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## Fort lauderdale airport to miami beach

Visit Fort Lauderdale today, and it’s hard to believe the yacht-laced, mansion-lined “Venice of America” was once a global spring break destination, complete with wet T-shirt contests. Indeed, billions in economic development have gone into erasing the Where the Boys Are vibe, restructuring Fort Lauderdale as an unfussy yet veritable alternative to neighboring Miami. Today’s Fort Lauderdale flourishes with wide beaches, exquisite waterfront homes, updated hotels, ocean-to-table restaurants, and yes, kitschy dive bars that locals still love. Here, our guide to the perfect weekend in a completely revamped Fort Lauderdale.The beachfront Ritz-Carlton Fort Lauderdale. CHECKING INThere’s no question: You have to stay on the beach in Fort Lauderdale, and there are plenty of options (with more to come in 2018 when the Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences Fort Lauderdale debuts).We recommend The Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale for its nautical design—the tiered, 24-story hotel channels the look and feel of a glossy Art Deco ocean liner, inside and out—and ubiquitous floor-to-ceiling windows, intended to showcase the city’s ocean blues. A seventh-floor, ocean-view pool deck with heated infinity pool and private cabanas may make you forget about the beach just below, and the Club Lounge spans the width of an entire floor; you can watch the sunrise over the ocean and sunset over the Intracoastal, champagne in hand.Alternatively, the W Fort Lauderdale is fresh from a \$55 million facelift in December. The hotel’s two most iconic venues have been redone—the Wet Deck with its “see through” swimming pool and the nightlife-friendly “Living Room” lobby—as well as the 430 guestrooms and suites.DAY ONE: SAIL AWAYAfter check-in and a welcome cocktail at your hotel, see why Fort Lauderdale is the so-called “yachting capital of the world.” Hop on the Water Taxi—the “Beach Place (Beach)” stop is a five-minute walk from the W and Ritz-Carlton—and cruise a portion of the 300-plus miles of inland waterways that lend to the city’s Venice moniker. Multimillion-dollar homes line the finger isles with water toys docked out back, representing a microcosm of Fort Lauderdale’s 50,000-plus yachts. Head down the New River to the “Stranahan House” stop, where you’ll catch a glimpse of the historic 1901 trading post-cum-residence of Fort Lauderdale founder Frank Stranahan. From there, wander down Las Olas Boulevard, the heart and soul of Fort Lauderdale, known for its restaurants, shopping, art galleries, and people-watching.How to choose from the 75-odd stores and galleries? We always stop by New River Fine Art, a gallery that’s frequently commissioned to decorate top yachts in the industry, and plan a meal at one of the boulevard’s two-dozen original restaurants. Luigi’s Coal Oven Pizza is a low-key affair with bragworthy pizza napoletana margherita—so authentic, toppings aren’t allowed (and so good, you won’t miss them). Sweet Nectar does al fresco dining and beach-conscious shared plates, charcoal grilled, with some pretty amazing craft cocktails. Try the tequila-forward Deez Smoked Pineapples with smoke charcoaled pineapple syrup and ancho chili. Nestled along the tip of Florida’s peninsula, Miami is a city surrounded by saltwater, where one white sandy stretch of beach seamlessly blends into the next. It’s not hard to find a beach—just head east, or, better yet, cross over one of the causeways leading to “islands” like South Beach or Key Biscayne. Narrowing down the best beaches in Miami is another story, since it’s such a personal decision; some beaches are more secluded while others are more public or even nude-friendly. The Best Beaches in Miami To help point you in the right direction, here are nine of the best beaches in Miami, catering to everyone from families to travelers with pets in tow. [viator\_tour destination=“662” type=“3-mod”] South Pointe Park Trip Advisor South Beach is synonymous with Miami, but the official beach only stretches from South Pointe Park to Collins Park on 21st and 22nd Streets, right across from the Bass Museum of Art. For that Instagram-worthy shot, post up at South Pointe Park, where you’ll come across South Beach’s iconic, pastel-coated lifeguard stands. Take in 360-degree ocean views from the renovated pier, or take the kids to play at the mini water park. Pup in tow? This spot is pet-friendly and features a dog park nearby. Surfside Beach TripAdvisor For a calm, family-friendly atmosphere, one of the best beaches in Miami lies north of the North Shore Open Space Park. Dubbed Miami’s “uptown beachtown,” Surfside is where the likes of Frank Sinatra and Elizabeth Taylor would hide away in the swanky Surf Club, where the Four Seasons recently opened its doors with a luxe oceanfront spa perfect for winter (or summer!) detoxing. A waterfront walking path lines the mile-wide beach town, which is also home to Harding Avenue, a downtown area dotted with smoothie shops like The Carrot and yogurt cafes like Serendipity. Haulover Beach Park TripAdvisor The 1.5-mile Haulover Beach Park constantly ranks one of the best beaches in Miami for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most famous is its stretch of clothing-optional sand between lifeguard stands 12 and 16. The beach is also dog-friendly, with a pup playground between lifeguard towers 2 and 3 from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and a Park Park open from 8:00 a.m. to sunset. The whole family can fly kites on the grassy stretch of park looking out to Biscayne Bay. If you happen to be in town on a Tuesday evening, local food trucks roll up to the Bill Bird Marina, dishing out some of Miami’s best eats. Crandon Park Beach TripAdvisor One of the best beaches in Miami for families, Crandon Park offers everything from volleyball nets to a nature center where you can discover exotic plants and wildlife. This beach is so scenic that it’s constantly used as a backdrop for swimwear ads and movies. Kayak or paddleboard along the coastal hammocks and mangroves, or pause for a picnic under a canopy of live oaks, where you’ll find plenty of pavilions and grills sitting nearby. One of the park’s best-kept secrets: the 200 acres of gardens tucked along the south end in what was once a coconut plantation. Oleta River State Park Beach TripAdvisor Even some locals are unaware that Florida’s largest urban park lies in Sunny Isles Beach. Located on the Oleta River on Biscayne Bay, Oleta River State Park is the perfect place for families and nature lovers to spend the day (or night), with miles of off-road cycling trails for all skill levels and a river prime for kayaking or canoeing. The 1,200-foot sandy beach offers crystal-clear water great for swimming or saltwater fishing, with picnic pavilions available for rent. Want to spend the night? “Camp” in one of the air-conditioned river cabins, complete with covered porches, picnic tables, and a barbecue grill. Lummus Park Beach TripAdvisor If you want to say you’ve really experienced South Beach, head to Lummus Park Beach. It’s one of the most popular beaches in Miami for its central locale in the Art Deco District along Ocean Drive, stretching from about 6th to 14th Street. Cyclists and rollerbladers cruise along the paved pathway winding through the palm tree-lined park separating the beach from Ocean Drive. This is the perfect place to get your bearings in South Beach, but don’t expect to have the water all to yourself; supermodels and celebrities flock to this stunning sandy stretch. Hobie Beach/Windsurfer Beach Causeway Over the past 20 years, Hobie Beach (also known as Windsurfer Beach) has become a Miami fave for two reasons: water perfect for windsurfing and a pet-friendly beach with shallow surf sans current. Tucked along the north side of the Rickenbacker Causeway, the overpass leading to Key Biscayne, Hobie Beach offers windsurf rentals and lessons, ranging from two hours to an entire day. Not only is this beach a calm one—both in terms of current as well as crowds—but it’s also one of the best spots to catch the sunset, with sweeping skyline views of the skyscrapers downtown. Historic Virginia Key Beach Park TripAdvisor This beach can be a tough one to find if you don’t know the landmark clues, making it a favorite for locals who want to keep some of their shores a secret. Located past the Rickenbacker Causeway across from the Miami Seaquarium, Historic Virginia Key Beach Park is marked by a wooden sign leading to the mile-long shores of the barrier island. Kids will love riding the mini train and vintage carousel, while nature enthusiasts can explore coastal hammock trails. If you want to hit the water, rent a board and paddle out on Biscayne Bay, where you’ll catch stunning views of Brickell and Downtown Miami. Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park TripAdvisor Home to the oldest standing structure in Miami-Dade County—the historic lighthouse built in 1846—Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park offers a respite from the bustling (and sometimes rowdy) beaches lining Miami’s main shores. Stretching across the southern third of the island of Key Biscayne, this quiet hideaway makes you feel like you’ve jetted off to a piece of paradise in the Caribbean, despite being just a 15-minute drive from South Beach. Take a guided tour of the lighthouse and lighthouse keeper’s cottage (offered twice daily) or cast a line from the seawall along Biscayne Bay, where you’ll find some of the region’s best shoreline fishing. More from SmarterTravel: —Original reporting by Lane Nieset We hand-pick everything we recommend and select items through testing and reviews. Some products are sent to us free of charge with no incentive to offer a favorable review. We offer our unbiased opinions and do not accept compensation to review products. All items are in stock and prices are accurate at the time of publication. If you buy something through our links, we may earn a commission. While most people head to Miami Beach for, well, the beach, there are plenty of activities off the sand as well. In Miami Beach you’ll discover fascinating history from the Al Capone era told through architecture, plus some of the best dining experiences in Florida. Here are nine of the best things to do in Miami Beach that don’t have anything to do with the actual beach. lazylama/ShutterstockOne of the best things to do in Miami Beach is to discover its art deco architecture and history. The Miami Design Preservation League sponsors a 1.5-hour daily walking tour through Miami Beach’s historic district. Explore the history of Miami Beach through its architecture and style while visiting hotels, restaurants, and other buildings relevant to the art deco, Mediterranean revival, and Miami modern eras. TripadvisorYou don’t have to be rich and famous to enjoy some of Miami’s hottest hotels; many five-star and luxury properties offer a day pass for their pools, so you can lounge in style at a fraction of the nightly room rate. Hotels on Miami Beach offering day passes include The National Hotel Miami, Delano South Beach, Mondrian South Beach, and SLS South Beach. MiaZayv/Shutterstock One of the best things to do in Miami Beach is to go for an event. Because of its year-round warm weather, locals and tourists alike flock to the area’s famous annual festivals. Standouts include Art Deco Weekend in January, the Miami International Boat Show in February, Ultra Music Festival and Music Week in March, Gay Pride in April, and Art Basel in December. Anna Krasnopeeva/ShutterstockMiami Beach—which doesn’t even include the popular Wynwood neighborhood, downtown Miami, or the design district—has plenty of museums worth exploring. In the South Beach area you’ll find The Bass (contemporary art), the Art Deco Museum, Wolfsonian-FIU (art and design), the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, and the ArtCenter South Florida. Tripadvisor Miami Beach has a varied culinary scene that ranges from well-known steak houses to incredible Cuban cuisine. Notable dishes include the Giant Chocolate Chunk Cookie from Big Pink, the Chicken ‘n’ Watermelon ‘n’ Waffles from Yardbird, and the famous Key lime pie from Icebox Cafe. And if you’re a seafood lover, one of the best things to do in Miami Beach is try the stone crab claws from Joe’s Stone Crab. Felix Mizionikov/ShutterstockThe Miami Beach Golf Club is a public golf course right in Miami Beach. Formerly an under-utilized course, Bayshore, it’s now regarded as one of the premier golf clubs in South Florida, and is one of the best things to do in Miami Beach outside of the beach. Kamira/ShutterstockStrolling along Lincoln Road is a must-do for anyone in the mood to shop. This pedestrian-friendly promenade is packed with trendy shops, restaurants, and entertainment. You’ll also find boutiques such as The Webster as well as high-end designer stores at the Bal Harbour Shops. With a style all its own and plenty of retail options, you’ll have a hard time leaving Miami Beach without buying something. DisobeyArt/Shutterstock One of the main attractions of Miami Beach is its nightlife, and South Beach and Ocean Drive don’t disappoint. From 24/7 venues to hotel nightclubs, you’ll find endless entertainment spots that stay packed into the wee hours of the night. Notable nightclubs include STORY, Basement (at the Edition Hotel), and LIV (at the Fontainebleau). Or if you want a different type of nightlife, check out the events schedule for the historic Colony Theatre or The Fillmore Miami Beach—both host comedy, music, dance, opera, and films. Ramunas Bruzas/ShutterstockWhile some might consider this the beach, the Miami Beach Boardwalk is still one of the best things to do in Miami Beach—and it’s free. The 40-block path is great for running or walking, and part of the path is bike-friendly as well. A decent portion of the path is covered by palm trees, so you have some relief from the sun. Hop on and off the boardwalk and enjoy the shops, bars, and restaurants along Ocean Drive. Editor’s note: This story was originally published in 2017. It has been updated to reflect the most current information. We hand-pick everything we recommend and select items through testing and reviews. Some products are sent to us free of charge with no incentive to offer a favorable review. We offer our unbiased opinions and do not accept compensation to review products. All items are in stock and prices are accurate at the time of publication. If you buy something through our links, we may earn a commission. Accommodations in Fort Lauderdale range from the extravagant to the comfortable with everything in between. If money is no object, consider staying at one of the best hotels in Fort Lauderdale. The Best Hotels in Fort Lauderdale Casual elegance defines these six Fort Lauderdale hotels where you can bask in luxury and live like a VIP. From oceanview rooms and high-end bedding to celebrity chefs and fun-filled casinos, these Fort Lauderdale luxury hotels deliver the finest stays the city has to offer. Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino TripAdvisor, LLC The 469-suite Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino is one of the best hotels in Fort Lauderdale for entertainment. It offers 469 music-themed rooms and suites, plus a variety of restaurants, an entire live concert and nightlife complex, a sprawling pool and beach club, a full-service spa, and a fitness center. The resort is in the midst of a major expansion that will include a guitar-shaped hotel tower and Bora Bora-style water wonderland. Try your luck at the adjacent casino or catch a live concert or comedy show. Amenities: Egyptian cotton sheets, guitar rental, mood lighting, HD electronics, complimentary Internet access, rock memorabilia and musical accents, spa, and a pool with 182-foot waterslide. Book It: Get prices for the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino and other Fort Lauderdale hotels Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale TripAdvisor, LLC One of the best Fort Lauderdale hotels for luxury and elegance, the Ritz-Carlton Fort Lauderdale is a beachfront property with decor and amenities inspired by the sea. All 147 guest rooms and 47 suites have private balconies with ocean or Intracoastal Waterway views. Wine and dine on seafood at Burlock Coast Seafare and Spirits, or relax in a VIP cabana poolside. Escape to the serenity spa for a relaxing hot stone massage or a “cleansing ceremony” that includes exfoliation and a lymphatic-drainage massage. Amenities: Food and drink throughout the day in the Club Lounge, marble baths, LCD panel TVs, heated infinity pool, and beachside towel and chair service. Book It: Get prices for the Ritz-Carlton, Fort Lauderdale and other Fort Lauderdale hotels Diplomat Beach Resort TripAdvisor, LLC The iconic Diplomat Beach Resort features two beachfront towers connected by a luxurious lobby with numerous dining options, including outlets by celebrity chefs Geoffrey Zakarian and Michael Schulson. A walkway connects to the Intracoastal side where more dining options can be found, along with a marina. The 1,000 rooms and suites are designed in soothing colors with dramatic views from floor-to-ceiling windows. The hotel has a supervised kids’ club and an infinity pool with two cascading waterfalls. You can rent a kayak or paddleboard or arrange a fishing or sailing excursion. Amenities: Poolside and terrace cabanas, some designed by Trina Turk; yoga on the beach; full-service spa; infinity pool; water taxi; two-story fitness center; pillowtop beds; and 10 restaurants. Book It: Get prices for the Diplomat Beach Resort and other Fort Lauderdale hotels Conrad Fort Lauderdale TripAdvisor, LLC This newly opened Fort Lauderdale luxury hotel features 290 suites with kitchens, 50-inch HDTV, marble bathrooms with tubs and separate showers, and private balconies or terraces. Four on-site restaurants offer hand-crafted signature cocktails and Mediterranean fare. The Conrad also recommends curated experiences in one-, three-, and five-hour durations to experience local food, art, culture, and history. Amenities: In-room espresso machines, pillow menu, expansive pool terrace, 24/7 fitness center, full-service spa, and some kitchens with Sub-Zero refrigerators and Wolf touch-screen ovens. Book It: Get prices for the Conrad Fort Lauderdale and other Fort Lauderdale hotels Lago Mar Beach Resort and Club TripAdvisor, LLC This secluded gem encompasses 10 acres in the exclusive Harbor Beach neighborhood. Renowned as one of the best hotels in Fort Lauderdale, Lago Mar has been privately owned and operated for the past 50 years. The 40 rooms and 164 suites feature pillowtop mattresses and private balconies. There’s also a full-service spa on site as well as a 500-foot private beach and a large oceanfront pool. Amenities: Tommy Bahama-inspired furnishings, Keurig coffee makers, 24-hour room service, four tennis courts, children’s playground, watersports, and sightseeing tours. Book It: Get prices for Lago Mar Beach Resort and other Fort Lauderdale hotels The Pillars Hotel TripAdvisor, LLC A member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, the elegant Pillars Hotel is located right on the Intracoastal Waterway within walking distance of the beach. Some of the 18 rooms and suites are located poolside, while others are in the main plantation-style house. The Secret Garden is the hotel’s signature restaurant, serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Amenities: Molton Brown toiletries, complimentary parking, luxury yacht to charter, wine cellar, marble bathrooms, Frette sheets and towels, in-room Nespresso coffee machines, spa bathrobes, and alfresco dining. Book It: Check rates at the Pillars Hotel and other Fort Lauderdale hotels More from SmarterTravel: [viator\_tour destination=“660” type=“3-mod” tours=“26409P8,6273PIRATE,6795P4”] —Original reporting by AnneMarie Mathews We hand-pick everything we recommend and select items through testing and reviews. Some products are sent to us free of charge with no incentive to offer a favorable review. We offer our unbiased opinions and do not accept compensation to review products. All items are in stock and prices are accurate at the time of publication. If you buy something through our links, we may earn a commission.

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