



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What's new from Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods

Art shows, new flights, calendar of events, lodging news

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) – Fort Myers' islands, beaches and neighborhoods in Southwest Florida continues to provide new experiences for returning guests and first-time visitors. Whether you're looking for great year-round weather or shell-drenched beaches along the sparkling Gulf of Mexico, VisitFortMyers.com is your source for the most up-to-date vacation information.

Don't miss these upcoming annual events

The 37th Cape Coral Art Festival & Market Place voted 5th best in the country by Sunshine Artist Magazine, returns Jan. 8-9 to downtown Cape Coral. Visitors will also enjoy Artways on the Parkway with works displayed by Lee County students. Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Cape Coral, the show will be available virtually through Jan. 28. capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District, returns Feb. 4-6 along the waterfront with art by more than 200 select artists, entertainment, delicious food and fun children's art activities. The show was named among the best in the country by Sunshine Artists Magazine. artfestfortmyers.com

The 23rd Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival will feature more than 20 acclaimed and bestselling authors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 5. The festival will be hosted on the downtown Fort Myers Regional Library campus located at 2450 First St., Fort Myers.

Free and for all-ages, this popular annual outdoor event gives fans the opportunity to meet a diverse lineup of bestselling authors, participate in contests, activities and discover the latest in books and technology. In addition to author appearances and autograph sessions, there will be food truck vendors, storytelling programs, arts and crafts, youth writing contests and a free book for every child and teenager.

The lineup of award-winning authors scheduled to attend includes adult authors Alafair Burke, Tim Dorsey, J.A. Jance, Nathaniel Philbrick, Kate Quinn and Brad Taylor, among others. Some of the youth and teen authors include Adrianna Cuevas, Stacy McNulty, Jenna Evans Welch, Alex Willan and Adrienne Young. The complete list of authors can be found on the festival's

new mobile app “SWFL ReadFest” at the App Store, Google Play or by visiting the festival website at ReadFest.org

Mark your calendar for Island Hopper 2022

Returning for its eighth year, Island Hopper Songwriter Fest is a 10-day music festival featuring performances by some of the country’s greatest singer-songwriters. The festival takes place in three areas, with the first weekend kicking off on Captiva Island, Sept. 16-18, then moving to downtown Fort Myers, Sept. 19- 22, and ending with a weekend on Fort Myers Beach, Sept. 23-25. Most shows are free with the exception of a few ticketed experiences, like our headliner shows. Stay up-to-date on festival news with the Island Hopper app or follow on social media. islandhopperfest.com

Accommodations news

The soon-to-open Fairfield Inn & Suites Bonita Springs and the newly renovated The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village received Convention South Magazine's Top New or Renovated Awards for 2022. These properties made this elite list of the Top 54 new or renovated meeting sites and destinations in the South.

New dining and brewery openings

Bonita Springs has two new breweries. **Hopsized Brewing Co.** opened in the new Bernwood Trade Center with a focus on sours and New England IPAs. hopsizedbrewing.com **Ceremony Brewing** celebrated its grand opening in downtown Bonita Springs with 18 taps and a bottle shop selling hard-to-find brews. ceremonybrewing.com

The owners of the Tacos & Tequila Cantina, which has three locations in the region, have opened **Aldos Italian Table & Bar** in University Village adjacent to Florida Gulf Coast University in Estero. The focal point of the 4,500-square-foot restaurant is the imported Italian pizza oven, which can bake a 12-inch pie in 90 seconds. <https://universityvillagefl.com/aldos-italian-table-and-bar.html>

R.A.D. Winery & Cidery is open at Miromar Outlets in Estero. R.A.D. (Really. Awesome. Drinks.) It carries its own line of wines and ciders on tap, as well as a selection of wines from Gravity Winery and Red Top Winery in Michigan. <https://miromaroutlets.com/store-directory/gravity-wine.html>

Airport news

New air service at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

Air Transat: Montreal (YUL), weekly, seasonal service

Eurowings Discover: Frankfurt, Germany (FRA), weekly, year-round service starts March 28

New flights at RSW

Sun Country: Duluth, Minn. (DLH), weekly; Green Bay, Wis. (GRB), weekly; Milwaukee (MKE), weekly; Rochester, Minn. (RST), weekly starts Feb. 3

United Airlines: Los Angeles (LAX), daily; San Francisco (SFO), daily

News from Punta Gorda Airport (PGD)

Allegiant service from Akron, Ohio (CAK), begins March 2

Attractions news

Edison and Ford Winter Estates offers guided German tours

With the growing population of German snowbirds and tourists arriving on direct flights from Germany, Edison and Ford Winter Estates is offering guided tours in German. Led by a trained site historian whose native language is German, the tours are offered each Wednesday at 11 a.m. Guided tours are \$30 per person and are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. For visitors that wish to stroll at their own pace, German language can be selected on the Edison Ford app. edisonfordwinterestates.org

Sounds of Discovery concerts at Lovers Key State Park

A Sounds of Discovery Concert will take place at the Welcome and Discovery Center at Lovers Key State Park at 5:30 p.m. Jan. 6. Friends of Lovers Key, FOLKS, has joined with The Americana Community Music Association to offer acoustic concerts of all original music. Artists will perform their own compositions and tell the stories behind the songs. \$25 per person and include two glasses of wine or bottled water, as well as park entrance fee. Visit Eventbrite or friendsofloversonkey.org

Recently opened, **Topgolf Fort Myers** features 70 climate-controlled hitting bays for year-round comfort with HDTVs in every bay and throughout the sports bar and restaurant. Visitors may use complimentary clubs or bring their own as they take aim at giant outfield targets.

<https://topgolf.com/us/fort-myers>

Free guided beach walks at **San Carlos Bay Bunche Beach** take place at 9 a.m. Wednesdays through April 27. Visitors of all ages may enjoy this volunteer-led program and learn the basics of different beach ecosystems, types of shells and more. Free tour with paid parking.

leegov.com/parks/beaches/bunche

Visitors are invited to a free tour of the **Manatee Park** butterfly garden and habitats at 9 a.m. Sundays through March 27. Visitors will enjoy walking the ADA accessible paths through the restored native plant habitats and butterfly gardens. A volunteer naturalist will lead the tour. Manatee Park is a non-captive refuge for the threatened Florida manatee. Optimum viewing is now through March. Free tour with paid parking.

leegov.com/parks/parks/manateepark

Have fun and save with Fort Myers Sun Saver Passport

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel has launched a free mobile savings passport giving users access to exclusive deals on attractions, restaurants and experiences throughout the destination.

To participate:

- Sign up at <https://explore.fortmyers-sanibel.com>
- The passport will be delivered to your mobile phone via text.
- Redeem it on your mobile phone at participating businesses.
- Visit the website for a complete list of attractions, restaurants and experiences.

2022 festivals and events

37th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral

Jan. 8-9

capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

Feb. 4-6

artfestfortmyers.com

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 19

edisonfestival.org

Spring training 2022

Boston Red Sox Spring training

17 home games

Begins Feb. 25 with exhibition game against Northeastern University

Ends March 29

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox

Minnesota Twins spring training

16 home games

Begins Feb. 26 against Toronto Blue Jays

Ends March 29

CenturyLink Sports Complex, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins

Annual Sanibel Shell Show, Sanibel Island

March 3

sanibelshellclub.com

85th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, Sanibel Island

March 3-5

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/p/84/shell-festival

23rd Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers

March 5

readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March 10-12

echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-festival

64th Annual Fort Myers Beach Shrimp Festival, Fort Myers Beach

March 12

fortmyersbeach.org/events/fort-myers-beach-shrimp-festival

12th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May 18-22

fortmyersfilmfestival.com

10th Annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament, Sanibel Island

May 13

dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1

24th Annual MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival, Pine Island

July TBD

<http://mangomaniafl.net>

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 16-25

IslandHopperFest.com

Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival

September TBD

fmbfilmfest.com

Roar Offshore, Fort Myers Beach

October TBD

roaroffshore.com

37th Annual Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

October TBD

capecoraloktoberfest.com

Lee County Alliance of the Arts 5th Annual Arts on Tap, Fort Myers

November TBD

artinlee.org/ontap

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Editor’s note: Fort Myers and surrounding areas includes Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel & Captiva islands, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, Pine Island, Matlacha, Cape Coral, North Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. For media assistance, VisitFortMyers.com/media-central