



# Destination Guide: Miami–Miami Beach



**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: Miami and Miami Beach includes trip-planning information covering AAA recommended attractions and restaurants, exclusive member discounts, maps and more.

The appeal of greater Miami goes beyond sun-soaked beaches and a world-renowned climate. The young metropolis also has diverse neighborhoods and a cultural richness suggestive of older, more established American cities.

Surprisingly, this popular destination may require some geographic orientation: Few realize Miami proper, on the mainland, and Miami Beach are separate cities. The former, while still a vacation spot, is more business-oriented, with a skyline of imposing bank towers; the latter's casual environment is almost entirely geared to tourism and its silhouette lined with high-rise hotels and condominiums.



A tropical sun and crystal-hued waters beckon visitors year-round—mom, dad and the kids to build sand castles and frolic in the ocean during summer, and snowbirds anxious to leave ice scrapers and snow shovels for a temperate winter. It's a place where you can wave at cruise ships sailing away to Caribbean islands, dine at waterfront restaurants, sleep in pastel-colored Art Deco hotels, shop at designer boutiques and catch exhibits at world-class museums.

This is not a typical Southern city, though, as its location might suggest. Multicultural Miami has integrated large populations of Northern

expatriates, Cubans and other Hispanic groups, and those with Caribbean, European and Asian heritage. You're as likely to hear Spanish spoken as English, sip a martini or a mojito, and dine on stone crab, arroz con pollo or corned beef on rye.

## **Essentials**

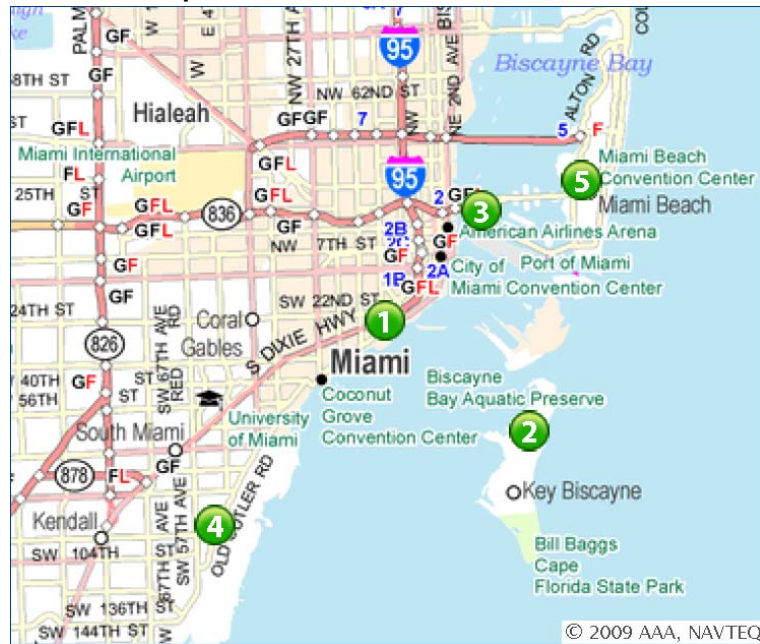
Cruise along oceanfront Collins Avenue, past rows of hotels and condos, to Ocean Drive in South Beach, where people-watching is an art form. Marvel at the sherbet-colored architectural gems in the Art Deco District as you dine, drink or shop in this oh-so-trendy area. South Beach doesn't really come to life, though, until the sun goes down. Then the neon-lit lounges, hip cafes and dance clubs pulsate into the wee hours with jazz, salsa and pop rhythms. You might even spot a celebrity or two among the cosmopolitan, international crowd.

Imagine what life was like during the Gilded Age at [Vizcaya Museum and Gardens](#), the lavish 34-room winter estate of industrialist James Deering.

*¡Bienvenidos a Calle Ocho!* Welcome to Eighth Street, the main thoroughfare of Little Havana. Immerse yourself in Cuban culture, transplanted to South Florida, as you sip a café con leche or shop for hand-rolled cigars and the perfect souvenir guayabera.

Catch some beach time—you are in Florida, after all! Feel the sand trickle through your toes, wade into the gentle surf (being careful not to get a mouthful of saltwater) and test your architectural skills with a plastic pail and shovel. Two favorite nearby beaches are [Crandon Park](#) and Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Beach.

## Essentials Map





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

Squaaawk! You can pose with a parrot, feed a flamingo or mingle with a macaw at [Jungle Island](#). Other residents you'll want to meet include cute twin orangutans; an Asian water monitor named Godzilla; and Crocosaurus, a saltwater crocodile.

Cheer on the Dolphins, Heat, Marlins or Hurricanes, depending on what time of year you're visiting the city (that is, if you can get a ticket). For a truly local experience, visit the Miami Jai-Alai Fronton and place a bet on your favorite player or team.

Steer your car south toward Florida City to the main entrance of [Everglades National Park](#), where trails, boardwalks and tram tours provide access to hardwood hammocks, swamps, an amazing variety of birdlife and subtropical plants, mangrove forests and sawgrass prairies.

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

-  - GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*
-  - Exclusive AAA member discounts available

### 1. Vizcaya Museum and Gardens

3251 S Miami Ave  
Miami, FL 33129  
Phone: (305) 250-9133



### 2. Crandon Park

4000 Crandon Blvd  
Key Biscayne, FL 33149  
Phone: (305) 361-5421

### 3. Jungle Island

1111 Parrot Jungle Tr  
Miami, FL 33132  
Phone: (305) 400-7000



### 4. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden

10901 Old Cutler Rd  
Coral Gables, FL 33156  
Phone: (305) 667-1651



### 5. The Holocaust Memorial

1933-1945 Meridian Ave  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Phone: (305) 538-1663



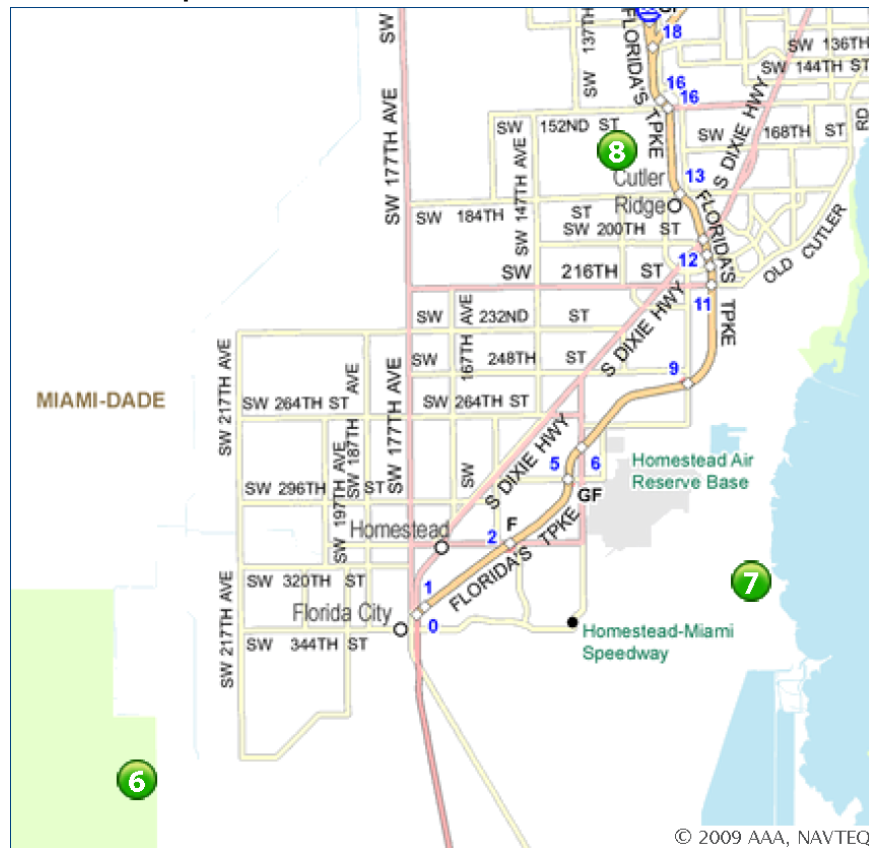
Also south is [Biscayne National Park](#), 95 percent of which is underwater. If you're not experienced in scuba diving, snorkeling or kayaking, you can view its coral reefs and other aquatic wonders on a glass-bottom boat tour.

You won't be able to tiptoe through the tulips, though you can stroll through a rainforest and among the palms, bougainvillea, hibiscus, fruits and vines that grow in organized profusion at [Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden](#).

Glide your way through the [Miami Metrozoo](#) on a monorail, taking time to admire the natural habitats where animals native to Africa, Asia and Europe live.

In a city famous for its diverse cultures and lifestyles, [The Holocaust Memorial](#) is a fitting reminder of our world's need for tolerance.

## Essentials Map



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



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

#### 6. Everglades National Park

40001 State Hwy 94  
Homestead, FL 33034  
Phone: (305) 242-7700

#### 7. Biscayne National Park

9700 SW 328th St  
Homestead, FL 33033  
Phone: (305) 230-7275

#### 8. Miami Metrozoo

12400 SW 152nd St  
Miami, FL 33177  
Phone: (305) 251-0400



## Miami and Miami Beach in 3 Days

Three days is barely enough time to get to know any major destination. But AAA travel editors suggest these activities to make the most of your time in greater Miami.

Before making travel plans, it is important to note that while Miami and Miami Beach share an enviable location in sunny South Florida, they are distinct, different cities. Miami, on the mainland, is a multicultural metropolis with a businesslike demeanor. It is separated from oceanfront, tourist-oriented Miami Beach by several causeways over Biscayne Bay. Because of some of the distances involved, you'll need an automobile to reach many of the places mentioned below.

### Day 1: Morning

Start your stay in Miami Beach with a visit to South Beach. This trendy hot-spot is as well-known for its restored sherbet-hued Art Deco-inspired boutique hotels as for its pulsating nightlife. The perfect place to begin is the Art Deco Welcome Center on Ocean Drive at 10th Street. In addition to exhibits and a neat gift shop, the center offers a 90-minute self-guiding audio tour, an enlightening walk that provides historical and architectural information about Art Deco District gems. Several guided walking tours also are available.

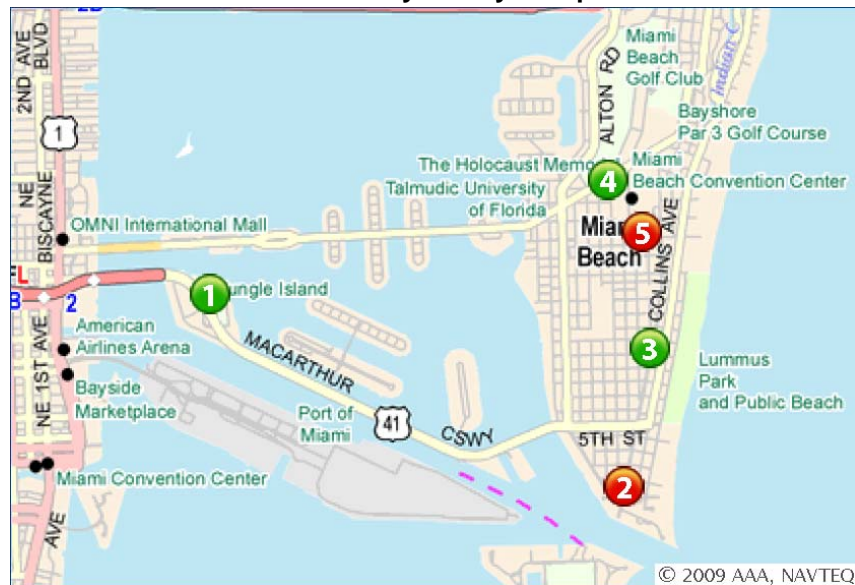
Now that you're well-versed in Streamline Moderne, stepped rooflines and porthole windows, head across the MacArthur Causeway, admiring the palatial mansions on one side and the balcony-bedecked cruise ships at the Port of Miami on the other. Your destination is [Jungle Island](#), where the lush, tropical surroundings are home to exotic, colorful characters such as macaws, orangutans, lizards and a liger named Hercules. Chance meetings with handlers and their animal charges make terrific photo ops.

### Afternoon

Make a return trip across the MacArthur Causeway to Miami Beach and head south. The legendary [Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant](#) is nearby. As the name suggests, stone crabs are the star attraction and, indeed, the



### Miami and Miami Beach in 3 Days – Day 1 Map



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

#### Day 1 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);

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



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

#### 1. Jungle Island

1111 Parrot Jungle Tr  
Miami, FL 33132  
Phone: (305) 400-7000



#### 4. The Holocaust Memorial

1933-1945 Meridian Ave  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Phone: (305) 538-1663



#### 2. Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant

11 Washington Ave  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Phone: (305) 673-0365

#### 5. Yuca Restaurant

501 Lincoln Rd  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Phone: (305) 532-9822

#### 3. The Wolfsonian-Florida International University

1001 Washington Ave  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Phone: (305) 531-1001

restaurant is only open during their season, mid-October to mid-May. Also, long waits (which are the norm here) are shorter at lunch than at dinner. Joe's has been serving these delicacies for close to 90 years, so come hungry, but save room for a piece of the restaurant's famous key lime pie for dessert.

Proceed back into the heart of the Art Deco District to a museum dedicated to decorative arts created between 1885 and 1945. [The Wolfsonian-Florida International University](#) examines these objects and how they reflect the societal, technological and political bent of their time. Not far away, a series of sculptures and a contemplative garden at [The Holocaust Memorial](#) remind visitors of the horror and tragedy of the 6 million Jews persecuted and exterminated by the Nazis 1933-45.

#### Evening

To complete your day in Miami Beach, plan on having dinner on Lincoln Road, a 7-block-long, tree-lined pedestrian mall in the northern reaches of the Art Deco District. One upscale restaurant to consider is [Yuca Restaurant](#) (an acronym for "Young, Urban Cuban-Americans") for creative, playful presentations of traditional Cuban dishes.

You don't need to travel far to extend your evening activities. Check out the eclectic array of shops, galleries and boutiques for which Lincoln Road is known, then move on to one of SoBe's many clubs for an evening of dancing, merriment and beautiful people watching, perhaps topped off by a nightcap at a fashionable hotel bar or a walk on the beach. You'll soon understand why this section of Miami Beach is also known as "America's Riviera."

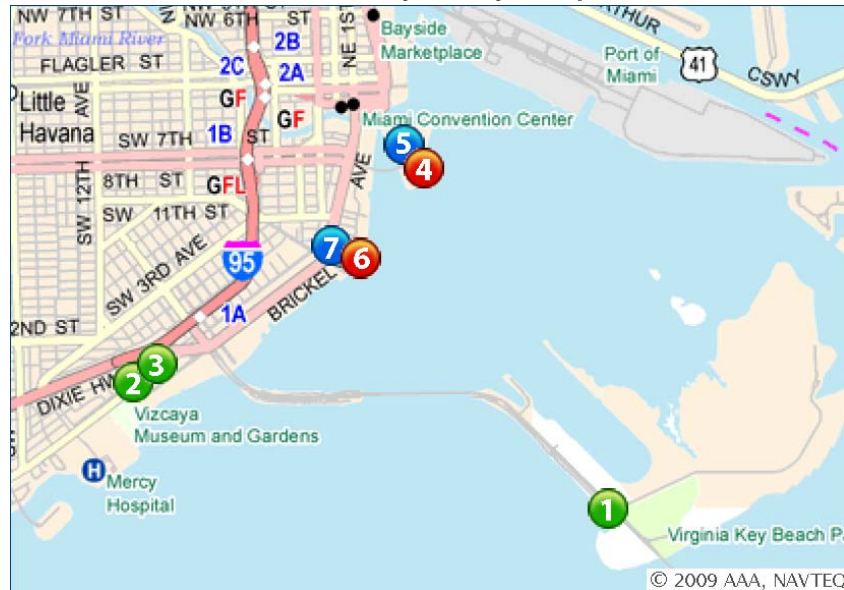
Serious partying in South Beach doesn't begin until late, after 11 for sure, and an evening on the town in this trendy area can be expensive when you factor in parking fees, cover charges and steep drink prices. Lines form to get in the more popular clubs (many with over-the-top, gimmicky themes), and bouncers can be selective. DJs are the norm here; live music is a rarity. If you have a specific place in mind, phone ahead to make sure it's still in business or check the *Miami Herald's* "Weekend" section; what's in (or even open) this week, might not be next week. A

few classy hotel bars to consider are the ultra-sleek Rose Bar at the Delano Hotel and the swanky red environment of the SkyBar at The Shore Club.

### Day 2: Morning

Today's activities are concentrated on the western side of Biscayne Bay, in Miami. To begin your day, spend some time on Calle Ocho (S.W. Eighth Street), Miami's "Little Havana," where Spanglish seems to be the language most commonly heard. Once the hub of Miami's exile Cuban community, this stretch of Eighth Street between 4th and 27th avenues now embraces other Latino nationalities as well. As you walk around a bit, step into some art galleries and a cigar factory, but be sure to visit a Calle Ocho landmark, Domino Park, a neighborhood fixture where groups of older Cuban men, typically retirees, gather to play dominoes and chess.

### Miami and Miami Beach in 3 Days – Day 2 Map



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

Point your car to the southeast and cross the Rickenbacker Causeway (there is a toll eastbound only). Your next destination is the Miami Seaquarium, home to 1960s TV and movie celebrity Flipper. The likeable dolphin and an assortment of killer whales, sea lions and other marine mammals gracefully frolic in daily shows. Guests also can see sharks being fed and watch a diver hand-feed residents of a 750,000-gallon saltwater aquarium.

Return to the mainland and head towards Coconut Grove to the resplendent winter residence of wealthy Chicago industrialist James Deering, a founder of the International Harvester Co., who spared no expense in building his 34-room bayfront mansion. Designed to resemble an Italian villa, Vizcaya Museum and Gardens is filled with antiques, paintings and sculptures hand-chosen by Deering himself on jaunts to Europe. The 10 acres of formal gardens surrounding the estate are equally opulent.

### Day 2 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](http://AAA.com);

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



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- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

**1. Miami Seaquarium**  
4400 Rickenbacker Cswy  
Miami, FL 33149  
Phone: (305) 361-5705



**2. Vizcaya Museum and Gardens**  
3251 S Miami Ave  
Miami, FL 33129  
Phone: (305) 250-9133



**3. Miami Science Museum**  
3280 S Miami Ave  
Miami, FL 33129  
Phone: (305) 646-4234



**4. Azul**   
500 Brickell Key Dr  
Miami, FL 33131  
Phone: (305) 913-8358

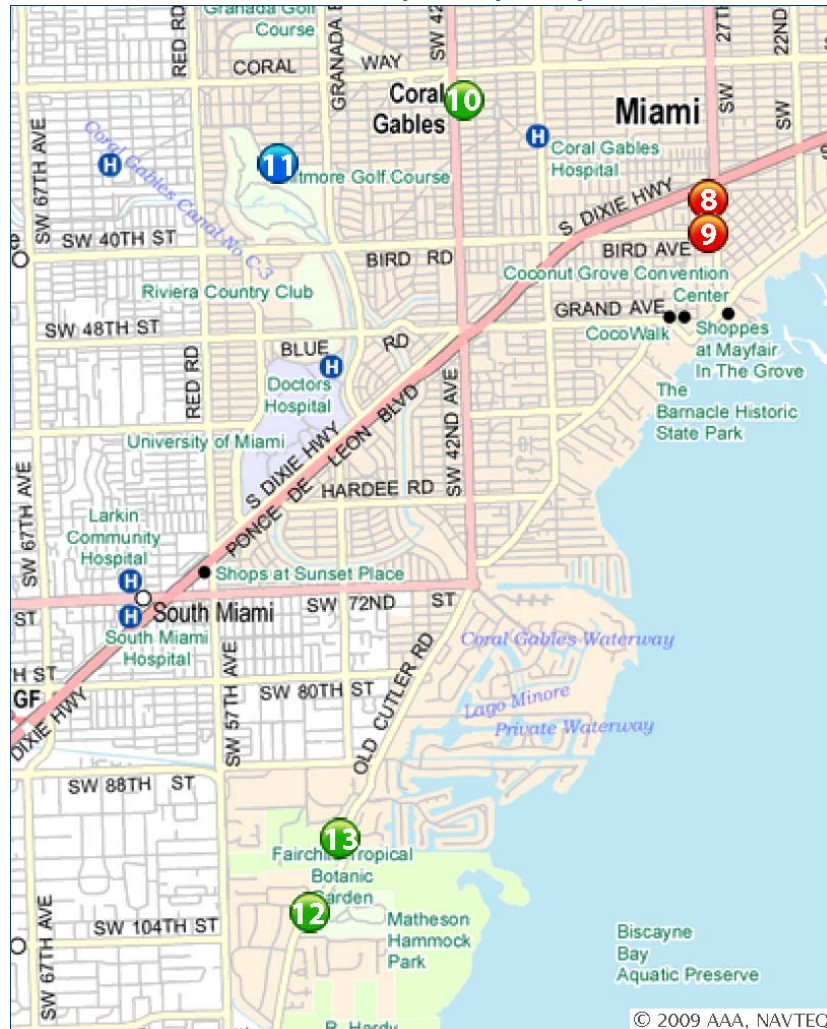
**5. Mandarin Oriental, Miami**   
500 Brickell Key Dr  
Miami, FL  
Phone: (305) 913-8288

**6. ACQUA**   
1435 Brickell Ave  
Miami, FL 33131  
Phone: (305) 381-3190

**7. Four Seasons Hotel Miami**   
1435 Brickell Ave  
Miami, FL  
Phone: (305) 358-3535

If you're traveling with children, a good alternative to one of the above points of interest might be the kid-friendly [Miami Science Museum](#). Practically across the street from Vizcaya, this Smithsonian affiliate has a planetarium, a wildlife center, a natural history collection and quality traveling exhibits.

**Miami and Miami Beach in 3 Days – Day 2 Map**



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**Day 2 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);**

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



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**8. Las Culebrinas in the Grove**   
 2890 SW 27th Ave  
 Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
 Phone: (305) 448-4090

**9. Flanigan's Seafood Bar & Grill**   
 2721 Bird Rd  
 Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
 Phone: (305) 446-1114

**10. Coral Gables**

**11. The Biltmore Hotel Coral Gables**   
 1200 Anastasia Ave  
 Coral Gables, FL  
 Phone: (305) 445-1926

**12. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden**  
 10901 Old Cutler Rd  
 Coral Gables, FL 33156  
 Phone: (305) 667-1651

**13. Matheson Hammock Park**  
 9610 Old Cutler Rd  
 Coral Gables, FL 33156  
 Phone: (305) 665-5475

**Afternoon**

It's just a couple of miles to the heart of fashionable Coconut Grove, a former artists' colony known for its funky shops, varied restaurant choices (many of them open-air), marina and nightlife. Take advantage of the abundance of dining opportunities and stop for a relaxing lunch. Among the possibilities are [Las Culebrinas in the Grove Restaurant](#) for Cuban and Spanish favorites, and [Flanigan's Seafood Bar & Grill](#) for a juicy burger or baby back ribs. Serious shoppers will want to check out the offerings at [CocoWalk](#), a large outdoor shopping complex.

More shopping can be found west of Coconut Grove in [Coral Gables](#), designed as a planned community in 1925. "The City Beautiful," as it calls itself, features tree-lined streets; Mediterranean Revival architecture; [The Biltmore Hotel Coral Gables](#), an elegant, posh treasure of a hotel; and the University of Miami. The aforementioned shopping takes place at [Miracle Mile](#), a downtown enclave of elegant stores, galleries, restaurants and theaters, and at [The Village of Merrick Park](#), a decidedly chichi center where shopaholics can max out their credit cards at the likes of Ann



Taylor, Gucci, Jimmy Choo, Neiman Marcus, Nordstrom and Tiffany & Co.

If you can tear yourself away from shopping, nature awaits. [Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden](#) and [Matheson Hammock Park](#) are next to each other on Old Cutler Road, a scenic connector between Coconut Grove and Coral Gables. Stately homes and a majestic canopy of huge, very old and otherworldly banyan trees make this a particularly picturesque drive. Trams transport visitors through the rare tropical foliage the beautifully landscaped garden is known for. Don't miss the palm and cycad collections, said to be among the world's finest. If you're ready for a quick break, Matheson Hammock Park is the perfect spot. The park's shallow manmade lagoon is ideal for a quick splash, and shady trails are just right for a relaxing stroll.

### Evening

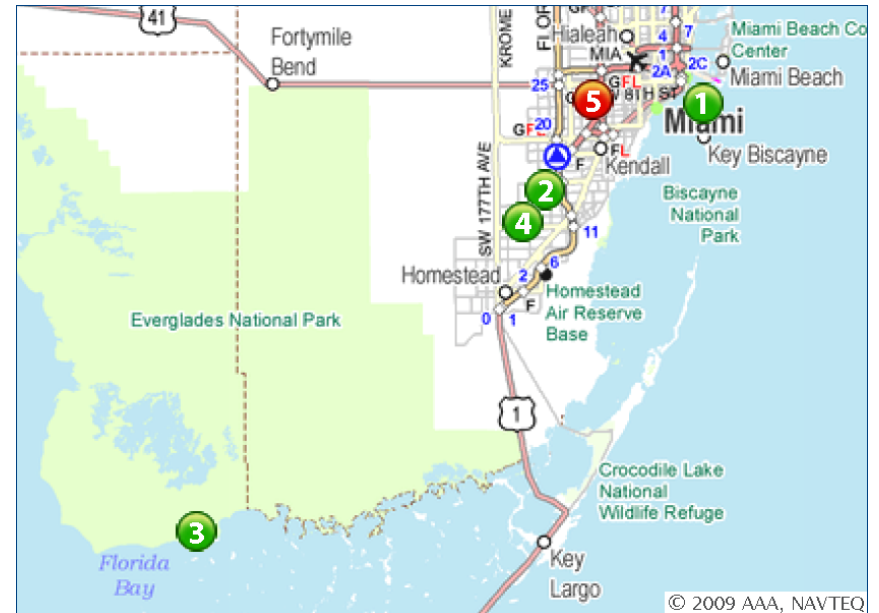
Return to your hotel to freshen up for a night on the town in downtown Miami. The signature restaurants in two sumptuous lodgings—[Azul](#) in the [Mandarin Oriental, Miami](#) on Brickell Key and [Acqua](#) in the [Four Seasons Hotel Miami](#)—define a romantic evening. The former shines with its open kitchen and Mediterranean/Asian fusion cuisine and the latter blends the best of Italian and Caribbean influences.

After-dinner indulgences might include a walk through nearby Bayfront Park, a popular site for concerts and special events, or an after-dinner drink at Bayside Marketplace. If you're so inclined, take in a performance in the Mediterranean courtyard splendor of the Gusman Center for the Performing Arts or, if the Heat are in town, watch Dwyane Wade crash the boards at the American Airlines Arena. Or catch a Dolphins or Marlins game at Land Shark Stadium (Dolphin Stadium) north of Miami in Miami Gardens depending on the season.

### Day 3: Morning

You're in Miami, so beach time is a requisite. Two of the best are on Key Biscayne (across the Rickenbacker Causeway), and both are perennially listed on "best beaches" lists. Family-friendly [Crandon Park](#) has 2 miles of sandy beach and calm water protected by an offshore sandbar. Bill

### Miami and Miami Beach in 3 Days – Day 3 Map



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### Day 3 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);

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



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*

#### 1. Crandon Park

4000 Crandon Blvd  
Key Biscayne, FL 33149  
Phone: (305) 361-5421

#### 2. Miami Metrozoo

12400 SW 152nd St  
Miami, FL 33177  
Phone: (305) 251-0400



#### 3. Flamingo Visitor Center

1 Flamingo Lodge Hwy  
Flamingo, FL 33034  
Phone: (239) 695-2945

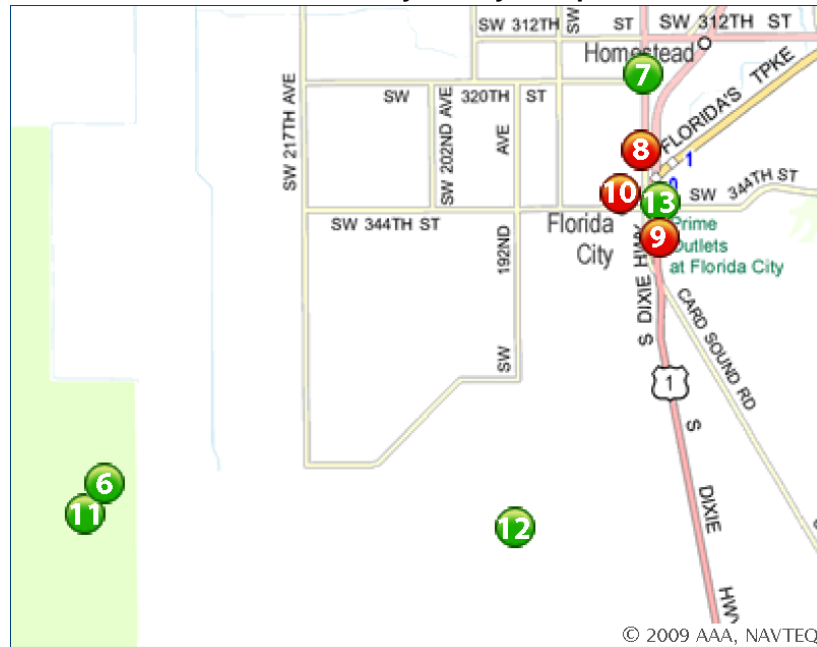
#### 4. Monkey Jungle

14805 SW 216th St  
Miami, FL 33170  
Phone: (305) 235-1611

#### 5. Tropical Chinese Restaurant

7991 Bird Rd (SW 40th St)  
Miami, FL 33155  
Phone: (305) 262-7576

**Miami and Miami Beach in 3 Days – Day 3 Map**



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

Baggs Cape Florida State Park not only has a pristine Atlantic Ocean beach but also an 1846 lighthouse and keeper's cottage. You'll find the beaches far less crowded on weekdays.

Change into dry clothes and get ready for a drive. Head southwest to [Miami Metrozoo](#), where the animals live in cageless settings reminiscent of their natural habitats. Trams and an air-conditioned monorail provide an easy way to meet the residents.

**Afternoon**

Mother Nature could be considered the theme for this day. After the beach and the zoo, continue heading southwest to [Everglades National Park](#). Just before the entrance to the park at [Florida City](#) are several lunch spots to choose from: [The Capri Restaurant](#) offers Italian favorites, the nautical-themed [Mutineer Restaurant](#) features seafood and Mexican specialties are on the menu at [Rosita's Restaurante](#).

**Day 3 Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](#);**  
**AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](#)**

**6. Everglades National Park**

40001 State Hwy 94  
 Homestead, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 242-7700

**7. Florida City**

**8. The Capri Restaurant**

935 N Krome Ave  
 Florida City, FL 33030  
 Phone: (305) 247-1544

**9. Mutineer Restaurant**

11 SE 1st Ave  
 Florida City, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 245-3377

**10. Rosita's Restaurante**

199 W Palm Dr  
 Florida City, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 246-3114

**11. Ernest Coe Visitor Center**

40001 SR 9336  
 Homestead, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 242-7700

**12. Everglades Alligator Farm**

40351 SW 192nd Ave  
 Florida City, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 247-2628

**13. Homestead**

Make an orientation stop at the park's main visitor center, the [Ernest Coe Visitor Center](#) in [Homestead](#). From there, a 38-mile road heads south through the park to the [Flamingo Visitor Center](#), providing opportunities to stop and explore this subtropical wilderness that protects many endangered plants and animals. Boardwalks, nature trails and overlooks may afford glimpses of alligators, egrets and native plants.

As you head back toward Miami, two other nature-themed attractions merit consideration. In addition to an airboat ride into the Everglades, a stop at [Everglades Alligator Farm](#) in Florida City also gives guests a chance to see a variety of gators and crocodiles and hold some of their offspring. The phrase "run of the jungle" takes on new meaning at [Monkey Jungle](#), where close to 400 primates actually do roam free. Visitors can observe the chattering creatures from screened walkways.

**Evening**

If hunger pangs strike on the drive back to your hotel, pull into the parking lot of the establishment many locals consider to have the area's best Chinese food. [Tropical Chinese Restaurant](#), in an unassuming strip



shopping center, draws crowds for its Sunday dim sum selections, though the regular menu also has its devoted followers.

For a truly Miami experience, watch the high-speed action at what is said to be the world's fastest ball game—jai alai. Games are played Friday and Saturday evenings (as well as matinees during the week) at the Miami Jai-Alai Fronton. Bet on your favorites and learn some new terms: a *fronton* is the arena in which the game takes place, and a *cesta* is the wicker basket the player uses to catch and throw the ball, which is called a *pelota*.

## Restaurants

Restaurants throughout Miami wisely take advantage of the abundance of fresh, locally grown (and freshly caught) ingredients and the diverse cuisines of the city's international population, blending components of each in creative, innovative ways.

### Restaurants Map



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

The quietly elegant Azul, the signature restaurant in the stunning Mandarin Oriental, Miami, features an open kitchen and ceiling-high windows with spectacular views of Biscayne Bay. The inspiration for its artistic fusion cuisine comes from the Mediterranean and Asia. Among the menu choices are several meat and seafood entrees with multiple preparation styles on one plate. A wine list with world-class selections complements the menu options.

At Acqua, on the seventh floor of the towering Four Seasons Hotel Miami, guests have a choice of dining either indoors or outside on a terrace overlooking the pool. Choosing the latter option in the evening provides expansive views of the twinkling lights of Biscayne Bay. The menu, which leans heavily towards dishes from Northern Italy, is especially notable for its seafood, pasta and the chef's divine risottos, though many dishes

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

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

**1. Azul**   
500 Brickell Key Dr  
Miami, FL 33131  
Phone: (305) 913-8358

**2. ACQUA**   
1435 Brickell Ave  
Miami, FL 33131  
Phone: (305) 381-3190

**3. Islas Canarias Restaurant**   
285 NW 27th Ave  
Miami, FL 33125  
Phone: (305) 649-0440

**4. Casa Juancho Restaurant**   
2436 SW 8th St  
Miami, FL 33135  
Phone: (305) 642-2452

**5. Tropical Chinese Restaurant**   
7991 Bird Rd (SW 40th St)  
Miami, FL 33155  
Phone: (305) 262-7576

**6. Palme d'Or**   
1200 Anastasia Ave  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
Phone: (305) 913-3201

**7. Las Culebrinas in the Grove**   
2890 SW 27th Ave  
Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
Phone: (305) 448-4090

**8. Flanigan's Seafood Bar & Grill**   
2721 Bird Rd  
Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
Phone: (305) 446-1114

**9. Baleen Miami**   
4 Grove Isle Dr  
Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
Phone: (305) 857-5007

feature sauces flavored with Caribbean fruits and spices. The food's artistic presentation harmonizes with the restaurant's attentive service and comfortable ambience. An extensive wine selection allows for expert pairing of food and drink.

For dishes with a Latin flavor, especially traditional Cuban cuisine or dishes reminiscent of Spain, choose from this duo of restaurants in Little Havana. In a small shopping center, Islas Canarias Restaurant is a local favorite. Decorated with a few pictures of the Cuban countryside, this unpretentious, family-style eatery is known for its authentic Cuban cooking. And although the name is a reference to the Canary Islands, the homeland of the restaurant's owner, the menu items—baked lamb, chorizos, and black beans and rice—are straight from Havana.

The warm colors of the brick walls and the wood-beamed ceiling, pottery, artwork and strolling troubadours are as evocative of Spain as the cuisine at Casa Juancho Restaurant. The restaurant's tapas menu, with more than 30 choices, serves as a prelude to the regular menu, which features fresh fish prepared Spanish style, aged Black Angus beef and, for dessert, *crema Catalana*, a custard dish with a crunchy, caramelized coating. The restaurant is known for its rare Armagnacs, Spanish brandies and large selection of wines from Spain.

Several miles southwest, off the main road in a small strip shopping center, is Tropical Chinese Restaurant, which many regard as Miami's finest Chinese dining experience. Finding the restaurant the first time might be a little difficult, but once there you will be rewarded with a sumptuous Hong Kong-style meal. The comprehensive menu at this elegantly simple establishment accommodates connoisseurs of Chinese food as well as those who prefer traditional American fare. Be adventurous and try the braised sea cucumber with spicy sauce or indulge in the shredded chicken with shark fin soup or the popular black bean lobster. The 54 items on the dim sum menu are sure to tempt. An open kitchen allows diners to view the chefs in action.

Tucked away in Coral Gables' historic 1926 The Biltmore Hotel Coral Gables is a dining jewel, the Palme d'Or, recognized for its gracious

### Restaurants Map



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**Restaurants Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](http://AAA.com);**  
**AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](http://AAA.com/Diamonds)**

**10. Yuca Restaurant**   
 501 Lincoln Rd  
 Miami Beach, FL 33139  
 Phone: (305) 532-9822

**11. Joe's Stone Crab Restaurant**   
 11 Washington Ave  
 Miami Beach, FL 33139  
 Phone: (305) 673-0365

service, Old World elegance and refined bill of fare. The intimate dining room, opulently adorned with crystal chandeliers, features “Modern French” cuisine as created by chef Philippe Ruiz. Guests can design their own tasting menu by selecting items from the diverse *à la carte* listings. Favorites include a foie gras terrine, pan-seared Dover sole and braised 7 hour beef. Cheese enthusiasts will be delighted with the tableside cart bearing an extensive selection from around the world.

If nearby Coconut Grove is your destination, here are three restaurants worthy of consideration. With a mix of Spanish and Cuban food, [Las Culebrinas in the Grove Restaurant](#) is an affordable option in this sometimes pricey area. The eatery’s hacienda-style interior exudes a warm décor with faux-finished walls and Spanish pottery and artwork. The cordial wait staff will guide you through the menu, which offers an array of Spanish favorites such as calamari, sausages prepared several ways, traditional Cuban pork and chicken entrees, and a variety of flans for those who have room for dessert. A cozy lounge and bar area is upstairs.

Expect to be treated like one of the locals at [Flanigan’s Seafood Bar & Grill](#), where the atmosphere is as casual as the artwork. The restaurant’s walls are covered with scores of pictures of fishermen with their tournament-winning catches as well as snapshots of the owner and his friends. This is the place to watch the game on TV, grab a bite and enjoy a cold brew. The baby back ribs can’t be beat, but you also can choose from huge burgers, fish sandwiches and pasta dishes, though locals love the just-off-the-boat fresh fish of the day. Flanigan’s can be found throughout the South Florida area.

For a more upscale Coconut Grove experience, make a reservation at [Baleen Miami](#), one of the area’s most romantic dining retreats. Guests may choose to dine outdoors under the stars with spectacular waterfront views of Miami or inside under seductive golden lighting where secluded booths guarantee privacy. The restaurant doesn’t take itself too seriously, however, as evidenced by its whimsical monkey theme: Diners may find the animals hanging discreetly from sconces and other unexpected

places throughout the dining room, and one of the restaurant’s signature dishes is its warm and steaming monkey bread. More traditional menu offerings are highlighted by superb meat dishes and fresh seafood whose sauces use island fruits and spices to incorporate Caribbean flavors. Other favorites include the chef’s rendition of lobster bisque and an Asian bouillabaisse.

In addition to its lively nightlife scene and oh-so-trendy hotels, South Beach also has its share of excellent restaurants. [Yuca Restaurant](#) (pronounced YOO-ka) on South Beach’s fashionable Lincoln Road Pedestrian Mall is a play-on-word acronym for “Young Urban Cuban-Americans.” The restaurant, which is said to have originated the Nuevo Latino style of cooking, features playfully innovative Cuban pork, chicken, beef and seafood dishes. Those lucky enough to snag a seat by one of the large picture windows or on the sidewalk patio can indulge in a bit of people watching.

You can’t visit Miami without having a meal at the legendary [Joe’s Stone Crab Restaurant](#), a South Beach fixture since 1913. At the very southern end of Miami Beach, this institution has been serving stone crabs since 1921. Joe didn’t discover the delectable little rascals, but he certainly put them on the map (or menu, in this case). As you would assume, this is a popular place and waits are to be expected. Reservations aren’t accepted, though, so get there early and relax in the lounge or courtyard until your name is called. Then put on a bib and enjoy Joe’s signature dish brought to you on trays by tuxedo-clad waiters. If you prefer, steaks, chops and chicken also are available, but you must end your meal with a slice of Joe’s key lime pie.

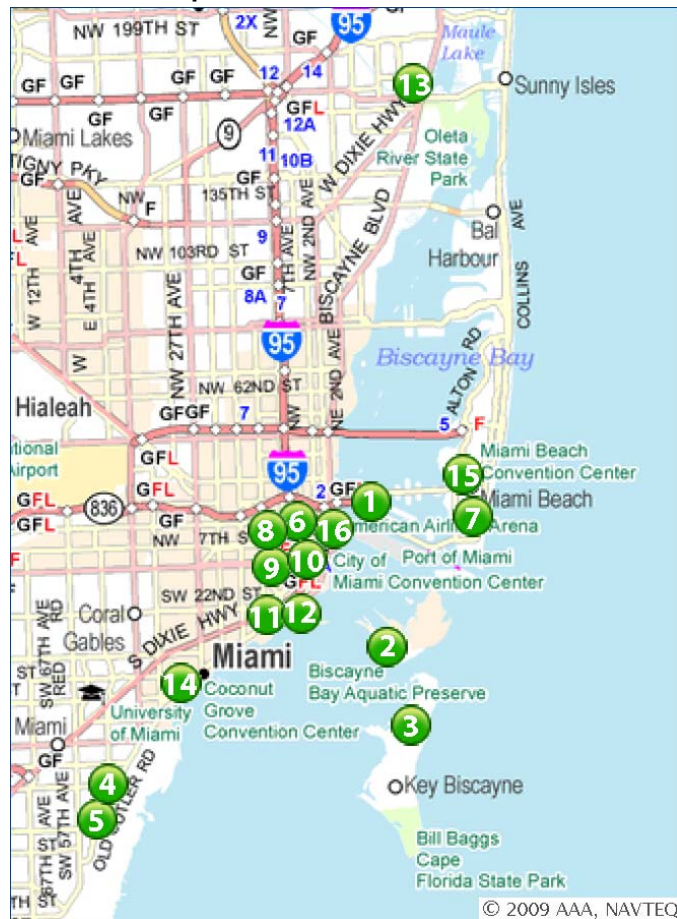
## Attractions

In a city with dozens of attractions, 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.”

Lush, tropical south Florida seems a “natural” for points of interest such as the AAA GEM attractions [Jungle Island](#) and [Miami Metrozoo](#). In



**Attractions Map**



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In addition to the rainbow-hued birds that are part of its name, cockatoos and macaws join collections of primates and reptiles at the former attraction as the star performers of stage shows in venues such as the Parrot Bowl. At Miami's zoo, the animals live in open-air, cageless settings designed to resemble their natural habitats. If Florida's typically muggy weather proves too much, visitors can see the zoo's residents from an air-conditioned monorail.

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



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

**1. Jungle Island**

1111 Parrot Jungle Tr  
Miami, FL 33132  
Phone: (305) 400-7000



**2. Miami Seaquarium**

4400 Rickenbacker Cswy  
Miami, FL 33149  
Phone: (305) 361-5705



**3. Crandon Park**

4000 Crandon Blvd  
Key Biscayne, FL 33149  
Phone: (305) 361-5421

**4. Matheson Hammock Park**

9610 Old Cutler Rd  
Coral Gables, FL 33156  
Phone: (305) 665-5475

**5. Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden**

10901 Old Cutler Rd  
Coral Gables, FL 33156  
Phone: (305) 667-1651



**6. Vizcaya Museum and Gardens**

3251 S Miami Ave  
Miami, FL 33129  
Phone: (305) 250-9133



**7. The Wolfsonian-Florida International University**

1001 Washington Ave  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Phone: (305) 531-1001

**8. Miami Art Museum**

101 W Flagler St  
Miami, FL 33130  
Phone: (305) 375-3000

**9. Miami-Dade Cultural Center**

101 W Flagler St  
Miami, FL 33130



**10. Historical Museum of Southern Florida**

101 W Flagler St  
Miami, FL 33130  
Phone: (305) 375-1492



**11. Main Library of the Miami-Dade Public Library System**

101 W Flagler St  
Miami, FL 33130  
Phone: (305) 375-2665

**12. Miami Science Museum**

3280 S Miami Ave  
Miami, FL 33129  
Phone: (305) 646-4234



**13. Ancient Spanish Monastery**

16711 W Dixie Hwy  
North Miami Beach, FL 33160  
Phone: (305) 945-1461

**14. The Barnacle Historic State Park**

3485 Main Hwy  
Coconut Grove, FL 33133  
Phone: (305) 442-6866

**15. The Holocaust Memorial**

1933-1945 Meridian Ave  
Miami Beach, FL 33139  
Phone: (305) 538-1663



**16. Island Queen Cruises**

401 Biscayne Blvd  
Miami, FL 33132  
Phone: (305) 379-5119

In addition to a parrot jungle, you also can find a [Monkey Jungle](#) in Miami. Since the 1930s hundreds of monkeys have roamed free here, swinging and chattering away as visitors meander through the park, observing the creatures' antics from protective screened walkways. Experience another up-close-and-personal look at nature at [Everglades Alligator Farm](#), south of Miami in Florida City, where your admission includes an airboat ride into the Everglades as well as alligator shows and feedings and a chance to bring back a souvenir photo featuring you and a cuddly infant gator or snake. Marine mammals are the focus at [Miami Seaquarium](#), a AAA GEM attraction on Biscayne Bay and a Miami fixture since 1955. This is the home of television star Flipper and his dolphin, whale and sea lion friends, who cavort in shows presented throughout the day.

The subtropical outdoors can also be appreciated at several nearby parks and gardens. Over the Rickenbacker Causeway on the barrier island of Key Biscayne is [Crandon Park](#), whose 2-mile expanse of white sand is consistently ranked among the nation's best beaches. Bring a picnic lunch and spend the day, or check out the park's nature preserve, tennis center or golf course. Coral Gables' contribution is [Matheson Hammock Park](#), on the shore of Biscayne Bay. The park is known for its manmade swimming lagoon and nature trails through a hardwood hammock and thickets of mangrove trees. You won't have far to drive to get to [Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden](#); a AAA GEM attraction it's conveniently next to Matheson Hammock Park. With 83 beautifully landscaped acres of rare palms, exotic plants, flowering vines, lily ponds, tropical fruits, lakes, cycads and a rain forest, the gloriously colorful garden is a treat to behold. A narrated tram tour is a great way to understand the scope of the garden.

Imagine having a national park practically in your backyard. That's the case with [Biscayne National Park](#), which is only 9 miles east of Homestead. Since 95 percent of the pristine park consists of water, a boat is necessary to see just about anything other than the visitor center. Not to worry, though. Glass-bottom boat tours and scuba and snorkeling expeditions start from the visitor center, which also has exhibits about the park's four ecosystems: bay, coral reef, keys and mangrove forest.

If you have time for a slightly longer side trip, another nearby national park is well worth the excursion to explore the state's amazing and shrinking natural ecology. The main entrance to [Everglades National Park](#), a AAA GEM attraction, is about 45 miles from downtown Miami, just outside Florida City. An escape from urban south Florida, this is the nation's largest remaining subtropical wilderness, sheltering many threatened or endangered plants and animals. Essentially a slow-moving freshwater river fed by Lake Okeechobee, the park is a labyrinth of mangrove waterways and saw grass marsh dotted with hammocks and salt prairies. The best way to see this fragile area is by following the 38-mile road from the [Ernest Coe Visitor Center](#) at the park's entrance to the [Flamingo Visitor Center](#); elevated boardwalks and well-marked trails along the way provide an opportunity to see more of the park's interior.

While you might not want to venture as far afield as Key West, it's difficult to resist visiting at least one of the closest of Florida's Keys. US 1, the Overseas Highway, links the mainland and Key Largo, where you'll find [John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park](#). An easy way to view the reefs and their brilliantly colored marine life is on a glass-bottom boat trip, or you could opt to snorkel or scuba dive for a closer view.

There's also plenty to do indoors in Miami. Sneaking a peek into the lifestyles of the rich and famous is always a guilty pleasure. Wealthy industrialist brothers James and Charles Deering, heirs to the International Harvester fortune, both established winter homes in Miami in the early 20th century. The two residences are now AAA GEM attractions.

James Deering built his bayfront retreat, [Vizcaya Museum and Gardens](#), to resemble a centuries-old Italian estate. Its 34 rooms are lavishly appointed with antiques and objets d'art carefully selected by Deering on multiple trips to Europe. Statuary and fountains enhance the 10 acres of formal gardens. Charles Deering bought, rather than built, his waterfront estate, then remodeled the two existing buildings and added an impressive Mediterranean Revival stone mansion to house his impressive collection of paintings, tapestries and furniture. His property, the [Deering](#)

Estate at Cutler, is now managed by the Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department and is used for education and recreation. The 450-acre grounds also include an archeological site, an Indian burial mound, hardwood hammocks, a mangrove forest and nature and canoe tours.

In a renovated Art Deco District warehouse built in the same time frame as the Deerings' homes, The Wolfsonian-Florida International University art museum focuses on objects created between 1885 and 1945, mainly in North America and Europe. The museum interprets these items—glass pieces, metalwork, textiles, fine art, furniture, rare books and postcards, to mention just a few—based on how they reflect contemporary culture and how that culture shaped their design.

#### Attractions Map



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The Miami Art Museum, one of the three components of the AAA GEM attraction Miami-Dade Cultural Center, is known for its collection of 20th- and 21st-century works by the culturally diverse artists who call Miami home and for the comprehensive traveling exhibits it mounts. The Historical Museum of Southern Florida, another part of the complex, explores the culture of south Florida and the Caribbean from a historical perspective. The museum's permanent exhibit, Tropical Dreams: A People's History of South Florida, chronicles 10,000 years using interactive displays, audiovisual presentations and hundreds of artifacts. The final element of the center is the Main Library of the Miami-Dade Public Library System which, in addition to cataloging important

**Attractions Details - Get additional information on [AAA.com](http://AAA.com);**  
**AAA Diamond Rating information available on [AAA.com/Diamonds](http://AAA.com/Diamonds)**



- GEM Attraction offers a *Great Experience for Members*



- Exclusive AAA member discounts available

#### 17. Miami Metrozoo

12400 SW 152nd St  
 Miami, FL 33177  
 Phone: (305) 251-0400



#### 18. Monkey Jungle

14805 SW 216th St  
 Miami, FL 33170  
 Phone: (305) 235-1611

#### 19. Everglades Alligator Farm

40351 SW 192nd Ave  
 Florida City, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 247-2628

#### 20. Biscayne National Park

9700 SW 328th St  
 Homestead, FL 33033-5634  
 Phone: (305) 230-7275

#### 21. Everglades National Park

40001 State Hwy 94  
 Homestead, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 242-7700

#### 22. Ernest Coe Visitor Center

40001 SR 9336  
 Homestead, FL 33034  
 Phone: (305) 242-7700

#### 23. Flamingo Visitor Center

1 Flamingo Lodge Hwy  
 Flamingo, FL 33034  
 Phone: (239) 695-2945

#### 24. John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park

US 1, Milepost 102.5  
 Key Largo, FL 33037  
 Phone: (305) 451-1202

#### 25. Deering Estate at Cutler

16701 SW 72nd Ave  
 Miami, FL 33157  
 Phone: (305) 235-1668





documents and books, contributes photographs and prints that further document local history. The Mediterranean-style cultural center was designed around an elevated plaza by noted architect Philip Johnson.

The [Miami Science Museum](#), an affiliate of Washington, D.C.'s, venerable Smithsonian Institution, offers visitors a chance to experience an Indiana Jones-style trek through Latin America and the Caribbean. The museum's permanent exhibit takes intrepid adventurers through jungles and the tomb of a Mayan king to discover archeological artifacts related to the natural and cultural history of the Americas. At the complex's planetarium, star shows and laser rock and multimedia presentations educate guests about astronomy and the night sky. Injured birds of prey, many of whom cannot be released back into the wild, have a home at the attraction's outdoor rehabilitation facility and wildlife center.

Two very different nearby historical sites are well-worth a short drive. The older, and certainly more traveled of the two, is the [Ancient Spanish Monastery](#), or, to use its official name, The Ancient Monastery St. Bernard de Clairvaux. It's probably a safe assumption that most monasteries remain at the location where they were built. Not so in this case. The saga begins in Segovia, Spain, where the monastery was completed in 1141; for almost 7 centuries it was occupied by Cistercian monks. After a period as a granary and stable, the cloisters and other buildings were purchased in 1925 by publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst, disassembled and shipped to the United States for use at his San Simeon, Calif., estate. Instead, the 11,000 crates ended up in Brooklyn, N.Y., where they remained in storage until they were sold to Miami developers in 1952. Now a North Miami Beach Episcopal church, the former monastery has displays of furniture and art and is a popular venue for weddings.



Not quite as old, [The Barnacle Historic State Park](#) in Coconut Grove contains the home built in stages 1890-1928 by early pioneer and yacht designer Commodore Ralph Munroe. The site is still surrounded by a hammock of native pines, trees and subtropical plants, just as it was when Munroe developed a craft that would skim the shallow waters of the coastal shoals and reefs. Munroe's home, topped with a barnacle-shaped roof, contains many family possessions; his boathouse, where he designed and built his boats, also can be seen.

The focal point of [The Holocaust Memorial](#), a AAA GEM attraction, is a 42-foot-high bronze forearm reaching toward the sky, as if grasping for life. Nearly 100 anguished figures can be seen clinging desperately to the sculpture, which is tattooed with a number from the Auschwitz concentration camp. The museum, conceived by a small group of Miami Holocaust survivors to commemorate the 6 million Jews who perished at the hands of Nazi Germany, was designed as a series of outdoor spaces, which also include an eternal flame and black granite panels etched with victims' names. Nobel laureate and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel was the guest speaker at the memorial's dedication.

If you prefer to avoid unwieldy maps and missed interstate exits yet still see Miami's highlights, consider a relaxing narrated sightseeing excursion offered by [Island Queen Cruises](#). Keep your camera handy as you sail along Biscayne Bay. You'll be able to create memories for your scrapbook from either an enclosed, air-conditioned salon or topside where you can enjoy the sun and ocean breeze as your yacht cruises past the scenic downtown Miami skyline; the Port of Miami; and Millionaire's Row, where celebrities live the good life in their palatial estates on Star and Fisher islands.

## 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.”

South Florida’s guarantee of year-round warm, sunny days makes Miami a natural for festivals of all types. Football fanatics start the year off right (especially if their team wins!) at the FedEx Orange Bowl, an early



January clash between two of the nation’s top-ranked collegiate teams. Being part of the Bowl Championship Series guarantees fans a top-notch match-up, in addition to a high-energy half-time spectacular. The contest’s name is somewhat of a misnomer, though, as

the game moved north from Miami’s venerable Orange Bowl to Land Shark Stadium (Dolphin Stadium) in 1996. The bowl game is a AAA GEM event.

South Beach’s whimsical architecture is the focus of mid-January’s Art Deco Weekend. Sponsored by the Miami Design Preservation League, the event promotes the culture and the unique design elements that constitute Miami Beach’s historic Art Deco District. Ocean Drive between 5th and 15th streets is closed for the duration of the event, all the better to appreciate the pastel-hued 1930s gems lining the street. Walking tours; a film series; lectures; music, dance and theatrical performances; a parade; and vendors with era-appropriate antiques and collectibles help reinforce the theme.

Two art festivals and a boat show fill the calendar during February. First up is the Miami Beach Festival of the Arts. Artists from across the country showcase their creations in a juried, open-air, weekend show on Ocean Terrace, on the beach a block east of Collins Avenue between 73rd and 75th streets. If you’re vacationing in Florida (or if you live here), chances are you came to be near the water or, better yet, on it. A boater’s idea of heaven surely must include the Miami International Boat Show. This 5-

day AAA GEM event, held at the Miami Beach Convention Center, brings together more than 2,300 manufacturers of boats, engines and boat-related accessories and a quarter of a million aficionados—a match made in heaven, so to speak. Whether you’re ready to buy or are just window shopping, you can find anything from personal watercraft to luxury yachts. If you prefer your boat to have sails, head to the show’s Strictly-Sail Miami at Miamarina at Bayside.

Slightly later in the month, the Coconut Grove Arts Festival, held in the tropical, eclectic village of the same name, is not only a AAA GEM event but one of the nation’s leading outdoor art festivals. Known for its trendy shopping and entertainment district, the Grove is the perfect setting for this 3-day affair featuring the works of more than 330 of the country’s premier artists and craftsmen. Art lovers can mingle with vendors while admiring their paintings; jewelry and metalwork; sculptures; photography; and glass, fiber, clay and wood works.

It takes 2 weeks in March to celebrate Carnaval Miami, a Hispanic extravaganza drawing revelers from around the world. Held mostly in the Little Havana section of Miami, the colorful fiesta features Latin music and culinary delights; parades; fireworks; and sporting events, including a domino tournament. The festivities culminate with Calle Ocho, said to be the nation’s largest street party. Twenty-three blocks of S.W. 8th Street in Little Havana are closed down to accommodate more than 30 stages from which salsa, merengue and Caribbean rhythms pulsate. Some estimates claim a million partygoers pack this gargantuan block party.

When spring arrives in Miami, the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition can’t be far behind. Known simply as The Fair, the 18-day event from mid-May into April is a family favorite. The 80-acre Fair Expo Center at Coral Way and 112th Avenue is where fairgoers can whoop it up on midway rides, chow down on corn dogs and cotton candy, survey blue ribbon-winning cows and apple pies, and try to win the elusive teddy bear at games of chance.

Coconut Grove, settled by Bahamian immigrants in the 1890s, celebrates its heritage with an early June weeklong carnival-like event, the

Miami/Bahamas Goombay Festival. The Grove's Grand Avenue more closely resembles Nassau's Bay Street during this rollicking street party, with junkanoo groups in brightly colored costumes dancing and parading in the streets to the vibrant rhythms of steel drums, cowbells and washboards. Street vendors lining the avenue hawk Bahamian foods, libations, arts and crafts.

The Homestead-Miami Speedway, south in nearby Homestead, is the site of the Ford Championship Weekend in mid-November. Three season-ending NASCAR races, including the Chase for the Sprint Cup Ford 400, draw the sport's biggest names and their legions of fans.

For a full week in late November bibliophiles gather at the Miami Dade College Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami to indulge their passion for the printed word. The Miami Book Fair International, one of the nation's largest such fairs and a booklover's delight, offers readings by authors from the United States and abroad, a rare book show and events for young readers.

## Things to Do

### Shopping

With its string of iconic, pastel-colored Art Deco hotels, Ocean Drive may be South Beach's most well-known street, but as SoBe's storied shopping district, Lincoln Road ranks a close second. The diversity of businesses along this rejuvenated shopping promenade is dizzying: ice cream parlors, coffee houses, restaurants serving an array of cuisines, art galleries, furniture stores, high-profile designer boutiques, unique shops and chain stores are all represented.

And when it comes to people-watching, the human diversity is just as striking. There's Miami's multicultural *mélange* of residents and the international visitors the city attracts. There are retirees and twentysomethings. There are wealthy society matrons dressed to the nines and beach bums in board shorts. There are conservatively dressed business people and fashionistas daring to wear the latest designs. You

might not see as many model-types as you would have in the 1990s, but spying a glamorous woman owning the sidewalk as if it were a runway in Milan is certainly not unusual.

Creating a very different mood just a couple blocks south is another, smaller pedestrian-only shopping district: the charming Española Way. Designed to look like a Spanish village, Española Way features colorfully painted Mediterranean-style buildings, lovingly restored and housing art galleries, clothing shops and restaurants. At night, strings of lights overhead make the setting especially romantic, and on weekends the street becomes an open-air market with vendors selling produce, flowers, jewelry and clothing.

The easiest place to park for both Lincoln Road and Española Way is in the large parking garage on 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue across from the Miami Beach City Hall. Lincoln Road is just south and Española Way is south of 15th Street between Washington and Jefferson avenues. The best way to get from Lincoln Road to Española Way is via Drexel Avenue.

Head to Miami Beach's northern tip for a shopping experience at Bal Harbour Shops in the upscale village of Bal Harbour. Its blank-walled exterior may not compare favorably to some of the more recently built outdoor shopping villages with their carefully executed ornamentation inside and out, but Bal Harbour Shops has been the destination for ritzy shopping in South Florida for more than 4 decades. And what it lacks on the outside is more than compensated for by its lushly landscaped interior courtyards with fountains, waterfalls and abstract sculptures—a modern and sophisticated setting. When your wanderings among the pricey boutiques and high-end department stores (Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue) become too much, there's always a seat at hand among the palm trees, tree ferns and orchids in bloom.

Across the bay, downtown Miami's Bayside Marketplace enjoys a prime waterfront location in the shadow of Miami's tallest buildings. The brightly colored outdoor shopping center offers a mix of typical suburban mall stores and vendors doing a brisk business selling tourist knickknacks to



the busloads of cruise passengers waiting to embark from the nearby terminal. On most afternoons and evenings, live bands on the Marina Stage create a festive atmosphere.

One of the most exciting changes in Miami recently has been the transformation of a bleak warehouse zone just north of downtown into the Wynwood Art District, home to more than 70 art galleries, artist studios and museums. Although the district covers several city blocks between Biscayne Bay and I-95 north of N.W. 20th Street, the majority of galleries are concentrated around N.W. 2nd Avenue and N.W. 24th Street. Not only does Wynwood figure prominently during Art Basel Miami Beach, the prestigious international contemporary art show held in early December, it also hosts a popular gallery walk every second Saturday evening of the month.

What the Wynwood Art District is to contemporary art, the Miami Design District is to stylish furniture showrooms and interior design stores, although there's a good bit of overlap between the two ever since art galleries and studios began proliferating here as well. Restaurants and exclusive clothing boutiques are among the latest arrivals to this roughly 18-block area north of Wynwood and I-195 between N.E 2nd and N. Miami avenues. And like Wynwood, the Design District also hosts a gallery walk every second Saturday evening of the month.

The tree-shaded sidewalks of Coconut Grove, a Miami neighborhood on Biscayne Bay south of downtown, entice shoppers to stroll from shop to shop, with a pause here and there for coffee or a bite to eat at one of the Grove's many restaurants. Although the area's glory days as a shopping destination seem to be behind it, and you'll likely find several store fronts vacant, you can still enjoy a pleasant afternoon of retail therapy here, particularly at the CocoWalk shopping center on Grand Avenue and Virginia Street, home to a variety of chain stores and restaurants.

Less than 3 miles away is Miracle Mile, a far more lively shopping district in downtown Coral Gables. Although the Gables is better known for its exclusive Mediterranean Revival-style housing communities and banyan tree-shaded streets, the downtown area centered along Coral Way,

known as Miracle Mile between Douglas and LeJeune roads, boasts several high-rise office buildings and hotels (also Mediterranean Revival-style). Still, the character of Miracle Mile seems more like a small town business district, with book stores, hair salons and bridal shops sprinkled in among the stores selling men's and women's apparel, housewares and furniture. Fountains mark the entrances to Miracle Mile, which is actually a mere half mile long, and at the western end you'll see the graceful curving colonnade and clock tower of Coral Gables City Hall, completed in 1928.

Another, much newer Mediterranean Revival-style landmark in the Gables, the Village of Merrick Park, is just over a mile south of city hall. Completed in 2002, this chic outdoor shopping village is centered about a large courtyard with fountains and statues and is landscaped with immaculate flower beds and ranks of stately royal palms. The largest retailers are Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom, which are joined by dozens of upscale boutique chains. During the day and into the early evening you can travel between Merrick Park and Miracle Mile aboard the free trolley that runs every 15 minutes along Ponce de Leon Boulevard.

## Nightlife

The glamorous life is as much a part of the South Beach mystique as palm trees, lapping ocean waves and Art Deco hotels. Once the sun goes down, that lifestyle takes on a whole new luster as the glitterati step out in designer clothes to sip cocktails and groove to booming music in ultra-stylish surroundings. Although the air of exclusivity is carefully cultivated—as it was during South Beach's earlier heyday in the 1930s, '40s and '50s when it was America's playground for the rich and famous—the reality isn't quite so intimidating, particularly if you start your evening before 11 p.m.

The area around the intersection of Collins Avenue and Lincoln Road specializes in chic nightspots, one of the most impressive being Rose Bar at the Delano Hotel (1685 Collins Ave.). The main entrance leads into a dramatic grand breezeway with lofty ceilings, massive columns, billowing white curtains and a series of seating areas characterized by comfy,

mismatched armchairs, oversized floor mirrors and a wall of flickering votive candles. Rose Bar is a cozy nook off the Delano's grand hallway bathed in red-tinged light coming mainly from the bar's translucent countertop. Have a drink here and continue through the breezeway past a restaurant and its patio dining area out to the narrow infinity pool surrounded by curtained cabanas, swaying palm trees and a series of whimsical roomlike seating areas complete with giant chess pieces, floor lamps, lanterns and hammocks. Phone (305) 672-2000.

Nearby at the Shore Club (1901 Collins Ave.)—another trendy boutique hotel with enough theatrical lighting and elegant décor for two hotels—is SkyBar, a great place for celebrity sightings if you can get in. Go there before 10 p.m. or on a weeknight, and you can dance in the aptly named Redroom with its luminous red walls and ball-bearing curtains without risk of bumping into the likes of Beyoncé or Lindsay Lohan, or anyone else for that matter if you get there too early. Skybar occupies the rear of the hotel and includes a Moroccan-themed garden area outdoors set amid lush screens of tropical foliage as well as pool- and beach-side bars. Phone (305) 695-3100.

Getting in is even more of a challenge at SET (320 Lincoln Road), but the effort is worth it. SET offers the real South Beach nightclub experience, something you might not expect judging from its plain-Jane exterior. If it weren't for the crowds waiting outside you might never find the place. Inside is a whole other world of light and sound that will likely leave your head spinning before you ever touch one of the pricey (though not by South Beach standards) cocktails.

The two-level club has enough spot lights, lasers, smoke machines, plasma screens, projectors and top-of-the-line speakers for a big-budget Hollywood movie set, which may be where it gets its name. From its main level—with its globular chandeliers and twin go-go girl platforms behind the bar—to the exclusive VIP Room and ultra-exclusive Trophy Room upstairs, the décor is posh and dramatically lit. Check into getting bottle service; purchasing that privilege may make sense if you have a party

small enough to fit at a reserved table but large enough to share the expense. Phone (305) 531-2800.

Several blocks south of Lincoln Road, Mango's Tropical Café (900 Ocean Dr.) offers a very different nightclub experience, but one no less saturated with local color. The Latin-Caribbean hotspot on beautiful, beachfront Ocean Drive serves up spicy Caribbean cuisine, tasty mojitos and dance numbers that get steamier—while the dancers' costumes get skimpier—as the evening progresses. Vibrant murals, garish lighting and lively entertainment help make Mango's a perennial tourist favorite. Phone (305) 673-4422.

Surf and sand is the theme at the appropriately named Nikki Beach (1 Ocean Dr.), near the southern tip of the island. The beautiful people love sunbathing in Nikki Beach's huge outdoor area with its cabanas, plush day beds and signature white teepees. The club regularly hosts parties and fashion shows, resident DJs play the latest dance music, and after night falls the party continues upstairs in the oceanfront complex's Club Nikki. Phone (305) 538-1111.

Should stepping out to South Beach's fabulous clubs (with their fabulous prices) begin to wear thin, head to one of the city's local haunts for a low-key alternative. Although Club Deuce Bar & Grill (222 14th St.) is just a short walk from the beach and Lincoln Road it offers a refreshing change of pace when all you want is a beer and a game of pool; phone (305) 531-6200. Likewise, The Abbey Brewing Co. (1115 16th St.), just a couple blocks off Lincoln Road, dispenses with all that high-end Collins Avenue frippery in favor of a dim, no-frills ambience where you can choose from among a handful of house recipe brews along with several imported draft beers; phone (305) 538-8110.

Of course, there's far more to the Miami nightclub scene than South Beach. In recent years nightlife across the bay in downtown has really taken off, and one of the first of the big clubs was Club Space (34 N.E. 11th St.), a two-level warehouse of a place with a state-of-the-art sound system and a regular lineup of top DJs from around the world. Space's unusual 24-hour liquor license allows it to keep the party going all night

long after other dance emporiums have closed. Space even hosts a popular Sunday-morning dance event on its outdoor Terrace where you'll find energetic clubbers who've been up all night mixing with those well-rested patrons who've come out to start their day with a cup of coffee and a healthy dose of throbbing house music. Phone (305) 375-0001.

If variety is indeed the spice of life, then the scene at The Vagabond (30 N.E. 14th St.) is four-alarm chili hot thanks to its eclectic rotation of bands and DJs playing hip-hop, indie rock, classic rock, house and even jazz, soul and funk depending on the night and sometimes the room you're in. There's a large dance floor, a lounge area with cushioned benches and a very popular patio with fire pits, a grill serving hamburgers and hotdogs for late-night sustenance and some coveted elbowroom when things get too crowded indoors. Although the area has gotten more upscale thanks to new high-rises in the neighborhood, it's still a little sketchy after dark. Take a cab rather than risk parking off the beaten path. Phone (305) 379-0508.

Another couple of blocks west on 14th Street is Karu & Y (71 N.W. 14th St.), a sophisticated South Beach-style club on the mainland. You might be tempted to leave a trail of breadcrumbs—or cocktail olives—as you wander through Karu & Y's maze of stylish bars, dance floors and garden retreats. The décor is upscale and generally Asian-themed; the outdoor areas are lush and furnished with cabanas and cushioned lounge chairs; and the theatrical lighting ranges from soothing to wild and psychedelic. There's even a tony restaurant with Dale Chihuly glass chandeliers and other artistic touches. But unless you're ready to shell out really big bucks for VIP treatment, be prepared to wait in line for a while and keep in mind that although the club is deluxe, the surrounding neighborhood is not. Phone (305) 403-7850.

Much easier on your wallet is Tobacco Road (626 S. Miami Ave.), a downscale Miami institution and neighborhood hangout near the Brickell financial district south of downtown that just happens to be the city's oldest bar. Housed in a low-profile building sandwiched in a row of other low-profile buildings in the shadow of high-rise condos and office towers,

this onetime speakeasy owes its reputation to its good food and nightly live music (mainly blues, jazz and rock). Phone (305) 374-1198.

## Spectator Sports

In addition to year-round sunshine and white, sandy beaches, Miami is blessed with an abundance of professional sport offerings, including four major-league teams. No matter what your preference might be, you'll find a venue and a crowd of like-minded fans ready to cheer on their favorites.

### Auto Racing

Homestead-Miami has a 2.2-mile oval track that is negotiated by some of the sport's top names.

### Baseball

Fans of the National League Florida Marlins passionately support their team during home games at Land Shark Stadium (Dolphin Stadium), 2267 Dan Marino Blvd., east of 27th Avenue in North Miami; phone (305) 623-6100. The Marlins brought the World Series title home to Miami in 1997 and 2003. The national pastime also is played locally in the college ranks when the University of Miami Hurricanes take the field on the UM campus at Mark Light Stadium.

### Basketball

The Miami Heat, 2006 NBA champions, have been a hot ticket in town since their 1988 debut. During their October to April season, the Heat play at the American Airlines Arena, downtown on Biscayne Boulevard adjacent to Bayside Marketplace; phone (786) 777-1000 for information.

### Football

Backed by legions of "dolfans," the Miami Dolphins suit up for battle at the 75,000-seat Land Shark Stadium (Dolphin Stadium); phone (954) 452-7000 for the Dolphins or (305) 623-6100 for the stadium. The University of Miami Hurricanes also call the stadium their home turf; phone (305) 643-7100. Despite five national championship titles, the 'Canes seldom fill up the stadium, so tickets are not difficult to come by.



### **Greyhound Racing**

The dogs average a swift 40 mph at Flagler Greyhound Track, 401 N.W. 38th Ct., year-round; phone (305) 649-3000.

### **Horse Racing**

Thoroughbreds run to the roar of the crowd December through May at Gulfstream Park, 901 S. Federal Hwy. in nearby Hallandale, about a half-hour drive north from downtown Miami. The scenic track, encircling an artificial lake, is host to numerous major races; phone (800) 771-8873.

The usual March-to-May season is extended at Calder Race Course, just south of County Line Road (SR 852) at 21001 N.W. 27th Ave., where the horses run from late April to early January on a 1-mile course in a glass-enclosed, air-conditioned sports facility. Phone (305) 625-1311 for specific starting and wrap-up dates.

### **Jai Alai**

In this high-speed, indoor version of lacrosse, players climb the walls to catch and hurl balls (*pelotas*) with woven baskets (*cestas*). Spectators place bets on the evening's players from behind a protective wall of glass. See the action for yourself at America's oldest jai alai arena (*fronton*), the Miami Jai-Alai Fronton, 3500 N.W. 37th Ave.; phone (305) 633-6400.

**Note:** Policies on admitting children to pari-mutuel betting facilities vary. Phone in advance for specific information.

### **Recreation**

A wealth of clear blue skies and a climate conducive to outdoor activity any time of the year make Miami a "hot" spot for those in search of fun in the sun. This tropical playground, with an average annual temperature of 76 F, comes equipped with aquamarine waters and more than enough land-based activities to suit all tastes.

### **Bicycling**

Few places offer such diverse cycling environments as Miami. Pedal the hard-packed sands of Miami Beach while enjoying the sun and sights, or

take the bicycle path that winds beneath a canopy of trees in Coconut Grove, where you can hop off and cruise through the neighborhood's colorful downtown area. Slightly more removed is the tropical escape of Key Biscayne. Here, on an island just 7 miles long and 2 miles wide, are 12 miles of bicycling trails. Bicycle rentals are available at all of the above locations; helmets are required for those under 17.

Experienced bicyclists desiring more extensive routes can contact the Miami-Dade Bicycle Pedestrian Program, which distributes maps about bicycling and bicycling safety and outlines some of Miami's more than 180 miles of bicycle trails; phone (305) 375-1647. A color-coded map of Miami-Dade County's suitable roads also is available.

### **Fishing**

An abundance of water naturally brings plenty of fishing opportunities, and the popularity of bridge fishing, seen all over Miami, is just a prelude to the opportunities available in a city where fishing is serious business. South Pointe Park in south Miami Beach offers excellent surf casting. Although bridge fishing generally is not allowed, it is permitted on the old Rickenbacker Causeway, which was left standing for that purpose when the new bridge was constructed for automobile traffic. Several piers in Miami Beach, as well as the Tamiami Canal, also are favorites of anglers.

Numerous marinas offer deep-sea fishing excursions, where avid anglers haul in prizes that range from snapper and bonito to big game catches like sailfish, tarpon and bluefish.

Kelley Fishing Fleet, 10800 Collins Ave. at Haulover Marina, provides party boats for half-day or full-day excursions out of Miami Beach; phone (305) 945-3801. Private charter boats abound at Haulover, with many offering 2-, 3- and 4-day fishing trips to the Bahamas; make the rounds and choose the one that suits your needs.

Licenses, required for freshwater fishing, are available at bait and tackle shops, sporting goods and discount department stores, as well as the county tax collector's office in the Miami-Dade County Courthouse, 140

W. Flagler St., Miami, FL 33130. Licenses also are available by mail; phone (888) 347-4356 (a credit card is required).

### **Golf**

More than 30 golf courses provide a wide choice of greens for hackers and seasoned golfers alike. Crandon Park Golf Course, 6700 Crandon Blvd. in Key Biscayne, (305) 361-9129, is recognized by most Florida golfers as the No. 1-ranked public course in the state; it also is among the top public links in the country. All courses listed below offer at least 18 holes and are open to the public.

Sites in the Miami area include Bayshore, 2401 Biarritz Dr. in Miami Beach, (305) 868-6502; Biltmore, 1210 Anastasia in Coral Gables, (305) 460-5364; Don Shula's Hotel and Golf Club, 6842 Main St. in Miami Lakes, (305) 821-1150; Doral Park Golf and Country Club, 5001 N.W. 104th Ave., (305) 591-8800; Golf Club of Miami, 6801 Miami Gardens Dr., (305) 829-8449; International Links Miami-Melreese, 1802 N.W. 37th Ave., (305) 633-4583; Killian Green, 9980 S.W. 104th St., (305) 271-0917; Miami Springs Golf Course, 650 Curtiss Pkwy. in Miami Springs, (305) 805-5180; and Miccosukee Golf & Country Club, 6401 Kendall Lakes Dr., (305) 382-3930.

The two city-owned Miami Beach courses welcome guests, and many hotels and motels have arrangements with private and semiprivate courses that allow guests to play.

### **Tennis**

Miami's balmy climate allows for year-round tennis dates, and nearly 500 public courts cater to the racket. A majority of the hotels and motels in Miami and Miami Beach have private tennis facilities for their guests. Nearly all charge an hourly fee for use by nonresidents.

Best bets include the Crandon Tennis Center, 7300 Crandon Blvd. in Key Biscayne, with hard courts; phone (305) 365-2300. Miami Beach's Flamingo Park Tennis Center, at Jefferson and 11th streets, offers 19 well-maintained clay courts; phone (305) 365-2300. For additional

information about public courts phone the Miami-Dade County Parks Department at (305) 755-7800.

### **Water Sports**

Whether you like zipping across its surface or exploring the world below it, everything you need to enjoy the water can be found in Miami, and all of it can be rented—from kayaks, windsurfers and boogie boards to catamarans, sailboats, personal watercraft and scuba equipment.

Many scuba and sail shops offer day-trip packages that include rental equipment and lessons for windsurfing, scuba diving and snorkeling. Sunken hulls, reefs and underwater gardens provide excellent opportunities for photography or exploration. North of Snapper Creek and south of Matheson Hammock Park is one of the better snorkeling sites. Another favorite location is near Fowley Rocks Light just south of Key Biscayne.

Boating is popular in Miami. Boats of all sizes and descriptions are for hire, whether for pleasure cruising, fishing or water skiing. Dinner Key and waterfront Coconut Grove are pristine and popular sites for launching sailboats. Other locations for sailboat rentals are available around the bay and on the Miami River. Boating events, whose locations and schedules are printed in area newspapers, take place throughout the year.

Powerboat rentals are available from Club Nautico at several locations: Tumberry Isle Marina in Aventura; Crandon Park Marina in Key Biscayne; and Miami Beach Marina, in Miami Beach, (305) 394-9099. Renters must be at least 21 years of age.

Water skiing and windsurfing instruction and equipment are available throughout the area. Many shops are clustered around the 79th Street Causeway (North Bay). Skiing is good all along the bay. Personal watercraft also can be rented. Surfing, while not the best in the country, attracts many enthusiasts. Two of the best spots are South Beach and Haulover Beach.

Some of the most popular white sand beaches in the Miami area are at Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park and Crandon Park. Miami Beach's oceanfront restoration program added 150 to 200 feet to the width of the city's 10.5-mile stretch of beach, southward from 87th Terrace to the south end of Miami Beach.

### **Performing Arts**

The 1981 development of the National Foundation for the Arts was the springboard for cultural evolution in south Florida. Patrons of the arts enjoy an expanding array of performing arts venues. Included are the handsomely refurbished Colony Theater on Lincoln Road in south Miami Beach, (305) 674-1040; the 1,710-seat, Moorish-styled Gusman Center for the Performing Arts, 174 E. Flagler Street in downtown Miami, (305) 374-2444; and the Art Deco Jackie Gleason Theater of the Performing Arts (known as "TOPA") on Washington Avenue in south Miami Beach, (305) 673-7300.

The Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County offers three theaters and an outdoor performance plaza showcasing everything from Broadway to opera, dance to drama and cabaret to comedy. The center is at 1300 Biscayne Blvd. in Miami; phone (786) 468-2000.

### **Dance**

Among the professional dance troupes in the Miami area is the Miami City Ballet, Florida's first fully professional resident ballet company. Artistic director Edward Villella premiered in the New York City Ballet under George Balanchine; works by Balanchine are included in the company's repertoire. Performances take place October through March at Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County; phone (305) 929-7010 for ticket information.

The professional dance company Ballet Flamenco La Rosa moves to a flamenco and Latin-style beat; for ticket and schedule information phone (305) 899-7729.

### **Music**

Miami Symphony Orchestra presents a dozen concerts each year; phone (305) 275-5666. Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas created the New World Symphony, the only advanced-training orchestra in the world as an interim step for young musicians who have completed their academic instruction. For subscriptions, season or single tickets phone (305) 673-3331, or phone the main office at (305) 673-3330.

### **Opera**

The celebrated Florida Grand Opera, 2901 W. Flagler St., which has provided South Florida with operatic performances since the early 1940s, offers productions in the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts of Miami-Dade County; phone (800) 741-1010. Included among those honored during the opera's International Series are Placido Domingo and Luciano Pavarotti. Promising singers make their mark in lead roles during the lower-priced National Series.

### **Theater**

Area Stage Company presents off-Broadway plays throughout the year; phone (305) 666-2078. Actor's Playhouse offers year-round productions for adults and children and is host to the National Children's Theatre Festival; phone (305) 444-9293.

## **Insider Info**

### **Art Deco in South Beach**

South Beach comprises the area from 21st Street down to 1st Street near the tip of Miami Beach. Within its confines lingers the Art Deco District, a distinctive neighborhood where flat-roofed, stucco buildings are crowned with soaring finials and stepped parapets, and many sport such distinguishing architectural touches as porthole windows and edgy geometric patterns.

"SoBe," also known as America's Riviera, draws a trendy social mix of models, paparazzi, locals, bohemians, producers, vacationers, inline skaters, drag queens and celebrities. Alfresco cafes serve with a European flair. Funky shops line Collins Avenue. And there is an ever-



changing number of fashionable nightclubs in which to dance the night away. The blossoming artists' colony on Lincoln Road attracts a sophisticated, international crowd, and the street's pedestrian mall, full of hip retail shops and superb restaurants, is an especially pleasant place to browse. Everything is within walking distance, so there's no need for a car.

How did this once dowdy beachside venue become the toast of Miami? The answer lies within the fanciful Art Deco hotels, built during the 1930s and '40s as an answer to Depression era blues. But the fanciful seaside lodgings languished by the 1980s, their facades crumbled and paint peeling. Developers were set to raze the buildings, a fate that seemed likely until conservationist Barbara Baer Capitman intervened. Her associate, Leonard Lazar Horowitz, had an idea to cover the drab brown and tan exteriors with playful hues of lavender, pink, melon and mint, literally transforming Ocean Drive with a paintbrush. A community was dazzled, and investors took notice. The rest is real estate—and preservation—history.

The term Art Deco, which was not coined until 1968, is derived from a 1925 French design fair, the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes. Two other words from the name of that gathering—industrial and modern—pretty much sum up what Art Deco architecture is all about. Early Art Deco buildings (mid-1920s to mid-1930s) are characterized by angular and geometric shapes and decorative ornamentation, much of which was inspired by ancient Egyptian art. The later style (late 1930s to early 1940s), commonly called “streamline,” is distinguished by rounded corners, expanses of light-catching glass, banded stripes and, frequently, nautical motifs. Colorful neon lights emphasize these architectural details. The largest concentration of renovated Art Deco gems can be found along a 10-block stretch of Ocean Drive from 5th to 15th streets.

The organization Capitman founded in 1976, the Miami Design Preservation League, sponsors the annual Art Deco Weekend festival in January as well as the Art Deco Welcome Center at 1001 Ocean Dr. Ninety-minute guided walking tours, led by local architects and historians, depart several times a week from the center. Or, if you want to explore on

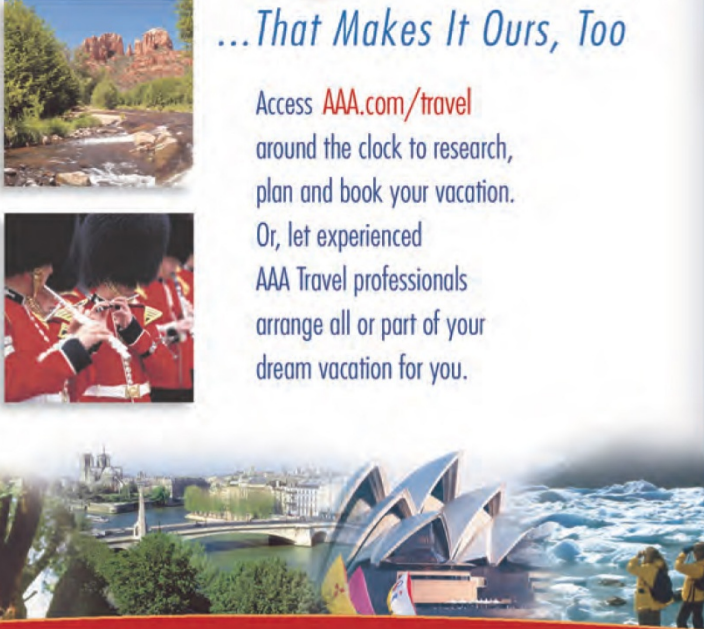
your own, the league also has self-guiding audio tours that introduce visitors to the district's distinctive architecture.

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