



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What's new from The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) – October on The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel brings long sunny days, happy Halloween hauntings and a hint of cooler temperatures that are right around the corner.

In addition to offering plenty of space for social distancing, great year-round weather, shell-drenched beaches, wildlife and the sparkling Gulf of Mexico, the destination offers lots of new experiences for return guests and first-time visitors. For the latest vacation information, visit FortMyers-Sanibel.com

Don't miss this month

Welcome fall and happy Halloween

October Art Walk, downtown Fort Myers River District

The second annual Great Artist Pumpkin Trail showcases the creative work of local and regional Southwest Florida artists from 6 to 10 p.m. Oct. 1. “The pumpkin that wanted to be a strawberry” by Mariapia Malerba, is just one of more than 40 pumpkins on display at participating downtown businesses. Tricks and treats will be available from area businesses. This free event is a fun night for all ages. Note: “The pumpkin that wanted to be a strawberry” will be on display at Seed and Bean Market through Oct. 31. www.myriverdistrict.com/events/october-art-walk

“Scarecrows in the Park” returns to Lakes Park Fall Festival

The 12th annual “Scarecrows in the Park” returns as part of the popular Lakes Park Fall Festival that runs 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Oct. 15-31. The festival will also include a pumpkin patch, bounce houses, hayrides, the favorite Halloween Express train and concessions. Visitors will enjoy Dr. Seuss characters, Harry Potter, Frankenstein, fairy tale characters and more along the paths in the Children’s Garden. For more information www.lakespark.org
And for details on Lakes Regional Park visit www.leeparks.org

Wicked Walk and a rooftop Halloween party at the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center, downtown Fort Myers

Celebrating the arts and the achievements of student artists, Wicked Walk is a collaborative project between Lee County Public Schools, the Foundation for Lee County Public Schools, and

the Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center. From 5:30 to 9 p.m. Oct. 21, the immersive arts experience tours audiences throughout the venue where Lee County School students explore spooky stories, classic monsters and horror in theater, dance, song and artwork. Check for details and tickets at www.sbdac.com/events

Plan for more Halloween fun from 8 p.m. to midnight Oct. 29. Dress up as your favorite character (there is a prize for the best) and make plans to be at the rooftop Halloween party with music and dancing. www.sbdac.com/halloween-party

“Spooktacular Night at the Estero Park”

Lee County Parks & Recreation is hosting “Spooktacular Night at the Estero Park” beginning at 5 p.m. Oct. 30 at Estero Community Park. The event includes a “Trunk or Treat” from 5 to 7 p.m. Children are encouraged to wear costumes and walk from vehicle trunk to trunk to see decorations and collect treats. Awards will be given out for the best decorated trunks/vehicles. “Scoob!” will be the featured Movie in the Park at 7:15 p.m. For details, visit www.leegov.com/parks/centers/estero

Spooky Mollusks and Other Evils of the Deep: A Halloween webinar special

Celebrate Halloween in genuine vampire-seeking fashion with Dr. José H. Leal, Ph.D., science director and curator at Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum on Sanibel Island, Oct. 20. Leal will unmask the shocking lifestyles of ghastly and bloodcurdling mollusks. Get acquainted with vampire squid and snails, clams that live entombed for life, grave-robbing and corpse-eating snails, parasitic micro mollusks addicted to blood and other harrowing creatures of the molluscan universe. www.shellmuseum.org/lecture-series

Halloween in the historic settlement of Koreshan State Park, Estero

Bring the family and celebrate Halloween in the historic settlement of Koreshan State Park, from noon to 5 p.m. Oct. 20 Local businesses will offer treats and game, street food, arts and crafts and more. <https://friendsofkoreshan.org>

WonderWeen at Wonder Gardens, Bonita Springs

There will be plenty of treats and surprises from 10 a.m. to noon Oct. 31. Children can explore the lushly landscaped botanical gardens and interact with more than 300 rescued, rehabilitated and non-releasable birds and reptiles while visiting “Gator Sweet Tooth” trick or treat stations throughout the gardens offered by area businesses. Also; a scavenger hunt and tic-tac-toe, a pumpkin toss and an educational boneyard with fossils will be offered. Costumes are optional but encouraged. Check for details at wondergardens.org

Also happening in October

Latino History outside guided tour at Mound House, Fort Myers Beach in October

For all ages, at 2 p.m. Oct. 5, 12, 19 and 26. This is perfect for Florida history buffs. Learn about the Latino fishing village, known as a rancho, that existed on the shell mound between the ancient Calusa and Anglo-Pioneer eras. Explore the site’s archaeology and history through unearthed clues about this multicultural society. Details and reservations at www.moundhouse.net

35th Annual Cape Coral Oktoberfest, Oct. 22-24, 29-31

Presented by the German American Club, this lively event includes nonstop German music and entertainment, three stages, two dance floors, food, sit-down dinners, carnival area for kids, crafts, vendors and exhibitors. Check schedule for details and hours.

www.capecoraloktoberfest.com

Travel writer completes Accessible Travel Guide to Fort Myers

Wheelchair Travel's John Morris, travel writer and advocate for individuals with disabilities, visited Lee County in June and researched the area for his guide: Fort Myers Wheelchair Accessible Travel. He writes: "Using this guide to wheelchair accessible travel in Fort Myers, you will be prepared to properly vacation in Florida's most impressive Gulf Coast Destination."

In the new guide, he includes details on airport accessibility, attractions and sight, public transportation, wheelchair taxis and sidewalk accessibility. There is a lot of information for us to share with friends and family who might find it useful in planning a visit to our area. Check it out at <https://wheelchairtravel.org/fort-myers>

Coming attractions

Murals commemorate McCollum Hall's colorful past

As Dunbar's historic **McCollum Hall** heads toward preservation, local artists have been working to commemorate the building's colorful past with vibrant outdoor murals depicting its days hosting big-name performers of the "Chitlin' Circuit" back in the 1940s '50s. Besides recalling performances by Black musical greats, such as Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, the murals pay homage to Dunbar community traditions, including the Easter Sunday parade and heated sidewalk checker matches. The Fort Myers Mural Society oversees the project, which engages a number of local artists as the 12-mural series nears completion. Check details at www.fortmyersmuralsociety.com

To learn more about Dunbar Cultural Landmarks, download the free Florida Stories app and follow the route to learn about historic places in the Dunbar community. The tour follows the route to narrated cultural stops. <https://floridastories.oncell.com/en/fort-myers-dunbar-community-207854.html>

Wonder Gardens plans Otter Grotto

Wonder Gardens in Bonita Springs is launching the Robert & Deborah Blain Otter Grotto. The \$250,000 otter exhibit will feature a clear acrylic tunnel and a play-cave for children to explore, while otters play and swim around guests. Clear viewing domes will allow children and adults to interact with the otters through the cave walls. The cave will be wheelchair accessible. Current plans call for an early January 2022 opening.

Wonder Gardens, opened in 1936 as an Old Florida roadside attraction on Old 41 and was a popular stop for travelers making their way from Tampa to Miami. Now, 85 years later, it welcomes about 75,000 visitors annually. www.wondergardens.org

Topgolf to add Fort Myers location

Topgolf plans to bring its technology-enabled entertainment experience to Fort Myers in late

2021. The seventh venue to be located in Florida, the complex will include 70 climate-controlled hitting bays, full-service restaurant and bars, 200 HDTV's, rooftop terrace, private event space and meeting rooms. www.topgolf.com/us/fort-myers

Have fun and save with Fort Myers Sun Saver Passport

Sunshine is just one of many reasons to visit Southwest Florida. Use your mobile phone to access exclusive deals and savings on experiences and find yourself exploring everything under the sun here.

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel has launched a free mobile savings passport. Users have access to exclusive deals on attractions, restaurants and experiences throughout the destination.

To participate:

- Sign up at <https://explore.fortmyers-sanibel.com>
- The passport will be delivered to your mobile phone via text
- Redeem it on your mobile phone at participating businesses
- Visit the website for a complete list of attractions, restaurants and experiences.

Airport news

New air service at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

Air Transat: Montreal (YUL), weekly, seasonal service starts Dec. 16

Avelo Airlines: New Haven, Conn. (HVN), weekly, year-round service starts Nov. 11

Eurowings Discover: Frankfurt, Germany (FRA), weekly, year-round service starts March 28, 2022

New flights at RSW

Alaska Airlines: Los Angeles (LAX), daily, resumes Nov. 19; Seattle (SEA), daily, resumes Nov. 19

Frontier Airlines: Orlando (MCO), daily, starts Nov. 1

Spirit Airlines: Louisville (SDF), weekly, starts Nov. 17; Manchester, N.H. (MHT), weekly, starts Nov. 17; St. Louis (STL), daily, starts Nov. 17

Sun Country: Duluth, Minn. (DLH), weekly, starts Dec. 17; Green Bay, Wis. (GRB), weekly, starts Dec. 16; Milwaukee (MKE), weekly, starts, Dec. 15; Rochester, Minn. (RST), weekly starts Feb. 3, 2022

United Airlines: Los Angeles (LAX), daily, starts Dec. 16; San Francisco (SFO), daily, starts Dec. 16

News from Punta Gorda Airport (PGD)

Allegiant plans nonstop routes to Punta Gorda Airport (PGD) from Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP) beginning Oct. 8. Springfield-Branson, Mo. (SGF) service begins Nov. 19.

Festivals and annual events

CROW Taste of the Islands, Sanibel Island

Taste passport available now through Nov. 30

www.crowclinic.org

Roar Offshore, Fort Myers Beach

Oct. 7-9

www.roaroffshore.com

35th Annual Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

Oct. 22-24, 29-31

www.capecoraloktoberfest.com

Lee County Alliance of the Arts 4th Annual Arts on Tap, Fort Myers

Nov. 12-13

www.artinlee.org/ontap

The Laboratory Theater of Florida, Gulf Shore Shakespeare Festival

Nov. 12-14

www.laboratorytheaterflorida.com

River District Holidays, downtown Fort Myers

Nov. 20-Dec. 31

www.myriverdistrict.com

46th Annual Holiday Nights at the Edison and Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers

Nov. 26-Jan. 2, 2022

www.edisonfordwinterestates.org

Luminary 2021, Sanibel and Captiva islands

Dec. 3 on Sanibel Island and Dec. 4 on Captiva Island

www.sanibel-captiva.org

Gift from the Sea Community Celebration, Captiva Island

Dec. 5, 2021

Annual Port Boca Grande Lighthouse and Museum Lighting, Boca Grande

December 2021

www.barrierislandparkssociety.org

37th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral

Jan. 8-9, 2022

www.capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

Feb. 4-6, 2022

www.artfestfortmyers.com

Annual Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 19, 2022

www.edisonfestival.org

Spring training 2022

Boston Red Sox Spring training

17 home games

Begins Feb. 25 with exhibition game against Northeastern University

Ends March 29

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

www.mlb.com/redsox

Minnesota Twins spring training

16 home games

Begins Feb. 26 against Toronto Blue Jays

Ends March 29

CenturyLink Sports Complex, Fort Myers

www.mlb.com/twins

Annual Sanibel Shell Show, Sanibel Island

March 3, 2022

www.sanibelshellclub.com

85th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, Sanibel Island

March 3-5, 2022

www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net/p/84/shell-festival

23rd Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers

March 5, 2022

www.readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March 10-12, 2022

www.echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-festival

64th Annual Fort Myers Beach Shrimp Festival, Fort Myers Beach

March 12, 2022

www.fortmyersbeach.org/events/fort-myers-beach-shrimp-festival

12th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May 18-22, 2022

www.fortmyersfilmfestival.com

10th Annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament, Sanibel Island

May 13, 2022

www.dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1

24th Annual MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival, Pine Island

July 2022

<http://mangomaniafl.net>

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 16-25, 2022

IslandHopperFest.com

Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival

September 2022

www.fmbfilmfest.com

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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 and Lehigh Acres. For media assistance, visit www.fortmyers-sanibel.com/media-central