



THE INSIDERS' FLORIDA

BEYOND THE GLAM IN SOUTH BEACH

BY NECEE REGIS
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

MIAMI — South Beach has been a hot and hyped destination for more than a decade, and sometimes it's hard to separate the glam from the good. I've spent the past 10 winters in South Beach, from four to six months at a time, and over the years I've compiled an unofficial "Best of South Beach" list for guests. The premise is it's easy to find the high-profile, newest, hottest, glitziest places, but harder to find where the locals like to go. So here, in addition to my favorite restaurants, are some helpful tips about the neighborhood, the beach, and other things the usual tourist might miss. Welcome to my other hometown.

SOUTH BEACH, Page M6



OWAKI - KULLA/CORBIS (TOP), BOB KRIST/CORBIS

Expect lots of company at two iconic spots: Ocean Drive in South Beach, top, with its Art Deco buildings and great people-watching, and Mallory Square in Key West, known for sensational sunsets and other more curious sights.

POCKETS OF OLD IN NEW KEY WEST

BY JOHNNY DIAZ
GLOBE STAFF

KEY WEST, Fla. — You're on a quest to find the old Key West, the one before Starbucks, Banana Republic, and CVS dropped their commercial anchors into this colorful tropical bohemia. Then you see a sign, maybe *the* sign, that seems to point the way.

"A last little piece of old Key West," reads a rooftop banner above the Schooner Wharf Bar, a weathered watering hole covered in fish netting.

The place has the look and feel of an old fishing boat or a tiki hut on Gilligan's Island with its tattered stools and tables. It feels almost like any South Florida waterfront bar, with small boats slung from the ceiling, license plates, and a jukebox with Bonnie Raitt and the Dave Matthews Band.

Regulars and visitors make toasts, swap stories, and listen to the waves lap at the historic seaport. Then you notice something in your peripheral vision — the first of many such sightings.

A brown hen appears outside the bar's rocky back lot and stalks along William Street with a seeming carefree, don't-mess-with-me attitude, similar to the early pioneers and longtime Conchs (what natives are called here).

Duval Street, the city's main thoroughfare, is rife with bars, T-shirt shops, For Sale signs, and notices like "Amer- KEY WEST, Page M5

DELRAY BEACH, FLA.

Peaceable kingdom

Meander the paths through pine and bamboo stands, past waterfalls and flowers, at the Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens. **M8**

CAPE ANN

A last go-round

For a sightseeing cyclist, the roads along the periphery of Gloucester, Rockport, and Annisquam are a salty breeze in the fall. **M11**

STOCKBRIDGE

Main Street, N.E.

Norman Rockwell and the Guthries (Woody and Arlo) pursued their arts and crafts in this little universe in the Berkshires. **M11**

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JEFF GOLDBERG/ESTO PHOTOGRAPHICS



PAUL COLANGELO/CORBIS

The futuristic Publix market designed by Carlos Zapata and colorful lifeguard stands relieve a South Beach Art Deco overload.

Take a self-guided tour of the fun and funky

► SOUTH BEACH Continued from Page M1 Getting acclimated

Numbered streets run east-west, between the ocean and the bay. Named streets run north-south. The exceptions are Espanola Way, which pops up between 14th and 15th, and Lincoln Road, between 16th and 17th. Espanola Way is pedestrian-only between Washington and Drexel avenues on weekends. Lincoln Road is a pedestrian walkway with shops, restaurants, and the ArtCenter South Florida. (You can wander in and out of artist studios most days and weekend evenings.) Both Espanola and Lincoln host street fairs or farmers' markets on Sundays. Ocean Drive is the big tourist spot that you see in movies and on TV. Many of the restaurants are mediocre and overpriced, but it's fun to wander and people-watch. Washington Avenue is the most fun and funky combination of old and new, with small high-end shops, Latin juice bars, shoe repair places, and a great thrift store. Collins Avenue has mainly hotels and residences, though the southern end is becoming overrun with (yawn) chain stores. The entire district has terrific Art Deco architecture, though.

Restaurants

In no particular order (many places add a 15 percent gratuity to the bill; look before tipping twice):

La Locanda
413 Washington Ave.
305-538-6277

This small gem is where local folks go for terrific Italian food with a low-key, friendly vibe. Don't miss the Penne dell'Appennino, an aphrodisiac mix of wild mushrooms with a touch of truffle oil. The charming man with the hundred-watt smile darting between the tables is the owner, Francesco Cavalletti. Entrees \$9-\$23.

Nemo
100 Collins Ave.
305-532-4550
www.nemorestaurant.com
A top-of-the-list expensive place. Get the citrus-cured salmon rolls with wasabi mayonnaise or the sea bass on ginger-laced spinach. Entrees \$25-\$39.

Miss Yip Chinese Cafe
1661 Meridian Ave.
305-534-5488
www.missyipchinesecafe.com
A great noodle and martini joint. Order the Singapore-curry noodles named Miss Yip (with shrimp, pork, egg, and vegetables) with a lychee martini and slip into bliss. Entrees \$11-\$17.

Lincoln Road Cafe
941 Lincoln Road at Michigan Avenue
305-538-8066
The best place for good inexpensive Cuban food on the beach. Excellent for breakfast, also open for lunch and dinner. Definitely eat outside. Try eggs with ham, Cuban toast, and café con leche, or a real pressed Cuban sandwich that is unlike anything you'll find in Boston. Breakfast \$4-\$6.

A La Folie Cafe
516 Espanola Way (between Drexel and Pennsylvania)
305-538-4484
My favorite casual hangout, day or night. Thirty varieties of crepes (savory and sweet) as well as sandwiches, salads, wine, and the best iced coffee (made with espresso). Very French, very bohemian — thus the service is slow, but so what. Entrees \$5-\$10.

Sushi Rock
1351 Collins Ave.
305-532-2133
Sit at the bar. Get the spider roll. Entrees \$11-\$24.

Rosinella
525 Lincoln Road (near Pennsylvania)
305-672-8777
Stop here for inexpensive, authentic Italian food with recipes by Mama Rosinella. Try the grilled calamari on mixed greens or the daily ravioli special. Also excellent wood-fired thin-crust pizzas. Eat outside and watch the crowds, or, when the temperatures drop below, say, 70 degrees, eat inside. Entrees \$8-\$16.

The Front Porch Cafe
1418 Ocean Drive

305-531-8300
Locals and tourists line up for huge breakfasts: omelets, breakfast burritos, fresh fruit. Also a great spot for drinks and people-watching in late afternoon. Breakfast \$6.25-\$8.50.

Pizza Rustica
863 Washington Ave.
305-674-8244
I don't even like pizza much, but I drool over thoughts of their large slices with a multitude of toppings. Perfect for après-beach or après-nightclub. (They close at 7 a.m.) Other locations at 667 Lincoln Road and 1447 Washington Ave. Slices \$4.

Pita Plus
1049 Washington Ave.
305-695-9222
Make sure you're at this Israeli-owned pita place and no other. Amazing falafel, hummus, kabobs, and shawarma, all fresh and homemade. They even grill the bread. A funky patio out back, or sit at tables on Washington Avenue. Sandwiches \$5-\$15.

Taste Bakery
900 Alton Road
305-695-9930
Diet-tempting pastries, bagels (Asiago cheese!), smoothies, salads, wraps, coffee, and chai latte. Hormone and pesticide-free. Bring your laptop for the free Wi-Fi. Wraps and sandwiches \$4-\$6.

Tap Tap
819 Fifth St.
305-672-2898
Colorful Haitian restaurant. Perfect if you're in the mood for stewed goat or whole steamed fish with lime sauce. Try a side dish of spinach and coconut milk. If you're lucky, there will be some live music. Entrees \$6-\$14.

Hotels

Since I have an apartment, I don't stay in hotels, and instead rely on reports from visiting friends. (My house rule: You can spend three nights on my couch.) Generally speaking, I'd stay off Ocean Drive if you don't like late-night rowdiness and noise.

On a budget

Best Western South Beach
1050 Washington Ave.
888-343-1930
www.bestwestern.com
Doubles \$95.

The Kent Hotel
1131 Collins Ave.
305-604-5068
www.thekenthotel.com
Doubles \$89.

Beachcomber Hotel
1340 Collins Ave.
888-305-4683
Doubles \$119.

Not on a budget

Delano Hotel
1685 Collins Ave.
305-672-2000, 800-606-6090
www.delano-hotel.com
Doubles \$450.

The Raleigh Hotel
1775 Collins Ave.
305-534-6300
www.raleighhotel.com
Doubles \$325.

Hotel Nash
1120 Collins Ave.
305-674-7800
www.hotelnash.com
Doubles \$179.

Other attractions

Lee-Ann Pharmacy
955 Washington Ave.
A good place to get essentials like a few basic groceries, plus the newspaper, flip-flops, postcards, and nail polish. The small wiry guy watching the door is the owner, Fast Eddie.

Books & Books
933 Lincoln Road
Our local bookstore. Pretty good for its size, with a small cafe.

The Miami New Times
This free weekly newspaper has listings for things to do and see and is in red metal boxes on many street corners.

Fernandez Fruit Market
1407 Washington Ave.
A slightly disheveled supermarket, but you can order fresh fruit drinks (including watermelon, papaya, blueberry, apple, carrot, orange) or smoothies for two to three bucks. Ask for extra ice if you want it cold, as they generally use only a few cubes.

Publix

1920 West Ave.
This is the coolest Publix in the world, designed by architect Carlos Zapata and shaped like a futuristic cruise ship.

Delano Hotel
(See above)
A little glam is sometimes necessary. Check out this hotel with interior designed by Philippe Stark. Wander through the lobby, out to the back and see the pool. Splurge for lunch on the patio or hang with the too-cool crowd at night at the bar.

Hotel Astor
956 Washington
A great place to have a drink at the bar off the lobby. Sit outside or in and watch the green-lit waterfall wall next to the pool.

Raleigh Hotel
(See above)
The interior bar is a classic but it's magical to sit out near the pool at night beneath the palms and stars. You'll pay dearly for the lush life, but you only live once. (My last martini cost \$18 with tip. Though with 10 ounces of alcohol, according to the bartender, it was like having two.)

Wolfsonian Museum
1001 Washington Ave.
305-531-1001

A museum of art and design objects from 1885-1945, housed in a former fur storage building. Admission \$7.

Post Office
1300 Washington Ave.
Cool Works Progress Administration-era building with murals in the lobby.

Beaches
This is a great urban beach, with a hard-packed surface for running and biking, areas with volleyball nets, and a funky array of decoratively painted lifeguard shacks. Rent chairs and umbrellas all along the beach. From 12th to 13th street is predominantly a gay area. Third Street used to be a more local and Euro crowd, but with new hotels along the strip, you'll find tourists there as well. This is a city beach, so leave your wallet and valuables at the hotel. Women can go topless anywhere.

Warning
Never step on any grass, in a park, along the beach, and especially the small strips between the curb and the sidewalk, as people here rarely curb their dogs.

Contact Neece Regis, a freelance writer in Boston and Miami Beach, at neeceregis@yahoo.com.

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