

GULF COAST VISITOR GUIDE

Welcome to the sun-drenched, subtropical paradise that the University of South Florida calls home, from the white sands and blue-green waters of St. Petersburg and Sarasota beaches to the thriving metropolitan community of Tampa. Here's the first thing you should know about the Tampa Bay area: There's a lot to do along this stretch of the Gulf of Mexico. We'll help you figure out where to start.

The primary stomping grounds of the Bulls are comprised of four counties (Sarasota, Manatee, Pinellas and Hillsborough) and metro areas including Sarasota, Tampa and St. Petersburg. Students come to learn, but these destinations are also ideal for anybody who loves the arts, great food, sports and outdoor adventures.

The region's quirkiness (we have an annual pirate festival) is perfectly suited to the eclectic landscape, everything from barrier islands to mangrove tunnels and Class II river rapids. Our range of activities is just as diverse. We've compiled some of our favorites so you can plan an unforgettable Florida adventure.

DIVE INTO NATURE

Kayak through mangrove tunnels at the Weedon Island Preserve in Pinellas County. Sunbathe on the sugar-white sands of Siesta Key or Clearwater Beach (regulars on many best-beaches lists), or get up close and personal with a manatee at the Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium. If you're feeling really adventurous, there are many places to encounter an alligator in the wild. And be sure to say hi to the resident dolphins at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, featured in the "Dolphin Tale" movies. Our beautiful, sunny climate is a great attraction, too — making us one of the nation's most desirable vacation destinations.

GULF COAST BEACHES

WATER ACTIVITIES

ECO TOURISM

WEEDON ISLAND PRESERVE

THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM

CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

EXPLORE THE ARTS

The Tampa Bay area offers much more than stunning sunsets viewed from beaches. We're recognized as a top arts destination. Explore the museums and performing arts venues nestled along Tampa's picturesque Riverwalk; visit nearby St. Petersburg, home to the largest U.S. collection of Salvador Dalí's works and the Mahaffey Theater, a primary venue of The Florida Orchestra; then check out The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota.

TAMPA MUSEUM OF ART

STRAZ CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

THE DALI MUSEUM

MAHAFFEY THEATER

THE RINGLING

VAN WEZEL PERFORMING ARTS HALL

GET YOUR GAME ON

The Bulls' turf is ideal for outdoor sports ranging from golf to deep-sea fishing, but it's more than just a great place to work on your game. You also can cheer on one of our professional sports teams. We've got it all: pro hockey and football in Tampa, pro soccer and baseball in St. Petersburg, 15 pro teams competing in the Gulf Coast Grapefruit league during spring training at ballfields from Sarasota to Tampa and beyond, and plenty of college action in a variety of school colors.

TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING

TAMPA BAY BUCCANEERS

TAMPA BAY RAYS

TAMPA BAY ROWDIES

GRAPEFRUIT LEAGUE

YUENGLING CENTER

A TASTE OF THE BAYS

With its fresh-caught seafood and countless craft breweries, the region from Sarasota Bay to Tampa Bay is a foodie paradise. Culinary experiences range from the exotic (alligator hush puppies) to the famous (Cuban sandwiches). Our favorite food-oriented destinations include Sparkman Wharf's waterfront eateries; a farmers market located in the heart of downtown Sarasota; and an array of ready-to-eat and take-home food at St. Petersburg's Saturday Morning Market, the largest in the Southeast.

DOWNTOWN TAMPA

FOOD TOUR

CRAFT BREWERIES

SATURDAY MORNING MARKET

SPARKMAN WHARF

SARASOTA WATERFRONT DINING

SARASOTA FARMERS MARKET

BRING THE FAMILY

Whether you're looking for thrills or just want to chill, we've got you covered. Our theme park excursions range from the stomach-dropping roller coasters of Busch Gardens to the waterways and waterslides of Adventure Island. You also can step into the prehistoric past by exploring Dinosaur World, a zany theme park (formerly an alligator farm) featuring hundreds of life-size dinosaur statues. Up for a road trip? Head for LEGOLAND, Walt Disney World or Universal Orlando. With this many attractions so close, your family will never want to leave.

BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA BAY

ADVENTURE ISLAND

DINOSAUR WORLD

LEGOLAND

WALT DISNEY WORLD

UNIVERSAL ORLANDO



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA