# PORT ARANSAS

the island guide

# Captivated by the Coast



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# **PORT ARANSAS**

the island guide

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# Welcome to the Island

Everyone has a different memory of their first time stepping foot on the sandy shores of Port Aransas and Mustang Island.
This is the memory that stands out, the one that immediately comes to mind when anyone mentions this swath of Texas coast.

As a young child, that memory might be the sight of a leaping dolphin as it plays in a ship's wake, or the ship full of vivacious pirates who make you giggle with their swords and "Ahoy Mateys." As a young adult, the memory that sticks out on your first Port A vacation might be that exhilarating moment when you snag your first Redfish on a bay fishing trip, or when you perfect your pop up and stand on a surfboard. As an adult visiting the island for the first time, that enchanting moment might be when you watch the sun set over the expansive dunes of Mustang Island, or the immediate sense of calm that settles over you when you drive into the city limits and realize you're on island time. Whatever it is, there's that moment that sticks—the memory that you look back on and say, "That's it. That's when I was captivated by the coast."

So, what are you waiting for? Now is the time to plan your escape, for the first or millionth time, and to make the memories that captivate you. It's time to make your way to Port A.

Set sail for your own adventure in Port Aransas.



# Island Fare

When you're craving a coastal getaway, it's more than just the beach you're envisioning. You might be looking forward to wetting a line and dropping off your haul to a "cook your catch" restaurant, or maybe your tradition is to host a shrimp boil on the beach for the whole family. The entire experience is what makes a trip to Port Aransas the ideal island vacation, and that includes the meals you share with family and the toasts you cheer with friends.

Whether you envision a towering boat of sushi from **BlueWater Cowboy**, as shown here, a perfectly smoky Old Fashioned, or a beachside burger, you'll find plenty to crave in Port A.

Scan the QR code to discover the culinary treats of Port Aransas.









# A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PORT A CULINARY SCENE

Put the restaurants of Port Aransas together and suddenly, "What do you want for dinner?" becomes the most exciting question of the day. Course by course, this spread will give you a taste of what Port A is bringing to the table.

- Black Marlin Bar & Grill, blackened Redfish with Creole crawfish cream sauce
- 2. Kody's, crab-stuffed jalapeños
- 3. Family Center IGA, assorted wines
- 4. **MacDaddy's Family Kitchen**, house-made pecan pie.
- 5. **MacDaddy's Family Kitchen**, house-made peach cobbler á la mode.



- La Playa Mexican Grille, Cortez Ceviche Sampler
- Castaways Seafood and Grill, roasted beets, goat cheese, and arugula salad
- Lelo's Island Bar, Mermaid Water
- Lisabella's, Mermaid Soup
- Crazy Cajun, The Hungry Cajun
- Lelo's Island Bar, Painkiller

- Miss K's Bistro, broccoli salad, chutney chicken salad, Caprese salad, and shrimp & avocado salad
- 13. MacDaddy's Family Kitchen, sausage board
- Lisabella's, Sunlight Pasta
- 15. Roosevelt's at the Tarpon Inn, ribeye, potatoes savoyard, and grilled asparagus
- 16. Kody's, crab-stuffed fried avocado

Table décor provided by Lisa Mayo Interiors.

The home pictured here, 404 W. Cotter Ave, is available for rent through Life in Paradise Vacation Rentals.

# TROUT STREET BAR & GRILL'S

# **Grilled Shrimp Tacos**

While you're planning your next beach vacation, you might also be thinking about what culinary delights await you at the island's many eateries. To tide you over until you can make the journey, learn how to make these grilled shrimp tacos from Trout Street Bar & Grill!



#### **SERVES 4**

- 1 lb. shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 8 corn or flour tortillas
- 1 yellow onion, sliced
- 1-2 poblano peppers, sliced and seeds removed
- 1/3 cup fresh cilantro, diced
- 2 cups queso fresco, crumbled
- 2 limes, sliced
- Chipotle cream sauce

#### **DIRECTIONS:**

- 1. Preheat grill to medium-high heat.
- 2. Grill onions and poblano peppers until softened.
- 3. Add shrimp and grill until they begin to curl and turn pink, a couple minutes per side. Set aside.
- 4. Heat tortillas on grill as desired.
- 5. To assemble:
  - Divide shrimp, onions, and peppers evenly across tortillas.
  - Sprinkle on cilantro and queso fresco as desired.
  - Serve with slices of lime on the side and a drizzle of chipotle cream sauce.







THE MARINA

Food just tastes better when it's served al fresco. There's no better side dish than an ocean breeze and a beautiful view. Lucky for you, waterfront restaurants in Port Aransas deliver both delicious food and remarkable marina views.

Drive down Cotter Avenue and you'll see them—FINS Grill & Icehouse, Trout Street Bar & Grill, Virginia's on the Bay, and Grumbles Seafood Co. These restaurants each have their

unique island flavors, and patios spacious enough to accommodate your whole group (and your furry friend!) at a table right on the water.

On the beach already? No need to leave! When you're ready for a bite, just pop over to Port A Beach Lodge, the only restaurant on the island that sits right on the beachline.

Photos taken at Grumbles Seafood Co.











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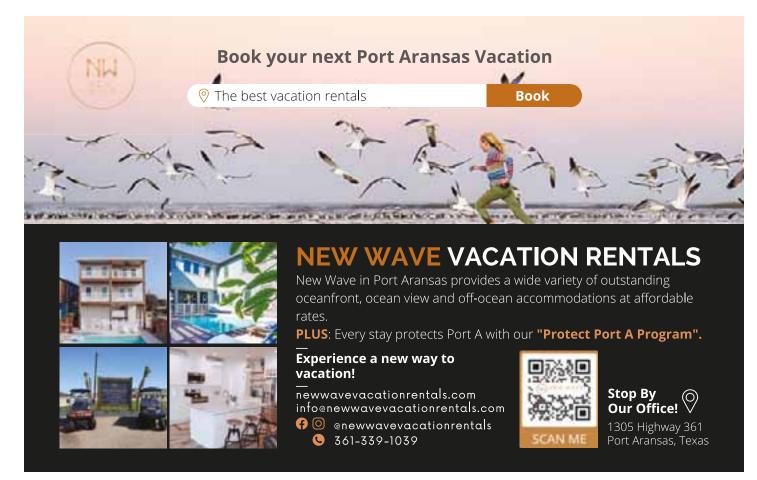






# **FINS GRILL** & ICEHOUSE The Scarlet Lady cocktail is made with vodka, strawberry, and fresh lemon. TACOSa 'TAILS There's nothing more quintessential of an island in South Texas than a seafood taco... and nothing better to pair it with than a beachy, ice-cold cocktail. **TROUT** STREET BAR & GRILL What's better than one type of taco? A trio of different tacos! Get a taste of the sea with ahi tuna, grilled shrimp, and grilled fresh fish tacos. VISITPORTARANSAS.COM







"What a fantastic golf course. A must-play for any golfer visiting Port Aransas."





"This place is making my island dreams come true, one mahi taco at a time!"





"Cool island breezes and even cooler social vibes."





# Welcome To Palmilla

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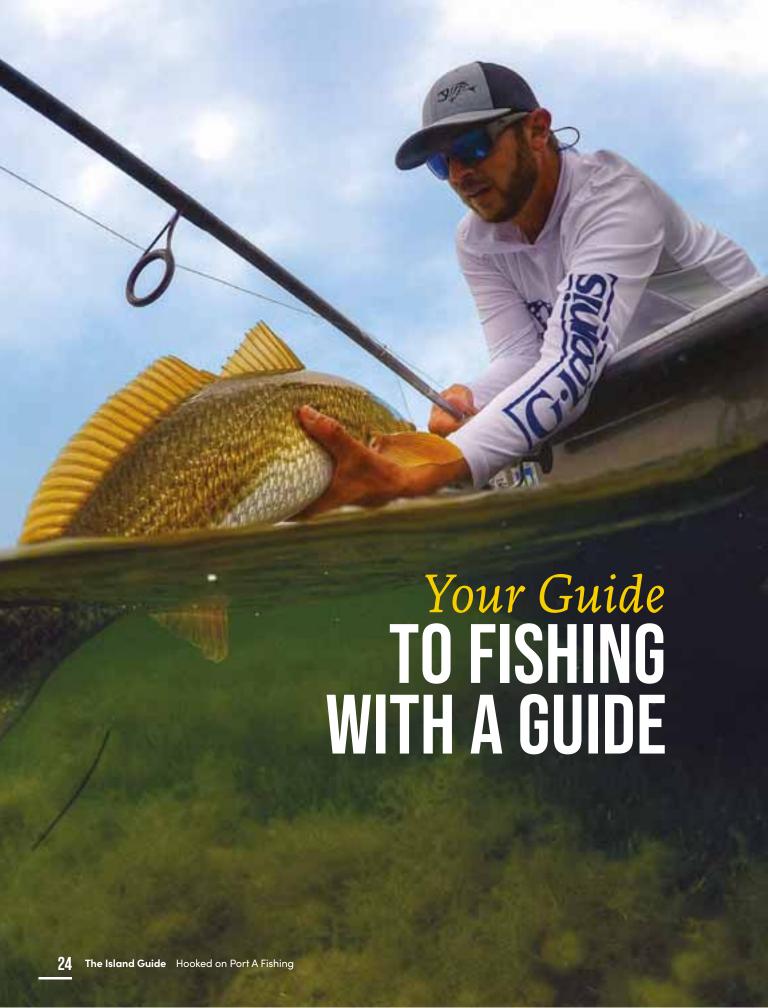


Hooked on Port A Fishing

Countless anglers have been captivated hook, line, and sinker by the Port Aransas fishing scene. Marinas buzz with activity all year long as tournament boats pull in their hauls, rows of capture flags flapping in the wind. In Port A, it doesn't matter whether you're a novice or an expert—fishermen love that they can choose the fishing adventure that suits them, from bay to deep sea, from pier to jetty, and from private boat to party charter. With all those options, it's no wonder Port Aransas has been dubbed the "Fishing Capital of Texas."

To see all the fishing options in Port Aransas, scan the QR code below!







You may have heard the age-old saying, "it's called fishing, not catching," spoken by anglers who spend a day with nary a bite on their bait. If you charter a trip with one of Port A's excellent fishing guides, though, you're guaranteed to be doing far more catching than anything else! If you're not an experienced angler—or even if you are—going fishing with a guide is a surefire way to ensure you have a great time out on the water.

These captains are bona fide fishing gurus who know when, where, and what the fish are biting.

For you, a fishing charter may look like a family-oriented Snapper trip out of Deep Sea Headquarters or Port Aransas Fisherman's Wharf that will have you back on the beach before sundown, or it may look like a private charter with just you and your closest buddies fishing the bays all day long. Captain Doug Stanford, of Pirates of the Bay Charters, has been guiding professionally for over 15 years, and he suggests, "To find the right guide, ask yourself, 'what do I want?'" Whatever you're looking for, fishing charters will have a package option that fits your preferences.

From there, you can begin to narrow down your choices. One way to get the feel for a guide's style is to read reviews so you can hear about others' experiences. Then you'll want to ask questions based on your party's needs. For example, if you plan to take little ones, you can ask how the guide handles children on their charters. Most guides, like Captain Stanford, love having kids aboard. He says, "I have no grandkids so every kid that gets on my boat is my grandkid for a day. I love to teach them and let them fish and... just be a kid." Asking those partyspecific questions ensures you'll find the perfect match!

Once you've chosen a guide and booked your trip, your worries are over. Recently retired fishing guide Arthur Serrano explains that when you're on the water, "We help you with everything you need to know about fishing." All you need to do is enjoy yourself and you'll be catching your limits in no time!

Fishing guides like Captain Serrano and Captain Stanford have the expertise to make sure you fill the box, but they're more than just fishing experts. These fishermen also love what they do. Captain Serrano explains how Port Aransas is an angler's paradise, saying, "We have the best beaches in the state and there's always something to fish for." Captain Stanford agrees, saying, "I always said (that) when my kids (were) grown that I was going to go to Port A to become a fishing guide, even if I had to live on the beach in a tent. I am not living in a tent, but I did find where I belong."











# DEEP SEA HEADQUARTERS

STOP WISHING, LET'S GO FISHING!

Deep Sea Headquarters is a full-service marina in Port Aransas, Texas built to satisfy all the maritime needs of fishermen and sightseeing adventurers alike. Our professional crew will guide you through your experience to ensure you get the most from your trip and create memories that last a lifetime. Adventure starts under the palapa at Deep Sea Headquarters!





# **FISH FINDER**

Simply find all the words and solve the questions to discover the hidden words.

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				W				Н	В					
	13													

- Tarpon
- Billfish
- Bait
- Trout
- Gigging
- Marlin
- Tackle
- Angler
- Weigh In
- Red Snapper

- Port Aransas hosts over 20 fishing \_\_\_\_\_ per year (11 letters)
- Port Aransas is the Fishing of Texas (7 letters)
- To most fishermen, having a sweet \_ fruit onboard is considered bad luck (6 letters)
- Many fishing tournaments now use a video catch and \_\_\_\_\_ judging system (7 letters)

- - - - W

      - G



Port Aransas is the Fishing Capital of Texas, which means that around here, the competitive sport of choice is tournament fishing.

Anglers converge on the island for high-stakes competitions like the professional **Yamaha Bassmaster Redfish Cup Championship**, which returned to Port Aransas for the second year in a row in 2022, and the "granddaddy of fishing tournaments," the **Deep Sea Roundup**. As local fishing guide René Lopez puts it, "There's one every weekend from March to March almost."

Lopez is a Port Aransas local through and through; he was born and raised on the island and grew up fishing with his dad. Though tournaments were a later addition, Lopez quickly fell in love with the sport. He now runs Seeing Red Charters, taking out the likes of country music legend George Strait on fishing trips, and is well versed in the local tournament scene. The competition aspect is what drives him. With so many people competing in these big tournaments, Lopez says, "Top 10 percent is always a great feeling."

Lopez explains that all the tournaments have different rules or caveats that make them unique and exciting to fish. For example, Deep Sea Roundup doesn't have a singular species focus. Instead, to even qualify for the "Grand Champ" title, anglers must demonstrate their versatility by catching at least four of the seven target species and placing first in at least one of those categories.

Just as Lopez learned from his dad, he is in turn teaching





his two young sons the art and sport of fishing, which led to a big payoff during last year's Deep Sea Roundup. 2022 was Lopez's seven-year-old's first shot at taking part in the "grown up" Deep Sea Roundup tournament, and on the first day of the tournament, he reeled in a massive (and rare) tarpon! Lopez says, "I think it hit him after a while. He got his scale and he said he's going to put his scale in the Tarpon Inn." Lopez's son will be in good company—generations of tarpon fishermen have hung scales on those iconic Port Aransas walls. It's a legacy that is easy to tell Lopez is proud of. "I love representing Port A," he says, "This is my town."



Of all the fish in the sea, which is your favorite? Your answer might change if you were a fishing captain who takes boats out to deep sea tournaments in Port Aransas, Texas. Different tournaments—of which the town hosts over 20 each year—may target different species, and generally billfish (Marlin, Swordfish, and Sailfish) rank over meat fish. So, what are those species that offshore tournaments are generally looking for? Learn more about them below!



## **SAILFISH**



Sailfish are widely regarded as the fastest fish in the ocean and can reach speeds close to 70 miles per hour. Their speed and agility make for a vivacious fight, and catching one is quite the event, even for experienced Port Aransas anglers.

## **BLUE MARLIN**



Marlin fishing is so big in Port Aransas, the species is the local school district's mascot! Blue Marlin are known around here for being high-flying fighters who leap multiple feet out of the water after being hooked. They can weigh over 500 pounds!



## WHITE MARLIN



White Marlin are smaller than their Blue Marlin cousins, and they tend to be more elusive and trickier to catch than many other billfish species.



# **SWORDFISH**



Though Swordfish look similar to Marlin, they are characterized by their long, flat bills and rounder bodies. Swordfish live in deep water-1,000 feet plus-and are very good eating!

## **TARPON**



Port Aransas was actually named Tarpon, Texas for a while due to the abundant Tarpon fishing in its waters. Even FDR made a trip down to wrangle one in! Now, Tarpon are a rare and valuable catch and Texas anglers spend years hoping to hook one.



## TUNA



Blackfin, Yellowfin, and Bluefin Tuna have all been caught off the Texas Gulf Coast. A Texas recordbreaking Bluefin Tuna was reeled in and weighed at Port Aransas Fisherman's Wharf last year. The fish weighed a whopping 876 pounds!

# **DOLPHIN**



Dolphinfish, also commonly known as Mahi-Mahi or Dorado, are in fact, fish. They're not mammals like the Bottlenose Dolphin, also found in Port Aransas waters.





## **WAHOO**



"Wahoo" is what you'll yell out when you pull in one of these prized sportfish! Though they are a smaller fish than many of the other species, they are incredibly fast.

## **SHARK**



Port Aransas anglers often catch Bulls, Blacktips, Makos, and even Hammerheads! Offshore trips can see sharks that weigh several hundred pounds.



# It's Only Natural

The natural landscape of Port Aransas is much more than just the beach; it's imposing sand dunes, expansive wetland, and countless watery inlets. Such a diverse landscape also means Port Aransas is home to wildlife you won't see anywhere else on the Texas coast. From the five-foot tall Whooping Cranes in the winter to the resident American alligator, Boots, you'll be captivated by the natural environment. Explore the island on foot, on a bike, or in a kayak!

To discover the island's natural beauty, scan the QR code below!





# Meet the Turtles of the Amos Rehabilitation Keep



The Amos Rehabilitation Keep, also known as the ARK, is a wildlife rehabilitation center in Port Aransas that takes in marine birds, raptors, and sea turtles. The center is a University of Texas Marine Science Institute (UTMSI) program which sees around 1,500 patients a year, and handles more stranded sea turtles than any other facility in the United States! Not all ARK patients are able to be re-released though, and those special creatures become permanent residents of the ARK's topnotch facilities. You can learn more about those special residents—Barnacle Billie, Nosey, George, Star, and Kiwi—below!

Keep an eye out on the ARK's Facebook page to see when the next sea turtle release is happening!

#### Meet Barnacle Billie

Barnacle Billie is a loggerhead sea turtle who was rescued by the ARK in July of 1997 at Avenue G on Mustang Island Beach in Port Aransas. Unfortunately, Billie was found with both front flippers missing. These injuries would prevent her from being released as it would be hard for her to evade predators and find food.



Barnacle Billie was originally named Barnacle Bill and thought to be a male. When

Billie was found, she was a juvenile weighing only 85 pounds. She has since grown to an adult weighing in at 190 pounds. Once sea turtles reach maturity, the tails of male turtles are much larger than the females. Billie has a short tail, which revealed her to in fact be a female!

#### **Meet Nosey**

Nosey is a Kemp's ridley sea turtle who was rescued by the ARK in July of 2013. She was found at the end of Rockport Beach Park with no obvious wounds, but she was disoriented. She was pale in coloration, weirdly shaped, and she swam in an odd way. The ARK tried releasing Nosey three times, each time unsuccessful. With these issues, Nosey has been deemed unable to survive in the wild and is an ambassador for her species.



Kemp's ridleys are the smallest and the lightest of all the species of sea turtles.

Being light allows them to nest very quickly, keeping them safe from predators and safe from the elements, as they are the only species that nest in the daytime. They can usually nest within 45 minutes, while larger species take several hours to nest.

#### Meet George

George is a green sea turtle who was rescued by the ARK in November of 2014 near the Station Street Pier in the ship channel. George was found floating at the surface of the water, cold stunned with a large









boat strike wound on the back of his shell. Due to these injuries, he developed deformations in his shell which caused air pockets to form so he permanently floats to the surface.



George's buoyance issues are called Positive Buoyancy Syndrome, or "Bubble

Butt Syndrome."

#### **Meet Star**

Star is a green sea turtle who was rescued by the ARK in December of 2015 on North Padre Island near the seawall. She was found weak and lethargic, covered in marine leeches and with a large boat strike wound on the back of her shell. She later developed Positive Buoyance Syndrome just like George and Kiwi, preventing her from being released.



Green sea turtles are herbivores and are named after the color of their fat.

They are commonly found in the Port Aransas area due to the abundance of algae on the jetty rocks and the beautiful sea grass meadows in the bays.

#### Meet Kiwi

Kiwi is a green sea turtle who was rescued by the ARK in January of 2018 near the UTMSI Boat Basin. Kiwi was found floating at the surface of the water, cold stunned with a large boat strike wound on the back of her shell. Boat strikes are very common for cold-stunned turtles because they float to the surface, lethargic, and cannot swim away from oncoming boat traffic.



Kiwi is a past patient at the ARK. She was first rescued in 2015 after sustaining a

different boat strike. Luckily, she healed from these wounds, was able to dive, and was released with a Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tag. PIT tags are small tags the size of a grain of rice that are injected into the turtle's flipper and will stay with them the course of their lifetime. Reoccurrence data provides important information for long-term monitoring of growth and movements of sea turtles.

Sea turtle information provided by Alicia Walker, Program Coordinator at the Amos Rehabilitation Keep.



Meet Flynn, the newest resident of Port Aransas. Flynn is a freshly-hatched Kemp's ridley sea turtle with plenty to learn and a passion for his new home! Flynn wants to make sure he and all his friends (that's you!) know how to keep Port Aransas an island paradise. To help him out, here are answers to a few of Flynn's most burning questions.

#### Q: Can I drive one of those super cool golf carts?

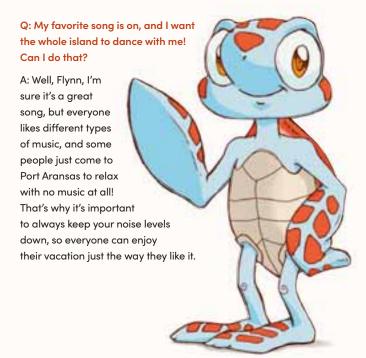
A: Great question, Flynn! Anyone with a valid driver's license can drive a beach-ready golf cart. Just remember that all road laws still apply, and you should be careful not to cruise past the intersection at Avenue G and south onto Highway 361! If you're planning to take your golf cart to the beach, you'll also need a beach parking permit.

#### Q: Where should I put my trash when I'm on the beach?

A: All along the Port Aransas beach, and at other locations like the pier and marinas, you can find reusable yellow litter bags inside blue metal containers. These bags even have a picture of your face on them, Flynn! Just make sure you don't leave your trash behind when you leave the beach for the day.

## Q: I see all my bird and turtle friends hanging out on the beach! Can I go play with them?

A: You sure can, Flynn, but any people who see animals on the beach should generally steer clear. Interfering with wildlife can be harmful to them. This includes feeding the gulls—they're not as hungry as they sound! Humans should report all turtle sightings to the **Amos Rehabilitation Keep**, which they can reach by calling 1–866-TURTLE5. Fun fact: that number works all along the Texas coast!





To learn more about how you can help Flynn respect our island home and have a turtle-y awesome day in Port A, scan the QR code.



# BIRDS of a FEATHER

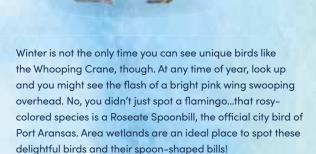
## flock to Port A

Haven't you heard? In Port Aransas, bird is the word!
One stop at Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center in the Port
Aransas Nature Preserve and you'll know why. Avid and
novice birders alike are entranced by the species that make
their way to Port A during fall and spring migrations.

One of the more unusual species you can find during the winter season is the endangered Whooping Crane, one of the rarest birds in North America. This magnificent crane is well-known for its bright red head and can reach five feet in height! The "Whoopers," as they are affectionately

known, spend the colder

months on the Texas Gulf
Coast, and birders travel
internationally to attend
Port A's Whooping Crane
Festival. The festival is
a four-day celebration
of the birds, and a
unique opportunity for
birdwatchers to see them
in their natural habitat...
and check a sighting off
their bucket list!



Port Aransas is home to dozens of birds that will ruffle your feathers in the best way. Make sure to pack your binoculars, because you never know what you might





## Scenes from

Stray off the beaten path the next time you're in Port Aransas and indulge your inner explorer by taking to the trails! With miles of trails along coastal wetlands, you're sure to find a new perspective in nature, as have many before you. The Shutter Bugs Port Aransas group is a Facebook community of Port A lovers and photographers showcasing the new perspectives they have gained while venturing out in the wetlands. Check out these highlights.



#### Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center

The first stop for any nature lover should be the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center. Walk along the wooden boardwalks or climb the observation tower and you'll be amazed at the variety of birds you witness. If you're lucky, you might even catch a glimpse of Boots the American alligator sunning himself in the wetlands!



The Nature Preserve at Charlie's Pasture is another must-stop when you want to see the full scope of life in Port Aransas. Several miles of wide trails meander through showstopping scenery and wildlife. Join a Nature Walk led by expert naturalists who will walk you through the sights and sounds of Charlie's Pasture or participate in a yoga class at the Charlie's Pasture pavilion with Inspirational Yoga Warriors.

#### Lighthouse Lakes

When you're ready to hit the water, rent a kayak and head over to the Lighthouse Lakes Paddling Trail. Located close to the Lydia Ann Lighthouse, this trail was actually the first ever Texas Paddling Trail! Leisure paddlers and kayak fishermen alike love to float along the four trail loops, which range in length from just over one mile to nearly seven miles long!

#### Joan and Scott Holt Paradise Pond

Tucked away behind a local restaurant you'll find the inconspicuous entrance to the **Joan and Scott Holt Paradise Pond.** Walk along the boardwalk, through a native pollinator garden where you'll hear croaking frogs and see the gentle flapping of butterflies, and you'll soon find an overlook giving you an expansive view of the two acres of Paradise Pond. The space is ripe with migratory birds...and an otherwise difficult-to-find sense of peace perfect for capping off a day of trailblazing.

#### San José Island

While this one isn't a trail, per se, **San José Island**, also called St. Jo's, is a not-so-hidden gem where you can explore the area's wilder side. The island is accessible only by a jetty boat out of **Port Aransas Fisherman's Wharf**, and a walk along the sand will give you some of the best beachcombing in Texas!



Scan the code and see the Shutter Bugs for yourself!



Six passenger carts delivered to your vacation home, with unlimited fuel!

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## Inspired by the Island Mustang Island may be small, but there's no containing the endless creativity pouring from local artists who have been captivated by the coast, or the unique culture born of sea salt air and generations of local characters. These creative individuals are the heartbeat of Port Aransas—the living, breathing epitomes of what it means to be captivated by the coast. As a visitor, just one glimpse inside the mind of an artist at the Port Aransas Art Center or one tour of the Port Aransas Museum and you, too, will understand. Want to get to know the island's art and culture? Scan the QR code below!



## meet Sarah Searight

Though she is originally from Austin, artist Sarah Searight was captivated by the Port Aransas coast at a young age. Searight's father had a tradition of coming to the island with his own father for fishing trips, a tradition that he in turn passed on to his own kids. Searight recalls as a child being offered the choice to go camping or take a trip to the beach on summer vacation. For her, the answer was always Port Aransas.

From packing her art supplies on those early beach trips, Searight grew up to earn her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art, traveling around the country and the world, painting as she went. Decades later, after a battle with Parkinson's disease, the last thing Searight's father would ever say to her would be, "Go be an artist and a fisherman on the beach." That's exactly what she has chosen to do.

Though her paintings have evolved over the years, Searight has always gravitated towards a free-flowing gesture style of art. This sort of painting is well suited for the way she prefers to do most of her work, which is outdoors on the

beach. She says, "I've got an old chunky, rusty car, and I sit on the beach with the top open and I just literally put a canvas in the back, use the back for shade, and paint out of the back of my car." Right there on the sand is where she finds the most inspiration for her work.

The beach is serene and steadfast, but always has something new to offer those who are looking. One of the benefits of being an artist? You're always looking. "(Being an artist) trains your mind to be more observant of your surroundings," Searight says. "I like doing the...fast sketches of life on the beach. Seeing the sunrises and the sunsets. Seeing the change of the tides and seeing the change of the surf...it's always a new image."

You can find samples of Sarah Searight's work around Port A, on a myriad of murals and Farley Boat planters, and her work is available for purchase at the **Port Aransas Art Center** and **Lisa Mayo Interiors**. You can also find her, and reach out to commission work, on Facebook at Sarah Searight Artist.

# SPOT the DIFFERENCE

Port Aransas has a distinctive personality recognizable to all who have visited the island. From salty characters who hang out in their usual haunts to fences adorned with beach toys and abandoned flip flops, Port A's personality is what makes it such a unique and treasured destination.

The images below are similar but have 10 distinct differences. Can you identify them all?





Answers can be found on page 92.

# GUESS the LANDMARK

Port Aransas is studded with landmarks, whether they be historical landmarks with larger significance or personal landmarks that carry great memories. While the latter may only come with time and each subsequent visit to the island, your knowledge of the former can come with a visit to the Port Aransas Museum. The Port Aransas Museum is a treasure trove of information that will deepen your appreciation for the island and all it has to offer.

It's time to put your knowledge to the test! Can you recognize these Port Aransas landmarks just by these close-up images?



Hint:
This landmark
is the oldest
functional
consecrated
church on
the island.





Hint: This "land" mark has a hand in the title of the local newspaper.





Hint: You can wet a line at this local landmark.





Hint:
You can spend your
vacation with a stay at

this landmark.





Hint: This landmark will help light your way.



6

Hint:

This landmark has housed generations of makers dating back over 100 years and is now a living exhibit.



Answers can be found on page 92.

## ACT OUT

Do you have a flair for drama? When you're freshly bronzed from the sun and ready to brush off the sand, it's time to take in a show. Come as you are to the most dramatic place on the beach—the Port Aransas Community Theatre.

When the lights dim in the theater, you'll be transported to another world. Embark on a vacation inside a vacation as you swim alongside Ariel and her underwater pals, or laugh like old friends with a duo of grumpy old men.

Chills will run up your arms at the soaring vocal power of the musical talent, and you might even shed a tear at the big emotions evoked by a poignant production.

Don't worry though, even with all the snazzy costumes and glitzy stage makeup, you won't ever lose those island vibes. You can feel the laidback energy of the cast, crew, and even your fellow audience members between every act! The theater's season schedule is packed with plays that will appeal to the whole group, so even when the curtain closes, Port Aransas Community Theatre will have you begging for an encore.



Photos courtesy A. Berksan





Vacations call for stylish new looks, and Port A's boutiques and outfitters are ready to serve them up! Whether your style is coastal chic or beachy boho, you'll find something you love on the shelves of these seaside shops. In one trip, you can easily find the perfect gift for everyone on your list, young and old, and take home a little piece of Port A for yourself, too. There's no doubt that on this island, the shopping is as delightful as the beaches.

Scan the QR code below to discover shopping in Port A.



## **COASTAL KEEPSAKES**

Choosing what you want to remember your vacation by can be tough. After all, what can possibly capture the memories you made on these shores? These elevated Port Aransas products from local small businesses are more than souvenirs, and they might just do the trick!



Capture your memories and look back on them with fondness as you walk through the halls of your home by booking a family photo session with local photographers Shannon Lafayette Photography or Merdog Media.



A tee or sweatshirt from Palm Republic is an iconic mark of island life that is recognizable to Port A lovers everywhere.



This Texasshaped ornament from Jackfish Cart Rentals shows off your love of the Lone Star State and Port Aransas at the same time.

your couch at home with this map blanket from **Roam** and dream of Port Aransas.

Sport this Port A necklace from **Roam** to make sure everyone knows your favorite Texas beach.



This beautifully embroidered pillow from Cita Resort Interiors/Boutique will brighten up any space in your home.



Everyone needs a floppy beach hat in their inventory, and this one emblazoned with "Port A" from **Lisa Mayo Interiors** does the job in style!

This oyster ornament décor from **Roam** is all things coastal and features a map of Port Aransas on the inside of the shell!



Set out this table décor from **Lone Star Taste** and you'll always be
reminded of the sea turtles you
spotted around the jetties.



Lisa Mayo Interiors lets you bring your love of the island into the kitchen with high-end accessories like this coordinate charcuterie board and the subtle Port Aransas dish towel.



massage | facials | lashes | waxing | boutique



## SPA & boutique

A unique gem nestled in the heart of Port Aransas, Texas – a true sanctuary in the small heach community. We are dedicated to supporting your personal well-being and health through luxurious spa services as well as the use of organic products and skin care lines.

## BEACH SCENE OF YOUR DREAMS

An oversized umbrella, perched just so in the sand; beach chairs, one for each of your loved ones; and a golf cart parked just behind, ready to whisk you to your next island adventure—this is the scene that encapsulates the Port Aransas beach vacation experience. This is what you dream about all year long!

Port Aransas makes it easy for you to see that dream come to fruition without lifting a finger.
Beach concierge services like
Bron's Beach Rentals or 361 Blue will set up comfy lounge chairs and an umbrella reserved just for you. 361 Blue even provides beach games like cornhole and giant
Connect Four! If you have a larger

group, get more elaborate with your beach scene by renting a tent from Party Tent Rentals #1 or hosting an entire boil and bonfire with Rollin' Tide Boil Co. They "roll their pot to your spot!"

When you've had your fill of the waves and the sand, or just want to take a cruise along the waterline, all you need to do is hop on the golf cart you've rented and go. Four seaters, six seaters, and even eight seaters are all available on the island! Sometimes, they're even included in your vacation rental...because that's how Port A rolls!

Does it all seem like a dream come true? Then it's time to make your way to Port A!





- 1. Lifestyle brand Palm Republic has options for the whole family, and you can match in a variety of logo gear from sweatshirts to hats.
- 2. Deep Sea Headquarters offers more than just fishing trips—unique coastal button ups and oversized sun hats make the perfect gifts.
- 3. Seeing doubles? That's just Coastal Closet's selection of complementary outfits, like these matching polos for dad and baby, and this Lilly Pulitzer print in mommy and me styles.
- 4. Georgia's A Children's Boutique makes kids' fashion that will carry your littles from the beach to bedtime.
- 5. Jackfish Cart Rentals is known for golf carts and pizza, but they also have an array of fun for the family, including dog toys that will make your furry friend feel just as special as the rest of the family.



## destination

## **Port Aransas**

With sun-drenched, sugary-sand beaches stretching over 18 miles, a temperate climate year-round and attractions for every kind of traveler, Port Aransas is a natural attraction for visitors and sun-seekers from around the world.









Start new traditions and memories for generations to come at Sunflower Beach on the New Texas Coast.





# Girls just want TO HAVE SUN

Girls just want to have sun...and seaside shopping! Eclectic Port Aransas boutiques will have you ready for the sand, sun, and out-on-the-town fun.

## **RAGGDOLL BOUTIQUE**

This colorful swimsuit and cover up combo from Raggdoll Boutique will take you to the beach and beyond!

# BELLA BELLA BOUTIQUE Bella Boutique is well-known for their selection of one-of-atkind Charlis I Horse hats and fashionable looks like this linear dress!

cart with ease in this high-class transitional look from **Roam**.

#### EC

#### **BALINESE BOUTIQUE**

Balinese Boutique is the

## **INDIGO ECLECTIC**

from **Indigo Eclectic** 

## BLUEWATER COWBOY MERCANTILE

BlueWater Cowboy Mercantile's jumpsuit is the perfect date night number, especially when paired with these stunning turquoise jewelry pieces.

## JO D'S, ETC.

The best vacation outfits combine style and ease, just like this dress and accessories ensemble from **Jo D's, Etc.** 



Scan the code for more details on these looks!







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Are you ready to drop anchor in Port A? Then it's time to find the spot that will be your vacation headquarters. Your lodging choice will become the backdrop to your celebrations and the scene of your tradition making. You may sip coffee on the balcony of an ocean-view condo or cozy up for a post-sun nap on the oversized couch of a beach house. Regardless, you'll feel right at home here in paradise, so come on in!

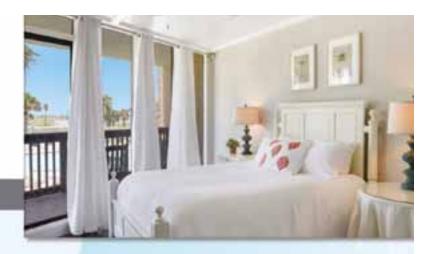
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# A TOUR THROUGH YOUR Beach Bungalow



When you rent a Port Aransas beach house, every door has the potential to unlock a vacation moment that will captivate you for years to come. Walking through the halls of your rental at the close of your trip, you'll likely find a little bit of sand and a whole lot of love. As you take this tour through a beach bungalow, set yourself in these scenes, surrounded by the ones you love.

#### THE ENTRYWAY

Step through the doors of "A Shore Thing" and instantly breathe a sigh of relief. You've arrived at your destination! The tiki details in this entryway instantly usher you into the island way of life and wash away your cares. Rattan chairs and an umbrella? You're definitely on the coast! This beauty is available for your next getaway from **Port A Escapes**.



#### LIVING ROOM & KITCHEN

The open concept of "Hooty and the Blowfish," available for rent through Silver Sands Vacation Rentals, is ideal for a family night at your home away from home. The kitchen and living room flow seamlessly together at the heartbeat of the home. You can have a private chef, like the Port Aransas Cookbook, cater a meal for the family in the stunning marble kitchen, then settle into the living room's oversized couch for a movie night!

## KIDS' ROOM After a hearty

After a hearty meal, the littles will be ready to settle into this shark-themed kids' room in "Big Blue," a home in the Palmilla Beach Resort & Golf Community. Double bunk beds are perfect for oodles of pals to come along for the ride and make some core memories.



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#### DECK

Once the kids are tucked in, the adults will want to head out back to the deck. Sit around the outdoor bar at "Bourbon Breeze," a SWAY Vacation Rentals home, and cheer to finally being on vacation! The cheery bright hues of this space are conducive to warm conversations and bringing families closer together.

### **BEDROOM**

You're never too old for an "I call this one!" shout when the bedrooms are as good as they are at "Coastal Vibes" in Sunflower Beach Resort & Residences. Fluff the pillows and climb in, because tonight you get to fall asleep to the sound of the ocean.



The view from Sandcastle Resort Condominiums is enough to stop anyone in their tracks. Step out for your morning coffee on the balcony and soak in the salt air. Looking right over the water that extends as far as the eye can see, this balcony is the definition of serenity.









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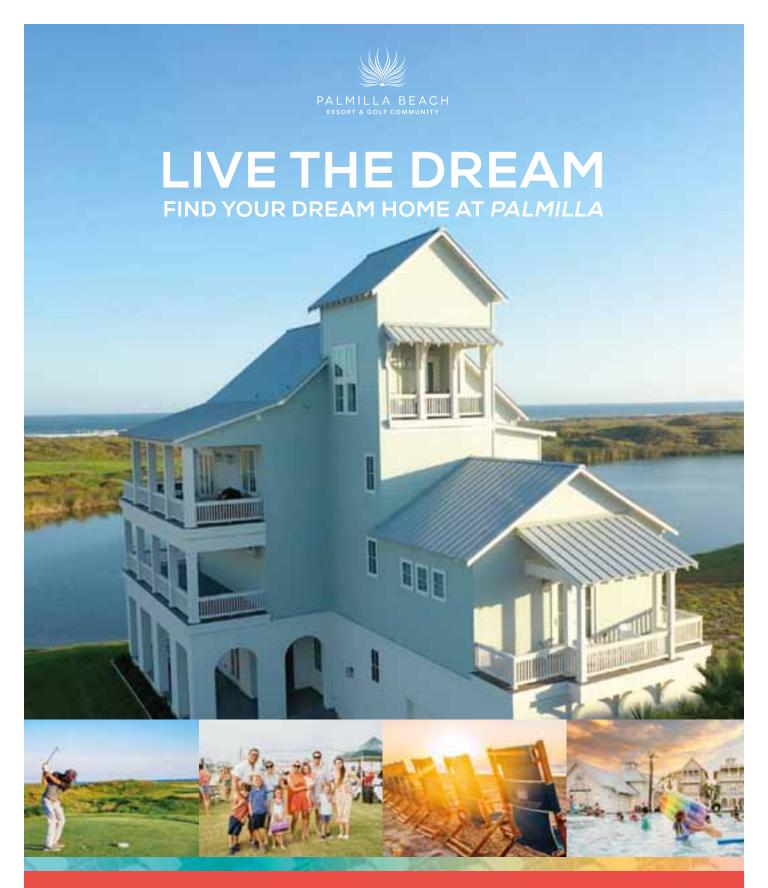
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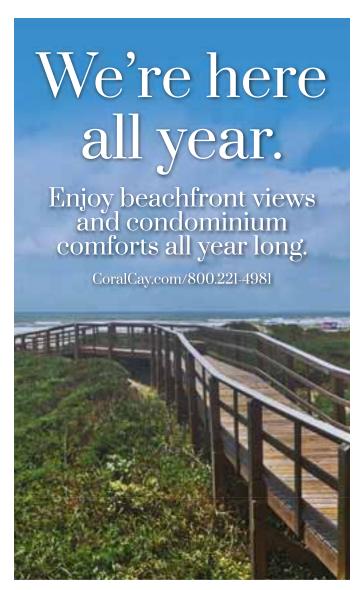








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## STAY IN Style

What makes a stay in Port Aransas so unique? On these shores, you can live the island life, whatever that may mean to you. Maybe your vacation style is vibrant—all bright colors and dancing on the beach—or perhaps it's more relaxed, with leisurely floats on a kayak and a beach read under an oversized umbrella. Regardless of your style, Port Aransas has a place to stay that matches your vacation mood.

History buffs might be interested in staying at **The Tarpon Inn**, a historic hotel that has been serving Port Aransas visitors since 1886. Rocking chairs line the expansive porches, and the lobby walls are ornamented with the tarpon scale legacies of anglers past.



The love birds should not miss the **Balinese Spa Suites**. This adults-only property is a romantic getaway waiting to be had. It includes discounts on spa services at the attached **Balinese Spa**, and a beach bike for picturesque rides across the sand with your significant other.

If you're more of a shopper, the **Old Town Cottages**, managed by **New Wave Vacation Rentals**, are the quaint bungalows you want. The cottages are located in the heart of Old Town Port Aransas, behind a row of local shops including **Palm Republic** and **Cita Resort Interiors/Boutique**.





Tropics on Tenth is a playful condo, available for rent from Life in Paradise Vacation Rentals, that features a rooftop terrace with yard games and a fantastic view. Inside the condo, you'll find a photo-ready wall papered in flamingos and fixed with a sign that reads "Beach Vibes."







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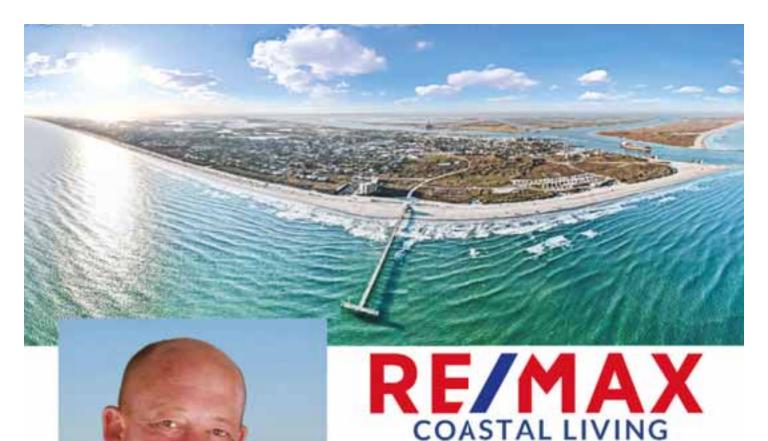




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What comes to mind when you think of adventure? Is it the exhilarating whip of salty spray as you roar by on a jet ski, or is it the whoop you let out when you're freewheeling through the sky on a parasailing trip? Maybe your idea of adventure is quieter—a round of golf on a roving beachside course or a leisurely shoreline cruise on a fat-tire bike. Whatever type of adventure "floats your boat," Port Aransas is ready to help you expand your horizons.

Looking for a Port Aransas adventure? Scan the QR code below!









For a real high-flying adventure, scoop out some time for parasailing with Chute 'Em Up!



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Explore the coast at your own speed when you rent a fat-tire bike or electric scooter from Island Motor Bikes.



GOLF

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will keep your adventurous
spirit swinging.





#### **KAYAKING**

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#### **JET SKI HIRE**

Go full throttle and rent a jet ski from Gettin' Salty Watersports or **Barefoot Water Sports!** 



### **SURF & SKATE RENTALS**

Crush some gnarly waves when you rent a board from **BoardHouse** Surf & Skate or Island **Surf Rentals.** 



#### **SANDCASTLE MASTERCLASS**

Want to learn how to build a sandcastle the likes of which only Texas SandFest has seen before? Book a lesson with Port Aransas Sandcastle Guy Mark Landrum!



# The sculptor BEHIND THE SAND

You may have seen the sand sculptures dotting the beach in Port Aransas during **Texas SandFest**—towering shoreline monuments—but have you stopped to consider the person behind the sculpture? One of the best parts of **Texas SandFest** is the chance to interact with sand sculptors hailing from all over the globe.

Not all sand sculptors at the festival come from so far away though, like native Texan Albert Lucio, Jr. His journey with sand sculpting began after college, but it wasn't exactly the artistic come-to-Jesus moment you might expect. While hanging out on the beach one day, a friend of Lucio's mentioned to him there was a small sculpting competition coming up nearby. "He said...we should sign up so we could get free parking and meet women," Lucio laughs. Lucio had never heard of sand sculpting before, so he did what came natural—he went home to look it up, then called his dad.

After taking a look at what his son came up with, Albert Lucio Sr. was also on board. "The next week my dad, myself, my sister, and my brother-in-law were all in our first sand sculpting competition," Lucio says. Talk about a family affair! Though the group didn't get free parking, nor did he meet women, Lucio says simply, "After that, I was hooked."

Lucio began sculpting and competing regularly with his dad, and nearly 20 years later, they're both still carving away. He is the coordinator for both the Amateur and Semi-Pro levels of **Texas SandFest**, which he began competing at in 2007, and even has a sandbox in his backyard that he uses to practice! Lucio has a creative process that works for him, and says each of his sculptures begins with something he's personally interested in. "I like to tell little stories, internal stories...and then I will start to design the piece either around that idea or emotion or the story I want to tell." For what he expects the audience to get out of his work, Lucio says,

"You get to create your own story...As long as you get the emotion that I'm telling, then I know that I've been successful"

When asked about the best part of sand sculpting, Lucio talks about his friends, a fascinating cross-section of individuals united by their love of the art. He says, "When we all get together...it doesn't matter how much money you make, it doesn't matter where you live, it doesn't matter what you do in your day-to-day job. When we all get together, we're really kind of celebrating our passion for sand sculpting. And that comes out through all the stuff that we do."

If you're interested in meeting sand sculptors like Albert Lucio
Jr., and learning more about the art, make
plans to come to the annual Texas
SandFest, taking place each year
in April in Port Aransas! As Lucio
himself puts it, Port Aransas is "a

small town that loves its sand

sculptors!"

#### . . .

For those interested in trying out sand sculpting for themselves, Lucio recommends just going out there and playing in the sand. "You don't need a whole lot," he says, "My dad started with a hotel key card and I started with a knitting needle."



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Boat out of Port Aransas
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take you out to St. Jo's
Island, an undeveloped
stretch of beach for you
to explore.

Sit back

and

take in the

painted sky on

a relaxing sunset

cruise aboard the

Island Queen II

or the Mustana.

If you're "hooked"
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THE PARTY AND THE PERSON NAMED IN

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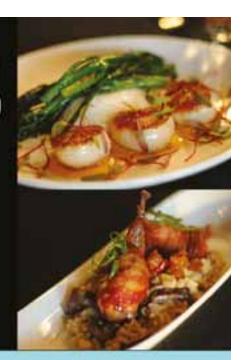


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### YOUR BEACH VACATION soundtrac The soundtrack to your beach vacation changes with sander races. Shorty's Place, known as Port A's "oldest and every visit. It floats out of venue front doors and onto the friendliest," is chock full of salty character, baseball caps, and breeze, where it mingles with the sounds of the gulls and pig memorabilia. Nights spent at these locations, surrounded crashing waves. You might hear a little tropical soul music by the people that make Port Aransas so special, are what songs are made of. They're what inspire these musicians to or the twang of some Texas country mixed in, because Port Aransas is a hotspot for Texas live music and a music-friendly stay and play here. community certified by the Texas Music Office. The musicians aren't the only ones captivated by the live Local musicians are the backbone of Port A's music scene, music scene, though. When you arrive, you'll immediately and they often find inspiration in their surroundings, in the want to throw on your dancing shoes—or flip flops, it is coast that has captivated them. This goes beyond just the an island after all—and sing along with the crowd. natural elements, though. Spunky venues full of eclectic And the recollections of those good times and good tunes characters abound in Port Aransas, like the Gaff Bar, where will become part of your beach vacation soundtrack. you can catch some tunes right after a lively round of belt



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### **ANSWERS FOR PAGES 47 & 48**





1. Spade angle

5. Flip flops size

9. Crab's eyes

2. Flamingo color

6. Watch color

10. Bucket removed

3. Princess's hair

7. Extra shoe

4. Crab removed

8. Parrot's hair



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