



Miami heat

Don a tropical personality and discover a wealthy and multi-ethnic city that celebrates life to the max. Welcome to America's playground!

Slip on some comfortable shoes, breathe in the Caribbean's tropical air, and get ready to enjoy a multi-faceted city that combines beach culture, art galleries and museums, where Ocean Drive's party spirit meets the alligators in the Everglades National Park, where architectural history meshes with Downtown's smart skyscrapers, where contemporary design and street art rub shoulders in a Little Havana where all the clichés we can think of parade past us as if they were the most natural thing in the world. Boats and jet-skis spy on the islands and celebrities' houses, Ferraris, Corvettes, and Mustangs, convertibles and limousines brandishing bling, the status quo and vanity on the avenues, a vibrant gastronomic scene amongst the palm trees and Art Deco, the buildings and freighters reflected on the waters of Biscayne Bay, the salsa and són at an afternoon fiesta, the spectacle of watching an NBA basketball game, or modern cabaret, neon, music, a dollar-rich America that behaves like a teenage girl on holiday: crazy and bursting with fun and dreams. Feel the vibe and make some of your own hopes come true.

Day 1: art deco and NBA



The Betsy – South Beach

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The morning begins at the Art Deco Welcome Center on Ocean Drive, in a sticky heat that calls for the shade of palm trees while our guide explains the importance of the Miami Beach Architectural Historic District to the group. Hopping from building to building, from detail in detail, we revisit the history of Miami and this spit of land connected to the mainland by bridges, a swamp infested with mosquitoes that has become one of the world's chicest addresses. The real star of the show is the Art Deco style, with its pastel façades, portholes, curves and counter-curves, but let's not forget the older Mediterranean revival style and MiMo (Miami Modern). Along Ocean Drive and Collins Avenue we see some of the most iconic structures of the city's golden age, when film stars like Clark Gable and Rita Hayworth would holiday here. Hotels like the Park Central, the Beacon, Colony, Cleavelander, National, The Tides, Cardozo and Carlyle are an important part of a lengthy itinerary of 800 buildings, the majority of which were built between 1923 and 1943. After World War II, Miami lost some of its allure, and decay and crime overtook many of its streets, where gangsters and drug dealers took charge, opposed only by fictional heroes such as Crockett and Tubbs, detectives for the TV series *Miami Vice*, which depicted the city in the early 1980s. Thanks to the perseverance and tenacity of Barbara Capitman, in 1976, a group of friends founded the world's oldest art deco society, preventing most of these architectural gems from being torn down.

After this cultural tour, take Collins Avenue to the renovated Lincoln Road, a pedestrian area that boasts shops galore and where you can see that shopping culture is as natural as your thirst, as you munch on tacos at an outside table under an awning. Join the consumerist masses and buy a hat at Goorin Bros, it will be useful in South Beach, just around the corner, where, in the middle of the afternoon, the sun beams down and holidaymakers take a dip under the watchful eyes of the lifeguards and seagulls. Warm yourself on the sand, cool down in the ocean and get the right shade of tan strutting along Ocean Drive, now in happy hour mode, with loud music, tourists in floral shorts, cocktail toasts. *Viva la vida loca!*

For something completely different (even if you're completely clueless about the sport), we recommend an NBA basketball game – others may prefer NFL American football or baseball. In today's clash between Miami Heat (heat.com) and the New York Knicks, the American Airlines Arena offers players, cheerleaders, sports commentators, families with trays laden with hamburgers, prize-winning fans, mascots, old club glories, the game itself play at a dizzy pace, noise, giant screens and a live show.

LT Steak & Seafood

Housed in the Betsy Hotel on Ocean Drive, it elegantly serves Miami Beach's finest seafood and steaks, salads, sushi, ceviche, crab cakes and other delicious fare. Try the cocktails or pair with a good wine.

thebetsyhotel.com

DÔA

Recently opened, it explores the concept of a modern Asian canteen, where oriental flavours combine with Latin American cuisine. Try a range of dishes in an environment where the busy open kitchen is allied to attentive service and an excellent wine and cocktail list.

doacantina.com

Art Deco Walking Tour

Run by volunteers from the Miami Design Preservation League, this tour of South Beach's past takes around 90 minutes.

mdpl.org