

SANIBEL ISLAND



Sanibel Island is a real shell-collector's paradise. The east-west orientation of the island's south end acts like a shovel, scooping up the more than 200 species of seashells brought in by the currents. Some beaches are literally carpeted with them. So many people go shelling that the bent-at-the-waist stance has even been dubbed the "Sanibel Stoop"! It was only in 1963 that the island was connected to the mainland by a causeway. Its exquisite scenery, blue waters as far as the eye can see and spectacular sunsets make Sanibel an essential destination when visiting southern Florida.

SEASHELLS ON A BEACH

WHAT TO DO

BEACHES ★★

LIGHTHOUSE

PARK BEACH ★★



Lighthouse Beach ★★ is mostly frequented by **families**. It is named for the **historic lighthouse** found there.

Swimming, fishing and walks around the marshes are the most popular activities. There are also washroom facilities, picnic tables and shaded pavilions.

110, PERIWINKLE WAY,
SANIBEL ISLAND

BOWMAN'S BEACH ★★



Beautiful **Bowman's Beach ★★** is everything you could dream of for a perfect getaway: it is secluded, quiet and not very crowded. It is one of the most popular beaches on Sanibel. There are

several amenities, including a **children's playground**. It is also the only beach with **barbecue grills** where you can cook while enjoying the spectacular sunset.
1700, BOWMAN'S BEACH
ROAD, SANIBEL ISLAND

TARPON BAY BEACH ★

Another white sand beach, perfect for **shelling**. It has washroom facilities (water fountains, showers and toilets) and picnic tables. It is a short hike from the parking lot to the beach.

111, TARPON BAY ROAD
SANIBEL ISLAND

TURNER BEACH ★

Turner Beach is one of the most **popular for shelling**. Swimming can be dangerous because of the

swift currents. There are no washroom facilities. Turner Beach is just after **Blind Pass Bridge** connecting Sanibel to Captiva Island.
17 200, CAPTIVA DRIVE,
CAPTIVA ISLAND

J.N. DING DARLING NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE ★★

This park covering **more than one-third of the island** was created to safeguard and enhance the pristine wildlife habitat of Sanibel Island, to protect endangered and threatened species, and to provide feeding, nesting, and roosting areas for migratory birds. Along the wooden boardwalks you can sometimes see **Gopher tortoises** and even **alligator crossings** on the bay side. The park is a bird watchers' paradise! One of the best times of the day to view some of the **245 species of birds** is early in the morning, at low tide. From your car on Wildlife Drive, you may see pelicans, spoonbills, anhingas, woodpeckers, herons, egrets

and other beautiful waterfowl. The road is open every day except Fridays. You can also enjoy kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding on the quiet waters of the park (equipment can be rented on location).
1, WILDLIFE DRIVE, SANIBEL ISLAND
239-472-1100
WWW.FWS.GOV/DINGDARLING

BAILEY-MATTHEWS NATIONAL SHELL MUSEUM

Sanibel's **Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum** has more than **2 million shells** in its collection, including specimens from around the globe. It's the perfect place to identify the shells you've found during your trip. You can also download their app to identify your finds. Currently closed for post-hurricane rebuilding. Visit website for updates.
3075, SANIBEL-CAPTIVA
ROAD, SANIBEL ISLAND
239-395-2233
WWW.SHELLMUSEUM.ORG

AUTHENTIK TIP

The best time to go shelling is **just before low tide, preferably at sunrise**. Shelling around the full or new moon will increase your chances of finding beautiful specimens! One of the best places for finding small, colourful shells is around the Sanibel Lighthouse end of the island, while larger shells are found closer to Captiva. **Junonia, Lion's Paw Scallop** and **Scotch Bonnet** are some of the rare species you may find, and are highly prized by collectors!

Important: live shelling is prohibited by Florida state law. Make sure that the shells you collect do not have an animal living inside.

BIKE TRAILS

Biking is without a doubt the best way to **explore Sanibel**. With its more than **35 km of bike trails**, you can get just about anywhere on the island by bike, even places not accessible by car. Bicycles can be rented at **Finnimore's Cycle** for a good price.

2353, Periwinkle Way, Sanibel Island / 239-472-5577 / finnimores.com

A BIT OF HISTORY...

You will notice that Sanibel is surrounded by many **small deserted islands**. They create a fantastic natural environment to explore by boat! Sanibel is said to have been the home base of the infamous **pirate captain José Gaspar** many years ago. Legend has it that he held his female prisoners captive on Captiva Island, imprisoned his beloved Mexican princess Joseffa on Useppa Island, hid his treasure on Gasparilla Island, and made his home on Pine Island...

DO YOU KNOW THE «SANIBEL SHUFFLE»?

It consists of jumping into the sea and shuffling your feet to scare away any small rays that might be nearby, as they can often be found near the beaches. Another popular Sanibel activity! That said, a ray sting can be painful but it is not dangerous.

** IMPORTANT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: HURRICANE IAN

Following hurricane Ian at the end of 2022, many restaurants and businesses had to close down for repairs. Please make sure to always visit their website for updates.



NEARBY

CAPTIVA ISLAND ★

A short bridge at the northern tip of **Sanibel Island ★★** leads to **Captiva Island ★**. Captiva is home to tourist resorts, some good restaurants, and more beautiful beaches where you can add to your collection of shells. Several companies offer **tours** to explore the beautiful pristine islands nearby, such as **Captiva Cruises**.

11401 ANDY ROSSE LANE, CAPTIVA ISLAND

239-472-5300

WWW.CAPTIVACRUISES.COM

5TH AVENUE S. AND 3RD STREET S. SCENIC DRIVE ★

This **scenic route** runs along the Gulf of Mexico for about **10 km**. Start on **Mooring Line Drive** which becomes Gulf Shore Boulevard. Turn left on 19th Avenue and then right on **Gordon Drive** until you reach **Gordon's Pass**. You will see luxury homes and beautiful beaches. Also note the **Naples Pier** (735 8th Street), built in 1888, a symbol of the city and its history.



CAPTIVA ISLAND

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NAPLES ★

Sometimes overlooked by visitors in favor of the Everglades, Naples boasts **many white sandy beaches** and the particularly calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico. The city appeals to a wide range of visitors with its **35 golf courses** and its high-end **boutiques** and **art galleries**.

DELNOR-WIGGINS PASS STATE PARK ★

This park boasts one of the most **pristine stretches of beach** in the world, with **2 km** of white sand and calm waters. It's the perfect spot to build a sandcastle or just relax in the sun. The place is however very busy on weekends. Currently closed due to hurricane Ian. Visit website for updates.

11 135, GULF SHORE DRIVE, NAPLES

239-597-6196

WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/
PARKS-AND-TRAILS/DELNOR-
WIGGINS-PASS-STATE-PARK



SCENIC DRIVE

© AdobeStock, jovaning



DELNOR BEACH

© Creative Commons, Elyabe

OLD NAPLES ★

Historic Old Naples is the place to browse high-end boutiques and art galleries, unwind on the patio of a good restaurant or take a break in the shade of some palm trees.



WHERE TO EAT

PINOCCHIO'S ORIGINAL ITALIAN ICE CREAM (\$)

A must! Pinocchio's ice cream, frozen yogurt, sorbet and gelato are handcrafted in-house. They offer many unique and delicious flavours, some of which are inspired by the local beaches, others by Tuscany, and the frozen treats are always fresh (if they make it on Monday, they serve it on Tuesday or Wednesday.) The portions are generous: you won't be disappointed! Currently closed. Check website for updates.
 2075, PERIWINKLE WAY,
 SANIBEL ISLAND / 239-472-6566
WWW.PINOCCHIOSICECREAM.COM

THE ISLAND COW (\$\$-\$\$\$)

The perfect place to start the day! The breakfast menu is impressive, with a wide selection of pancakes, eggs prepared just how you like them, sandwiches and even seafood omelettes! You will also love the patio, the festive atmosphere, the interesting menu, the great cookies, the cold drinks, the outdoor games and the live entertainment. Currently closed following a fire. Check website for updates.
 2163, PERIWINKLE WAY,
 SANIBEL ISLAND
 239-472-0606
WWW.SANIBELISLANDCOW.COM

SWEET MELISSA'S CAFE (\$\$\$\$)

One of the island's favourite restaurants. A real culinary journey awaits you here. Chef/owner and artist Melissa Talmage offers a varied and creative menu prepared with eclectic ingredients.
 1625, PERIWINKLE WAY,
 SANIBEL ISLAND
 239-472-1956
WWW.SWEETMELISSASCAFE.COM

THE MAD HATTER (\$\$\$\$)

This popular restaurant offers American cuisine at its best in a cozy, romantic setting! The menu is varied and prepared with fresh seasonal ingredients. You will enjoy your experience as much for the beautiful sunsets as for the food and service. Currently closed. Check website for details.
 6467, SANIBEL-CAPTIVA ROAD,
 SANIBEL ISLAND
 239-472-0033
WWW.MADHATTERRESTAURANT.COM



SUNSET ON LIGHTHOUSE BEACH

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