



FACT SHEET

Panama City Beach Family Beach Persona

OVERVIEW

Panama City Beach (www.visitpanamacitybeach.com) is located in Bay County, Fla., in the Northwest part of the state. The destination is best known for its 27 miles of white-sand beaches edging emerald-green waters where the Gulf of Mexico and St. Andrew Bay converge. With an average of 320 days of sunshine annually, the region has long been favored by travelers seeking an affordable beach vacation with year-round offerings perfect for families with toddlers to tweens and teens.

From world-renowned beaches and adventurous water activities to fun-filled water and amusement parks and a brand-new sports complex, Panama City Beach delivers a Caribbean-like vacation without leaving the country. Families can swim in world's highest concentration of bottlenose dolphins, snorkel and paddleboard through crystal-clear water, bike beautiful state parks, discover the emerald depths below on a scuba diving adventure, relax on white-sand beaches, hook a big one on a fishing charter, race through the Gran Maze at Coconut Creek Family Fun Park, dine with "real" mermaids at Sisters of the Sea and so much more. It's no wonder this beach town, known for its sweet Southern hospitality, has been welcoming families for generations to make memories that will last a lifetime.

ACTIVITIES

Beaches

- **St. Andrew's State Park Beach**

[St. Andrews State Park](#) is consistently one of the most popular and most visited state parks in Florida. Situated on a peninsula at the far eastern edge of Panama City Beach, the beach is bordered by the Gulf of Mexico to the south, the St. Andrews Pass to the east, and the Grand Lagoon to the north. Snorkeling and scuba diving along the jetties is a popular pastime for many as an array of brightly colored marine life can be found not far beneath the surface. Swimming and surfing are popular on the Gulf side of the state park, while those in search of calmer waters can enjoy the "kiddie pool," a large area along the pass that's protected by the jetties.

- **Shell Island**

Located just across the pass from St. Andrews State Park, [Shell Island](#) is an undeveloped seven-mile island of white sand, emerald water and beautiful pine forest. It's perfect for a picnic, walk on the beach or snorkeling adventure. Sightseeing trips, private charters, boat rentals and an hourly shuttle service make the barrier island accessible to families who want to really get away from it all. The water surrounding Shell Island is also home to the world's highest concentration of bottlenose dolphins.

- **Camp St. Helen State Park Beach**

This often-overlooked ecological gem sits on the far western border of Panama City Beach, just over the Phillips Inlet Bridge and close to the border of Walton County. Offering pristine beaches, excellent trails that wind through dunes and scrub oak forests, and a rare dune lake, [Camp Helen State Park](#) is truly one of Florida's most special state parks.

- **Doggie Beach (Pet-Friendly)**

Furry friends are welcome as part of the family in Panama City Beach, and Doggie Beach is located across from Pier Park and west of the City Pier. The 400-foot beach is open to dogs on leashes, and they love strolling the beach and enjoying the waves.

Water Activities

- **Shipwreck Island Water Park**

Home to nearly three million gallons of water for children to slide down, splash under, swim in, float down, raft through or just relax in, [Shipwreck Island Water Park](#) has been a favorite attraction among families for generations. Attractions include the 500,000-gallon wave pool, Tadpole Hole for toddlers, Lazy River, Tree Top Drop tube ride, Pirates Plunge Racing Slides for thrill seekers, Rapid River Run home to twists, turns and waterfalls, and White Knuckle River with 400 feet of winding fun.

- **Fishing Charters**

The crystal-clear depths of Panama City Beach's sandy shores are home to a vast array of wildlife for both inshore and offshore fishing. Whether families are looking to reserve a [fishing charter](#) for deep sea fishing in the Gulf of Mexico or sit on a pier at St. Andrews Bay, they will be delighted to enjoy the diverse salt and freshwater options in the region. Fishing adventures abound in Panama City Beach, so much so that the award-winning "Chasin' The Sun" TV show takes place in the region.

- **Jet Ski & Boat Rentals**

One of the best ways to experience the fun and natural beauty of Panama City Beach is to get out on the water. The destination offers a ton of options for families to make their boating dreams come true. Relax and let a charter or cruise boat captain and crew do the work for or take the helm of a pontoon boat rental or Jet Ski rental. Start with [these companies](#) and find out what the perfect fit is for the family.

- **Airboat Adventures**

Families looking to explore the labyrinth of creeks, islands and marshes inaccessible by other modes of transportation can book an airboat ride with [Airboats Gone Wild](#). Riders will feel the wind in their face as they tear through the water at speeds approaching Mach 10 and explore the beaten path where the wildest of wildlife dwells.

- **Deep Dive the "Wreck Diving Capital of the South"**

Known for some of the best shipwreck diving on the Gulf Coast, Panama City Beach is a premier diving destination for both beginner and advanced divers. Guests can become scuba certified with [Dive Locker](#) and discover hidden, underwater treasures, including the destination's newest artificial reef, the former [El Dorado Cruise Liner](#). Whatever a person's level of diving experience, the ideal underwater adventure awaits as divers will get up close and personal with octopus, grouper and other colorful wildlife that frequent these waters.

- **Snorkeling Adventure**

For those who don't have their diving certification, snorkeling off the coast of the secluded Shell Island is the perfect way to explore Panama City Beach's crystal clear emerald green waters. An undeveloped seven-mile stretch of white sand, Shell Island is located just across the pass from St. Andrews State Park. The waters between the island and the mainland also happen to be home to one of the world's highest concentrations of bottle-nose dolphins- a breathtaking sight to experience both from the water and onshore.

- **Parasailing**

Adrenaline junkies looking to keep their feet Off the ground can book a parasailing adventure through [Adventures at Sea](#). Once they strap in and leave the earth behind, gravity becomes a suggestion rather than a rule. Parasailers will see new perspectives soaring above the brilliant sugary white coastline and turquoise waters of Panama City Beach.

- **Paddleboard & Kayak Rentals**

Beach lovers can surf the waves via paddleboard on Panama City Beach's protected and open waters like the [Grand Lagoon](#), St. Andrews Bay and various cold springs, rivers and lakes in the region. While paddleboarding, guests can spy rays, fish, sea turtles, dolphin and other wildlife beneath the water's surface. Equipment is easily rented from [The Boardroom](#) and for the especially brave and well balanced, paddleboard yoga is available at [Yoga Elements](#).

Additional Outdoor Activities

- **Professional Sandcastle Lessons**

Perfect for the whole family and kids of all ages, this #1 Rated TripAdvisor Takes sandcastle building to a new level. The professionals at Beach Sand Sculptures supply all the tools and equipment, and our beaches are stocked with plenty of available beautiful sand and copious, amounts of Gulf of Mexico water (the two main SandCastle ingredients).

- **Sea Dragon Pirate Cruise**

Families are invited to drift back in time to the carefree days of pirates on Panama City Beach's very own [pirate ship](#). Parents can sit back and relax as their children laugh and play under the watchful eyes of Capt. "Fearless" Phil and his friendly crew. From water gun and sword fights to finding treasure and singing pirate songs, this is a night to remember.

- **Panama City Beach Sports Complex**

The brand-new \$37 million [Panama City Beach Sports Complex](#) offers families on 'play-cation' a place to enjoy multiple sports and activities on its 13-field complex. Featuring nine turf fields, four natural grass fields, dedicated tournament buildings, two championship fields with seating up to 1,500 and over 1,000 parking spots, the complex allows for soccer, lacrosse, rugby, football, baseball, softball and more.

- **Ecotourism: Biking, Hiking and Walking Trails**

Ecotourism is more popular than ever and visitors to Panama City Beach have a surprising number of opportunities to take part in ecologically responsible, fun-filled outings. Hiking, biking and walking trails are just some of the activities families can take part in to enjoy Panama City Beach's great outdoors- home to miles of on and off-road trails in protected conservation areas. [Conservation Park](#) offers 12 looping trails ranging from 0.6 to 11 miles

for walking, biking, wildlife and bird watching. In addition, St. Andrews State Park, consistently one of the most popular and most visited state parks in Florida, offers guest the chance to walk, hike or bike and see an amazing variety of wildlife, from migratory birds to deer to even alligators.

- **Golf**

Home to four championship courses, 320 days of sunshine a year and an average temperature of 74 degrees, Panama City Beach is the ideal location for golf-loving families to enjoy the greens. The Bay Point Golf Club at Sheraton Bay Point Resort has two spectacular courses for families to choose from, including the only Nicklaus Design course in Northwest Florida.

- **Explore PCB via Helicopter**

The 28-mile “Shell Island” adventure with [Panhandle Helicopter](#) flies guests above the area’s emerald coast water where they can spot some of the destination’s beautiful sea-life from the sky! An affordable, electrifying experience, those looking for an all-out expedition can soar above the city for 28 miles until reaching stunning Shell Island, passing Grand Lagoon and St. Andrews Park along the way.

Indoor & Evergreen Activities

- **WonderWorks**

[WonderWorks](#) is an amusement park for the mind with 35,000 square feet of “edu-tainment”. The attraction combines education and entertainment with more than 100 hands on exhibits that challenge the mind and spark the imagination. This once top-secret laboratory was located in the Bermuda triangle. An experiment gone awry lifted the laboratory carrying it to Front Beach Road in Panama City Beach where it landed upside down. Luckily all of the exhibits remained intact and available for guests to explore.

- **Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Odditorium**

Curiosity seekers have no fear as [Ripley’s Believe It or Not! Odditorium](#) offers family fun for kids of all ages. From shrunken heads to the newly built kids crawl area, this odditorium will leave even parents amazed. Experience the bizarre, explore the mysterious and enjoy the weird at Ripley’s Believe It or Not!

- **Coconut Creek Family Fun Park**

Welcome Aboard! [Coconut Creek](#) is home of the Gran Maze, the first American designed giant size maze for human amusement constructed in the United States and two 18-hole courses, both of which will provide you with fun, adventure and excitement regardless of your skill level.

- **Museum of Man in the Sea**

Is it too cold or rainy to go scuba diving in Panama City Beach’s famous emerald-green waters? The [Man in the Sea Museum](#), founded in 1982, transports visitors under water with eye-catching and education exhibits. The Man in the Sea Museum brings you treasures recovered from sunken ships dating from 1500, along with more recent commercial and naval equipment, vehicles and habitats. Both kids and adults can climb through SEALAB I and other selected exhibits. Come see displays of early diving equipment and watch videos of showing how it was used!

- **SkyWheel**

[Skywheel](#) promises families a 360-degree panoramic views of the Emerald Coast from Pier Park 180 feet up (the height of an 18-story condo!). Providing

riders with the chance to sit in a glass-enclosed gondola for up to 15-minutes and seating as many as six people, families love getting a bird's eye view of the picturesque destination.

- **SkyTrail**

The [SkyTrail at SkyWheel Panama City Beach](#) is an aerial attraction engineered for the most daring climbers. Participants, fitted with a harness and redundant sling, can explore suspended bridges, cargo nets, rope ladders and more. For those looking for an additional adrenaline rush, the SkyRail allows guests to jump off a suspended platform and soar through the air.

- **Gulf World Marine Park**

[Gulf World](#) is the perfect place for the entire family, featuring daily interactive shows with dolphins, sea lions, reptiles and tropical birds. Over the years, the marine park has matured into one of Panama City Beach's jewels for its charismatic trainers and commitment to rehabilitating local marine life on-site. Intimate arenas allow spectators to get up close with all animals and even swim with dolphins as part of their Trainer for the Day program.

- **Swampy Jack's WONGP Adventure**

Panama City Beach's brand-new, hybrid amusement park, [Swampy Jack's WONGO Adventure](#), opened just last month, bringing the thrill of a Mario Kart video game to life with its unique interactive outdoor track- Marrakesh Road Rally. Teens can also experience thrilling rides and attractions such as the Blue Hole, funky and surreal bumper cars; the Swamp Ape, the park's signature attraction featuring a 25' tall photo-bombing Swamp Ape, lights, music and fog; the Yacuma, a grand serpent wipeout ride; and the iconic Kraken, an experience that will send adventurers swirling upwards.

- **Cobra Adventure Park**

The Max Flight Simulator at [Cobra Adventure Park](#) allows travelers to live life at full throttle and experience the "rollercoaster of the future." In addition, guests can race go-karts on a four-story track, with double riding available; reach heights of over 160 ft. on The Vertical Accelerator, get lost in the electronic games at The Arcade or putt their way around the mini pirate course at Smuggler's Cove.

- **Pier Park**

This 1.1 million square-foot, open-air regional lifestyle center brings unique shopping, tourist attractions and dining to the heart of Panama City Beach. Located on 100 acres directly across from the Gulf of Mexico and City Pier, department stores and restaurants include Dillard's, JCPenney, Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville and dozens of one-of-a-kind boutiques and specialty shops. In addition, [Pier Park](#) embraces diverse dining options such as Hofbrau Beer Garden, Back Porch Seafood & Oyster House, Pompano Joe's Seafood House and many more. Shoppers can also enjoy movies at The IMAX Grand 16 Theatres, which was recently retrofitted to offer the high-tech sensory experience for up to 350 moviegoers.

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ACCOMODATIONS

More than 16,500 rooms ranging from resorts, hotels, condos, town homes and villas are available for quick getaways or extended stays in Panama City Beach. Each accommodation caters to families of different interests, from luxury resorts with kid-friendly amenities to fully equipped campsites and RV parks.

Popular Panama City Beach resorts and hotels are listed below:

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DINING

Known as the “Seafood Capital of the South,” Panama City Beach offers an array of dining options to please all palates including award-winning restaurants, casual beachfront cafes and family-friendly tables. Visitors can enjoy island cuisine, steakhouses, barbecue, ethnic cuisine, and specialty sushi. Experiences are available for any occasion from elaborate multi-course meals and dinner cruises to buffets, grills, casual beachside dining and ice cream parlors. Parents never have to worry about dining options in Panama City Beach not being kid and wallet friendly.

Popular, kid-friendly eateries in Panama City Beach are listed below:

- [Andy’s Flour Power Cafe and Bakery](#)
- [Thomas Donuts](#)
- [Finn’s](#)
- [Schooners](#)
- [Capt. Anderson’s Restaurant](#)
- [Saltwater Grill](#)
- [Sisters of the Sea](#)

ACCESSIBILITY

Daily commercial air service is provided through Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport, just 15 minutes from the beach. Leading low fare carrier Southwest Airlines operates daily flights through the airport non-stop from Baltimore, Houston, Austin, Chicago and Nashville. Delta Airlines operates non-stop flights from Atlanta. United Airlines offers direct flights to their international hub in Houston. Florida’s Intracoastal Waterway and the Gulf of Mexico bring boaters to the area’s many marinas, and the destination is within a six-hour drive to major Southeastern cities including Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans, and others.

ADDRESS:

Panama City Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau
P.O. Box 9473
Panama City Beach, FL 32417

PHONE:

850-233-6503
1-800-PCBEACH (within the Continental United States)

WEBSITE:

www.visitpanamacitybeach.com

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Instagram: [@Visit_PCB](#)
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