

News Release
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Pensacola, FL
Where Paradise Is a Place and a State of Mind

Pensacola, Fla. (April 2017) — When people think about Florida vacations, they typically think of Disney World, Miami Beach or The Keys. But if you truly want to get into a “Sunshine State of Mind,” visit Pensacola, where you can explore stunning yet uncrowded beaches, amazing food, sensational attractions and 450 years of rich history and culture. Come discover authentic experiences that you’ll treasure forever.

Pensacola is more than a pretty face. She’s a city with a past, one that stretches back more than 450 years when Spanish explorer Don Tristán de Luna y Arellano was lured to her pristine shores in 1559 and established Pensacola as the first European settlement in North America.

Today, as in the past, visitors from all over the world are enticed by Pensacola’s gorgeous sugar-white beaches and emerald green water. Once here, however, many find themselves captivated by her history, culture and diverse heritage.

Visit Pensacola invites travelers to step back in time and explore more than 450 years’ worth of history within just a few square blocks of Downtown Pensacola.

Andrew Jackson lived here for years while he was busy winning Florida back from the Spanish. On July 17, 1821, at the site of today’s Plaza Ferdinand, Spain ceded Florida to the U.S. General. Here Jackson made a speech to the townspeople declaring Pensacola as the capital of the Florida Territory and was later sworn in as Florida’s first governor.

Stroll through Historic Downtown Pensacola, and explore the eclectic eateries and shops on Palafox Street, named one of the “10 Great Streets in America” by the American Planning Association. Step into the past at Historic Pensacola Village, where guides in colonial-era costumes bring history to life with reenactments and demonstrations, or venture to the historic Belmont-DeVilliers district, the heart of the African-American community, once known as the “Harlem of the South.” Pensacola celebrates its vibrant history, culture, music and cuisine year-round.

Nowadays, if you happen to be strolling around Plaza Ferdinand on the third Saturday of the month around noon, don't be alarmed when you hear gunfire around you. That's just the Jacksonian Guard. The re-enactment group of Jacksonian era and Spanish soldiers, fifers and drummers perform a Colors Ceremony and fire off muskets in front of Jackson's statue to pay tribute to the General and commemorate the 195th birthday of Florida becoming a U.S. Territory.

The Pensacola Bay Area is famous for its stunning white sand beaches, which are ranked among the best in the country. In the 2016 USA TODAY 10 Best Readers' Choice polls, Gulf Island National Seashore was ranked the #1 "Best East Coast Beach," and Johnson Beach on Perdido Key was named the #2 "Best National Park Beach." Pensacola Beach won a 2016 Traveler's Choice Award and was named the #7 "Best Beach in the U.S." by TripAdvisor.

For those looking to get away from it all, Perdido Key offers a sacred blend of scenery and serenity. More than 60 percent of the island is state and national park where you can enjoy unspoiled nature, watching shorebirds, and sea turtles. It's about simple pleasures, secluded stretches of beach, scenic natural trails and preserves brimming with wildlife.

Pensacola Beach makes a bit more of a splash. Indulge yourself with upscale shopping and spa treatments at a gulf-front resort. Charter a boat for sailing, sports fishing or scuba diving, or try jet skiing, and parasailing. Take the kids down to the beach for some swimming, and snorkeling or hike the Footprints in the Sand Eco Trail, an interactive way to learn about local plants and wildlife.

History, beaches and now the yummy stuff. The Pensacola Bay Area offers mouthwatering options for every taste, every occasion, and every mood. From premier chefs in award-winning restaurants to hot new culinary artists in food trucks, folks around here are passionate about food. Whether your idea of a great meal is classic cuisine or fresh seafood on the deck in your flip-flops, you'll find a dining experience beloved by locals and visitors alike. Dig into familiar favorites like surf-and-turf, sushi, and pub fare and discover exciting new flavors like downhome Southern cooking, spicy Cajun soul food, and fusion cuisines. It's all here, and it's all delicious. For those who like to cook, our local seafood and farmer's markets offer fresh, organic ingredients to create your own delicacies. Plus, year-round food festivals, like the Pensacola Seafood Festival, Crawfish Festival and Taste of the Beach, are a great way to sample a variety of local cuisines. Whatever you choose, you'll be left saying, "Now that's good eatin."

For more excitement, head over to the award-winning Blue Wahoos Stadium to catch some baseball or college football on the bay. Get in on the fun at amusement and water parks, or try your hand at canoeing, kayaking or tubing.

Spend a day or two at the National Naval Aviation Museum, our area's #1 attraction and named one of the "Top Museums in the U.S." by both TripAdvisor and Yelp. With nearly 350,000 square feet of aircraft, exhibits, simulators and a giant screen theater, it's the world's largest museum of its kind and a fan favorite. The museum is located aboard

NAS Pensacola, dubbed the Cradle of Naval Aviation. Established in 1914, NAS Pensacola is the oldest naval air station, and all Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard aviators and Naval Flight Officers pass through her gates. It's also the home base for the world-famous Blue Angels Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron. To get the best view, climb to the top of the Pensacola Lighthouse & Museum.

Soak up some culture as you explore Pensacola's vibrant arts scene with galleries, museums and live performances, or join a hands-on class at the First City Art Center.

The Pensacola Bay Area is an ideal vacation destination for everyone from romantic couples to boisterous families. So, when it's time to get away, head to VisitPensacola.com, download your free Vacation Guide, and get in your perfect "Sunshine State of Mind."

About Visit Pensacola

Comprised of over 200-member businesses, Visit Pensacola leads the effort of economic development through tourism in Escambia County. Visit Pensacola's mission is to position the Pensacola Bay Area as a premier year-round travel destination through tourism marketing, communications, meetings and conventions, reunions and group tour initiatives. For more information, check out VisitPensacola.com or call toll-free 1-800-874-1234.

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