

Miami

Includes ➔

Sights	39
Activities	82
Tours	87
Festivals & Events ...	88
Sleeping	90
Eating	99
Drinking & Nightlife	110
Entertainment	116
Shopping	119
Information	121

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Exquisito Restaurant (p107)
- ➔ Chef Creole (p105)
- ➔ Blue Collar (p105)
- ➔ Choices (p104)
- ➔ Steve's Pizza (p103)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Shore Club (p94)
- ➔ Gale South Beach (p94)
- ➔ The Standard (p94)
- ➔ Raleigh Hotel (p94)
- ➔ Pelican Hotel (p92)

Why Go?

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

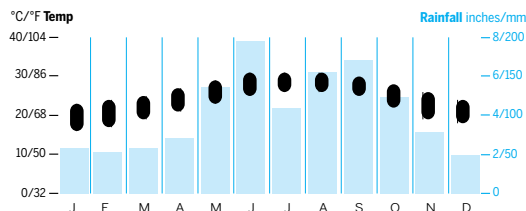
They're right. The archaic definition of 'glamour' is a kind of spell that mystifies a victim. Well, they call Miami the Magic City. And it is mystifying. In its beauty, certainly: the clack of a model's high heels on Lincoln Rd, the teal sweep of Biscayne Bay, flowing cool into the wide South Florida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

Then there's less-conventional beauty: a poetry slam in a converted warehouse, 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 are 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 late 1970s, such as the arrivals on the 1980 Mariel Boatlift during a Cuban economic crisis. The glam and overconsumption of the 1980s, as shown in movies like *Scarface* and *Miami Beach*, attracted a certain breed of the rich and beautiful, and their associated models, designers, hoteliers and socialites, all of whom transformed South Beach into the beautiful beast it is today.

Political changes in Latin America continue to have repercussions in this most Latin

of cities – as former mayor Manny Diaz once said, 'When Venezuela or Argentina sneezes, Miami catches a cold.' In the last half of the 'aughts,' Miami embarked on a Manhattanization of its skyline that – barring a brief pause from 2008 to 2010 due to the financial crisis – hasn't really let up. Miami has, as of this writing, the third-biggest skyline in the USA (after New York and Chicago), most clearly evident in the area around Brickell.

Maps

McNally, AAA and Dolph's all make great maps of the Miami area. The best free map is from the Greater Miami & the Beaches Convention & Visitors Bureau (p122).

Sights

Miami's major sights aren't concentrated in one neighborhood. The most frequently visited area is South Beach, home to hot nightlife, beautiful beaches and art-deco hotels, but you'll find historic sites and museums downtown, art galleries in Wynwood and the Design District, old-fashioned hotels and eateries in Mid-Beach (in Miami Beach), more beaches on Key Biscayne, and peaceful neighborhood attractions in Coral Gables and Coconut Grove.

Water and income – canals, bays and bank accounts – are the geographic and social boundaries that divide Miami. Of course, the great water that divides here is Biscayne Bay, holding the city of Miami apart from its preening sibling Miami Beach (along with the fine feathers of South Beach). Don't forget, as many do, that Miami Beach is not Miami's beach, but its own distinct town.

South Beach

The most iconic neighborhood in Greater Miami, South Beach encompasses the region south of 21st St in the city of Miami Beach, though hoteliers have been known to push that up as high as 40th St and on our maps it is below 23rd St. Collins Ave, the main artery, is famous for its long string of art-deco hotels. The chic outdoor cafes and restaurants of Ocean Dr overlook the wide Atlantic shorefront, while pedestrian-only Lincoln Rd Mall is a shopper's heaven. Anything south of 5th St is called 'SoFi'.

★ **Art Deco Historic District** NEIGHBORHOOD (Map p52) South Beach's heart is its Art Deco Historic District, from 18th St and south along Ocean Dr and Collins Ave. It's ironic that in a