

# A touch of Floribbean

Famed for its natural and unnatural attractions, the state of Florida has long been known as the Sunshine State because of its year-round balmy temperatures. The large peninsula is therefore the ideal place to berth your yacht, typically at one of the many world-class marinas in the chic cities of Miami, Fort Lauderdale and Palm Beach.

BY MARINA MICI



Fort Lauderdale's popular Bahia Mar Yachting Center on the beachfront



# Miami

Miami has been loved for its beaches and Art Deco style since the 1930s, but the city has come a long way since then. Today it is an icon of style. Miami's vibrant atmosphere, dazzling blue waters, fine sandy beaches, and abundance of cultural variation never seem to fade. Traditionally regarded by East Coast yachtsmen as a convenient place to winter their yachts, the season has now expanded and many now keep their yachts in Florida all year round. With average yearly temperatures hovering around 25°C and these generally complemented by a gentle sea breeze, it's a nice place to be at any time.

## Sport and leisure

From sunbathing on Miami Beach to all manner of watersports, or even playing golf, Miami is all about the outdoors. Take an early morning stroll or join the joggers and soak up the view of South Beach's pastel-colored hotels as you head along the beach towards the breakwater.

Take the cycle paths and boardwalks along the coast to the tip of Key Biscayne and look back at Miami's sparkling skyline. For even better city views, if you have the energy, climb the 118 steps to the top of the 1820s-built Cape Florida Lighthouse. The vantage point is a great contrast to the metropolitan madness of the city center.

For those in need of a break from the city and a genuine change of scene (and scenery), two hours' drive inland is the Everglades National Park. Best explored by airboat, you can quickly navigate the long grass for an up-close view of flamingos, alligators and some 360 bird species.

## Culture

Fast becoming one of the major art capitals in the world, Miami hosts the annual Art Basel Miami Beach early in December, an event that has firmly secured the city with its reputation on the contemporary art scene as the place to be seen. Creative inspiration can also be found on the streets—the entire city in fact becomes one huge sculpture. The Art Deco district is packed with restored Art Deco hotels, whilst the galleries in the design district provide the perfect way to spend a relaxing afternoon browsing a wide variety of different art.

Art Basel Miami Beach takes place 1-4 December 2011. For further information contact: Show Manager Maureen Bruckmayr +41 58 206 27 51, or visit [www.artbaselmiamibeach.com](http://www.artbaselmiamibeach.com).



Enjoy an evening cocktail at The Royal

## Dining

Miami's gourmet scene is heavily influenced by Cuban and Caribbean cuisine. For a leisurely breakfast, head to The Royal at The Raleigh Hotel for eggs over easy. The Royal is also perfect for early evening cocktails. *Contact: General Manager Marcelo Mezquia, +1 305 612 1173.*

Later, take a leisurely lunch on the terrace at the Front Porch Café, Ocean Drive (+1 305 531 8300). A Miami Beach institution, the Ocean Drive location of the News Café is perfectly placed for a spot of people watching (+1 305 538 6397).

For oysters and champagne, The Setai is the perfect place for an aperitif before moving on to Casa Tua for gourmet Italian cuisine. Set in a Mediterranean-style villa, the simple pasta sauces are some of the best this side of the Amalfi Coast. *Contact: Restaurant Manager Chris Crocetti, +1 305 673 1010, [ccrocetti@casatualifestyle.com](mailto:ccrocetti@casatualifestyle.com).*

A visit to Miami would not be complete without a visit to Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant (+1 305 673 0365) for a seafood feast. World-famous, the establishment has been open since 1913 and is so popular you may not get a table for more than an hour, but it is always worth the wait.



Contemporary dining at The Setai

## After dark

Trendy South Beach is where the it-crowd of Miami mingles with visiting VIPs and party until the early hours. It's also where you will find locals and international visitors brushing shoulders with A-list celebrities. Once you combat the fearsome door policy, the night is all yours. From Set (Thursdays) and Mokai (Tuesdays) to The Setai (Friday night cocktail parties should not be missed), The Forge, Sky Bar at The Shore Club, there are many hot clubs, bars and restaurants to try out. A few tips for first-timers to Miami's club scene: arrive before 11pm, and ask your captain or call ahead to gain guest list access.

The Design District is coming into its own catering for locals and VIPs alike. Here you will find swanky bars and lounges with vast cocktail menus that mimic the New York City Meatpacking District vibe. Those looking for something alternative should head to the Pawn Shop Lounge. This downtown Miami club is housed in a former pawn shop and is still adorned with antiques and retro pieces, including a classic yellow school bus which doubles as a cocktail lounge.

## General information

Perfectly located on the exit from the Port of Miami, Miami Beach Marina has berths for yachts over 30 meters, and 40 berths for yachts of 25-30 meters of side



The Setai on South Beach has three swimming pools, each maintained at a different temperature

tie dockage. The marina has 40 berths for yachts of 25-30 meters and 13 berths for yachts of up to 76 meters.  
*Contact: Marina Manager on VHF Hail on 16, Working Channel 67/68, +1 305 673 6000, info@miamibeachmarina.com.*

Recommended

Time your visit right and arrive as one of the city’s festivals kicks off. The following are just a selection of the events that are must-sees on the calendar:  
**Sleepless Nights** runs across Miami Beach on the same night the clocks change, with art installations, fashion shows, street performers and a moonlit cinema. This year the festival runs from 6pm to 6am on 5-6 November; [www.sleeplessnight.org](http://www.sleeplessnight.org).

**The South Beach Food & Wine Festival** sees the whole city taken over by food and drink aficionados. From mixologists shaking up cocktails to open-air gastronomy competitions, Miami’s top restaurants are all involved in this four-day culinary extravaganza. The next festival runs from 23-26 February 2012; [www.sobewineandfoodfest.com](http://www.sobewineandfoodfest.com).

**Carnaval Miami** is the largest party in the Hispanic calendar. Latin music and jazz is played across numerous venues, and sporting events and culinary competitions take place throughout the festival. Everything is finished off with the Calle Ocho Festival in Little Havana on the last weekend. The event takes place every February and early March; [www.carnavalmiami.com](http://www.carnavalmiami.com).



Miami’s Bayside Marketplace

**Art Deco Weekend** has been running for 35 years and brings together parades, live bands, lectures and movies, all with a 1930s slant. The next weekend scheduled is 13-15 January 2012; [www.artdecoweekend.com](http://www.artdecoweekend.com).

Fort Lauderdale

Fort Lauderdale has long been infamous for its annual spring break parties, but today the city is drawing a more affluent crowd attracted to its 300 miles of navigable waterways and vibrant culture ashore.

Sport and leisure

Well-known for its miles and miles of continuous beach, Fort Lauderdale has something for everyone. Head to Fort Lauderdale Beach for a swim or, if you feel brave enough, join the locals for a game of

volleyball. Take a hike along the self-guided nature trails at Lloyd Beach, whose natural setting is a sharp contrast with the city of Fort Lauderdale.

Stroll along the Hollywood Beach Boardwalk, which was modeled after Atlantic City’s legendary boardwalk and is a carnival of young hipsters, cyclists and skaters, amid rows of souvenir shops and arcades. The Hollywood Beach version stretches for three miles and includes a crushed-shell running path. The beach itself is wide and clean and a great spot to escape the hustle and bustle of the boardwalk.

Fort Lauderdale’s climate lends itself perfectly to playing golf. With more than 50 courses in the vicinity, among the best is the 18-hole course at Emerald Hills.  
*Contact: Head Golf Professional Larry Blanchard, +1 954 961 4000, lblanchard@theclubatmeraldhills.com.*

The best diving in the area is off Pompano Beach. The wreck of the *Mercedes* ran aground in Palm Beach and, after being salvaged, was later sunk for divers off Pompano Beach. Today the artificial reef abounds with spiny lobsters and barracudas, and an abundance of colorful sponges.

Dining

Fort Lauderdale has never been particularly known for its culinary scene, but the luxury hotels have introduced a number of fine restaurants. Las Olas Boulevard has a variety of restaurants ranging from fusion to Caribbean.



The Bahia Mar Yachting Center in Fort Lauderdale has over 250 slips





The Palm Harbor Marina is well located for Palm Beach's shopping areas and restaurants

### After dark

As Fort Lauderdale slowly sheds its reputation as a college party town, the bars and nightclubs are slowly attracting a savvier clientele. Las Olas Boulevard has vastly improved its party scene and, though it cannot compete with Miami's South Beach, it also lacks the South Beach attitude and so is a welcome respite for those looking for a casual night out.

### General information

Located on the beachfront, the Bahia Mar Yachting Center has over 250 slips including 150 berths for yachts between 25-30 meters and 100 berths for yachts of 30-80 meters. The resort itself has everything on offer from five-star accommodation to tennis, golf, a fitness center, shopping, restaurants and bars. *Contact: Dockmaster Christina Russell, +1 800 755 9558, crussell@luxuryresorts.com.*

### Recommended

If you are visiting between June and July, you might be lucky enough to join the Sea Turtle Awareness Program on Lloyd Beach and witness the hatching of loggerhead sea turtles. *The program begins at 9pm on Wednesday and Friday from mid-May to mid-July, Contact: +1 054 923 2833.*

## Palm Beach

The traditional winter home of American aristocracy, Palm Beach has it all, including beautiful beaches and a great climate. Today it is replete with exclusive golf clubs, bobbing superyachts, and vast mansions with immaculate lawns.

### Sport and leisure

As with most of Florida's coastline cities, golf is a large part of the Palm Beach lifestyle. The area has a number of challenging courses, including the Abacoa Golf Club and the PGA Resort courses. The Ocean Course at the Breakers is the oldest in Florida. Built

by the railroad magnate Henry Flagler in the 1890s, and expanded in 1901 to a full 18 holes, the course has been revamped and is today one of the most exclusive courses in the world.

Beaches in Palm Beach are beautiful, but without a yacht (and a tender), they are difficult to access as private estates and resorts make access from the land difficult. If you are yacht-less then Midtown Beach is an exception, as is Phipps Ocean Park and South Ocean Boulevard.

### Culture

Palm Beach has a wealth of patrons dedicated to the arts and the area boasts an abundance of venues. The Kravis Center for Performing Arts hosts more than 300 performances each year and is the place to go for the best music, dance and theater in Palm Beach. *Contact: Box Office Manager Teresa Cribb, +1 561 832 7469.*

Downtown Palm Beach hosts the Norton Museum of Art, the largest art museum in the state. Here you will find works by Picasso, Renoir and Monet, along with modernist sculptures, and American Pop Art.



Café Boulud at the Brazilian Court Hotel

### Dining

Palm Beach is home to some of Florida's most exclusive restaurants. Dress is slightly formal, even at the trendier downtown West Palm Beach venues. There are a number of fine eateries, but those of note include Michelle Bernstein's restaurant at The Omphoy Ocean Resort, which serves a meaty Mediterranean menu with floor-to-ceiling views over the Atlantic Ocean (+1 561 540 6440).

Chef Daniel Boulud chose Palm Beach as the location for his first restaurant outside New York: Café Boulud at the recently renovated Brazilian Court hotel. Fountains and lush courtyards complement the menu's tropical flair.

*Contact: General Manager Laurent Chevalier, +1 561 655 6060, lchevalier@danielnyc.com.*

The Palm Beach Grill is always busy, mainly thanks to its no-jacket policy and its bar menu which serves everything from cocktails to wines from all over the world.

### After dark

Palm Beach is better known for its society balls and private parties than its nightlife, which is more likely to revolve around the better known hotels such as The Breakers, Ritz-Carlton, Chesterfield and Four Seasons. No visit to Palm Beach is complete without a visit to the classic Breakers Hotel for a cocktail at the Seafood Bar. Leopard Lounge at the Chesterfield Hotel attracts visitors, who end the night clubbing at 251 Palm Beach.

West Palm Beach has been revitalized and Clematis Street at its center has become a hot spot for the West Palm glitterati and stylish Europeans. Current favorite jaunts include Blue Martini for its signature cocktail menu, Sky 309, an open-air, rooftop club, and Off the Hookah, a day and night club with daybeds and lounge areas where you can enjoy flavored hookah pipes.

### General information

Conveniently located south of the Lake Worth inlet, the new Palm Harbor Marina is the cornerstone of a multi-million dollar downtown waterfront revitalization project, which includes promenades, an amphitheater, waterfront pavilion and gardens. Everything in Palm Beach is just a short stroll away, including the nightlife of Clematis Street, Worth Avenue for shopping, and the classic Palm Beach hotels including The Breakers. Two hundred slips exist for yachts from 15 to 75 meters. Amenities include concierge services, a yacht club, fitness facilities, and an Epicurean center. *Contact: Marina Manager John Smundin, +1 561 655 4757, john@palmharbor-marina.com.*

### Recommended

Interior design aficionados should flock to the 40-plus antiques shops on South Dixie Highway. ■