

Travel Tips For South Beach

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10 Very Good Reasons To "SoBe" It



When it comes to making the most of **South Beach** there are must-see sights, sensational shopping and, of course, an unbelievable amount of stylish restaurants. Add the copious nightlife options that go well into the sultry night, and things quickly shift into sensory overdrive.

Where to Stay

Just north of the strip is the stunningly serene **Acqualina** hotel. Book in at their brand new spa, or stay a night (if only to indulge in the **ETRO** bath products provided in every suite). If you've got the kids then book them into the marine biology-based **AcquaMarine** children's program and enjoy a perfect poolside mojito!



Don't miss a chance to experience the hotel's two-level 20,000-square-foot **ESPA**. Outfitted with sauna, steam room, as well as his and her relaxation lounges, one can easily spend an entire day surrendering to a soothing blend of ancient and modern therapies. The signature **Stress Releasing Abyhanga** treatment (1 Hour 50 Minutes) is ideal after a long flight as it gently releases tension to restore

vitality.

If you need to be closer to the action and have the cash to flash then book **The Villa by Barton G.** (1116 Ocean Drive). Rich with design inspiration, the former residence of **Gianni Versace** went through a multi-million dollar makeover and reopened as an ultra exclusive boutique hotel.

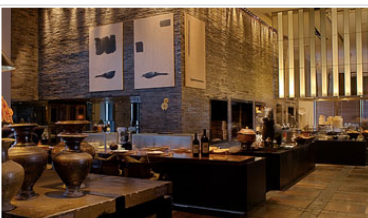


Taking design cues from Italian villas (courtyard entrance) to Versailles (the restaurant) to German castle (The G. Lounge), guests who stay at The Villa can also enjoy the pool that's lined in 24-karat gold. Clearly, the influence of Gianni and Donatella remains strong.

Can't afford a night? Get a peak at this retreat by reserving a table for dinner.

Where to Eat

At The Restaurant at **The Setai** (2001 Collins Avenue) it's clear that the world is, quite literally, your oyster as so many lauded chefs have taken on the task of boosting the dining reputation within the various hotels. The Setai's Jonathan Wright boasts many accolades for his cuisine that fuses the authentic flavours of Northern and Southern Asia. Wright oversees chefs from Thailand, China, Malaysia, India and Singapore as they artfully prepare modern interpretations on native dishes. Make a dinner reservation or indulge in a champagne-fueled Sunday Jazz Brunch.



The Betsy (1440 Ocean Drive) has preserved its traditional colonial façade despite a complete

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restoration from the inside out. And while the choice of cafes and restaurants in this area is overwhelming to say the least, their **Bistro Laurent Tourondel** (or BLT) is a chic urbane boite offering prime American and Japanese Kobe beef, fish and an extensive Raw Bar, which makes retreating to their roof for lazy lunch, or settling on the charming portico for long dinner, an exceptional experience.



After, chill in the swanky lounge or slip into a groove at the hotel's uber cool B Bar.

The Pelican Café (826 Ocean Drive, www.pelicanhotel.com) is a hot spot for lunch or dinner. Those in the know flock to savour their 'lightplates' like Tuna Tartare with guacamole and crispy won ton, and a variety of mains ranging from Lobster Linguini to Kobe Beef Burgers.

Michael's Genuine Food & Drink in The Design District (130 NE 40th St.) has the best al fresco on deviled eggs, savory salads and grilled catch-of-the-day fish. I love a steak salad and their Harris Ranch version raised the bar. The finish? Homemade sorbet, of course! So delicious.

Exploring the area's trendy shops and cool contemporary art galleries is a civilized way to spend an afternoon. Especially since one of the only five **Christian Louboutin** boutiques in the US is just a stroll away.

Where to Shop

Lincoln Road is an outdoor oasis filled with shops, sidewalk cafes and rests. After spending some time here one really starts to envy the en plein air lifestyle that the southern half lives. But, if you're not interested in the usual branded suspects, and vintage is what you're seeking, then hit C. Madeleine's (www.madeleine.com), or book an appointment at Hollen & Jennifer's Vintage Showroom (1177 Kane Concourse).

Then, just north of the strip (and conveniently close to the Acqualina), there's **Bal Harbour Shops** – a lush open-air, garden environment that sets the gold standard for innovative retail destinations. Amid waterfalls and exotic foliage, iconic brands such as Chanel, Christian Dior, Valentino, Prada and Chloe await. Enjoy delightful outdoor restos and an art gallery, in addition to department stores Neiman Marcus and Saks Fifth Avenue.

Other Must Dos...

-Score some tickets to an NBA game and watch the Miami Heat scorch the courts. Pop in to the nearby Viceroy Hotel for pre- or post-game drinks and bites.

-People watching at the W Hotel (2201 Collins Avenue). The Wall and the Living Room bars provide endless eye-candy.

-The Standard Hotel (40 Island Avenue). Head over for a yoga class, time in the Hamam spa, and then a delicious poolside lunch while you relax, sit back and just enjoy the scene.

Whether you need a sexy escape or good times with the girls, South Beach offers several sublime **VISITFLORIDA.com** for more travel information on the Sunshine State.

A special thank you to Rosedale Livery Limited (1.800.268.4967) and Rimowa luggage for making sure we arrived on time and in style!



Sara Graham, Fashion Forward

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

When Malcolm Gladwell talks about "connectors," he's talking about Sara Graham. This gal-about-town made her mark spending five years in (and out) of publishing as Editor-in-Chief of Canada's top teen magazines *Vervegirl* and *FUEL*. During the out part she created, designed and managed all aspects of *Sister Underwear* – a collection that was not only embraced by the Canadian fashion network of buyers, media and the public, but enjoyed repeat orders from boutiques located in the U.S. Although no longer deep in the publishing or fashion trenches, Sara remains curious and connected via her insatiable appetite for culture and travel. Sara also continues to produce fashion shoots through Project, her brand management company.

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