



SARASOTA AND HER ISLANDS AT A GLANCE

THE EXPERIENCE

SARASOTA AND HER ISLANDS – AN ECLECTIC ISLAND ESCAPE

Known as Florida’s “Cultural Coast,” Sarasota and Her Islands offer visitors an atmosphere of cultural indulgence, creative abundance and casual elegance, where they can unwind in style in this authentic beach town. Though many travelers come to Sarasota for the sugar-white sands of Siesta Key and colorful Gulf sunsets, visitors also find a whole other world to enjoy, *beyond the beaches*. From exploring the history of the circus at the Ringling Campus, to the acoustic acclaims of the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, or kayaking at Myakka River State Park, visitors to Sarasota can enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of a beach side bungalow just minutes from cultural amenities that rival major metropolitan centers.

LOCATION

Nestled along Southwest Florida's Gulf coast – Sarasota and her string of eight islands are located between Tampa, 60 miles to the North; and Ft. Myers, 75 miles to the South.

Sarasota and Her Islands is comprised of Sarasota, Longboat Key, Lido Key, St. Armands Key, Manasota Key, Siesta Key, Casey Key, Englewood, Nokomis, North Port, Osprey and Venice.

DISTINCTIONS

Orbitz.com rated Sarasota as one of the “Top 10 Fastest Growing Domestic Beach Destinations” in 2008.

Siesta Key Beach was included in *Dr. Beaches’* Top 10 “Best Beaches in America” in 2007 & 2008

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Travel Channel rated Siesta Key Beach as the “Best Sand Beach” in America three years in a row (2002-2004).

Family Fun Magazine chose Sarasota as the best destination for “Beachy Pleasure” among their top 10 family-friendly destinations.

Siesta Key also garnered the award for “Best Florida Beach” as rated by *Florida Living Magazine* with Crescent Beach capturing third place.

ART & CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

ARTIST COLONIES, GALLERIES, MUSEUMS AND THEATERS

Visitors to Sarasota can stroll through an authentic artist colony while enjoying art by the light of the moon or the performing arts in a number of venues.

- Towles Court Artist Colony
- John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art
- The Asolo Repertory Theatre
- The Florida West Coast Symphony
- Jazz Club of Sarasota, Inc.
- Sarasota Ballet of Florida
- Sarasota Opera
- Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall
- Florida Studio Theatre
- The Player’s Theatre
- Venice Theatre

ECO ESCAPES

MANGROVES, MYAKKA AND MINERAL SPRINGS

Travelers can explore the mangrove tunnels of South Lido Key by kayak or traverse North America’s first canopy trail in Myakka River State Park.

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- Myakka River State Park
- Oscar Sharer State Park
- Warm Mineral Springs
- Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
- South Lido Park
- Casperson Beach in Venice
- Florida Underwater Sports

CIRCUS HERITAGE

THE LEGACY OF JOHN RINGLING

Visitors can walk in the footsteps of John Ringling at his Venetian-inspired mansion along Sarasota Bay or take to the air on the flying trapeze.

- The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art
- The Circus Museum
- Cá d’Zan (House of John)
- Circus Sarasota
- Tibbals Learning Center
- PAL’s Sailor Circus
- Circus Ring of Fame
- Flying Trapeze Academy & The Flying Fantasy Circus

FAMILY FUN

FAMILIES PLAY TOGETHER OFF THE BEACH

Families can learn about the lives of Florida Pioneers at Historic Spanish Point, visit with sharks, sea turtles and manatees at Mote Aquarium or make a bolt of lightning at G. WIZ.

- Mote Aquarium
- The Tibbals Learning Center at Ringling
- Historic Spanish Point
- G. WIZ, the Hands-on Science Museum
- The South Florida Museum
- Crowley Museum and Nature Center

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- Sarasota Jungle Gardens
- The Sarasota Children's Garden
- Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary

SPORTS & LEISURE

GOLF, TENNIS, FISHING AND BASEBALL BY THE SEA

Visitors can watch the Cincinnati Reds train for the season, or play golf or tennis with views of the sea.

- Ed Smith Stadium (Spring Training for Cincinnati Reds)
- Oscar Scherer State Park
- The Colony Beach & Tennis Resort
- Ritz-Carlton Members Golf Club
- Oak Ford Golf Club
- CB's Saltwater Outfitters
- Flying Fish Fleet

DOWNTOWNS & ISLANDS

KEY LIME QUAIN TO OPULENT ELEGANCE

Siesta Key – Flip-flops are the footwear du jour and beachfront bungalows allow each visitor their own piece of beach with the satin-soft sands that have gained the island worldwide recognition.

Longboat Key – Longboat Key's upscale atmosphere and luxurious accommodations provide an air of sophistication mixed with sandy pleasures.

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Lido Key/St. Armands – Anchored by St. Armands Circle, artistic eccentricity melds with European charm as visitors stroll with ice cream in hand along a plethora of boutiques, eateries and specialty shops.

Downtown Sarasota – Both the financial and cultural center of the destination, downtown Sarasota boasts attractions ranging from the Ringling Museum of Art and the Van Wezel Performing Arts Center to Mote Aquarium and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Accommodations range from the Ritz-Carlton or Hyatt Regency to less expensive national brands.

Venice – Dubbed the “Shark Tooth Capitol of the World,” the treasure hunters’ tool of choice is the Florida snow shovel – a small hand-held sifter that easily locates the pre-historic gems. Venice Island is home to a variety of quaint shops and peaceful Venice Beach provides a change of pace from the sands of Sarasota.

ACCOMMODATIONS

& MEETINGS

MORE THAN 15,000 GUEST ROOMS

Seaside hotels, beachfront bungalows and favored chains for the frugal to the flamboyant.

BAYSIDE VISTAS TO CORPORATE QUARTERS

Sarasota and Her Islands caters to meeting planners who understand it’s not only the number of movable walls that count. From intimate retreats to corporate gatherings, Sarasota and Her Islands offer a variety of beautiful meeting spaces in an atmosphere that inspires attendees to both work hard and play hard.

DINING

THE FIRST FLORIDA ORIGINALS

Boasting one of the highest concentrations of Zagat-rated restaurants in Florida, Sarasota and Her Islands is known for original, independent dining from tantalizingly fresh seafood shacks to five-star fare.

Each June, Sarasota hosts its annual “Savor Sarasota” Restaurant Week, where participating restaurants offer prix-fixe menus at \$15 for lunch and \$25 for dinner. Visitors enjoy an expensive taste of Sarasota for an affordable price.

CLIMATE

SUNSHINE YEAR-ROUND

Spring	High 82°F/28°C	Low 60°F/15°C
Summer	High 91°F/33°C	Low 71°F/22°C
Fall	High 85°F/29°C	Low 64°F/18°C
Winter	High 73°F/23°C	Low 51°F/11°C

ACCESS BY CAR

The area is easily accessed by Interstate 75 and US Highway 41.

Miami 223 miles (4 hours drive time)

SARASOTA

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Orlando

129 miles (2 hours drive time)

Tampa

57 miles (1 hour drive time)

ACCESS BY AIR

SARASOTA BRADENTON INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Serviced by Delta, JetBlue, Continental, US Airways, AirTran, ATA, Northwest, Air Canada, Cape Air, Florida Coastal and Sky Service.

VISITOR

INFORMATION

SARASOTA CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU

Phone: 800-522-9799

Website: www.sarasotafl.org

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CONTACT:

ERIN DUGGAN

PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR

SARASOTA CONVENTION AND VISITOR'S BUREAU

941.955.0991 EXT. 108

EDUGGAN@SARASOTAFL.ORG