



Navarre Beach

FLORIDA'S PLAYGROUND

STORY IDEAS 2017

Welcome to Florida's Playground! From saltwater to freshwater, and places in between, Santa Rosa County offers abundant ways to enjoy the great outdoors. Visitors can now explore [Florida's Playground Trail](#), made up of 12 sites connecting Navarre Beach and historic Milton. Together, these two areas — along with every scenic minute and mile connecting them — make a destination that's bigger than any one Florida vacation along the Gulf of Mexico. With beautiful signage designating each spot, the trail begins at the [Navarre Beach Marine Park](#), with an educational marine science station, sea turtle conservatory, and near shore reefs. It then follows a variety of sites along the beachfront, including the Navarre Beach Fishing Pier, the longest in Florida, and the [Gulf Breeze Zoo](#), with more than 50 acres featuring hundreds of animals from around the world. The trail then makes its way to historic Milton, the Canoe Capital of Florida, and the Blackwater River State Park, with kayaking, canoeing, tubing, and ziplining.

Located midway between two of the Florida Panhandle's most popular beaches lies a stretch of pristine sand that bills itself as "Florida's Best Kept Secret." Navarre Beach is, quite simply, like no other coastal outpost in Florida. Think of this place on slender Santa Rosa Island as your own private Florida beach — open to the public. That's because, regardless of the season, Navarre Beach does not get crowded. Imagine arriving, beach gear in tow, and staking out an ample piece of real estate on sands that are a whiter shade of white. Sure, some other folks may be within a stone's throw, or may amble by, but essentially you'll have a lovely piece of paradise all for yourself and your family. Gaze out at the crystalline blue-green waters. Go for a swim, relax on a float, or simply frolic. If that doesn't make you decompress, what will?

[Gulf Islands National Seashore](#) is one of only ten National Seashores and offers eight miles of undeveloped Gulf-front on the west side of Navarre Beach, and a Visitors' Center at Naval Live Oaks. Here four out of the world's seven sea turtle species nest. The park is also home to towering dunes, migratory birds and miles of trails. Barrier islands overlooking the protected waters of Santa Rosa Sound create protected waters and critical wetland areas too.

The emerald green Gulf waters off the Santa Rosa County beachside communities of Navarre Beach and Gulf Breeze are teeming with fish species that provide great eating and plenty of fight. Opportunities for anglers range from offshore fishing charters in the Gulf of Mexico to casting from shore or the renowned 1,545-foot [Navarre Beach Fishing Pier](#) — the longest on the Gulf coast. Anglers also can fish via kayak along the inshore mangroves, grass flats and rivers.

For a glamping, treehouse or tiny house cabana experience, check out [Coldwater Gardens](#) in Milton. Not only are the lodging options a refreshing change of pace, but the Gardens and fresh fruits and veggies from this fully sustainable retreat are a cut above. Then there's Coldwater Creek recreation such as canoeing, kayaking and more. For more traditional lodging, the area has abundant beachfront condos, vacation rental

homes (most rentals offer their guests beach toys: boogie boards, SUP, beach bikes, kayaks, etc. for family fun) and the new Springhill Suites by Marriott opening late March 2017.

Paddle down a pristine, winding river, taking in the foliage, wildlife and soothing sounds of nature — then pull over, unfurl a blanket and relax on the beach. That's a recreational scenario you don't often hear about, but it's what sets apart the [Blackwater River State Park](#) in Santa Rosa County. For eons, people in kayaks and canoes have basked in the natural splendor and isolated surroundings of one of Florida's most picturesque sandy-bottom waterways. A key part of the experience is to pull up your craft and spend time on one of the river's many mini-beaches — all with gleaming white sand.

Navarre Beach and its surrounding communities offer a variety of venues for destination weddings, from intimate to opulent — casual beachy, country rustic, and elegant too. Nuptials held along [Navarre Beach's](#) four miles of pristine shoreline, with the crystalline blue-green waters of the Gulf of Mexico as a backdrop, ensure a memorable ceremony and stunning photos, especially during a spectacular sunset. Surrounded by pristine Florida pinelands, [Coldwater Gardens](#)— a 325-acre agro-tourism destination provides a secluded, rural backdrop and serene atmosphere for weddings on its Terrace. If a lively party atmosphere is sought for the wedding day theme, [Juana's Pagodas and Sailors Grill](#) certainly fits the bill. Couples can arrive at their dock in private watercraft and guests can enjoy rental watersports such as jet skis, sailboats, beach bikes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboarding and beach volleyball. Holland Farms' [Heaven's Trail Event Barn](#) in Milton is nestled in the backwoods. The 5,000-square-foot barn has a prep kitchen, bathrooms, heating and air conditioning. There is a large area for guest parking. Also available here is a farmhouse for the bridal party to use.

Located between Pensacola and Destin/Fort Walton Beach, Florida's Playground — whose communities include Gulf Breeze, historic Milton and Navarre Beach -- is an easy drive from most anywhere in the Southeast. It features Florida's most relaxing beaches, spectacular sunsets and inland waterway adventures to savor at an unrushed pace in an uncrowded atmosphere. Pensacola International Airport is just 30 miles away with air service provided by American, Delta, United, US Airways and Southwest; while Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport is 25 miles away and is serviced by Allegiant Airlines, American and Delta. For more information, please visit www.floridasplayground.com

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