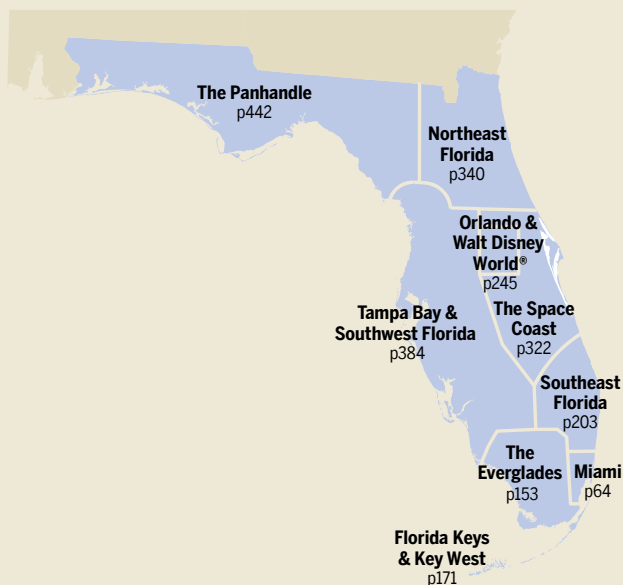




Florida



Adam Karlin, Kate Armstrong,
Ashley Harrell, Regis St Louis

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HURRICANE IRMA

On September 10, 2017, one of the largest hurricanes ever recorded barrelled over Florida, causing flooding and destruction. Hurricane Irma made landfall in the Florida Keys as a category 4 storm the width of Texas. Homes and businesses in Everglades City were left battered and mud-soaked after an 8-foot storm surge; in the Keys, a FEMA survey reported that 25% of buildings had been destroyed, with another 65% damaged.

This book was researched before the storm hit and sent to print soon after, when Irma's long-term effects were still unknown. Most cities were already announcing intentions to be ready for visitors soon. Still, those traveling to Florida, especially the Keys (www.fl-keys.com) or the Everglades (www.nps.gov/ever), should check official websites for the latest information.

Itineraries



7 DAYS Iconic Florida

For sheer iconic box-ticking, you can't do better than spending a week taking in Miami, the Everglades and the Florida Keys.

First off, explore **Miami** for three solid days (more if you can). South Beach's pastel art-deco hotels and hedonistic beach culture? Check. Cuban sandwiches, Haitian *botanicas*, modern art? Check. Charming the velvet ropes, Latin hip-hop, *mojitos*? Hey, we're doing good.

Then take one day and visit the sunning alligators (check) of **Everglades National Park**. On the way, **Homestead** has prime Florida roadside attractions (Coral Castle, Robert Is Here – check and check!), and the **Flamingo visitor center** offers opportunities to kayak among the mangroves (check).

Now spend three days (or more) in the Florida Keys. Stop first in **Key Largo**, for key lime pie, conch fritters and jaw-dropping coral reefs (check x3). Enjoy tarpon fishing in **Islamorada** – check – beach napping at **Bahia Honda State Park** – check – and, finally, hit **Key West** to ogle the Mallory Sq freak show (check) and raise a libation as the tangerine sun drops into an endless ocean – *salut!*



A1A: The Southern Atlantic Coast

Florida's southern Atlantic Coast is a symphony of beaches and barrier islands, of mangroves and sea turtles, of nostalgic Old Florida and nipped-and-tucked celebrity Florida, of the wealthy and the you've-got-to-be-kidding-me obscenely rich. Three driving routes can be mixed and matched (I-95, Hwy 1 and A1A), but scenic, two-lane A1A knits the islands together and edges the sands as much as any road can.

A1A starts in **Miami Beach**, within the art-deco historic district. Naturally you'll want to spend three days or so soaking up all that **Miami** offers. Then rent a convertible, don your Oakley sunglasses and nest a Dior scarf around your neck: it's time to road trip.

There already? First stop is **Fort Lauderdale**. Preen along the promenade among the skating goddesses and be-thonged gay men, ride a romantic gondola in the canals, and enjoy fine art and gourmet cuisine: it's a suite of pleasures the Gold Coast specializes in.

After two or three days, stagger on. Pause for a quiet interlude on the gorgeous beaches of **Boca Raton**, then repeat your Lauderdale experience in **Palm Beach**. Ogle the uberwealthy as they glide between mansion and Bentley and beach, stop by the Flagler Museum to understand how this all got started, and each day decamp to **West Palm Beach**, the hipper, more happening sister city.

After several days, it's time to detox. Heading north, the Treasure Coast is known for unspoiled nature, not condos and cosmopolitans. Stop first in **Jupiter**; among its pretty parks, don't miss the seaside geyser at Blowing Rocks Preserve.

Even better, spend several days in **Stuart**. From here you can kayak the Loxahatchee River, book a fishing charter, snorkel the reefs at St Lucie Inlet, and escape the crowds on nearby **Hutchinson Island** beaches.

If you only have two weeks, then you may have to skip the next offerings. At **Fort Pierce**, admire manatees in winter and snorkel a Spanish galleon. Surfers should pause at **Sebastian Inlet State Park**, and birders detour to the nation's first national wildlife refuge, **Pelican Island**. We've come a long way from Miami, yes?



Gulf Coast Swing

Many prefer Florida's Gulf Coast: the beaches aren't as built up, soporifically warm waters lap blindingly white sand, and the sun sets (rather than rises) over the sea. Plus, it's easy to mix urban sophistication with seaside getaways and swampy adventures – just like around Miami, only even more family- (and budget-) friendly.

On this trip, spend your first three to four days in **Tampa** and **St Petersburg**. Stroll the museums and parks along Tampa's sparkling Riverwalk, and spend a day enjoying historic Ybor City's Spanish cuisine, cigars and nightclubs. St Pete offers similar city fun, but above all, don't miss its Salvador Dalí Museum.

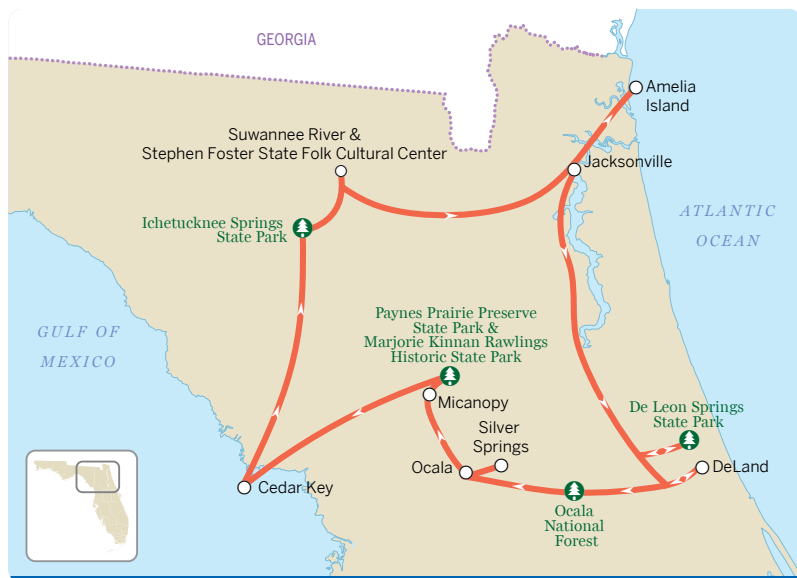
Now head west for the barrier islands. Take their full measure by spending one day on unspoiled **Honeymoon and Caladesi Islands**, then enjoy the hyper, activity-fueled atmosphere of **St Pete Beach**.

Next, drive down to **Sarasota** for three days. You'll need that long to take in the magnificent Ringling Museum Complex, the orchid-rich Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, perhaps catch the opera and still allow plenty of time to build sandcastles on the amazing white-sand beaches of **Siesta Key**. If you have extra time, visit **Myakka River State Park** and kayak among the alligators.

Then skip down to **Fort Myers** for two days of regional exploring. Take the ferry to **Cayo Costa Island** for a beach of unforgettable solitude, or go the party route and hit the crowded strands of **Fort Myers Beach**.

You need to save at least two days for **Sanibel Island**. World famous for its shelling, it's also a bike-friendly island stocked with great eats and wildlife-filled bays ripe for kayaking.

Finally end with two to three days in **Naples**, the quintessence of Gulf Coast beach towns: upscale, artistic and welcoming of every age demographic, with perhaps Florida's most pristine city beach. You can eat and shop to your heart's content, and fit in a day trip to the **Everglades**. It's easy – zip along the Tamiami Trail to **Shark Valley**, and take a tram tour or bike ride among the sawgrass plains and sometimes countless alligators.



North Florida Backroads

North Florida appeals to outdoor-lovers who prefer that days be filled with forests, springs, rivers and fishing, and that evenings be spent reliving these adventures around campfires.

Fly into **Jacksonville**, and spend the first day embracing the Atlantic Ocean on Jax beaches. For a full dose of Florida's Southern personality, have dinner at Southern Charm, then sink a few beers in the Little Five Points neighborhood.

Drive south to small-town **DeLand** and explore **De Leon Springs State Park**, with its crystal-springs kayaking. The big daddy down here is the **Ocala National Forest**, with epic hiking and biking through Florida's fascinating limestone karst terrain. While it may be tough to spot local wildlife, you're in a wilderness that is rife with alligators, foxes, coyotes and black bears: keep your eyes peeled.

Next, scoot over to **Ocala**, a veritable center for Florida agriculture and Old Florida vibe. Here the classic glass-bottom boat tours of **Silver Springs** and high-revving dragster energy of the Don Garlits Museums beckon. Then go north to **Micanopy**, 'the town that time forgot,' for more eerie hikes at **Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park** and a taste of Cracker history at **Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park**, named for the author of *The Yearling*, the classic tale of growing up barefoot and poor in the Depression-era South.

For the next two to four days, string together the following outdoor highlights: drive to **Cedar Key**, where you can kayak among seabirds and unspoiled mangrove-fringed islands; then head further north to **Ichetucknee Springs State Park**, which warrants a half-day of tubing amid its cool blue springs. Save at least a day for a river trip along the **Suwannee River**, a muddy-brown moss-draped meander that's North Florida all over. Reserve ahead for a multiday river-camping trip, and visit the **Stephen Foster State Folk Cultural Center** to learn about the folkways of the 'Cracker' (rural white) cultural roots of the region.

Nothing personal, but it's clean-up time. Drive back to Jacksonville, and spend a final day or three on **Amelia Island**. Spoil yourself with a Victorian B&B and some gourmet seafood, or hit the outdoors again with a paddle around the barrier islands.

1
WEEK

Mickey to Manatees

The kids want Disney, but Mom and Dad want beach time, a good meal and some culture. Oh, and you've only got a week.

Presto change-o – here you go! For the first three or four days, stay in **Orlando**. Rather than give in entirely to Walt Disney World®, spend two days there and another day at Universal Orlando Resort, particularly if you've read any of those Harry Potter books.

For the next three or four days, hit Tampa Bay. On one day in **Tampa** choose between its tremendous zoo and aquarium and its fantastic museums, then end in historic Ybor City for Spanish cuisine with a side of flamenco. In **St Petersburg** even kids will find the Salvador Dalí Museum intriguing. Then squeeze in a day trip north for the mermaid shows at **Weeki Wachee Springs State Park** and the manatees of **Homosassa Springs**. Everybody's happy!

1
WEEK

City to Seashells

Geez, you really don't want to miss sexy, high-energy Miami, but if you don't get some sandy, leave-me-alone-with-my-novel downtime you'll never make it when you return to work in [insert name of major metropolis here]. Oh, and you've only got a week.

Presto change-o – here you go! Spend the first three days in **Miami** and have a party. Tour the art-deco-district hotels, enjoy the sophisticated art museums, shop for tailored shirts and racy designer dresses, and prance past the velvet ropes to celebrity-spot and dance all night to Latin hip-hop.

Next, spend one day peering at alligators through dark sunglasses in the **Everglades**, just so everyone back home won't be all 'What? You went to Florida and didn't even go?'

For the last three days, chill on **Sanibel Island**. Get a hotel on a private stretch of beach and do nothing but sun, sleep, read and collect handfuls of beautiful seashells as you kick along. Maybe take a bike ride and have a gourmet dinner. But each night, dig your toes in the sand and enjoy the setting sun in romantic solitude.



10 DAYS

Redneck Riviera

Sure, Florida's Panhandle gets rowdy, yet there's family-friendly warmth and unexpected sophistication along with its spectacular bone-white beaches.

Start your tour with a few days in **Pensacola**. Relax on the beaches of the **Gulf Islands National Seashore**, and enjoy Pensacola's historic village and its naval aviation history. The Blue Angels may even put on a show.

Spend another two days in the tourist towns of **Destin** and **Fort Walton Beach**, and don't miss the world-class sand of **Grayton Beach State Park**. If you have kids, a day among the hyperactive boardwalk amusements of **Panama City Beach** is virtually a must.

Afterward shuffle along to the secluded wilderness of **Cape San Blas** and quaint **Apalachicola**, whose romantic historic sweets as heavy as a hot Florida day.

St George and St Vincent Islands provide more secluded getaways, but if time is short, spend your last day around **Tallahassee** – admittedly located off the Gulf. Unwind and get a little rowdy in some local live-music joints.

10 DAYS

Summer Farewell

Let's say you want the warmest weather but the fewest people. Hello, September! This trip is good anytime, but Florida's north is particularly sweet as school starts and summer fades.

Fly into **Jacksonville**, but go straight to **Amelia Island** for several days of romantic B&Bs, luscious food and pretty sand. The good vibes continue as you kayak and explore the undeveloped beaches of **Talbot** and **Fort George Islands**, just south.

Then spend two to three days in **St Augustine**. America's oldest city preserves its heritage very well, with plenty of pirate tales enlivening the Spanish forts and basilicas.

When you've had enough of fine dining and costumed reenactors, head to **Cassadaga**, a town of spiritualists and New Age wisdom in the middle of the backwoods (because Florida!), and have your fortune told.

At this point, you've filled a week, but a few more days means more kayaking in **Canaveral National Seashore**, and perhaps a day or two in the theme parks of **Orlando**. Where aren't the kids when they are in school? In line.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkeling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- BART station
- Border crossing
- Boston T station
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro/Muni station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway/SkyTrain station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Adam Karlin

Curator, Northeast Florida, the Panhandle Adam is a Lonely Planet author based out of wherever he happens to be. Born in Washington, DC and raised in the rural Maryland tidewater, he's been exploring the world and writing about it since he was 17. For him, it's a blessedly interesting way to live life. Also, it's good fun. He just read two good quotes, so with thanks to Italy, ancient and modern: '*Tutto il mondo e paese*' and '*Ambulare pro deus*'. If you ever meet Adam on the road, be

sure to share a drink and a story. Adam also wrote the Plan Your Trip, Understand and Survival Guide sections.



Kate Armstrong

Southeast Florida, Orlando & Walt Disney World® Kate has spent much of her adult life traveling and living around the world. A full-time freelance travel journalist, she has contributed to around 40 Lonely Planet guides and trade publications and is regularly published in Australian and worldwide publications. She is the author of several books and children's educational titles. You can read more

about her on www.katearmstrongtravelwriter.com and @nomaditis.



Ashley Harrell

Southwest Florida, the Space Coast After a brief stint selling day spa coupons door-to-door in South Florida, Ashley decided she'd rather be a writer. She went to journalism grad school, convinced a newspaper to hire her, and started covering wildlife, crime and tourism, sometimes all in the same story. Fueling her

zest for storytelling and the unknown, she traveled widely and moved often, from a tiny NYC apartment to a vast California ranch to a jungle cabin in Costa Rica, where she started writing for Lonely Planet. From there her travels became more exotic and farther flung, and she still laughs when paychecks arrive.



Regis St Louis

Miami, Florida Keys & Key West, the Everglades Regis grew up in a small town in the American Midwest – the kind of place that fuels big dreams of travel – and he developed an early fascination with foreign dialects and world cultures. He spent his formative years learning Russian and a handful of Romance languages, which served him well on journeys across much of the globe. Regis has contributed

to more than 50 Lonely Planet titles, covering destinations across six continents. His travels have taken him from the mountains of Kamchatka to remote island villages in Melanesia, and to many grand urban landscapes. When not on the road, he lives in New Orleans. Follow him on www.instagram.com/regisstlouis.

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