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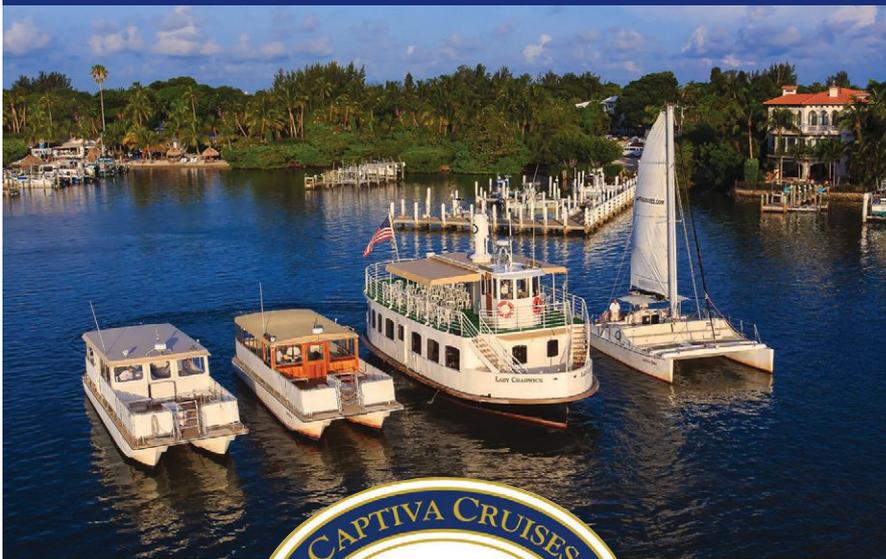
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Sanibel & Captiva

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Sanibel & Captiva Islands

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Welcome...

From the Chamber Board

We invite you to begin your island adventure in this guide, through the words and images of the people who live here and love it. Let islanders take you to their secret spots and cherished memories within the captivating realm of Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

Here, Mother Nature has created a masterpiece of soft white sand, soothing gulf breezes and natural beauty. Enjoy miles of scenic bike paths that meander along the gulf and wind through wildlife habitat and quiet neighborhoods. Canoe or kayak unspoiled waterways, home to the endangered manatee and hundreds of varieties of birds. Splash and swim in the sun-kissed Gulf, gather shells along the beach, or simply stretch out under a cabana.

The best way to experience this paradise, of course, is to stay here on the islands. Choose among seaside cottages, luxurious resorts, beachfront villas and condos, comfortable hotel rooms—and then unpack and enjoy the natural beauty!

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors of the Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce, thank you for exploring our island sanctuary.

Aaron Pruss

Chair, Board of Directors

From the City of Sanibel

On behalf of the entire team of elected and appointed city officials and employees who work each day to protect and maintain the quality of life in our community, we welcome you to Sanibel.

The City of Sanibel is a unique and special town. It was incorporated in 1974, and residents chose the council-manager form of government. Five island residents are elected to the legislative governing body, City Council, on staggered terms. The city's mayor is elected annually by fellow council members. City Council hires a city manager to oversee city operations.

Sanibel is a barrier island sanctuary where over 67 percent of the lands on the island are protected through federal or municipal government or private foundation ownership. Our municipal government is committed to preserving an environment where our diverse population lives in harmony with the island's wildlife and natural habitats. To this end, Sanibel has adopted laws and ordinances that we enforce to maintain our community.

Due to the island's delicate ecosystem, each of us has a responsibility to enjoy but not destroy Sanibel. The laws and codes that protect Sanibel apply equally to visitors as well as residents. If you have any questions about the city's regulations while you are here, you are invited to call the Sanibel Police Department at (239) 472-3111.

If you would like more information about the municipal government on Sanibel, you are welcome to visit City Hall at 800 Dunlop Roads or visit our Web site at www.mysanibel.com.

Best wishes for a rewarding, safe and pleasant stay.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ruane

Mayor



Stop...

and see us at the Visitor Center

As soon as you begin to cross the Sanibel Causeway, pelicans, gulls and terns herald your arrival with a wave of the wing, right alongside your car. Drive slowly to protect them and watch the water for a dolphin welcome. Then look for the Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce Francis P. Bailey Visitor center on your right as you drive onto the island. It's a colorful island-style building. Stop in to say "hi." Our staff can answer all of your questions 365 days a year and will make you feel right at home. Even after office hours, we serve you with an outdoor phone for local calls and information packs. When you can't visit in person, call (239) 472-1080 or explore our Web site (www.sanibel-captiva.org).

The Francis P. Bailey, Jr. Visitor Center on Sanibel has been named one of only thirteen official Florida Certified Tourism Information Centers in association with a new VISIT FLORIDA program.

The VISIT FLORIDA Certified Tourism Information Centers (CTICs) Program brings VISIT FLORIDA recognition to Visitor Services facilities around the state, providing these facilities and their staff with benefits that enable successful promotion of travel to and throughout Florida.

**Please Stop by the
Sanibel & Captiva Islands
Francis P. Bailey, Jr.
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Just ^{the} Facts



We have all the answers!

Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com

How big are the islands? The driving distance from one end of Sanibel Island to the other is roughly 12 miles long. It measures less than 3 miles across at its widest point. Captiva Island is smaller at under 5 miles long and almost a 1/2-mile at its widest.

Where is the Chamber Visitor Center? The Sanibel Causeway bridges (which carry a toll for vehicles coming ONTO the islands only) lead to Causeway Road on Sanibel Island. The Sanibel and Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce and Francis P. Bailey Visitor Center is located at the second driveway on the right. The center is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day of the year.

How do I find my way around the islands? It's easy! At the four-way stop after the Chamber, **Causeway Road** intersects with **Periwinkle Way**, one of two main Sanibel Island roads that roughly parallel each other. Periwinkle is the main business route. In either direction, it leads to shopping and dining. Follow it east (left off Causeway Road) and you will enter the quiet Olde Sanibel neighborhood, ending up at the Sanibel Lighthouse and its beach park. To the west of Causeway Road lies the main commercial district. From the four-way stop go straight ahead to reach Gulf Drive.

Another major route, **Gulf Drive** wanders past resorts, beaches and homes

near water's edge. It is segmented into East, Middle and West Gulf Drive, the latter of which dead-ends. (Take Rabbit Road off of it to get to **Sanibel-Captiva Road**, a.k.a. San-Cap Road), Sanibel's third major thoroughfare. Periwinkle Way links via Palm Ridge Road or Tarpon Bay Road, to San-Cap Road, which continues to Captiva Island.

San-Cap Road, Sanibel's "conservation corridor," passes The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation Center (SCCF), J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Clinic for Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW), other small preserves and the turn-off to Bowman's Beach.



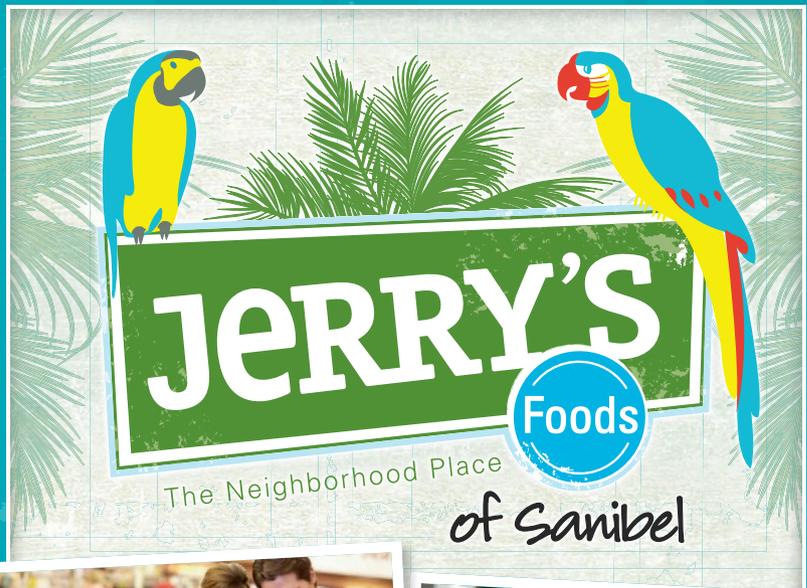
Instagram Alert

Your first Sanibel-Captiva Island selfie? On the Sanibel Causeway, of course. Especially at sunset #wherethesunsleeps. Look for suggestions for Instagram shots and selfie spots that are bound to get you "hearted" throughout this visitor guide. Tag @sancapchamber so we can like your photos. Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/SanibelCaptivaChamber.

Once you cross the short bridge to Captiva Island at scenic Blind Pass, the road becomes **Captiva Drive**. Follow it north and you will find two public beach accesses plus resorts, restaurants and shops.

Where's the Beach? Find public beach accesses at the following locations:

- **Causeway Islands Beach Park** – both sides of Causeway Road
- **Lighthouse Beach** - east end of Periwinkle Way
- **Gulfside City Park** - on Algiers Lane off Casa Ybel Road



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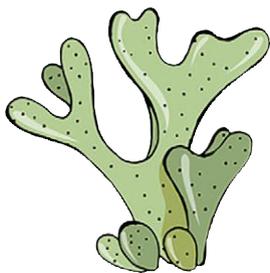
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1700 Periwinkle Way
Sanibel Island, FL 33957



- **Tarpon Bay Beach** - south end of Tarpon Bay Road at West Gulf Drive; parking lot to the north on Tarpon Bay Road
- **Bowman's Beach** - off Sanibel-Captiva Road, around MM 5, on Bowman's Beach Road
- **Turner Beach** - on Captiva Drive, on the left at Blind Pass and the short bridge between Sanibel and Captiva
- **Alison Hagerup Beach Park** (Captiva Beach) - end of Captiva Drive



Island Secret

The toll for driving onto the Sanibel Causeway is \$6 round trip. Visitors planning to stay an extended period of time, or who will be making frequent trips across, can purchase an inexpensive transponder that will save money on each trip. It also works on other Florida toll roads. For more information visit www.leewayinfo.com.

What should I pack to wear? Keep it casual. Our easy-going, outdoor lifestyle translates into comfortable and informal attire. Shorts and flip-flops are the accepted "island uniform." Restaurants range from simple outdoor cafés to elegant candlelit dining rooms; none requires jackets or ties. Retail establishments generally request shirts and shoes.

What else should I pack? Bring swimsuits, cover-ups, sunglasses, a sundress or two, lightweight collared shirts, T-shirts, tank tops, and hats to shade your face and head. In winter, slacks and a light wrap will complete your vacation wardrobe. If you plan on boating, bring something warmer and wind-breaking. Don't forget your favorite beach and water toys—snorkel and mask, skim board, body board, sand bucket and shovel, Frisbee® and inflatables. If you'd rather not lug all that, don't worry—a number of stores can supply them.

How's the weather? Our winters are mild (average daytime temperatures in the 70s and low 80s) and dry (just enough rain to keep our islands lush). Summer temperatures, ranging from the 80s to mid-90s, are tempered by cooling sea breezes and brief showers, followed by more sunshine and glorious sunsets. See the Weather Report (page 14) for a year-round meteorological snapshot. Or visit our Web site (www.sanibel-captiva.org) for current conditions.

Is lightning a problem? Thunderstorms and lightning are common summer occurrences in Florida. They are lovely to watch—from inside. At the first rumbles of thunder, seek shelter; lightning strikes far beyond the center of a storm. Never stay in the water once you hear thunder.

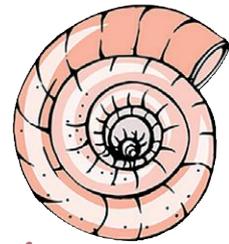
How about tropical storms? The good news is that tropical storms and hurricanes come rarely and with enough advance notice to change your plans or safely evacuate if necessary. Hurricane season is June through November, with August and September usually being the most active months in Southwest Florida.

How do I prevent getting burned by the sun? Begin your sun days with a high sunscreen-protection factor (SPF) lotion or ultraviolet-protection factor (UPF) clothing. For children and fair skin, use no less than waterproof 30 SPF lotion. Re-apply sunscreen after swimming and at regular intervals throughout the day. Hats and sunglasses provide additional protection for the face. Use zinc ointment for noses and other sensitive and highly exposed areas.

The sun is strongest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Don't be fooled by clouds and haze; they intensify rather than soften the sun's effect. Being in and around the water also increases the burning potential of the sun's rays. Cool minor burns with an aloe vera product. If immediate blistering occurs, seek medical attention.

Any other advice for weathering the sun and heat? Staying hydrated is crucial in semitropical climes. If you plan on biking, golfing, playing tennis or pursuing other outdoor activities, drink at least 12 ounces of water before you step out the door. Carry a reusable water bottle with you at all times, even if you are only walking or lying on the beach. After coming in from the sun, drink beyond satiation, and continue to do so throughout the day. Avoid alcohol, which is dehydrating. Juice and soda are okay, but water or sports drinks work best.

A car in Florida can become fatally hot. It is unlawful to leave small children and pets in cars in Florida for that reason. Never leave a child or pet in a car alone, even with the windows cracked, even if you're "just running in" to the convenience store.



Island Secret

Avoid traveling on and off island at peak travel times, especially during the winter season. To check live video feed of island traffic conditions, visit sanibel-captiva.org/sanibel-island-webcams or download the free SanibelBound app.

Are there medical facilities on the islands? Sanibel Medical Inc., at 2499 Palm Ridge Road, (239) 395-2005, sanibelmedical.com accepts appointments and walk-ins. HealthPark Medical Center (239) 343-5000, www.leehealth.org, a full-service facility with its own children's hospital, lies about 15 minutes from Sanibel Island on the mainland. The emergency room stays open 24 hours.

Where can I get a cash advance? The following Sanibel banks offer cash advances against credit cards and have ATM machines:

- Bank of America, 2450 Periwinkle Way; (239) 472-2800, (800) 432-1000; www.bankofamerica.com
- Bank of the Islands, 1699 Periwinkle Way; (239) 472-7211, (800) 359-9034; www.bankoftheislands.com
- Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, 2475 Library Way, (239) 472-6100; www.sancapbank.com; branch at 1037 Periwinkle Way, (239) 472-6150. (ATMs at Bailey's Shopping Center and the branch office).
- Wells Fargo, 2407 Palm Ridge Road; (239) 472-7100, (800) 869-3557; www.wellsfargo.com

Where can I send and receive money by cable? You can find Western Union on Sanibel Island at Bailey's General Store, 2477 Periwinkle Way at Tarpon Bay Road, (239) 472-1516. To reach Western Union directly: (800) 325-6000; www.westernunion.com.



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Where can I find Federal Express stations? Drop boxes/services are located at:

- 1101 Periwinkle Way (Treetop Center)
- 1456 Periwinkle Way (Qwik Pack & Ship, 239-472-0288)
- 1648 Periwinkle Way (Island Medical & Business Center)
- 2422 Palm Ridge Road (SanCap Pak 'N' Ship, 239-395-1220).

To contact Federal Express directly:
Federal Express: (800) 238-5355; www.fedex.com.



Island Secret

A bonus to using the Post Office services at Jerry's: Caged exotic, often chatty birds fill the lush courtyard outside.

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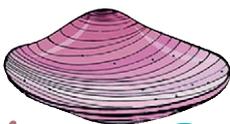
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Where can I get free wireless Internet access? Most island accommodations now have wi-fi access, so check with your hotel first. Other known locations for free access include:

- Cantina Captiva – 14970 Captiva Drive
- Captiva Memorial Library – 11560 Chapin Lane
- Coffee Bar @ Bailey’s – 2477 Periwinkle Way
- Green Flash Restaurant – 15183 Captiva Drive
- Jerry’s Foods – 1700 Periwinkle Way
MacIntosh Books & Paper – 2330 Palm Ridge Road
- Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce – 1159 Causeway Road
- Sanibel Bean – 2240 Periwinkle Way
- Sanibel Café – 2007 Periwinkle Way
- Sanibel Deli & Coffee Factory – 2330 Palm Ridge Road #2
- Sanibel Public Library – 770 Dunlop Road
- Timbers Restaurant/Sanibel Grill – 703 Tarpon Bay Road.

Where is the post office? You can find postal services at three locations on the islands:

- Main Sanibel Post Office: 650 Tarpon Bay Road; (239) 472-1573 or (800) 275-8777. Hours: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday; 10 a.m.-noon Saturday
- Captiva Post Office: 14812 Captiva Drive; (239) 472-1674. Hours: 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Monday-Friday
- A contract Post Office is located inside Jerry’s Foods, 1700 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel; (239) 472-9300. Post Office hours: 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday-Friday; 8-10:30 a.m. Saturdays



Island Secret

The Sanibel Public Library recently completed its \$5.9 million Library Reimagined makeover to serve the needs of modern-day readers and researchers.

Where are there libraries? The islands boast two modern libraries with full services:

- Captiva Memorial Library, 11560 Chapin Lane; (239) 472-2133
- Sanibel Public Library: 770 Dunlop Road, Sanibel; (239) 472-2483

Who do I call in case of emergency? Police, fire, medical emergencies: Dial 911
TDD: Dial 911

Weather REPORT

Source: www.weather.com



Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com

AVERAGE MONTHLY AIR TEMPERATURES

(Degrees Fahrenheit)

Month	High	Low
January	75	54
February	77	56
March	80	59
April	85	63
May	89	69
June	92	74
July	92	75
August	92	75
September	91	74
October	87	69
November	81	62
December	77	56

AVERAGE AIR TEMPERATURES

(Degrees Fahrenheit)

84.9 annual high temperature
65.5 annual low temperature

AVERAGE ANNUAL WATER TEMPERATURES

(Degrees Fahrenheit)

Source: Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau
78 average annual temperature
71 average fall/winter temperature
84 average spring/summer temperature
66 average winter low temperature
87 average summer high

NORMAL MONTHLY RAINFALL

Month	Inches
January.....	1.9
February	2.2
March	2.9
April	2.2
May.....	2.6
June.....	10.1
July.....	9.0
August.....	10.1
September	8.3
October.....	2.9
November.....	2.0
December.....	1.7
Annual.....	55.9



VACATION RENTALS AND SALES

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Located on Sanibel Island, Florida, SBL Vacations provides a variety of high quality, meticulously maintained vacation rental homes and condos.

But unlike any other, we add value by offering you “one-stop shopping” for your wants and needs — from bikes to paddleboards and kayaks — delivered right to your door.

Or just check in and *Relax.*

SBL Realty Group, LLC

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2330 Palm Ridge Road, Suite 13
SBLVacations.com

SBL Outfitters

2330 Palm Ridge Road, Suite 14
sblvacations.com/recreational-toys

239-579-0348



Pelican's Perch
3 bed, 3 bath, sleeps 10, pet-friendly, pool



South Seas Lands End Village 1657
2 bed, 2 bath, sleeps 6, golf cart, community pool and tennis

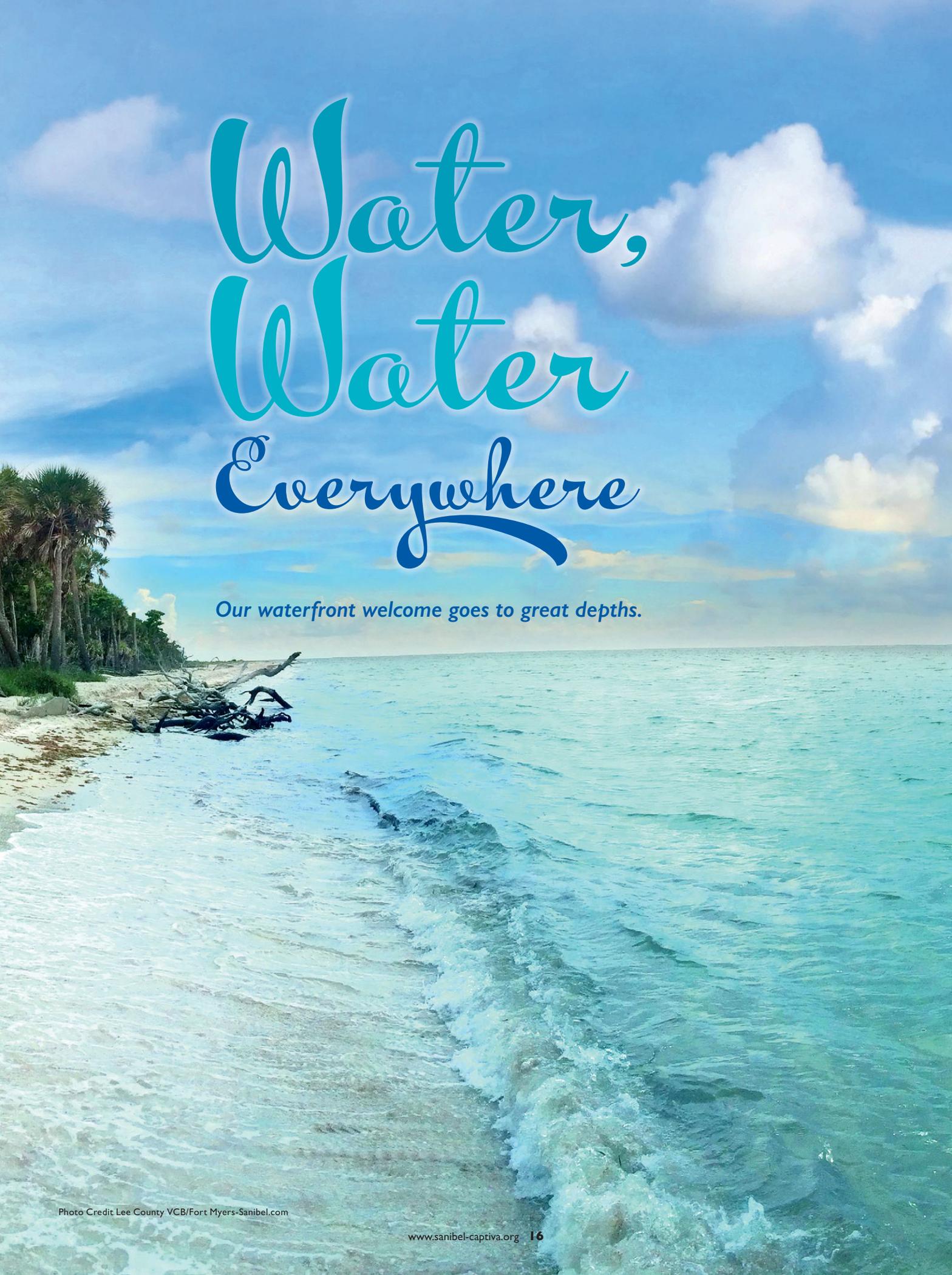


Sanibel Surfside 122
2 bed, 2 bath, sleeps 4, gulf front



Dream big.

Let us handle the details.



Water, Water Everywhere

Our waterfront welcome goes to great depths.



With the Gulf of Mexico on one side, San Carlos Bay on the other, the Sanibel River, Tarpon Bay and plenty of wetlands, the islands literally wallow in water—water that sparkles at times like precious gemstones. For visitors, that means practically unlimited opportunity to play in, on and around our liquid assets.

Sanibel counts among a select few barrier islands in Florida with a freshwater river, which is why it attracts more wildlife—particularly alligators, river otters and bobcats—than others. The river, which flows through Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) property, is a hidden secret among local paddlers looking for quietude and bird life.

Fertile estuaries, where salt and fresh water mingle, make rich breeding grounds and nurseries for myriad species of fish and birds. In fact, within J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, the brackish mangrove waters underlie a worldwide reputation among birders.

Rookery islands punctuate the Refuge’s Tarpon Bay, where the official Refuge concession rents paddlecraft and conducts kayaking, stand-up paddleboarding and nature boat tours. Sunset time is best, when the birds come home to roost for the night. By day, manatees, dolphins and the rare small-tooth sawfish flit through the bay. Commodore Creek Trail winds from the bay into the mangroves for rare views of Refuge back waters.

The islands’ calm bay waters make it a much-lauded destination for paddling and fishing alike. Anglers cast from Sanibel Causeway Island Parks, the Blind Pass bridge between Sanibel and Captiva and the Lighthouse Beach Park fishing pier.

The beach at the latter, Sanibel’s easternmost point, wraps from bay to the island’s warm and irresistible Gulf of Mexico front, home to leaping dolphins, gliding rays and shorebirds by the flock. The mildly breaking Gulf—a playground for all types of water sports enthusiasts—laps more than 15 miles of white-sand, award-winning beach known for its shelling, natural beauty and romance.

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Heartthrob Beaches

Most people begin their island love affair at the seashore. It is seductive without working at it—in a quiet, natural, come-hither way. Muddles of seaweed and shells make beachcombing a game of seek-and-find. Great blue herons strut the beach as if they own it. Sea oats stand wispy sentinel. Kids clump wet mounds of sand to fashion into visions of happily-ever-after dreams. Bright umbrellas prop against striped beach chairs. Float toys bob on gentle waves. A stretch of white tapers off into the distance—as far as the eye can see, blurred like a watercolor painting bordered by cerulean blue on the top and dreamy aqua at the bottom.

Sanibel and Captiva Islands create the quintessential beach experience. Warm climes, mellow waves, near-shore sandbars, Instagram sunsets and a bounty of shells endear travelers to our beaches—some of Florida’s most visually uncluttered and highly rated.

The islands maintain a low-impact philosophy at their beaches. Restrooms are located at most public accesses. Some parks have picnic tables tucked away off the sand, so as not to interfere with sea turtle nesting. Parking at most beach accesses costs \$5 an hour for visitors without resident stickers on their vehicles. Beach parks stay open 24 hours, but no overnight parking is allowed. For volleyball, watersports rentals and other beach activities, walk along the beach to the nearest large resort.

Here is the honor roll of Sanibel and Captiva’s comely beaches listed alphabetically.

Alison Hagerup Beach Park (a.k.a. Captiva Beach) A favorite spot for sunset, its main access lies close to restaurants and watersports rentals. *The limited parking lot is located at the end of Captiva Drive.*

Blind Pass/Turner Beach It straddles the pass between Sanibel and Captiva Islands and is popular with shellers, fishermen, sunset-gazers and, when there

are waves, surfers. Signs warn against swimming around the pass because of swift currents. Public parking is limited. *Located off Sanibel-Captiva Road/Captiva Drive at Blind Pass.*

Bowman’s Beach Known for its wildlife and seclusion, it is especially popular with shellers and nesting birds and sea turtles; it also has a playground and picnic area near the parking lot for families. To reach it from the capacious parking lot, you must hike through a wooded area and over an estuary bridge. *Located off Sanibel-Captiva Road on Bowman’s Beach Road.*

Causeway Islands Park Terrific for swimming, fishing, windsurfing and kite-surfing, it’s also handy for picnicking: Pull your vehicle right to water’s edge, free of charge (other than Causeway tolls for oncoming vehicles). *Located along both sides of Causeway Road on two separate islands.*

Gulfside City Park Picnic tables and a pavilion, shady trees, safe waters and an interpretive loop nature trail make this beach inviting to families. Parking fees apply to all vehicles, including those with

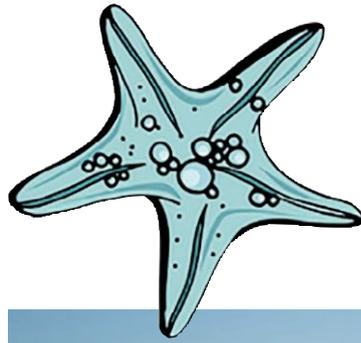


resident stickers. In the summer, this is a popular beach for loggerhead turtles, whose nests volunteers stake off. Located on Algiers Lane off Casa Ybel Road.

Lighthouse Beach Park Site of a functioning historic lighthouse, it wraps around Gulf to bay at the eastern tip of Sanibel Island. A newly restored T-dock on the bay side attracts fisherfolk; a boardwalk nature trail offers glimpses of beach and coastal habitat. Located at the east end of Periwinkle Way.

Resident Beaches Signs along the Gulf Drives on Sanibel Island mark small parking lots and beach accesses reserved for residents with permit stickers or beachgoers arriving by foot or bike. These are the islands' least visited, most secluded beaches because they lack restrooms and, for the most part, run past residential homes rather than resorts.

Tarpon Bay Beach Popular and easily accessible, it offers parking for recreational vehicles and cars. The lot is a short hike to the beach; travel lightly or drop off at the entrance before parking. Located at the south end of Tarpon Bay Road at West Gulf Drive; parking on Tarpon Bay Road.



Island Secret

In 2017, J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge unveiled an interpretive kiosk at Gulfside City Park, near the picnic pavilion, with a hands-on guide to local shells, birds, sea turtles and other beach life.





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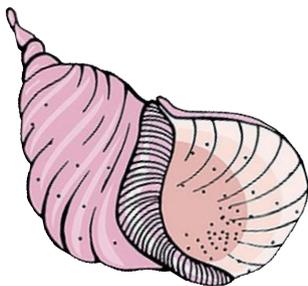
These islands' identity and their seashells are inextricably intertwined and have been since the dawn of man. In prehistoric days, Calusa tribesmen came to collect shells, which they used for food, tools and structural foundations.

Nearly 80 years ago, Granny Matthews (namesake of the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum) organized the earliest Shell Fairs in the lobby of her hotel, today's Sanibel Inn. She initiated a tradition of islanders helping visitors appreciate their shells, a tradition that continues today in our wash of shell shops, shelling tours, shelling organizations and annual Shell Festival (see "Celebrate," page 60).

The islands rank number one on the continent for their beach shelling simply because of geography. You see, Sanibel Island itself bends, a lot like those doubled-over shellers striking the classic island stances known as the Sanibel Stoop and Captiva Crouch. Rather than running parallel to mainland, like the more orderly islands in their offshore parade, Sanibel breaks rank.

The east-west torque of its south end acts like a roadblock for all the shells that the Gulf imports from the Caribbean and other southern seas. The abundance and variety of shells have made the islands shell-crazed. People come from all over the world, drawn by the song of the seashell.

Throughout the year, shell shops sell seashells by the thousands. Shells are the dominant motif in island décor and boutique gifts. You will find everything from intricately crafted Sailor's Valentines to toilet seats lacquered with seashells. (No home should be without one!)



Island Secret

In 2012, to celebrate its 75th anniversary, the Shell Festival (then known as the Shell Fair) organized an island-wide Sanibel Stoop that placed as the largest treasure hunt game for Guinness World Records.



Photo by Captain Brian Holaway

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Photos by Rob Hoovis - Old Sparky Productions

Visit Our New Welcome Center

Old-island meets high-tech

It still greets visitors at the threshold to Sanibel Island with an old-island, cottage-style welcome. But when return guests walk in the front door, they are in for a big surprise. A big pleasant surprise.

The Sanibel & Captiva Island Chamber of Commerce has leaped into the realm of 21st-century travel, where digital information, videos, touchscreens, social media and mobile-device interaction create a state-of-the-art visitor experience.

In November 2018, the Chamber completed a modern makeover of its Welcome Center at 1159 Causeway Road. Although the bulk of the improvements lies in new technology that is user-friendly and appealing to the eye, the entire first floor underwent a total strip-down and green redesign.

The front desk has been converted from its horseshoe shape to a kiosk-style

configuration. In contrast to all that's ultra-modern within, the new décor reflects the islands' rich history. Wood flooring has an endearingly timeworn look, while painted white boards line the walls for a completely fresh island feel. One wall promises to be a hit with selfie-snappers: A vintage-style mural painted by local artist Pam Brodersen features an antique map, island hot spots and local wildlife celebs such as dolphins and roseate spoonbills.

But don't put your smartphones away yet. The Chamber's four touchscreens are designed to turn your mobile devices into virtual island travel guides. Access electronic maps, menus and brochures to email or text to your device. Create a custom itinerary with the Welcome Center's OmniExperience software, and you are on your way to the best possible island experience to fit your specific style.

More than 30 different screens within the Center display sharp imagery and video footage of the treasures you can expect to experience during your visit to Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

For those who prefer the concrete and human interaction to the electronic, Chamber information volunteers will still be ready with recommendations, guides and paper brochures from island businesses to grab and go.

"Although this technology is designed for the next generation of travelers, we make sure to reach our entire demographic—from families to retirees," said John Lai, Chamber President & CEO. "Studies show that all generations are embracing new technology to help with their travel plans. Our touchscreens are very easy to use—probably easier than a cell phone."



Instagram Alert

The vintage island map juxtaposed with a 16-foot video wall! #backtothefuture @sancapchamber

NATURE: Where the Outdoors Are 'In'

The sure cure for 'nature-deficit disorder'



Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com

Nature can cure a lot of things, experts are finding – from diabetes to hyperactivity. On Sanibel and Captiva Islands, it cured the threat of overdevelopment decades ago.

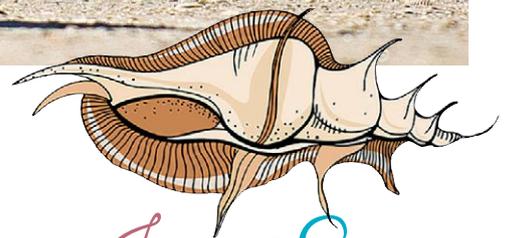
You see, islanders have a long history of being overprotective of their environment dating back to Teddy Roosevelt, who once fished these waters, and a man named “Ding,” who first sounded the alarm about the area’s importance as a wildlife habitat.

The designation of thousands of acres on Sanibel Island in 1945 as a national wildlife refuge—later renamed to honor J. N. “Ding” Darling—ensured the permanent preservation of more than half the island.

Sanibel incorporated as a city in 1974, enabling residents to write local legislation that restricted development and maintained the island’s sanctuary quality. Visitors to this day appreciate the quiet contrast Sanibel offers in comparison to other Florida beachfront communities.

Our shell-rich beaches and waters are often more populated with royal terns, passing dolphins and diving pelicans than they are with people. Island children learn their colors from yellow-crowned night herons, roseate spoonbills and red-shouldered hawks.

Residents have an intrinsic respect and love for nature, and it rubs off easily on our



Island Secret

Often called “fancy dancer” or “tap dancer,” the snowy egret hops its yellow feet around in the water to trick fish into thinking its “toes” are worms to nibble. BAM! The fish end up becoming food instead.

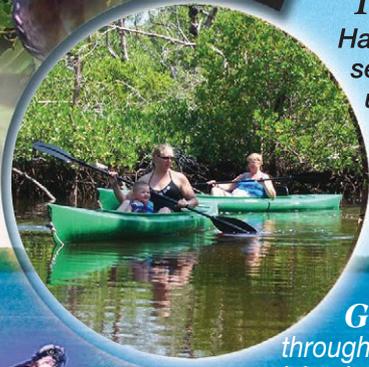


Explore and Discover the Natural Wonders of Tarpon Bay



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National Wildlife Refuge

visitors. We put forth constant, concerted efforts to conserve the precious wildlife of Sanibel and Captiva Islands by focusing on keeping the islands just how our furred, finned and feathered co-residents like them—completely natural.

That's our good nature, and that's why people in search of an intense outdoors fix come to Sanibel and Captiva Islands. Not only can they soak up the sun and bask in Gulf waters, but they can also explore mangrove tunnels by kayak, discover the abundance of wildlife that thrives on our islands and in the waters around them, and learn why Sanibel Island is one of the nation's premier destinations for bird lovers.

Bird-Brained

Birders have spotted nearly 250 bird species in J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge; many of them, such as the mangrove cuckoo and black-whiskered vireo, are rare types that lifelist-keepers flock to see for the first time.

It doesn't take an expert to appreciate them, however. Snowy, great and reddish egrets; blue, tricolor and green herons; pileated and red-bellied woodpeckers; ospreys and bald eagles; cormorants; anhingas; white ibis; willets;

and sanderlings are common. You are also likely to spot more unusual or threatened species, including the pretty-in-pink roseate spoonbills, stately wood storks and seasonal white pelicans.

"Ding" Darling Refuge (see page 60 for the Refuge's full story) is known internationally as a birders' mecca—one of several regional destinations along the Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail (www.floridabirdingtrail.com). The 2,000-mile mapped trail encompasses more than 500 locations in Florida noted as top spots for bird watching or learning about birds.

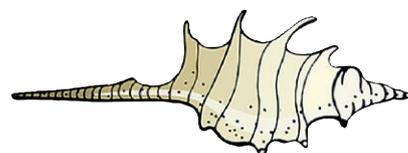
A second location on Sanibel plotted on the birding trail, Lighthouse Beach Park, at the east end of the island, provides a crucial rest-stop for migrating birds. Fall and spring bring them by the thousands along the flyway over Sanibel and Captiva Islands. Peregrine falcons, indigo buntings, cedar waxwings, warblers and waterfowl join the so-called "fall-out" as they reach land, exhausted and recovering from a long flight over the Gulf.

Human visitors come too to recover and recuperate. Many simply seek serenity: the warmth and sunshine, the shimmering water, the soothing salt-air aromatherapy. Others seek out the islands' rare eco-experiences.

Habitat, Sweet Habitat

Sanibel and Captiva's broad, undeveloped beaches are world-renowned, but they count as only one in a treasure trove of thriving island habitats—on land and in fresh and salt water.

Each supports its own dynamic community of plants and animals. River otters frolic in the freshwater wetlands, bobcats and armadillos prowl secretively through highland forests, manatees bobble in the saltwater bay, dolphins leap in the Gulf, and living seashells burrow at beach's edge, hiding from sandpipers, oystercatchers and other shorebirds. The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum on Sanibel Island examines seashells and their habitat in detail and leads daily interpretive Beach Walks.



Island Secret

The City of Sanibel has passed an ordinance banning the use of plastic straws in island eating and drinking establishments due to their threat to wildlife.

Those who seek active recreation in the islands' waters and wilds can take advantage of opportunities to get close to nature by foot, pedal and paddle. Paths and trails mark the way from beachside to deep subtropical woods. Sanibel Sea School offers educational programs that take place outdoors on land and water.

"Ding" Darling Refuge's Commodore Creek Trail is part of the 190-mile Great Calusa Blueway paddling trail (www.calusablueway.com) throughout Lee County's Intracoastal and inland waters. The Refuge's Tarpon Bay ranks among the top paddling destinations in the United States.

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) protects habitat along the Sanibel River—our alligators' favorite place to hang out. You will also find SCCF trails through other habitat preserves island-wide. (See page 30 for a map of island trails.) A number of trails at "Ding" Darling Refuge take you into different environments. Calusa Shell Mound Trail, for instance, features hardwood vegetation and cultural displays, while the Bailey Tract trail visits a freshwater marsh community.

"Ding" Darling and SCCF both offer a number of tours ranging from sea turtle

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walks in the summer to birding tours and boat cruises year-round.

The Refuge's Wildlife Drive is the best nature biking experience on the island. If you have a mobile device with a camera and app-downloading abilities, check out the iNature Trail, which interprets the environment along the way using QR-code-scanning technology. Or try the free Discover Ding game app that incorporates GPS technology and social media interactions. Cyclists can also encounter wildlife—marsh rabbits, white ibis and an occasional gopher tortoise—along Sanibel Island's 23 miles of paved shared-use paths.

Proceed quietly, look closely, and indulge gratefully in the rare ecology of the islands.

New at Our Nature Attractions

Nothing stays static in the world of Sanibel nature, and that's especially true at our island environmental attractions. Check out these new and forthcoming programs, exhibits and other exciting developments.

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge restored the freshwater habitat at its Bailey Tract in 2018. Its exciting new Learning Lavatories (#LearningLav) exhibit recently took first place in America's Best Restroom Contest. The project has

turned bathroom space into dramatic 3D underwater murals with educational messaging. Visit www.bestrestrooms2018.com for more info.

Last summer, the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum initiated its New Day New Adventure free programs. In 2019, it will break ground on a \$6 million project to expand the museum's mission and exhibits. Central to the expansion, live mollusk and other sea creature aquariums will convey the beauty of living shells.

Last year, CROW debuted its "Be A Wildlife Veterinarian" children's area, where kids can dress up and perform exams on plush animals using the gadgets and tools like those of the veterinarians



Instagram Alert

One of the island's rarest and most threatened creatures, the Eastern indigo snake is the longest native species of snakes in the United States. Although you are highly unlikely to encounter one in the wilds on the islands, you can photograph those in captivity at CROW's animal exhibit and SCCF's Nature Center. #sssooool @crowclinic

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in CROW's hospital. It also plans to upgrade live cameras and add new ones to its surgical suite and permanent patient enclosures.

SCCF continues to make its Bailey Homestead property an inviting and educational experience for visitors. Its demonstration gardens help them identify native plants. Staff presents workshops on topics such as holiday decorating, container planting and making bee boxes.

In addition to offering daily marine science programs for 6-13 year olds, Sanibel Sea School added seasonal Sea Squirts day programs for 4-6 year olds in 2018, scheduled during peak travel times. The school has also added new after-school programs for elementary and middle school-aged children (including surfing lessons), and has initiated seasonal boat-based courses for adults.

Nature Places

A number of island-based organizations provide environmental enrichment, as well as opportunities to get outside and enjoy.

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum

3075 Sanibel-Captiva Road
(239) 395-2233
www.shellmuseum.org

The only of its kind in the U.S., the museum reinforces Sanibel Island's reputation as a top seashell-collecting destination. Nature vignettes and artistically arranged displays demonstrate the role of shells in ecology, history, art, economics, medicine, religion and other disciplines. Shells of the world encircle the museum's centerpiece—a two-story globe. The Children's Science Lab provides games and hands-on learning experiences in colorful reef-motif surroundings. Other exhibits explain mollusk physiology and offer tips for finding your own shells. A memorial is devoted to the late actor Raymond Burr, who helped establish the museum.

Admission is free for children ages 4 and younger, \$7 for children ages 5 to 11, \$9 for youth ages 12 to 17, and \$15 for adults ages 18 and older.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily



Instagram Alert

The best place to catch alligators on camera, the Wildlife Education Boardwalk at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge also provides wonderful vantage for nesting birds in the early summer. #outdoorablebabies #discovering @dingdarlingwildlifesociety

CROW

3883 Sanibel-Captiva Road
(239) 472-3644
www.crowclinic.org

The 50-plus-year-old Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) welcomes the public to its Visitor Education Center. Among its state-of-the-art hands-on exhibits, visitors of all ages can learn about protecting wildlife, watch recovering patients via critter cam, see live invasive and native creatures, and learn what it takes to be a wildlife veterinarian from exhibits such as Peek at a Pelican and the new Be the Wildlife Veterinarian. The clinic sees more than 4,000 patients each year. CROW offers special presentations and guided patient tours weekly; check out its website for more information.

Admission is \$12 for ages 13 and older, \$7 for ages 4-12, free for ages 3 and younger.

Hours: (Jan. 1 through April 30) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday; (May 1 through Dec. 31) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

1 Wildlife Drive, Sanibel-Captiva Road, Mile Marker 2
(239) 472-1100 for Refuge; (239) 472-8900 for Tarpon Bay Recreation Area
www.fws.gov/refuge/jn_ding_darling or dingdarlingsociety.org

World-famous for its coastal birding, the Refuge encompasses more than 7,600 acres of wild lands and waters, home to nearly 250 species of birds, more than 50 reptile and amphibian species and 30 types of mammals. Your chances of catching a glimpse of a number of animals along 4-mile Wildlife Drive or the various hiking, biking and paddling trails are excellent. But before you start down the trail, spend some time in the free Visitor & Education Center, where you will see an impressive collection of hands-on exhibits covering everything from manatees to the story of J.N. "Ding" Darling, the Pulitzer-winning cartoonist who blazed the trail to create the Refuge and legislate the Federal Duck Stamp program. Rangers and naturalists host free seasonal interpretative programs for all ages, plus there are narrated tram tours of Wildlife Drive. Nature boat and paddling tours and rentals are available at Tarpon Bay Recreation Area.

Admission to the Education Center is free; entry to Wildlife Drive costs \$5 per vehicle, \$1 per walker or bicyclist age 15 or older.

Hours: The drive is open from 7 a.m. (7:30 in October and November) to a half-hour before sunset; closed Friday. The Visitor & Education Center is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily. Tarpon Bay Recreation Area is open (Oct. 1-Feb. 15) 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily; (Feb. 16-Sept. 30) 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

Bailey Tract

Tarpon Bay Road
(239) 472-1100
www.fws.gov/refuge/jn_ding_darling or dingdarlingsociety.org

Part of the "Ding" Darling Refuge, it occupies a separate, 100-acre parcel of land that showcases a different, freshwater side of Sanibel Island. Whereas Wildlife Drive takes you through coastal and estuarine environment, Bailey Tract lays out an easy hike or bike on 2.2 miles of trail through interior habitats and past freshwater ponds. Look for ducks, alligators, marsh rabbits, gopher tortoises and nesting shorebirds. Bobcats frequent the habitat at night.

Admission is free.

Hours: Open from sunrise to sunset.



Island Secret

Need a "Ding" Darling fix when you're at home? Check out the Refuge's live cam, which delivers ongoing daylight bird feed. Visit sanibel-captiva.org/sanibel-island-webcams to find the link.

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF)

Mile Marker 1, 3333 Sanibel-Captiva Road
(239) 472-2329
www.sccf.org

At SCCF's Nature Center, you can walk 4 miles of trails along the Sanibel River, climb an observation tower, view videos of wildlife and peer into aquariums holding native turtles and terrapins. Throughout the year, special educational programs are available; look for a calendar of events on the web. SCCF's Native Landscapes & Garden Center is open to the public at its Bailey Homestead Preserve (1300 Periwinkle Way), where you will find more trails. The organization is dedicated to the preservation of coastal habitats and aquatic resources throughout the area. Other work includes monitoring, research, preservation and restoration of water and wildlife populations on and around the islands. On Sanibel, SCCF maintains a network of preserves and trails for public use. Nature Center admission is \$5 for adults, free for children under age 17. Hours: (October through May) 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday; (June through September) 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Sanibel Sea School

Two locations on Sanibel Island. Main campus at 455 Periwinkle Way and branch at Sundial Beach Resort & Spa. (Also offers programs at South Seas Island Resort on Captiva Island) (239) 472-8585

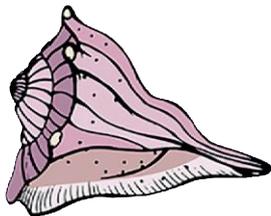
www.sanibelseaschool.org

Sanibel Sea School is a nonprofit foundation whose mission is to improve the ocean's future by providing field-based marine education programs. With two locations on Sanibel, the school offers day programs and weeklong camps for kids, courses for adults, and private land- and boat-based programs for groups. Teachers with an established knowledge of the islands' wildlife and ecology lead all of the experiences. *Program pricing varies, visit the website for details.*

Hours: Sanibel Flagship Campus is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Photo by Nick Adams Photography



Island Secret

“Ding” Darling Refuge’s most iconic bird, the roseate spoonbill gets its name from its coloration and the spatula shape of its bill. People often confuse it with the American flamingo, but flamingoes have curved bills and are seen rarely in these parts.

The Islands’ Darling

The Refuge provides sanctuary for birds and humans alike.

Paddling along the silent curves of J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s **Commodore Creek Trail**—through hunkering, witchy-armed mangroves and placid waterways—is a defining island experience.

Here, where freshwater intermingles with salt to support a natural world somewhere in-between, native Calusa spirits feel close. It’s a world primeval where yellow-crowned night herons and snowy egrets calmly populate the mangroves, undisturbed by passing paddlers. Mullet skim beneath the surface and occasionally burst heavenward, landing somewhere between a belly-flop and a nosedive.

Most Refuge visitors drive or take the tram tour along **Wildlife Drive**, stopping to snap pictures of the birds feeding in the brackish impoundments, climbing the observation tower to spy through the scope. The drive makes it easy to view the Refuge’s charismatic mega-fauna—its trademark roseate spoonbills; its fall population of white pelicans; its ospreys, bald eagles, pileated woodpeckers, wood storks, reddish egrets and herons; its alligators; its river otters and manatees.

That’s the beauty of “Ding” Darling: It provides easy access for wildlife spotting, making it the second-most visited attraction on the island after the beaches. Those who work at it a little harder—leaving the car to hike, bike or paddle the Refuge—come away with more than pictures. They depart with a sense of communion.

By-foot brings you closest to Refuge secrets. It doesn’t require a long hike. Following the boardwalk out to the **Mangrove Outlook**, watching the crabs skitter sideways among the mangroves, you reach the muck-fragrant estuary. Roseate spoonbills often hang out here along with egrets, herons and brown pelicans.

A favorite hike goes along the **Calusa Shell Mound Trail**, where ancient spirits undoubtedly lurk. Most easily accessible, **Indigo Trail’s** begins right next to the Refuge’s free Visitor & Education Center. The boardwalk takes you through a hardwood forest where stillness is broken by the occasional act of hidden predation or the thrum of a pileated on a dead tree trunk. The trail leads to the new **Wildlife Education Boardwalk**, which lets you observe freshwater habitat from a two-level deck. Along the boardwalk, re-creations of wildlife tracks and scat help visitors identify clues that Refuge animals leave behind.

To learn more about what you see on the Refuge’s Wildlife Drive, stop in for a free visit at the hands-on **Refuge Visitor & Education Center**, and look at what’s been sighted lately via the e-Bird monitor and illustrated Recent Sightings Board. Your first stop should be the **Learning Lavatories** (#LearningLav) exhibits that line the hallway to the restrooms and fill the men’s and women’s rooms with engaging educational opportunities.

Interactive exhibits inside the Visitor & Education Center include the **Marvelous Manatees**, which teaches about the sea creature whose articulated skeleton hangs above it; **Living with Dinosaurs**, with hands-on tools to understand alligators and crocodiles; and **Saving Sea Turtles**, focusing on preservation of the loggerhead and other turtles that nest on local beaches.

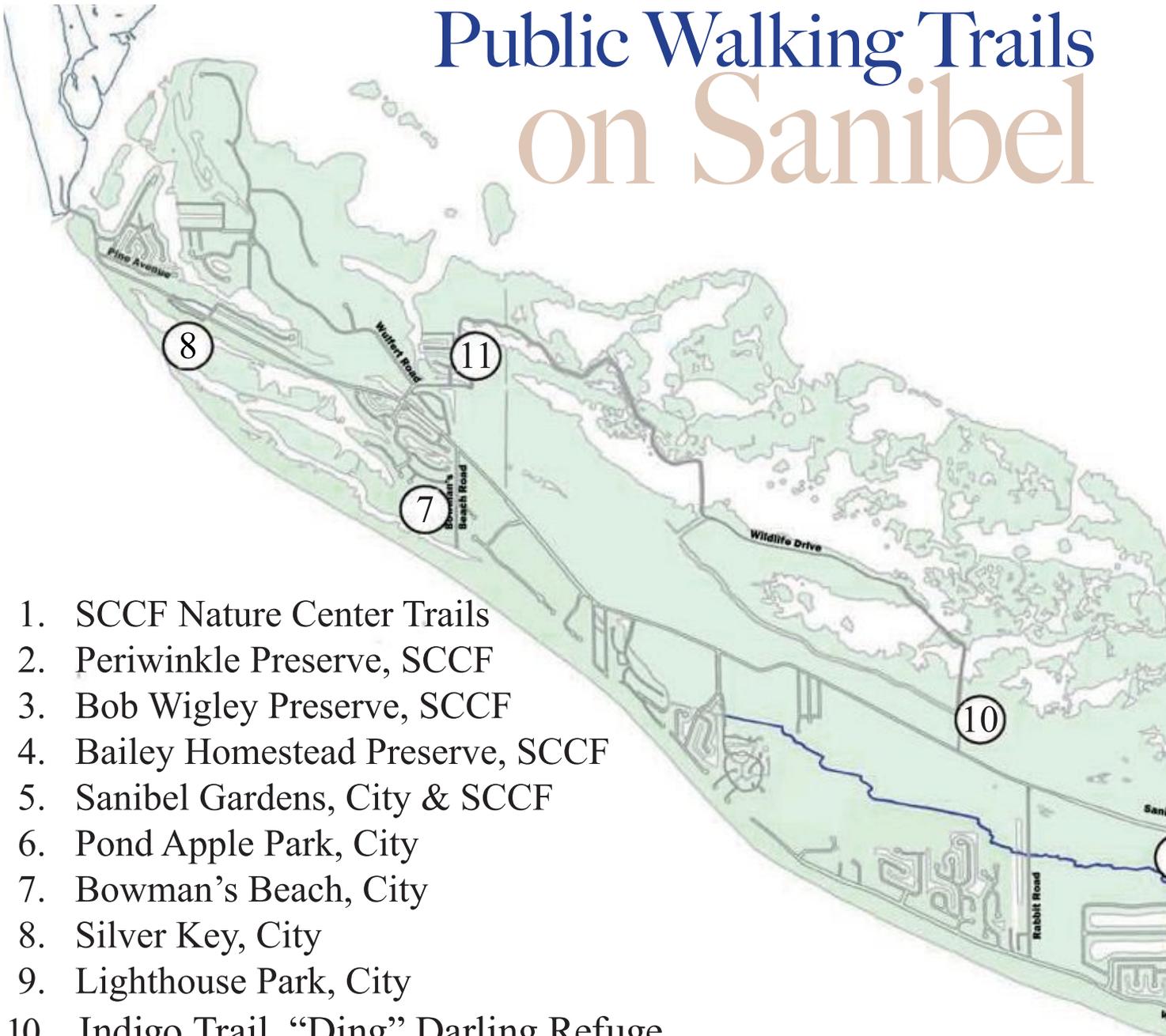
For a more immersive nature experience, “Ding” Darling Refuge and its **Tarpon Bay Recreation Area** schedule a number of tours, programs and rentals throughout the year—including trams, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards, canoes, bicycles and pontoon boats. Visitors can connect with a nature boating cruise and touch tank session, kayak and stand-up paddleboarding tours, and excursions at sunset, when the birds fly in to roost in Tarpon Bay’s rookery islands.

Trained naturalists narrate the tram tours along Wildlife Drive. Refuge staff lead free bike tours, hikes, beach walks and other educational tours and family programs during the winter and summer seasons.

“Ding” Darling Days (www.DingDarlingDays.com), the Refuge’s annual birding and eco-festival, takes education to another level of fun (see page 60) for one weekend in mid-October.

Every way it can, “Ding” Darling Refuge strives to get people outside to immerse in nature and learn about wildlife and conservation. Nearly a million people visit each year to experience the rare ecology that its namesake foresaw as precious some 90 years ago.

Public Walking Trails on Sanibel



1. SCCF Nature Center Trails
2. Periwinkle Preserve, SCCF
3. Bob Wigley Preserve, SCCF
4. Bailey Homestead Preserve, SCCF
5. Sanibel Gardens, City & SCCF
6. Pond Apple Park, City
7. Bowman's Beach, City
8. Silver Key, City
9. Lighthouse Park, City
10. Indigo Trail, "Ding" Darling Refuge
11. Calusa Shell Mound Trail, "Ding" Darling Refuge
12. Bailey Tract, "Ding" Darling Refuge

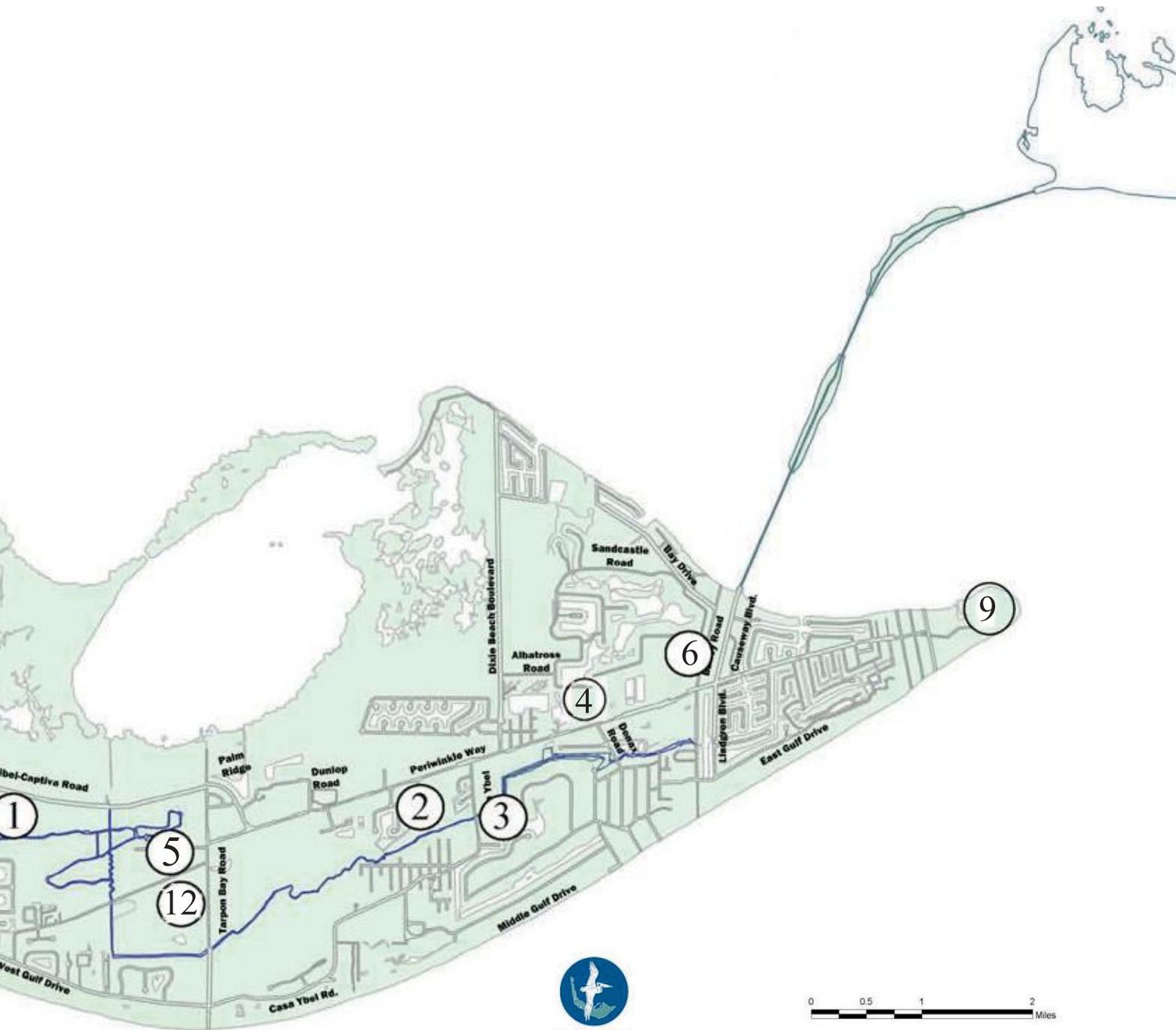
SCCF Trails

SCCF Nature Center Trails - Walk 1/2 mile to Sanibel River tower and back, or walk all 4.5 miles of trails in Sanibel interior freshwater wetlands. Enter through Nature Center, M-F 8:30 to 4. Cost \$5 per adult.

Periwinkle Preserve - No on-site parking; arrive by bike or foot. Walk a restored migratory bird trail with kiosk. Can park at Jerry's or Mango Bay at corner of Casa Ybel and Periwinkle Rd. Walk 1/10 mile west on Periwinkle bike path to trailhead.

Bob Wigley Preserve - No parking; bike or walk to trailhead. Can park at bank at corner of Casa Ybel and Periwinkle Rd. then walk Casa Ybel bike path .5 mile to short trail with kiosk.

Bailey Homestead Preserve - The 28.3 acre Bailey Family Homestead includes the family house and the Shipley Trail.



SCCF

Prepared by: Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation



City of Sanibel Trails

Sanibel Gardens - Enter Island Inn Rd. from Tarpon Bay Rd. across from Bailey's grocery store. Park at trailhead.

Pond Apple Trail - Park at Chamber of Commerce on Lindgren by causeway; walk or bicycle 1.6-mile loop trail.

Bowman's Beach Trail - Paid parking at Bowman's Beach, trail runs parallel to beach.

Silver Key Trail - Paid parking at Blind Pass and walk .5 mile SE along beach to trail head.

Lighthouse Park - Paid parking at Lighthouse Beach – walking trails, restrooms, fishing pier and picnic area.

“Ding” Darling Refuge Trails

Indigo Trail & Wildlife Education Boardwalk - Park at Visitor & Education Center. Walk 4.6-mile round-trip trail.

Calusa Shell Mound Trail - Park at parking area at end of Wildlife Drive. Walk 1/3-mile boardwalk trail.

Bailey Tract - Park at trail head on Tarpon Bay Rd. Walk or bike through 2.2 miles of trails.



Think Outside the Car



Instagram Alert

Shoot a bird's eye perspective from the observation tower along SCCF's Nature Center trails. @scf_swfl #sanibelfromabove

Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com

Score some exercise and fresh air with your sightseeing.

When it comes to exploring our islands, step away from the car. Downshift into island mode and take your explorations to the sands, trails, paths and waterways that offer the ultimate island experiences. It's better for your health and the health of our islands.

Toes in Sand

Most people begin their island walks on our most scenic side: the beach. Although it is easy to get distracted by the shells lying at your feet and the dolphins slicing through the waters offshore, the beach supplies a proper introduction to maritime habitat and a most gratifying way to get in your daily steps.

Look closely and you will see the coin-sized holes that ghost crabs have excavated. If you hold still, you might see one at work shoveling fistfuls of sand out of the opening.

Stand at water's edge with your feet planted in the sand, and you might notice a tickling sensation after each wave. That's when you will see hundreds of tiny coquina shells squirming their way back into the wet sand after the surf has exposed them, offering feet a bit of beachside reflexology.

Along the beach, shorebirds skitter and peck for lunch, pelicans do kamikaze dives for fish, and dolphins flirt in the surf. In summer, you will see the roped-off nests of super-sized sea turtles and tiny, fluffy snowy plover birds, both listed species.

With animals happening in the air, in the sea and on the land, the beach is

decidedly one of the islands' most dynamic wildlife-watching venues. Favorites include **Lighthouse Beach**, where you can explore from Gulf side to bayside, and **Bowman's Beach**, where seclusion rewards and shells abound.

Happy Trails

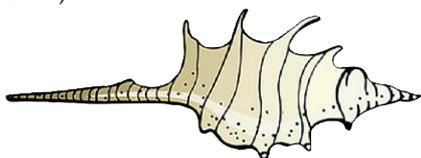
But don't stop there. Much more awaits discovery on inland trails. Steal away to the islands' preserved wild parts, which account for about two-thirds of Sanibel Island's acreage—more than 10,000 square miles of land mass in all.

For birders in particular, **J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge** tops the list, known worldwide as one of the finest coastal bird habitats. You could just drive your vehicle around the 4-mile Wildlife Drive, but then you would miss the rich fauna activity along the trails. You must look closely, often with binoculars and scopes, to see the shy birds, partially submerged alligators, antisocial river otters and wee mangrove crabs and lizards that play in and around the wetland.

The trail at the Refuge's **Bailey Tract** loops around freshwater marsh habitat in a remote location off-campus where bobcats prowl, birds nest and alligators swim.

The **Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation's** (SCCF) nature trail leads to a different waterfront—the Sanibel River. Look for golden orb spiders, gopher tortoises, alligators and woodland birds along the way.

SCCF maintains more than 30 other preserves funded by private donations. At some, trails welcome you to hike into the quiet of nature and observe butterflies, birds, marsh rabbits, raccoons and, if you're really lucky, bobcats. (Don't worry, they're more frightened of you than you of them.)



Island Secret

Indigo Trail at "Ding" Darling Refuge leads to the Wildlife Education Boardwalk where you can make a game of guessing "Whose Scat is That?" Replicated scat samples (that's right: poop!) from various Refuge critters line the boardwalk's railing.



Island Secret

More than 20 artificial reefs around Sanibel and Captiva Islands attract great schools of fish for anglers and divers. One, the 165-foot World War II cutter *USS Mohawk*, lies 28 nautical miles off Sanibel Island shores. To learn more about the reefs' locations and marine species they attract, visit www.leereefs.org.



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Two-Wheelin’

Instead of driving around **Wildlife Drive** at “Ding” Darling Refuge, try cycling for close-up encounters. The entire loop from the Visitor & Education Center, through the Refuge and back to the center via the **Sanibel-Captiva Road** (a.k.a. San-Cap Road) shared-use path, is about 8 miles, all paved. Or you may want to diverge onto the unpaved shortcut via the **Cross-Dike Trail** almost 2 miles from the Refuge’s entrance.

Sanibel Island’s mostly flat, 25-mile, hard-paved **shared-use path** takes you just about anywhere you want to go—shopping, dining, beaches, trails, and most condos and resorts. Marked crosswalks without curbs accommodate cyclists and special-needs travelers.

Nature-lovers bike the “conservation corridor” path paralleling San-Cap Road. It leads to “Ding” Darling, SCCF and other environmental attractions. Here, fewer cyclists and driveways make biking breezier than on some of the well-traveled path sections along Periwinkle Way.

Try the loop off Sanibel-Captiva Road that runs parallel to **Rabbit Road** behind the houses on the west side. It ends at **West Gulf Drive**, where you can turn left and circle around to **Tarpon Bay Road**, past beach and the Bailey Tract (where bikes are allowed, but must be

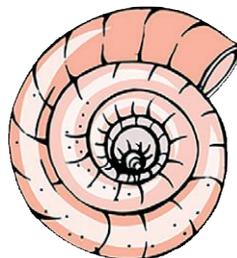
walked in parts), then back to San-Cap Road.

Another favorite by-bike destination along San-Cap Road, **Bowman’s Beach** lies north of the Refuge. At the Blind Pass Bridge to **Captiva Island**, the shared-use path ends, and pedaling can become a bit treacherous on Captiva’s curvy road, especially in the busy winter season. But if you’re staying on Captiva Island, by all means rent a bike to explore the nearby sights and shops.

Closer to the Causeway, a shell-paved and boardwalk path takes cyclists off-road along **Shipley and Pond Apple trails**, behind the **SCCF Bailey Homestead Preserve** historic site. On Periwinkle Way, stop at the **Shared-Use Path Welcome Gazebo** to rest awhile and view a map of the paths and other useful information for your island cycling explorations.

Experienced cyclists enjoy getting off the path and onto roads where the top speed is a safe 35 mph. Morning rides take in Gulf water views on both islands and truly breathtaking, elevated bay vistas along the 3- mile Causeway.

A number of rental outlets and resorts carry all manner of biking equipment from mountain bikes to tandems, baby trailers and family-sized surreys.



Island Secret

Before taking to Sanibel Island’s shared-use path by bike, visit www.mysanibel.com to watch the “Cycling on Sanibel” video.



Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com

Wildlife Drive

Traveling by Tram



Protect Wildlife

Take the tram. Enjoy a relaxing, informative tour knowing that the proceeds directly benefit the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge.

The J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) is second only to beaches as the island's top attraction. It is one of the most visited refuges in the United States. Traveling Wildlife Drive is an experience people will remember.

This pristine natural ecosystem has been preserved within a densely populated region of southwest Florida. Over 750,000 people visit the refuge annually and explore Wildlife Drive, most of them by car. Unfortunately, this automobile traffic constantly exposes this delicate ecosystem to polluting exhaust fumes and noisy automobile engines. Visitors should consider taking the tram that is offered several times daily to tour Wildlife Drive. Wildlife refuges are created and maintained for the protection and conservation of wildlife and their natural habitats. Bear this in mind, and experience this unique refuge in the way that has the least impact on its inhabitants. If the automobile traffic continues and the human impact on the ecosystem is not reduced, our children and grandchildren will not be able to enjoy this wonderful experience.

Not only is the tram the better touring option when we consider impact, but it is also the more enjoyable option, and it provides a more in-depth learning experience. With an experienced guide,

you'll spot wildlife most visitors would never see on their own or would not be able to identify. In addition to identifying all the refuge inhabitants, the guides are a wealth of information regarding the biology and life history of these species. The guides take visitors past tidal mud flats and mangrove forests where roseate spoonbills, herons, egrets, pelicans, ibis, anhingas and many more birds may be observed.

You will have the chance to stop and stretch your legs along the way. The Mangrove Overlook Boardwalk is a great place to spot tree crabs, fiddler crabs, periwinkle snails and more. On a walk to the water's edge near the Cross Dike, you may spot crown conch, jumping mullet or even a marsh rabbit.

You never know what you may encounter along the way. The tram tour guides are always on the lookout for interesting and unusual wildlife. The guides will stop the tram whenever they – or a passenger – see something to share with the group. The tram tour isn't just about the wildlife; you'll hear who J. Norwood "Ding" Darling was, and also hear much of the history of the Calusa Indians and other Sanibel folklore. The tram benefits the wildlife and the refuge visitors, so please consider this option next time you visit "Ding" Darling NWR.

Sit back and enjoy the ride with your hands free to snap photos or hold your binoculars as you gaze at the wildlife. You'll know you made the right choice by taking the tram. Protect wildlife and take the tram. For more information call 239-472-1351 or 239-472-8900. *

Scan Code To Learn More



A Closer Look

Guides will stop the tram to allow you to more closely encounter this delicate ecosystem and its inhabitants.



Marsh Rabbit

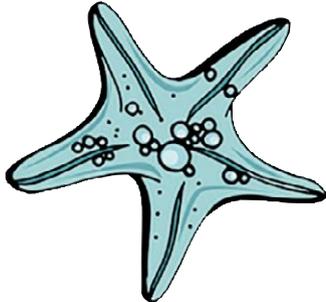
You Deserve a Good Paddle

When it comes to traveling around island waterways—whether it’s the Gulf, bay, estuaries or river—paddling is the most wildlife-intimate, eco-conscious mode. Outfitters on both islands can set you up with a kayak, canoe or stand-up paddleboard (SUP) that best fits the type of water or activity you choose.

Besides rentals, outfitters offer kayaking and SUP lessons for beginners and guided tours into the islands’ most secret wildlife areas where you cannot go by larger craft. There is no better way to get close to the islands’ wealth of bird life and marine creatures. Dolphins often escort your excursion, and occasionally a manatee will sneak a back scratch from the bottom of your craft. Listen for sounds of the osprey call and the whoosh and cackle of pileated woodpeckers.

Early morning or sunset is the best time to commune with nature in the calm of paddling. **Commodore Creek Trail** at J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s **Tarpon Bay Recreation Area** takes you past rookeries and manatees and into mangroves—a perfect introduction to kayaking for beginners and families.

The calm waters between Captiva Island and **Buck Key** are also conducive to easy paddling, and the **Buck Key Paddling Trail** keeps you shaded and cool under a mangrove canopy. The trails connect to the 190-mile Great Calusa Blueway Trail (www.calusablueway.com) that travels throughout Lee County.



Island Secret

Pond apple trees are native to the islands. Despite their fruity name, they rarely appeal to human appetites, although some animals find them tasty enough.

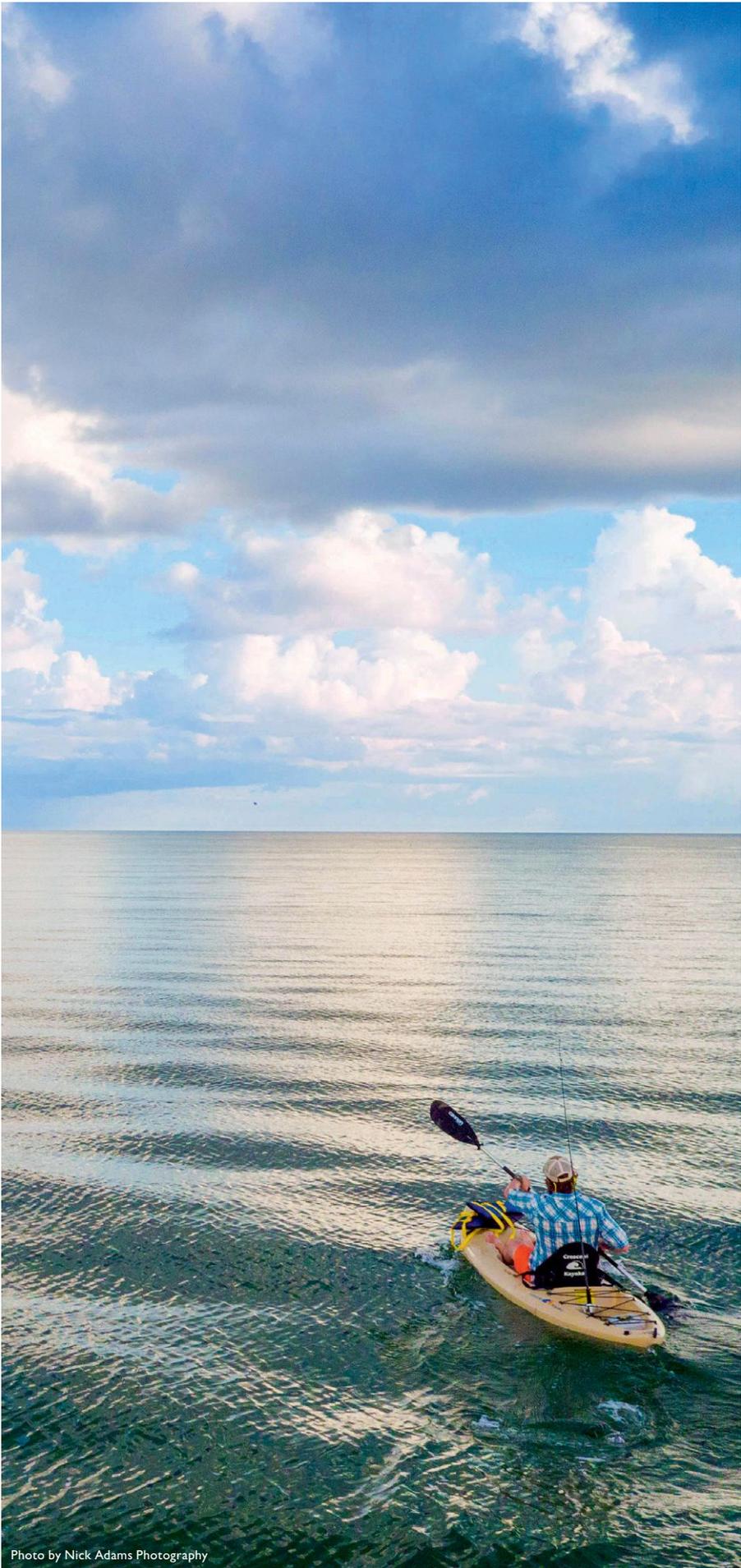


Photo by Nick Adams Photography

The Calm, the Exhilarating

You've decided to come to an island, drawn by the beckon of the sea; so indulge your inner sailor and get out on the water. It's the island thing to do.

Fans of hushed sea adventure with more efficiency than a kayak go for sailing. Then there's that whole romance thing to recommend it. "Sailing into the sunset" may sound like a cliché, but the experience never grows anything less than spectacular.

Some resorts keep a fleet of small catamaran-style sailboats to use from the beach and out into the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, you will find paddle bikes and other fun water toys. A renowned sailing school on Captiva Island certifies students to rent and operate its graceful sailing yachts.

For fishing or for island-hopping to **Cayo Costa, North Captiva Island, and Cabbage Key** to beach, shell, picnic or do lunch in a seaside restaurant, power boating is the most practical transportation.

No matter how slowly or fast you want your explorations to move along, you can find boats to rent at island marinas. They stock center-console, deck and pontoon boats for day-cruising up and down the Intracoastal Waterway—surely one of the islands' more simultaneously relaxing and exhilarating experiences.

On windy days at the **Sanibel Causeway** and occasionally on **Lighthouse Beach**, you can watch windsurfers and kiteboarders performing feats of aerial dynamics. Look like fun? Rentals and lessons are available to satisfy that urge to jump on in and fly.



Instagram Alert

Whether feeding on the sandbars or flocking into the trees, the #nightnightbirdies in Tarpon Bay make the most remarkable #sunset pics. @dingdarlingwildlifesociety



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Escape on your own adventure and agenda with a Waverunner rental. Zip around local waters with a half-hour or hour rental, or book a guided excursion to the upper islands or into dolphin habitat.

Keep on Cruising

The ultimate way to relax while you explore waters around Sanibel and Captiva Islands, charters and cruises travel around local waters to deep-water fishing holes, to neighboring un-bridged islands and into the sunset.

You will find **charter boats** at the marinas or working independently (check sanibel-captiva.org for both). They are ready to do your bidding, whether your goal is sightseeing, shelling, birding the bay's rookery islands, snorkeling, water-skiing, wakeboarding, sunset-gazing, bar-hopping or a combo platter. Charter boating is ideal for families and small groups who wish to design their own itinerary for a half or full day on the water.

One of the most popular type of boat charters makes use of the captain's local knowledge and GPS waypoints to find fish where they live. For first-time **boat fishing** in the area, chartering is the way to go. Some of the captains have fished these waters for decades, and they know exactly where each species of fish hangs out in every season and whatever time of day.

Cruise boats present a more affordable option for seeing nature and the upper islands. Regularly scheduled cruises specialize in various experiences from shelling to island-hopping and sunset yachting. Some tours focus on dolphins and the environment. Others talk about the history of the islands. One of the latter tours stops for lunch at historic **Useppa Island**, a private club accessible only to its members and the day-passengers of luncheon cruises.

Sea life cruises involve a naturalist who identifies beach and marine finds. Sunset cruises end the day with drama and romance. One comes complete with a cash bar and live entertainment. An entirely different excursion takes you on a high-speed thrill ride around the islands, while sailing cruises take the slowest, laziest route possible. There's even a cruise with a pirate theme and another that zips you to Key West and back.

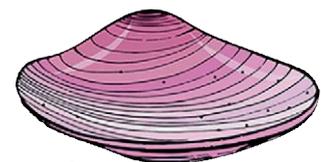
Many of the large tour boats also hire out for big-group, special-event chartering and custom cruises. A beach feast for 20 on castaway Cayo Costa anyone?



Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com



Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com



Island Secret

Summer evenings at sea can surprise with a spectacular finale—glowing organisms in the water known as “dinoflagellates.” Lay folk call it “phosphorescence,” but whatever you call the unpredictable visits to our summer waters, they create a magic, topsy-turvy, ethereal feeling that someone—without warning—has transformed the sea into a starry sky.

Itinerary: Family Time

If spending time with the family is priority number one for your vacation itinerary, you can find enough activities to fill several weeks. To get you started, we suggest a three-day schedule you can mold to your family's whims.

Day One: All good island vacations start at the beach, and so should yours. Early risers can walk the sands outside their accommodations or head to **Bowman's Beach** to gather the shells that have washed in overnight. Low tide is the best time. Bring along a beach blanket and brunch picnic to extend your beach time for a little swimming, castle-building and, at Bowman's, playground fun.

When it comes time to get out of the sun, head to the **Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum** to learn more about the shells you collected. For sunset, make reservations ahead of time for a nature boat cruise into Tarpon Bay at the **J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge** and watch the birds come in to roost in the rookery islands.

Day Two: Rent bikes to explore the islands on a leisurely ride along island shared-use paths and designated trails. Stop for breakfast and shopping along Periwinkle Way or Palm Ridge Road.

Visit the **Sanibel Historical Museum & Village** to peek in on the native Americans, hardy pioneers and farmers of times gone by. Don't miss the vintage toys and clothing in the kids room at Morning Glories Cottage.

Afterward, plan on a dip in the kids' pool, some tennis or skateboarding at the **Sanibel Recreation Center**. Catch a cheeseburger or grouper fish fingers at an island restaurant, and end the day with a movie and popcorn at the local theater or in the comfort of your hotel.

Day Three: At morning's low tide, drive **Wildlife Drive** at "Ding" Darling to spot flocks of big pink roseate spoonbills and other birds in shades of blue, white and reddish. Stop in the admission-free Visitor & Education Center before or after to learn hands-on about this unique environment and how it was saved.

Afterward, plan to explore the restaurants and shops of Captiva Island. Stop in the **Captiva Memorial Library** to visit the small history museum and check out a book for the beach. Stay for the islands' best sunset and dinner with a Gulf view.



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Visit Captiva Island

The Ultimate Island Escape

Roughly shaped like a wishbone, tiny Captiva Island makes you wish you would never have to leave this land beyond Sanibel Island, beyond compare.

A little bit Key West, a teeny nip of New England and a dash of Caribbean, Captiva resists comparison to any of those places. It simply is Captiva, as exotic and captivating as it sounds. A place unlike any other. A restful place, the ultimate escape from pressures and worries: Pressures and worries, after all, are considered contraband when you are crossing the Blind Pass bridge.

Welcome to Captiva...

Blind Pass, the threshold between Sanibel to Captiva Island, is the definitive cut-off from reality. The short bridge between the two islands crosses at Turner Beach, where the flushing waters of the pass reward fishermen, surfers and shell-gatherers.

From Turner Beach, Captiva Drive begins its corkscrew foray into this island world. Nothing is as it should be here, much like circumstances in *Alice in Wonderland*. Roads run—ignoring grids and logic—in delightful confusion. Trees, bushes and flowers grow amok. There are no mailboxes, no street lights, no points of reference. People call their houses by names like Hakuna Matata and Daze-Off—houses obscured behind hedges of blossomy bougainvillea and ixora. Humble to magnificent, the homes demonstrate Captiva's fetching blend of old-new, whimsical-sophisticated.

Captiva Island introduces its eccentricities slowly, gently. The road contorts through a column of tall, thick palm trees. In understories, sea hibiscus, poincianas, scaevola, sea grapes and plumbago proliferate. The vegetative channel gives way to the road's only straight stretch along sea and sand, one of Florida's most scenic and photographed drives. At places, you can see from one island shore across to the other. A sharp turn snaps you quickly from Gulf to bay

Island Secret Early Captiva Island settlers farmed eggplants, tomatoes, peppers, citrus and other ground and tree crops. The Chadwick plantation, where South Seas Island Resort now spreads, was once the world's largest producer of key limes.

and into "downtown Captiva," if such a thing exists.

The Captiva Lifestyle

More of a neighborhood than a town, Captiva sees its residents and visitors walk or drive golf carts from place to place along Andy Rosse Lane. Vacationers stay in fishing cottages, guest houses, sweet little inns and fantasy resorts. They blow kazoos at crab races and make music in an occasional Mullet March. They stop at restaurants with peculiar names to eat Duck Fingers, Bubble Bread and Gator Bites. They visit lollipop-colored shops that look victim to a crayon factory explosion. They walk the 5-mile beach that stretches past Gulf-front homes to the island's northern tip at Redfish Pass. Access to the north-end Alison Hagerup Beach lies off a parking lot at the end of Captiva Drive.

Island Secret Captiva Island's north end was once connected to today's North Captiva Island by a neck known as The Narrows. A 1921 hurricane broke that neck to create Redfish Pass. The pass was thusly christened when, for some unknown reason, redfish ran through it so profusely that the waters looked red. The phenomenon has never happened since, much to the chagrin of those in quest of the prized food fish.

Activity of the adventurous sort centers around Captiva's resorts, abuzz with the adrenaline of sporting types. Harbor-side marinas provide a full menu of watersports activities. Board a tour boat to collect shells, and have lunch at an unbridged island to the north. Or rent a vessel and chart your own high seas course. Hook up with a fishing guide, who will whisk you off to a favorite, secret sweet spot. Hop aboard a kayak and enjoy our rare ecology at fundamental level, through Captiva's Roosevelt Channel to the offshore mangroves of Buck Key. Float the heavens on a parasail ride. Local watersports rental shops can also get you out on anything from a stand-up paddleboard or surfboard to a sailboat, banana boat or waverunner.

Muses & Luminaries

From Roosevelt Channel—named for President Theodore Roosevelt, who once fished these waters—you will notice an old, stilted fish house hovering over bay waters and connected to land by a narrow wooden bridge. Once owned by conservationist and Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist Jay N. "Ding" Darling, it later served as a studio for world-renowned assemblage artist Robert Rauschenberg. Today the fish house is part of a 20-acre artist's colony complex, Rauschenberg's island legacy.

The Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Captiva Residency Program was inspired by the artist's early years at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where the creative community greatly influenced the direction of his groundbreaking work in the late 1940s. The Captiva program reflects Rauschenberg's career-long interest in collaboration and promotes a spirit of innovation and boundary-busting.

The Texas-born artist worked from his island studio for more than 40 years, up until his death in 2008. He was not the first to find his muse on this quirky little island. Charles Lindbergh, famed *Spirit of St. Louis* pilot, and his wife, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, vacationed on Captiva Island and visited often during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Both recorded impressions of their stays in published journals—most famously in Anne's *Gift From the Sea*, poignant essays that compare the stages of a woman's life with the seashells the author found on the beach.

The close-knit community of islanders back then guarded the Lindberghs' privacy during controversial times, and for decades the location of their "sea-shell of a house" and clandestine visits was kept under wraps.

Other creative luminaries who spent time on the island include pop artist Roy Lichtenstein, playwright Thornton Wilder and violinist-composer Albert Spalding.

Island Secret The historical society's Captiva Island exhibit boards the replicated *Santiva* mail boat, which carried a lot more than letters between the mainland and islands from 1936 to 1963, pre-Sanibel causeway. Vacationers, school kids, groceries, farming supplies and other folks and necessities made the daily trips.

Captiva Island remains a tight, insular community that gathers at the Captiva Civic Association complex to hash out local issues. The newly expanded building holds the Captiva Memorial Library and an exhibit room hosted by the Captiva Island Historical Society. It explores and celebrates the island's fascinating past and ever-captivating charms through exhibits, videos and historic images.



Captiva Island's charming Chapel By the Sea—once a schoolhouse—provides a photogenic subject. #religiousexperience. At the historic seaside cemetery next to it, visitors often leave seashells rather than flowers at the headstones. #restinginpeace #seashellbouquet



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Fishing

Sanibel & Captiva Islands

Exciting fishing opportunities around Sanibel and Captiva Islands await the angler who is eager to “wet a line.” Whether fishing inshore, the back country, on a fishing pier, offshore or at the beaches, fishing areas are easily accessible and productive all months of the year. Anglers with all levels of skill and experience seek the pristine waters around the islands to take advantage of the great fishing opportunities for a variety of species.

Going offshore for grouper, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, grouper, snapper, sharks, bonito, cobia, tripletail or tarpon means the boater might be as close as one to two miles or as far as 20-30 miles away from land. Many artificial reefs and wrecks offer the angler unlimited chances for terrific fishing and/or diving.

Tarpon fishing in world-famous Boca Grande Pass is usually drift fishing in large boats with heavy tackle or jig fishing in large skiffs.

The back country and flats fishing can be “gang busters” when it comes to sight fishing in the clear waters for snook, redfish, seatrout and other species. Tarpon fishing in the back bays can be very productive when the water temperature reaches 75-76 degrees. Fishing for tarpon along the beaches in smaller skiffs is quite popular especially for fly fishermen.

Wade fishing along the beaches or fishing off the Sanibel Fishing Pier offers the angler a wide variety of fish to cast to: pompano, whiting, seatrout, snook, redfish, sheepshead, mackerel, sharks or flounder to name a few.

Fishermen from novice to advanced anglers, using heavy tackle, light tackle, live bait, artificial lures or fly rods, can experience world-class fishing around Sanibel and Captiva Islands.

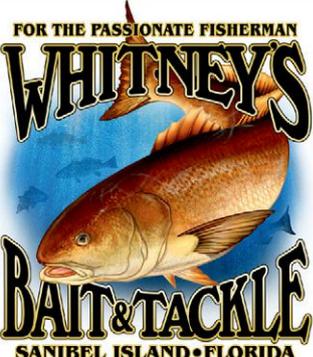
Written by Joyce Rehr



Photo by Nick Adams Photography

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Culture: Artful Heritage

Inspired by nature and history



Sanibel Historical Museum and Village

From Calusa tribesmen to Robert Rauschenberg, Sanibel and Captiva Islands have forever inspired the arts with their intrinsic beauty and spirit of individuality.

It all started with the Calusa, who built shell mounds to demonstrate hierarchal importance, fashioned tools out of seashells, carved intricate masks and sculpted pottery to use for cooking. Today, multilayered history has built upon that native foundation, a history that informs and inspires a strong legacy of island pride and passion for the arts—from painting and sculpture to music and theater.

Past Tense

The Sanibel Historical Museum and Village remembers the Calusa with a room devoted to their culture. The museum's collection of vintage and replicated island structures takes visitors into more recent eras—through the days of citrus farming, ferry boat transportation and mosquito brooms.

The Sanibel Historical Preservation Committee, which advises village operation, is responsible for the new Sanibel Heritage Trail. It encompasses a string of 22 panels along the island's shared-use path that examine island history and culture through multiple topics such as environment, architecture and racial integration.



Island Secret

The Captiva Island Historical Society (www.captivaishistorical.org) maintains a history exhibit room in the Captiva Memorial Library. Interpretative signage and touch screens tell Captiva tales of the Chadwick lime, a WWII servicemen's respite and early visitors such as Charles Lindbergh, "Ding" Darling and Teddy Roosevelt.

One navigation-themed panel tells the history of the Sanibel Lighthouse, which punctuates with exclamation the island's East End. It counts as one of the islands' most-visited historic structure.

The Captiva Community Association serves as the heart of culture on Captiva Island. The building is home to the Captiva Memorial Library. Its small historical museum pokes into island bygones and explores historical sites such as Chapel By the Sea.

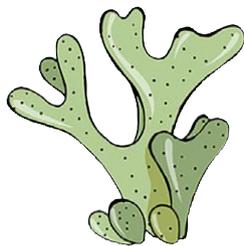
Art in Our Genes

Ever since Edna St. Vincent Millay and Anne Morrow Lindbergh visited the islands for literary inspiration, Sanibel and Captiva Islands have attracted the creative. The most famous modern-day artistic resident—the late, world-renowned assemblage artist Robert Rauschenberg—made his home on Captiva Island. The Texas-born artist worked from his Captiva studio for more than 40 years, up until his death in 2008. The artist has left there

a legacy of art in the form of a 20-acre artists' colony.

Rauschenberg's early years at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where the artistic community greatly influenced the direction of his groundbreaking work in the late 1940s, inspired today's Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Captiva Residency Program. It reflects Rauschenberg's career-long interest in collaborative creativity and promotes a spirit of innovation and boundary-bending. Internationally renowned artists such as Darryl Pottorf have followed in his wake.

The artful vibe spreads throughout the islands, where a trail of galleries display fine art of all media, inspired by the sea and its various moods. Plein-air artists capture the inspiring scenery in watercolors and acrylics. The galleries carry works from historic black-and-white historic photography to jewelry, textile arts, raku pottery, sculpture and delicate art glass.



Island Secret

Late artist Robert Rauschenberg's Captiva Island estate includes a historic fish shack (visible from Roosevelt Channel) built by Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling. The important '30s political cartoonist constructed a drawbridge to discourage visitors while he was working.

You will discover galleries sprinkled among shopping centers and along Tarpon Bay Road. Some are co-operatives, where you can find the artists themselves running the show, sometimes giving demonstrations.

Sanibel Public Library displays the works of the Sanibel-Captiva Art League on a revolving basis. It also hosts important authors such as, in years past, Paul Theroux and Jodi Picoult during its winter lecture series. Sanibel Public Library and Captiva Memorial Library are the islands' intellectual centers, places of refuge for the spirit and mind.

Clay figure with driftwood by Diane Nicastro

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Another oasis of culture, the BIG ARTS complex on Sanibel Island holds two separate galleries, open seasonally and hosting changing exhibits. It also teaches workshops geared both for adults and kids. They address disciplines from glass-fusing to African dance. The 1.5-acre campus brings performances, as well as visual arts, to appreciative audiences. In its 409-seat auditorium it hosts films, readings, plays, symphony, dance and other performance arts. Nearby, the BIG ARTS Strauss Theater stages lectures and readings in an intimate, 130-seat modern facility.

See below for more information on island places where culture thrives, colorful and vibrant as the islands' own flora.

Culture Places

BIG ARTS

900 Dunlop Road, Sanibel Island
(239) 395-0900
www.bigarts.org

Each winter season brings a bright choice of high-brow entertainment to the stage at Schein Hall—from film to ballet. Throughout the year, the center offers classes and workshops for kids and adults, as well as art exhibits in its Phillips and Founders galleries. In November, it hosts, along with Sanibel Public Library, the FGCU-Sanibel Island Writers Conference featuring celebrity authors as lecturers.

Office hours: (October through April) 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays; (May through September) 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays; (January through March) 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday; and one hour prior to all performances



Get a selfie of you captaining the historic *Santiva* mail boat. With a photographic Roosevelt Channel background, you can take the wheel at this historical society exhibit inside the Captiva library. #ohcaptainmycaptain

BIG ARTS Strauss Theater

2200 Periwinkle Way, Sanibel Island
(239) 472-6862
www.bigarts.org

Created circa 1960 in a historic one-room school building that is now part of the Sanibel Historical Village, it today occupies a thoroughly modern facility. The theater offers an array of programs in an intimate, 130-seat venue: a series

of morning lectures and dialogues titled "Talking Points;" the creative community voices of "Writers Read;" and the new "Theater Backstage," conversations with well-known American theater insiders.

Captiva Memorial Library

11560 Chapin Lane, Captiva Island
(239) 533-4890
www.leegov.com/library/branches/cv

Part of the Lee County Public Library System, the Captiva library offers a quiet place among books of all genres, specializing in local history and nature. Residents and visitors alike are welcome to peruse the collection, access the internet through the wireless connection and the library's computers and attend the library's various book discussions and other programs. (For \$15, visitors can purchase a three-month temporary library card.) The library contains a children's section and a room devoted to the Captiva Island Historical Society.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, noon to 8 p.m. Wednesday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday; closed Sunday and Monday.

Chapel By the Sea

11580 Chapin Lane, Captiva Island
(239) 472-1646
www.captivachapel.com

Once a schoolhouse where religious services were held on Sundays, today this charming, historic building is all church—extremely popular for weddings. During winter season, mid-November through April, it holds an interdenominational church service at 11 a.m. every Sunday. Next to the chapel at its peaceful seaside setting, a historic cemetery holds the graves of island pioneers and the more recently departed.

The Community House

2173 Periwinkle Way
(239) 472-2155
www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net

Here's where it all happens on Sanibel Island, in recently renovated and expanded old-island-style digs. Home to the Sanibel Community Association, the historic structure hosts everything from shellcrafting and cooking classes, to community fundraisers and the Shell Festival every winter. The city park next to the House holds a family playground and space for art fairs and other events.

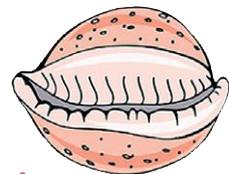
Edison & Ford Winter Estates

2340 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers
(239) 334-7419
www.edisonfordwinterestates.org

If there is ever a reason to leave the islands while visiting, this is it. Here, two of America's most brilliant geniuses, Thomas A. Edison and Henry Ford, spent their winters side-by-side. The estates take in Edison's twin homes, the Ford home, Edison's botanical gardens and laboratory, a museum of Edison's inventions, the Caretaker's Home and a stunning view of the Caloosahatchee River. Visitors can see the grounds by guided or self-guided audio tour.

Hours: Daily 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Special tours are available weekly.

Admission: Guided tours \$30 for adults, \$25 for teens ages 13 to 19, and \$18 for children ages 6 to 12; laboratory and museum-only admission is \$15, \$12 and \$8; other tour options available on web site.



Island Secret

At age 76, artist and socialist Curtis A. Perry decided Sanibel and Captiva needed a community center. That's when he put on his walking shoes and hiked the length of the islands to promote the idea, soliciting support door-to-door for today's Community House.

Sanibel Historical Museum and Village

950 Dunlop Road
(239) 472-4648
www.sanibelmuseum.org

Step back in time to Old Sanibel, condensed into an easy-to-stroll village of historic and recreated buildings. The village collection began with the early 20th-century Rutland House, an example of Florida Cracker architecture. Today the home holds period furnishings and historic exhibits. Through the years, the Sanibel Historical Society has added the old Bailey's General Store and 1926 Model-T truck, 1926 Post Office, 1924 Sears-Roebuck kit home with a Children's Room, circa-1930 tea room, 1898 cottage, 1896 schoolhouse and replicated packing house from the early 1900s. The newest additions include a circa-1924 home and its caretaker's cottage. Docents tend a pioneer garden and conduct tours of the peaceful little time warp.

Admission: Admission \$10 per adult (18 years and older), under age 18 free

Hours: (mid-October through April) 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; (May through July) 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; closed August through mid-October.

Sanibel Lighthouse

Point Ybel, East End of Sanibel Island

Lovely to enjoy and photograph from outside, the 98-foot light tower itself is rather plain, but the keeper's quarters around it lend yesteryear character. The lighthouse went into service in August 1884 at the insistence of cattle barons, who needed an aid to navigate the tricky waters at Point Ybel. When the U.S. Coast Guard decided to extinguish it in 1972, public protest kept it lit, as it is still to this day. It marks a popular recreational area complete with a beach, fishing pier and nature trail.

Sanibel Public Library

770 Dunlop Road, Sanibel Island
(239) 472-2483

www.sanlib.org

Owned and supported wholly by island residents, the independent Sanibel Public Library boasts a collection of movie DVDs, music CDs, books, magazines, cooking kits and downloadable books, magazines, movies, music and audio books—all accessible through its online card catalog. It offers local museum passes and high-speed internet access to patrons and visitors. Programs throughout the year are geared toward adults and children. Its recently "reimagined" two-story building features an atrium lobby with a fossil shell collection, plus free WiFi, local history archives, separate spaces for young children and teens, collaborative spaces and a water-view reading porch. A one-year visitor's card costs \$10 and permits checking out books, movies, music and other media.

Hours: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. (Summer Saturday hours are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.)



Island Secret

The Sanibel Public Library completed a \$5.9 million remake in 2018 to upgrade its capacity to reach modern-day library-goers with state-of-the-art technology and a soothing, island vibe.

Sanibel Historical Village and Museum

The Sanibel Historical Village and Museum is a tribute to Sanibel's past. It consists of nine authentically restored buildings, accurately representing various aspects of life in the old days. There's also a 1927 Model-T truck belonging to the Bailey family.

Located at 950 Dunlop Road. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturdays (mid-October through April); and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (May through July); closed September to mid-October. Admission is \$10 for adults age 18 and over; those under 18 are free.

Visit our website: www.sanibelmuseum.org,
email info@sanibelmuseum.org,
or call (239) 472-4648.

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Love

is in the

Sea Air





Photo by Nick Adams Photography



Photo by Nick Adams Photography

Birds, bees and beyond

Birds do it. Bees do it. And on these islands, manatees, dolphins, alligators and even tiny insects known as love bugs do it. Every living thing takes cues from the sexy, swaying coconut palms and the warm kiss of sea waters. Whether you are coming to the islands to celebrate love or marriage, you are sure to be swept away by the sheer romance of it all.

Many couples come to Sanibel and Captiva Islands specifically to get married. Others fall victim to the influence of courting herons and kissing manatees and find themselves wed before they know what hit them. There's no underestimating the power of island romance.

Who could help but fall in love—for the first time or all over again? Whether you are planning on a romantic getaway together, exchanging vows or renewing your commitment to each other, Sanibel and Captiva Islands set the perfect stage.

continued on page 51



Island Secret

A certain goofy, friendly insect flies around Sanibel and Captiva Islands in the spring and fall. It goes by the name "love bug." It doesn't bite, but its life's determination to fly around in blissful wedlock truly inspires love-bitten passion.



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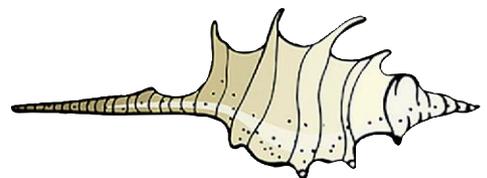


Photo by Milissa Sprecher Photography

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Island Secret

Built in 1901, Captiva's Chapel By the Sea has been on the National Register of Historic places since 2013.

Island I Do's

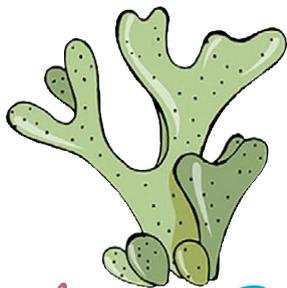
Island wedding bells ring a different tune from your typical march to the altar. Altered instead to island tempos, weddings here often come with a side of sand and water. Island ceremonies, in general, tend to be more casual, more creative. More romantic and memorable.

Many brides opt to walk down an aisle carpeted with white sand and seashells—the beach. Countless others have sailed into the sunset for an intimate exchange of vows. Wedding planners report the offbeat to the conventional: In addition to beachside betrothals, they have seen splashy in-pool knot-tyings, formal church affairs, ceremonies on the greens, boat excursions to Cayo Costa and intimate gatherings at the historic Captiva Chapel By the Sea.

Independent island wedding planners can tell you the ins and outs of your preferred venue. Many large resorts and some local tour boat operators retain the services of planners on staff for the utmost in convenience. They will work with you on every detail of ceremony and reception starting with the theme. Seashells? Dolphins? Luau? Sandcastles? Birds and butterflies, perhaps?

How about the flowers and decorations? A bouquet of white calla lilies or a single bird-of-paradise stem are elegant island choices. Attach dried starfish to the sides of the chairs. Stick white candles

continued on page 53



Island Secret

Southwest Florida's beloved manatees are often caught "kissing" in local waters. Scientists believe that touching snouts may be a form of communication between the mammoth marine mammals.



Photo by Millissa Sprecher Photography



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Instead of preserving your wedding dress after the big day, island photographers suggest a fun photo op known as “trash the dress.” Sometime during the honeymoon the bride suits up again to take the plunge in the Gulf while the photographer captures the madcap moment. Couples celebrating their anniversaries, too, find it fun to liberate that white gown from the back of the closet with a dunk in the sea.

Photo by Nick Adams Photography

continued from page 51

in the sand. Line the bridal path with seashells. Simplicity is the new conspicuous wealth when it comes to island weddings. Planners are knowledgeable about local caterers, cake artists, photographers, florists and musicians—whether you prefer the tropical strains of a steel drum band or a single classical guitar.

Weddings Intimate to Grand

Ceremonies come in all shapes and sizes on the islands—and on the waters surrounding them. One of the most popular options is a quiet exchange with only the two of you, your witnesses and the officiate at the edge of the waves during sunset on a secluded beach. Or, consider the altar of an all-to-yourselves church or the bow of a sailboat under a moonlit sky.

Many, however, prefer a large to-do. If your style dictates a ceremony with all of your family, friends and a 16-person bridal party on a sprawling lawn, island hotels and resorts can prepare a fitting setting for the rehearsal dinner, ceremony and reception. But remember to plan ahead: Major venues sometimes book up a year in advance.

Two Time

Should you decide to prolong your island stay past the big day (most do!), planners can make your wedding and honeymoon a worry-free, seamless series of events. For what better place to unwind after your wedding than here, where island rhythms and tropical pacing practically mandate relaxation?

Spend the dawn of your new lives together or any romantic getaway for two exploring island trails on a bicycle built for two. Rent a double kayak and paddle along the secluded waterways of J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, or do a serenaded sunset cruise from Captiva Island. Start a collection of seashells together. Play a round of golf, and then relax with a couples massage.



Island Secret

Island beach weddings of 25 people or fewer do not require event permits. Setting up chairs, tiki torches, a podium, sound amplification or an archway does, however.

Laze on the beach. Sail away to an island with no physical connection to mainland or anything remotely mainstream. Reserve a window table at sunset. Dance on the beach in the moonlight. Sleep in.

Whether it's your first, second or 20th honeymoon, or just an opportunity to get to know one another better, Sanibel and Captiva Island breezes have a way of fanning the flames of love. Fill your wedding album with images of tropical beauty and sunny togetherness. Make memories that will keep for the rest of your shared lives.



dream “I do”



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Dig in Your Toes...
and Your Heels

How to become an islander



Do visions of barefoot days and bloom-scented nights run through your brain? Are you finding yourself daydreaming about how wonderful it would be to live on these islands year-round? Are you ready to make Sanibel or Captiva Island your new address? You know you don't have to leave the islands just because the calendar says your stay is over. So go ahead, dig your heels into the sand. Vow you are never going to leave. And mean it.

The move to a lifetime—or at least a part of each year—in this land of sun, flowers and pure nature is easy. A large percentage of island residents, after all, started out as visitors, just like you.



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Saturday 10am - 4pm

Step One: Shop Around

Of course, your foremost resource is a qualified real estate agent, and the islands have plenty. But first you may want to peruse the local newspapers, real estate publications and websites to narrow down your price range, location and size preferences. The Sanibel Island & Captiva Island Chamber of Commerce website, sanibel-captiva.org, can help you locate real estate agent websites and other contact information.

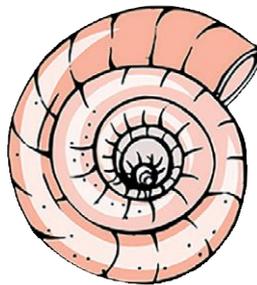
It's a fun vacation pastime to hop on a bike and pedal by one or two of the listed prospects each day. When you have found a few that fit your needs, make contact with an agent, who can also recommend other properties with comparable prices and locations.

Pick Your Style

Your island options range from undeveloped lots to condominiums, duplexes to single-family homes. Decide where you want to live: on the Gulf, on the bay, on a golf course, near shopping and restaurants or away from it all.

For waterfront living, condominiums pose your most affordable option. They offer the added bonus of typically being maintained under contract with the condo association—meaning less worry and work for you. They often come with added amenities such as a swimming pool, a whirlpool spa, tennis courts and exercise facilities.

The islands also offer timeshare, fractional and full condo ownership plans. To get your feet only slightly wet in the island real estate market and island life



Island Secret

Every person who owns and resides on real property in Florida on Jan. 1 and makes the property his or her permanent residence is eligible to receive a homestead exemption up to \$50,000. Source: <http://dor.myflorida.com>



**Instagram
Alert**

Picture yourself in that island dream home! Take a few selfies of you and your family in front of houses you like, and see how they look on you. #islandlife #forwardingaddress

Island Secret

In 2017, the City of Sanibel was designated as the seventh safest city in Florida by the National Council for Home Safety and Security.

experience, you may want first to consider timeshare or fractional ownership, where you buy one week or month in the condo complex of your choice. Often known as “interval ownership,” most plans allow you to trade in your time slot for other locations, should the urge hit.

If you decide upon full condo ownership, you still have the option of putting it in the rental market for the periods you are not occupying the unit—a smart way to help pay for your investment.

Families—who move here for high-ranking The Sanibel School, our enviable quality of life and safe environment—usually look for a duplex or single-family home. The islands boast abodes from Old Florida-style cottages to grand, modern mansions. Most are tucked off main thoroughfares in inviting neighborhoods with a variety of character and a ton of quiet. Some are gated communities; others congregate around a lake, the Sanibel River, a golf course or the sea.

Island Stylin’

Island style dictates an easy way of life that blurs the boundaries of indoors and outdoors, reflecting the local semitropical vegetation and climate. Screened lanai porches, sunny “Florida rooms,” backyard swimming pools, comfortably furnished porch decks, outdoor kitchens and blossomy gardens expand the island home living area year-round. Strict density and set-back regulations ensure ample yard space and privacy.

Your real estate agent can advise you about insurance requirements and neighborhood guidelines. A number of property management, grounds maintenance and house-sitting services on the islands makes your time away from your island home worry-free.

But like most of the transplanted islanders here, you will probably find yourself spending more and more time on the islands as time goes on. You will know you have sunk in the roots as a “true islander” when the tides turn and you now spend your vacations up north and your life on-island.

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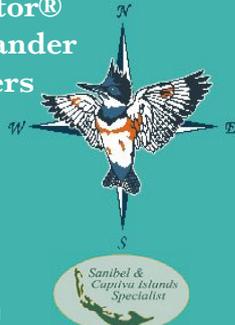
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"DING" DARLING DAYS



#DISCOVERDING

DATES TO CELEBRATE

Nature, food and art draw the community together with visitors year-round.

Festival Showcase: 31st Annual “Ding” Darling Days 2019 Oct. 19-20

Birding, kayaking, archery and live animal presentations: “Ding” Darling Days, the annual eco-festival at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, boosts environmental awareness to a whole new level of fun just as summer’s heat cools to fall.

The festival honors the birthday of the Refuge’s namesake and father of the Duck Stamp, Jay Norwood Darling, who twice won the Pulitzer Prize for his syndicated—and often controversial—political cartoons back in the 1930s.

The festival culminates with Sunday’s all-free Family Fun Day, Oct. 20, featuring live wildlife presentations, Refuge tram tours, a butterfly house, archery, kids nature crafts, giveaways and hot dogs.

The 31st annual celebration begins on Saturday, October 19, with Conservation Art Day. Federal Duck Stamp Winners, other artists, cartooning, and nature art workshops will highlight that Saturday devoted to Jay Norwood Darling’s legacy as the first duck stamp artist.

Admission to Wildlife Drive is free to all on Sunday and Saturday. Birding, boating, tram, and kayaking activities also fill the weekend.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge and Tarpon Bay Explorers recreation concession cooperatively host “Ding” Darling Days with support from local businesses and individuals.

To learn more about the weekend’s events and activities, please visit www.dingdarlingdays.com or call (239) 472-1100 ext. 222.



**Instagram
Alert**

Kids love getting their pictures taken with the costumed Blue Goose character at “Ding” Darling Days. The mascot of the national wildlife refuge system, the Blue Goose evolved from the logo that Refuge namesake Jay N. “Ding” Darling designed for the federal agency in the 1930s.



MORE 2019 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

(Note: Exact dates are subject to change.
Please call or visit the event website
before finalizing plans to attend.)

Feb. 16-17: Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva's 35th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair. More than 120 juried artists and 10,000 visitors fill Sanibel Community House grounds for two days during this popular representation of multimedia art works. www.sanibelartfair.com

March 7-9: 82nd Annual Shell Festival. In celebration of Sanibel's reputation as a world-renowned shelling island, this longtime tradition showcases shell displays and crafts. It includes food booths, entertainment and raffles at the Sanibel Community House. (239) 472-2155, www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net

March 5-23: 33rd Annual Sanibel Music Festival. Sanibel Island devotes

one entire month to seven classical music concerts performed at the Sanibel Congregational Church by emerging artists from around the nation. (239) 344-7025, www.sanibelmusicfestival.org

March 15-16: Sanibel Captiva Lions Club's 35th Annual Arts & Crafts Fair. Artists from around the country submit their work for jury selection to be able to sell at the fair and to be eligible to win prizes at this well-attended event held at the Sanibel Community House. sanibelcaptivalionsclubartsandcraftsfair.com

April 20: Earth Day at the Refuge. "Ding" Darling will celebrate the 49th anniversary of Earth Day with earth-friendly Family Story & Craft activities. Guests can also attend free educational programs and films and meet Bagzilla, a "bag monster" dressed in the average person's annual plastic bag consumption. (239) 472-1100, dingdarlingsociety.org

July 4: Independence Day Celebration. Sanibel Island throws a good, old-fashioned festival, where paraders toss candy and gifts while the crowd cheers them on. Merchants host

special sidewalk sales and parties for the whole family. Locals and visitors participate in the Road Rally scavenger hunt. Fireworks over the Causeway light up the night. (239) 472-1080, www.sanibel-captiva.org.

Nov. TBA The 26thok Annual Esperanza Woodring Memorial Castnet Rodeo. Kids under the age of 16 can participate in demonstrations, lessons and a youth competition. (239) 472-1618, www.baitboxsanibel.com

Nov. 10: 38th Annual Taste of the Islands. Sample island cuisine and dance with the locals to live music at the Sanibel Community Park. The food festival benefits the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW). (239) 472-3644, www.crowclinic.org,

Dec. 6-7: 35th Annual Luminary Holiday Stroll. A merry trail of luminary candles leads to festively decorated businesses hosting entertainment and free refreshments. The first night takes place on Sanibel Island and the second on Captiva Island. (239) 472-1080, www.sanibel-captiva.org.



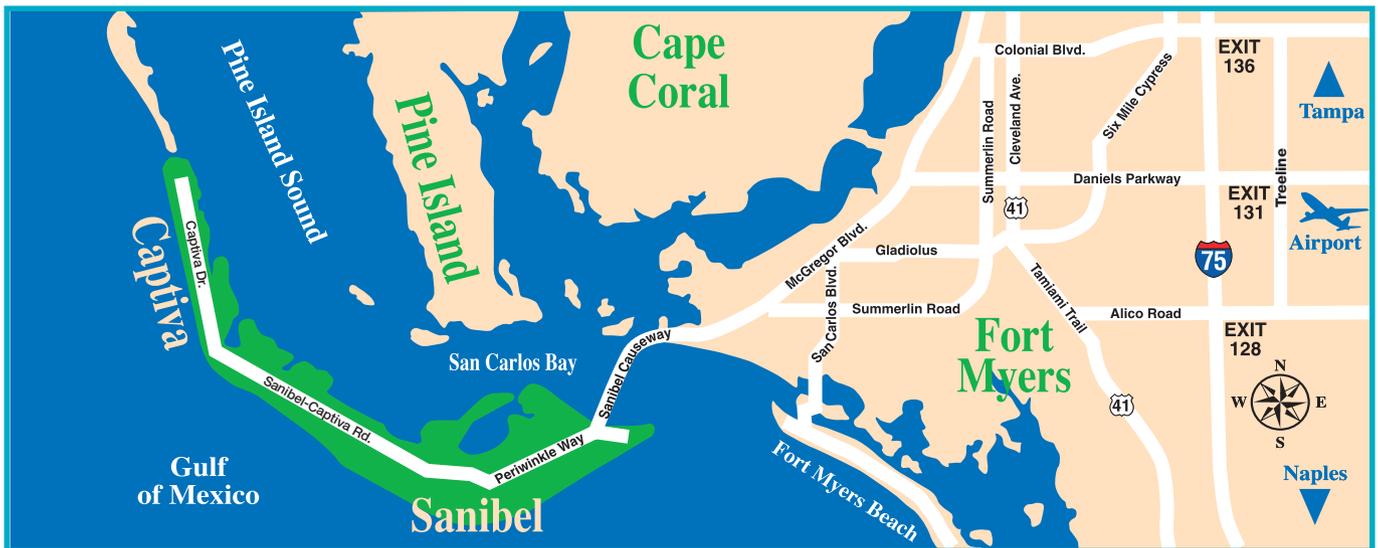
Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com



Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com

GETTING HERE: FOLLOW THE ISLAND-BOUND ROAD

EASY TO GET TO, HARD TO LEAVE



Distance from Sanibel-Captiva (in miles) to other Florida cities:

Clearwater 160	Ocala 243
Daytona Beach 235	Orlando 180
Fort Lauderdale 146	Palm Beach 186
Gainesville 275	Sarasota 104
Jacksonville 344	St. Augustine 287
Key West 307	St. Petersburg 141
Miami 162	Tallahassee 421
Naples 48	Tampa 154

BY VEHICLE

Interstate 75

From the north, take Exit 131 (Daniels Parkway) and head west to Summerlin Road. Turn left on Summerlin Road and follow to the Sanibel Causeway (\$6 toll driving onto the island).

From the south, take Exit 128 (Alico Road) and head west to Highway 41/Tamiami Trail. Turn north (right) and follow to Gladiolus Drive. Turn left and continue, staying in the left lane and taking the ramp to Summerlin Road, which you will then follow to the Sanibel Causeway (\$6 toll driving onto the island).

Interstate 95

If you are driving into Florida from the north on I-95, turn west on I-10 (near Jacksonville), then south on I-75 and follow the directions above.

From Miami, take I-95 north to I-595 west and follow signs directing you to I-75 north (toward Naples). Follow directions above for I-75 from the south.

Interstate 4

From Orlando, head west on I-4 to I-75 south and follow directions above for I-75 from the north.

Here at Last!

Drive across the scenic causeway and onto Sanibel Island. The second cheerfully painted building on your right is the Chamber Welcome Center, where visitors can find information and a red-carpet greeting.

At the four-way stop sign at Periwinkle Way, either a right or left turn will lead you to beaches, shops, restaurants, attractions and accommodations. (See the map on pages 67 - 69.) Straight ahead, you will reach the Gulf drives and more beach accesses.



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To reach Captiva Island, turn right onto Periwinkle Way at the four-way stop and again at the west end of Periwinkle Way on either Palm Ridge Road (via turning lane) or Tarpon Bay Road (at the T-intersection). Both take you to Sanibel-Captiva Road. Drive about 8 miles and cross the Blind Pass bridge. It takes 15 to 30 minutes to drive between Sanibel and Captiva islands, depending upon traffic. Warning: The speed limit is closely monitored and rigidly enforced. Be sure to abide by school zone limits when the light signal is flashing.

Island Secret: In high season, avoid traffic coming onto the island between 9 a.m. and noon. Traffic leaving the island is heaviest 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Visit www.mysanibel.us/traffic for live feed from a number of island and causeway street cams.

CAR RENTALS

You will need a valid driver's license and major credit card. (Most rental agencies have minimum age requirements.) Nearly all major car rentals are available at Southwest Florida International Airport; it's best to reserve before you arrive.

BY AIR

Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW) (239) 590-4800; www.flylcpa.com

Located in Fort Myers, the terminal is accessible off I-75's Exit 131 and Exit 128. An easy 45- to 60-minute drive brings you to Sanibel Island via Daniels Parkway and Summerlin Road. Most major

domestic airlines serve RSW.

Orlando International Airport (MCO)

(407) 825-2001; www.orlandoairports.net

Located 7 miles south of Orlando; take I-4 west to I-75 south.

Miami International Airport (MIA)

(305) 876-7000; www.miami-airport.com

Located 5 miles northwest of downtown Miami; take I-95 north to I-595 west and I-75 north.

Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport (FLL)

(866) 435-9355; www.broward.org/airport

Located 4 miles south of downtown Fort Lauderdale; take I-595 west to I-75 north.

Tampa International Airport (TPA)

(813) 870-8700; www.tampaairport.com

Located off I-275; take I-275 south to I-75 south.

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Sanibel & Captiva Islands

POINTS OF INTEREST



<http://www.facebook.com/SanibelCaptivaChamber>

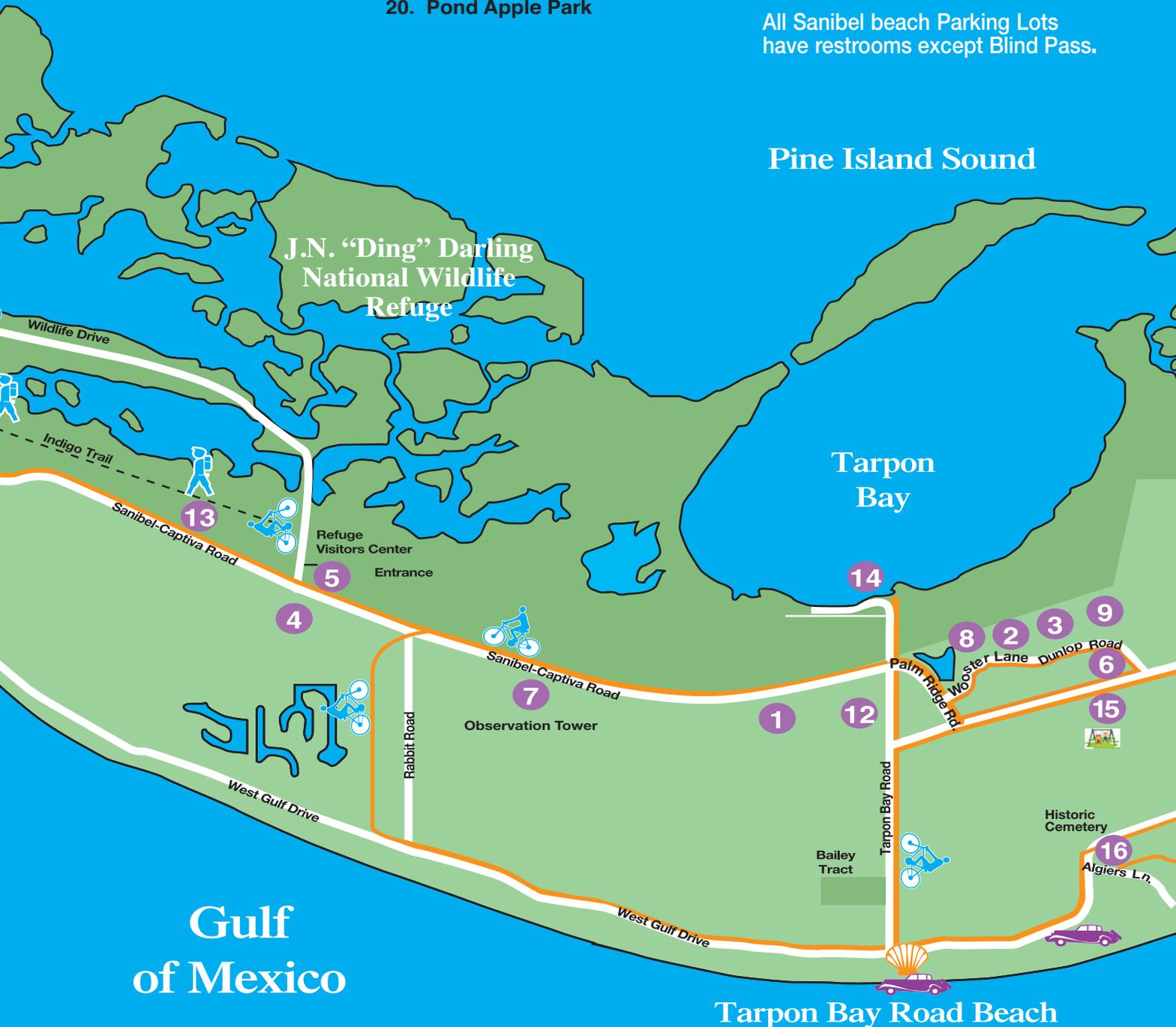
Points of Interest

1. Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum
2. BIG ARTS
3. City Hall / Police
4. C.R.O.W.
5. J.N. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge Entrance – Visitors Center
6. BIG ARTS The Herb Strauss Theater
7. Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
8. Sanibel Historical Village
9. Sanibel Public Library
10. Sanibel Lighthouse
11. Sanibel Marina
12. Sanibel Post Office
13. Sanibel Recreation Center
14. Tarpon Bay Nature Center
15. SCA Community House
16. Historic Cemetery
17. Sanibel Sea School
18. Bike Stop
19. Bailey Homestead (SCCF)
20. Pond Apple Park

Legend

-  Public Golf Course
-  Bike Paths
Bike Paths run parallel to, but not on, the roadway
-  Public Beach Access
-  Public Parking Available (Fee)
-  Fishing Pier
-  Lighthouse
(Point Ybel Light)
-  Boat Ramp
-  Playground

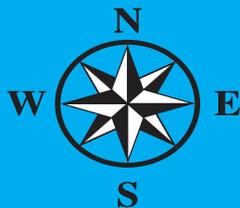
All Sanibel beach Parking Lots have restrooms except Blind Pass.



Pine Island Sound

Gulf
of Mexico

Tarpon Bay Road Beach



The Islands of
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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Francis P Bailey
Visitor Center

San Carlos
Bay

Public Restrooms

Ladyfinger Lake

Sanibel Marina
North Yachtsman

Fishing
Pier

10

Sanibel
Lighthouse

Lighthouse
Beach

19

18

11

17

Sanibel
Island

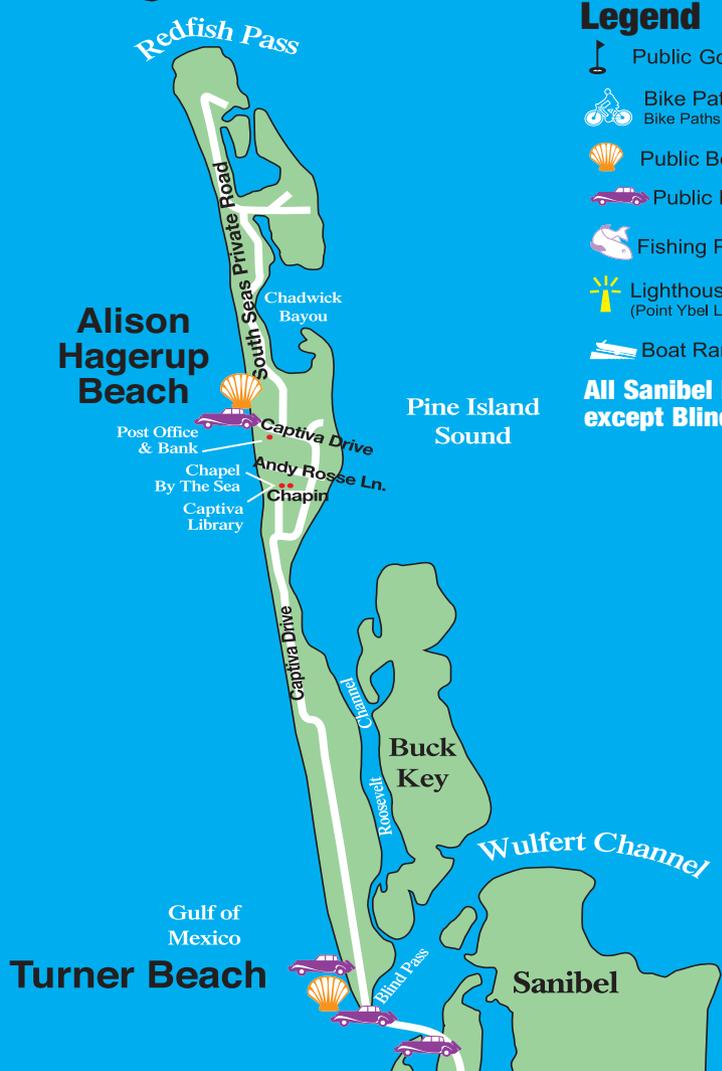
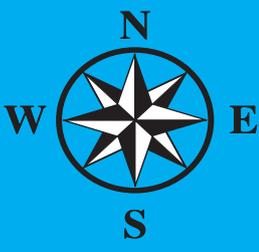
Gulf Side City Park

Sanibel Island is approximately 12 miles long and three miles across at its widest. Captiva Island measures about five miles long and 1/2-mile wide.



Captiva & Sister Islands

POINTS OF INTEREST



Legend

-  Public Golf Course
-  Bike Paths
Bike Paths run parallel to, but not on, the roadway
-  Public Beach Access
-  Public Parking Available (Fee)
-  Fishing Pier
-  Lighthouse
(Point Ybel Light)
-  Boat Ramp

All Sanibel beaches have restrooms except Blind Pass Beach

SHHHHOPPING SECRETS

*8 insider tips
to island
retail therapy*





Skip the traffic, crowds and noise you find in the canned atmosphere of a mega-mall. Forget Black Friday. Opt instead for Green Everyday in the outdoor shopping centers of Sanibel and Captiva Islands—the best-kept shopping secrets in the state of Florida. Go offline to shop in real time in park-like settings for sea- and beach-related goods that make poignant remembrances of your island days and night.

Instead of a strip of chain and franchised stores, you will find—tucked demurely into the foliage throughout the islands—owner-operated galleries, one-of-a-kind clothing stores, unique boutiques, hardware and garden outlets and blingy jewelry shops. Sometimes you really have to look to find them, so we are going to let you in on eight of the islands' best shopping tips.



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Tip #1: Browse Olde Sanibel.

Many visitors never discover that, aside from all the shops they see along Sanibel Island's Periwinkle Way west of the Causeway, that a charming throwback to old-island times awaits toward the Sanibel Lighthouse on the island's East End.

Sanibel's original settlement, it cropped up after the government built the lighthouse in 1884. The ferry that once transported all visitors and goods to the island, before the Causeway opened, once loaded and offloaded here.

The neighborhood retains a time-warp feel where folks, many of whom are staying in the neighborhood's small inns and lodging, roam the paved shared-use path to leisurely shop a blend of funky, finery and watersports necessities. In between shopping sprints, they pause for breakfast, a deli sandwich, a Sea Turtle sundae or people-watching from benches in front of the shops. Then they head for the nearby beach.

Tip #2: Find seashells away from the seashore.

Sure, you can comb the beaches for shells gratis, but what if you need supplies to turn those shells into crafty gifts to take home? Nowhere else in the whole world can you find in one small town a handful of shops devoted entirely to seashells and shell art. Only on Sanibel Island, shell capital of the United States. And that's not even counting the many stores that sell seashells as part of their gift merchandise.

Shell shops spread through Sanibel Island like treasures washed up on a beach. And, same as with those shell treasures, you sometimes have to look closely and ask locals for advice on where to find them.

The shops' inventory includes decorative and rare specimen shells, sea stars, coral, sea glass, minerals, collector kits, fossils, shell craft supplies, identification and DIY craft books, nautical accessories, gifts, shell jewelry and exquisite works of art fashioned from shells. Buy a tiny cat's-eye shell for 39 cents or pay up to \$4,000 for a rare showpiece cowry shell.



Island newspapers print pictures of shellers who have found the island's rare prize shell – the #junonia. Improve your chances: Grab a junonia at one of the shell shops and post your own #shellfie.

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Tip #3: Shop "The Ridge." As you head west on Periwinkle Way, take the right exit lane that leads to Palm Ridge Road. Many first-timers miss this off-the-main-route lineup of unique shops and restaurants, where you will find everything from shoes to some of the island's best homemade soup. Need a pharmacy or looking for a good beach read? Hang a right!

Tip #4: Wander "downtown Captiva Island." Whether you are in the market for an inflatable octopus or a vintage Tiffany lamp, it dwells among the wares displayed in the tight nucleus of shops in "downtown Captiva." The vivacious scene resounds with live music, emits delicious scents from the neighborhood outdoor bistro, and bubbles with the gaiety of folks headed to the beach.

You can easily walk the extent of the shopping district, which starts where Captiva Drive and Andy Rosse Lane intersect. And ends, in either direction, at the beach. Expect to find the quirky in art galleries, boutiques and eateries.



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Tip #5: Gallery hop. Captiva and Sanibel Islands both claim their share of one-of-a-kind galleries, where often you can find the artists themselves hanging out, running the cash register, demonstrating or talking about their art.

The range of art covers wildlife photography, raku pottery, exquisite jewelry, seascape watercolors, fused glass, sea life wall hangings, driftwood sculptures and oil paintings inspired by vintage beach art.

Tip #6: Find treasure in our thrift shops. The islands are all about the environment and recycling, so don't be surprised to find treasures—often name-brand and practically new—such as clothing, household accessories and furnishings at Sanibel Island's thrift shops. Noah's Ark at St. Michael & All Angels Church benefits area charities, plus a Goodwill Industries shop is stuffed with fun surprises for the bargain-hunter.

Tip #7: Literally literary. Skip the impersonal, supermarket-sized bookstores and online outlets. Sit, chat and turn some pages at the islands' individually owned book shops. Watch for news of author appearances and other special events.

Tip #8: Stalk specialty gifts at our nature attractions. If you are looking for the extraordinary in nature-oriented gifts, you will find it in the gift shops at some of the islands' environmental attractions. It's a great way to show your allegiance to nature and find gifts for your "wild" friends and family.

CROW (Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife) sells fun things for kids—books, puzzles, wildlife toys and jewelry—at its Visitors Center. "Ding" Darling's Refuge Nature Store carries a complete range of birding supplies—from high-quality binoculars to plush bird toys, field guides, roseate spoonbill T-shirts and even a game called Bird-Opoly. The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum store is shell-oriented, naturally, with gifts from fine jewelry to puppets. Sanibel Sea School's Ocean Tribe Outfitters stocks water shoes, rash guards and all the gear you need for water-related recreation.

The best part about buying at these outlets is that the profits benefit environmental research, preservation and education.

So now that you're armed with a local's best intel, grab your credit card and, why not? Charge!



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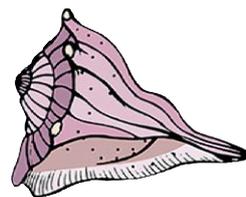
PERIWINKLE PLACE 2075 PERIWINKLE WAY, #28 SANIBEL, FL
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Island Stylin'

Flirty cotton skirts imprinted with tropical flowers and fish. Slip-on flip-flops decorated with rhinestones, buckles, shells and lollipop hues. Sun-protective fishing shirts and hats with removable neck capes. Earrings and pendants in the shape of dolphins, hibiscus, sea turtles and sand dollars. Kids' shark socks and T-shirts that change color in the sun.

Noticing a pattern here? It's what we call "island style," a relaxed sense of fashion that evolves from our love of the sea, wildlife and vegetation. Colors mimic the flowers and fruit that bear year-round in shades of ixora pink, hibiscus yellow, lime green, blushing mango, heron blue and so on. Fabrics match our easy lifestyles and warm climes—cool cottons, breezy rayons, lightweight blends, wicking micro-fabrics.

From the most affordable resort wear shops to the most elegant jewelry boutiques, island merchants showcase a diverse and wearable sense-of-place. Practical for playing in the sun, waves and sand, island style makes a fashion statement that no one will question.



Island Secret

See the calendar of events on page 62 or visit the Sanibel Community House website (www.sanibelcommunityhouse.net) for art fairs and other special shopping events, where you can find the unique and creative in gifts and souvenirs.

TAHITIAN GARDENS

1975-2019 PERIWINKLE WAY

Adventures In Paradise
Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry
Cheeburger Cheeburger 
C. Turtles
Pandora's Box
Pandora's Box Too
Paper Fig Kitchen 
Royal Shell Real Estate
Royal Shell Vacations
Sailor's Toy Shoppe
Sanibel Cafe 
Sanibel Resort Wear
Sanibel Sole
Shiny Objects
Synergy Sportswear
Wilford & Lee Home Decor

THE VILLAGE SHOPS

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Tribeca Hair Salon
t2 Traders 
Watson MacRae Gallery
Why Knot

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Amy Jo's Ladies Boutique
Amy's Something Special
Island Paws
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On Island
Over Easy Cafe 
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Tahitian
GARDENS

1975-2019 Periwinkle Way

The
VILLAGE SHOPS

2340 Periwinkle Way

Town
CENTER

2496 Palm Ridge Road

Olde
SANIBEL SHOPPES

630 Tarpon Bay Road



For individual shop information:

www.ShopOnSanibel.com



DINING: *GET FRESH*

A legacy of seafood, citrus and rum.



Ever since the native Calusa first dropped in on the islands to catch dinner, fish and shellfish have reigned as a mainstay of local diets. Further down the timeline, the commercial fishing industry and Cuban trade thrived for decades on the islands' bounty. During Prohibition, Cuban rum was the currency of exchange for mullet roe. Smugglers transported kegs to the islands in their bait wells.

Early settlers subsisted on farming, particularly tomatoes and citrus. A coconut and key lime plantation once thrived on Captiva Island. Sanibel Island became synonymous with winter produce. So prized were "Sanibel Tomatoes" for their flavor and juiciness that unscrupulous competitors took to "borrowing" the brand.

As intrepid tourists began making their way to this acclaimed "garden spot of

Florida," makeshift, seasonal restaurants furthered the Sanibel, dinner-bell connection. Miss Charlotta Matthews' Tea Room, which now resides at the Sanibel Historical Village, was among the first to welcome visitors, as they disembarked the ferry from the mainland, with island culinary hospitality. Charlotta served tea, biscuits, light lunch, and even a little golf to her guests. Old Thistle Lodge, faithfully replicated at today's Casa Ybel Resort, hosted Thomas A. Edison and other prominent island visitors.

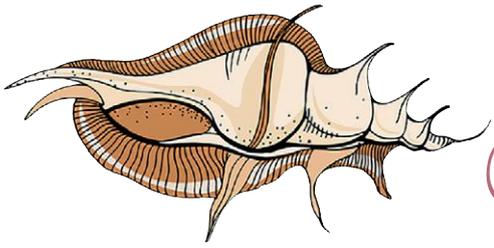
Today's island restaurateurs and chefs have contributed ingredients and foodways from all corners of the planet. As in the days of the Calusa, seafood stars on most menus—such local specialties as wild Gulf shrimp, stone crab claws, grouper, snapper and pompano. Dual growing seasons assure that the freshest produce hits your plate. A local farmer's market provides

residents and visitors with homegrown and homemade goodness during winter season. And rum still flows freely into fruity punches, daiquiris, pina colodas and craft cocktails at local bars.

The result: an all-fresh culinary legacy that is equal parts island-inspired and steeped in tradition. Come, taste the richness of the present spiced with the past.



Thomas Edison probably caught a dramatic seaside sunset view from the Thistle Lodge, and so can you. #dinnerwithaview #justliketom



Island Secret

You could say that cows built the Sanibel Lighthouse and the islands' first settlement. The lucrative cattle-shipping business made a powerful case for better navigational guidance at tricky Point Ybel, and, in 1884, the lighthouse put an end to cattlemen's "beefs" about the dangers.



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	Credit Cards Accepted	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Sunday Brunch	Take-Out	Waterfront Dining	Entertainment	W&B= Wine and Beer F= Full Liquor Bar	Happy Hour	Outdoor Dining	Reservations Suggested
Bailey's 2477 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-1516 (Catering, Deli, Bakery)	2,3,5	Y	Y	Y		Y					Y	
Cheeburger Cheeburger 1975 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-6111 (Casual, American, Family)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y			B&W			
Cheeburger Cheeburger at the Sanibel Outlets 20350 Summerlin Rd, Fort Myers, (Casual, American, Family)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y			B&W		Y	
Cips Place Island Restaurant 2055 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-0223 (Casual Island Dining)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y			F	Y	Y	Y
The Coffee Bar @ Bailey's 2477 Periwinkle Way, San, 579-0026 (Best Coffee Bar)	2,3,5					Y					Y	

Breakfast & Lunch

Breakfast and Lunch daily
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Photo by Millissa Sprecher Photography

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Visit Florida.com 8 Best Ice Creams in Florida

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The Crows Nest 15951 Captiva Drive, Cap, 472-5161 (Food, Music, Fun)	2,3,5			Y		Y	Y	Y	F	Y		
Doc Ford's Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille 2500 Island Inn Road, San, 472-8311 (Caribbean Flair, Family)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y			F		Y	
Doc Ford's Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille South Seas Island Resort, Cap, 312-4275 (Caribbean Flair, Family)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y		Call	F		Y	
The Dunes Golf & Tennis Club 949 Sand Castle Road, San, 472-3355 (Club Dining Room)	2,3,4,5		Y	CALL				Y	F	Y	Y	Y
George & Wendy's Seafood Grille 2499 Periwinkle Way, San., 395-1263 (American, Seafood, Casual)	2, 3, 5		Y	Y		Y		Y	F	Y	Y	Y



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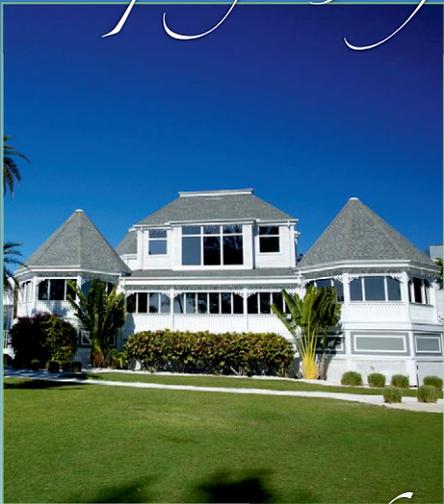
2330 Palm Ridge Road Sanibel, FL 33957
(in plaza across from CVS)





Photo by Nick Adams Photography

Sweeping Gulf Views ...



and Rave Reviews

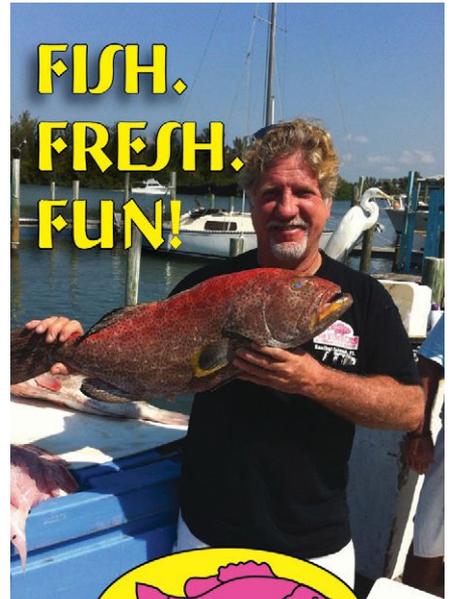
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Geppetto's Beach Foodies 362 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-6566 (Best Beach Food To Go)	2,3,4,5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	
Gramma Dot's 634 N Yachtsman Drive, San, 472-8138 (American Seafood)	2,5		Y	Y		Y	Y		B&W			
Greenflash Restaurant 15183 Captiva Drive, Cap, 472-3337 (Seafood, Steak, Pasta)	2,3,5		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		F		Y	
Il Cielo 1244 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-5555 (Seafood, Steaks, Modern American)	2,3,4,5			Y	Y			Y	F	Y	Y	Y
Island Cow Eatery 2163 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-0606 (Fun Casual Dining)	2,3,5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	F	Y	Y	

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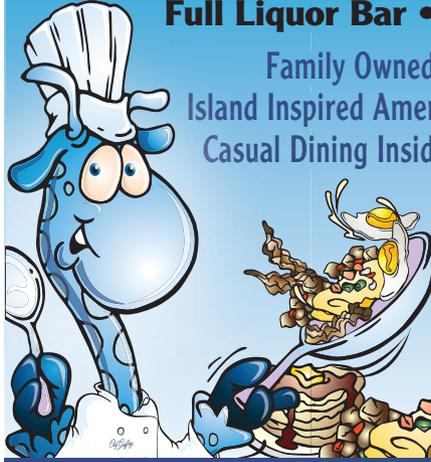
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Island Ceviche

- One pound of local Gulf Shrimp
- 8 big limes (juiced)
- 1 cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 Serrano chili, minced
(all ribs and seeds removed)
- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- 1 diced avocado
- 1 peeled and diced cucumber
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Preparation:

Boil the shrimp for a quick minute, with salt to taste.

Remove and drain right away to avoid over cooking.

Cool off the shrimp by placing it in cold iced water.

Drain and cut the shrimp in small pieces (unless using small shrimp).

Place it in a glass bowl with the lime juice, salt and pepper, cover and leave it in the fridge for half hour.

Mix in the chili and the chopped onion and refrigerate for an additional 20 minutes.

Add the cilantro, cucumber and avocado before serving.

Enjoy with chips!



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Jac 1223 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-1771 (Farm to Table)	2,3,4,5		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	F	Y	Y	Y
Jerry's of Sanibel 1700 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-9300 (Family Style Dining)	2,3,5	Y	Y	Y		Y			B&W			
Lighthouse Café of Sanibel 362 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-0303 (Breakfast, Seafood, American)	5	Y	Y						B&W			
Love Boat Ice Cream 1700 Periwinkle Way, Unit #9 San, 312-4356 (Best Ice Cream Ever)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y					Y	
Matzaluna, The Italian Kitchen 1200 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-1998 (Pizza, Pasta, Seafood)	2,5			Y		Y			F	Y		

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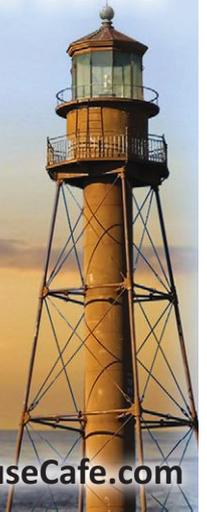
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Mucky Duck 11546 Andy Rosse Lane, Cap, 472-3434 (American, English Pub)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	F		Y	
Normandie Seaside Cafe' 3345 West Gulf Drive, San, 800-824-0476 x 310 (Casual, American)	2,3,5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		F	Y		Y
The Old Captiva House at 'Tween Waters Inn 15951 Captiva Drive, Cap, 472-5161 (Delicious, Fresh, Florida)	2,3,5	Y		Y			Y	Y	F		Y	Y
The Oasis Pool Bar 115951 Captiva Drive, Cap, 800-223-5865 (Casual, American Bar & Grille)	2,3,5		Y	Y		Y		Y	F	Y	Y	
Over Easy Café 630 Tarpon Bay Road Unit # 1, San, 472-2625 (Fun Casual Dining)	2,3,5	Y	Y			Y			B&W		Y	



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Paper Fig 2003 Periwinkle Way, Tahitian Gardens 887-0050 (Take Along, Catering, Private Chef)	2,3,4,5		Y	Y		Y						
Pecking Order 2496 Palm Ridge Rd., San, 472-2534 (Southern Traditional Comfort Food)	2,3,4,5		Y	Y		Y			W&B		Y	
Pinocchio's Original Italian Ice Cream 362 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-6566 (Sanibel's Best Ice Cream)	2,3,4,5	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y	
Sandollar Restaurant 1231 Middle Gulf Dr. San, 472-4123 (Fresh Island Fare)	3,4,5	Y	Y	Y					F		Y	Y
Sanibel Deli & Coffee Factory 2330 Palm Ridge Road, San, 472-2555 (American, Ice Cream, Pizza)	2,3,5	Y	Y	Y		Y			B&W		Y	



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Sanibel Fish House 1523 Periwinkle Way San, 472-7770 (Family, Sports Bar)	2,3,5		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	F	Y		
Sanibel Grill 703 Tarpon Bay Road in Timbers Plaza, San, 472-4453 (Sports Bar, Seafood)	2, 5		SEASON	Y		Y			F	Y		
Schnappers Hots Inc. 1528 Periwinkle Way, San, 472-8686 (Fresh food, Carry-out)	3,5		Y	Y		Y					Y	
Sea Breeze Cafe' 1451 Middle Gulf Drive, San, 395-6013 (American, Seafood, Gulf-front)	2,3,5	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	F	Y	Y	
Shima Japanese Steakhouse & Sushi Bar 1451 Middle Gulf Drive, San, 395-6017 (Hibachi, Sushi)	2,3,5			Y		Sushi			F			Y
Thistle Lodge 2255 West Gulf Drive, San, 472-9200 (Seafood, Floridian)	2,3,5		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	F	Y	Y	Y
Timbers Restaurant & Fish Market 703 Tarpon Bay Road, San, 472-3128 (Fresh Seafood Market)	2,5			Y		Y			F			
Traditions at the Island Inn 3111 West Gulf Drive, San, 472-1561 (Upscale American Cuisine)	2,3,5			Y		Y	Y	Y	F			Y
The Upper Deck 3345 West Gulf Drive, San, 800-824-0476 (Casual, American Bar & Grille)	2,3,5		Y				Y	Y		Y	Y	



Photo Credit Lee County VCB/Fort Myers-Sanibel.com



Mojito Slushy

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1/2 cup fresh lime juice, about 4 to 6 limes
- 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves, firmly packed
- 2 limes, zested
- 1/2 cup light rum
- 8 cups crushed ice
- Mint sprigs and lime wedges for garnish

In a saucepan over medium heat, add the sugar and water. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring often, until the sugar is dissolved and the syrup is clear. Set aside to cool.

Put the sugar syrup, lime juice, mint leaves, lime zest, and rum into a blender and blend until smooth. Add the ice and blend until slushy. Spoon into glasses; garnish with a sprig of mint and a lime slice.

ACCOMMODATIONS: Stay, Just a Little Bit Longer

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The beach, the nature, the glorious sunshine: They constitute the top reasons to visit Sanibel and Captiva Islands. Because outdoors is so “in.” When it comes time to use your inside choice, however, you want to make sure that your accommodations fulfill all the ingredients in the vacation RR&R—rest, relax and rejuvenate—formula.

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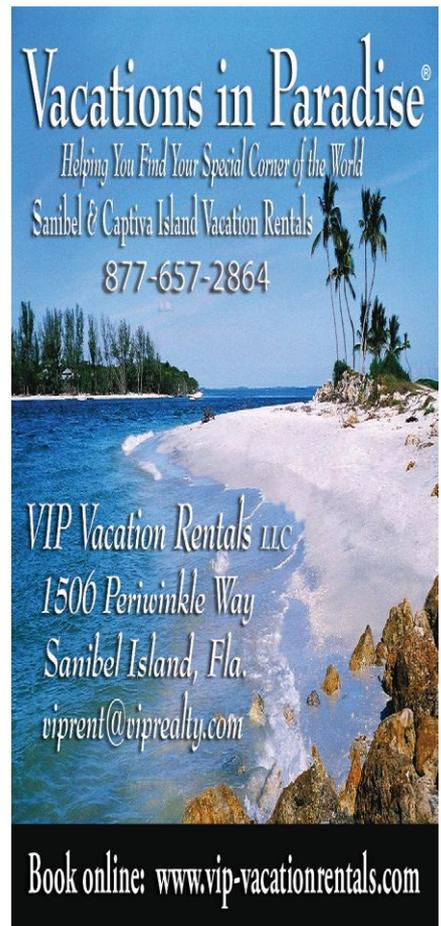
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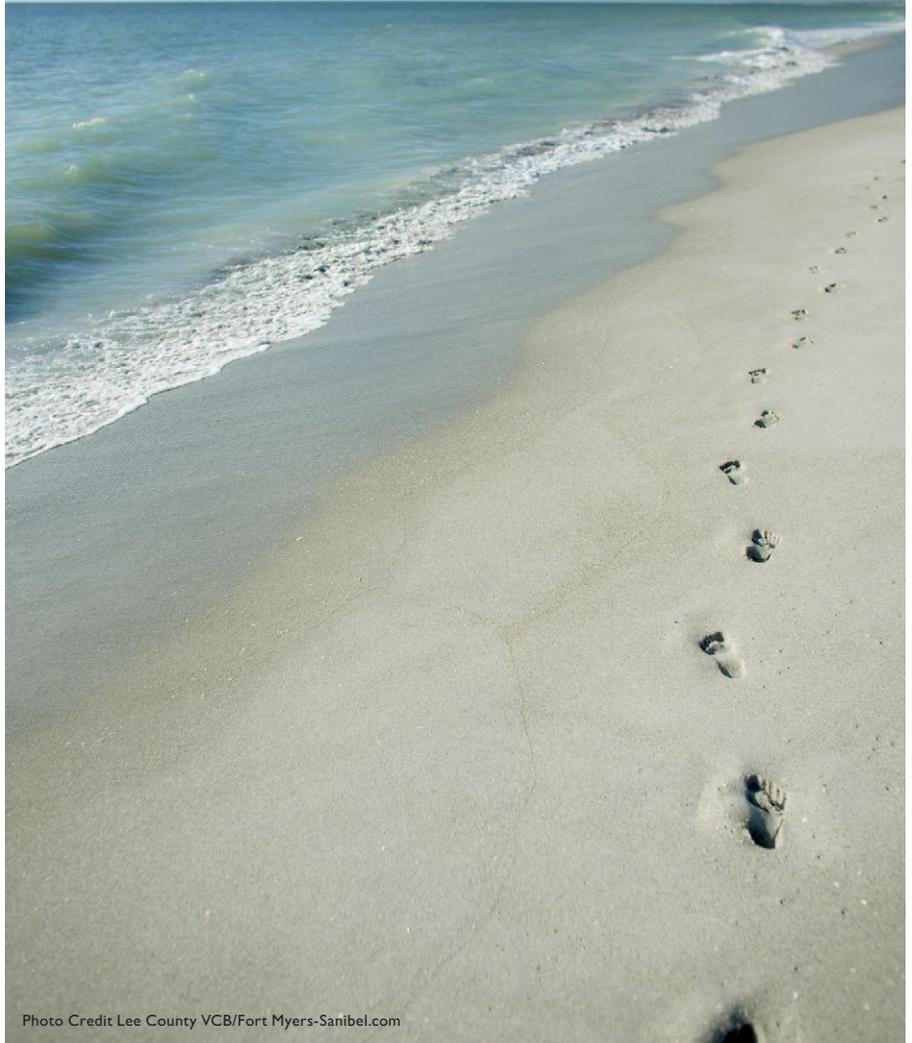


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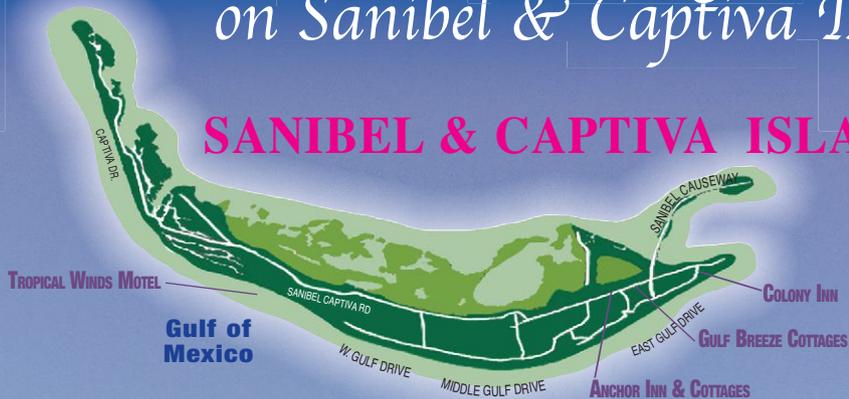
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