

VISIT PANAMA CITY BEACH

SUMMER 2018 MAGAZINE

Beach Glory

**PCB's Best
Spots To Bring
Your Pooch**

**Shell Island:
What To Do &
How To Get There**

**Our Top Picks
On The Area's
Best Golf Scenery**

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"I look forward to the Fourth of July fireworks show!" — **BRIANNA WEBB**



"I like to walk the west end beaches and photograph the beautiful sunsets!" — **DARA DAVIS**

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"I love to go to the Thursday Night Concert Series in Aaron Bessant Park." — **MARCIA BUSH**



"I like relaxing at Shell Island or fishing... anything on the water!" — **PATRICK STEWART**

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PRESIDENT/PUBLISHER Brian E. Rowland

VICE PRESIDENT/CORPORATE DEVELOPMENT McKenzie Burleigh Lohbeck

CHIEF CONTENT OFFICER Lawrence Davidson

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EDITORIAL DESIGNER Shruti Shah

ADVERTISING DESIGNER Meredith Brooks

CORPORATE CLIENT LIAISON Sara Goldfarb

CUSTOM PUBLISHING EDITOR Jeff Price

AD SERVICES COORDINATOR Lisa Sostre

PROOFREADER Melinda Lanigan

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Steve Bornhoft, Hannah Burke, Kim Harris Thacker, Thomas Monigan, Rob Rushin, Liesel Schmidt

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS Michael Booini, Jason Barnette Photography, Katie DeSantis, Desiree Gardner, Sonja Revells, Saige Roberts, Andrew Wardlow



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AS WE MOVE THROUGH 2018, it's still true that the summertime tradition of bringing the family to Panama City Beach is a strong one. It's been fun to look back at photos from summers gone by and note in particular how two things have remained constant: summer family fun and our beautiful white sand beaches. It's true that more and more visitors are discovering the shoulder seasons of fall and late spring, and our winter visitors continue to have as much fun as anyone, but there's no better example of a classic American summer vacation experience than what you'll find here in Panama City Beach. It's in that spirit of summertime excitement that this issue of *Visit Panama City Beach* magazine is offering a close look at family favorites, whether it's jet skiing, snorkeling or camping ("Family Matters," p. 34), the best destinations for celebrating your honeymoon or popping the question to your loved one ("Perfect Spot, p. 48), or where dog friendly beach venues are located and perfect for a walk with your four legged furry friend ("Dog'n It," pg. 44). In this issue, you'll also find this season's top picks for shopping to add a little coastal flare to your summer outfits or home décor (pg. 62), along with where to find the best fish tacos in the region to satisfy your Gulf seafood cravings (pg. 82). As always, we also delve deep to provide insights into golf, fishing and diving, where you'll get an outsiders perspective from an overseas visitor on what Panama City Beach has to offer (p. 68). Our summer issue is a fun read that will unlock many secrets of our Real. Fun. Beach. that we hope you enjoy. In every season, we're proud to have you with us, and we thank you for making Panama City Beach your own.



Sunny Regards,

DAN ROWE
President and CEO
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Even if you can't be here in person, you can catch a glimpse of Panama City Beach from anywhere in the world! Check out the white sand, emerald green water or last night's sunset!

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Panama City Beach

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- "Back Beach Road" Panama City Beach Parkway
- "Middle Beach Road" Hutchison Boulevard
- "City Pier" Russell-Fields Pier
- "County Pier" M.B. Miller Pier

**NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

Major Road

Bike Path



Distance Chart

Atlanta, GA	297 mi	470 km
Birmingham, AL	280 mi	440 km
Dallas, TX	751 mi	1,310 km
Houston, TX	639 mi	1,034 km
Montgomery, AL	186 mi	206 km
Nashville, TN	476 mi	744 km
New Orleans, LA	305 mi	513 km
Orlando, FL	340 mi	617 km
St. Louis, MO	745 mi	1,243 km
Tallahassee, FL	98 mi	171 km
Tampa, FL	339 mi	546 km



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Natural Treasures

By land and by sea, animals enrich the Gulf of Mexico experience

BY STEVE BORNHOFT
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN RUSSO

DESERTS CAN BE made to bloom. Just add water. Doubt that? Consider, then, the sands of Panama City Beach, its surf line and the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico extending to the horizon.

Those environments attract and host myriad life forms, a mere small sample of which is represented in the drawing before you. Some, at the bottom of food chains, are so small as to go unseen; others are too big to be reeled in.

To be sure, all add to the experience of visiting the beach. It is possible to enjoy each on a surface level, but you may also be inclined to go granular — see what we did there? — and seek answers to the questions they invite: How do sand dollars eat? Of what advantage to snowy egrets are yellow feet? All groupers mature first as females! What's that all about?

And, hey, we haven't even gotten around to marine mammals, including that bottlenose leaper who elicits oohs and aahs whenever it takes to the air. ●



Laughing Gull



Great Blue Heron



Sandpiper

Flounder



Speckled Sea Trout



Redfish



Whiting



Fighting Conch



Callico Scallop



Coquina Shells

Osprey



Brown Pelican



Snowy Egret



Mahi Mahi



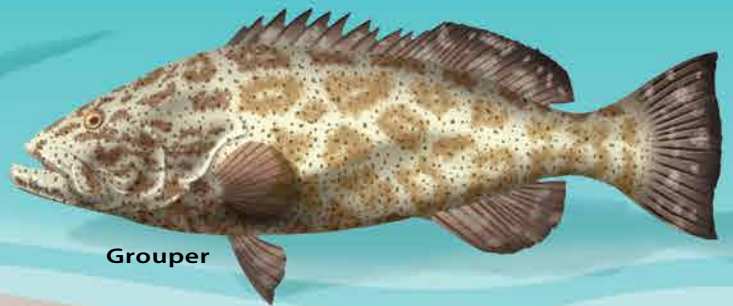
Pompano



Red Snapper



Grouper



Common Nutmeg



Florida Augers



Olive Shell



Alphabet Cone



Sand Dollar





Golfers' Paradise

FOR THE SERIOUS

GOLFER — or the lucky beginner — there could be no Panama City Beach souvenir more precious than a hole-in-one. Courses here offer easy-to-reach par 3s that make such an achievement possible. There are plenty of holes that will tempt you to take your driver out of the bag. And hey, if your sand wedge is a little rusty, there's no better way to sharpen your sand play than to practice at the beach before hitting the links.

Panama City Beach's five-course golf menu includes: **BAY POINT**, offering two layouts, the only Nicklaus Design course in the region and a more subtle Walter Byrd layout; **HOLIDAY GOLF**, home to both a regulation 18-hole layout and a lighted par-3 executive course; **HOMBRE**, formerly three courses, these 18 holes provides a distinctive challenge and lots of water; **SIGNAL HILL**, which delivers a varied 18 holes, open on the front side but dicier on the back.

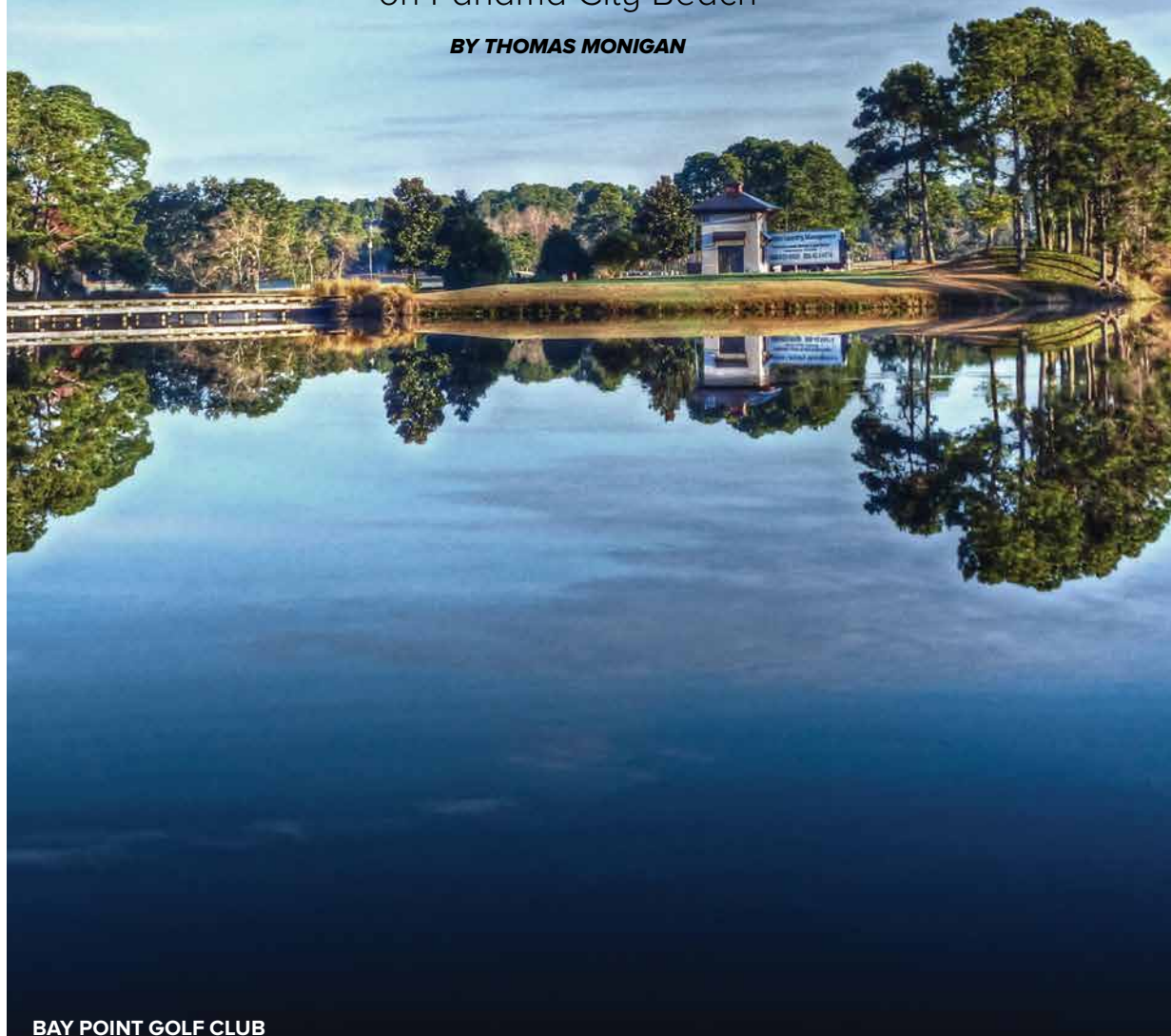
BEST SCENES

Among The

Greens

Local golf pros and officials give their picks for the best setting among the courses on Panama City Beach

BY THOMAS MONIGAN



BAY POINT GOLF CLUB



The return of summer to the Emerald Coast means this is the perfect time to hit some of our local golf courses and test your skills. But if you're looking for a little scenery to go along with your morning or afternoon round, here are our picks for the most picturesque holes Panama City Beach has to offer.



HOLIDAY GOLF CLUB

says No. 5 on the Nicklaus course and No. 13 on The Meadows are the holes that stand out as the most visually stunning.

The signature Nicklaus fifth hole offers a spectacular tee shot to an island fairway in the middle of the Grand Lagoon, with a second shot to a peninsula green overlooking St. Andrews Bay. Yardage on this par 4 measures between 227 and 398 yards. "It's right on the bay," said assistant pro Nate Starr. "There's a lot of marsh wetlands and pampas grass, too."

No. 13 on Meadows is a par 3 that plays between 84 and 153 yards, but don't let the short yardage fool you. There's a fair amount of water between the tee and the island green. According to Starr, it is "almost a near replica" of No. 17 on The Players Course as TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. That course's website terms it as "one of the most recognized in golf."

HOLIDAY GOLF CLUB

Brad Carroll, Holiday's PGA pro, has always liked the look of No. 13, a par 3 that measures between 128 and 226 yards.

"Our course is in a neighborhood, and when you're in that tee box you can see seven other holes, so it's a good vantage point, you can see a lot from there," Carroll said. "There's palm trees around the tee box, and there's some all around the green. There's two bunkers in front of the green, and most of the time you're hitting into a prevailing wind."

BAY POINT GOLF CLUB

Bay Point is part of the Sheraton Bay Point Resort, and it features two courses — The Nicklaus Course and The Meadows Course.

Ryan Mulvey is a PGA pro and the general manager at Bay Point, and with almost 14,000 yards of real estate between the two courses, he

SCOTT WEBB

DESIREE GARDNER

Carroll says don't forget the little canal and bridge on No. 13's left side. "Overall," he says, "it's a very scenic hole."

SIGNAL HILL GOLF COURSE

Opened in 1962, Signal Hill is Panama City Beach's oldest golf course, and it is rich in history and natural scenery. The hole that might catch your eye, according to Signal Hill staff, is the secluded par 3 No. 16, which plays between 141 and 161 yards.

"I think it's real pretty and unusual," says owner and operator Beth Langford. "You're hitting uphill, and the green is carved from the outside of a sand dune. There's a lot of birds out there."

But be warned; according to Bobby Miller from the pro shop, No. 16 is also "the toughest hole on the golf course."

HOMBRE GOLF CLUB

The Hombre opened with 18 holes in December 1989, and it recently returned to that format. Previously, there were three nines with the titles "The Good," "The Bad" and "The Ugly." Hombre's new 18 has parts of those latter two melded into a new par 72 that included some design help local PGA pro Jerry Pate.

"Number 7 is an island hole and our most scenic," said Robby Willis, the club's general manager and director of golf. "It's an island green, and from the time you hit from the tee, if you don't hit the green, it's in the water."

No. 7 is a Par 3 that plays between 100 and 153 yards, but don't let the numbers fool you.

"It's probably our most commented hole," Willis said. "It's much like No. 17 at TPC (Sawgrass), but it's a little bigger." ●



DESIREE GARDNER



HOMBRE GOLF CLUB'S island hole No. 7 is beautiful — but treacherous for wayward tee shots.


~~~~~  
**THE ELDER STATESMAN** of beach courses, Signal Hill Golf Course No. 16 is an uphill battle with down-home charm.  
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DESIREE GARDNER

BAY POINT GOLF CLUB

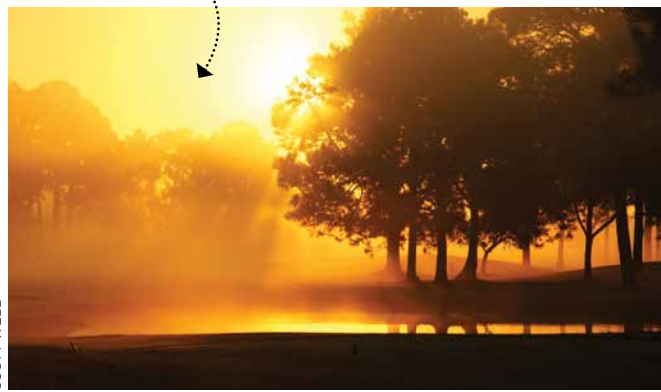
There are five sets of tees on The Nicklaus Course, measuring between 7,152 and 4,974 yards, with par at either 72 or 73. The Meadows Course measures between 6,913 and 5,140 yards, with a par of 72. There is also a large practice facility, which includes a full-size driving range. **(850) 235-6950, BayPointGolf.com**

HOLIDAY GOLF CLUB

This par-72 course measures between 5,151 and 6,859 yards depending on what set of tees you play. Last year Holiday added “family tees,” and playing from them involves 4,019 yards. **(850) 234-1800, HolidayGolfClub.com**

HOMBRE GOLF CLUB

Returning to its original 18-hole roots, Hombre’s new 18 is a par 72 that measures between 5,400 to 6,800 yards. In addition, Hombre partnered last year with Callaway Golf to introduce the Hombre Performance Center, with Hank Castleberry as its director. **(850) 234-3673, HombreGolfClub.com**



SCOTT WEBB

SIGNAL HILL GOLF COURSE

Built by John Henry Sherman in 1962, Signal Hill celebrated its 56th birthday in March. The course is a family tradition as current Signal Hill owner and operator Beth Langford is Sherman’s daughter. Langford’s son, Chris Vickers, is one of the course managers, and grandson Chip Vickers works in the pro shop. Signal Hill plays between 4,636 to 5,607 yards with a par of 71. **(850) 234-5051, SignalHillGolfCourse.com**



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SUN”** may be one
of Panama City
Beach’s unofficial
mantras, but this
booming beach
town has a lot more
to offer than simply
world-class natural
amenities. Sure, the
27 miles of pristine
coastline are what
draw people in. But
once visitors arrive
in this vacationers’
wonderland, there
are a million reasons
to stay.

Sightseers in need
of a reprieve from
the sunshine will
have an array of
adventures to
choose from in
Panama City Beach.

On the agenda?
Well, for starters,
how about partaking
in a round of mini-
golf, getting into a
laser tag shootout
with loved ones or
making friends with
a stingray? As a
true, all-American
seaside retreat, this
beach is chock-full
of fun attractions.

JASON BARNETTE PHOTOGRAPHY



PIER PARK'S NEW SKYWHEEL promises to give beach-goers a new perspective as it reaches 200 feet into the air.

REACHING new HEIGHTS

SkyWheel raises the entertainment bar

BY HANNAH BURKE

Picture California's Santa Monica Pier or the Navy Pier in Chicago. What's the first thing that popped into your head? For many, it isn't the hodgepodge of eclectic restaurants and kiosks, but the iconic, neon-emblazoned Ferris wheels that tower over them.

This spring, Pier Park in Panama City Beach acquired a wheel of its own, but it's not your typical fair ride. Stretching as high as one of the 20-story condos that border the shore, SkyWheel Panama City Beach is taking entertainment to new heights.

"The SkyWheel Panama City Beach is an observation wheel that will rise more than 200-feet above the Gulf of Mexico," says Colleen Wagner, public relations representative

for Simon Property's Pier Park. "Riders will enjoy 360-degree panoramic views of Panama City Beach in the safety and comfort of glass-enclosed, fully-accessible gondolas that comfortably seat up to six passengers."

This model mirrors its twin in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, which was the first SkyWheel to debut in North America in 2011. Since then, five other wheels have popped up across the country from the Netherlands-based company behind the ride, Dutch Wheels. Founded in 2008, Dutch Wheels has made quick work of the past 10 years, establishing SkyWheel sites on each continent.

"Pier Park is the ideal location for the new SkyWheel as it is Panama City Beach's premier, open-air shopping



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adds Mike Denton, Director of Marketing and Business Development at Pier Park. “We are a one-of-a-kind, beachfront, family-friendly property with over 125 retail, dining and entertainment offerings, so the addition of the SkyWheel is a natural fit.”

He also believes this attraction is the perfect complement to Pier Park’s lineup of family-friendly events and entertainment. While the wildly popular New Year’s Eve Beach Ball Drop attracts over 30,000 people to the al fresco mall each year, the SkyWheel has the potential to skyrocket visitation.

So, what can you expect from your first ascent this summer? As you climb in to one of 30 gondolas, the interior will be blissfully air conditioned to ensure you’re as comfortable as you are exhilarated during your orbit. Glass walls grant more than a bird’s-eye view, as you’ll not only have a pristine vantage point of Pier Park but also Panama City Beach, the Gulf and the coast of Highway 30-A. A full ride accomplishes three to four rotations, offering up to 15 minutes of supreme vistas.

If it’s a special occasion, you’ll definitely want to scope out the glass-bottomed VIP gondola, a pod that includes luxurious, leather seating and double the air time to soak in the sights.

Individual gondolas can contain up to 1,300 pounds and endure 146-mph winds. If you’ve ever wound up stuck on your local carnival’s Ferris wheel, that won’t be a concern here. Even in the event of a power outage, a backup generator has been installed to guarantee smooth soaring.

The attraction will operate year-round behind the Celebration Tower, adjacent to The Grand 16 Movie Theater and Dave and Buster’s. You may recognize this as the former site of Pier Park Amusements, but don’t fret. A slew of new recreations will surround the SkyWheel, including a mini-golf course, zip line, rope course, and carnival-esque concessions.

~~~~~  
**ATTRACTIONS GOING** in around the new SkyWheel include a mini-golf course, a zip line and a ropes course.  
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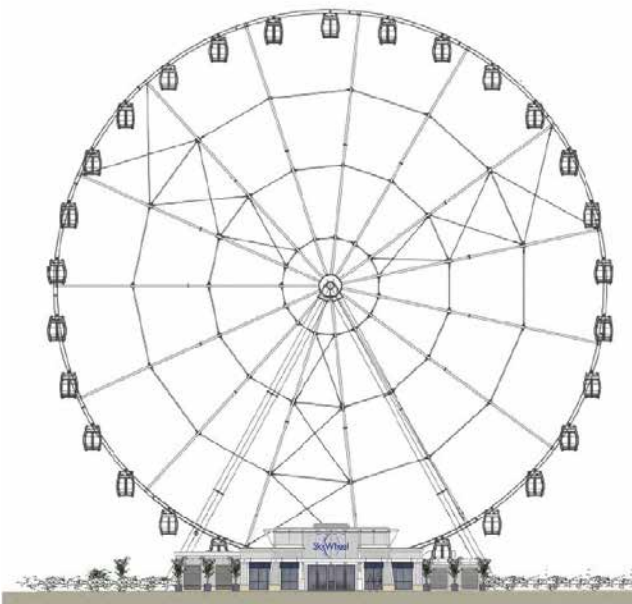
“The ropes course at SkyWheel Panama City Beach brings a new kind of adventure to guests,” states the Koch Development Team, partners of SkyWheel PCB. “Using expertly engineered technology, guests of all ages will venture up multiple levels at their own pace. Navigate across bridges, ascend stairs and scale to the top, all while safely attached to an overhead track.”

The course will include two levels with 28 different climbing challenges and a zip line, another electrifying attraction that will knock you off your feet. Little visitors under 4 feet tall can also get their kicks with a smaller obstacle course, or the family can opt for mini-golf.

Koch adds: “Mini golf at SkyWheel Panama City Beach will feature 18 beach-themed holes of excitement. It offers an interactive, memorable experience that’s beautifully landscaped with the SkyWheel as the backdrop.”

Whether you’re looking for a romantic, star-studded ride with your partner or a day of family fun in the sun, the SkyWheel is sure to be the high point of your vacation. ●

KOCH DEVELOPMENT



JASON BARNETTE PHOTOGRAPHY



READY TO REEL?

Keep in mind these tips from
a seasoned captain **BY STEVE BORNHOFT**

At some point, the beginning saltwater fisher who has experienced inshore Spanish mackerel and sheepshead action is ready for bigger game. Here, Capt. Mark Kelley of Kelley Girl Fishing Charters offers a few tips for the first-time and occasional bottom fisherman.

1 No matter the state of the economy, an ounce of prevention is always worth a pound of cure. Combat seasickness by taking usually reliable over-the-counter tablets the night before your trip offshore and again in the morning. Dramamine and Bonine are leading brands.

2 When lowering your bait in the water, apply light pressure on the spool of your reel with your thumb until the lead weight hits the bottom. Then depress your thumb firmly on the spool to prevent an entangling “overrun” and re-engage the reel.

3 When you detect a bite, respond by reeling as fast as you can to hook the fish. People accustomed to freshwater fishing often rear back on their rod when they feel a bite just like they do at the bass pond back home, but reeling is better, especially when using the circle hooks required when pursuing reef fishes.

4 In fighting a fish, many people have a tendency to tuck the rod under their arm, making it impossible for them to put much leverage on that big snapper they have on the line. Instead, use a “gut bucket,” a belt equipped in the front with a cup that receives the rod butt.



ANDREW WARDLOW

5 Refrain from pumping the rod when cranking in a fish. Doing so results in additional pressure that can cause hooks to pull out.

6 Don't heave-ho your fish into the boat. Leave your fish in the water at the surface and let the mate either gaff it or haul it aboard. That sure beats clanking your fishing buddy in the head with a 16-ounce lead weight.

7 Don't forget sunscreen, and bring cash to tip your mate at the end of a successful trip. ●



ANDREW WARDLOW



FISHING SPOTLIGHT

Go Fish!

**30.1767° N,
85.8056° W**

THAT'S THE latitude and longitude for Panama City Beach, Florida, a world-class fishing destination with easy access to year-round angling opportunities.

What do you dream of reeling in? Do you see yourself chasing a big cobia or pulling a large grouper or snapper up off of a shipwreck on the Gulf floor?

In Panama City Beach, you can troll for mackerel, target redfish and tarpon on fly tackle or just take the kids out for a day on the water to have a good time.

With three public piers on the Gulf of Mexico, lucky spots to fish from shore and countless charters available, Panama City Beach has something to offer every angler. Remember, in Panama City Beach, fishing season lasts all year long.

TARGET RICH

From month to month, Gulf offers many species worth catching **BY STEVE BORNHOFT**

CAPT. MARK KELLEY is a third-generation professional fisherman who started working on his father's charter boat when he was 12. Now 54, Kelley, who owns Kelley Girl Fishing Charters, has been through a few fishing cycles and many rounds of ever-changing regulations. Generally, he runs trips from March through October. Here is what he was looking forward to as the 2018 season approached ...



ANDREW WARDLOW



ANDREW WARDLOW



MARCH

Migratory **Spanish mackerel** show up in numbers and enter area bays. Spawning sheepshead congregate at the mouth of the pass to St. Andrews Bay. Triggerfish season opens on March 1. Offshore anglers may also keep **vermillion snapper, white snapper, red grouper** and **scamp**.



APRIL

Cobia, known variously as ling, lemonfish and crab crunchers, move along the beaches, just outside the sand bars, from east to west en route to spawning grounds. Bruisers on light tackle, they occasionally reach 100 pounds.



MAY

The one-month spring **amberjack** season opens. To be legal, a "jack" caught in federal waters must measure at least 34 inches in length and, at that point, the angler has a serious fight on his hands. Amberjacks are muscle fish, Camaros of the sea. **King mackerel** begin to show up and, once they do, will be around for the entire summer. The big ones are called "smokers" and, for good reason, given what they can do to a reel.



JUNE-JULY

The **red snapper** season opens on June 1. In Kelley's career, that season has ranged from nine days to 365. This year, federal officials are promising a season of at least 50 days. The **gag grouper** season also opens, but Kelley has found that when the **red snapper** season is underway, 99 percent of his customers want to focus on catching a big, crimson fish.

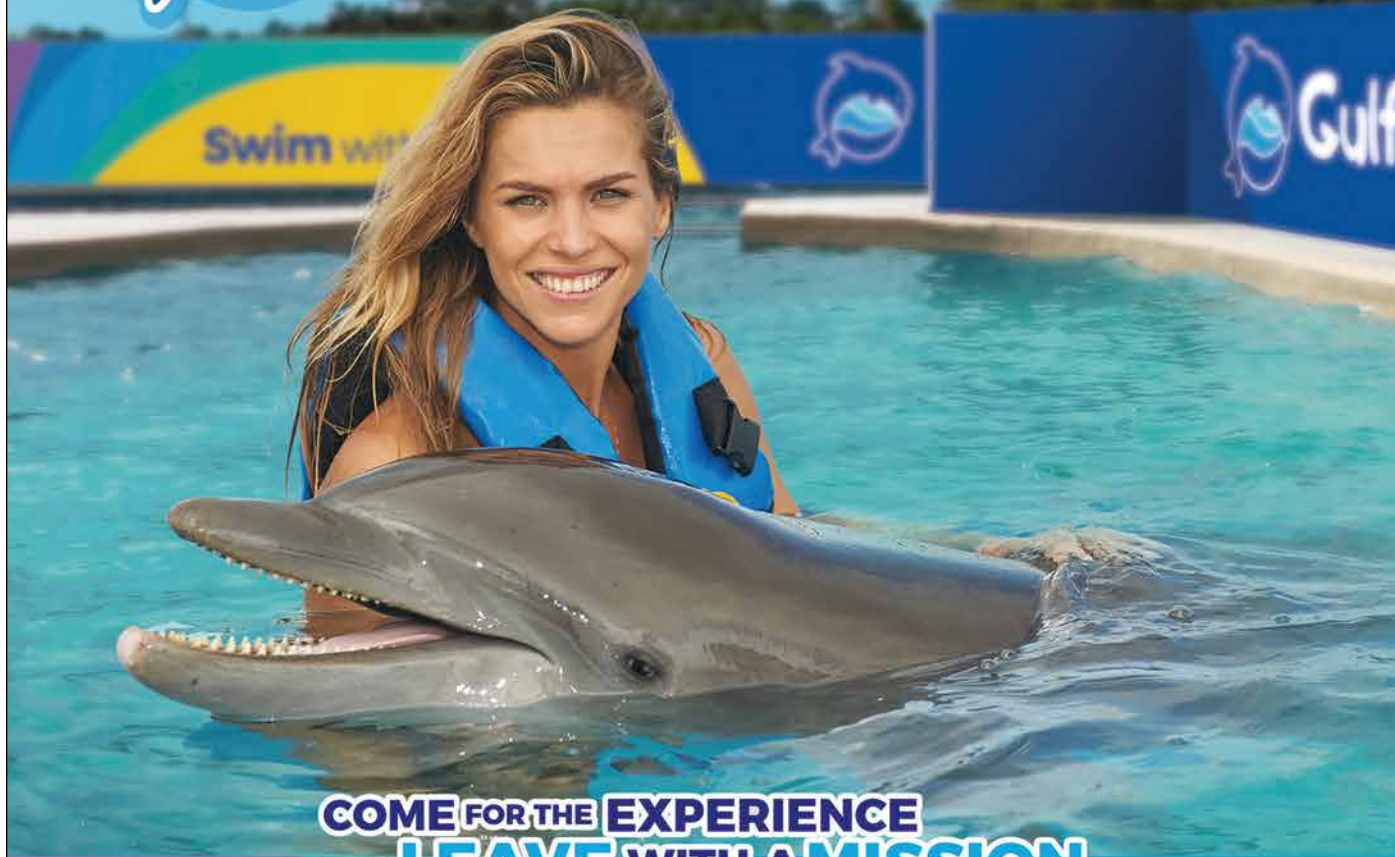
AUGUST-OCTOBER

The amberjack season reopens. **King mackerel** hang around until the water begins to cool. Anglers continue to catch and keep **gag and red grouper** and **vermillion and white snappers**. Incidental catches now and earlier in the year include **wahoo, blackfin tuna,** and **mahi mahi**.





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THE *Ultimate* FAMILY BEACH VACATION

Find fun for all ages in the surf or on dry land

BY KIM HARRIS THACKER

From dolphin tours to campgrounds, Panama City Beach has every attraction and activity a vacationing family could wish for — even if each member of the family wants something different out of the vacation. So round up your beach bum, your angler and your nature lover and get ready to find out how your family can enjoy the vacation of a lifetime.

~~~~~  
**WHETHER YOU'RE** just  
paddling along or cruising  
by on a jet ski, Panama  
City Beach offers fun on  
the water for everyone.  
~~~~~



FOR SAND AND SURF FANS

Beach bums are into sun, salt and sand. They're beachcombers, but they're also not opposed to paddling, swimming or diving. They want to snorkel in the Gulf and maybe catch a wave or two.

Your family's beach bum is going to be happy in Panama City Beach.

Calico Scallops. Fighting Conchs. Florida Augers. No, these aren't the names of local music groups, they're the names of some of the species of marine creatures whose shells are found on PCB's white sands. Low tide is a great time to do a little beachcombing, but if you'd rather do your shell collecting in the water, take the shuttle from St. Andrews State Park to Shell Island, where the snorkeling and shelling is top-notch. Several boating services also offer tours that will let you swim with the dolphins just offshore. ●

● But don't just hang out on the beach. With its gentle, clear waters, Panama City Beach is a great place to try out a trendy form of exercise and sightseeing: stand-up paddleboarding (SUP). Sign up for a beginner's lesson at one of the board shops and prepare to fall in love with SUP.

Need something a bit faster to navigate the currents? Rent a couple jet skis for the family

and feel the wind and the surf on your face as you cruise the emerald waters. Don't forget to get a different perspective by booking a parasailing trip so you can take in the ocean vistas from a bird's-eye view.

If you prefer scuba diving to snorkeling, then the waters off PCB are sure to satisfy. Many historic shipwrecks, including the 185-foot Black Bart, can be found in the region, inspiring Skin Diver Magazine to name PCB the "wreck diving capital of the South." The natural and artificial reefs are also worth exploring, as they are havens for many species of fish.

Speaking of fish ...

For some, a vacation is not a vacation unless it involves a rod and reel. If this describes a member of your family, then take them fishing at Russell-Fields Pier (a.k.a. "City Pier") or M.B. Miller County Pier (a.k.a. "County Pier"). If you didn't bring your gear, don't worry: You can rent at the piers or at any number of outdoor gear shops.

If you've done the onshore fishing thing and are ready to catch some offshore action, there are plenty of charter boat captains ready and willing to accommodate your family on a fishing trip.

If you'd like to get on the water to fish, try spearfishing or gigging. Novice and experienced anglers alike can experience saltwater fishing with any of Panama City Beach's fishing charters. Some charters offer customers a fishing license or you can purchase your own short-term license. Find out more at visitpanamacitybeach.com/things-to-do/fishing-charters.

FOR LAND DWELLERS

Done with the beach for your trip and looking to explore the area in other ways? Bike rentals are plentiful around the beach if you'd like to cruise down the coast on two wheels. For those that need four wheels, several adventure and fun parks offer go-kart racing for the family in need of a little more speed.

While Panama City Beach is a haven for golf enthusiasts, with four public courses dotted around the area, the more family-friendly version is also available. Putt-putt or mini golf courses can offer some relaxing family time, such as Goofy Golf, which has been a mainstay in the area since 1959. Need more old-school fun? Fun Land Arcade is right across the street from the beach.

If your family needs a bit more nature on its vacation, Panama City Beach has you covered. Before 1951, St. Andrews State Park was a military reservation. Since that time, it has been beloved by families visiting from afar and from next door, all because of the beauty and tranquility that can be found throughout its 1,200 acres. Birders will thrill at the opportunity to spot herons, egrets, ibises



“ PANAMA CITY BEACH HAS EVERY ATTRACTION AND ACTIVITY A VACATIONING FAMILY COULD WISH FOR. ”





GET PLANNING

NOW THAT YOU KNOW that your whole family can have it all while on vacation in Panama City Beach, it's time to start planning your trip. You can create a custom vacation for your family online with a little help from the Visit Panama City Beach (VPCB) website: VisitPanamaCityBeach.com.

On the “*Make it Yours*” page is the “*Dream Vacation Video*” tab. Use this feature to create a video detailing what you would want on your vacation, then send it to friends and family.

Under the “*Plan Your Trip*” tab, you'll find links to pages that are devoted to PCB-specific topics, such as local transportation, how to prepare for PCB's weather and where to engage a photographer who can document your epic family vacation.

Another helpful feature on the VPCB home page is the “*Make it Yours*” tab. From here, you can take the “*Find Your Vacation Vibe*” quiz to discover what type of vacationer you are and what PCB attractions fit your style. There are recommendations for adrenaline junkies, romantics, ecotourists or families who want a little of everything. If you're a seasoned vacationer and you know your vacation style, you can skip the quiz and go straight to the recommendations.

and ospreys along the park's trails. If you've yet to see an alligator in Florida, this is a great place to observe these creatures in their natural habitat — while maintaining a safe distance, of course.

The 185-acre Camp Helen State Park is an ecological marvel. It is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico and Lake Powell, a rare, coastal dune lake. Campsites and RV parks also dot the area if you want to get a more up-close-and-personal look at nature in the region. But don't worry, modern amenities such as bathrooms, Wi-Fi and laundry services are provided on site.

If your family would like to see a huge variety of sea life all in one go, head for Gulf World Marine Park, where you can swim with dolphins, get up close and personal with seals and sea lions, snorkel with stingrays and even feed the resident sharks. It's an unforgettable experience. ●

THE “FIND YOUR VACATION VIBE” QUIZ

WHAT'S YOUR VACATION VIBE?



THE LAST MOVIE YOU WATCHED:

Made you ugly cry into your sofa cushion

Was set in a beautiful, exotic locale

Made you laugh so hard it counted as an ab workout

Had people slow-mo walking away from a fiery explosion



JOIN US FOR A
REAL FUN
FOURTH

FIREWORKS & HOLIDAY EVENTS

JULY 1

LIGHT UP THE BAY

Sheraton Bay Point Resort

JULY 3

9:00 P.M.

FREEDOM ROCKS!

Grand Lagoon

*music simulcast available
on 103.5 app

JULY 4

9:00 P.M.

**STAR SPANGLED
SPECTACULAR**

City and County Pier

*music simulcast available
on 103.5 app

**VETERANS MEMORIAL
CEREMONY**

Aaron Bessant Park

JULY 5

7:00 P.M.

**REAL.FUN.FOURTH
CONCERT WITH
FIREWORKS**

Aaron Bessant Park

JULY 6

8:30 P.M.

LIGHT UP THE GULF

Boardwalk Beach Resort



VisitPanamaCityBeach.com

★ *Choreographed music simulcast available with the Kickin 103.5 app
for Freedom Rocks and the Star Spangled Spectacular - kickin1035.com.* ★

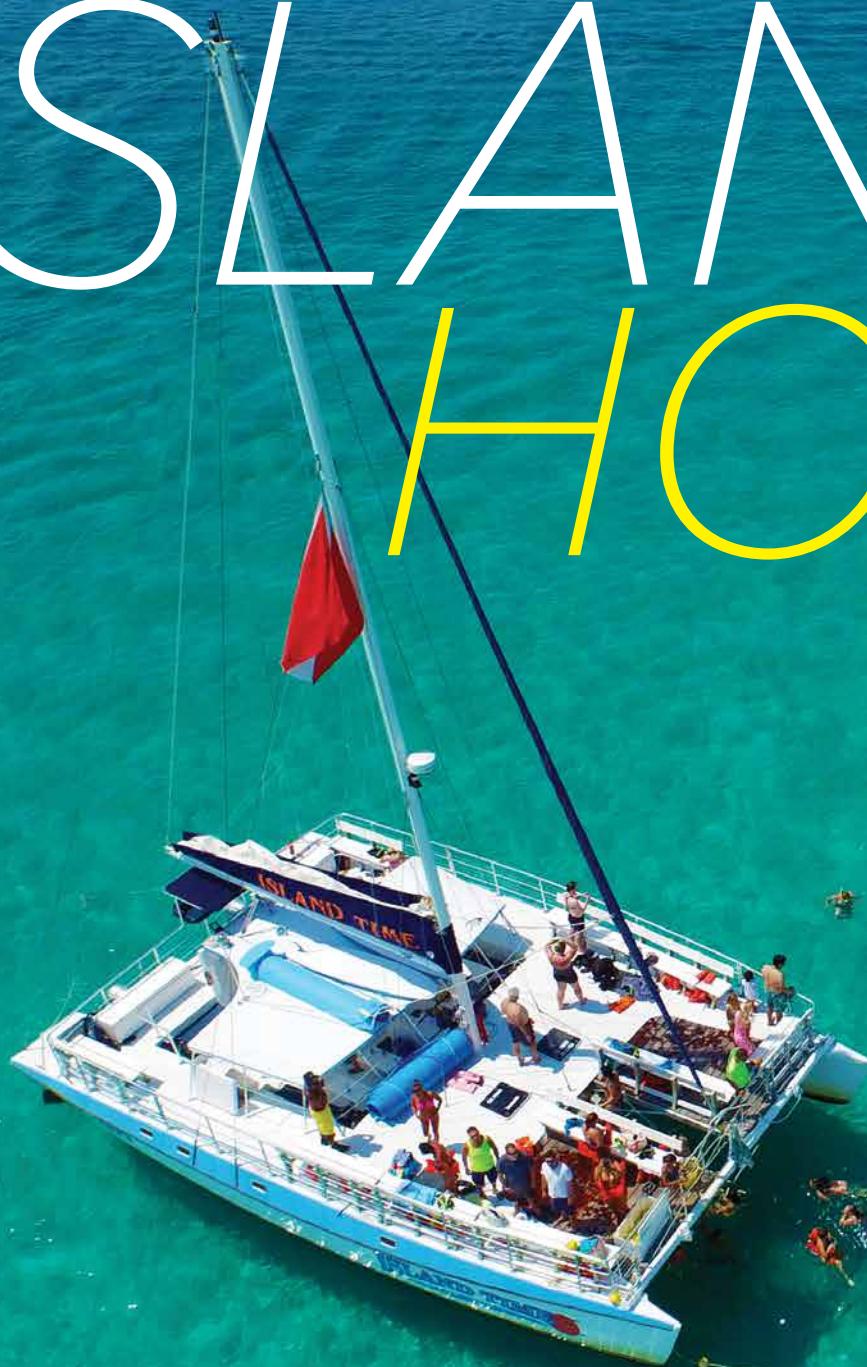


Panama City Beach

FLORIDA

REAL. FUN. BEACH.

ISLAND HOPPING



SWIMMING with the dolphins via Island Time Sailing is just one activity to draw you to Shell Island.

ING

Shell Island hosts a variety of wildlife and a variety of activities along the way

BY HANNAH BURKE

ISLAND TIME SAILING



We've all dreamt of winding up on our own private island, the sensation of sun kissing skin and toes sinking into pearlescent, white sand. There's no sign of civilization for miles, just the crystal-clear waves lapping at the shore and the gentle sway of palms in the breeze.

Such paradise manifests itself in Panama City Beach as Shell Island, a 7½-mile, pristine peninsula just off the coast of St. Andrews State Park. What you do once you get there is entirely up to you. Whether you're looking for ride on the shuttle or you want a sightseeing tour of the area, here's how to castaway for a day.

SHELL ISLAND SHUTTLE

Eager for an express route? The Shell Island Shuttle is your ticket, transporting passengers to and from the retreat every half hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. You'll be dropped off near the rocky jetties, a premier snorkeling spot that fosters a medley of marine life. Open all week, the Shell Island Shuttle departs directly from St. Andrews State Park with no reservations necessary. Pack a picnic and stay for an hour or two, or indulge in an all-day R&R session until the final shuttle retrieves you.

COST

\$18.95 for adults; \$9.95 for children 12 and under

*Group rates available for parties of 20 or more

ShellIslandShuttle.com

PONTOON RENTALS

Ask any local about the ultimate leisure boat, and they'll steer you in the direction of the beloved pontoon. While dozens of pontoon rental vendors are stationed along the beach, Shell Island Boat Rentals & Tours is located at Treasure Island Marina, a 10-minute cruise from your island destination. While the operation offers unique guided tours, pontoon rentals

allow you to explore at your own pace. Choose among four rental packages that can accommodate up to 10 guests and be sure to take your time getting there ... you're more than likely to spot a pod or two of bottlenose dolphins!

COST
(Seasonal Pricing)
[ShellIslandtours.com/
Tour/Boat-Rentals/](http://ShellIslandtours.com/Tour/Boat-Rentals/)

JET SKI RENTALS

If none of the previous options are quite your speed, you're sure to get your kicks on a sleek n' speedy jet ski. At Lagoon Pontoons, select from one hour, half-day or full day rentals, climb aboard a VX110 Yamaha WaveRunner and slice through the sea to your heart's content. Though your target is about a 5-minute ride away, it's well worth it to take the scenic course through St. Andrews Bay to wet your appetite for adventure. When you need to catch your breath, simply moor along the shore of Shell Island and let your thrilling excursion continue through the dunes.

COST
\$79 1 hour; \$249 half day;
\$349 full day
[LagoonPontoon.com/
Jet-Ski-Rentals/](http://LagoonPontoon.com/Jet-Ski-Rentals/)

DOLPHIN CRUISE

Boasting one of the world's most abundant populations of bottlenose dolphins, St. Andrews Bay and Shell Island are the ultimate sites to seek out these magnificent mammals. Island Time Sailing's Shell Island Dolphin & Snorkel Cruise isn't your typical sightseeing

tour, offering guests an exhilarant adventure both on and off the boat. In the span of this 3½-hour cruise, experienced guides will scout out prominent dolphin purlieus, educate passengers on the history of St. Andrews Bay and anchor down for a swim and snorkel session. While stationed, families can easily wade or paddleboard to Shell Island to scoop up some scallops or conchs as a souvenir.

COST
\$40 adults; \$30 children 3-12;
\$10 infants 2 & under
[islandTimeSailing.com/
shell-island-dolphin-
snorkel-cruise/](http://islandTimeSailing.com/shell-island-dolphin-snorkel-cruise/)

PRIVATE CHARTERS & TOURS

If you want the privacy of your own boat but the expertise of a local tour guide, look no further than booking a charter with Blue Dolphin Tours. Whether you're looking for a romantic day in the sun with your significant other or want to bring the whole family along, your captain will supply the ultimate expedition. As opposed to larger commercial tour boats, this quiet modest craft is less likely to intimidate the dolphins you'll spot and swim with along the way. Once you reach your destination, snorkel, beachcomb and soak in some rays to make the most of your day.

COST
\$49 per person (2-hour tour);
\$249/ boat (2-hour tour,
max of 6 people);
\$349 (3-hour tour); \$449
(4-hour, private family tour)
BlueDolphinTour.com



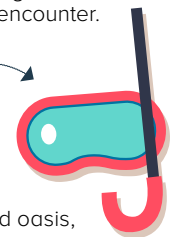
SHELL ISLAND SHUTTLE

IF YOU'RE ON A DESERTED ISLAND, AND CAN ONLY BRING 5 THINGS ...



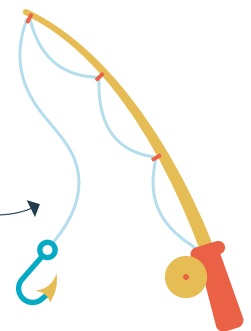
CAMERA Shell Island is a barrier island, meaning it hosts a variety of ecosystems within its salt marshes, pine-scrub forests, dunes and barrier flats. You'll want to have your camera ready for any deer, ghost crabs, nesting birds or sea turtles you might encounter.

SNORKEL GEAR Starfish, sponges, seahorses and tropical fish thrive just offshore.



COOLER Shell Island is an unspoiled oasis, meaning there are no public facilities or concessions available. Be sure to pack plenty of water and snacks — and ensure your space is clean before you leave.

FISHING ROD Redfish, mackerel, and sea trout — oh, my. Just keep in mind that you'll need a Florida fishing license to cast at Shell Island.



BEACH BAG A tote to contain your towels, sunscreen and shells. It wouldn't be Shell Island if it wasn't furnished with hundreds of sand dollars, conchs and pen shells to collect.

Hello Summer



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YOUR FAVORITE
four-legged friends
are free to roam
the beach across
from Pier Park, but
there's so much
more for canines
to stick their nose
in around Panama
City Beach.



DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

Vacation fun for everyone
— no matter how many legs

BY KIM HARRIS THACKER

For many families, a vacation isn't a family vacation unless all members of the family are present, including the four-legged ones. These families look for vacation destinations that promise good times and home-away-from-home accommodations for humans and canines alike — vacation destinations such as Panama City Beach.


In this gorgeous beach town, your pup can frolic in the waves, join your family for an al fresco lunch at a pet-friendly restaurant, run off-leash in the doggie enclosures at a city park, tag along on a stroll through a popular shopping and entertainment district — and more.

The pet-friendly locations and venues found in this article are a sampling of the many that are available in Panama City Beach. A more comprehensive list can be found on the Visit Panama City Beach website, visitpanamacitybeach.com.





com. Under the “Places to Stay” tab is the heading, “Pet-friendly Accommodations.” This is where you’ll discover the perfect place for your family to crash after you’ve spent your day in serious play. By using the Visit Panama City Beach website’s “Make it Yours” feature, you can customize your vacation to fit the specific wants and needs of everyone in your family, including the four-legged kind.

Now, hang onto your leash, it’s time to learn about dog-friendly Panama City Beach 

DOG BEACH

Located across from Pier Park and on the west side of Russell-Fields Pier (16101 Front Beach Road), lies a 400-foot stretch of white sand that comprises Dog Beach — the dog-friendly section of City Beach. Dogs on leashes are allowed here, but there is a limit of three dogs per visitor. Visitors can enter the beach via Public Beach Accesses 56 and 57. There is no fee, and the beach is open from sunrise to sunset.

Will Spivey, Aquatics and Beach Superintendent for Panama City Beach’s Parks and Recreation Department, says, “We are happy to have a place where dogs and their owners can play at the beach. There is fresh water available at the top of the beach accesses, and we have a pet waste station on the beachside of both accesses.

We ask that folks be courteous and pick up after their pets as well as maintain control of them while at the beach.”

To ensure that your memories at Dog Beach are happy ones, you may wish to pack an extra collar for your dog. A collar that becomes wet with saltwater can be itchy and become very painful. It’s also wise to bathe your pet in fresh water after he or she spends time in the Gulf. In addition, be aware of the temperature of the sand. If it’s hot on your bare feet, it’s sure to be uncomfortable on your dog’s paws.

DINING

Your dog won’t be the only member of your family to drool at the sight of the scrumptious cuisine offered at Panama City Beach’s restaurants, many of which welcome canines on leashes in their outdoor dining areas. Try Pineapple Willy’s: Servers provide pets with lots of fresh water, and a few have been known to give out treats and belly-rubs.

I scream, you scream, even Fido screams for ice cream. The Pink Pelican Ice Cream Bar has two outdoor tables where dog owners can sit, relax and possibly (probably) share a slurp of ice cream with

their pet. This fun ice cream parlor is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., every day.

If you’re headed out the door late for drinks, visit Hofbrau Beer Garden in Pier Park, across the road from Dog Beach. The outdoor dining area is shady and gated-off from the rest of the Pier Park foot traffic. For early morning coffee, head to Starbucks: They have 10 dog-friendly, outdoor tables and even offer coffee-free “Puppaccinos” to fur-babies.

CITY PARKS

Frank Brown Park boasts a fenced-in, leash-free puppy playground. The park also has 1.5 miles of trails and greenways that are perfect for strolling with leashed companions.

Aaron Bessant Park, next to Pier Park, is another pet-friendly city park. Dogs are even welcome at the park’s “Summer Concert Series,” which is held every Thursday night throughout the summer at the park’s outdoor amphitheater. Just remember to keep your dog on a leash and clean up after him or her.

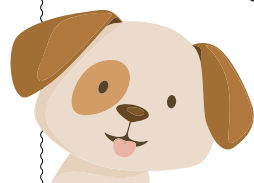
Panama City Beach Conservation Park is a pet-friendly wilderness park that contains miles of trails and boardwalks perfect for dogs on leashes. These trails are open every day — as is the rest of the park — from sunrise to sunset.

PIER PARK

Dogs that are on leashes are welcome in Pier Park; however, with the exception of Ron Jon Surf Shop, they are not allowed in the stores or restaurants. No matter — there is an endless variety of things to do and see at this deluxe outdoor venue. Pier Park often hosts entertainment from local music groups, too. ●

Great Health, Great Vacation

Keep your pet healthy while on vacation with the help of these tips from Dr. Matt LeBleu, a veterinarian at Animal Care Center Panama City Beach



THINGS TO BRING ON VACATION

- » Flea prevention/parasite control, due to exposure to common pet areas in condos, etc.
- » Medical records/vaccine history, in case veterinary care is required.
- » Extra medication for your pet, if he or she is on regular medication.

TIPS

1 Watch your pet carefully while on the beach. Dr. LeBleu sees

a high number of sand impaction cases that are caused by pets ingesting sand. He adds that sand toxicity is also possible when a pet is playing on the beach, as are health problems caused by drinking ocean water.

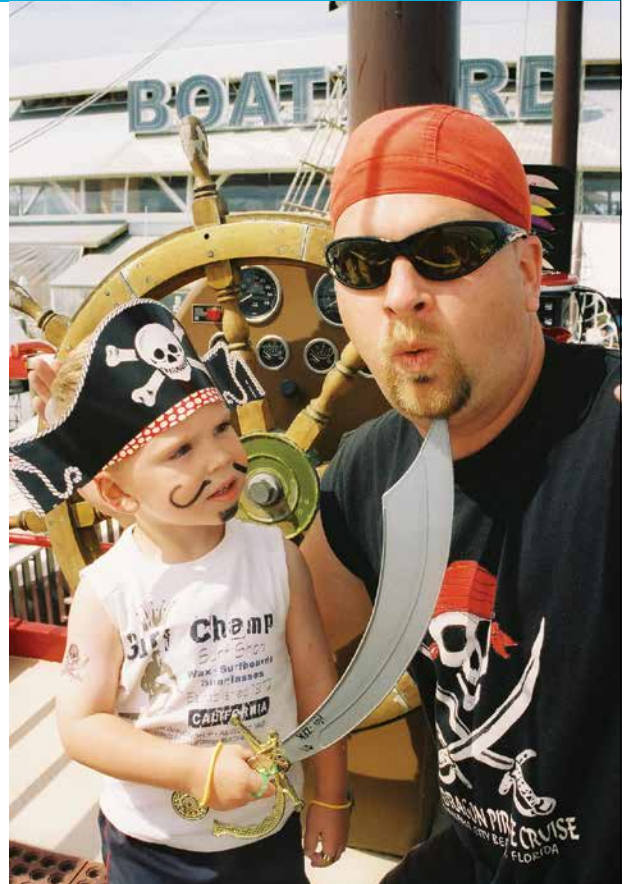
2 To avoid heat stroke, provide your pet with plenty of shade and fresh drinking water, whether you’re on the beach or at the park.

3 Be aware that your pet may experience increased anxiety while on vacation, especially if he or she has noise phobia. For example, fireworks on the Fourth

of July can be very stressful for a pet. Consider medications to help your pet stay calm and comfortable. In addition, traveling can cause a pet to experience stress-induced diarrhea.

4 Dr. LeBleu cautions against traveling with animals that have major health concerns, because doing so can sometimes exacerbate conditions and force emergency visits. Dr. LeBleu says, “We’ve seen many vacations ruined due to pet-parents being faced with a euthanasia decision while away from home with their pet.”

“Sea Dragon” Pirate Cruise



5325 N. Lagoon Drive
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Come, if you dare, to walk in a pirate's shoes and see through a pirate's eyes! Enjoy an exciting and scenic two-hour family adventure cruise that includes dolphin sightings, great music and non-stop pirate activities for the kids. Cold beer, soda, snacks, T-shirts and pirate souvenirs are available on board, as well as clean restrooms.

We're located on Grand Lagoon at the Lighthouse Marina. Open March through October!

Pop the Question in Paradise

TOP 10 SPOTS FOR A PANAMA CITY BEACH PROPOSAL

BY HANNAH BURKE

Panama City Beach hosts thousands of destination weddings each year – and for good reason. Boasting some of the most beautiful beaches in the world, historic state parks and ample urban attractions, there are hundreds of venues ideal for tying the knot – but even more for popping the question. Whether you're getting down on one knee for the first time or renewing your vows, these 10 venues are sure to set the mood.



Ocean Jewel's Images



THE TIMELESS NATURE of Panama City Beach's sand and surf can prove to be a perfect metaphor for couples pledging their lives to each other.



SKYWHEEL AT PIER PARK

A 200-foot ascent into the clear blue sky has hearts fluttering as you and your loved one are treated to a bird's eye view of the ocean and cityscape. Not your typical Ferris wheel, this air-conditioned, glass-encased gondola creates an intimate, serene ambience à la London Eye. While your breath is already taken away by the gorgeous vista at the apex of the observation wheel, it's the perfect time to ask your soulmate to share many more of these moments with you for the rest of your lives. They'll be on cloud nine. SkyWheel is set to open this summer.

ST. ANDREWS STATE PARK/ CAMP HELEN STATE PARK

If Panama City Beach's main strip of shore is a bit too public for your liking, the private beach access and pristine woodlands of St. Andrews and Camp Helen State Parks are ideal for the eco-crazy couple. The winding trails of each park offer premier

hiking, birding and picnicking beneath a cool canopy of pines and palms, allowing couples to get lost in their own private slice of nature. If your S.O. can't get enough of the water, canoeing through Camp Helen's Lake Powell or cruising to Shell Island produces an ideal moment to bring out the ring.

FIREFLY RESTAURANT

If you're going to pop the question mid-dinner, the impeccable recipe is selecting a setting with enchanting ambiance, a mouthwatering menu and excellent wait staff to ensure all goes smoothly. Luckily, Firefly is the complete package, placing among the ranks of OpenTable's Top 100 Most Romantic Restaurants in America. A live, ancient oak tree's branches span throughout the dining room, adorned with warm string lights and paper lanterns to illuminate your meal. With selections of fresh seafood, sushi, steaks

and sweets, this is sure to be a repast, and a proposal, to remember.

GRAND LAGOON CRUISE

If your style is more traditional than trendy, you can't go wrong with a classic sunset setting. But add in a dreamy sail across the sea, champagne in hand, while dolphins leap across the horizon — now you've created something out of a fairy tale. Island Time Sailing's catamaran allows plenty of room for your closest friends and family members to come along and witness your big moment. It's only appropriate your happily ever after includes gliding off into the sunset with your beloved.

CONSERVATION PARK

Make it a scavenger hunt, set up a romantic rest spot or spontaneously lower to one knee during your hike through the 2,900 acres that Conservation Park has to offer for the ultimate, alfresco engagement. Active

couples can bike along the boardwalks or rough it on a run through the wetlands to get their hearts pumping before dropping the big question.

AARON BESSANT PARK

Aaron Bessant Park's amphitheater is easily one of the hottest concert venues in PCB, attracting thousands to its 70-acre lawn, where big names take the stage. For the couple who loves scoping out the local music scene and getting down to some raw, live talent, proposing during a moonlit rock show couldn't be dreamier. Post-show, take a stroll along the park's numerous looping trails for some stargazing.

GULF WORLD

Sometimes you need a little help to pull off the perfect proposal. Enlist the help of dolphins (and their humans) at Gulf World Marine Park, and they'll put on a fin-tastic water show. The grand finale: One of the sweetest dolphins breaching the water with a "Will You Marry Me?" buoy between its teeth! To finish the experience, book a "Royal Swim" for you and your bride-to-be to dive alongside these playful porpoises.

AIRBOAT ADVENTURES

You and your partner are adrenaline junkies; serene, sunset sails just aren't for you. Instead, take a tour with Airboat Adventures, and your chariot is a swift n' speedy watercraft whose hefty Chevy engines propel you through the stunning wetlands of PCB. Dolphins, gators and gorgeous, native birds make the perfect audience for your proposal, and the wind in your hair promises an exhilarating life together.

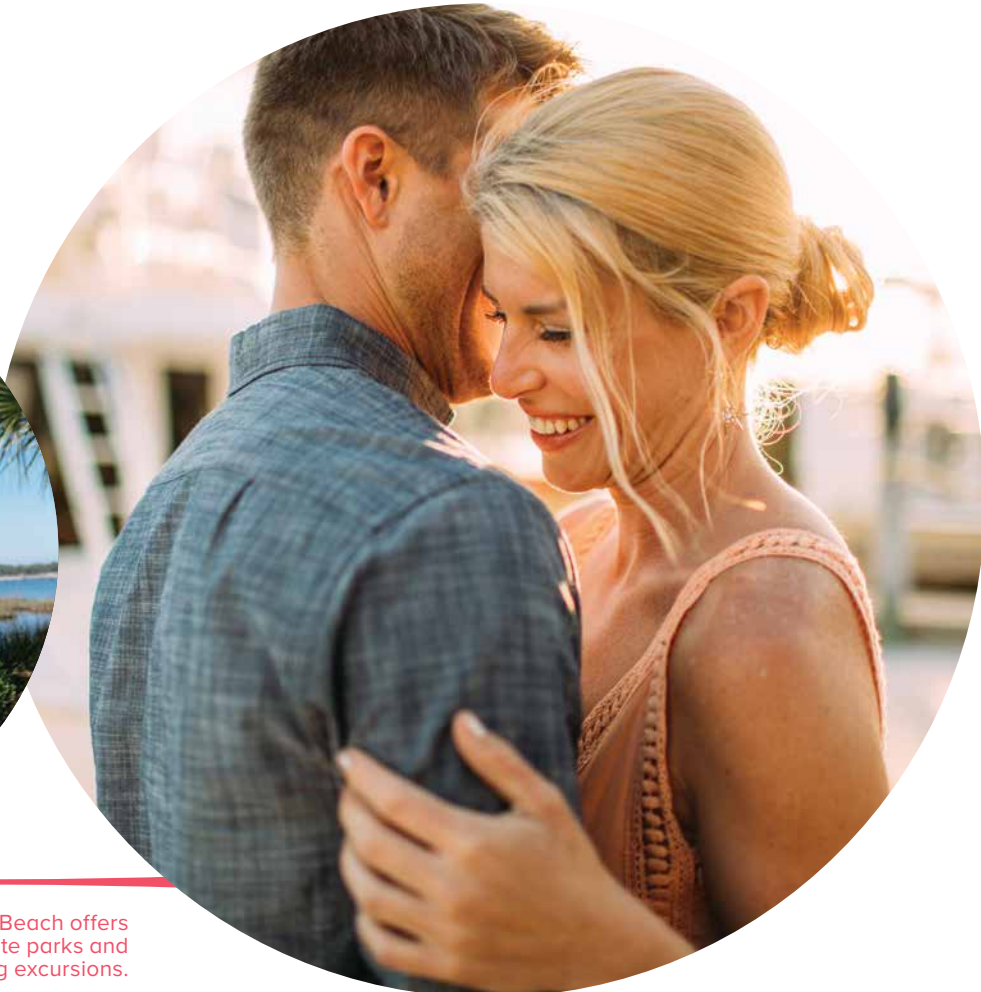
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WINNING FORMULA

‘Odd couple’ brings
new chemistry to
Chasin’ The Sun

BY STEVE BORNHOFT

CHASIN' THE SUN has seen an uptick in popularity and notoriety after moving to Discovery Channel for Season 3.



Saltwater guide Justin Leake doesn't engage in self-promotion on the Chasin' the Sun fishing show that he co-hosts. He refrains from mentioning his guide service or his contact information.

Still, he has benefitted from the program, which, effective with the airing of the first episode of its third season on Jan. 6, moved from Destination America to Discovery Channel and its much larger viewership.

"I'm hearing from people from different parts of the country who have seen the show and are making plans to come to Panama City Beach," Capt. Leake said. "They saw an episode, then they went online looking for fishing guides and they wound up calling me. Most of the callers don't even realize that I'm the host of the show, but when I tell them I am, of course that makes for an easy sell."

Season 3 comprises 13 episodes that air on Saturday mornings and feature quarries ranging from bull redfish to bruising amberjacks and delectable stone crabs. (Episodes become available for viewing online a day after they are shown on Discovery Channel.)

The program also includes lifestyle segments that introduce viewers to the myriad activities that Panama City Beach offers visitors. The premiere episode, for example, checked in with the popular Thomas' Donut and Snack Shop and the miniature golf courses and maze at the Coconut Creek Family Fun Park.

From the standpoint of Panama City Beach's tourism industry, the show's formula has been a success.

"It's hard to isolate variables," Leake said in February, "but Panama City Beach is off to the best start-of-the-year it has ever enjoyed. And I think that Chasin' the Sun has been a factor in that."

As a result of the move to Discovery Channel, the show has been able to attract a sponsor mix that includes local and national businesses. So it is that Royal American Beach Getaways and Pirates Cove Marina in Bay County have been joined by Islamorada Boat Works, Kicker, Pelican Products, Mercury Marine, Dulce Vida, Florida Fishing Products, Native Eyewear, Z-Man, Power-Pole and Xtratuf.

"The feedback we're getting from our sponsors has been good," said Leake, a Bay County native. "Very good."

In Season 3, Leake has been joined as host by Capt. Travis Holeman, a tournament fisherman and guide out of the Florida Keys. Holeman finds fish by relying on his gut and reading the water after heading out. Leake is far more systematic and never leaves the dock without a plan. Leake is a self-described "OCD neat freak" for whom there is only one way to organize the tackle on his boat. One look at Holeman's mammoth beard and you know that tidiness is not his thing.

"Before he joined the show, I knew Travis and had hung out with him a little bit," Leake noted. "But he and I had never shared a boat before, and that can

be a true test of a relationship between two guys, especially when each is used to being the captain. So, I'll be honest, I was a little nervous about how things were going to work out."

As it turns out, the Odd Couple-style relationship works fine.

"Travis is way laid back," Leake has found. "He indulges my way of doing things and just goes with the flow, and we have a good time kidding each other about our differences." ●

"I'm hearing from people from different parts of the country who have seen the show and are making plans to come to Panama City Beach. They saw an episode, then they went online looking for fishing guides and they wound up calling me. Most of the callers don't even realize that I'm the host of the show, but when I tell them I am, of course that makes for an easy sell." — JUSTIN LEAKE

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ON THE REBOUND

Red snapper populations are on the rise

BY STEVE BORNHOFT // ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN RUSSO

It makes sense that a creature as beautiful as the red snapper, like the prettiest girl on the playground, would precipitate contests.

Indeed, the American red, as it is sometimes called, has been at the center of controversy for years as regulators, recreational fishermen and commercial fishing operations have debated the appropriateness of curtailed seasons and catch limits, imposed to allow a fish deemed to be overfished to rebound.

The good news is that all parties agree that red snapper numbers are up, dramatically so.

On land, the red snapper surfaces everywhere. With the exception, perhaps, of the blue marlin, it figures in business names and logos in Florida more than any other fish.

Bottom fishermen know to make things easy for the red snapper by offering it baits that are cut rather than whole. It is equipped nonetheless

with teeth as sharp as fish hooks that enable it to tear up even the invasive lionfish, usually thought to be immune to predation. That turnabout may be seen as fair play; lionfish are tough on populations of juvenile snapper.

The red snapper in its lead role is joined by understudies, including the mutton snapper and the vermilion snapper, two fish known around Panama City Beach by other names. Here, the mutton is a “black snapper” and the vermilion — a party boat staple — is a “beeliner.”

Neither approaches the mature red snapper’s cartoonishly large size. The Florida all-tackle record stands at a whopping 46 pounds, 8 ounces.

Imagine the platter that fish required. ●



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LIONFISH



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(MUTTON SNAPPER)

BEELINER
(VERMILION SNAPPER)

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↑ GRAND LAGOON WATERFRONT MARKET WEEKENDS

The market hosts the region's favorite makers, bakers and growers on Saturday and Sunday mornings from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Capt. Anderson's Marina. Hailed by The New York Times as one of the "Top 10 Things to do at PCB," the market stays open year-round for locals and visitors alike. WaterfrontMarkets.org

GROOVIN' ON THE GREEN

Weekly from May 27–Sept. 2 Enjoy an evening of music at Carillon Beach's Village Green for this summer concert series. Admission is free and guests are welcome to bring chairs, blankets and coolers with your beverage of choice while listening to a myriad of musical stylings — including bluegrass, top 40, beach, reggae, country, blues and jazz. facebook.com/GroovinOnTheGreen

MOVIES AND MORE

June 1, 15 & 29; July 13 & 27 Camp Helen State Park offers a summer full of movies, food and fun with a series of family-oriented movies, environmental interpretive programs and old-fashioned campfire cookouts. FriendsOfCampHelen.org

KALEIDOSCOPE THEATRE

Sunday, Friday, Saturday until June 3 The area's all-volunteer community theatre will have three weekly shows of "End Days" this summer. The theater will also host a summer camp for children fourth grade and above from June 11-16. The cost of the camp is \$150 per child (\$120 for each additional child in the same family), and includes a T-shirt, daily snacks and drinks and pizza lunch on the final day. Campers bring their own lunch Monday–Friday. KT-Online.org

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

June 7–Aug. 9 (Thursdays) Hot summer nights are made for music, and the Summer Concert Series has become a beloved summertime tradition in

REAL.FUN.FOURTH.

No Independence Day is complete without sparkling, vibrant fireworks displays. Start the day off right by shopping and eating with family and friends at Panama City Beach's Pier Park. Then, when the sun begins to set, head down to the water's edge and claim a front row seat for a spectacular fireworks show.

LIGHT UP THE BAY

July 1
Sheraton Bay Point

FREEDOM ROCKS

July 3
Grand Lagoon

STAR SPANGLED SPECTACULAR

July 4
City and County Pier

VETERANS MEMORIAL CEREMONY

July 4
Aaron Bessant Park

REAL.FUN.FOURTH. CONCERT WITH FIREWORKS

July 5
Aaron Bessant Park

LIGHT UP THE GULF

July 6
Boardwalk Beach Hotel





SCHOONERS

LOBSTER FESTIVAL & TOURNAMENT SEPT. 17-23

The biggest seven-day lobster festival in Florida takes place at Schooners during the middle of September. Lobster tournament divers hunt for local lobsters and vie for prizes, while spectators devour delicious lobster dishes and participate in a sand-sculpting contest. Schooners.com

PCB. Enjoy a free concert at the park every Thursday at Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater — bring your lawn chair and blankets and enjoy the sounds of summer music. Coolers, food and pets are welcome. The 2018 lineup can be found at VisitPanamaCityBeach.com

A NIGHT OUT WITH LORRIE MORGAN

June 9 Country music legend Lorrie Morgan, with over 12 million records sold worldwide, brings her tour to Aaron Bessant Park for a special summer show. Lorrie.com/Events

PANAMA CITY BEACH UCA CHEER AND DANCE CAMPS

June 1-8, 11-14, 18-21 (Laketown Wharf); June 7-10 (Edgewater Beach Resort) Do summer the right way at one of Universal Cheerleaders Association's instructional cheer and dance camps, where you can learn from instructors made up of college cheerleaders from some of the top teams in the country. VisitUCAVarsity.com for more information.

GRAND SLAM WORLD SERIES OF BASEBALL

Session 1&2: June 18-24, June 25-July 1; Session 3&4: July 1-7, 23-29

Come see youth teams from around the country hit the beach for the Grand Slam World Series of Baseball at Frank Brown Park. GrandSlamTournaments.com/Baseball

USFA WORLD SERIES

July 9-14 & 16-21 Check out some of the nation's best fast pitch softball teams at the annual USFA World Series at Frank Brown Park. USFAStpitch.com

GRAND LAGOON GRAND SLAM FISHING TOURNAMENT

Aug. 10-11 This offshore fishing tournament is limited to outboard powered fishing boats (including center consoles, walkarounds, cuddly cabin boats, catamarans, etc.). Teams will target gamefish and billfish, including tuna, wahoo and dolphin. GrandLagoonGrandSlam.com

PEPSI GULF COAST JAM

Aug. 31-Sept. 2 Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, a three-day celebration of sun, fun and country music, will host its fifth annual festival on the Gulf Coast shores of Panama City Beach. Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam will provide the best of today's country music for an audience of more than 15,000 people on the coast.

Festival-goers will stand on the white sugar sand beach and dip their toes in the water during the day and watch their favorite performers at night. As the sun begins to set, patrons will ride free shuttles to the stage at Frank Brown Park. GulfCoastJam.com

WORLD SOFTBALL LEAGUE WORTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

I - Sept. 7-9; II - Sept. 14-16; III - Sept. 21-23

Come see the best teams in men's and women's softball fight for the title at the WSL World Championships. Three separate tournaments will determine who is the best at the beach. PlayWSL.com

PIRATES OF THE HIGH SEAS FESTIVAL

Oct. 5-7 Columbus Day weekend brings waves of fun-filled adventure to Panama City Beach each year with this annual event at Pier Park. The whole family can play together, and weekend activities include a scavenger hunt, pirate invasions, water battle, kids parade and main parade, live music, fireworks and much more. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com

BLOODY MARY & MUSIC FESTIVAL

Oct. 20 Enjoy all-you-can-drink bloody mary samples from over two dozen vendors before casting your vote for the best bloody mary. The winner (the "Big Tomato") will be awarded a trophy and bragging rights. A full bar and local eats will also be available. Admission is \$20 per person (\$15 for military/first responders with ID). The spectacular Grand Lagoon provides the backdrop for this event, hosted by Schooners Last Local Beach Club. GrandLagoon.org

THUNDER BEACH MOTORCYCLE RALLY

Oct. 24-28 Motorcyclists will be roaring into town to celebrate the annual spring rally and the autumn events. Bikers from around the nation head south to enjoy contests, rocking entertainment and bike shows. Known as "The Most Biker Friendly FREE Rally in the United States," Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally is held twice yearly in Panama City Beach during the first weekend in May and mid-October. Bikers from around the country enjoy scenic rides along the Emerald Coast, live entertainment and local cuisine. ThunderBeachProductions.com

IRONMAN FLORIDA Nov. 3

What began as a challenge between groups of Navy SEALs has become one of the most recognized endurance



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events in the world. The Ironman consists of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run, with the Florida edition of the challenge serving as one of the most popular races on the circuit. Too much to take on? Check out the new Ironman 70.3 Gulf Coast in May ... half the course with all the fun! Ironman.com

SNAPPER BOWL

Nov. 22–25 The longest running premier youth football postseason tournament in the country returns to Frank Brown Park and Pete Edwards Field in Panama City Beach. The Snapper Bowl brings in top teams from around the United States for three days of the best youth football anywhere. SnapperBowl.com

BEACH HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Nov. 23–24 Kicking off Thanksgiving weekend, Beach Home for the Holidays includes a fun-filled lineup of activities and events to entice families from far and wide to build new traditions and celebrate the season together in Panama City Beach. Highlights include

the lighting of a 100-foot Christmas tree, magical Santa’s Village and holiday music concerts (past acts include Wynonna Judd, John Berry and Panama City POPS Orchestra) at Aaron Bessant Park. VisitPanamaCityBeach.com

PANAMA CITY BEACH MARATHON

Dec. 1 Runners can choose from a marathon, half-marathon, 5K or kid’s fun run in this popular annual event — regardless of the division, all win with a view of the Gulf of Mexico to guide them along. PCBMarathon.com

NEW YEAR’S EVE BEACH BALL DROP

Dec. 31 Celebrate New Year’s Eve on the beach. A family-friendly countdown at 8 p.m. culminates with fireworks and 10,000 beach balls being dropped over the crowd. As the seconds tick down to midnight, thousands of revelers watch the Celebration Tower as a glowing beach ball descends to signify the start of a New Year and kicks off a second round of fireworks. Live music sets a festive tone all night long! VisitPanamaCityBeach.com



EMERALD COAST CRUIZIN’ CAR SHOW NOV. 7–10

Twice a year, Panama City Beach pays homage to the classics ... cars that is. Activities at Aaron Bessant Park include cruise-ins, concerts, parties, vendors, food, parades and celebrity appearances. Car enthusiasts of all ages are welcome to check out the thousands of hot rods, customs, muscle cars, trucks and classics on display. EmeraldCoastCruizin.com

YEARLY EVENTS

PANAMA CITY BEACH MARDI GRAS AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

February The most family-friendly Mardi Gras celebration on the Gulf Coast, this two-day festival takes place in Pier Park and is one of the most fun Mardi Gras events anywhere. Enjoy a weekend filled with parades, float tours, street fair, kids zone and live music (and lots and lots of beads). VisitPanamaCityBeach.com

SEABREEZE JAZZ FESTIVAL

April Named a “Top 10 Jazz Festival in the USA” by JazzIZ Magazine and recently nominated as “Best Jazz Festival” at the Oasis Smooth Jazz Awards, the Seabreeze Jazz Festival combines top national smooth jazz artists with a full weekend of fun, sun, great beaches and good times — all on the west end of Panama City Beach. The event attracts thousands of fans from the U.S., Canada and Europe for the ultimate performance-packed weekend of jazz. SeabreezeJazzFestival.com

JEEP BEACH JAM

May Jeep enthusiasts from throughout the United States travel to Frank Brown Park for this five-day event dedicated to all things Jeep. Industry-leading companies will be present with information, seminars and merchandise. This family-friendly event includes obstacle courses, bonfires, jeep parade, bounce houses, live music and more. JeepBeachJam.com





UNWINE D YEARLY EVENT

March Guests can raise a glass while mixing and mingling with elite chefs, mixologists and top tastemakers at this hip signature spring event. UNwineD features superb craft beer, spirits and wine from around the world, along with culinary creations by Northwest Florida's leading chefs, accompanied by outstanding musical talent (2017 featured Birmingham-based soul band St. Paul & the Broken Bones). VisitPanamCityBeach.com



HOT PICKS FOR *Summer*

Summer on the beach is all about looking cool and feeling cool, whether it's with some designer shades or the shade from your hat. But while you are out and about, pick up an eclectic piece from a beach boutique to liven up your home decor.

AVENUE SEA

Featured on Visit Panama City Beach's Décor by The Shore Shopping Trail, Avenue Sea provides high quality coastal treasures and unique décor. These Beatriz Ball serving dishes are not only beautiful but they are also durable. The artfully crafted sand-cast metal can withstand high temperatures, making them the perfect serving dish for any beach party. Avenue Sea also allows you to sample wine and beer while you shop — what more could you ask for?

101 Bluefish Drive, Suite 120,
Pier Park, (850) 708-3210





LIZARD THICKET

Looking for the perfect pair of shorts for summer? Or maybe a trendy, summer concert outfit? Lizard Thicket provides a wide range of summer style for your next adventure. Stay cool in their JBD jean cut offs, perfect to pair with your favorite swimsuit as you stroll the sugar white sands of Panama City Beach. Dress up your date night with Lizard's floral and striped dress, paired perfectly with a simple neutral wedge. **15565 Starfish Street, Suite 105**

NATIVE EYEWEAR

Since 1998, NATIVE Eyewear has been providing quality sunglasses for beachgoers across the world. Using the highest quality lens technology and a lightweight, durable frame design, there is a pair of glasses for every adventure. Chasin' The Sun stars Captain Justin Leake and Captain Travis Holeman can be seen sporting a pair of NATIVE eyewear while fishing the turquoise waters of Panama City Beach. **12400 Front Beach Rd, (850) 235-9876**



THE BOARDROOM

Located on the east end of the beach, The Boardroom has everything you need for a perfect day on the water. This cleverly named surf shop provides a balance of expertise and passion while providing their customers the most affordable paddleboards and surf equipment on the beach. While exploring the Gulf on your new Starboard paddleboard, protect your face from the summer rays with a Tormenter straw hat. It's perfect for any summer day. **8011 Thomas Drive, (850) 866-3805**



A COOL BREEZE

Freeze

Put your day at the beach on ice

STORY BY LIESEL SCHMIDT // PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BOINI

Sun+Sand+Water+(??) = The Ultimate Beach Experience. If you're like most adults, the missing part of the equation is a frozen drink, the kind that takes you away from the cares of the rest of the world and helps you feel more relaxed with every sip. And who better than the mix masters in Panama City Beach to create frozen drinks that'll take your tongue on a vacation? Whether you're a fan of the traditional margarita or want to drink outside the box, for something fun and fabulous, the beach can't be beat. So sit back, relax and sip on.

BAREFOOT HIDE A WAY GRILL

Offering great coastal cuisine within view of the beach, Barefoot Hide A Way Grill accents its refreshing fare with frozen drinks that'll make you want to slip off your shoes and walk barefoot in the sand. Slicing up some cool and creamy tartness, the Key Lime Piña Colada is the perfect frozen blend of

Blue Chair Bay Key Lime rum cream, Naked Turtle Rum and Island Oasis Piña Colada mix garnished with a sweet dollop of whipped cream and fresh cut lime. For something smooth and tropical, sip on the Miami Vice, a three-layered freeze of Naked Turtle Rum, Island Oasis Strawberry mix and Island Oasis Piña Colada mix garnished with cool and creamy whipped cream, a sweet pineapple wedge and a cherry. Shoes off or on, the frozen drinks at Barefoot will cool you down from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. [15405 Front Beach Road, \(850\) 249-2031, barefoothideawaygrill.com](http://15405FrontBeachRoad.com)

FLIP FLOPS POOL BAR

Perfect for its poolside setting, Flip Flops Pool Bar at the Sheraton Bay Point Resort will get you chillin' with their Freezling and Frosé frozen wine beverages, two fun takes on traditional varietals made with Riesling and Rosé wines blended with ice and fruit

syrups. Served in hurricane glasses and garnished with a strawberry, these curvy gals are an ideal way to cool off from the sun and still satisfy your inner wine snob. [Sheraton Bay Point Resort, 4114 Jan Cooley Drive, \(850\) 236-6000, SheratonBayPoint.com](http://SheratonBayPointResort.com)

PINEAPPLE WILLY'S

Chill out with a grown-up version of tropical punch, just frozen. A recent addition to Pineapple Willy's popular menu of frozen drinks, this punch features a blend of Fat Tuesday Daiquiri Mix and rum, served up in a fun Pineapple

COOL OFF this summer with one of a bevy of frozen drinks available in Panama City Beach.





~~~~~  
**PICK A FLAVOR,**  
any flavor — variety  
is the spice of life  
on the beach.  
~~~~~



Willy's souvenir cup garnished with an orange slice and a cherry. Love an orange Dreamsicle? Order the 190 Octane, a slushee on speed made with vodka, Diesel 190 Proof and daiquiri mix that tastes like your favorite childhood treat — with a major punch. Garnished with an orange slice, this is one frozen drink that'll rev your engine. [9875 South Thomas Drive, \(850\) 235-0928, pwillys.com](https://www.pwillys.com)

SCHOONERS

Blending up their frozen drinks to order rather than boozing out a batch, Schooners tricks out their cocktail menu with a range of cool concoctions, including top-shelf margaritas using nothing but the best. Pouring on the Cabo Wabo, Don Julio and Patron, each margarita is finished with Grand Marnier and fresh agave nectar as it takes a spin through the blender to become a drink that'll really put the wind in your sails. Take the traditional route or go a little off-course with one of their signature blends, such as the Key Lime Pie Margarita, a tasty freeze made with Island rum, Ke Ke Key Lime Liquor, ice cream mix and ice. Feeling a little bananas? Order the Banana Bailey's Colada made with Island rum, pineapple juice, coconut milk, Bailey's Irish Cream, crème de banana and ice. With so many drinks to try, Schooners has a frozen drink menu whose flavor never flags. [5121 Gulf Drive, \(850\) 235-3555, schooners.com](https://www.schooners.com)

SHARKY'S

Sharky's might not have an extensive menu, but their track record of selling more than 5,000 frozen drinks per year proves their high-proof beverages have some bite. Using Fat Tuesday brand daiquiri mix and Endless Summer rum, the frozen drinks at Sharky's are the perfect way to chill out and sip the island vibe. Topping the hit list are the Pina Colada, Strawberry, Margarita and Shark Fuel — a biting blend



of 153-proof grain alcohol and Fat Tuesday's 190-octane mix. Sweet and fruity or tangy with a twist, Sharky's frozen drinks are a shark attack of flavor served with a cool, cool smile. [15201 Front Beach Road, \(850\) 235-2420, sharkysbeach.com](https://www.sharkysbeach.com)

SPINNAKER BEACH CLUB AND PARADISE GRILL

Putting their own "Spin" on the Gulf Coast's iconic Bushwhacker, Spinnaker Beach Club's signature Banana Bushwhacker is an ingenious creation that takes all the shake-like drink's original ingredients and blends them with banana and coconut cream rums to make a delightful freeze that might make you go ape. Served in a 3-D souvenir cup and topped off with whipped cream, Spinnaker's boozed-up banana-rama is worth your time. Show your love of country with the Old Glory, a layered slushy sip of red, white and blue that layers up red strawberry daiquiri with pina colada and blue raspberry. Sip on a signature mix original or order one of their classics, and Spinnaker will definitely spin some fun into your day. [8795 Thomas Drive, \(850\) 234-7892, spinnakerbeachclub.com](https://www.spinnakerbeachclub.com) ●

Dulce Vida Tequila

Serving as a sponsor to the Chasin' The Sun fishing show, Dulce Vida Tequila is known along our beaches as one of the highest quality tequilas on the market. Dulce Vida crafts their tequila with some of the finest ingredients, including 100 percent blue agave distilled in the village of San Ignacio Cerro Gordo, Mexico. The next time you plan on creating your own frozen treat, consider including this award-winning spirit!





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Florida's Unknown Beauty

A german blogger gives her unique take on PCB

BY JANA ZIESENIS

COTTAGES NEAR
PIER PARK



Anyone who wants to visit Florida inevitably thinks of places such as Miami, the Florida Keys or Orlando. But Florida has more to offer, and Panama City Beach is a prime example. For me, Panama City Beach is the perfect blend of the most beautiful and whitest sandy beaches I've ever seen, with super-relaxed and friendly people, and a kitchen that is unparalleled — especially in America.

I am glad that I did not let Google dissuade me with pictures of skyscraper-lined beaches and spring break rumors as I tried to choose the location for my first Florida trip. For one, the skyscrapers are only in the center (and around it, deserted beaches), and they offer a chance to watch dolphins, turtles and manta rays. And since alcohol is banned on the beach, spring break parties are also a thing of the past. Instead, people are concentrating on families and individual travelers. Sound good? So here are my tips for restaurants, excursions and how to get around during your trip to Panama City Beach.

HOW TO GET TO PANAMA CITY BEACH

Panama City Beach has its own airport, so a person can now land directly in the city with a change in Houston or Atlanta, saving you the detour through Panama City. Flight time lasts about 12-14 hours (from Germany) — but it is definitely worth it. If you're planning a longer tour of Florida or the U.S., you can visit Panama City Beach on your way west to New Orleans or on your way south to Tampa (or Naples, the Everglades and Miami further down the state).

THINGS TO DO IN PANAMA CITY BEACH

Panama City Beach is perfect for relaxing — as any beach vacation should. But those who want to be active (like me), or want to experience something new or try the city's unique cuisine will also be happy in Panama City Beach. The choice of water sports includes scuba diving, snorkeling, stand-up paddling, kayaking or jet skiing.

» **PIER PARK** Right in the heart of Panama City Beach is Pier Park. Next to the pier, there is a business center with restaurants, bars and shops. If you are looking for curious or beautiful souvenirs, clothes (and the best ice cream in the city), you can stroll from shop to shop. Especially curious: there is also a “Hofbräu” house, which is affectionately pronounced by the locals “Halfbrow.” The most beautiful spot is spending sunset on the pier and the adjacent beach. It is here that the locals gather, sit on the dunes and enjoy their evening.

» **ST. ANDREWS STATE PARK** Southeast of the city lies St. Andrews State Park. Here you can enjoy not only the 1.5 miles of powdered white sand beach and turquoise sea, but also various water sports, such as diving, snorkeling or, in my case, stand-up paddling. Throughout the park are also various hiking trails where alligators and other rare species can be observed. Not a single building blocks the view of untouched nature — even deer can be seen walking around in the park.



PANAMA CITY BEACH



~~~~~  
**GERMAN BLOGGER**  
Jana Zieseniss took in the sun, the surf — and more than a couple cultural differences in her trip to Panama City Beach.  
~~~~~

» **SHELL ISLAND** Not to be missed on a trip to Panama City Beach is taking a boat trip to Shell Island. The beaches on the mainland are already gorgeous, but the offshore island exceeded everything I've ever seen: the whitest sand, most beautiful turquoise waters and not a single soul to see. And while you're en route, a dolphin sighting is almost guaranteed. It's best to pack a cooler with drinks and snacks, rent a boat and enjoy the whole day in paradise.

» **WEST BAY BACKWATERS** The second nature reserve in Panama City Beach is West Bay. If you want to visit the "Everglades" of Panama City Beach, you can do so as part of an airboat tour. The best chance for crocodile sightings is during the night tours, but the mirror-smooth seascape is definitely worth seeing during the day.

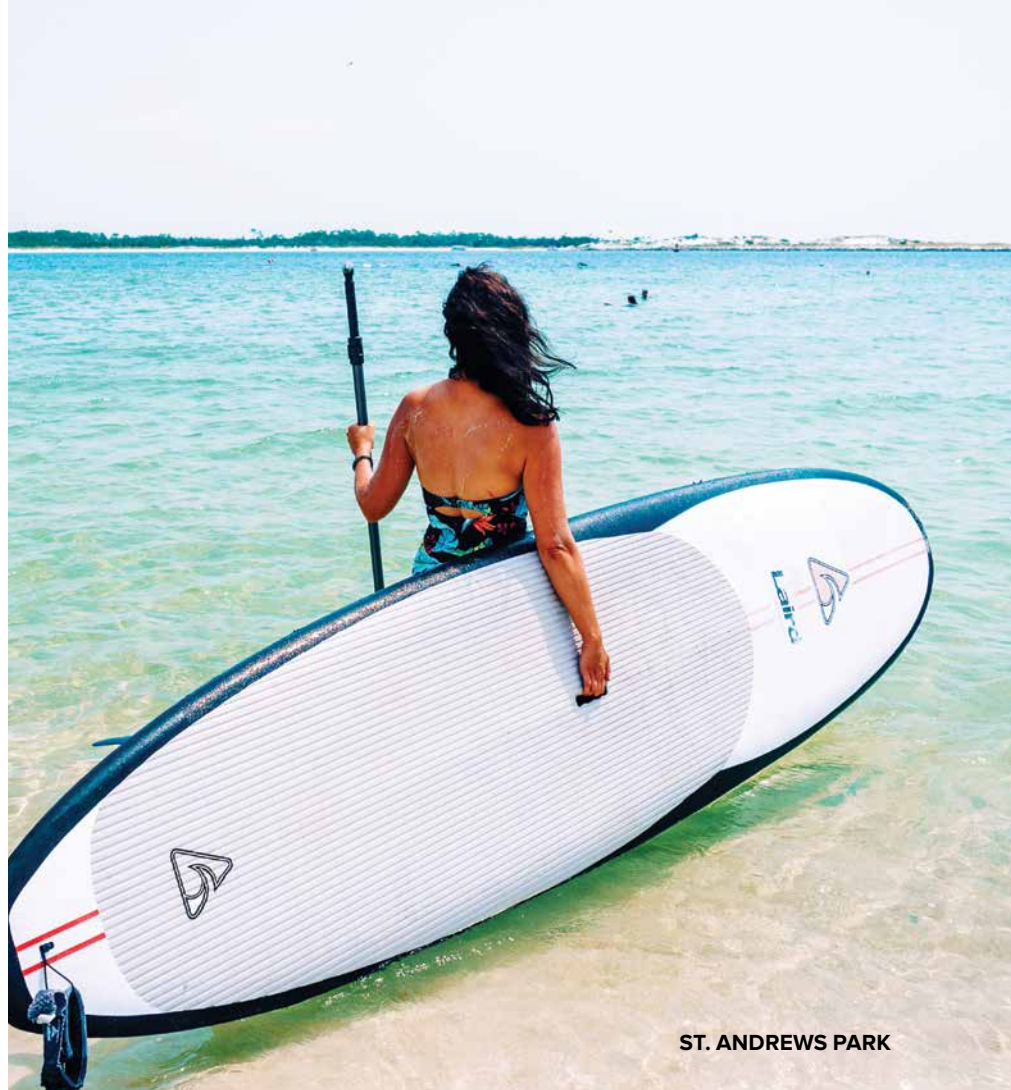
FOOD & DRINK TIPS IN PANAMA CITY BEACH

The seafood in Panama City Beach is some of the best in the American South, but other restaurants have plenty to choose from. Offerings range from taco stands to fine dining. Here's my list of recommended restaurants for breakfast, lunch and dinner — ranging from healthy to "delicious sin" — which of course I've tested all myself:

» **ANDY'S FLOUR POWER** Andy's is a breakfast and lunch restaurant with homemade pastries, omelets and the popular "breakfast potatoes" (potato wedges). I highly recommend the vegetarian eggs Benedict and the French toast.

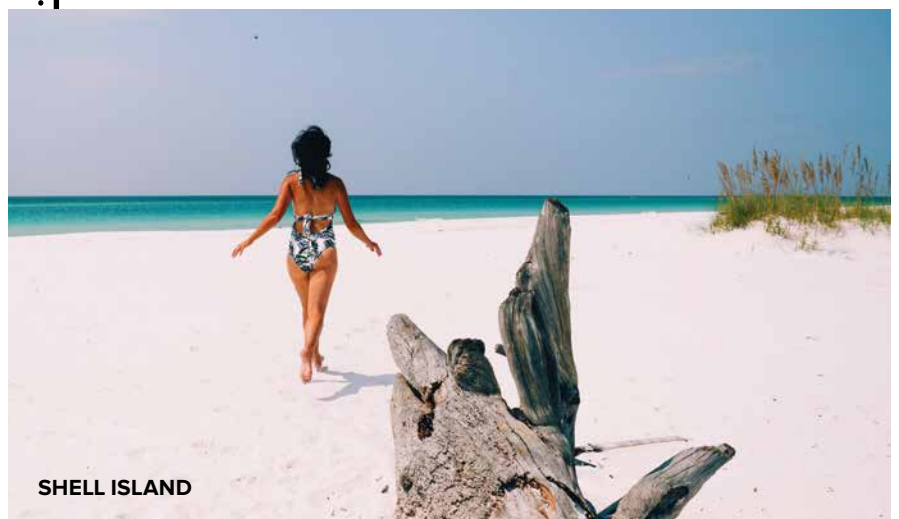
» **LIZA'S KITCHEN** Liza's Kitchen is a family-run eatery, best known for its Sunday brunch. There is everything the American breakfast heart desires. And, best for us Europeans, there are seats outside.

» **THOMAS DONUT & SNACK SHOP** Not healthy but damn delicious — that describes the donuts from this family-run shop directly on the sea. The best way to experience this place is to share a selection of donuts, so you can try their near-unlimited assortment. There are also hearty breakfast options, which you



ST. ANDREWS PARK

"For me, Panama City Beach is the perfect blend of the most beautiful and whitest sandy beaches I've ever seen, with super-relaxed and friendly people, and a kitchen that is unparalleled — especially in America."



SHELL ISLAND

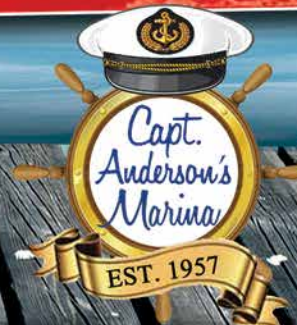
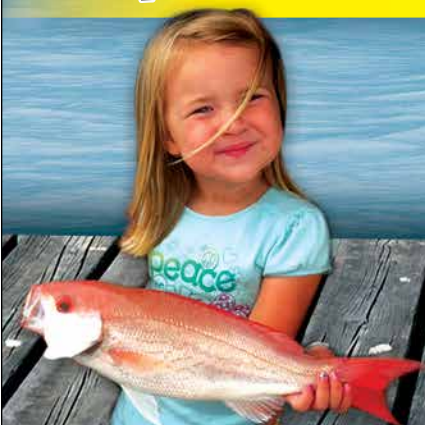
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can eat as you sit comfortably in the sun on wooden benches that look out over a beautiful and deserted beach.

» **LOTUS CAFÉ AND JUICE BAR AT ZEN GARDEN** A healthier alternative for breakfast and lunch is the Lotus Café. There is a large selection of healthy, partially vegan fare, including super tasty wraps, salads and other snacks such as hummus. A perfect contrast!

» **FINNS ISLAND STYLE GRUB** My favorite restaurant in Panama City Beach is Finns, which makes the best tacos in the city. All their dishes are delicious, and you sit outdoors on rustic wooden tables in the beach-style bar. They also offer locally made kombucha in several different flavors.

» **SCHOONER'S** Somewhat more classic is Schooner's, a beach club on the outskirts or town. It's best to come a bit earlier and enjoy the sunset. Otherwise, there is a large selection of seafood, salads, burgers and beers. Again, you can sit outside.

» **FIREFLY** If you want something upscale, try dining at Firefly. The restaurant specializes in steaks, seafood and a large selection of sushi — which they didn't have to tell me twice. The wine selection is also great. Incidentally, Firefly even cooked for the Obama family.

STAYING OVERNIGHT IN PANAMA CITY BEACH

A classic stay in Panama City Beach would include a beachfront hotel. Although I'm not usually a fan of hotels, I would recommend one if you stay in Panama City Beach if you want the views that they afford.

» **STAYING IN THE CONDO** We stayed at Tidewater Beach Resort, which is located on the beach and about 900 meters from the pier. The location is great, the apartments are nicely decorated and there are two outdoor pools.

» **STAYING IN A BEACH HOUSE** Next time, I want to stay in a beach house. Some of them are beautiful, pastel-

colored wooden houses with locations directly on the beach or across the street. A selection of available two-to-five bedroom homes can be found.

GETTING FROM A TO B IN PANAMA CITY BEACH

Anyone visiting Panama City Beach as part of a Florida road trip will already have a rental car with him or her, and the same applies to any other visitor (cars are always needed in America, at least outside the big cities). But driving is easy as in the USA. The roads are wide, the fuel is cheap and parking is everywhere. Within Pier Park and the beach, you can cover a lot of ground on foot, but for everything beyond that, I recommend a private vehicle. And who needs a taxi: Uber is also available in Panama City Beach, which is much cheaper than a normal taxi. ●

SHELL ISLAND



JANA ONLINE

Jana Zieseniss is a German travel blogger that documents her journeys online at Sonne & Wolken (Sun and Clouds). Read more about Jana and her travels at sonne-wolken.de.

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EXPANDING THE 'SPORTFOLIO'

New PCB complex will 'shoulder' more sports

BY THOMAS J. MONIGAN

Panama City Beach is already an established destination for youth sports during the summer, and a new project scheduled for completion next year would make it a year-round magnet.

"Right now, we're anticipating the first phase will be open in June 2019," said Richard Sanders, Vice President of sports and special events for the

Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Sanders has been in the area for 20 years, the past 10 with the CVB. "The main thing is this is being built with the offseason in mind," he said, "and this will get us closer to being a 12-month destination."

On land donated by The St. Joe Company at the east end of Breakfast

Point, phase one plans call for 13 rectangular fields, with artificial turf on nine and natural grass on the remaining four. Estimated cost would be around \$37 million.

"The sports that would we would cater to would be soccer, lacrosse, rugby or football, and things of that nature," Sanders said. "Those are all played in the spring, fall and wintertime periods."



**PHASE TWO OF PANAMA CITY
BEACH SPORTS COMPLEX**

Phase two will involve a 109,000 square-foot indoor athletics facility. This would include eight basketball courts or 16 volleyball courts, space for gymnastics and other mat sports including cheer and dance competitions, meeting rooms, locker rooms and training/physical therapy rooms.

At the time of his February interview, Sanders said Chris O'Brien, Director of Sports Marketing and Special Events for the Panama City Beach Convention and Visitors Bureau had just returned from a U.S. Lacrosse national conference in Baltimore.

"We have several organizations that are ready to book with us when we open," Sanders said, "and we are ready to start booking dates at the new phase one facility.

"And we've been at conferences throughout the year, where we've had some relationships for a decade," he added, "and now we're going to have the inventory to start taking in



PANAMA CITY BEACH'S
new sports complex will have a positive effect on the region, both in generating revenue and new jobs.

some of their events. And they're really excited about coming in here."

Sports Facilities Management, located in Clearwater, has been chosen to take charge of operating the new facilities. A study by this company projects an economic impact of \$23.2 million for the first year, with 81,611 non-summer visitors as the contributors to 60,000 room nights. Phase one could also mean between 100 to 150 additional jobs for the area, counting on-site management, operational staff plus game officials and concession workers.

CEO and founding partner Jason Clement said that, Sports Facilities Management counted 24 million visits to 30-plus venues last year in which it was involved.

"Part of the reason we're so interested in Panama City Beach is that if we

are making this impact in tourism destinations across the country, to be able to contribute in our state in Florida is something really special for us," Clement said.

Born in Iowa, Clement is familiar with how folks in other parts of the country are drawn to the Gulf of Mexico.

"This is a preeminent destination in the United States," Clement said, especially for folks in the Midwest and the Southeast and up into the Northeast who are looking for a slice of paradise. Many working families now are having to choose between a vacation and providing opportunities through sports for their children, and this evolution of what we call a 'tournacation' allows families to do both. And Panama City Beach is as good a location as there is in the country for that experience.

We're really excited about the potential for this complex."

"What's really interesting about this complex from a sports perspective is the capability for field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, flag football and football — as well as sports such as Ultimate Frisbee, archery and road races," Clement said.

And for you Harry Potter fans, Clement mentioned that Quidditch could also be played there.

"And there's a lot of flexibility for even some non-sports events," Clement added. "Anything from trade shows to car shows, dog shows or RV shows. We're not looking to compete with things that are already going on there. What we're looking to do is be additive and complimentary to what the city and county are already doing, so we can populate those shoulder seasons." ●



"What's really interesting about this complex from a sports perspective is the capability for field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, flag football and football — as well as sports such as Ultimate Frisbee, archery and road races." JASON CLEMENT

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A BRAND NEW JAM

Big names, diverse festivals bring a new vibe to Panama City Beach

BY KIM HARRIS THACKER

There's a lot of jammin' going on in Panama City Beach. From the three-day Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam to the two-day SandJam, Panama City Beach's festival events cater to the interests of just about every music fan.

The newest addition to the scene is Sandjam, which held its inaugural event in late April and featured some of the top talent in rock music. Sandjam, in part, grew out of the success of Panama City Beach's premier country concert, the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam.

Celebrating its sixth year on Labor Day weekend, the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, held at Frank Brown Park, consistently features a dazzling array of country music headliners. Last year's Jam welcomed Luke Bryan, Jason Aldean and Little Big Town to the stage; in 2016, Brad Paisley, Jake Owen and Eric Church rocked the house. The 2018 headliners — Eric Church, Florida Georgia Line and Thomas Rhett — promise to be every bit as exciting.

"Before we started the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, we had concerts here and there," says Richard Sanders, Vice President of Sports Marketing and Special Events for Panama City Beach. "The Seafood Festival is a prime example of where we had B-level entertainment. But the Gulf Coast Jam took us to a whole new level with music. We are hearing A-level talent, year after year."

The performers at the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam are impressive enough that Billboard Magazine included the Jam in its "10 Best Country Music Festivals" feature. Country News editor Chuck Dauphin wrote, "This great country music festival is known for its diverse mix of musical talent from within the country ranks." He also wrote, "This event has become a rite of passage for thousands of country music fans."

THE JAMS *WHEN & WHERE*

SANDJAM

Held the last weekend in April
(The inaugural event was held April 26–28, 2018.)

M.B. Miller County Pier

12213 Front Beach Road
Panama City Beach
(850) 236-3035

PEPSI GULF COAST JAM

To be held August 31–
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Frank Brown Park

16200 Panama City Beach Parkway
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(850) 233-5045





EXPECT DAZZLING
performances from
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names in country —
plus plenty of friends
to sing along with —
during this summer's
Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam.



While the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam brings country music performers and “thousands of country music fans” to the Emerald Coast, the SandJam, held at M.B. Miller County Pier, brings a different crowd to town — and this group fully appreciated the 2018 inaugural event’s headliners, rock music groups Incubus and Sublime.

PCB Entertainment president Rendy Lovelady, whose company produces the two concerts, said the idea for SandJam grew organically as festivalgoers sought different musical genres.

“With the success and longevity of the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, we started getting requests from our “Jammers” about a rock music festival here,” Lovelady said. “We worked closely with the city come up with a plan. . . .

“We’re planning to grow this festival in Panama City Beach the same way we’ve grown the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam over the last five years — by bringing in a great mix of artists people are excited to see along with new artists they’ll really get into.”

The differences in music, venue and season lend each Jam its own, unique vibe. For the Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam, it’s a county-fair-meets-Woodstock vibe; at the SandJam, it’s a here-comes-summer vibe.

“We really have a great diversity in music in Panama City Beach,” says Sanders. “We have country music, and we have a jazz festival that’s in its 20th year. Now, with the addition of the SandJam, we have another kind of music to offer. The SandJam allows us to cater to even more people and to get out our message that we are a great, family-friendly destination with a lot going on.”

So grab your tickets for Labor Day weekend’s Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam (if you haven’t already), and block out the dates of next year’s SandJam on your calendar. These are two seriously jammin’ events that no true music lover should miss.

Said Lovelady: “Any chance we get to show off our beautiful beaches, great restaurants and amazing hospitality, we do it!” ●



2017 PEPSI GULF COAST JAM FUN FACTS & FIGURES

Courtesy of gulfcostjam.com – For a complete list of fun facts and figures from the 2017 Gulf Coast Jam, see gulfcostjam.com.

- » 33 artists
- » 26+ hours of music
- » 64,000 tickets sold
- » 1,300 workers
- » 95,328 beers poured (Anheuser-Busch | Lewis Bear Company)
- » 3,000+ military members hosted
- » \$2.00 from every ticket sold donated to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital®
- » 24 Lodging Partners sold out, including 8,000+ condos and hotel rooms



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'TACO' THE TOWN

Gulf seafood adds local flavor to your favorite portable food

STORY BY LIESEL SCHMIDT // PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BOONI



CRAFT BEER, craft spirits — and of course, craft shrimp and fish tacos — make The Craft Bar a welcome stop for locals and travelers alike.

THE CRAFT BAR

Grilling up fresh mahi-mahi spiced with their own in-house taco seasoning, the chefs at The Craft Bar craft their fish tacos using only the freshest ingredients, warming their flour tortillas on the grill to add some charred flavor and topping the fish with freshly made guacamole, taco slaw, zesty salsa verde and a lime wedge. If fish isn't your favorite catch, The Craft Bar also offers shrimp tacos loaded with plump Gulf shrimp prepared fried, grilled or blackened; and guests craving some smoky meats will love the pulled pork tacos. Serving satisfied diners since 2014, The Craft Bar might have made a name for themselves with their low country shrimp and grits and their blackened redfish over cajun jambalaya, but their fish tacos are a tidal wave of flavor that'll reel you in.

.....
15600 Panama City Beach Parkway, Suite 180, (850) 588-7309, thecraftbarfl.com

SHUCKUMS OYSTER PUB & SEAFOOD GRILL

If you love a good hole-in-the-wall seafood shack, set your course for Shuckums Oyster Pub & Seafood Grill, where their claim to

fame might be their oysters, but their fish tacos are also quite a catch. They serve up a pair of soft tacos made with your choice of tender, grilled grouper or flaky catfish seasoned in Shuckums' signature seafood seasoning and topped with shredded cabbage, tomatoes, green onions and cilantro drizzled with a delicious homemade chipotle ranch. For a pop of juicy coastal fun, order the tacos with fresh Gulf shrimp loaded with all the toppings, or be a landlubber with chicken and beef.

.....
15614 Front Beach Road, (850) 235-3214, shuckums.com

SPINNAKER BEACH CLUB AND PARADISE GRILL

Giving their craveable tacos a Creole spin worthy of sinking your teeth into, Spinnaker Beach Club offers Jason's five-spiced fish tacos. With chunks of fresh catfish seared in a special blend of spices, served in warm flour tortillas and topped with crunchy shredded cabbage, pico de gallo and shredded cheddar Jack cheese, the flavor is taken to new levels with a house-made Creole remoulade sauce that'll send your taste buds on

Tacos have long been popular for their portability, their play of textures, and, well, their fun factor. After all, who can look serious eating a taco?

Tacos are the ultimate street fare, but when you're in a beach town, they're also the ultimate beach fare, with their cool, crisp veggies, spicy sauces, salsas, guacamole and sour cream. But to fully beach-ify them, the best restaurants in Panama City Beach have taken the sensationally shell-driven concept and added the best Gulf seafood, using tender, freshly caught fish or shrimp to add the Emerald Coast flavor that really gets their guests hooked.



DIEGO'S has a couple Panama City Beach locations to fill your need for shrimp or mahi-mahi tacos.

a fishing trip to the Bayou. When it comes to bringing a hint of the Low County to the beach, Spinnaker really knows how to get their diners hooked.

8795 Thomas Drive, (850) 234-7892, spinnakerbeachclub.com

DIEGO'S BURRITO FACTORY

Traditional meats such as chicken and beef aren't the only lures you'll find in the tackle box at Diego's Burrito Factory. Offering fish tacos made with grilled mahi-mahi in your choice of corn or flour tortillas lightly warmed on the grill, Diego's has a wide variety of toppings to make your taco all the more craveable. Take your pick from fresh garnishes, including house-made mango pico de gallo, crunchy veggies, hearty beans, cheeses, sauces, fresh guacamole, creamy cheese dip and even their own signature Southwest coleslaw. Suckers for shrimp will love their shrimp tacos, but if your appetite is shark-sized, order a fully loaded mahi-mahi burrito or their ever-popular spinach tortilla shrimp quesadillas. Whether you're craving the street food classic in its more traditional form or are hooked on the cooler coastal version, Diego's casts a wide net on a tide of flavor.

15514 Front Beach Road and 6209 Sunset Drive, (850) 249-7373 and (850) 238-8741, diegosburritofactory.com

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FINNS OWNER JUSTIN BUXTON makes sure his place adds its own unique twist on fish tacos, whether that be with its house blend of “Finns Crack” spices or homemade yogurt sauce and pico de gallo.



FINNS ISLAND STYLE GRUB

Anyone who has tried the fish tacos at Finns Island Style Grub is sure to get hooked. Using seasonally available freshly caught mahi-mahi or cobia, the white corn tortilla taco shells are lightly toasted to enhance their flavor and loaded with juicy chunks of grilled fish seasoned in their signature “Finns Crack” blend of spices and topped with fresh veggies, shredded cabbage, pico de gallo, shredded cheeses and a drizzle of mild taco sauce. That’s all topped off with a dollop of Finn’s house-made yogurt sauce and a lime wedge. Other featured faves on the taco menu include special catches like grilled red snapper, ahi tuna, grouper and even swordfish.

7220 Thomas Drive and 2808 W. 12th St., (850) 249-3466 and (850) 215-9273, finnsislandstylegrub.com



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FRESH FISH ON THE BEACH

His touring days in the rearview, Barry Fish lends his sounds to the beach

BY ROB RUSHIN

Nothing works up a thirsty appetite like hanging on the beach. And nothing beats those cravings like ice-cold drinks and fresh-from-the-Gulf seafood at one of Panama City Beach's great beachside taverns like Schooners, affectionately known as the "Last Local Beach Club." (Hey, it might not be the last beach club, but you have to love their bold claim!)

But sometimes you have to fill your soul with music, that other essential element of good times on the seashore. The soundtrack of the beach is a universal language, and nobody speaks that tongue more fluently than Barry Fish.

Whether he performs solo, in a duo or with his full force Barry Fish Band, Fish brings a catalog of 200-plus songs with him to hit the sweet spot of just about any music hungry beachcomber. He's a walking encyclopedia of all your favorite tunes, playing everything from classic rock to hardcore country to the latest hits climbing the pop charts.

Across a career spanning more than 30 years, Barry has seen duty as a house musician in Tallahassee and Memphis, spent countless days and nights on the

road, appeared on stage with the likes of Jimmy Buffet and was a contestant on Star Search way back when. But the chance to live a saner lifestyle off the road presented itself in 2003 when Barry settled his family in Panama City Beach.

For the 2018 beach season, Barry will be a regular at Schooners, playing every Tuesday as a solo and every other weekend (Friday and Saturday) with his full band. It's a neat bit of full circle karma: Barry's first gig in PCB was at Schooner's in April of 1993.

He also regularly turns up in the spotlight at other fine Panama City Beach establishments, including the always popular Margaritaville and slightly more upscale G-Foley's. And if you miss him at these places, get yourself up and moving on Sunday morning and join Barry at the Gulf Beach Baptist Church, where he serves as Worship Pastor.

We asked him if he saw any conflict between providing the soundtrack for party-time and raising the roof in worship.

"Not at all," he replied. "Using the talent that God has given me for the church is the greatest joy and very humbling. Besides, Schooners and the rest of these places are

~~~~~  
**BARRY FISH** and longtime guitarist friend Greg Norris bring their familiar tunes to a variety of laidback locales all along the beach.  
~~~~~





KATIE DESANTIS

SONJA REVELLS

“What people want when they come down to the beach, by and large, are songs they recognize, that make them feel good and remind them of years past at the beach.”

BARRY FISH

BARRY FISH SPLITS his time between some of the most popular Panama City Beach haunts and Sunday service at Gulf Beach Baptist Church.

essentially family restaurants. Don't get me wrong — we cut loose and there's a lot of excitement. But more and more, everywhere we play, it's about families. And that's what Panama City Beach is.”

But whether it is Saturday night honky-tonking or Sunday morning hallelujah, Barry plays music that helps people have a good time and enjoy themselves.

“What people want when they come down to the beach, by and large, are songs they recognize, that make them feel good and remind them of years past at the beach,” he says.

“A lot of these are throwback songs. I've found that a lot of them weren't No. 1 hits. But people have somehow associated them with the beach and that kind of fun atmosphere, so they've sort of taken a new niche here on the beach.

Some of these songs I don't even put on my song list because I know people are going to ask for them anyway.”

Barry is something of a tune excavator. He spends most of his free time expanding his working catalog to keep things fresh.

Because surely he gets tired of playing a song for the millionth time, right?

“I never once flinched, never thought, ‘oh, I don't want to do that.’ If it's going to make somebody's weekend or make their trip, it's my good pleasure to play it for them.”

Does a request ever stump the band?

“There are times. But I've learned that they really appreciate when you give it a shot — as long as you don't crash and burn,” he laughs. “But you always gotta remember ... we're not there for us. We're here for the people who come down here. And it's different every single night.”

So make your way to Schooners for a burger or a fresh grouper sandwich and think about which of your favorite tunes you want Barry to play. And if you settle in just before dusk, you can enjoy Schooners' nightly Sunset Cannon blast. The music begins early and runs into the wee hours, so remember to pack your dancing flip-flops. ●



SUMMER FLIGHTS

REALLY TAKING OFF



GETTING TO PANAMA CITY BEACH THIS SUMMER JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT EASIER

BEGINNING JUNE 10, Southwest Airlines will service Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) with non-stop and easy direct flights on Saturdays from over a dozen major cities.

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- Austin (AUS)
- Baltimore/Washington (BWI)
- Chicago (MDW)
- Dallas (DAL)
- Denver (DEN)
- Houston (HOU/IAH)
- Nashville (BNA)
- St. Louis (STL)

SATURDAY SOUTHWEST DIRECT FLIGHTS

- Amarillo (AMA)
- Burbank (BUR)
- Omaha (OMA)
- Phoenix (PHX)
- Seattle (SEA)
- Tampa (TPA)

OTHER NON-STOP FLIGHTS

- Atlanta: Delta Airlines
- Houston: United Airlines
- Charlotte: American Airlines
- Dallas-Fort Worth: American Airlines

All of the airlines serving ECP, including Delta and United Airlines, are expected to increase flight activity or add larger aircrafts throughout the summer. Information on all flight markets can be found by visiting, www.iflybeaches.com/flights/wherewe-fly, with tickets available to purchase on airline websites. Flight schedules are subject to change. Be sure to check flight schedules at Southwest.com, Delta.com, and United.com, as non-stop flights may be seasonal and there are a limited number of flights scheduled per day. The Northwest Florida Beaches Airport is 20 minutes away from Panama City Beach. More information and directions can be found at IFlyBeaches.com.

In Focus / PCB IN PHOTOS

@k_d_canup



@markfromcincinnati



@adventuresatsea



@disneybeachbeyond



@vicallenmusic



@lisa29



@cwburgers



AT THE
REALFUN BEACH YOU WILL NEVER RUN OUT OF
WAYS TO MAKE IT YOURS

@amybianucci



@e11iot.jane



Share your fun!

A GREAT PHOTO is all about being in the right place at the right time – in Panama City Beach, the right time is just about any time. So if you capture a great vacation photo you'd like to share with us, post it to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter with the hashtag #RealFunBeach, or email it to us at social@visitpanamacitybeach.com. Your photo might even be selected to appear in Visit Panama City Beach magazine (with your permission, of course)!

@rubayet_elahi



@ebpaint



@vishnevskaya_irishka



@jesisr



SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING AT -
#REALFUNBEACH

SAFETY FIRST

FLORIDA'S BEACH WARNING FLAG program uses flags in four colors accompanied by interpretive signs along the beach to explain the meaning of each color. Flags are located approximately one mile apart along the beach. Absence of flags does not assure safe waters. Current beach flag conditions can be found on **VisitPanamaCityBeach.com**.



Sign up to receive alerts for flag changes by texting **FLAG** to **313131**.



**GREEN –
LOW HAZARD**
Calm conditions,
exercise caution



**YELLOW –
MEDIUM HAZARD**
Moderate surf
and/or currents



**RED – HIGH
HAZARD**
High surf and/or
strong currents



**RED OVER
RED**
Water closed
to public



PURPLE
Dangerous
marine life

Bay Point Marina



BAY POINT
MARINA

Daniel Fussell, Marinas Director
(850) 235-6911
baypointmarina.net
3824 Hatteras Lane

BAY POINT MARINA

Housing the area's finest motor yachts, sport fishing yachts and cruisers up to 120 feet, Bay Point Marina is no slouch when it comes to world-class boating. Panama City has some of the best bottom fishing and sport fishing. Cruise local bays, visiting area restaurants and local hangouts like Shell Island. Bay Point Marina is teamed up with only the best vendors for marine services, so at any time you can have your boat properly repaired by the area's best.

This fully staffed, clean marina located next to St. Andrew Pass is open 7 days a week. Radio dispatched dock attendants are fully trained to handle your docking experience with ease. From a well-marked channel to an easy approach fuel dock with customer discounts, Bay Point Marina is a place you and your boat should call home.

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

Together, we can keep our beaches pristine

PANAMA CITY BEACH is known for having the “World’s Most Beautiful Beaches,” and we would like to keep it that way for the enjoyment of locals and tourists alike! For this reason, the “Leave No Trace” ordinance was adopted in 2012. Anything you bring to the beach should also leave the beach with you. Anything left on the beach overnight could be cleared off the beach by the time you return in the morning. Our goal is to protect our pristine beaches and the natural wildlife, such as nesting sea turtles, by leaving no trace of personal items on the beaches overnight. Please do your part in maintaining our beautiful beaches!

The “Leave No Trace” ordinance states that all personal items will be removed and disposed of if

left on the beach between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. These items include, but are not limited to, tents, chairs, toys, umbrellas and coolers. On public beaches or with the upland landowner’s permission, beachgoers may store personal belongings overnight at the toe of the dune. The toe of the dune is the area of the beach immediately seaward of the dune and beach vegetation. To be specific, it is the area of the beach that is furthest from the water that is not in a sand dune or beach access point.

Those who store their personal items overnight do so at their own risk. The county, the city, the Tourist Development Council and the beach maintenance contractor do not assume any liability for any items left on the beach.





From our Greek Style Open Hearth

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Served with Lemon Butter, Olive Oil, Chopped Spring Onions and Parsley.



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