

welcome to **Miami & the Keys**



The Magic City

South Florida is a land of dreams. Miami is known as the Magic City. Whichever way you cut it, imagination and innovation are big here, manifesting themselves in art, architecture and festivals. You see it from the extravagance of Lincoln Rd to the ephemeral neon beauty of Ocean Dr; from the cloud-kissing skyline of downtown Miami to the shells of empty condos that bankrupted their speculators; from the pink castle walls of a Coral Gables mansion to the dark, sexy lounges of Overtown; and from the Fabergé-egg interior of the Vizcaya Museum to an experimental art piece in Midtown. Stay in Miami long enough and you might believe magic is real.

Arts & the Edge

In Miami proper and Miami Beach, the newest neighborhoods are the districts where the creative community is opening the best restaurants, bars and clubs (and here 'the newest' and 'the best' often go hand in hand). Sometimes this takes the form of massive public investment realized in architectural masterpieces such as the Adrienne Arsht Center and the New World Center, two impressive performing arts spaces that have spruced up Miami and Miami Beach respectively. Sometimes it takes the form of young artists using open houses, gallery nights and special studio shows to gentrify entire swathes of neighborhood. In both ways, greater Miami is growing, physically and culturally.



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Beauty is the name of the game here. From fashion models to deco hotels, beach sunrises to a wetland ecosystem and alluring islands, South Florida is an aesthetic masterpiece.

(left) South Beach's Ocean Drive (p46)
 (below) Skating and cycling at South Beach (p42)



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Ah, Florida

If Miami is full of culture, fun and urban beauty, South Florida is full of natural beauty, especially the spectacular wetland ecosystem of the Everglades and the island jungles and waterways of the Keys. If you took America and shook it by its sides, all its eccentricities (and quite a few eccentrics) would tumble into the southeast corner pocket that is South Florida. What happens when these folks mix with the region's considerable immigrant population? Fun, diversity and the occasional chicken sacrifice to a *vodou* god. Miami is iconoclastic enough, but outside the city? In the Everglades you'll find alligator wrestlers and Bigfoot hunters sharing a beer at crab

shacks where panthers prowl the backyard. Head out to the Keys and you'll meet drag queens working as insect exterminators and islands named No Name inhabited by miniature deer. All of this delightful sense of place is ensconced within considerable natural beauty: shimmering bays, serene tidal flats, fecund cypress groves, emerald islands scattered over a teal sea, and a bed of ancient-looking wetlands.