



Miami

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Best Places to Eat

- » Señora Martinez (p117)
- » Osteria Del Teatro (p112)
- » Tap Tap (p111)
- » Michy's (p118)
- » Steve's Pizza (p114)

Best Places to Sleep

- » The Standard (p104)
- » Shore Club (p105)
- » Circa 39 (p108)
- » Pelican Hotel (p102)
- » Hotel St Augustine (p102)

Why Go?

Miami is so many things, but to most visitors, it's mainly glamour, condensed into urban form.

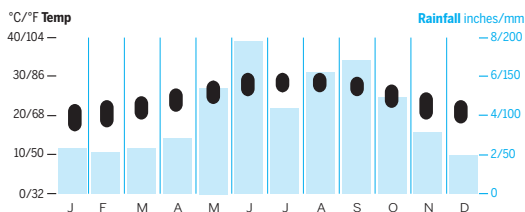
They're right. The archaic definition of 'glamour' is a kind of spell that mystifies a victim. Well, they call Miami the Magic City. And it is mystifying. In its beauty, certainly: the clack of a model's high heels on Lincoln Rd, the teal sweep of Biscayne Bay, flowing cool into the wide South Florida sky; the blood-orange fire of the sunset, setting the Downtown skyline aflame.

Then there's less-conventional beauty: a Haitian dance party in the ghetto attended by University of Miami literature students, or a Venezuelan singing Metallica *en español* in a Coral Gables karaoke bar, or the passing *shalom/buenas días* traded between Orthodox Jews and Cuban exiles.

Miami is so many things. All glamorous, in every sense of the word. You could spend a fun lifetime trying to escape her spell.

When to Go

Miami



Jan-Mar Warm and dry, with lots of tourists; snowbirds from the northeast and Europeans.

Apr-Jun Not as muggy as deep summer, but lush and greener than winter.

Jul-Oct Prices plummet. When it's not as hot as an oven, there's storms: it's hurricane season.

History

It's always been the weather that's attracted Miami's two most prominent species: developers and tourists. But it wasn't the sun per se that got people moving here – it was an ice storm. The great Florida freeze of 1895 wiped out the state's citrus industry; at the same time, widowed Julia Tuttle bought out parcels of land that would become modern Miami, and Henry Flagler was building his Florida East Coast Railroad. Tuttle offered to split her land with Flagler if he extended the railway to Miami, but the train man didn't pay her any heed until north Florida froze over and Tuttle sent him an 'I-told-you-so' message: an orange blossom clipped from her Miami garden.

The rest is a history of boom, bust, dreamers and opportunists. Generally, Miami has grown in leaps and bounds following major world events and natural disasters. Hurricanes (particularly the deadly Great Miami Hurricane of 1926) have wiped away the town, but it just keeps bouncing

and building back better than before. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Miami earned a reputation for attracting design and city-planning mavericks such as George Merrick, who fashioned the artful Mediterranean village of Coral Gables, and James Deering, designer of the fairy-tale Vizcaya mansion.

Miami Beach blossomed in the early 20th century when Jewish developers recognized the potential American Riviera in their midst. Those hoteliers started building resorts that were branded with a distinctive art-deco facade by daring architects willing to buck the more staid aesthetics of the northeast. The world wars brought soldiers who were stationed at nearby naval facilities, many of whom liked the sun and decided to stay. Latin American and Caribbean revolutions introduced immigrants from the other direction, most famously from Cuba. Cuban immigrants arrived in two waves: first, the anti-Castro types of the '60s, and those looking for a better life since the

MIAMI IN...

Two Days

There's more to Miami than South Beach, but we're assuming you're starting – and sleeping – here. Have breakfast at **Puerto Sagua** (p111) and, gorged, waddle to the **Wolfsonian-FIU** (p52) to get some background on the surrounding art-deco architecture. Now stroll around **Lincoln Road** (p61), hotel-spot on Collins Ave or check out South Beach's most flamboyant structures, like the **Delano Hotel** (p106), **Tides** (p106) and the **Shore Club** (p105).

Get in some beach time and as evening sets in consider an excellent deco district tour with the **Art Deco Welcome Center** (p133). For a nice dinner try **Osteria del Teatro** (p112) or **Tap Tap** (p111). When you're ready to hit the town (and the rails), we suggest early cocktails at **B Bar** (p122).

The next day potter around either of the excellent ethnic enclaves of **Little Haiti** (p79) or **Little Havana** (p85) before dining in the trendy **Design District** (p79). End your trip rocking out in one of Midtown's excellent venues, like **Barbot** (p125) or **Electric Pickle** (p124).

Four Days

Follow the two-day itinerary and visit whichever one of the 'Littles' (Haiti or Havana) you missed the first time round. If you can, visit Coral Gables, making sure not to miss the **Biltmore Hotel** (p89), the **Venetian Pool** (p89) and a shopping stroll down Miracle Mile. If all that isn't opulent enough for you, see what happens when Mediterranean revival, baroque stylings and a lot of money gets mashed together at the **Vizcaya Museum & Gardens** (p86). Top off a visit to these elegant manses with dinner at one of the best restaurants in Miami in, no kidding, a gas station at **El Carajo** (p120).

On day four, head downtown and take a long ride on the free **Metromover** (p135), hopping on and off to see the excellent **HistoryMiami** (p76) and the gorgeous **Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts** (p73). Have your last meal at **Michy's** (p118) on emergent N Biscayne Blvd and please, before you leave, guzzle a beer and pick at some smoked fish on the couches of **Jimbo's** (p84).