



# Destination Guide: Fort Lauderdale



*Top Picks From AAA Travel Editors - Travel information you can trust*

## **AAA Destination Guide: Official AAA maps, travel information and top picks**

AAA Destination Guide: Fort Lauderdale includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

Nearly every enjoyable activity in Fort Lauderdale takes place al fresco and on, in, under or beside water. This might be true of most coastal destinations, but what sets Fort Lauderdale apart is its extensive network of residential waterways—300 miles of rivers, canals and interior arteries—and the sophisticated, casual lifestyle this water culture fosters.

Long a winter headquarters for yachtsmen, Fort Lauderdale boasts more than 42,000 registered pleasure craft, many of which are docked beside handsome, multimillion-dollar mansions. Yachts rival cars as a means of transportation in the self-proclaimed Venice of America, making dock-and-dine bars and restaurants de rigueur. With sightseeing boats, water taxis, luxury charter yachts and even authentic Italian gondolas at their disposal, visitors, too, can navigate the city the way it was meant to be seen.

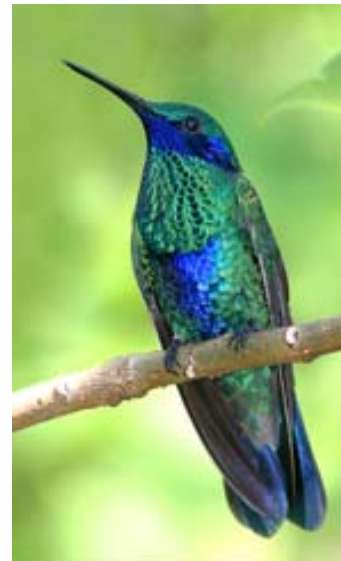
Downtown is a bastion of sophistication, and nowhere is this more evident than Las Olas Boulevard, arguably one of South Florida's most fashionable shopping, dining and people-watching thoroughfares. Las Olas anchors a vibrant cultural district featuring multiple art and entertainment venues and top-notch attractions.

Fort Lauderdale's inimitable élan spills over to its surrounds. There's upscale high-rolling at Hollywood's Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, Thoroughbred racing in Hallandale, haute-couture discount shopping in Sunrise and golfing at its finest on any of 65 area courses. But with award-winning beaches, spectacular offshore dive sites, one of the

world's busiest cruise ports and an explosion of new luxury resort hotels, Greater Fort Lauderdale's 23-mile coastline remains its greatest attraction.

## **Essentials**

Be seen on Las Olas Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale's premier shopping and strolling address. Bistros, sidewalk cafes, one-of-a-kind boutiques, high-end designer shops, bars, nightspots, day spas, cultural centers, house museums and a landscaped riverside walkway line this landscaped two-and-a-half-mile avenue stretching from downtown to the ocean.

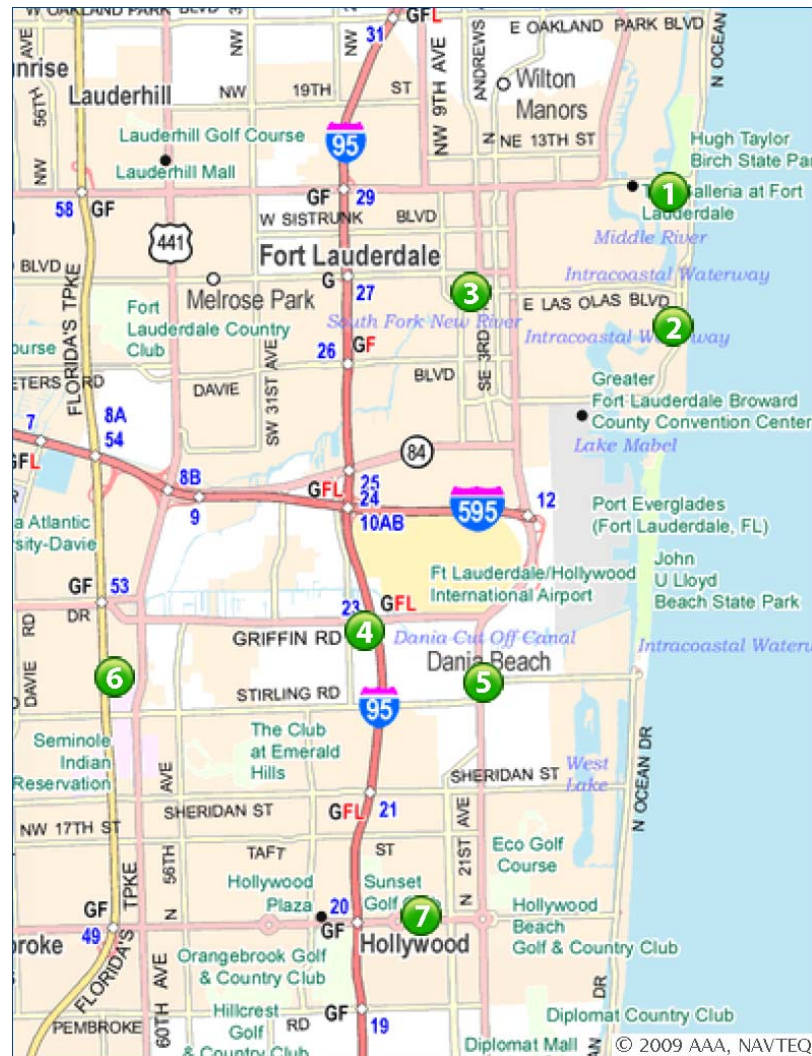


Peek into the private domain of artists Frederic and Evelyn Bartlett at [Bonnet House Museum & Gardens](#), a AAA GEM attraction. Artwork collected and created by the couple illuminates this house museum.

Stand still long enough in [Butterfly World](#), a AAA GEM attraction in Coconut Creek, and a monarch may light on your head. Thousands of colorful butterflies flutter freely in this botanical wonderland filled with birds, insects and lovely plants.

Drift through the Venice of America on a vintage Italian gondola piloted by a singing gondolier, or float past lovely homes along the Intracoastal Waterway aboard boats operated by [Jungle Queen Riverboat Cruise](#) or [Riverfront Cruises](#).

## Essentials Map



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com

## Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](http://AAA.com):



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

### 1. Bonnet House Museum & Gardens

900 N Birch Rd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304  
Phone: (954) 563-5393



### 2. Jungle Queen Riverboat Cruise

801 Seabreeze Blvd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316  
Phone: (954) 462-5596

### 3. Riverfront Cruises

300 SW Second Ave  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
Phone: (954) 463-3440



### 4. IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum

300 Gulf Stream Way  
Dania Beach, FL 33004  
Phone: (954) 924-4370



### 5. Dania Beach

### 6. Seminole Hard Rock Casino

1 Seminole Way  
Hollywood, FL 33314  
Phone: (954) 327-7625

### 7. Hollywood

Purchase an all-day Water Taxi pass and navigate the city's liquid streets with unlimited on-off privileges at 11 stops. You'll always be just minutes from hotels, restaurants, the beach and fabulous Las Olas Boulevard.

Skim across a river of grass and encounter exotic animals on south Florida's wild frontier courtesy of [Everglades Holiday Park Airboat Tours](#) or [Sawgrass Recreation Park](#).

Reel in a boatload of useful information about game fishing while honing your angling skills on simulators at the [IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum](#), a AAA GEM attraction in [Dania Beach](#). Later, charter a fishing boat and head for the deep.

Dive! Dive! Dive! There are at least 20 designated dive sites just off the coast, some of which can be reached from the beach. Fort Lauderdale is renowned for its natural reefs and planted wrecks.

Try your luck at Texas Hold'em or hundreds of gaming machines at Seminole Hard Rock Casino in Hollywood. Shop, dine, dance, schmooze, rock out and party on at Hard Rock's Seminole Paradise, next to the hotel. Day or night, this entertainment complex pulses with activity.

And when the party's over, stretch out on pristine sand at Dania Beach, Deerfield Beach, Fort Lauderdale Beach, Hollywood or Pompano Beach, some of south Florida's certified Blue Wave beaches, so designated for cleanliness.

### Essentials Map



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### Essentials Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](http://AAA.com);



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

#### 8. Butterfly World

3600 W Sample Rd  
Coconut Creek, FL 33073  
Phone: (954) 977-4400



#### 10. Sawgrass Recreation Park

1006 US 27N  
Weston, FL 33327  
Phone: (954) 389-0202

#### 11. Pompano Beach

#### 9. Everglades Holiday Park Airboat Tours

21940 Griffin Rd  
Weston, FL 33332  
Phone: (800) 226-2244

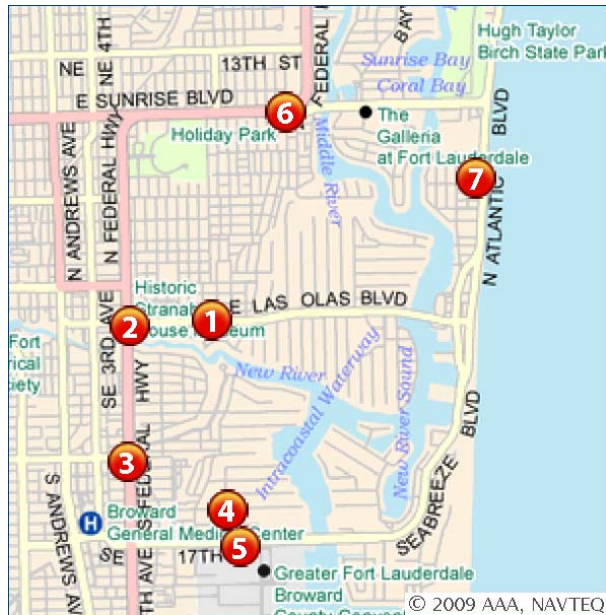
## Restaurants

With boutiques, galleries, bistros, martini and wine bars, and sidewalk cafes, Las Olas Boulevard is a destination unto itself. Regardless of your budget, the Floridian Restaurant is the ideal place to launch a Las Olas Boulevard shopping expedition—or end one, for that matter. Open 24/7, this classic diner has been serving generous helpings of breakfast, lunch and dinner in the same location since 1937. No frills, just good food at reasonable prices.

British colonial décor and formal service set a refined tone in The Grill Room on Las Olas in the elegant Riverside Hotel. Cuisine includes appetizers such as escargot and oysters Rockefeller; Caesar salad prepared tableside; entrees centered on aged USDA prime beef, chateaubriand, Chilean sea bass or duck confit; and international wine selections.

You'll find casual fare and lots of laidback locals at this threesome just south of Las Olas Boulevard: At Tom Jenkins Bar-B-Q, the sauce makes the meal. Down-home accompaniments such as cornbread muffins and sweet potato pie further explain the long lines at this self-serve barbecue

## Restaurants Map



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joint, where smoky aromas penetrate the air and the rustic décor meets expectations. Pizza lovers can load up on their favorite toppings or order a classic Italian dish with a glass of wine at [Bravo Ristorante](#). Patrons of [Bimini Boatyard Bar & Grill](#) enjoy large portions of seafood, steak, pasta, pizza and salads in a relaxed waterfront atmosphere.


Lively [Canyon Southwest Café](#), north of Las Olas, specializes in spicy southwestern food, a large selection of tequila drinks and a dessert list not to be overlooked. Try the signature prickly pear margarita.


Sip specialty 'tinis while savoring an ocean view from the sleek, contemporary dining room of [Trina Restaurant & Lounge](#) in [The Atlantic Hotel](#). The flavors of the Mediterranean influence such signature dishes as Atlantic paella, Florida grouper with almond couscous, truffled potato ravioli and Moroccan lamb flat bread. Artfully prepared desserts excite the eye as well as the palate. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, this


**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);**

**AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**

**1. Floridian Restaurant**   
1410 E Las Olas Blvd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
Phone: (954) 463-4041

**2. The Grill Room on Las Olas**   
620 E Las Olas Blvd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
Phone: (954) 467-2555

**3. Tom Jenkins Bar-B-Q**   
1236 S Federal Hwy  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316  
Phone: (954) 522-5046

**4. Bravo Ristorante**   
1515 SE 17th St Cswy  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316  
Phone: (954) 523-9441

**5. Bimini Boatyard Bar & Grill**   
1555 SE 17th St Cswy  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316  
Phone: (954) 525-7400

**6. Canyon Southwest Cafe**   
1818 E Sunrise Blvd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304  
Phone: (954) 765-1950

**7. Trina Restaurant & Lounge**   
601 N Ft Lauderdale Beach Blvd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304  
Phone: (954) 567-8070

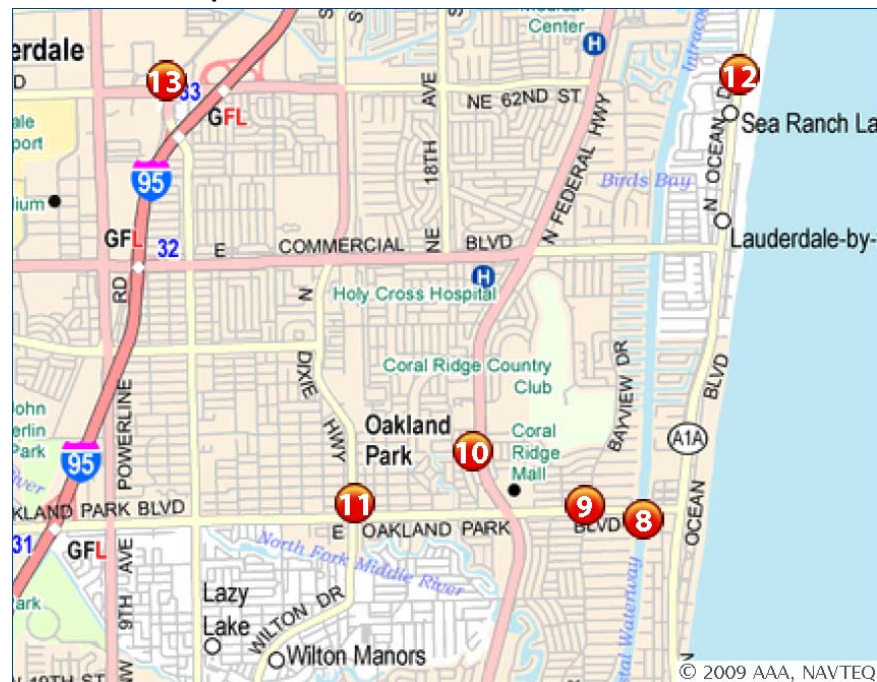
fashionable beachfront restaurant posts a few minor dress code restrictions worth inquiring about.

Patrons arrive at [Shooters Waterfront Cafe USA](#) by car, private boat or water taxi to enjoy indoor and outdoor dining complemented by views of the busy Intracoastal Waterway. The menu offers variety—seafood, beef, poultry and pasta dishes as well as frozen and tropical drinks. Martini and cigar bars also are available at this popular evening gathering place.

Elegant décor, a sophisticated menu and a refined, tuxedo-garbed wait staff transform ordinary Chinese dining into an epicurean event at [Rainbow Palace](#). Duck and shrimp preparations are standouts.

[Mai-Kai Restaurant](#) is a South Florida institution plucked right out of the South Pacific. Foliage, artifacts, sculptures, tiki torches, fire dancers and an outdoor garden create a Polynesian atmosphere, while multiple dining rooms represent various South Seas cultures. Wok, Chinese oven and

## Restaurants Map



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Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);

AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)

**8. Shooters Waterfront**

**Cafe USA**

3033 NE 32nd Ave  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308  
Phone: (954) 566-2855

**9. Rainbow Palace**

2787 E Oakland Park Blvd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33306  
Phone: (954) 565-5652

**10. Mai-Kai Restaurant**

3599 N Federal Hwy  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308  
Phone: (954) 563-3272

**11. By Word of Mouth**

3200 NE 12th Ave  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334  
Phone: (954) 564-3663

**12. Sea Watch on the Ocean**

6002 N Ocean Blvd  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33308  
Phone: (954) 781-2200

**13. Moonlite Diner**

6201 N Andrews Ave  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309  
Phone: (954) 938-1116

duck entrees head up the extensive menu of Cantonese and American cuisine. This is an ideal place to take the family.

If you enjoyed crab cake with Vidalia onion drizzle or pork tenderloin with miso plum sauce last week at [By Word of Mouth](#), you may not find these dishes on your next visit. But you won't be disappointed after the waiter shows you the daily display of creative American cuisine prepared with gourmet flair. The décor is subdued in the intimate dining room.

[Sea Watch on the Ocean](#) specializes in fresh seafood dishes, ocean views and island-casual ambience. Whet your appetite with crab-stuffed artichoke hearts or Bahamian conch chowder, and then try a tempting seafood bouillabaisse or salmon roasted in white wine. Steak and poultry entrees are equally imaginative.

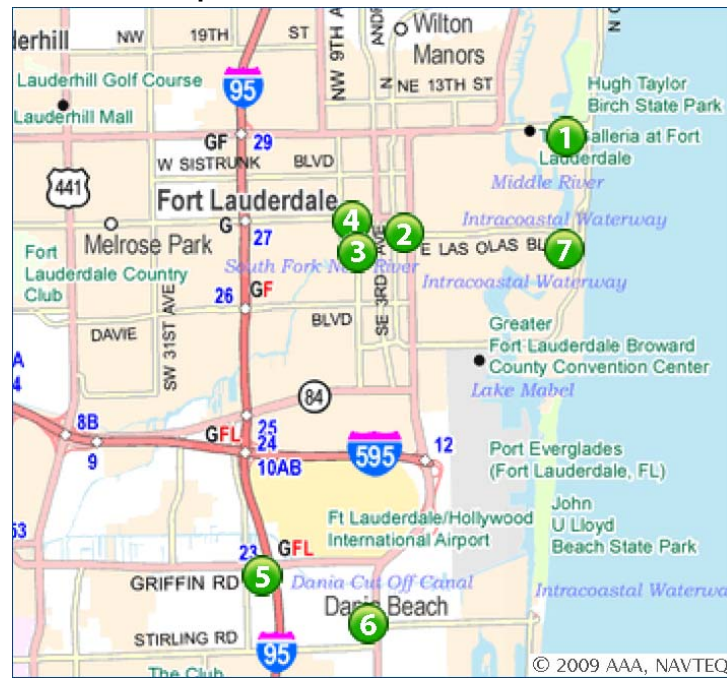
[Moonlite Diner](#) revives the 1950s roadside eatery. A shiny chrome exterior, checkerboard floors, red-and-white-vinyl booths and counter seating on swirling stools remind customers of a bygone era, as do large portions of moderately priced home-style meals—burgers, chili, corned beef hash, meatloaf and “smashed” potatoes. Order a cheeseburger and a shake and relive those rock ‘n’ roll days at Moonlite Diner, open 24 hours a day.

## Attractions

In an area with dozens of attractions and points of interest, you may have trouble deciding where to spend your time. Here are the highlights for this destination, as chosen by AAA editors. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

Whether built by prominent families or by founders whose names are etched on the pages of city history, house museums serve as tangible links to another time while opening a window to the lifestyles and personalities of former occupants. [Bonnet House Museum & Gardens](#), a AAA GEM attraction, illuminates the lives of artists Frederic and Evelyn Bartlett, one of the area's most cultured “wintering” couples. Insulated by 35 lush acres of mangrove jungles, fruit orchards and hardwood

**Attractions Map**



Get maps and turn-by-turn directions using [TripTik Travel Planner on AAA.com](#)



hammocks, the estate can easily be mistaken for a park. Décor in the plantation-style home ranges from classical to whimsical, reflecting the breadth of the Bartlett's tastes and travels.

In sharp contrast is Historic Stranahan House Museum, a pioneer home on the New River. Frank Stranahan operated a ferry and trading post that he later enlarged and converted to the family home. During the settlement period, social and commercial activity centered on Stranahan's. With its Florida vernacular architecture and period furniture, this restored house speaks volumes about frontier life.

Delve into more area history at a complex of early buildings, exhibits and a research facility operated by the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society.

"Captivating" describes the experience at Butterfly World, a AAA GEM attraction in Coconut Creek. Thousands of free-flying butterflies as well

**Attractions Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#):**

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-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

**1. Bonnet House Museum & Gardens**  
 900 N Birch Rd  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304  
 Phone: (954) 563-5393



**2. Historic Stranahan House Museum**  
 335 SE Sixth Ave  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
 Phone: (954) 524-4736



**3. Fort Lauderdale Historical Society**  
 219 SW Second Ave  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
 Phone: (954) 463-4431

**4. Museum of Discovery and Science**  
 401 SW Second St.  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312  
 Phone: (954) 467-6637



**5. IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum**  
 300 Gulf Stream Way  
 Dania Beach, FL 33004  
 Phone: (954) 924-4370



**6. Dania Beach**

**7. International Swimming Hall of Fame**  
 1 Hall of Fame Dr  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316  
 Phone: (954) 462-6536

as lorikeets, hummingbirds and other winged whimsies delight visitors as they stroll through a lush tropical rain forest, a botanical garden abloom with nectar producing plants, a macaw exhibit and an aviary. Visitors can even witness metamorphosis through glass enclosures in the butterfly emerging area.

Flamingo Gardens in Davie is a showcase of Florida's feathered friends, particularly larger types such as flamingos, wading birds and birds of prey. For a true eco-encounter, ride the tram through this 60-acre habitat filled with alligators, otters, bobcats and panthers.

Sure, the Museum of Discovery and Science is a science buff's playground. But anyone who has ever wondered "How'd they do that?" is sure to find answers here. Hands-on exhibits simplify scientific principles while exploring the latest technology and the amazing gizmos it begets. Plan on spending several hours at this AAA GEM attraction, particularly if accompanied by children

Buehler Planetarium & Observatory in Davie will have you gazing skyward. Learn how early explorers used celestial navigation; journey through the Milky Way Galaxy; or follow the cycles of stars, planets and constellations. Then decide: Are we *really* alone?

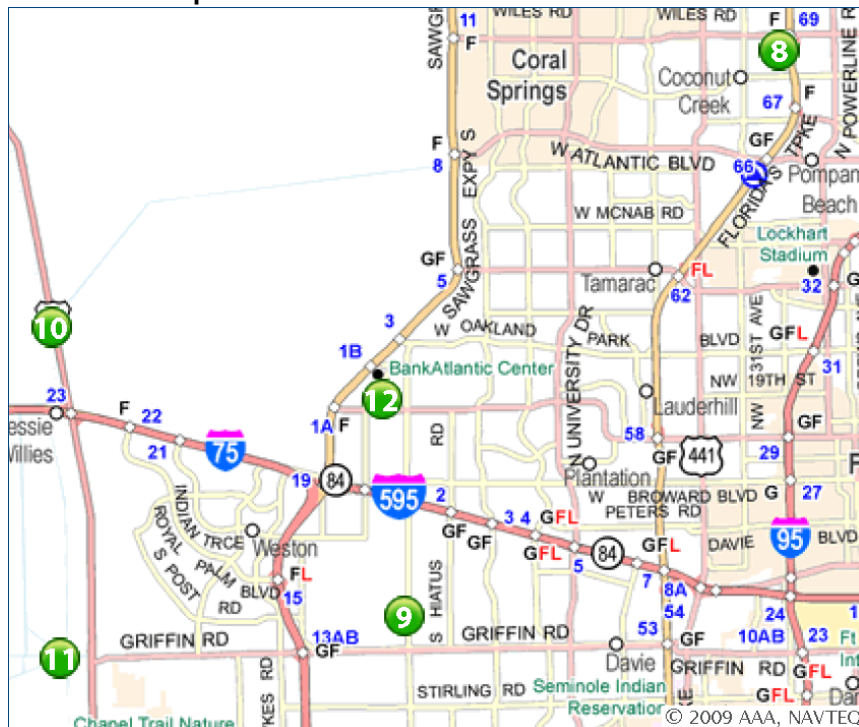
Two museums pay tribute to popular water-related activities. IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame & Museum, a AAA GEM attraction in Dania Beach, is all about game fishing for recreation and fun. Try your luck at reeling in a tarpon using a fishing simulator; find your next great fishing hole with the help of interactive electronic maps; and admire collections of artwork, vintage tackle and mounted fish. International Swimming Hall of Fame immerses visitors in exhibits about everything from the history of swimming to the newest Olympic category, synchronized swimming.

Don't expect to do a few quick laps through exhibit halls; this museum lays claim to the world's largest collection of swimming-related memorabilia.

Speaking of enjoying the great outdoors, exhilarating airboat trips across Florida's Everglades are arranged at Fort Lauderdale's Sawgrass Recreation Park or through Everglades Holiday Park Airboat Tours in Weston.

What does your child want to be when he/she grows up? Interactive stations at Wannado City, a AAA GEM attraction in Sunrise, encourage role playing, self-expression and independent thinking, not to mention spending plenty of "Wonga" funny money.

### Attractions Map



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### Attractions Details - *Get additional information on [AAA.com](#):*



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

#### 8. Butterfly World

3600 W Sample Rd  
Coconut Creek, FL 33073  
Phone: (954) 977-4400



#### 11. Everglades Holiday Park Airboat Tours

21940 Griffin Rd  
Weston, FL 33332  
Phone: (800) 226-2244

#### 9. Flamingo Gardens

3750 S Flamingo Rd  
Davie, FL 33330  
Phone: (954) 473-2955



#### 12. Wannado City

12801 W Sunrise Blvd  
Sunrise, FL 33323  
Phone: (888) 926-6236



#### 10. Sawgrass Recreation Park

1006 US 27N  
Weston, FL 33327  
Phone: (954) 389-0202

## Events

In addition to its many cultural and historic landmarks, this destination hosts a number of outstanding festivals and events that may coincide with your visit. GEMs are “Great Experiences for Members.”

[Las Olas Art Fair](#) is so highly regarded among artists and attendees alike that it occurs in two installments. Upwards of 300 exhibitors set up along Fort Lauderdale’s chic Las Olas Boulevard for each show. The first is in early January, while [Las Olas Art Fair-Part II](#) occurs in early March. Typically, the second fair features artists who did not participate in the first.

As Florida’s mild winter gives way to springtime’s near-perfect weather conditions, the first quarter of the year is a popular time to hold outdoor art festivals, and most area towns have at least one such signature event. In addition to Fort Lauderdale’s big Las Olas affair, the [Deerfield Beach Festival of the Arts](#) in late January and the [Coral Springs Festival of the Arts](#) in mid-March merit your consideration. The [Lauderdale-by-the-Sea Craft Festival](#) also takes place in mid-March.

Once upon a time, a medieval festival opened in southeast Florida. Still going strong after more than 45 years, the [Florida Renaissance Festival](#) brings costumed performers, skilled artisans, battling knights on horseback, a royal court, falcon handlers and much merriment to Deerfield Beach for five weekends starting in late February. The festival is a AAA GEM event.

At the [Pompano Beach Seafood Festival](#) in late April, two rows of tents on the beach form an inviting chow corridor from which festival-goers can sample their favorite seafood creations. There’s plenty of entertainment at stages just off the “foodwalk,” so bring a blanket or chair for seating.

[Fleet Week Port Everglades](#) is a AAA GEM event and Fort Lauderdale’s annual salute to the U.S. military. More than 3,000 sailors converge here in late April and early May for sports events, golf tournaments, civic appearances and celebrity concerts.

Vintage wines from around the world and dishes created by local chefs tempt tasters at the [Las Olas Wine and Food Festival](#), held downtown on Las Olas Boulevard in early May. Tickets for one of the city’s hottest events must be purchased in advance.

Fall brings another round of outdoor cultural fetes. Starting in mid-October and lasting approximately 3 weeks, the [Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival](#) illuminates the best in independent cinema at several locations.

Billed as the world’s largest show of its kind, the [Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show](#) takes place over a five-day period in late October. Watercraft of every size, shape and price along with the latest marine accessories wow enthusiasts at multiple venues, including the convention center and several marinas.

Boating is integral to the south Florida lifestyle, even in winter months. During the Christmas holidays, owners deck their vessels bow to stern with lights and all manner of visual effects for the spectacular [Winterfest Lighted Boat Parade](#), a AAA GEM event viewed along a 10-mile water route.

## Things to Do

### Shopping

In Fort Lauderdale (and, indeed, all of Broward County) you can easily find the usual souvenirs typical of a beachside location—T-shirts, beach towels, sea shells and a multitude of kitschy items. But you can also hunt for antiques, shop for deals at outlet malls, browse flea markets and search through racks of designer duds at high-end retailers.

The crown jewel of Fort Lauderdale’s shopping scene has to be Las Olas Boulevard. This tony thoroughfare, which runs from Andrews Avenue to the beachfront, is an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants, bars, spas and galleries. The tree-lined boulevard, a perfect spot for strolling and



window-shopping, has a charming Mediterranean ambience that seems to invite you to stop for a latte at a sidewalk café and engage in some beautiful people watching. You can expect to find trendy boutiques stocking the latest fashions, galleries displaying one-of-a-kind pieces and restaurants that run the gamut from small bistros to well-known chains. Traffic can be fierce, so park the car (or float in on a water taxi) and head out on foot to explore this Fort Lauderdale gem.



If you're looking for antiques, head south of Fort Lauderdale, just past the airport, to Dania Beach. Downtown along Federal Highway (US 1), just blocks from the Atlantic Ocean, is the city's art and antique district, where you can spend hours checking out a cluster of antique shops and art galleries. Vintage treasures you can expect to find include both American and European antiques, paintings and jewelry.

If your idea of shopping, however, tends to the more contemporary, a visit to Sawgrass Mills is an absolute must. For sheer size and selection this outlet mall at W. Sunrise Boulevard and Flamingo Road in Sunrise can't be beat. The sprawling complex has more than 350 name-brand outlets and stores (both indoors and open-air), two food courts, seven restaurants (including Cheesecake Factory, Legal Sea Foods, P.F. Chang's and Rainforest Café) and entertainment options including a 24-screen cinema; GameWorks; and Wannado City, a children's theme park where kids can pretend to be any occupation they choose. You can shop to your heart's content at such well-known retail icons as Ann Taylor Factory Store, Banana Republic Factory Store, Gap Outlet, JCPenney Outlet Store, J. Crew, Levis/Dockers, Nike Factory Store, Nordstrom Rack, Rockport Outlet Store and Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th. Be forewarned, though; as huge as the parking lot is, empty spots can sometimes be difficult to find.

The Colonnade Outlets, the upscale component of Sawgrass Mills, is a collection of luxury outlets adjacent to the huge main mall. The outdoor promenade tempts chic shoppers with marked-down items at Barneys New York Outlet, Burberry Factory Outlet, Coach Factory, Crate and Barrel Outlet, Hugo Boss Factory Store, Michael Kors, Neiman Marcus Last Call Clearance Center and Stuart Weitzman.

Of course, more traditional malls also dot the Fort Lauderdale landscape. Prominent examples include The Galleria Mall, just west of the Intracoastal Waterway on E. Sunrise Boulevard, where Dillard's, Macy's and Neiman Marcus guarantee fashionable selections. If carrying all those shopping bags becomes tiring, indulge in some pampering at the mall's Elizabeth Arden Red Door Spa.

Westfield Broward Shopping Center, in nearby Plantation at W. Broward Boulevard and S. University Drive, has more than 120 stores to entice shoppers, including anchor stores Dillard's, JCPenney, Macy's and Sears. You can find the same anchors at Coral Square Mall, west of Fort Lauderdale at Atlantic Boulevard and University Drive in Coral Springs and south of the city at Pembroke Lakes Mall on Pines Boulevard in Pembroke Pines. If your destination is the northern suburbs, you can get your mall fix at Pompano Citi Centre in Pompano Beach at Federal Highway and Copans Road, where JCPenney, Macy's and Sears are fixtures.

Even if a day at the beach is on your agenda, you can still fit in some shopping. In addition to casual restaurants and bars, The Gallery at Beach Place, across SR A1A from the ocean, a couple of blocks north of Las Olas Boulevard, has a good mix of shops with many geared to beachwear and other beach accessories and necessities.

If you truly love to hunt for bargains, point your car north toward Pompano Beach and Festival Flea Market Mall, a huge, indoor complex that covers a full block east of Florida's Turnpike on Sample Road. Aisle after aisle of booths—more than 500 in all—are chockablock with merchandise of all types. You can find merchants specializing in sunglasses, shoes, watches, toys, clothing, perfume, purses, jewelry,

cosmetics, luggage and home furnishings. You name it and it's probably there. If you're hungry, a food court has everything from knishes to a McDonald's, or you can check out the mall's farmer's market for some fresh munchies. Bargains abound; just remember to wear comfortable shoes.

Swap Shop appears more like a mammoth, multi-faceted garage sale than your typical flea market, but if you look hard enough you might uncover a hidden treasure or two. It's hard to miss this landmark; huge bright yellow flags mark its presence on Sunrise Boulevard between Florida's Turnpike and I-95. Swap Shop has been around in one form or another since 1963 with booths, both indoors and outdoors; a farmer's market; video games; carnival rides; food vendors; and a 14-screen drive-in theater. The place is kitschy (even somewhat gritty), and you never know what you'll find for sale.

Should you decide to test your luck at Seminole Hard Rock Casino in Hollywood, spare a few coins for Seminole Paradise, a collection of shops in an outdoor marketplace adjacent to the casino. Funky, hip clothing, shoes and beachwear predominate.

Visiting some of the area's top points of interest during any vacation is practically *de rigueur*. What most folks don't realize, however, is that the gift shops at these attractions frequently offer splendid shopping opportunities—and not just the requisite key chains, sweatshirts and post cards but fine apparel, posters, jewelry, books and *objets d'art*. Don't leave Bonnet House Museum & Gardens, Butterfly World, Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale or Museum of Discovery and Science without checking out their gift shops and seeing what's available.

## Nightlife

Fort Lauderdale became spring break headquarters following the popularity of the 1960 film "Where the Boys Are," and the Elbo Room, featured in the film, became party central. Though the spring breakers have moved on to other sun-soaked beach locales, the Elbo Room, at 241 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., remains as popular as ever. The

raucous bar is a local institution, a landmark that is home to a seemingly never-ending party. This unpretentious double-decked hangout on the corner of Las Olas Boulevard and the ocean is still packed with sun-baked revelers—bare-chested guys and girls in bikinis—soaking up cheap beer while enjoying music and million-dollar ocean views. Be forewarned, though: The bar accepts cash only. Phone (954) 463-4615.

In addition to the Elbo Room, the strip of oceanfront SR A1A between Las Olas and Sunrise boulevards has a concentration of souvenir shops, restaurants and more clubs. You can shop, eat and party without moving your car. One such emporium is The Gallery at Beach Place, 17 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd., a multi-level, Mediterranean-inspired shopping center where you can grab a new pair of sunglasses and a bite of lunch, hang around at the beach until the sun sets and return for some casual dining, live music and rum and fruit concoctions at LuLu's Bait Shack, or have a frosty daiquiri or a margarita at Fat Tuesday. Phone LuLu's at (954) 463-7425 and Fat Tuesday at (954) 525-1220.

In the historic Himmarshee Village area of downtown Fort Lauderdale (part of the Riverwalk Arts & Entertainment District) is a nightlife cluster with a variety of options. Tarpon Bend Food & Tackle, in contemporary surroundings at 200 S.W. 2nd St., is known for its happy hour specials, really good munchies and live music; phone (954) 523-3233. Revolution, 200 W. Broward Blvd., is a local favorite where you can find bands and DJs playing high-energy music on both indoor and outdoor stages; phone (954) 727-0950. For hip-hop and rock head to Voodoo Lounge, one of the city's largest nightclubs. DJs spin the latest in this former brewery at 111 S.W. 2nd Ave. as patrons dance the night away indoors and on a large outdoor deck; phone (954) 522-0733. If you'd like to preface your nightlife with a nice meal, try Himmarshee Bar & Grille at 210 S.W. 2nd St. Begin your evening with selections from the upscale restaurant's self-described Contemporary American menu before moving next door to Side Bar, the nightlife side of the establishment. The small dance floor can get crowded, but the drinks, especially the martinis, are highly rated (and the wine selection is primo). Phone (954) 524-1818 for either the grill or bar.

Heading northeast are several nightspots that have a cultural focus. Who would imagine a South African-themed bar, especially in Fort Lauderdale? Well, check out Kalahari Bar, in a neighborhood plaza at 4446 N.E. 20th Ave. An ex-pat couple has created this pub where the walls are covered with South African knickknacks and the televisions are tuned to rugby and soccer matches. Here's your chance to sample a South African brew or cocktail; phone (954) 351-9371. For a decidedly different cultural encounter, you can experience an overload of Polynesian kitsch at Mai-Kai Restaurant, 3599 N. Federal Hwy. between Oakland Park and Commercial boulevards. Tiki torches and statues, waterfalls and thatched-roof huts enhance the South Seas décor at this restaurant/bar/Polynesian review, a Fort Lauderdale favorite since the mid-1950s. Mai-Kai's Polynesian Islander Revue combines brightly colored island costumes, spirited dancers and songs set to a tropical drumbeat; phone (954) 563-3272. The last of this group, however, is cultural in name only. The Culture Room, 3045 N. Federal Hwy., is a small venue that presents concerts mostly by groups playing hard rock and metal; phone (954) 564-1074.

If you're interested in a relaxing evening at a dockside bar—in this case the dock is on the Intracoastal Waterway—check out Shooters Waterfront Café USA at 3033 N.E. 32nd Ave. Fort Lauderdale's Venice-like canals are a natural for casual nightlife, and the city's water taxi, which has a stop conveniently nearby, makes getting there easy. You'll find a mix of locals and tourists sitting outside under blue umbrellas watching the mega yachts sail by while enjoying some appetizers, drinks and live entertainment. Phone (954) 566-2855.

The posh Galleria Mall is the location of the definitely chic Blue Martini. The lounge, on the ground level of the mall at 2432 E. Sunrise Blvd., has more than 25 martinis to choose from, including the signature blue version. Choose a seat indoors where you can enjoy live music along with your drink, or outdoors on the patio when the weather permits. Phone (954) 653-2583.

A visit to Seminole Hard Rock Casino, just off US 441/SR 7 north of Stirling Road at 1 Seminole Way in Hollywood gives you two nightlife choices. If you feel like Lady Luck is on your side, check out the slot machines and table games at the casino. Or, if you're not a gambler, the complex's Seminole Paradise entertainment district has 11 nightclubs in addition to trendy shops and a variety of restaurants. The East African-inspired décor at Pangaea has a plush safari-like vibe with sheets draped from the ceiling and native artifacts on the walls. DJs spin rock and hip-hop to the accompaniment of drums and maracas. Pangaea's sister club is Gryphon, where a sunken dance floor is a main feature of the lounge's contemporary, modern design. Other choices include a comedy club, an Irish pub and a chance to sing along to dueling pianos. An advantage of partying at Seminole Paradise is that the clubs, which are on an Indian reservation, can stay open 'til dawn. Phone (954) 327-7625 for the casino or (954) 581-5454 for Pangaea or Gryphon.

A fine way to end a day in Fort Lauderdale is to take an evening stroll down tree-lined Las Olas Boulevard. Let enticing aromas from some of Fort Lauderdale's best restaurants draw you in for a romantic meal. Ask for a table outside, if available; Las Olas is a top-notch spot for people watching. Then stop for a nightcap or a late night snack. The Floridian Restaurant, a Fort Lauderdale institution for more than 60 years, is open 24/7. Comfort food is the specialty here. Breakfast is served all day (and night), portions are generous and the biscuits are legendary. Oh, and by the way—bring cash; they don't accept credit cards. The Floridian is at 1410 E. Las Olas Blvd.; phone (954) 463-4041.

## Sports and Recreation

Fort Lauderdale has a public beach and excellent inland and ocean fishing waters. Many species of fish are caught in the "inside" waters. The Everglades and deep-sea fishing rank with the best in Florida. Fishing boats can be rented at Bahia-Mar Yachting Center and Pier 66. Area piers are good spots for fishing; bait, tackle and food are available.

Boating is another popular sport. There are numerous canals to be explored, and sailing around the barrier islands is a favorite pastime. Most marinas rent boats.

Scuba diving is rewarding along three lines of reefs, where clear water permits views of sea fans, branched coral and tropical fish. Many firms offer instruction and rental equipment; consult the telephone directory.



Water skiing is popular on the city's protected waterways and canals. Instruction is offered by McGinnis Ski School, 2421 S.W. 46th Ave., (954) 321-0221, and Ski-Rixen at Quiet Waters Park in Deerfield Beach, (954) 429-0215.

The Broward County Brian Piccolo Velodrome in nearby Cooper City consists of two tracks: one for competitive bicycle racing and one for recreational riding and in-line skating; phone (954) 437-2626.

The Broward County Parks system includes 18 regional parks, four nature centers and more than 20 natural areas for outdoor recreation. In addition, community centers offer activities ranging from bridge for beginners to instruction in shellcraft. For more information, phone the Parks and Recreation Department at (954) 357-8100.

Hockey comes to sunny South Florida in October when the Florida Panthers of the National Hockey League take to the ice at BankAtlantic Center in Sunrise; phone (954) 835-7000, or (954) 835-8326 for tickets.

Golf in the area is excellent. Most courses are semiprivate, with play governed by local regulations. Many hotels have agreements allowing guests to play on certain courses; check with your hotel manager.

Tennis is popular throughout the area; many hotels and motels have their own courts. Supplementing these are the public courts at Jimmy Evert

Tennis Center, 701 N.E. 12th Ave., (954) 828-5378; and Joseph C. Carter Park, 1450 W. Sunrise Blvd., (954) 828-5411.

### Performing Arts

Broward Center for the Performing Arts, 201 S.W. Fifth Ave. in the 22-block Riverwalk Arts & Entertainment District, is the setting for events including ballet, opera, Broadway shows, children's theater and concerts; phone (954) 522-5334 or (954) 462-0222.

Parker Playhouse, in Holiday Park at US 1 and N.E. Eighth Street, offers Broadway shows; phone (954) 462-0222.

War Memorial Auditorium, at 800 N.E. Eighth St. in Holiday Park, seats 2,100 people. Plays, concerts, sports events and exhibitions are presented throughout the year; phone (954) 828-5380.

Broward County supports an opera company, symphony orchestra and ballet, as well as other dance and musical programs. For performance information contact the Arts and Entertainment Hotline, (954) 357-5700, or (800) 249-2787 out of Fla.

### Insider Info

**A Diver's Paradise** – Fort Lauderdale ranks among the state's top scuba diving destinations, largely due to three parallel natural coral reefs interspersed with artificial reefs lying just offshore. The shallowest natural reef is within 100 yards of the shore at a depth of about 20 feet, making diving here extremely attractive to snorkelers and novice divers. In fact, Greater Fort Lauderdale's 23-mile coastline is the only place in Florida where divers can approach a reef right from the beach.

Artificial reefs—typically comprising submerged concrete or steel—function much like the rocky substrate of natural reefs and serve a two-fold purpose. First, they quickly attract marine organisms essential to the establishment of a food chain, which organisms are then followed by invertebrates, crustaceans, small fish and large predators. In turn, these undersea communities provide divers with alternative neighborhoods to

explore, thereby reducing potentially damaging boat and human traffic around natural reefs.

Broward County launched an artificial reef development program in the 1980s. To date, there are more than 80 deployed freighters, tugs, barges, cutters, yachts, dredges, airplanes and scrapped construction materials at various depths. One of the most spectacular dive sites is Tenneco Towers, a retired oil derrick resting in segments near Hallandale Beach.

Ghostly shipwrecks add mystery and excitement to a dive, and Fort Lauderdale's reefs hold the crusty remains of nearly 20. Popular sites include the Glasgow steamer Copenhagen, which slammed onto a reef in 1900 and remained partially submerged for several years before slipping into a shallow grave; the German freighter Mercedes, beached in front of a multimillion-dollar mansion during a 1984 winter storm and later towed offshore; and the Hydro Atlantic, a 300-foot-long dredge that sank off Deerfield Beach en route to salvage in 1987. If hulls could talk, the Ancient Mariner off Pompano Beach might whisper of stalking German U-boats during its service as a U.S. Coast Guard cutter. Technically, the Mercedes and the Ancient Mariner are classified as artificial reefs because they were sunk intentionally at their present locations.

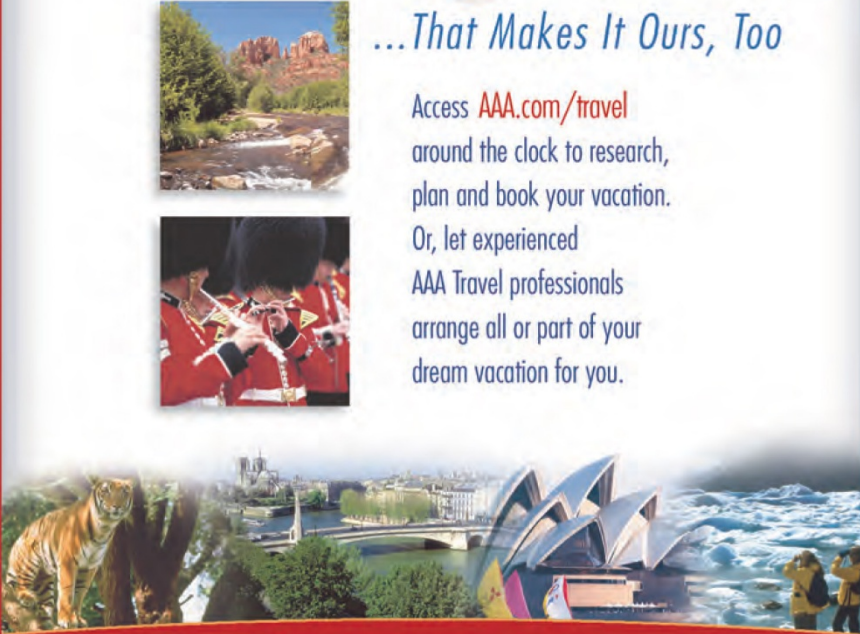
With marine life ranging from sponges and sea fans to a neon kaleidoscope of tropical fish to amberjack, grouper and other game fish, Fort Lauderdale's reefs hold wonders for divers of every skill level. A list of dive sites and operators is available from the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention & Visitors Bureau; phone (954) 765-4466.

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