



ACCOLADES 2019

[The Coolest Secret Location in Each State](#)

Reader's Digest

January 2019

A 100-acre island off the coast of Southwestern Florida, Cabbage Key is named for its indigenous cabbage palm trees. "It's about as cool and off the beaten path as you can get," PR professional Jessica Wells tells Reader's Digest. On this island, you'll find no cars—not even a paved road. There's no way to get there except by boat or seaplane. Whether day-tripping or overnighting, be sure to explore the nature trails and mangroves while taking in the gorgeous sunset over Pine Island Sound, the waterfront vistas, and all the wildlife, including otters, tortoises, dolphins, osprey, and ducks.

[25 Best Florida Gulf Coast Beaches](#)

VacationIdea Magazine

January 2019

Florida offers several hundred miles of pristine beaches, all of which carry their own character and beauty, but there's something extra special about the beaches along the Gulf of Mexico. Beyond the incredibly gorgeous sunsets, many Gulf Coast beaches provide the best fishing, most picturesque nature trails, clearest waters, and softest sand. From the Dry Tortugas to the crook of Northwest Florida, the calm Gulf Coast waters attract all kinds of visitors, including scuba divers, spring breakers, shell hunters, and sunbathers. Finding the right Gulf Coast beach can be tricky, especially with so many magnificent options. From Anna Maria Beach to Venice Beach to Cape San Blas, this list of 25 Florida Gulf Coast Beaches is the place to begin searching for the ideal beach.

[Florida's Gulf Coast: Five Wonderful Island Escapes](#)

Go Nomad

January 2019

Florida is a big, very populous state with lots of tourists, and consequently finding a little quiet peace on the beach gets harder all the time. Yeah, there are over 1,350 miles of coastline, and you would think that's enough to give everybody their own place on the sand. But no, everybody seems to want to pile in the same spot you picked.

[The 9 Best Florida Beach Resorts](#)

February 2019

SmarterTravel

Located on the northern tip of Fort Myers Beach, [Pink Shell Beach Resort](#) boasts sweeping beachfront views. Amenities include a wide range of water activities, including sailing lessons, WaveRunner rentals, parasailing, dolphin adventure tours, and free use of kayaks and paddleboards.

[11 Best Florida Beaches for Families](#)

March 2019

PlanetWare

Just a little south of Venice Beach (and north of Naples) is Fort Myers Beach. Situated on Estero Island just a short drive outside of Fort Myers proper, it's the perfect place to spend a day or longer outdoors, enjoying quality family time on the beach. Unlike many of the top beach resorts in Florida, Fort Myers Beach has managed to retain its small-town beach community feel. In addition to its historic bed-and-breakfasts and classy inns, there are many great family resorts here, too, most with direct beach access and plenty of fun activities to enjoy.

[The 10 Best Beaches Near Fort Myers](#)

April 2019

SmarterTravel

The best beaches in Fort Myers—and in nearby Fort Myers Beach—are some of Florida's most beautiful. The sand is fine, soft, and white, and littered with shells, sand dollars, and driftwood. The public beaches in and near Fort Myers don't open until 7 a.m., close at dusk, and don't allow pets unless otherwise specified.

[Why The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel Is a Photographer's Paradise](#)

April 2019

Smithsonian Magazine

Located off the coast of Southwest Florida, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel's barrier islands are known around the world for their abundant seashells. With each tide and summer storm, a fresh batch of under-the-sea treasures washes ashore, sand dunes rise and fall and new light dances across the sky. The area is constantly reinventing itself, making it a paradise not only for beachcombers, but photographers as well.

[The Best Beaches in Florida](#)

May 2019

Southern Living

Also lovingly referred to as The Sunshine State, Florida is a welcome retreat for beach lovers year-round. With the Atlantic Ocean on one side, and the Gulf of Mexico on the other, the Southern most state in the contiguous U.S. has no shortage of beautiful destinations. Whether you're planning a mother-daughter trip, a weekend away with your girlfriends, or a week-long family vacation, these are the beaches that belong on your Florida bucket list.

[15 Beaches with the Best Seashells in the World](#)

May 2019

Reader's Digest

Named the best shelling spot in North America by *Travel & Leisure* magazine, Sanibel Island—located near Fort Meyers on the Gulf of Mexico—is a true haven for seashell-spotting enthusiasts.

[The Most Beautiful Seaside Towns in America](#)

May 2019

Reader's Digest

Leave the bustling beaches of Fort Myers behind and head south to Sanibel and her sister island, Captiva. These low-key barrier islands are known for their pristine beaches, an abundance of shells—in fact, it's one of the 15 best beaches for seashells around the world—and commitment to preserving the natural beauty and wildlife of the islands.

[8 reasons Southwest Florida is the perfect family vacation destination](#)

June 2019

Matador Network

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel can be summed up in three Ws: warm Gulf waters, white-sand beaches, and wildlife. All three are accessible and family friendly — with bike lanes, beach trams, and boardwalks to boot — and a million and one activities will get you experiencing each.

Kayak through nature preserves, explore the history of the barrier islands, spot dolphins while parasailing over Estero Bay, and take your seashell game to the next level. If you need more reasons, we got 'em below.

[The Best Campsites in the U.S.](#)

June 2019

Outside Online

Perched on the warm Gulf of Mexico south of Tampa, this state park can be reached only by ferry or private boat. But it's worth the effort, as the island is dominated by lush tropical foliage and has nine miles of untouched, sugar-white beaches. Grab a site on the west side of the island (some have hammock posts) and you'll be steps away from the sand and warm-water paddling

Cayo Costa State Park

[The 30 most fun place to live in the U.S.](#)

July 2019

MSN Microsoft News

This popular retirement destination is well-known for its warm weather and gorgeous beaches, but Fort Myers also has many amenities to make free time enjoyable. Scoring sixth for its shopping options, [Fort Myers](#) also has plenty of concert venues throughout the area, ranking No. 8 in that category.

Restaurants and attractions are also proportional to the metro area's relatively small population, with 2,100 restaurants for 700,000 people.

[125 Best Places to Live in the USA](#)

July 2019

U.S. News & World Report

For many years the Southwest Gulf Coast's population had little growth and remained somewhat isolated from the rest of the Sunshine State. That seclusion ended in the early 1900s when inventor Thomas Edison and industrialist Henry Ford built winter homes in Fort Myers. At the start of the 20th century, the City of Palms started to boom. And that growth has continued to this day.

[The Top 10 Home Rental Locations For The July 4th Holiday](#)

July 2019

Forbes

The joint Fort Myers & Cape Coral area is well known to most in the country – both for its extensive beach coast line, as well as for being the spring training location for several MLB teams. The area sees roughly 3 million paid accommodations annually (this figure excludes those that stay with family and relatives), generating \$3.1 billion in tourism revenue. While July 4th generates a lot of traffic for those renting their homes, summer is actually the slowest season here (a high average temperature of 92 in July and August is likely a factor).

[33 Best Weekend Getaways in Florida for Marvelous Memory Making](#)

August 2019

365 Atlanta Traveler

Sanibel Island. Just off the coast of Fort Myers Beach you'll find the islands of Sanibel and Captiva. Bowman's Beach on Sanibel Island is popular, not only for sailing and swimming, but also shell collecting! And if shells are what you're after, you can also head to Blind Pass Beach. The current here is too strong for swimming, but it definitely brings in the shells. Stay here: Sanibel Moorings

[Best Labor Day Weekend Getaways in Every State](#)

August 2019

Reader's Digest

For a quiet getaway, consider sleepy Sanibel Island on the Gulf of Mexico, which is largely untouched by development with no stoplights and buildings taller than a palm tree. Famous for its shelling (though please leave them on the beach), other outdoor activities include kayaking, exploring the Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge, and biking around the island and to its lighthouse. The oceanfront Sundial Beach Resort makes a great home base on the island with beach chairs, pools, games, and water rentals, or visit South Seas Island Resort on nearby Captiva Island to join their Labor Day Yacht Rock Festival with live music.

[9 Secret Beaches Worth Making the Trip For](#)

August 2019

Jetsetter

Bowman's Beach, Florida

Looking for the perfect shell to add to your collection? Bowman's Beach, on Florida's sleepy Sanibel Island, is where to find pristine whelks, cockles, and conches in every size and hue. But there's something here for everyone. Sun worshippers can pull up their towels on powdery swaths of sand, while sailors can make use of the gentle waves and tailwinds. More of an angler? Charter a boat or rent a rod to catch tarpon, grouper, and the photogenic crevalle jack, for your mantel or for dinner.

[Simply the best! GOLF's Top 100 Resorts in North America for 2019-20](#)

September 2019

GOLF

In one of the biggest editorial projects GOLF has ever undertaken, we culled the names of 243 rank-worthy resorts spread across North America. Under the expert guidance of resort industry veterans and our stable of well-heeled travel writers, we placed each resort into at least one of four experience categories: [Luxury](#), [Buddies](#), [General Excellence](#) and [Families](#).

All-Around Excellence- The Gasparilla Inn & Club

[Fort Myers makes 'best cities for early retirement' in United States](#)

October 2019

News-Press

Hey, city of Fort Myers, you're on FIRE.

According to Magnify Money, that is. The personal finance site listed the city among the top 20 for a FIRE retirement — an acronym for "financially independent, retire early."

According to the [Magnify Money article](#), "The FIRE approach to retirement has become popular among many younger, millennial savers in recent years. In a nutshell, practitioners of FIRE aim to retire as early as they can, but only once they have achieved a level of financial independence that would free them from conventional employment. The core strategy for building a nest egg that would allow one to retire early is to adopt extremely frugal saving and spending habits."

9. Fort Myers

[9 Best Off-the Beaten-Path Southern Getaways](#)

October 2019

Jetsetter

From Charleston to Savannah, New Orleans to Nashville, the South's most atmospheric cities draw tourists in droves. But look deeper and you'll find that the region's second cities offer just as much history and sense of place as their more famous siblings—plus they're often less crowded, allowing you to experience their leisurely charms as the locals do. We've rounded up seven off-the-beaten-path Southern getaways that are ripe for discovering. But hurry: They won't stay under-the-radar for long.

[10 Beaches That Are Actually Better in Winter](#)

October 2019

Reader's Digest

Winter on Captiva Island means cloudless days, little-to-no traffic, empty beaches, and serious resort savings. The island is widely considered the shelling capital of the world, and from October to December, tides are at their lowest and the shells are on full display. Once a collection of fishing cottages, Tween Waters Island Resort & Spa offers pastel homes, seaside suites, and guest room accommodations on 13 beachfront acres. Guests **can** spend a day by the pool, on the resort's private beach, or enjoy a complimentary bike rental and explore the island's 25 miles of bike paths.

[The 16 Best U.S. Beach Towns for a Perfect Weekend Getaway](#)

October 2019

Elle Décor

Just north of the beloved Sanibel Island, Captiva Island offers a more quaint respite—crystal clear waters, pastel sunsets, and all. The Gulf of Mexico's warm waters creates a tropical atmosphere, and heading back into mainland is only a short drive away.

[4 Best Beaches in Fort Myers](#)

November 2019

Vacation Idea

Florida is one of the most famous of the states of America. Even on the other side of the world, people instantly recognize the Sunshine State due to its famous attractions like the Walt Disney World Resort and Universal Studios theme parks. Florida is seen as a place to have fun, with a laid-back, friendly vibe found all around the state. And it's not just the man-made attractions that make Florida such a wonderful place to visit; the state is also home to some of the prettiest landscapes and most breathtaking beaches in all of North America. Not only that, but due to its southerly location, Florida also benefits from exceptionally warm and sunny weather.

[13 Best Wedding Venues in Cape Coral](#)

November 2019

Vacation Idea

Cape Coral is a beautiful waterfront city in southwestern Florida, conveniently located near the beautiful beachfront attractions and amenities of Fort Myers. Couples looking to celebrate their weddings in the region can enjoy use of luxurious ballroom and banquet areas at a number of inclusive resorts and hotels, many of which offer honeymoon accommodations for the happy couple on the night following festivities. Historic homes preserve the splendor of the region's pioneer era, while farmstead venues offer modernized barns and farmhouse wedding venues set amidst rolling landscapes.

[Here Are The Best Bookshops In America for Bibliophiles](#)

November 2019

Forbes

There's something about seeing stacks of books everywhere, lining the walls, topping each surface, stored in every nook and cranny, that creates a lived-in feel. **Gene's Books** on Periwinkle Way in Sanibel, Florida, is such a place. The popularity of this gem has created a need for expansion—there's a second building across the street. Both locations have a large selection of Florida-specific titles and visitors can often get discounts or receive free books.

[4 Lesser Known Locations in Florida That are Perfect for Your Beach Vacation](#)

December 2019

YourAmazingPlaces

Cayo Costa has a little bit of something for everyone. Close to the Fort Meyers area, people come here for the low-key vibes and nine miles of tranquility. There are ample seashells around, but one of its attractions is that it's home to manatees, dolphins, and unique birds. There are just a few cabins you can rent among the unspoiled white sand, but you must take a ferry to get to the island. It's a place for nature lovers to see an abundance of animals in their natural habitat.

[Seven Great Destinations for An Affordable Weekend Getaway](#)

December 2019

BudgetTravel

With 250 kinds of shells, 25 miles of bike paths and 15 mile of beaches, Sanibel and Captiva Islands sound like the perfect dreamy escape for a weekend getaway. And if that doesn't sway you, the fact that it's cheaper and closer to home than the Caribbean should do it.

[15 discoveries to make in Florida... beyond Disney World](#)

December 2019

Le Journal de Montreal

Named as one of the most beautiful small coastal towns by the USA Today, Boca Grande has a charming downtown area and white sand beaches (many of which are well secluded) that have nothing to envy to those of Miami. . The place is also known for tarpon fishing.

[24 Places That Keep the Spirit of Old Florida Alive](#)

December 2019

Garden & Gun

The burger at the Cabbage Key Inn and Restaurant is, like umpteen other places, rumored to have inspired Jimmy Buffett's "Cheeseburger in Paradise." Back in the seventies, Buffett drifted to the quiet key and its eponymous establishment by seaplane.

[Unexpected Yoga Vacations Around The World](#)

December 2019

Reebok Blog

What to expect: In Captiva, a tiny slice of paradise with fewer than 600 residents, Yali Zawafy runs [Ambu Yoga](#), offering rest guests a complete menu of yoga classes, meditation sessions, stretching exercises and more. On weekends, guests enjoy beach yoga, where gentle waves and warm breezes heighten the practice. In the high season, you can sign up for standup paddlboard yoga adventures, featuring manatees, dolphins, and shorebirds.