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The Boston Globe

# Travel

MIAMI

## On Miami's Lincoln Road, variety spices the life

By Necee Regis | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT FEBRUARY 05, 2012



ROBERT SULLIVAN/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**Diners enjoy the weather at a Lincoln Road restaurant.**



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MIAMI - It's 73 degrees on a Saturday night in January and the crowds are

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promenading slowly along this pedestrian mall in South Beach. Young women in 6-inch heels toss their long tresses and tug at their skin-tight dresses as they stroll, mingling with perfumed Latin men, families pushing strollers, T-shirt-clad gawkers, manicured metrosexuals, sunburned tourists, Joan Rivers look-alikes leading tiny dogs on rhinestone-studded leashes, cigar-chomping elders, skateboarding teens, tattooed twentysomethings, stylish gay couples, and me.

"I've never been anywhere where there's such a mix of people," said Rick Hanley, owner of the Pink Palm, a fun, sophisticated urban card and gift shop. "That's what I love about the street. I'm constantly meeting people from every walk of life."

Hanley is talking about Lincoln Road, a shopping-eating-drinking strip that's once again riding a wave of popularity and renewal. This may or may not have surprised Carl Fisher, referred to as "the founding father of Miami Beach," who in the early 20th century envisioned this street as the "Fifth Avenue of the South."

"The road itself is at least 100 years old. That will take a lot of people by surprise," said Becky Smith, head of the library and archives at History Miami. "The road was named after Abraham Lincoln. Fischer was a big fan."

In its long history, Lincoln Road has experienced cycles of boom-bust-boom-bust-boom.

"In the 1930s, Lincoln Road was like Rodeo Drive," said Hanley. "It was where the super-rich came to shop, arriving in limos at Saks Fifth Avenue, Harry

## PHOTOS



Photos: Variety spices the life in Miami

Winston jewelers, and Bonwit Teller.”

Decades later, as business slumped, the city hired architect Morris Lapidus to redesign the strip in 1959. He did so with the same flair employed at his famed Fontainebleau and Eden Roc hotels, enlivening the road with gardens, fountains, bold-patterned paving, and architectural shade structures in his signature Miami Modern architecture (“MiMo”) style.

“I designed Lincoln Road for people - a car never bought anything,” said Lapidus, in response to his decision to close the road to traffic, thus creating one of the nation’s first pedestrian malls.

By the 1980s many storefronts were again vacant, though as Ocean Drive was rediscovered and restored to its Art Deco glory, this area came to life again.

Today, the cliché “there’s something here for everyone” rings true on Lincoln Road. With over 40 restaurants and cafes, and 80 shops, plus bars, clubs, a megaplex, concert hall, and theater, this bustling eight-block stretch between Alton Road and Washington Avenue is booming. Those who love corporate retail shopping will find their favorite chains, and there are enough one-of-a-kind boutiques and eateries to keep more adventurous visitors entertained. Most restaurants offer indoor and al fresco dining. (Tables spilling across the sidewalk make walking difficult but are great for people watching.) Here’s a sampling of some popular spots, traveling west to east:

Though **La Tasca Tapas** at Panizza Bistro is located west of Alton Road, it’s worth starting a tour here with its sumptuous Argentine pastries. A favorite breakfast spot among locals, this cozy place with terra cotta walls and tile floors morphs at night into a Spanish tapas and wine bar serving tasty bites by Basque chef Fernando Echevarri. On Wednesday evenings, enjoy paella with live music and flamenco dancing.

Crossing Alton Road to where the pedestrian mall begins, look up at the eye-popping parking garage designed by the Swiss architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron. But don’t walk too far, as the first floor houses retail and dining

opportunities, including **Rosa Mexicano** , a chic Mexican eatery with floor-to-ceiling windows and a travertine bar serving fabulous margaritas - especially at the half-price weekday happy hour. Across the lush landscaped plaza, not far from the three-story movie theater, **Doraku Sushi** also offers happy hour drinks, as well as half-priced edamame and sushi rolls. (Warning: More often than not, a gratuity is added to all checks on Lincoln Road and most of South Beach, no matter the size of the dining party, so check your bill.)

On the corner of Lenox Avenue, check out the Art Deco facade of the **Colony Theater** . Originally opened as part of Paramount Pictures' theater chain in 1935, this 430-seat entertainment venue recently underwent a \$6.5 million restoration and renovation. Owned by the city and leased out to artists and performers, the Colony presents a wide variety of music, theater, opera, comedy shows, dance, performance art, and film programs. Nearby, an al fresco sprawl of couches and tables hosts **Segafredo** , a favorite cocktail spot to see and be seen.

For top-notch dining, consider splurging at **Quattro** , where the sleek interior with Murano glass chandeliers will transport you from South Beach to an Italian hillside villa. Chefs Nicola and Fabrizio Carro, identical twins, were born in the town of Alessandria in the Piedmont region, and Quattro's northern Italian menu reflects their hometown roots. The agnolotti filled with braised beef, a recipe specific to the Carros' hometown, is exceptional.

Nicola describes his kitchen as "a laboratory."

"Every time I prepare a new plate I use pure creativity. I think of things to put on the plate to surprise my guests," he said.

The brothers also operate a thin-crust pizza bistro across from Quattro. Less formal but equally stylish, **Sosta** offers swoon-worthy pies such as black truffle with buffalo mozzarella, and a classic Margherita.

Continuing to stroll east you'll find **Meat Market** , where chef Sean Brasel embraces the staples of a classic steakhouse - charbroiling and grilling prime

cuts of grass-fed, organic, high-quality meats - adding a contemporary spin that focuses on sourced and indigenous products.

“Knowing where your products come from makes a big difference,” said Brasel, who flies buffalo in from a ranch in Nebraska, buys produce from farms in Homestead (south of Miami), and serves cobia, mahi-mahi, and stone crabs supplied by local fishermen.

For lighter fare, sit at the bar for raw oysters, clams, stone crabs, and ceviche. Some people, myself included, love to graze on appetizers, especially the cedar-scented hamachi with jalapeno, Asian BBQ lamb ribs with papaya slaw, and smoked Gouda Tater Tots.

This block of Lincoln Road offers two shopping destinations in the landmark Sterling Building: **Base** , and **Books & Books** .

It's hard to categorize the merchandise at Base. A sales associate described it as a “concept store,” saying they sell whatever they want “as long as it's conceptualized.” Uh-huh. (Or as my mom would put it: “If you say so.”) Still, it's fun to peruse the eclectic mix of limited edition menswear and women's clothing, scents, jewelry, wallets, and other accessories from designers from around the world. There's also a CD listening bar for sampling edgy new music including chill, lounge, dance, indie, jazz, soul, and world through stylish headphones.

A walk through the terrazzo-tiled courtyard, past cafe tables and magazine racks, leads to Books & Books, an independent, locally owned bookstore with several locations in South Florida. It's no surprise that this venue specializes in art, design, fashion, and architecture books, though there's also a large selection of fiction and a room of children's and young adult lit. Check the calendar for author events - the stores host about 60 per month - to participate in the area's vibrant reading and writing community.

The visual arts community also has a strong presence on the road, not only through commercial galleries but also by means of weekly artist open studios, exhibition spaces, and cultural programs provided by the nonprofit organization

**ArtCenter/South Florida** , established in 1984. You can wander through AC/SF's three buildings to see - and buy - what the current crop of artists are producing.

Artist Tony Chimento moved from Provincetown to South Beach over 20 years ago.

“Lincoln Road was different then,” said Chimento. “We went through many years of the wilderness. Now it’s incredible. People come from all over, including serious art collectors.”

On Sundays, the street hosts a **farmers’ market** with vendors selling fruits and vegetables, cut flowers, live orchids, handmade soap, Peruvian ceviche, honey, jam, empanadas, guacamole and chips, fruit smoothies, fresh pressed veggie juices, fresh “agua de coco” (coconut water), “granizados” (snow cones), and sweets such as croissants, cupcakes, and strudel.

Like live music? The jazz bar **Upstairs at Van Dyke Café** , in the building where Carl Fisher housed his real estate company, is an intimate club where straight-ahead jazz, fusion, Brazilian, R&B, salsa, and occasionally world music play seven nights a week. Music starts at the early-for-Miami time of 9 p.m., though it’s best to go earlier to snag a seat. A dinner menu is available, though I prefer to dine elsewhere and stick with cocktails here.

Until last year, the Lincoln Theater housed the **New World Symphony** , an orchestral academy with performance programs under the artistic direction of founder Michael Tilson Thomas, music director of the San Francisco Symphony. The new campus is one block north - technically on the corner of 17th Street and Washington Avenue - but it’s a must-see part of any Lincoln Road tour. **New World Center** , designed by renowned architect Frank Gehry, features a 7,000-square-foot projection wall on which concerts, video art, and films are shown for free in **SoundScape** , a 2 1/2-acre public park designed by the Dutch architectural firm West 8. Check the schedule for events, and join the crowds who sprawl on the lawn.

Carl Fisher would have loved it.

### ***Where to stay***

#### **Ritz-Carlton, South Beach**

1 Lincoln Road

786-276-4000

[www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/SouthBeach/Default.htm](http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/SouthBeach/Default.htm)

Seasonal rates, from \$749.

### ***Where to eat***

#### **La Tasca Tapas at Panizza Bistro**

1229 Lincoln Road

305-695-8800

[www.panizzabistro.com](http://www.panizzabistro.com)

Tapas \$2.50-\$16.50.

#### **Quattro**

1014 Lincoln Road

305-531-4833

[www.quattromiami.com](http://www.quattromiami.com)

Entrees \$18-\$46.

#### **Sosta**

1025 Lincoln Road

305-722-5454

[www.sostapizzeria.com](http://www.sostapizzeria.com)

\$10.50-\$14.75.

### **Meat Market**

915 Lincoln Road

305-532-0088

[www.meatmarketmiami.com](http://www.meatmarketmiami.com)

Entrees \$19-\$95.

### **Rosa Mexicano**

1111 Lincoln Road

305-695-1005

[www.rosamexicano.com](http://www.rosamexicano.com)

Dinner \$13.75-\$27.50.

### **Doraku Sushi**

1104 Lincoln Road

305-695-8383

[dorakusushi.com](http://dorakusushi.com)

Sushi rolls \$4.75-\$14.50, hot dishes \$8.50-\$14.25.

### **Segafredo**

1040 Lincoln Road



[www.sze-originale.com](http://www.sze-originale.com)

All cocktails \$10, bar food \$2.50-\$15.

Where to shop

### **Pink Palm**

723 Lincoln Road

305-397-8097

[www.pinkpalm.com](http://www.pinkpalm.com)

### **Books & Books**

927 Lincoln Road

305-532-3222

[www.booksandbooks.com](http://www.booksandbooks.com)

### **Base**

939 Lincoln Road

305-531-4982

[www.baseworld.com](http://www.baseworld.com)

### ***What to do***

### **Colony Theater**

1040 Lincoln Road

305-674-1040

[colonyandbyrontheaters.com](http://colonyandbyrontheaters.com)

Ticket prices vary.

### **ArtCenter/South Florida**

800/810/924 Lincoln Road

305-674-8278

[www.artcentersf.org](http://www.artcentersf.org)

Free.

### **Upstairs at Van Dyke Café**

846 Lincoln Road

305-534-3600 [www.thevandykecafe.com](http://www.thevandykecafe.com)

Weekdays \$5, weekends \$7.

### **New World Symphony**

500 17th St.

305-673-3331 [www.nws.edu](http://www.nws.edu)

Concert prices vary; outside events free.

For information, walking map

[lincolnroadmall.com](http://lincolnroadmall.com)

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