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the island guide

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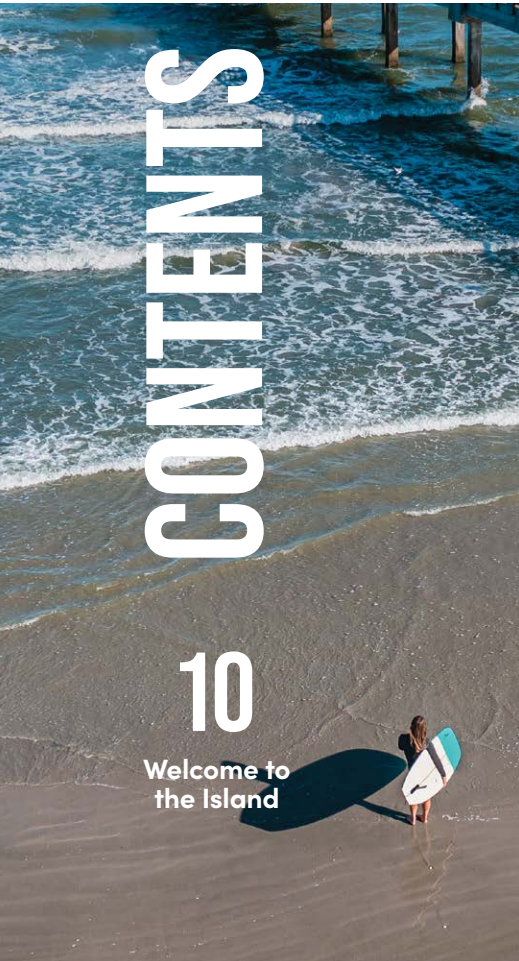


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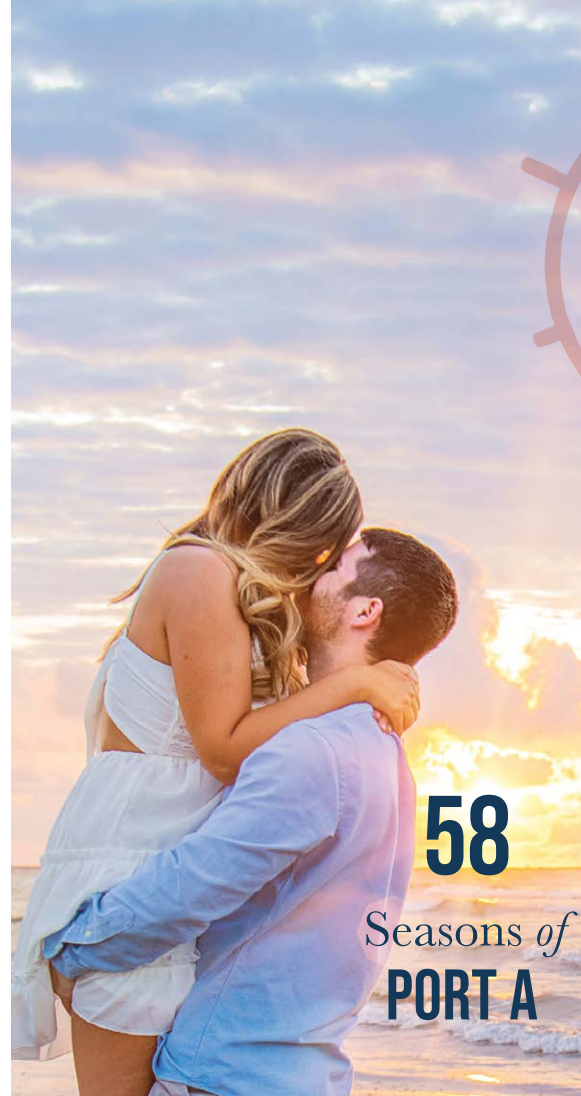
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PORT ARANSAS

the island guide

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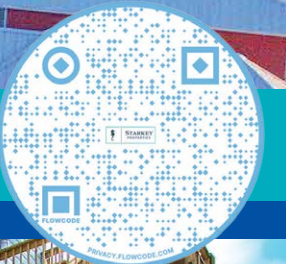
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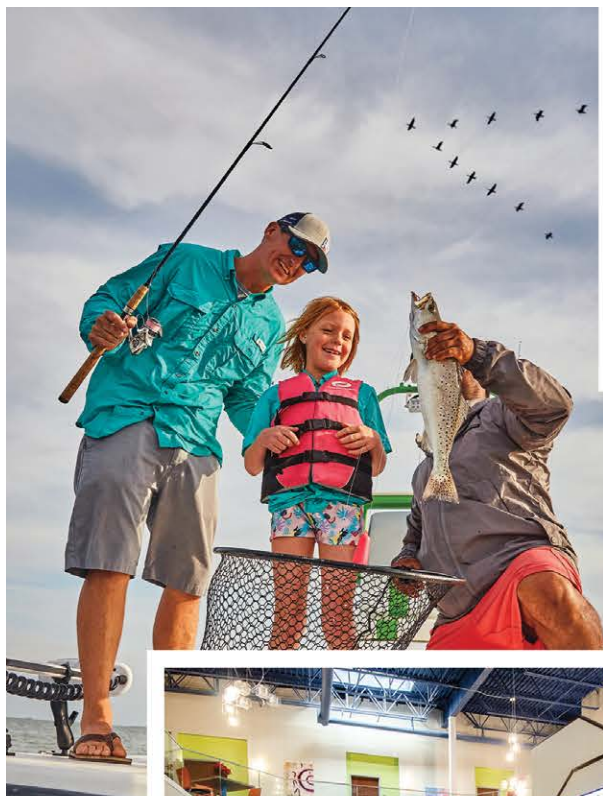
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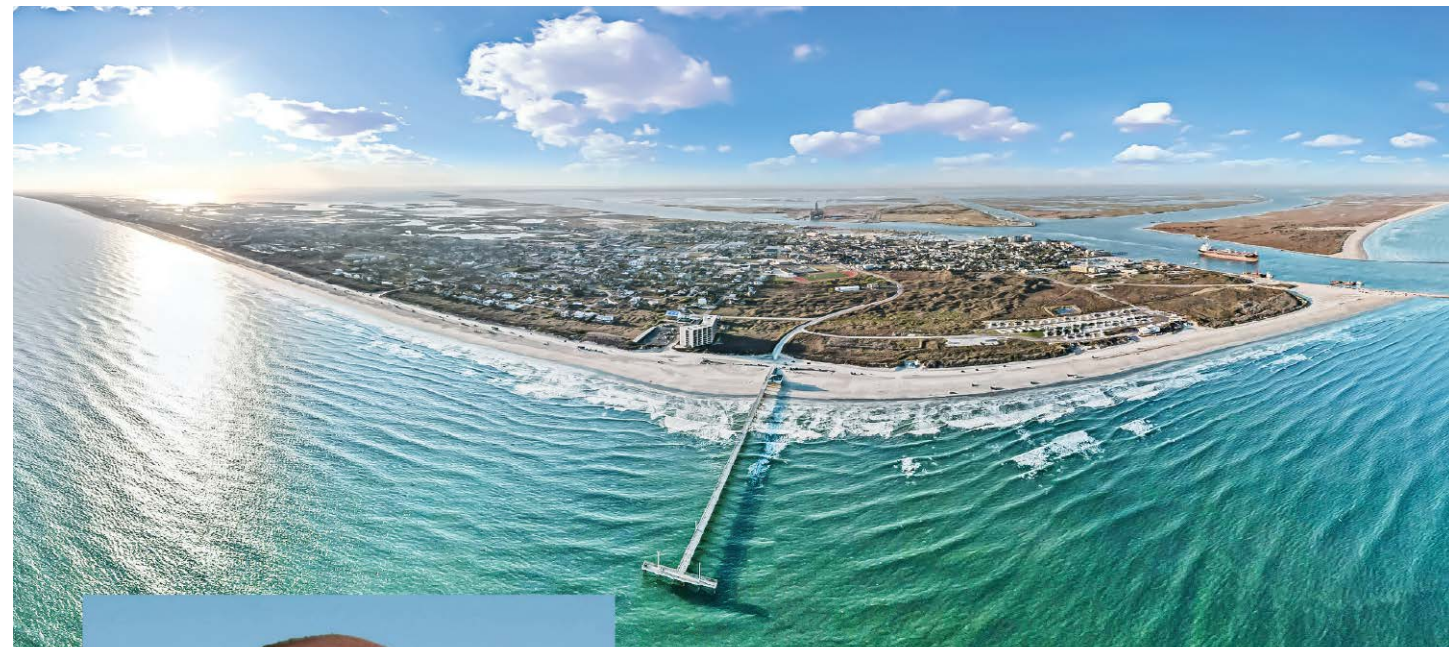
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Welcome to the island

The gulls sound out your welcome call while the waves usher in relaxing sea salt air. A beach cart trundles past, but slowly—you're on island time here. The grains of sand shift softly beneath you and you feel worlds away from to-do lists, from responsibilities.

Here, it's about you. Here, you feel carefree and boundless. 18 miles of uninterrupted shoreline will do that to a person. This sand feels warmly familiar. It all feels very natural, very right.

This is your escape, the one where your soul is buoyed and your traditions become anchored.

After a while, you will rise refreshed and take a quick jaunt into town for a bite to eat. Sitting down at a table, you will look out over gleaming rows of boats while the fresh seafood you ordered plays over your palate.

Perhaps you will move aside a drink umbrella to sip on a cocktail and nod your head to the band playing on the deck.

Maybe you will smile at the dolphins frolicking in the water.

Tonight, you will go to sleep feeling as if it's all been a dream. Only, in this dream you get to wake up tomorrow and curate a new coastal experience right here, where new adventures are inspired by timeless traditions.

Welcome to Port Aransas. Traditions anchor here.

Inspiring
new adventures
anchored by
timeless
traditions



Island Time



Crave Port A

The first thing that comes to mind when someone says “Port Aransas” is probably “beach.” There’s a strong case, though, for “great food” to be the thought that directly follows. From the very first cup of joe in the morning to the hearty dinner spread, Port A is your new dining destination. Families build traditions around returning every year to their tried-and-true favorites, like **Seafood & Spaghetti Works** pictured here, and for good reason.

Why not try this Port A classic yourself, or create your own traditions from the many other coastal cuisines? **Scan the code for a full list of dining options.**



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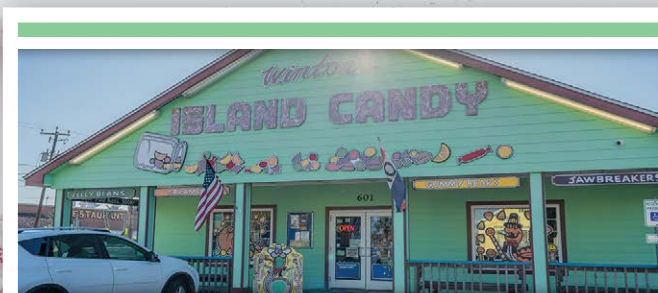
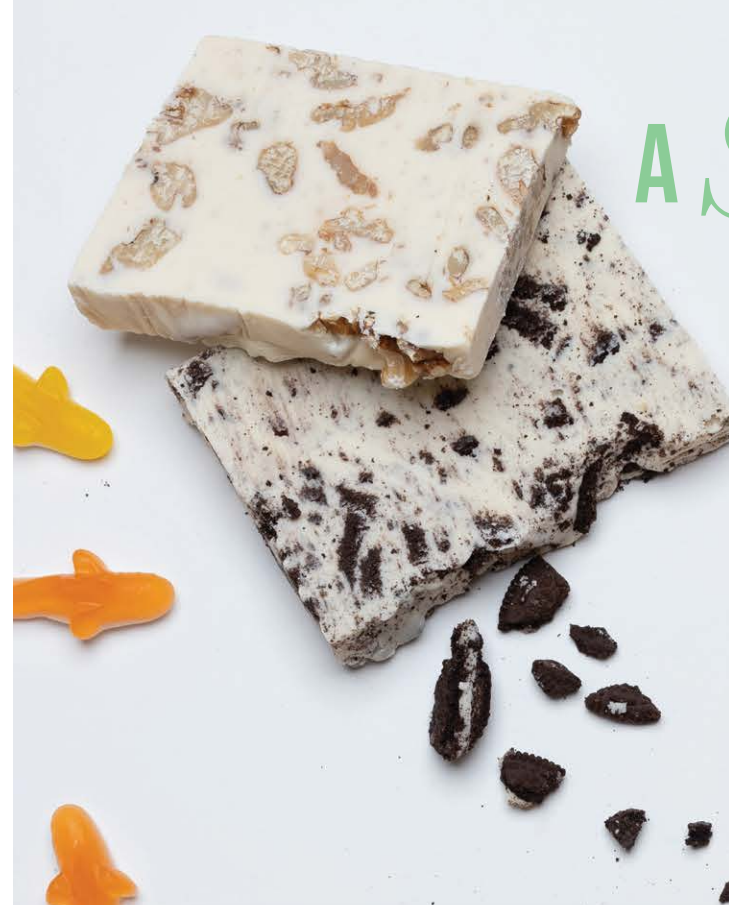
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A Sweet TRADITION

The mint green building of Winton's Island Candy is a welcome beacon for Port Aransas visitors, the cheery wooden signage a cue that now the fun can begin.

Walk inside and step into something timeless; here, everyone can experience the magic of being a kid in a candy shop. Indulge in a slab of creamy fudge or feel the sticky pull of caramel between your teeth.

Scoop saltwater taffy from the old Ford truck bed for the road, because no trip to Port A is complete without a stop (or two) at Winton's Island Candy.



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YOUR DINING DESTINATION

With miles of unrestricted beach and a booming fishing industry, it's no wonder that seafood is top of mind and the cuisine of choice for many visitors to Port Aransas.

The world-class chefs and inventive owners of Port Aransas restaurants have risen to the challenge—this isn't your average fish and chips spread.

From morning to night, Port A is the place where you can indulge your seafood craving.

So, take a look. Delve into each dish, and don't be surprised when you begin to crave Port A.

Brunch "Bites"

Start the day on a high note with a seafood-infused breakfast dish! Shrimp and grits may sound like an odd combination, but this "Third Coast Shrimp & Grits" from **Black Marlin Bar and Grill** will have you wondering why you didn't think to add shrimp to your morning rotation earlier. It's Southern comfort food with a seaside twist!



Elevated Coastal Cuisine

For a relaxed atmosphere with world-class food, reserve a mealtime for **Lisabella's** at Cinnamon Shore. This seafood entrée, like all the seafood dishes the restaurant has to offer, is delectable. The Sea Bass is encrusted in macadamia nuts and drizzled with a saffron and vanilla-infused sauce. It's more than a dinner—it's a delight.

Get Saucy

Irie's Island Food is known for their unique take on sauce. Whatever flavor you're craving, Irie's has a sauce—or several—to match. Avocado lime sauce is zesty and refreshing, while fire dragon sauce heats things up. A shrimp plate from Irie's, flanked by sides and a smattering of sauces, will add some zing to your seafood selection!



A Seafood Fusion

Seafood enchiladas: proof that seafood can be creative. This fusion of a traditional Mexican dish with crabmeat, shrimp, crawfish, or all three comes together exquisitely at **La Playa Mexican Grille**. Add to that the more than 70 tequilas available and you have the quintessential South Texas coastal meal.

This is How Port A Rolls

Let the good times roll...sushi roll, that is. That's right, Port A has sushi. The delectable selection from **BlueWater Cowboy Saloon** is often served in a sushi "boat," and the menu ranges from nigiri to sashimi and maki rolls. Feeling spicy? Go for the "Devil Roll." Looking for a friend? Get a "Waldo Roll." And yes, it's all this pretty.



The Unbuttoned Boil

For an unbuttoned take on seafood, tuck in your bib and order a classic seafood boil from **The Crazy Cajun Restaurant**. The Cajun spice will hit your nostrils and get your mouth watering as the boil is poured steaming hot directly onto your butcher paper-covered table. Shrimp, corn on the cob, sausage, crab legs—it's all there, savory and impossible to forget.

Next time you're craving the coast, why not bring it to you? This quick, easy poke bowl recipe from **Castaways Seafood & Grill** is the perfect tantalizing taste of Port A and will have you putting **Castaways** at the top of your dining list for when you finally make it back to the beach!

Castaways' Poke Bowl

- Serves 1**
Prep Time/Cook Time: 20 minutes
- 8 oz. sushi-grade yellowfin tuna
 - 2 oz. sambal chili
 - 2 oz. rice vinegar
 - 2 oz. soy sauce
 - 4 oz. jasmine white rice
 - ¼ cup arugula
 - 2 tbs. candied walnuts
 - 2 oz. fresh cored pineapple
 - ¼ sliced avocado
 - Spicy mayo to taste
 - Tuxedo sesame seeds to taste

Directions:

Marinate the yellowfin tuna. Cube the tuna into bite-sized pieces. Add diced tuna to a medium bowl with soy sauce, rice vinegar, and sambal chili. Gently toss to combine and set aside to marinate while you prep the rest of the ingredients.

Cook the rice. Cook white jasmine rice using your preferred method. You can also do this step ahead of time.

Assemble the bowls. Add cooked rice into a large bowl. Spoon the marinated tuna over the rice. Arrange the arugula, walnuts, pineapple, and avocado around it. Drizzle with spicy mayo and finish with a sprinkle of tuxedo sesame seeds. Enjoy!

BONUS TIP

Mix up a piña colada to go with your poke bowl. Use the pineapple shell from the recipe as your glass for an extra tropical flair!



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SEA TO TABLE



You've heard of farm to table dining, but how about sea to table? Take fresh to a whole new level with the most unique dining experience out there, "cook your catch," right here in Port Aransas, Texas. This is how you turn dinner into an event.

Here's what a day of cooking your catch might look like:

You start at one of the many fishing charters in town. Either you've sprung for an eight-hour trip, so you start bright and early, or you've opted for a shorter bay trip that allows for a more leisurely morning. Either way, you head out on the boat, rod in hand, ready to work for your dinner. Thanks to the expert guides on board, you catch enough for the whole family!

You're tired when you return, but ready to enjoy your bounty. So, you clean your fish—or use a fish cleaning service at **Deep Sea Headquarters**, **Port Aransas Fisherman's Wharf**, or **Dolphin Dock**—then pass the work off to a "Cook Your Catch" restaurant like **Fins Grill & Icehouse**.

As one of their signs says, "U hook 'em we cook 'em." **Fins Grill & Icehouse** is one of more than a dozen restaurants in Port A where you can give the staff your cleaned catch, then sit down to enjoy the full restaurant experience.

Choose how you want your fish prepared—blackened, fried, grilled, or the Port Aransas specialty, garlic fish—and the sides you want to go with it, just as you would if you ordered straight from the menu.

The only difference? You're proud to know that you truly "brought home the bacon."

SALTY STORIES

THE OWENS CREATED A LIFE THEY LOVE

The Owens, who own My Fun Port A, the parent company for Deep Sea Headquarters, Fins Grill & Icehouse, Tortuga's Saltwater Grill, MacDaddy's Family Kitchen, Jackfish Cart Rentals, Red Dragon Pirate Cruises, and the Scarlet Lady Dolphin Adventure, are champions of the Port Aransas community, and have created a life they love. Like any good story, though, it has been quite the journey to get there. Scan the code to get the full "salty story."



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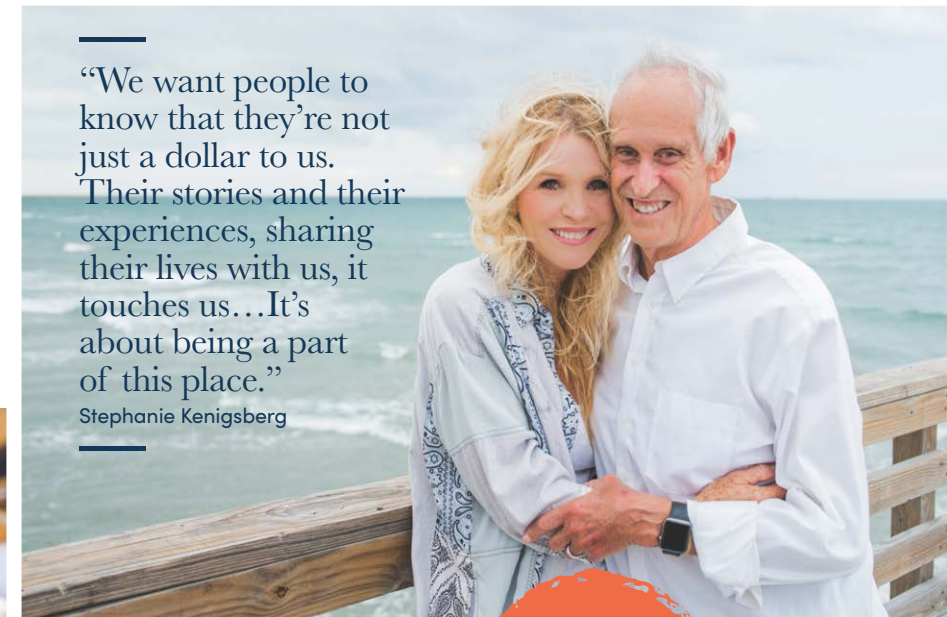
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A Family's FARE

Seafood & Spaghetti Works has been a "must-have" dining spot for visitors since its opening in 1979 more than 40 years ago. What started as a waterslide called "Texas Twister" quickly became a bustling family-owned restaurant where diners find togetherness with family and friends over a phenomenal meal. Owners Jay and Stephanie Kenigsberg reflect on what keeps people coming back.

"We want people to know that they're not just a dollar to us. Their stories and their experiences, sharing their lives with us, it touches us...It's about being a part of this place."

Stephanie Kenigsberg



traditions anchor here



"It's more than a meal to them. Every year their family went to Port Aransas...It was part of their childhood... We meant something to them...They're looking forward to passing what they felt were such good times onto their children."

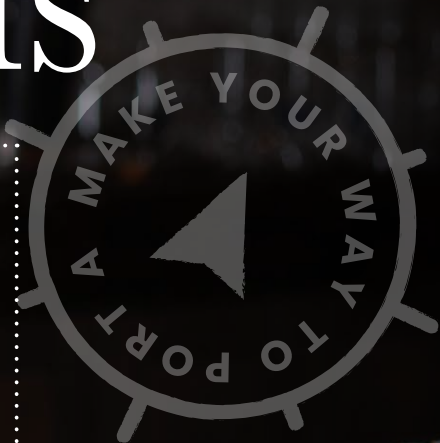
Jay Kenigsberg



Coastal Cocktails

Happy isn't just an hour when you're in Port Aransas! To prove it, local mixologists are constantly whipping up innovative craft cocktail recipes fitting every occasion and every personality.

There's a drink to go with your French toast at brunch and a refreshing tropical concoction to cap off your beach day. Scan the code for a full list of drink spots in Port A. Cheers!



Raise a Toast to Tradition

When you walk into **Roosevelt's at the Tarpon Inn**, know you're about to experience Port Aransas at its historical core. As you sip your tried-and-true cocktail or the glass of wine that goes exceptionally well with your meal, be sure to note your surroundings, because there lies the rich story of the restaurant and of **The Tarpon Inn** where it resides. **The Tarpon Inn** dates back to 1886, and in the 135 years since then has seen movie stars, many legendary fishermen, and even a president walk along its 200 foot long porches.

With a heritage like that, **Roosevelt's at the Tarpon Inn** doesn't need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to their drink menu. Tradition is heavy in every detail—in the care taken to use fresh, quality ingredients and the attention paid to find the perfect pairing for every patron's order. Classic favorites take on new life when tasted along the coast. **Roosevelt's** carefully-crafted Ocean Water Iced Tea, Lemon

Drop Martini, and Honey Bourbon Old Fashioned, all pictured here, are but a sample of that island revitalization. Couple these craft cocktails with a high-end selection of wine and an atmosphere conducive to storytelling, and **Roosevelt's at the Tarpon Inn** is the perfect place to celebrate a special occasion...and to raise a toast to tradition.



WHAT'S YOUR COASTAL COCKTAIL?

1.	How would your friends describe you?	a. Adventurous	b. Silly	c. Sweet	d. Laidback	e. Sophisticated	f. Carefree	g. Practical	h. Hilarious
2.	What's your favorite beach activity?	a. Surfing	b. Sandcastle building	c. Chatting with friends	d. Playing beach games	e. Barbecuing	f. Swimming	g. Laying out to get a tan	h. Beach volleyball
3.	What is your favorite Port A event?	a. Restaurant Week	b. Texas SandFest	c. First Friday at the Art Center	d. All the fishing tournaments	e. Wooden Boat Festival	f. Port A Live Music Fest	g. Whooping Crane Festival	h. Margarita Madness
4.	What brings you to Port Aransas?	a. The call of adventure	b. Childhood nostalgia	c. A best friend's birthday	d. The chance to relax, fishing pole in hand	e. Family tradition	f. The island life vibe	g. A remote work change of scenery	h. A bachelor/bachelorette party
5.	What's your favorite non-beach thing to do in Port A?	a. High-thrill adventure like skydiving	b. Cruise aboard the pirate ship	c. Shop till you drop	d. Listen to live music	e. Visit the Port Aransas Museum	f. Attend a sea turtle release	g. Watch boat building at Farley Boat Works	h. Dance the night away
6.	It's a Saturday night at home. What are you doing?	a. Trying something new	b. Playing board games	c. Movie night with friends	d. Grilling at home	e. Dinner reservations	f. Attending a music festival	g. Exploring a new museum exhibit	h. Going out for the night
7.	How would you describe your fashion sense?	a. Edgy	b. Youthful	c. Cute	d. Casual	e. Classic	f. Bohemian	g. Functional	h. Bold
8.	Which of these Port A animals fits your vibe?	a. The neon pink Roseate Spoonbill	b. Playful dolphins	c. Friendly seagulls	d. Beach pups	e. The regal Whooping Crane	f. Sea turtles	g. Boots the American Alligator	h. Feisty Sailfish

- If you got mostly A's, your coastal cocktail is **Trout Street Bar & Grill's Sparkler!**
- If you got mostly B's, your coastal cocktail is **Moby Dick's Ultimate Piña Colada!**
- If you got mostly C's, your coastal cocktail is **Stingrays Taphouse's Lemon Drop of Love!**
- If you got mostly D's, your coastal cocktail is **a beer from Port A Beer Hut!**
- If you got mostly E's, your coastal cocktail is **Tortuga's Saltwater Grill's Smoked Old Fashioned!**
- If you got mostly F's, your coastal cocktail is the **Mermaid Water from Lelo's Island Bar!**
- If you got mostly G's, your coastal cocktail is the **Black Marlin Bloody Mary!**
- If you got mostly H's, your coastal cocktail is **La Playa Mexican Grille's classic margarita!**

Did you get one of each or come up with a tie? You're a mixed bag, and you deserve to try all the cocktails!

TURN THE PAGE FOR THE ULTIMATE

COASTAL COCKTAIL

VISUAL GUIDE

Trout Street Bar and Grill's "The Sparkler" combines vodka, grenadine, and blue curaçao in one fun package. Like "The Sparkler," you're a firecracker who's not afraid to cause a stir. You seek adventure and are always willing to try new things.

If your result was the "Ultimate Piña Colada" from Moby Dick's Restaurant, you're a kid at heart! This cocktail, served in a pineapple and with silly straws galore, is the quintessential tropical drink. Who said growing up couldn't be fun?

The "Lemon Drop of Love" from Stingrays Taphouse is made with lemon-flavored Deep Eddy vodka, lemon juice, simple syrup, and the Tuaca brandy blend. If you drink the Lemon Drop of Love, you're a social butterfly who loves to live life to the fullest and spend time with your friends.

Scratch all the fancy stuff, you're a laidback person who just wants to enjoy a beer from Port A Beer Hut. You're all about having a chill time in the wooden bar swings at Beer Hut and making the most of the fishing scene in Port A. You might even be a little bit country.

The "Smoked Old Fashioned" from Tortuga's Saltwater Grill is a traditional cocktail with a twist, just like you. Likely, you've been coming to Port A for generations, you know all its history, and you plan to carry on the tradition of family-friendly good times for everyone.

If the "Mermaid Water" from Lelo's Island Bar was your result, you love the beach and everything about it. The waves, the breeze, the sea turtles, the sand dunes—you love it all. You were probably a mermaid in another life and want to live the island life so you can be close to nature.

The Bloody Mary bar at Black Marlin Bar & Grill is a practical person's dream come true. Top your Bloody Mary with choices ranging from shrimp to a corn dog to a grilled cheese sandwich. This cocktail has a dual purpose; it's a drink, but also a snack. You love to learn new things and have fun at the same time!

If you're a margarita drinker, you're sweet, sour, and bold. This classic margarita from La Playa Mexican Grille contains tequila made specifically for the restaurant; it's unique, and so are you! You're feisty, ready to crack a joke, and always the life of the party.

COASTAL COCKTAILS

MARGARITA *Madness*

There's nothing better to top off a day at the beach than a fresh, ice-cold margarita. While you may know March for the college basketball tournament March Madness, this island knows it for Margarita Madness! There can only be one "Best Margarita in Port Aransas," and every March, this town dedicates itself to finding it.

Margarita Madness is a bracket-style tournament that pits local bars and restaurants against each other in a salty, spicy, and sometimes sweet competition. Do you prefer frozen or on the rocks? Spicy or fruity? Tequila or mezcal? This is your opportunity to share your opinions with the world! Tasters vote for their favorites online as the rounds progress down from the "Salty Sixteen" to the "Top Two."

It wouldn't be right to talk about Margarita Madness without talking about the contestants. The 2021 competition was tough, and over 200,000 votes were cast. Key lime pie frozen's battled pineapple jalapeño refreshers, while fresca watermelons had it out with hibiscus-infused creations. Only one contestant rose through them all to the top. Hailing from **MacDaddy's Family Kitchen**, the winner of the 2021 Margarita Madness competition was the Hot & Prickly, a Tex-Mex style sweet and spicy margarita served on the rocks.

Who will the next champion be? You'll have to come to Port Aransas to find out.



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Music

Port A *Live* Music



The live music scene in Port Aransas is vivacious, dynamic, and has garnered this piece of the coast the official designation of "Texas Music Friendly Community."

This is the place where you can dance to the band on the stage, then sling back a beer at the venue's bar with the musicians right after. **For the full schedule of live music, use the code below and check back frequently!**



MEET



In the summer of 1982, Dave Maroney was invited to the parking lot of John Trice's "Island Surf 'n Sunwear" shop to play the guitar before an outdoor showing of a surf movie. Trice, a buddy of Maroney's, knew he played, and more importantly, knew Ray Summy, who also played guitar and was invited to the parking lot that night. The name wasn't new to Dave; the pair had gone to junior high together. The band formed quickly after that night—Ray was already connected with talented drummer Bill Purcell, Dave's brother Mike Maroney hopped on the bass, and that was the beginning of Aloha Dave & the Tourists.

The band wasn't always "Aloha Dave & the Tourists," though. Dave doesn't remember who exactly came up with the moniker that has stuck with them all this time, but he does recall a few others the band kicked around. "New Wave Dave and the Beach Band," he laughs.

The band's first big show was at a festival in Corpus Christi. The venue was packed, and the crowd was hyped for Aloha Dave & the Tourists. "I can still remember when we did our last song, we left the stage and we kind of ran out from under the tent and were like, 'Wow, can you believe that? It was really something,'" Dave says. They played that festival for 17 consecutive years. Another highlight for the band was when they played the Laredo Jalapeño Festival. Selena Quintanilla played the festival on Friday night, and Aloha Dave & the Tourists rocked

out on Saturday night. Since those early days, the band has released two albums, a self-titled vinyl album in 1986 and "It's Good to Be," a live album recorded at the Back Porch Bar in Port Aransas, in 2011.

Port Aransas has always held a special place in the hearts of the band members. "Port Aransas is a gem of friendliness and good vibes. You can feel it when you pull into town," Dave says. The entire group has been coming to the island their entire lives, both for surfing and to perform. There's plenty they love about playing here, but Dave tries to put it into words. "It's the atmosphere, that salt sea air, it's knowing when you pull into town that people are going to be smiling and friendly." Those smiling, friendly locals have invited the band into their lives. The group has played at school dances, then at those students' graduation parties, then a few years later at their weddings. Aloha Dave & the Tourists have been there to ring in good times and milestones, and even now have regulars who show up to every single show and dance like they always have.

From the way the band interacts onstage, and the way Dave speaks about them, it's clear these guys have been close for a long time. "I can't put it into words what it's been like all these years being onstage with them," Dave says of his bandmates. There has never been a band argument or artistic difference. They don't even have a setlist. Each member is free to innovate as they go, with full confidence his bandmembers will be there to back him up.

This year, in 2022, the band celebrates their 40-year anniversary—same four band members, same laidback vibes, same love of the beach.



traditions
anchor here



SHORTY'S THE OLDEST AND FRIENDLIEST

An island like this one doesn't come without its salt. It's in the water, in the air, and, perhaps most notably, in the characters who populate it.

There's perhaps no better example of the "salt of Port A" than **Shorty's Place**. This low-slung, unassuming building has been the landmark bar and live music venue of salty Port Aransas locals and visitors since 1946. Take one look around **Shorty's Place**, or have one conversation with a faithful bartender, and you'll feel it. Every inch of the place has a story to tell.

Floor to ceiling, **Shorty's** is laden with the hallmarks of tradition. Baseball caps hang in droves, the calling cards of visitors past who have tacked up their legacies to the ceiling. Over the bar are a rainbow of koozies waiting for their regulars to pick them out. Pink pig décor fills one wall—the original owner was a fan and a "pig party" is thrown each year in memoriam.

Wander onto the patio of **Shorty's Place** and you'll find out why it's a favorite of music-lovers and musicians alike. The atmosphere is homegrown and relaxed, beloved. This is the type of place where husbands have met wives and celebrated anniversaries, where 21st birthdays have been celebrated followed by 50th birthdays 29 years later. You name it, **Shorty's** has seen it.

A litany of well-known artists has graced the patio, including Willie Nelson, Patsy Jones, Rusty Wier, and Larry Joe Taylor.

Ask any local musician and they'll fondly remember jam sessions of seasons past, or you'll get an "Oh yeah, I'm playing there next weekend!"

They'll ask you to come on out, and trust, you'll want to listen. Sprinkle some salt on your vacation and visit **Shorty's Place**, the oldest and friendliest in Port A.



PORT A

Where Musicians Come To Play

Island tunes drift in on the breeze and lead to Bron's Backyard, where kids toss bean bags while parents relax on swings. Live Texas country music lures onlookers to two-step on the dance floor at Shorty's Place. The crowd at Treasure Island is animated, rocking out to the sounds of the band. Most nights a week, you'll find a plethora of live music options like these across the island. Even the docks of a marina or the shores of the beach are known to sport a musician or two. Why is there so much music in Port Aransas? This town fosters a supportive community that entices musicians to come play, and stay, in Port A.

It's not uncommon to see musicians enjoying other bands or hanging out with the crowd after a set. Some of these artists have come here since childhood; they have known the venue owners and bartenders their entire lives. Others are just passing through, soaking in the scene while they can. Still more are not from here originally, but came to be inspired, then stayed to experience the island life.

A celebration of this vibrant community comes during Port A Live Music Fest, an annual weekend-long festival. It's a weekend stacked with entertainment, one where you can let loose and simply enjoy the talent. The festival isn't solely about the music, though—it takes place all over town and showcases the spunky venues that make Port A such an enjoyable place for artists to play.

At the kickoff of the 2021 Port A Live Music Fest, Port Aransas had an exciting announcement to make: the city officially earned the designation of "Music Friendly Community" from the Texas Music Office. Port Aransas passed rigorous requirements to earn the title, which according to the Texas Music Office, means "certified communities are serious about attracting and developing music industry growth." This community of artists will continue to thrive and grow, visitors will continue to relish in the live music performances, and all will know why Port A is the place where musicians come to play.



Robert Earl Keen

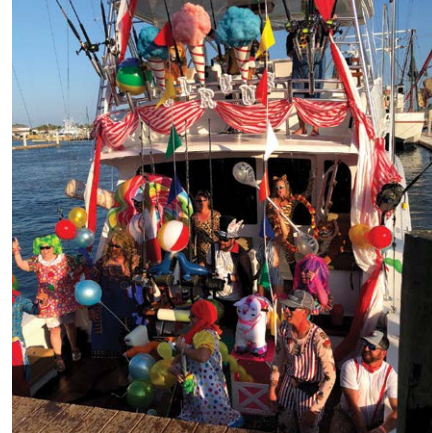
High Stakes Tight Lines

Port Aransas is called the “Fishing Capital of Texas” for good reason. Here, you never have to go far to wet your line. Cast off from Horace Calwell Pier, from the jetty, or go all in and book a fishing charter.

Charter trips can have you exploring the bay or heading offshore for days at a time. Hire a guide to indulge your competitive side and fish a tournament. **To see all the fishing options in Port Aransas, scan the code below!**



Fishing



AN INSIDE LOOK AT FISHING TOURNAMENTS

In this town, sportfishing is big business, and fishing tournaments are the holy grail. They're competitive, they're impressive, and they embody sports luxury. Here is a glimpse inside the high-stakes world of Port Aransas fishing tournaments.

You can find anglers preparing for tournaments all over the city, including **Fisherman's Wharf, Deep Sea Headquarters, Island Moorings, Dolphin Dock, Virginia's on the Bay**, and the city marina. Lines of offshore fishing boats form a gleaming, imposing front on the wharf. Performance shirts with boat photos and names in script fonts denote which anglers fish for which team.

Registration dinners preceding the tournament are crab boils or catered dinner courses, a hearty start to what is often multiple days a hundred miles offshore. Boat owners place money in pots, betting on their teams to win. Keepers are measured and video catch-and-releases reviewed when the boats return, and the anglers celebrate in legendary style, with cheers, drinks, and live music.

DEEP SEA ROUNDUP

The island hosts over 20 fishing tournaments every summer, and Deep Sea Roundup is the granddaddy of them all. This tournament is among the world's oldest saltwater tournaments, boasting a storied tradition dating back over 80 years. It's the most classic fishing tournament out there, and over the years has seen traditions form—generations of families return year after year to fish Deep Sea Roundup. All year long, kids look forward to the piggy perch competition at Roundup that has inspired countless new generations of anglers.

TEXAS LEGENDS BILLFISH TOURNAMENT

With a name like that, it's no wonder the Texas Legends tournament is one of three legs that make up the Texas Triple Crown Billfish Series. This premier billfish tournament is dedicated to "all Texas fishermen, past and present, who have made a difference in Big Game Fishing." Over radio, the group is united in prayer to remember that dedication during the Blessing of the Fleet, a centuries old fishing tradition that has made its way to Port A. With over half a million dollars in prize money at stake, the blessing is more than appreciated. When the prayer concludes, the gathered crowd onshore cheers as a cannon is fired and the boats head on their way.



TEXAS WOMEN ANGLERS TOURNAMENT

A departure from the more formal tradition of Deep Sea Roundup and Texas Legends, the Texas Women Anglers Tournament is most well-known for its weigh-in tradition of elaborate themed costumes and boat décor. At this tournament, only women are allowed to reel in the fish, and participants spend months making a game plan both to fill the box and to win the contest for "best decorated." Boats come in hot decorated from bow to stern with anglers donning intricate costumes and carrying props. At the weigh in, balloons abound and beach balls fly between the competing boats and the huge group watching the show. At Texas Women Anglers Tournament, the more over-the-top, the better.

BILLFISH PACHANGA

The party atmosphere at the Billfish Pachanga tournament is palpable. A stage, white vendor tents, and tables transform the parking lot of **Virginia's on the Bay**; the whole area is reserved for the event and decked out with sombrero-shaped balloons and entire balloon arches. The registration gift is often along the lines of a Yeti bucket stocked with Costa hats and fishing gear, and the raffles are the stuff of fishermen's dreams. Spectators line the ship channel in droves to watch the boats streak out at the boom of the shotgun start. The boats won't return for two days, but a celebration awaits them complete with an open bar, private concert, and awards for winning catches.

These highlighted tournaments are but a snippet of the full season, a sliver of a look into fishing at its finest. They are one manifestation of the fishing culture Port A was built on, and to that, may you raise a toast to tournaments and to, as the good luck saying goes, "tight lines!"





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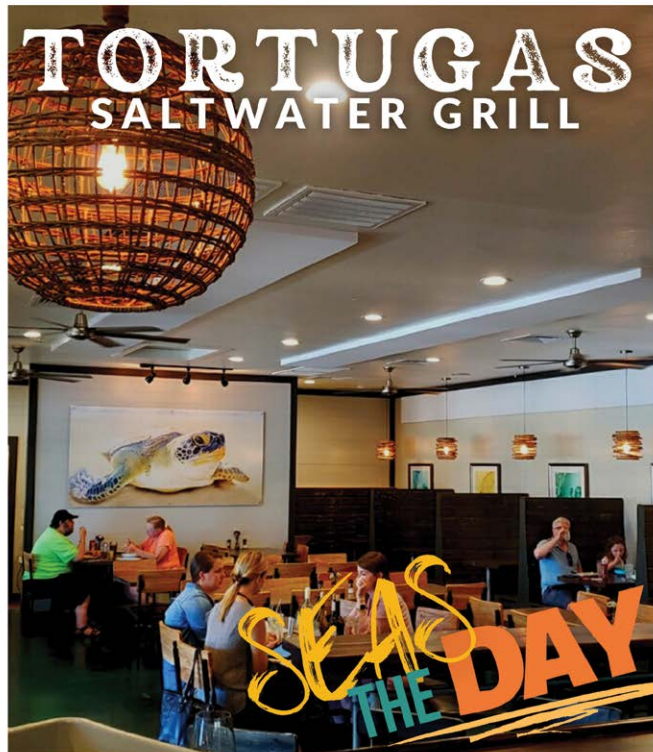


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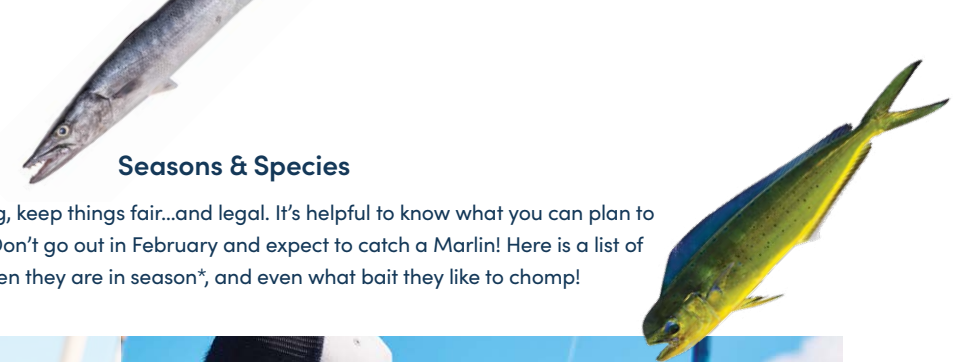
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FISHING IN PORT ARANSAS

Perhaps you're not ready to commit to a tournament, or you'd just prefer your fishing with lower stakes. Port Aransas is the "Fishing Capital of Texas" for a reason, and tournaments are not your only option. Here's all the need-to-know information to prep you for fishing the Gulf and bays of Port Aransas.

Traditions & Superstitions

Anglers are known to be one of the most superstitious groups out there. You'll feel better about entering that world if you don't immediately make a faux pas that costs you, or the whole group, a great catch. Here are some of the most common superstitions:

- **Place a pineapple in the fighting chair at the start of an offshore trip.** This spunky yellow fruit is known to keep the sun shining and get the fish biting.
- **Red skies at morning, sailors take warning.** It's one of the first things they teach you at captain's school. If that sky is red, go back to bed!
- **Put money in the reel.** Talk about putting your money where your mouth is, some anglers wrap big bills in the spool. If the fish takes enough line, the money is lost, but you've hooked a catch! Not too keen on spending that kind of cash? Kiss a quarter and toss it in before you cast.
- **Pour one out for the fish!** Toss a shot of your favorite vodka or an offering from your midmorning snack into the water and let the good luck ensue.
- **Above all else, no bananas on board.** Don't bring an actual banana, don't bring banana bread, don't eat one for breakfast—unless, of course, you wish terrible luck on the entire boat.



Seasons & Species

When you go fishing, keep things fair...and legal. It's helpful to know what you can plan to catch and when. Don't go out in February and expect to catch a Marlin! Here is a list of species, when they are in season*, and even what bait they like to chomp!

Amberjack
May–August
Live Bait, Jig.

Barracuda
Year-Round
Live Blue Runner,
Ballyhoo, Lure.

Dolphin (Mahi Mahi)
July–October

Grouper
December–April
Large Whole Fish.

Kingfish
Year-Round
Ribbon Fish,
Cigar Minnow,
Lure.

Ling (Cobia)
April–October
Live Perch,
Ribbon Fish,
Sardine, Jig.

Marlin
July–September
Ballyhoo, Lure,
Live Tuna.

Pompano
October–April
Shrimp, Fishbites.

Red Snapper
(offshore)
June–August
Live Perch, Squid.

Sailfish
July–September
Lure, Ballyhoo.

Spanish Mackerel
May–September
Spoon, Live Mullet.

Tarpon
Live bait.

Swordfish
Year-Round
Squid.

GULF FISHING



Redfish
Year-Round
Shrimp, Mullet, Lure.

Speckled Trout
Year-Round
Shrimp, Perch, Lure.

Drum
Year-Round
Shrimp, Crab.

Flounder
Year-Round
Shrimp, Lure,
Finger Mullet.

Sheepshead
January–April
Live shrimp,
Ghost shrimp.

BAY FISHING



* Seasons subject to change based on Texas Parks & Wildlife regulations

PRACTICE MAKES A PERFECT CATCH

Now that you know when you're going, what you're fishing for, and have purged bananas from your breakfast menu, it's time to book a charter! Port Aransas is brimming with experienced captains who will make sure you catch those fish regardless of your experience level. Private charters, like **Pirates of the Bay Fishing Charters**, provide everything you need to meet your goals, whether that be to land a

prize trophy fish or just to have some family fun out on the water. Choose anything from a short day trip to a multiday excursion. Want to dip a toe into the tournament world but not ready to do it on your own yet? **Hot Spot Fishing Charters** loves to fish tournaments and has all the experience to turn your first tournament into a tradition you return for year after year.



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KIMBERLY ZAHN WINTON

ON FAMILY, FISHING, AND THE HALL OF FAME



Tournament fishing isn't all trophy fish and oversized checks. For some anglers, like Kimberly Zahn Winton, fishing is in their blood, and competition is the natural extension of a heritage extending back generations.

Her parents and grandparents were longtime Port Aransas fishermen, and Kim fished her first tournament when she was just two years old—Deep Sea Roundup's Piggy Perch Contest. Kim would go on to win that contest several times, and by the time she aged out she was already spending much of her time volunteering, not just for Deep Sea Roundup, but at many of the tournaments hosted in Port A.

Even now, Kim doesn't go without the family and mentors who kicked off her love of the sport. This past year, Kim fished several tournaments, including the Ladies' Powder Puff Tournament out of Woody's Sports Center, with her

mother, daughter, best friend, and son's girlfriend. Fishing and family are inextricably linked. Beyond her own family, Kim has watched the fishing community develop over the years. She tells a story of three buddies who fished together in their youth, all now captains and with quite the friendly rivalry. "The fishing is what everybody loves," Kim explains, "the tournaments are just a bonus."

Kim is particularly fond of Deep Sea Roundup, which she helps plan through the Port Aransas Boatmen's Association. Of the 85-year-running tournament, Kim says, "It's about tradition for us. Most people come back, and they fish with their families, and it's generations. We've had five generations of family fishing it." Kim has watched as families return to Port A every year with grandkids, then great grandkids.

Kim saw her longstanding dedication to the sport come to fruition when she was inducted into the Port Aransas Boatmen's Association Hall of Fame in 2021. When asked about what the title meant to her, Kim said, "It's an honor because of the past Hall of Famers. A lot of them are great mentors." Kim is among the ranks of PABA anglers as equally passionate about giving back as they are about fishing.



SALTY STORIES

KIMBERLY ISN'T THE ONLY WINTON WITH A STORY.

From tournaments to taffy, this family is behind visitor traditions that span generations and reverberate through the island community. Watch the full story here.



Tournament traditions vary by boat and by angler, but as for Kim and her family? They reminisce. "When we're out on the water, we talk about our experiences through the Roundup and other tournaments, and just the good times we have," she says. The past year was particularly special for reasons beside the Hall of Fame induction—the family was able to add Kim's grandchild to their tournament team for the first time.

Kim urges visitors, "If they don't want to fish right away, just come watch." Watching the excitement of a tournament weigh in, seeing Kim in her element laughing and chatting on marina docks with family and friends, it's easy to understand her passion.

Anchor your new fishing tradition here in Port A.

Island Style



Pick up a pair of performance shorts for your offshore fishing trip at a local outfitter, or swing by a boutique for a trendy date night outfit. Need gifts? Port Aransas has that too.

Shopping sprees in Port A offer a prime taste of the coast. These are the souvenirs that will last you far beyond the beach. This is how you shop, island style. Use the code below for a full list of shops in Port A.



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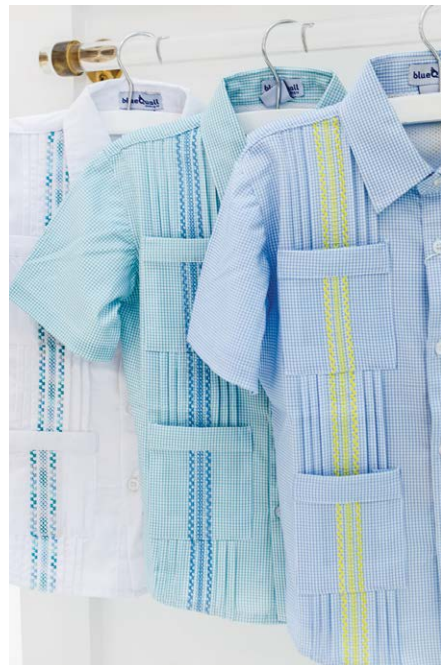
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Fully stocked with stylish and practical products from small local businesses, this beach bag will have you feeling confident on your beach day. The items may come and go with the Port Aransas seasons but filling your bag at local shops is always the way to go. Take a peek inside!



Revitalize your skin during a hot beach day with the Eminence Lime Refresh Tonic from **Balinese Spa & Boutique**. Toss it in a cooler and refresh as needed!



MANDA Organic Sun Paste from **Balinese Spa & Boutique** is not only SPF 50, but also completely organic and kid safe.



This wonder towel from **Indigo Eclectic** comes in multiple patterns, but all feature a fun fringe and sand-free experience.



Salteez Beer Salt Strips from **Bella Bella Boutique** quickly adhere to any cup. Just remember, no glass on the beach!

These TKEES slides from **Coastal Closet** make beach shoes chic and easily transition to daytime wear.



Klean Freak body wipes from **Jackfish Cart Rentals** are individually packaged, made of all natural ingredients, and make beach cleanup a breeze.

A water-resistant Consuela bag by **Stephanie's Stuff** makes the perfect foundation for a "packed" beach day!



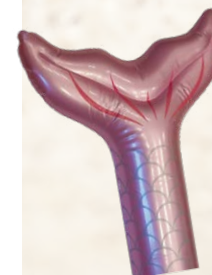
Shield yourself from the sun in style with a painted hat from **Bella Bella Boutique**.



These yellow WeeFarers sold by **Georgia's A Children's Boutique** are not only tiny and adorable, but also have UVA and UVB ratings for maximum protection.



Polarized shades are key to enjoying a sunny day on the beach, and these Bajio sunglasses, sold at **Fisherman's Wharf**, more than fit the bill.



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BrüMate insulated drinkware from **BlueWater Cowboy Mercantile** keeps your drinks colder for longer. Choose from full bottles, tumblers, martini glasses, and more!



Pro tip: Looking for what NOT to pack in your beach bag? Save the space and leave the chairs at home. Beach setups from **361 Blue or Bron's Beach Rentals** range from chairs and umbrellas to full-blown palapas and are just one quick rental away!

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Beach by Matisse slide sandals by
BlueWater Cowboy Mercantile

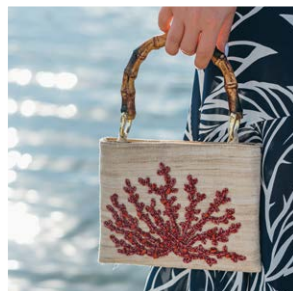
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Susan Shaw gold bracelet by Bella
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Susan Shaw pearl bracelets by
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GIGI PIP hat by Balinese Boutique
Tiana NY beaded bag by
Indigo Eclectic

Location: Roberts Point Park



Lounge on the Beach

Lilly Pulitzer swimsuit by Coastal Closet
Lilly Pulitzer cover-up by Coastal Closet
Lilly Pulitzer earrings by Coastal Closet
Hat Attack hat by Coastal Closet
Tula Blue necklaces by Tula Blue, sold at
Bojon's Surf Shop
Tula Blue wrap bracelets by Tula Blue,
sold at Bojon's Surf Shop
Abrazo Style bag by Jo D's Etc.
Corkys sandals by Island
Woman Boutique
Wonder Towel by Indigo Eclectic

Location: Port Aransas beach
Beach Setup: Cinnamon Shore



style currents

Out on the Island

Barok dress by Roam
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Location: Bron's Backyard



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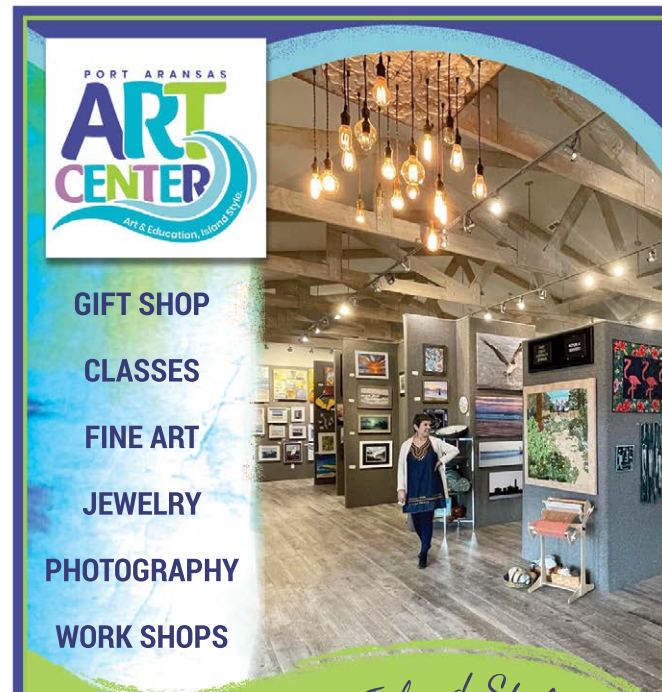


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Island Inspiration

In Port Aransas, your lodging isn't just where you sleep. It's the beach house where you bond, the hotel room where you reminisce, and the balcony where you celebrate. Inspiration comes easy here, but you don't have to leave it all in the sand when you go home.

Invoke the feeling of Port A by creating a coastal corner in your own home, filled with unique pieces from local interior decorators. In the meantime? **Start planning your vacation by scanning the code to see all accommodations!**



The home pictured here is the **Beauty & the Beach**, available for your next vacation from **My Port A Getaway**.



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Design Your Coastal Corner

Nothing compares to waking up in a gorgeous beach house, sun streaming in through high windows and the beach waiting outside.

That feeling of invigoration forms traditions; it's what draws people back to Port Aransas time and time again. To encapsulate that feeling, to bottle up the coast and take it back home, is next to impossible. If anyone has a shot at it though, it's the talented interior decorators that live in Port Aransas.

Susan Castor, founder of **Susan Castor Collection**, explains her passion for coastal decorating, "People are here for family, friends, and fun or peace and solace."

Here are some tips from local designers to jumpstart you on your journey to create your very own coastal corner.



Visualize Your Space

How much space do you have to dedicate to your oasis? Maybe it's a master bedroom or master bathroom, where you can channel the rest and relaxation of the beach. Perhaps it's a sunroom, where you can stand in the sun and envision a deck overlooking the water. It could be as small as a hallway, but carefully considering the function of your space will impact how you can implement coastal décor. A rope mirror might work well in a bathroom, but not an outdoor space. A shell chandelier would function gorgeously in a dining room or even a hallway but would quickly overwhelm a bedroom.

Colors & Textures

Designing a beach-inspired space begins with the color palette. Stick with colors found in the natural surroundings of Port Aransas—a wide

range of blues, some greens, neutral sand colors, and a healthy dose of white. The color blue has a calming effect that will mimic the tranquility felt by the sea, and shades of it can be used on anything from cabinets to textiles. If a space utilizes fixtures, consider using brass rather than nickel to warm up the interior and harken to mariner days of yore.

Another building block of a coastal space is texture. Sandy stretches, nautical instruments, and dune grasses all signal that you're on the coast, and those textures can be replicated in an interior space. Incorporate grasscloth wallpaper for a muted, but interesting wall texture. Add furniture made locally of rattan, or carved wood that's reminiscent of driftwood. Smaller décor moments that feature wrapped rope, an accent of seashells, or mother-of-pearl add texture that draws the eye without overwhelming the senses.

Finishing Touches

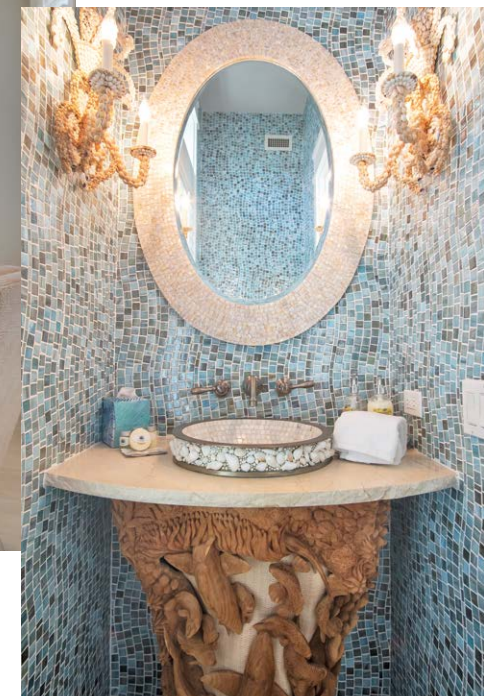
Capturing the spirit of the island often lies in the little things. Personal details and finishing touches can make the difference in whether or not your space becomes the seaside haven you intend. Hang up a cleat coat rack as a simple homage to boating or display a one-of-a-kind coral specimen to draw attention. Want to make things personal? Collect seashells on the shores of Port Aransas and display them in a glass bowl—it's aesthetically pleasing and a talking point for entertaining. Procure work from a local artist as the hallmark piece of your room, or book a family photo session with a local photographer and display the results on a driftwood shelf. Details like these individualize a room and take a space from "coastal corner" to *your* coastal corner.

What really completes a room, though? Herb Lancaster of **H. Lancaster Co.** says, "The people! The space would go untouched and just look lifeless without them. Truly, people are the final touch to any space."

Feeling inspired? When you're ready to take the next step, book a consultation with a local designer, or stop in one of the many interior décor shops around town!



The home pictured here is the **Palmilla Pearl**, located in **Palmilla Beach Resort & Golf Community** and available for your next vacation through **Turnkey Vacation Rentals**! The home was decorated by **Susan Castor Collection**.





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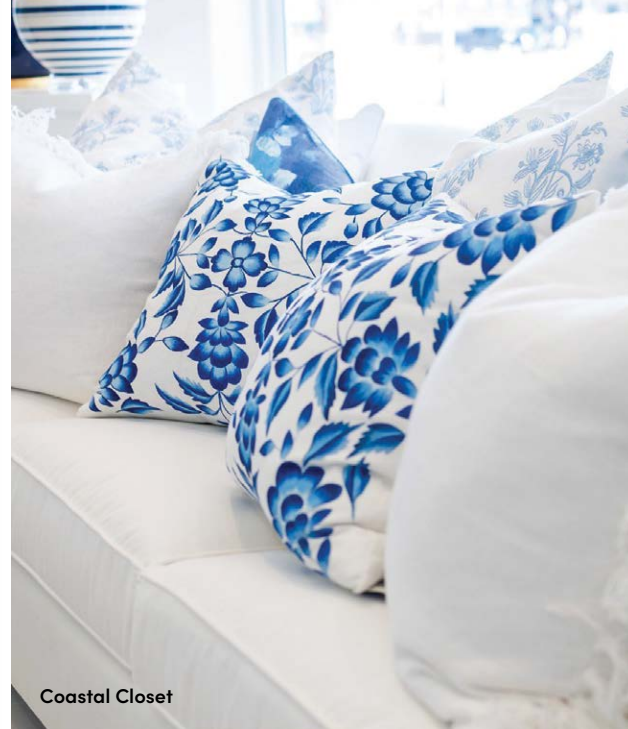
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Lisa Mayo Interiors



Coastal Closet

“Textures can formalize or deformalize a space. The use of natural textures and finishes make a space feel more casual and coastal: seagrass and hemp rugs, woven wood blinds, fine shiplap interiors, etc.”

Susan Castor



Lisa Mayo Interiors

Get The Look

“You always want to have three colors in mind when coordinating a space.”

Herb Lancaster



Brandon Lafayette Homes



Coastal Closet



H. Lancaster Co.



My Coastal Home



H. Lancaster Co.

“To make a room come together you really need to take into consideration the textures in the space, the colors in the space, and the lighting. All of these are very important when pulling a space together and making it cozy.”

Herb Lancaster



Lone Star Taste



Lone Star Taste

Susan Castor Collection

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Time and again, people visit Port Aransas only to depart on the ferry wishing they had just a bit more time. Their eyes are opened to that which lies beyond the beach, to the adventure that awaits. In just one more day, you could land the catch of a lifetime.

In one more day, you could ride the waves like never before. In one more day, you could vault off the back of a boat to take flight high above the water. So, what will it be? What else could you do if you just added one day for adventure? Chart your own adventure now!



Do you want to take a dip in the water or do you prefer your adventures keep you dry?

Is the whole family coming along or is this an adults-only affair?

I'll get wet; That's what towels are for!

Are you an adrenaline junkie or are you looking for something more low key?



Chill is good

We've got the kids!

You've chosen **Red Dragon Pirate Cruises, No. 4** on adventure map



Just us this time.

Do you have your sea legs?



Keep me on land, please.



Of course I do!

You've chosen **The Dolphin Express, No. 10** on adventure map



You've chosen **Palmilla Beach Resort & Golf Community, No. 5** on adventure map



I'm ready to go!

Teach me!

You've chosen **BoardHouse Surf & Skate, No. 9** on adventure map



You've chosen **Texas Surf Camps, No. 8** on adventure map



Let me drive.

You've chosen **Gettin' Salty, No. 6** on adventure map



I want to ride.

You've chosen **Chute 'Em Up, No. 7** on adventure map



Are you along for the ride or do you want to be in control?

The higher the thrill, the better.

I'd rather be indoors.

Are you looking for hands-on adventure or do you want to take a more laidback approach?

I'll get my hands dirty!

You've chosen **Fire It! Ceramics, No. 3** on adventure map



I'm more of an observer

Give me feelings!

You've chosen **Port A Art Center, No. 1** on adventure map



Give me facts!

You've chosen **Port A Museum, No. 2** on adventure map



Are you a history buff or more the artsy type?

TURN THE PAGE FOR **ADVENTURE MAP** AND FULL ADVENTURE DESCRIPTIONS ON PAGES 80 AND 81.



1

You've chosen to add a day for the **Port Aransas Art Center**! Artists are drawn to Port Aransas from all mediums and walks of life. Spend an afternoon at the art center and you'll see the coastal inspiration come to life with Gulf-inspired exhibits that change monthly, plus a robust curation you can view all year long.



2

You've chosen to add a day for the **Port Aransas Museum**! Port Aransas isn't just a beach destination; it's a town rich in history. Pop in to the Port Aransas Museum for a taste of what Port A was like when the horses from which Mustang Island gets its name roamed the island, or to see photos from when locals helped President Franklin D. Roosevelt reel in a tarpon.



3

You've chosen to add a day to make your own souvenir! Let your creativity loose at **Fire It! Ceramics**, where you can choose from an array of mugs, décor, and more to paint exactly how you'd like! Make sure you plan this one on the front end of your trip so you have plenty of time to pick up your creation and take it home, or let Fire It! ship it straight to you.



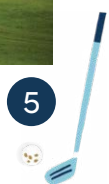
4

You've chosen to add a day for a "shiver me timbers" good time aboard **Red Dragon Pirate Cruises**! This rowdy pirate adventure is fun entertainment for the whole family. Cruise along the channel and take in the scenic views while also enjoying an interactive show chock full of sword fighting, swashbuckling humor, cannon fire, and more!



5

You've chosen to add a day for golfing! Tee off at **Palmilla Beach Resort & Golf Community's** 12 hole course along the Port Aransas beach, complete with coastal dunes. Hop on an electric golf board and zip through the three hole "Loop," or leisurely work your way through the nine holes of regulation play on Texas' only true Links-style golf course.



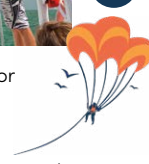
6

You've chosen to add a day for jet skiing with **Gettin' Salty or Barefoot Water Sports**! Feel the spray of the saltwater on your skin and the whip of the wind against your face on a two-or-three-seater jet ski. Explore the bays of Port A on the water or make a stop at surrounding islands to comb for seashells or soak in the sun. If you're lucky, you might even spot dolphins!



7

You've chosen to add a day for parasailing! See Port Aransas from new heights when you book a parasailing trip with **Chute 'Em Up**. Propelled by a speed boat and buoyed by a brightly-colored parasail wing, parasailing will get your adrenaline pumping as you soar high over the water. This is the exhilarating, high-thrill experience of a lifetime.



8

You've chosen to add a day to learn to surf! **Texas Surf Camps** has 17 years of experience instructing surfers of all ages and skill levels. Choose from private or group lesson options and you'll be on your way to catching those waves! If you're looking to branch out, Texas Surf Camps also offers stand-up paddleboarding lessons. Even better? All equipment is provided!



9

You've chosen to add a day for surfing! Don't bother packing your board, because **BoardHouse Surf & Skate** is a one-stop shop for all your watersport needs. Surfboards, skimboards, and stand-up paddleboards are all among the rentals at BoardHouse. The shop is also a surf and skate outfitter, so go ahead and peruse for apparel, equipment, and whatever else might jumpstart your adventure. Just one quick stop and you'll be off to catch the waves!



10

You've chosen to add a day for a fishing or boating cruise aboard **The Dolphin Express**! This massive 95-foot boat will make your trip a leisurely breeze. Reel in seasonal fish while you mingle with other anglers. Not a big fisherman? Don't worry. Hop aboard one of many boats around Port A that offer dolphin watching or sunset cruises that add a hint of romance to your cruise.



Texas SandFest

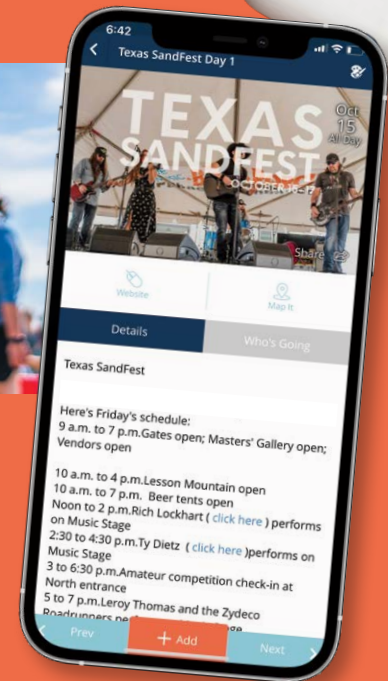
Not Your Ordinary Sandcastles

You stand on the beach in Port Aransas, Texas. Waves crash in the background as you watch an artist coax the form of a human being from the mountain in front of them. Even made of sand, you can see the emotion on the figure's face. You snap a photo and move down the beach to a pair of happily snoozing sand elephants, their leathery wrinkles becoming more defined with each flick of the sculptor's tool. This is **Texas SandFest**, and this is your new family tradition.

Texas SandFest, one of the largest native-sand sculpture competitions in the USA, draws renowned sand sculptors and visitors from around the world each year in April to the beaches of Port Aransas. Between live music, eclectic shopping, expansive food booths, and of course the sandy statues, **Texas SandFest** is the time for you to sculpt coastal memories.



Smart vacationers get the PORT A APP



Download the Visit Port Aransas app for easy, on-the-go trip planning! Narrow down your next shopping stop, view the live music schedule, add restaurants to your itinerary, complete trails to win prizes, and more!



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Make it a Conser-vacation

Protecting the environment is a cause near and dear to Port Aransas locals, but also to anyone who has had the privilege of visiting this Gulf Coast gem. It's a birder's oasis, a nature-lover's playground, and a history-lover's unexpected dream come true. All these treasures add up to the ecotourism that is so key to Port A.

This place is just waiting for your love and compassion to come make a visit, and there are plenty of ways that you can make a difference. **Start planning your "conser-vacation" now by scanning the code below for a full list of nature and parks in Port Aransas!**





TRADITION TODAY

A step into Farley Boat Works is a step back in time. The unassuming metal building houses history going back to 1915, as much a part of the Port A landscape as the dunes or the palm trees. A trip to Port Aransas that aims to get the full picture of the town, to learn how to love and protect Port A for all that it is, would be incomplete without a visit to Farley Boat Works.

Over the years, the renowned Farley Boat Works produced boats—all wooden—specifically for tarpon fishing, skiffs for sailing, watercraft built for speed, and more. Now? Reopened in 2011, the shop is open to you as a living exhibit. Carve out some time to sit and observe as a boatbuilding artisan swipes a pungent, polish-soaked rag over the wooden surface of his skiff until it shines. Watch the careful precision that goes in to

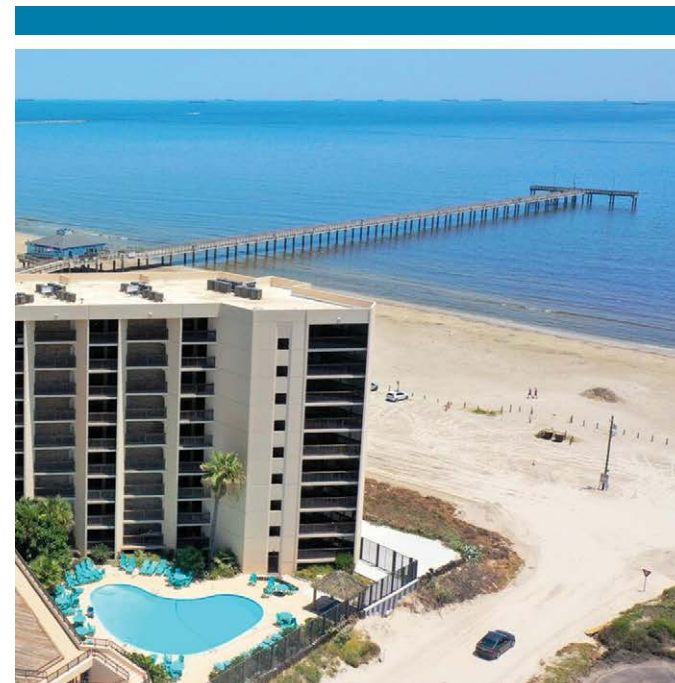
chiseling markings to denote the next step of crafting a 60-foot scow schooner. You can even take part by snagging a spot in one of the highly coveted boatbuilding classes, taught by seasoned Farley Boat makers. Sitting among the sights and smells will transport you to a simpler time when handmade was just how things were made. When you've spent enough time in the workshop, wander around Port Aransas to see the impact of the shop on a community proudly peppered with uniquely painted Farley Boat planters.

Farley Boat Works is such a unique part of Port A's history that a festival has formed around it, called the Wooden Boat Festival. The weekend-long festival celebrates these mariner makers with displays of historic Farley Boats, a boat barn dance, and the

signature event, the family boat build. It's about the boats, but more than that, it's about heritage. It's about being Port A proud. See history in action. Visit Farley Boat Works.

SALTY STORIES

Over a hundred years ago, the first Farley Boat launched in Port Aransas waters. Over the years, Farley Boats would become synonymous with Port A sportfishing. Watch this interview with Cliff Strain, Port Aransas Museum director, to learn the history of Port Aransas and experience Mustang Island's "salty story."



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CONSER-VACATION

Crafting *your* Conser-Vacation

For the Love of the Coast

Anyone who spends any amount of time in Port Aransas knows that this is a special spot, one that elicits a sense of ownership from those who walk these shores and fosters a desire to protect.

That feeling might be sparked by your first sight of the Whooping Crane family that takes up their winter residence here. It might be that you witness the jubilant release of a rehabilitated turtle from the **Amos Rehabilitation Keep**. It could be as simple as the wide yawn of Boots the American Alligator as he suns himself in the **Port Aransas Nature Preserve**.

Whatever the moment is for you, this is where ecotourism comes passionately roaring to life. Here are some of the reasons why:

▼ Nautical Nature

Port Aransas is the place where blue waters extend farther than the eye can see and the sun reflects off the waves. There's a breeze that lifts the palm tree fronds and brings peace to the soul, but there's also far more nature in Port Aransas than first meets the eye. Just off the water there's a rich wetland ecosystem waiting to be discovered. The **Port Aransas Nature Preserve** has four sites, each with hidden natural gems begging to be explored. Hop aboard the **Jetty Boat** out of **Fisherman's Wharf** to make your way to San José Island, an undisturbed and unpopulated island just off the Port Aransas coast, for beachcombing and untamed nature.



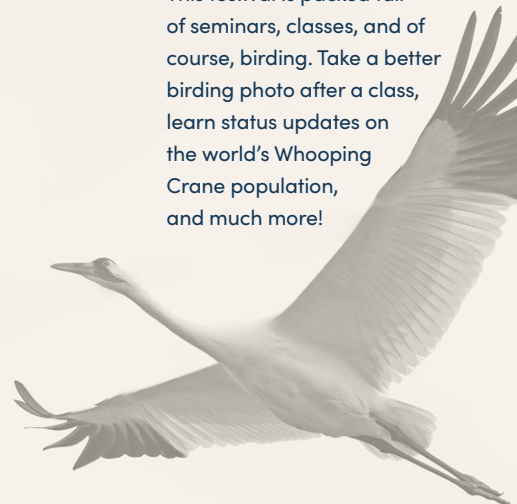
▼ Wild for Wildlife

Port Aransas is crawling, swimming, and everything in between with distinctive wildlife. It's not uncommon, while enjoying the outdoors in **Roberts Point Park** or taking a boat cruise in the bay, to see a pod of dolphins breach and dance in the wake of a large watercraft. Green, Loggerhead, and endangered Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtles all call the area home, and rehabilitating sea turtles can be seen on a tour of the **Amos Rehabilitation Keep**, or **ARK**. Kayak paddling trails and catch the glint of a darting fish or the stare of a motionless hunting bird. It will be all but impossible not to fall in love with these majestic nonhuman residents.



Don't miss your opportunity to see one of the world's only naturally occurring populations of Whooping Cranes! These majestic birds come down to the Texas Coast every year, and Port Aransas takes full advantage of the opportunity to celebrate with the annual Whooping Crane Festival.

This festival is packed full of seminars, classes, and of course, birding. Take a better birding photo after a class, learn status updates on the world's Whooping Crane population, and much more!



▲ Beach Birds

Birders flock to Port Aransas every winter to check off their birding bucket lists. Port A rests in the Central Flyway, which makes it the habitat for hundreds upon hundreds of migrating birds. Spot a pink Roseate Spoonbill and immediately know you're in Port A. Spy a trio of Whooping Cranes and know you're seeing one of the only naturally occurring Whooping Crane families in the world. Once in a lifetime sightings are waiting just off every boardwalk and perched on every branch. Six sites along the Great Texas Coastal Birding Trail make Port Aransas paradise, and these winged species the birds of paradise.



▲ Harbored Heritage

The love that inspires a desire to protect doesn't stem solely from the natural. Historical sites tell the story of Port Aransas; they deepen understanding and appreciation. The **Chapel on the Dunes** is the oldest consecrated church on Mustang Island. **Farley Boat Works** tells the story of a family dating back 100 years. The **Lydia Ann Lighthouse** still shines as a beacon to weary travelers. These are the spots that have helped anchor Port Aransas as the destination it is today.

ECOTOURISM CHECKLIST



There is extraordinary beauty in the wildlife and stunning natural scenery of Port Aransas, but also in the people who dedicate themselves to being dutiful stewards of that environment. Curate your conser-vacation in Port Aransas with these 25 ecotourism must-dos. How many can you check off?

- ☐ Explore the Nature Preserve at Charlie's Pasture.
- ☐ Look out over the tidal flats at Wetland Park. Keep an eye out for the wading and shorebirds that call the wetlands home.
- ☐ Take in the sights and sounds of the two-acre freshwater pond at Joan and Scott Holt Paradise Pond.
- ☐ Walk the 700-foot-long boardwalk at the Leonabelle Turnbull Birding Center and enjoy the view from the observation deck.
- ☐ Spot a Roseate Spoonbill, the flamingo doppelgänger and official bird of Port Aransas.
- ☐ Fill a yellow mesh litter bag.
- ☐ Attend a sea turtle release hosted by the Amos Rehabilitation Keep. Try not to die of too much cuteness.
- ☐ Snap a photo of Boots, the American Alligator who resides in the Port Aransas Nature Preserve.
- ☐ During migratory season, check five birds off the "Wings of Winter" birding guide.
- ☐ Take the Jetty Boat over to discover the natural San José Island and spend the day sunning, swimming, and beachcombing.
- ☐ Go on a guided tour of the Wetlands Education Center at the University of Texas Marine Science Institute.
- ☐ Tour the Amos Rehabilitation Keep to see rehabilitating sea turtles, sea birds, and raptors.
- ☐ Experience the protected expansive beaches of Mustang Island State Park.
- ☐ While you're at Mustang Island State Park, paddle through some of the 20 plus miles that make up the "Mustang Island Paddling Trail."
- ☐ Attend birding events, photography workshops, and expert seminars at the Whooping Crane Festival.
- ☐ Team up with Keep Port Aransas Beautiful and the Texas General Land Office for an Adopt-a-Beach cleanup.
- ☐ Pick up chic, reusable drinkware at a local boutique.
- ☐ Hike with Parks & Recreation on a gorgeous two-hour Nature Walk.
- ☐ Book a dolphin-watching cruise aboard the Scarlet Lady.
- ☐ Celebrate Gulf Coast vegetation at the native plant sale and plant swap hosted by Keep Port Aransas Beautiful.
- ☐ Center yourself with a yoga class at the Port Aransas Nature Preserve on Tuesday mornings.
- ☐ Go beachcombing and share your unique findings.
- ☐ San José Island is a hidden gem of the Texas coast. Suit up for a Keep Port Aransas Beautiful island cleanup along the stretches of this private, uninhabited land.
- ☐ Hunt for the many decorated Farley Boat planters! These uniquely-painted planters dot the town and combine the history of Farley Boat Works with the beauty of native plants.
- ☐ Kayak the very first Texas Paddling Trail, Lighthouse Lakes Paddling Trail, and catch a glimpse of the privately-owned Lydia Ann Lighthouse.

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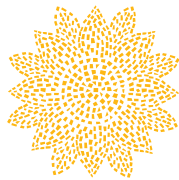
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