



**TWEET:** @FtMyersSanibel declares #NationalSeashellDay, June 20. Shellebrate with us by searching for # 

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE BEACHES OF FORT MYERS & SANIBEL DECLARES NEW HOLIDAY:  
NATIONAL SEASHELL DAY, JUNE 20**

*World's Best Shelling Destination Kicks Off First Day of Summer with Shellebration*

**LEE COUNTY, FL (May 4, 2016)** – [The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel](#), one of the premier shell collecting destinations in the world, has proclaimed June 20 as the first annual [National Seashell Day](#), inviting beachgoers to celebrate the first day of summer by shell searching. For years, shelling enthusiasts from around the globe have visited the Southwest Florida locale to comb the 50 miles of pristine beaches. Now, travelers will have another reason for a getaway this summer with National Seashell Day deals and offers, allowing visitors to relax, reconnect and be inspired by nature.

When Anne Morrow Lindbergh visited Captiva Island and penned her famous book, “Gift from the Sea,” in 1955, she wrote: “The beach was covered with beautiful shells and I couldn’t let one go by unnoticed. I couldn’t even walk head up looking out to sea, for fear of missing something precious at my feet.” The destination aims to bring that same passion to visitors collecting memories on the beaches, where thousands of intact shells arrive daily due to its ideal geography and gentle waves. Shell seekers throughout the islands and mainland coasts can do the “Sanibel Stoop” and “Captiva Crouch” to search for 400 shell varieties of all shapes, sizes and colors, with the “once in a lifetime” find being the rare junonia shell.

Travelers who visit the destination this summer to celebrate National Seashell Day will have access to special travel deals, seashell attractions and activities. Several **hotels, vacation rentals and even beachfront, vintage RV parks throughout the destination are offering the fourth night free** so guests can take advantage of an extra day of shelling (subject to availability; booking and travel windows vary). Certain properties are also offering add-ons, such as free shelling cruises to beautiful barrier islands, shell guides and bags, free breakfast and more.

When shelling with us this summer, be sure to visit the [Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum](#) on Sanibel Island, the most comprehensive museum in the Western Hemisphere devoted solely to shells and listed in the famous book “1,000 Places To See Before You Die.” The museum is in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of educating the public on shells from around the world, as well as local shells such as kitten’s paws, angel wings, baby’s ears, paper fig and worms, triton’s trumpets, alphabet cones and other exotic-named seashells of the destination. Visitors should also visit the [Shell Factory & Nature Park](#), one of Florida’s original roadside attractions billed as the “world’s largest collection of rare shells, corals, sponges and fossils from the seven seas,” with 5 million shells and shell-related souvenirs.

“As a destination renowned for world-class shelling, we are thrilled to officially declare June 20 as National Seashell Day,” said Tamara Pigott, executive director of the Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau. “Our beautiful shells have long attracted writers, artists and innovators to our beaches for creative inspiration and a connection to nature. National Seashell Day is a celebration of the gifts from the sea that make The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel so special.”

Visit [www.nationalseashellday.com](http://www.nationalseashellday.com) for a full list of properties participating in the fourth night free deal, seashell attractions and special activities that will be happening to celebrate the holiday, including shelling lectures and tours, workshops with local shell artists and more. Be sure to enter the Shell Yeah! Sweepstakes for a chance to win a three-night stay at [Sanibel Inn](#) with a [Captiva Cruises](#) shelling excursion to Cayo Costa. Celebrate the holiday on social media by using #NationalSeashellDay along with a hashtag of the seashell emoji (FtMyersSanibel on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)).

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**Shelling Tips:** *The best shelling locations are on Sanibel Island (Bowman’s Beach and Lighthouse Beach), named the best shelling beach in the U.S., and also in less populated areas such as the uninhabited Cayo Costa, Big Hickory Island and Lovers Key State Park. Peak shelling season in the Fort Myers/Sanibel area is May – September and shelling is best an hour before and after low tide, or high tide after storms. Walk the high tide shell line where the highest waves stop, as this is where groups of shells arrive. Another good spot is the slight drop in the surf line, where gentle waves break before rolling to the beach. It’s prohibited to collect any shell with a living mollusk/creature inside. Beachcombers work to preserve this natural resource and protect live shells from being over-harvested and endangered. Sanibel Island artist and “shell-ebrit” [Pam Rambo](#) offers additional helpful tips, tide and weather information, web cams and up-to-the-minute beach and shelling news on her website [www.iloveshelling.com](http://www.iloveshelling.com).*

**Editor’s note:** *The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in Southwest Florida includes: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, North Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres. For media assistance, visit [www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/media-central/](http://www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/media-central/)*