free: 855-364-7888

# Pick Your Own Oranges



Showcase of Citrus on Highway 27, just 10 minutes from Walt Disney World, gives visitors a taste of Old Florida. It's a little kitschy and a little out of the way, but it's purely authentic.

The winter months are prime time for citrus, and Showcase of Citrus offers 70 varieties on its 2,500-acre farm. Visitors can purchase fruit and homemade products like soap, honey, jams and candies in the country store or head straight out into the groves to pick their

own fruit. Everyone from kids to adults can have fun filling their bags, which range from \$6 to \$12, with everything from sweet Meyer lemons and red navel oranges to tart tangelos and key limes. For those really ambitious pickers, you can even fill an entire wagon. For those wanting a bigger adventure, hop aboard a giant school bus-turned-monster truck for an hour ride through the farm and a chance to spot the resident zebra, water buffalo and alligators.

I've heard this is especially fun after a rainfall, making for a thrilling splash through the mud.

After a day in the sun, parents can relax with a creamsicle, a refreshing blend of frozen orange juice and frozen yogurt, while the kids play on the playground or in the giant sand pile.

The farm is open every day, including holidays, from 8 am to 7 pm. Admission is free. 5010 US Highway 27, Clermont, 352.394.4377

# A Year of Fun at LEGOLAND



LEGOLAND Florida in Winter Haven has a big year planned for families in 2015. Along with the opening of the new LEGOLAND Hotel this summer, the year features family favorites and a few new events, too. Here's a look at what's ahead for 2015:

**LEGO® Club Weekends Featuring LEGO Star Wars™ Miniland** – Feb. 21-22: Experience out-of-this-



world activities with other fans for character meet-and-greets with LEGO Darth Vader, plenty of Star Wars building activities and giveaways and take part in an interactive guided LEGO Star Wars Miniland tour.

**LEGOLAND Water Park Season Begins** – Mar. 28: Bring your swimsuit and join the fun as the water park opens for the season on March 28. Float down the lazy, 1,000-foot river, splash in the 583,000-gallon wave pool and take a spin in one of the park's five water slides. The season ends at the end of October.

**Red, Brick and Boom** – July 3-5: Experience three nights of fireworks for this special Independence Day celebration. With unique viewing glasses, ordinary fireworks turn into

exploding mini-bricks lighting up the night's sky.

**Brick-or-Treat** – Select dates in October: Go trick-or-treating along the Brick-or-Treat trail and discover LEGO build activities, the largest LEGO jack-o-lantern in the world along with a haunted scavenger hunt in MiniLand U.S.A. Kids are encouraged to wear costumes too!

**Christmas Bricktacular** – Select dates in December: Don't miss seeing the 30-foot tall LEGO Christmas tree, made of 270,000 LEGO bricks, a life-size LEGO Santa, reindeer and sleigh with festive decorations. LEGO Santa and LEGO Toy Soldier also make appearances throughout the season. LEGOLAND Florida Resort One LEGOLAND Way Winter Haven, Fla 33884

# Day Trip: Bok Tower Gardens

Orlando



The drive down Highway 27 is unremarkable. After a while you may wonder if your final destination is worth the drive. Then you'll see it: a bell tower that looks out of place from the highway. When you pull into the main entrance of Bok Tower Gardens, your blood pressure begins to drop. Moss blankets majestic oaks, ancient pine trees climb toward the sky and bells chime a familiar hymn. You feel an inner calm.

So how did a place like this come to be in Central Florida? Back in the 1920s, Edward Bok, millionaire publisher of Ladies Home Journal, spent his winters in the affluent Mountain Lakes community 50 miles from Orlando. Each afternoon, he hiked up the hill to watch the sunset and listen to the birds. His grandmother had once told him to "make the world a bit better or beautiful because you have lived in it," and on this sacred spot, he took her message to heart. He soon bought the land and built a

public garden.

Essential to the garden was a bell tower, a carillon to play music. Bok, who grew up in the Netherlands, often played in the woods while beautiful music drifted from bell towers to every corner of town. Bok hired world-famous landscape architect Frederick Olmsted, Jr. of the National Mall and Central Park to transform the sand hill into a fertile garden, and he commissioned Philadelphia architect Milton Medary and acclaimed sculptor Lee Lawrie to construct a 60-bell, 205-foot, neo-Gothic and art deco tower. When the project was complete in 1929, President Calvin Coolidge came to dedicate the gardens in front of a crowd of people. Bok died one year later.

His legacy lives on today as a National Historic Landmark and one of Florida's most beloved attractions. Today, Bok Tower Gardens is adding a children's garden, an edible garden and an outdoor kitchen, and they've

recently recruited the top carillonneur in the world to perform the park's twice-daily concerts. Geert D'hollander, who grew up playing 15th-century carillons in Belgium, says the Bok Tower instrument with bells ranging from 16 pounds to 12 tons, is the most beautiful in the world. When D'hollander plays from his studio at the top of the tower, whether it's an original composition or a favorite melody, the crowd below stops what they are doing to listen. They take in the pure sound of the bells and the beautiful gardens that surrounds.

Bok Tower Gardens is open daily, including holidays, from 8 am to 5 pm. The visitor center, café and gift shop are open at 9 am. Admission is \$12 for adults and \$3 for ages 5-12. Members and children under 5 are admitted free. LEGOLAND ticket holders receive free admission for children under 12.

# Kennedy Space Center

Orlando



The John F. Kennedy Space Center is located about 50 miles east of downtown Orlando. You can't miss the 90,000-square-foot Space Shuttle Atlantis attraction, which features more than 60 interactive exhibits and simulators that detail NASA's 30-year Space Shuttle Program. No visit would be complete without stopping by the Astronaut Training Experience. Here you'll learn about the experience from a former NASA

astronaut and then get to try it with hands-on training, which includes operating a full-scale shuttle mock-up. Head over to the IMAX Theater to take in two larger-than-life films narrated by Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Cruise. Your general admission ticket also includes access to these attractions, plus the Angry Birds Space Encounter, special viewing for rocket launches and a general bus

tour.

The center opens at 9 a.m. and closes anywhere from 5 to 7 p.m. depending on the time of year. The U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame opens at noon year-round, with closing hours between 5 and 7 p.m. Check the complex's website to see your chosen day's operating hours. Tickets for adults cost \$50; admission for children ages 3 to 11 costs \$40.

# Harry P. Leu Gardens



Despite the fact that most vacationers spend their time pounding the pavement, trundling tots from one amusement park ride to the next, Orlando is actually a great place to stop and smell the flowers. Swing by Harry P. Leu Gardens and get a sense of the real Orlando. This botanical oasis is 50 acres worth of camellias, roses,

orchids, azaleas and more. Plus there are seasonal art exhibits, a horticultural library and museum and house tours of Leu's restored, turn-of-the-century home. Visitors say this is a nice change of pace from park-palooza, even when it's not peak bloom season. If you're going to visit the Harry P. Leu Gardens, aim to do so on the

first Monday of the month — that's when admission is free. Otherwise, you'll pay \$10 (and \$3 for school-age children). The grounds are open every day but Christmas from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (The last garden admission time is 4 p.m., however). Tours of the Leu House are given every half hour from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Visit the website for further details.



## Raglan Road

An Irish pub/restaurant that serves better food than you'd get in an average diner in Ireland, Raglan Road is the heart of the Emerald Isle in central Florida. Traditional dancers perform onstage, and live Irish music is played 6

nights a week.

The pub was built in Ireland and shipped more than 4,000 miles to its current home at the Downtown Disney marketplace. Chef Kevin Dundon has cooked for Queen Elizabeth and U2, and you'd be advised to take advantage of the

master chef's inspired cuisine.

The Salmon Swoon, smoked and served with capers and crème fraiche, is a far cry from corned beef and cabbage. Shrimp risotto, chicken and wild mushroom pie, Guinness and onion bangers on mashed potatoes, and roasted lamb shank in

rosemary jus, create a menu that stands out from other Irish pub fare.

Look for the statue of Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh -- identical to the one that sits along the Grand Canal near Baggot Street Bridge in Dublin. Get here around 8 p.m. for the dancing and tunes.



## Seasons 52

A fresh, seasonal menu and healthy offerings have helped Seasons 52 expand to several locations, but the original is right around the corner from the convention center in Orlando. The restaurant's name reflects its unique approach: Every week of the year brings new ingredients and ever-changing harvests -- and therefore a seasonally-changing menu.

Depending on the time of year, entrees could include cedar-plank roasted salmon, oak-grilled filet mignon or caramelized sea scallops. Soft lighting, contemporary design, and wood and stone accents might create a sophisticated setting, but don't get too uptight: The piano bar and dessert flights bring everything back down to earth. Sample the wine list of more than 100 selections and order freely from the unique selections: Each item on the menu is no more than 475 calories.



## Ravenous Pig

Pressed tin ceilings and Edison lightbulbs set the retro-chic scene at this Winter Park gastropub, the best in town, where the monthly pig roasts (check website as the schedule varies) are a big local lure.

The seasonal menu elevates classic pub fare with gourmet takes on things like shrimp and grits and moules frites, lots of fresh Florida fish such as pompano and snapper and French-inspired fare, too, a la cheese and charcuterie plates and foie gras. Beer connoisseurs love the microbrew selection, with Colorado, Brooklyn and even a sampling of Florida ales on the list.



## Selva Grill

This favorite specializes in Nuevo Latino cuisine, defined as "the marriage of exotic flavors from Latin America and the U.S.," with an emphasis on Peruvian dishes. I love ceviche, so for me, a great choice is the Triologia, which is a ceviche sampler. My favorite entrée is Selva's Famous Skirt Steak, served over sweet plantains with Selva's chimichurri. Don't miss the Truffle Parmesan Fries. (Another cool thing about this restaurant is that every plate of food looks like a beautiful work of art.) Besides the food, one of the major draws for me is Selva's energy and vibe. Also home to Selva Lounge, Selva Grill makes me feel like I'm in South Beach or New York City, which is how I want to feel sometimes. Also, its signature cocktail list is great.



## Yoder's

Yoder's comfort-food menu reflects traditional Amish home-cooking with yummy staples like noodles, pot roast, meatloaf and mashed potatoes. The menu is also sprinkled with surprises

you don't expect to find at an Amish restaurant: Asian chicken salad, "Amish quesadillas" (chicken, cheese and mushrooms), and a salad of mixed greens, crumbled gorgonzola cheese and dried cranberries. No

meal here is complete without trying Yoder's famous pie, which comes in two dozen varieties. The most popular flavor is peanut butter, with layers of crunchy peanut butter topping and vanilla pudding.



## Blue Pointe Oyster Bar & Grille

For an authentic taste of Ft. Myers, stop by a local oyster bar. Blue Pointe features a modern fusion of mahogany wood, marbled white granite counters, bright cobalt wall murals and tile accents. The restaurant tablet menus allow diners to click on a menu option to see pictures of it. Featuring oysters, sushi, crab cakes, burgers, and more, the joint is a great place to visit on a warm summer evening.



## Café Epicure

This place is the closest to truly authentic Italian cuisine. Most if not all of the servers, as well as the chef and pizza chef, are Italian, and owner Giovanni Migliorini imports lots of his ingredients, including cheeses, meats and tomatoes, from Italy. You can taste that the ingredients are really high quality (a bonus is that the prices are really reasonable). My favorites? Spaghetti alla Carbonara, the Insalata Tropicale (with arugula, avocado, hearts of palm

and parmesan cheese shavings), any gelato... and any pizza...and even the bread and the olive tapenade that you get before your meal. Migliorini also owns two other Italian restaurants in town -- Mediterraneo and Café Americano. These places are wonderful, but there's something about the more casual Café Epicure, home also to a martini bar and a gelato and pastry shop attached, that keeps me coming back. It's probably because when I'm there, I feel like I'm back at a trattoria in Rome. (continued on page 20)

# Top Ten Florida Beaches

1

## Delray Beach

Delray Beach, at Ocean and Atlantic Avenues, is a charming village by the sea. Each year, nearly 1 million visitors flock to this

family-friendly 2-mile-long beach ideal for sunbathing, swimming and sandcastle-building. When the sun goes down, visitors take a

stroll on festive Atlantic Avenue, enjoying the boutiques, seafood restaurants, cool architecture and the Pineapple Grove Arts District.

2

## Clearwater Beach

Clearwater Beach's reputation as one of America's finest beaches has lured countless families and couples to its sandy shores. Spread along a narrow, 3-mile stretch of the Pinellas Peninsula on the Gulf Coast, Clearwater Beach straddles the Gulf of Mexico to the west, and Tampa Bay to the east. This location offers visitors ample activities like sunbathing on white sandy beaches, diving into a game of beach volleyball, renting fishing boats, taking a dolphin-watching cruise, parasailing or heading to a mainland museum or aquarium.

3

## Naples Beach

One of the most popular beaches at Naples Pier is in the city, on 12th Avenue South. Another great beach lies a few miles north of Old Naples, at the Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park. This is a great place to spread out the family's beach blanket and camp out for the day as there are bathhouses and food stands on-site and rentals available for everything from umbrellas to kayaks to snorkeling gear.

4

## Sanibel Beach

Sanibel is a unique barrier island with east-west orientation. This designation has helped Sanibel earn its reputation as one of the Shell Islands—prime spots along Florida's coastline for gathering perfectly intact shells in every shape and size. Hit the beach with a bucket, shovel and small net, and stroll the beach at low tide to peruse the ocean's bounty of conch, cockles and scallop shells. Bowman's Beach is the quietest and most remote stretch of sand in Sanibel, while a historic lighthouse beckons visitors to take a stroll on the rustic boardwalk at Lighthouse Beach.

5

## South Beach

South Beach is an international playground offering non-stop nightlife, sandy shores, and unique architecture. The long, man-made beach stretches up the Atlantic for miles and is perfect for early morning runs and topless sunbathing. And while it may not be the Caribbean, the water is as clean and clear as the Atlantic gets. The beach is also the best spot to view the city lights at night before exploring the legendary club scene.

6

## Siesta Key

Siesta Key Beach is perfect for strolling, shell-collecting, or renting a catamaran or kayak from a beach concessionary. This perfect family vacation venue boasts beachside picnic areas and playgrounds, and is also home to candlelit restaurants and cozy rental cottages ideal for a getaway.

7

## Atlantic Beach

Relaxing is easy on Atlantic Beach: soft white sand, brilliant sunshine and azure waters abound. And while Atlantic Beach has heaps of small-town charm, it's also a short drive from Jacksonville, making it convenient for day trippers and vacationers who want a short commute. History buffs can learn about the development of Atlantic Beach and neighboring Jacksonville beaches at the area's Beaches Museum and History Center.

8

## Key West

Paradise is located just off the coast of mainland Florida -- and it's called Key West. Visitors can rent snorkel gear or a 2-person glass-bottomed kayak. Rent a bike to navigate the path that winds beside the Key West shipping channel, around the fort, through a rocky secluded beach and countless picnic spots.

9

## Palm Beach

Palm Beach is a 14-mile-long, half-mile-wide island of wealth and extravagance. Perched next to the Gulf Stream, Palm Beach enjoys the benefit of warm blue water and gentle breezes. The John D. MacArthur State Park has a beautiful beach perfect for families as well as abundant marine life and rare plants to explore.

10

## Captiva Island

Along with Sanibel, Captiva Island shares the distinction of being 1 of Florida's Shell Islands. Captiva is generally the spot to find the larger of the intact shells. Be sure to leave any live shells on the beach or risk breaking the state's strict shelling laws. At sunset, head to Captiva Beach at the end of Captiva Drive to take in a spectacular sunset.



## Sarasota accepts gift of "Unconditional Surrender" statue

The city of Sarasota agreed to accept a pretty big gift Tuesday evening. Commissioners voted 3-2 to accept a resident's offer to buy a 26-foot tall statue and then give it to the city. Under the deal, the statue called "Unconditional

Surrender" will remain on display at its current location on the bayfront.

Reportedly, 88-year-old Jack Curran is the person who made the offer and will pay a half million dollars for the statue before giving it to the city.

Under the deal the statue will remain on the bayfront for at least the next 10 years.

Opponents have argued the sculpture is oversized and out of place along Sarasota's picturesque bayfront.

"Unconditional Surrender" is based on a famous 1945 Life Magazine picture of two people kissing in Times Square following the end of World War II. The statue was on display in Sarasota in 2005 and 2006 before returning in 2008 as part of the city's Season of Sculpture.



## Venice - Shark Tooth Capital

One of the few cities on Florida's west coast without a barrier island, Venice is known as "The Shark's Tooth Capital of the World." The fossil-laden shores of Venice Beach are celebrated annually at Venice's Shark's Tooth Festival in April. Combing the beach for prehistoric sharks' teeth has always been a favorite pastime of visitors and residents here. Success

is practically guaranteed; sharks have lived and died in the Gulf for millions of years, and since they regenerate their teeth, a single shark can produce thousands. The teeth may be black, brown, or gray, depending on the minerals in the soil in which they have been buried. Fossilized bones of other prehistoric animals such as camels, bison and tapirs can sometimes be found washed up on the shore as well.



## Parasailing in Sarasota County

Connect with the sky in a calming, take-it-all-in kind of way with parasailing. Also known as parakiting or parasending, parasailing involves a participant being towed behind a boat while attached to a specially designed, parachute-like canopy called a parasail wing.

Once the harness is fastened, the boat begins quickly moving forward, which carries the parasail wing and rider into the air. Up to three participants can parasail at the same time, spotting dolphins and manatees below. Twelve people can go out on the boat during the excursion and take turns watching their friends ascend. The company's Kevlar towline is smoothly reeled out from a winch, so riders will not feel any uncomfortable pulls or tugs as they float higher into the sky. The captains are all United States Coast Guard-certified and boast years of experience. This is one activity that does not require athletic skills, stamina or competitive streaks.

### Local parasailing resources:

Siesta Key Watersports: 1536 Stickney Point Road, Sarasota, (941) 921-3030

Parasail Siesta: 1250 Stickney Point Road, Sarasota, (941) 346-8200



## Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park

About 10 miles north of Old Naples is the Delnor-Wiggins Pass State Park, one of the best beaches in the city. Covering 166 acres of land, the beach here has great facilities, including plenty of parking, bathrooms, beach rental equipment, food stands and picnic

spots. The water is clear and serene. The park also offers good spots to snorkel (you can rent gear here too) at a reef offshore. You can also get a feel for the rest of the nature the park has in store with a nature tour. Rangers guide you through the area; if you're an avid watcher of Animal Planet, you might try and time your visit

for the loggerhead turtles' nesting season (June through October). You're also bound to see a variety of colorful birds during your tour. There is a small fee per vehicle to get into the park; the price depends on the number of occupants in the car. Bikers and pedestrians also must pay a small price of admission.



## Naples Zoo

Fans of the movie Madagascar will surely recognize one of the Naples Zoo's newest additions, the fosa, in the Petrof's Primate Pavilion exhibit. The exhibit is also home to another Madagascar native, the lemur. As you walk around the grounds, be sure to stop and check out the rare Indochinese tigers and a collection of other interesting mammals like hyenas and leopards. One TripAdvisor user says that although it only took them a

couple hours to see the zoo from top to bottom, they enjoyed their visit.

If you want a more educational experience, take in a live show, where zookeepers show off some of the zoo's animals. You can also watch live feedings. Times for all these events can be found on the zoo's website.

Slightly pricey tickets are discounted for those ages 12 and under. Buy your ticket online before you go to save a few bucks.



## The Baker Museum

The 15 galleries here make up one of the best art collections in the southwest Florida region. The 14-foot-high art-covered entrance gates provide a dramatic entrance to the museum's fantastic pieces. The permanent collection includes some great modern American works, including spectacular glass installations by Dale Chihuly — you'll find yourself marveling at his amazing colorful chandelier and ocean-themed ceiling décor. The museum is located within the Philharmonic Center for the Arts. For more information on prices and hours, visit the website.

## The Edison & Ford Winter Estates

The Edison & Ford Winter Estates is one of the greatest historic treasures within Lee County.

Thomas Alva Edison was born on February 11, 1847, in Milan, Ohio. Edison visited Fort Myers for the first time in March 1885 where he became very interested in the botanical growth offered in southwest Florida. Specifically, Edison was interested in bamboo; carbonizing the bamboo fibers and using them as filaments for his incandescent lightbulb. Within 24 hours Edison purchased 14 acres of property along the Caloosahatchee and built two beautiful winter homes complete with an electric laboratory and botanical gardens. In 1896, Edison became friends with Henry Ford. Ford would visit during the winters and in 1916, bought his own property next to Edison. Thomas Edison died October 18, 1931 at 84 years old. He is credited



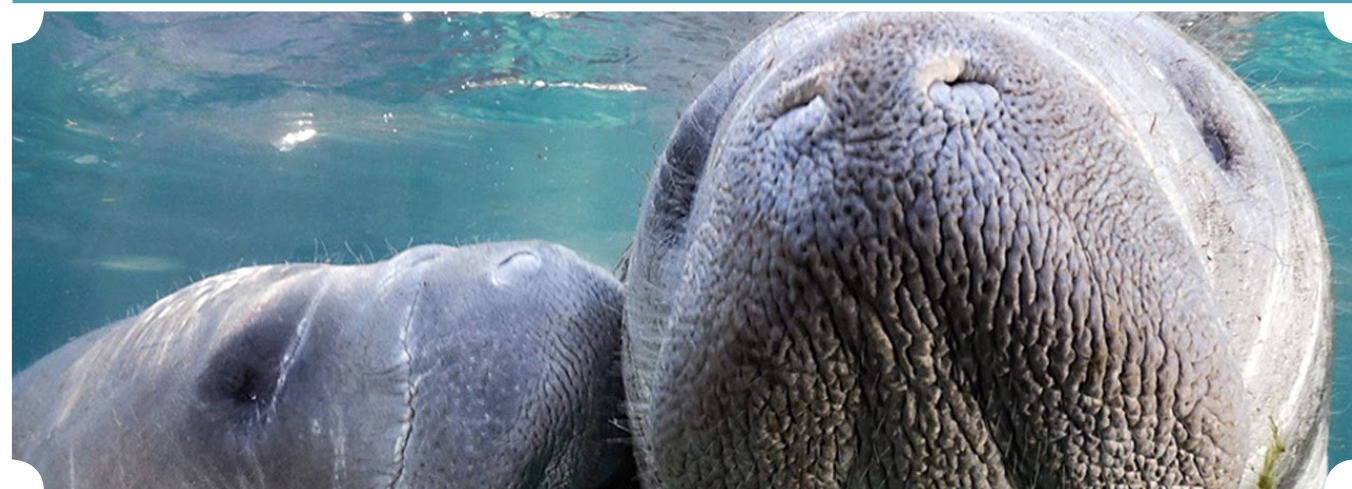
with holding 1,093 patents and holds the record as being the only person in our country ever to have a patent granted every year for sixty-five consecutive years, 1868 to 1933. Visitors to the Edison & Ford Winter Estates in Fort Myers can enjoy 20 acres of historical buildings, beautiful gardens, Edison Botanic Research Lab and the Estates Museum. The newly restored Edison buildings include the Mian House, Guest House and Caretaker's House. The 1929 historic landscape is evident throughout the property including the award

winning Moonlight Garden. The Estates Museum has an impressive collection of inventions, artifacts and special exhibits.

In addition to providing the opportunity to explore the winter retreats of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford, the site offers opportunities for the public to enjoy its park like environment for special events, weddings, corporate functions, meetings, exhibits and ongoing educational programming. Throughout the year, the National Register Historic Site, Florida Historic Landmark and Winner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Restoration Award offers visitors of all ages a chance to step back into "old Florida" and learn more about the world through unique historical, scientific and cultural experiences.

Open Daily 9AM - 5:30PM

2350 McGregor Blvd.  
Fort Myers, Florida 33901  
(239) 334-7419  
edisonfordwinterestates.org



## Manatee Park

It's best to stop by Fort Myer's Manatee Park between November and March. The park is a refuge for Florida Manatees, which are best observed when they gather at the park in the colder months.

There are a handful of observation decks to see the animals up close, but you can also hop into a kayak and paddle out to spot them. You probably won't see Manatees if you visit in summer, but you can enjoy the park's 16 acres in kayaks or on

guided tours.

General admission to the park is free, but there are small fees for parking and kayak rental. After you've had your fill of wildlife, enjoy a picnic lunch on one of the many tables set up around the area.

## Noisy and Colorful, Just Like Key West

Key West has a lot of off-beat charms, but one of my favorites has always been the chickens.

The feral fowl that frequent the streets and alleys of Key West seem like the perfect metaphor for Key West -- historic, colorful, sort of wild, a little noisy and occasionally annoying.

You don't have to work hard to spot Key West chickens -- you hear them crowing and see them strutting everywhere. The colorful roosters and the mother hens followed by lines of tiny chicks weave in and out of traffic and through outdoor cafes all over town. Key West residents call them gypsy chickens.

There have always been chickens in Key West. When people stopped the process of turning live chickens into Sunday dinner many decades ago, some backyard chickens gained their freedom. Other roosters were released when cock-fighting became illegal.

The chicken population grew so large that in 2004, Key West hired a chicken catcher to reduce the number. His work was controversial -- plenty of people cherish the chickens -- and the post was discontinued that year

when he quit.

The chickens may have fans, but they also have detractors. "They crow at all hours," explained Debbie Britten, a volunteer at the Key West Wildlife Center. "They're like some of the people down here -- they don't know when to quit."

To get rid of nuisance chickens, residents can borrow a trap from the wildlife center and bring the captured fowl there. The chickens are trucked to organic farms in Central Florida monthly, where they are prized for their eggs and for their help with pest control.

One sign of how many chickens roam Key West: The wildlife center relocated close to 1,500 last year, Britten said. And they're still everywhere.

If you don't see enough chickens on the streets of Key West, you can visit the Key West Wildlife Center. It's free and you're likely to see hawks, pelicans, osprey, heron and egrets in and around the cages.



## Key West Snorkeling

eliminating the charter boat middleman. Depths rarely exceed 20 feet, and the local sea life includes schools of bait fish, as well as big groupers and tarpon. However, as with most shore snorkeling sites, visibility off Fort Taylor depends heavily on the weather. A windy day will drive stronger waves, which in turn stirs up more sand from the bottom and reduces visibility.

Key West is surrounded by shallow reefs, populated by marine life. Snorkeling is a cheap and easy way to explore this world of underwater wonder that's waiting just off Key West's beaches.

### Fort Taylor State Park

Fort Taylor is one of Key West's shore snorkeling areas. Corals and the attendant tropical sea life are just a few minutes' swim from the beach,

### Sand Key

Sand Key is a small island seven miles from Key West, home to the area's local weather-monitoring station and often visited by snorkeling tour boats. Although the waters

around the reefs can reach depths of 75 feet, the reef tops are relatively shallow and visibility is high. The reef here is decorated by elkhorn and fire corals, while the waters are inhabited by such popular sea creatures as groupers, barracuda and sea turtles.

### Rock Key

Set one mile east of Sand Key, Rock Key is routinely visited by snorkeling tour boats. The reef offshore of Rock Key started as a shipwreck, but over time the ship was so encrusted with coral as to become unidentifiable. Riddled with crevasses, the coral reef has an average depth of 15 feet but reaches down to 35 feet in some

places. It's populated by schools of bait fish and other reef-based sea life, and both small sharks and sea turtles have been seen here.

### Key West Marine Park

Key West Marine Park is another shore snorkeling site. The designated swimming and snorkeling areas are marked by buoys; and it's recommended guests stay within them, as the areas outside the buoys are frequented by boats. Within the area, however, is an underwater wonderland of colorful corals, sponges and sea grass.

# Ten Best Key Lime Pies



The key to happiness might be as simple as a slice of key lime pie. But pairing that sweet treat with a trip to the Keys is the proverbial cherry on top. The topping is actually a bit debated: whipped cream or meringue? As is the crust: graham cracker or pastry? Oh, and the color: yellow for Keys denizens, neon green for nonislanders. Because key lime pie originated in the Keys -- although key limes no longer grow there (thanks, hurricanes!) -- nearly every eatery, shack, and shop at seemingly every mile marker claims to sell “the best” and “the original.” Let’s not get tangled in that web of origin. Instead, here’s a simple countdown our ten favorite slices. Pucker up!

## 1. Kermit’s Key West Key Lime Shoppe

Kermit’s has two locations in Key West, so you are never far away from a fantastic slice and baker Kermit Carpenter. He can greet you with a pie, fake you out with a fake pie thrown in your face, or find other ways to lure you in. However, all of that is just the whipped cream on top. When it comes to the pie itself, it truly is the best. It’s tart and

rich, uses real key limes (not the Persian variety), and the graham cracker crust on the bottom is tops. But when he freezes it, puts it on a stick, and dips it in dark Belgian chocolate, you’ll fall in love.

## 2. Ma’s Fish Camp

In Islamorada you’ll find the most charming place. You can call it simply Ma’s. It is as comforting as home, and the homemade key lime pie (\$5) is not to be missed. The graham cracker crust has some crunch, the filling is tangy, and each slice is topped with a mountain of sweet meringue. It is a real treat at Mile Marker 81.5.

## 3. Pepe’s Café

Pepe’s has a sign boasting it’s the oldest eating house in Key West, and this we actually believe! It was established in 1909, and of all the handmade desserts, the key lime pie is the most notable. It’s nice and tart, with a crunchy graham crust and plenty of whipped cream. The charm of this joint adds to the sweetness of this pie.

## 4. Fish House

Everyone has their special Keys traditions. However, for many Miamians a stop at Fish House is

a necessity. As you make your way into Key Largo, the most delicious matecumbe-style yellowtail, a giant cocktail, and a delicious slice of key lime pie (\$5.99) always beckon. The meringue is slightly browned and features those perfect curls.

## 5. Midway Café & Coffee Bar

For many years it was Manny and Isa’s key lime pie that was the ultimate. Their stand closed, but you can still get their pies -- along with a tasty latte -- at Midway Café in Islamorada. The pie comes frozen, so you can buy a whole one or a thawed-out slice. It may not look pretty, but it is absolutely delicious. The filling can’t be beat. And while this one uses a regular pie crust instead of graham cracker, it actually works better on this particular pie -- it’s flaky and buttery.

## 6. Blue Heaven

The most over-the-top slice comes from Blue Heaven near the Bahama Village of Key West. Some say meringue is part of the original key lime pie, but this one is some next-level stuff. The meringue is full of body and height, like overteased and overhairsprayed hair in the

’80s. It is amazing the first couple of hours and then tends to fall flat. Make sure you get a fresh slice, and it is a real slice of heaven. The cool vibe outside with live reggae music just adds to the experience.

## 7. Mrs. Mac’s Kitchen

Since the ’70s, Mrs. Mac’s has been delivering the goods with an amazing key lime pie and other treats like the key lime freeze. The pie packs creamy, cold, tangy, and sweet between a homemade graham cracker crust and dollops of whipped cream.

## 8. Hogfish Bar & Grill

Just before Key West is one of the coolest, locals-only kind of spots. Hogfish Bar & Grill is located on Stock Island, and you would certainly know about it if you know a local or have a friend in the know. The place is like an enormous tiki hut with a full bar, great seafood, and heavenly slices of key lime pie.

## 9. Hobo’s Café

Hobos may not conjure up images of luxurious and decadent desserts, but Hobo’s Café in Key Largo will make you change your mind. Real key limes are used in the fillings, a crisp graham cracker crust lies on the bottom, and it’s decorated with just the right amount of whipped cream on top of each slice (\$4.50). Sometimes the slices come with a green candy foot or sandal candy or a lime wedge on top. It’s the ultimate Hobo stamp of approval.

## 10. Key Lime Pie Factory

This shop, which opened only a few years ago, has \$5 slices that are rich and creamy like cheesecake. It is located in the heart of tourist central. It stocks a seemingly endless supply of all things key lime -- from extracts to cookies to slices on a stick dipped in chocolate.

# What is a Conch?



When people speak of the Key West Conch, they may be referring to the large sea snail that lives in the depths of the Gulf of Mexico surrounding the Florida Keys. Most often the term refers to Key West natives—the first settlers and the long-time residents of Key West. Americans loyal to the British crown after the war, Tories, were not very popular, so they fled the southern states to the next British colony, the Bahamas. Unfortunately, the British Parliament started taxing the Bahamians on their food just like they taxed Bostonians on their tea. The Bahamians said they’d rather eat conch than pay taxes and that is just what they did. They came up with 27 different ways to eat this animal.

Throughout the years, many came to know and use the term Conch to describe the locals, and those who made the island their home were proud to be nicknamed Key West Conchs. “To this day if you are born in Key West you are a conch. If you are born elsewhere but live here seven years you become a fresh water conch.”

The story continues when in April of 1982, the city of Key West declared itself the Conch Republic. This historic event was an act of protest against the United States Border Patrol when a blockade was set up on US Highway 1, just north

of the entrance into the Florida Keys. Visitors and residents were stopped, asked for identification and forced to prove their American citizenship. An uproar ensued—how could the United States shut-off the only land route into the Keys? Key West tourism suffered and as such the economy in the Keys began to decline.

Key West Mayor Dennis Wardlow and several determined Key Conchs went to Federal court in Miami to seek an injunction to stop the federal blockade. When their plea was denied, the Mayor told TV reporters that the following day the Florida Keys would secede from the Union. The next day, as promised, Mayor Wardlow stood in Mallory Square and led the Conch Republic Rebellion which lasted approximately one minute and was followed by a surrender to the US Navy Admiral in Key West.

Although these events took place years ago, the name Conch Republic stuck and those who live in the Florida Keys officially hold dual citizenship—they are American Citizens and Conchs!

Today, visitors to Key West are likely to meet an assortment of interesting Conchs out and around town - and if you’re in the mood for even more adventures, stop by a local watering hole for a refreshing cocktail and a smoldering bowl of authentic Key West Conch chowder.

# Key West

## No Name Pub

No Name Pub, which calls itself "A Nice Place If You Can Find It," is a few minutes off U.S. 1 in Big Pine Key in the Florida Keys, about 30 miles north of Key West. From the outside, it looks like an old wooden cottage turned into a bar and restaurant. On the inside, however, every surface is covered with thousands of fluttering dollar bills. Most are decorated — people's names and initials, messages, doodles. Today, No Name Pub is filled with families and tourists as well as Keys regulars. The menu includes pizzas, local seafood, pub food such as nachos, chili and chowder, and sandwiches.

Beverages include a variety of beers, including No Name Pub Amber on tap. It's located in the middle of Keys deer habitat, so there is also a chance to spot these miniature deer, an endangered species found only here, along the way.



## Glazed Donuts

Part of the experience of being in Key West is taking it slow. There's no better way to do that than taking your time to enjoy a fresh roasted cup of coffee while savoring unique, handmade donuts. Glazed Donuts uses its geography as inspiration for flavors, as key lime and pina colada donuts are often featured.



## Boondocks Grille & Draft House & Miniature Golf

Everyone has to play at least one round of mini-golf when vacationing in Florida. When you're done, check out the playful menu at Boondocks, featuring fun items like crab-covered soft pretzels, seafood-stuffed mushrooms and crab-infused mac and cheese.



## Blue Heaven

The Florida Keys are an eccentric place, so the absolute must-see restaurant should reflect that nature. Blue Heaven's ambiance is full of art, tropical trees and its unofficial mascots: chickens and cats roam the restaurant. The menu is Caribbean-inspired and features items such as jerk chicken and Red Stripe deglazed shrimp.



## iFLY INDOOR SKYDIVING



**EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF FLIGHT**  
**Call 1-800-SKYFUN1**

Reservations are **STRONGLY** recommended  
**Safe and fun for ALL ages!**



[orlando.iFLYworld.com](http://orlando.iFLYworld.com)

"I COME HERE TO FIND MYSELF. IT IS SO EASY TO GET LOST IN THE WORLD."  
 JOHN BURROUGHS

**BOK TOWER GARDENS**  
 NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

GARDENS + SINGING TOWER + MANSION  
 PRESERVE CAFE + GIFT SHOP + PLANT SHOP  
[WWW.BOKTOWERGARDENS.ORG](http://WWW.BOKTOWERGARDENS.ORG)  
 1151 TOWER BLVD - LAKE WALES, FL - 863.676.1408

**FAMILY-FRIENDLY HOTEL AND WATER RESORT**

Visit us online at [www.cocokeyorlando.com](http://www.cocokeyorlando.com) and enter corporate code: OVG for our great value packages.  
 For reservations and information call 407-351-2626

**Coco Key WATER RESORT**  
 HOTEL & WATER PARK | ORLANDO  
 We make kids happy.

# ALWAYS EXPLORING

Feel what it's like to launch into space. Stand nose to nose with the Space Shuttle Atlantis<sup>SM</sup>. See a rocket launch. Meet an astronaut. Touch the moon — literally. Only at Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex.

**SEE WHERE THE JOURNEY BEGAN. SEE WHERE IT LEADS.**

**Kennedy Space Center VISITOR COMPLEX**

JUST ONE SMALL STEP FROM ORLANDO | [TOURKSC.COM](http://TOURKSC.COM) | 877.236.8849

Florida's Foodie Stops

# 2015 Events

# 2015 Events

February						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
					Florida State Fair in Tampa	
						Mardi Gras at Universal Studios
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Florida State Fair in Tampa			Florida State Fair in Tampa		Florida State Fair in Tampa	
						Praise Wave Christian Music Festival at SeaWorld Orlando
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios			Mardi Gras at Universal Studios		Mardi Gras at Universal Studios	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios					Silver Spurs Rodeo in Kissimmee	
						Praise Wave Christian Music Festival at SeaWorld Orlando
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios			Mardi Gras at Universal Studios		Mardi Gras at Universal Studios	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Daytona 500					Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City	
						Praise Wave Christian Music Festival at SeaWorld Orlando
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios			Mardi Gras at Universal Studios		Mardi Gras at Universal Studios	

March						
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City		Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City			Florida Strawberry Festival in Plant City	
					Weeki Wachee Swamp Fest	
						Carnaval Miami
			EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Lake Buena Vista			
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios		Mardi Gras at Universal Studios			Mardi Gras at Universal Studios	
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Carnaval Miami		Carnaval Miami		Carnaval Miami		Carnaval Miami
EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Lake Buena Vista			EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Lake Buena Vista			
Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios		Mardi Gras at Universal Studios			Mardi Gras at Universal Studios	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios						
EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Lake Buena Vista			EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Lake Buena Vista			
Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios		Mardi Gras at Universal Studios			Mardi Gras at Universal Studios	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Lake Buena Vista			EPCOT International Flower & Garden Festival in Lake Buena Vista			
Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		Busch Gardens Food & Wine Festival in Tampa		
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios		Mardi Gras at Universal Studios			Mardi Gras at Universal Studios	
29	30	31				
International Flower & Garden Festival through May 17, 2015						
Busch Gardens Food and Wine Festival through April 26, 2015						
Mardi Gras at Universal Studios through April 18, 2015						



# NORMAN LOVE CONFECTIONS

## 2015 Valentine's Collection

*Berry Fierce*



*Savage Spice*

*Wild Fire*



*Passion Orange*



*Cool Congo*

*Peanut Butter  
Purr*



*Caramel Banana  
Bite*

*Sweet Stampede*



*Dark Cherry  
Charge*



*Zebra High Heel Shoe –  
Only \$35.00!*



*Rum Rampage*



*24 piece Heart Box –  
Only \$50.00!*

Stop in at one of our locations to try our other great chocolates!

11380 Lindbergh Blvd  
Fort Myers FL 33913  
239-561-7215

3747 Tamiami Trail N.  
Naples FL 34103  
239-687-7215

10801 Corkscrew Rd  
Suite S-516  
Estero, FL 33928  
239-672-8787

[www.normanloveconfections.com](http://www.normanloveconfections.com)