

Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part I: Introducing Florida	7
Chapter 1: Discovering the Best of Florida	9
Chapter 2: Deciding Where and When to Go	15
Part II: Planning Your Trip to Florida	33
Chapter 3: Managing Your Money	35
Chapter 4: Getting to Florida	45
Chapter 5: Getting around Florida	52
Chapter 6: Booking Your Accommodations	58
Chapter 7: Catering to Special Travel Needs or Interests	65
Chapter 8: Taking Care of the Remaining Details	71
Part III: South Florida	77
Chapter 9: Settling into Miami	79
Chapter 10: Exploring Miami	108
Chapter 11: Unlocking the Keys	127
Chapter 12: The Everglades	163
Chapter 13: The Gold Coast	178
Part IV: The Gulf Coast	211
Chapter 14: Tampa	213
Chapter 15: St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and the Beaches	236
Chapter 16: Sarasota, Fort Myers, and Naples	260
Part V: Visiting Central Florida:	
Mickey Mania	287
Chapter 17: Settling into Walt Disney World and Orlando	289
Chapter 18: Touring the Theme Parks	318
Chapter 19: Exploring the Rest of Orlando	360
Part VI: The Great North	377
Chapter 20: Daytona Beach	379
Chapter 21: Northeast Florida	396

<i>Part VII: The Part of Tens</i>	423
Chapter 22: The Top Ten Florida Beaches	425
Chapter 23: Ten or More of Florida's Favorite Foods	430
<i>Appendix: Quick Concierge</i>	435
<i>Index</i>	443

Maps at a Glance

Florida	16
Florida Driving Times and Distances	53
Miami at a Glance	83
South Beach Accommodations	90
Miami Beach Accommodations	95
Accommodations Elsewhere in Miami	98
South Beach Dining	102
Miami Beach Dining.....	104
Attractions in South Miami-Dade County	109
Central Miami Attractions	114
The Florida Keys	130
Key West	151
The Everglades.....	166
Fort Lauderdale	184
Palm Beach and Boca Raton.....	199
Tampa Accommodations and Dining	218
Tampa Attractions	226
Downtown St. Petersburg	239
St. Pete and Clearwater Beaches	249
Sarasota and Bradenton	262
Fort Myers, Sanibel, and Naples	272
Orlando Neighborhoods	293
Accommodations and Dining in Walt Disney World and Lake Buena Vista	300
Other Orlando Area Accommodations and Dining	302
Accommodations and Dining on International Drive	306
Walt Disney World	319
More Orlando Attractions	364
Daytona Beach	381
St. Augustine.....	398
Jacksonville	409
Amelia Island and Fernandina Beach	411

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
Foolish Assumptions	3
How This Book Is Organized	4
Part I: Introducing Florida	4
Part II: Planning Your Trip to Florida	4
Part III: South Florida	4
Part IV: The Gulf Coast	5
Part V: Visiting Central Florida:	
Mickey Mania	5
Part VI: The Great North	5
Part VII: The Part of Tens	5
Icons Used in This Book	5
Where to Go from Here	6
<i>Part I: Introducing Florida</i>	7
Chapter 1: Discovering the Best of Florida	9
The Best Fine-Dining Experiences	10
The Best Places for Fresh Seafood	10
The Best Romantic Hideaways	11
The Best Family Attractions	11
The Best Chills and Thrills	12
The Best Places to Get Topsy	13
The Best Places to Party Until Dawn	14
The Best Places to Cast Your Reel	14
Chapter 2: Deciding Where and When to Go	15
Diving Into Florida's Regions	15
South Florida	18
The Gulf Coast	19
Central Florida	19
The Great North	20
Revealing the Secret of the Seasons	21
Discovering springtime in Florida	21
Heating up the scene in summer	22
Falling into the tropics	22
Heading south for the winter	22
Wising Up about the Weather	23

Heeding Weather Warnings	24
Making hurricane waves	24
Tumbling tornadoes	25
Forgoing some sun	25
Raining down	26
Checking Out Florida's Calendar of Events	26
January	27
February	27
March–April	28
May	28
June	29
July	29
August	29
September	29
October	29
November	30
December	30

***Part II: Planning Your Trip to Florida*33**

Chapter 3: Managing Your Money35

Planning Your Budget	35
Transportation	36
Lodging	36
Dining	37
Sightseeing	37
Shopping	38
Nightlife	38
Keeping a Lid on Hidden Expenses	40
Cutting Costs — but Not the Fun	41
Handling Money	42
Using ATMs and carrying cash	43
Charging ahead with credit cards	43
Toting traveler's checks	43
Dealing with a lost or stolen wallet	44

Chapter 4: Getting to Florida45

Flying to Florida	45
Getting the best deal on your airfare	45
Booking your flight online	47
Driving to Florida	48
Getting to Florida by Rail	49
Choosing a Package Tour	49
Airline packages	51
Other package resources	51

Chapter 5: Getting around Florida	52
By Car	52
Minding the road rules	52
Renting some wheels	54
Ringing up the cost of renting a car	55
Booking a rental on the Internet	55
By Plane	56
By Train	57
By Bus	57
Chapter 6: Booking Your Accommodations	58
Getting to Know Your Options	58
Getting the Best Room at the Best Rate	60
Finding the best rate	61
Getting the view — or not	62
Surfing the Web for hotel deals	63
Reserving the best room	64
Chapter 7: Catering to Special Travel Needs or Interests	65
Traveling with the Brood: Advice for Families	65
Making Age Work for You: Tips for Seniors	67
Accessing Florida: Advice for Travelers with Disabilities	68
Following the Rainbow: Advice for Gay and Lesbian Travelers	69
Chapter 8: Taking Care of the Remaining Details	71
Playing It Safe with Travel and Medical Insurance ...	71
Staying Healthy When You Travel	72
Keeping Up with Airline Security Measures	73
Beating the Crowd: Reservations and Tickets	74
Reserving a table	74
Reserving a ticket and getting event information	75
Reserving a green	75
<i>Part III: South Florida</i>	<i>77</i>
Chapter 9: Settling into Miami	79
Getting There	79
By plane	80
By car	81
By train	81

Orienting Yourself in Miami81
 Introducing the neighborhoods82
 Finding information after you arrive86
Getting around Miami87
 By car87
 By taxi88
 By bus88
 By rail88
Staying in Style89
 Miami's best hotels89
 Runner-up hotels94
Dining Out99
 Miami's best restaurants99

Chapter 10: Exploring Miami108

Seeing the Top Sights108
Finding More Cool Things to See and Do112
 Visiting museums, gardens,
 parks, and more113
 Golfing117
 Watching the big-league teams117
 Fishing118
 Laying down some bets119
Seeing Miami by Guided Tour119
 Bus tours119
 Walking tours119
 Boat tour120
Shopping120
 Burning some bucks121
 Crawling through the malls121
Living It Up After Dark122
 Toasting the town123
 Clubbing123
 Pursuing splashes of culture124
Fast Facts125

Chapter 11: Unlocking the Keys127

Getting There127
 By plane128
 By car128
 By train128
Getting a Clue about the Keys129
Getting Around129

Key Largo	131
Spending the night	131
Dining locally	132
Exploring Key Largo	134
Touring the waters	135
Shopping for local treasures	136
Living it up after dark	136
Islamorada	136
Spending the night	136
Dining locally	138
Exploring Islamorada	140
Pursuing outdoor delights	141
Living it up after dark	141
Marathon	142
Spending the night	142
Dining locally	143
Exploring Marathon	144
Outdoor pursuits	145
The Lower Keys	146
Spending the night	146
Dining locally	148
Exploring the Lower Keys	149
Taking it to the water	150
Key West	150
Spending the night	152
Dining locally	154
Exploring Key West	156
Seeing Key West by guided tour	158
Outdoor adventures	159
Keeping a bit of the Keys for yourself	160
Living it up after dark	160
Coming out to enjoy the gay scene	161
Fast Facts: The Keys	161
Chapter 12: The Everglades	163
Introducing the Everglades	163
Getting There	164
Getting Around	165
Staying in Style	165
Dining Out	169
Exploring the Everglades	170
Top attractions	171
Going outdoors in the Everglades	176
Taking a guided tour	176
Fast Facts	177

Chapter 13: The Gold Coast178

Seeing the Gold Coast	178
Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, and Beyond	179
Getting there	179
Getting around	181
Staying in style	182
Dining out	186
Exploring Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, and beyond	189
Shopping the local stores	194
Living it up after dark	194
Fast Facts	195
Boca Raton, Palm Beach, and West Palm Beach	196
Getting there	196
Getting around	197
Staying in style	198
Dining out	202
Exploring Palm Beach, West Palm Beach, and Boca Raton	204
Shopping the local stores	208
Living it up after dark	208
Fast Facts	209

Part IV: The Gulf Coast211**Chapter 14: Tampa213**

Getting to Tampa	214
By plane	214
By car	214
By train	214
Orienting Yourself in Tampa	215
Introducing the neighborhoods	215
Finding information after you arrive	215
Getting Around Tampa	215
By car	216
By taxi	216
By bus	216
Staying in Style	216
Tampa's best hotels	217
Runner-up accommodations	221
Dining Out	222

Exploring Tampa225
 The top attraction: Busch Gardens225
 Seeing other top sights229
 More cool things to see and do231
 Shopping the Local Stores232
 Tampa’s best shopping areas233
 Hitting the malls233
 Living It Up After Dark233
 Bars233
 Clubs234
 Cultural centers234
 Fast Facts234

**Chapter 15: St. Petersburg, Clearwater,
 and the Beaches236**

Searching the Suncoast: What’s Where?237
 St. Petersburg and Its Beaches237
 Getting there237
 Getting around238
 Staying in style240
 Dining out243
 Exploring St. Petersburg245
 Going on a guided tour247
 Shopping the local stores247
 Living it up after dark247
 North Pinellas and Its Beaches248
 Getting there248
 Getting around250
 Staying in style250
 Dining out252
 Exploring Clearwater254
 Taking a guided tour257
 Shopping257
 Living it up after dark257
 Day-Tripping to Weeki Wachee,
 Homosassa Springs, and Crystal River258
 Fast Facts259

Chapter 16: Sarasota, Fort Myers, and Naples ...260

Southwest Florida: What’s Where?260
 Sarasota and Bradenton261
 Getting there261
 Getting around261

Staying in style	263
Dining out	265
Exploring Sarasota and Bradenton	267
Shopping	270
Living it up after dark	270
Fort Myers, Sanibel, Naples, and Marco Island	271
Getting there	271
Getting around	271
Staying in style	273
Dining out	277
Exploring Fort Myers, Sanibel, Naples, and Marco Island	279
Going on a guided tour	283
Shopping	284
Living it up after dark	284
Fast Facts	285

Part V: Visiting Central Florida:***Mickey Mania*287****Chapter 17: Settling into Walt Disney World
and Orlando289**

Getting There	289
By plane	290
By car	291
By train	291
Orienting Yourself in Orlando	292
Introducing the neighborhoods	292
Finding information after you arrive	294
Getting Around Orlando	294
By the Disney transportation system	295
By trolley	295
By car	295
By bus	295
By taxi	296
By shuttle	296
Staying in Style	296
The top hotels	297
Runner-up hotels	308
Dining Out	309
Disney character dining	314
Dinner shows	316

Chapter 18: Touring the Theme Parks	318
Walt Disney World: An Overview	318
Pricing theme parks	319
Enjoying Walt Disney World	320
The Magic Kingdom	321
Main Street, U.S.A.	321
Tomorrowland	321
Mickey’s Toontown Fair	322
Fantasyland	323
Liberty Square	325
Frontierland	326
Adventureland	328
Parades and fireworks	329
Epcot	330
Future World	331
World Showcase	335
Ending your day at Epcot	339
Disney–MGM Studios	339
Checking out the best of Disney–MGM	340
Parades and fireworks	342
Animal Kingdom	343
The Oasis	343
Discovery Island	343
Camp Minnie-Mickey	344
Africa	344
Asia	345
Dinoland U.S.A.	346
Universal Orlando: An Overview	347
Universal Studios Florida	347
Hollywood	347
New York	348
Production Central	348
San Francisco	349
Woody Woodpecker’s KidZone	349
World Expo	350
Islands of Adventure	351
Port of Entry	351
Seuss Landing	351
Marvel Super Hero Island	352
Toon Lagoon	353
Jurassic Park	353
The Lost Continent	354

SeaWorld355
 Park prices355
 SeaWorld attractions356
Discovery Cove358

Chapter 19: Exploring the Rest of Orlando360

Seeing the Top Smaller Attractions360
 The never-ending world of Disney360
 Beyond Disney363
More Cool Things to See and Do366
Shopping367
 Orlando’s best shopping areas367
 Searching for shopping hot spots368
Living It Up After Dark369
 Disney after dark369
 Universal after dark371
 Other nighttime venues373
Side-tripping to John F. Kennedy Space Center373
Side-tripping to Cypress Gardens374
Fast Facts375

Part VI: The Great North377

Chapter 20: Daytona Beach379

Getting There380
 By plane380
 By car380
 By train380
Orienting Yourself in Daytona Beach380
 Introducing the neighborhoods380
 Finding information after you arrive382
Getting Around Daytona382
 By car382
 By taxi383
 By bus383
Staying in Style383
 The top hotels383
 Runner-up hotels386
Dining Out387
Exploring Daytona Beach389
 The top attractions390
 More cool things to see and do391

Shopping392
 Living It Up After Dark393
 Bars393
 Performing arts394
 Day-tripping to Ocala394
 Fast Facts395

Chapter 21: Northeast Florida396

Getting a Feel for Northeast Florida397
 St. Augustine397
 Getting there397
 Getting around399
 Staying in style400
 Dining out402
 Exploring St. Augustine404
 Shopping407
 Living it up after dark407
 Jacksonville, Amelia Island,
 and Fernandina Beach408
 Getting there408
 Getting around408
 Staying in style410
 Dining out414
 Exploring the Jacksonville area416
 Shopping420
 Living it up after dark421
 Fast Facts422

Part VII: The Part of Tens423

Chapter 22: The Top Ten Florida Beaches425

Bahia Honda State Park (Big Pine Key)425
 Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Recreation Area
 (Miami/Key Biscayne)426
 Matheson Hammock Park Beach (South Miami)426
 Naples Beach (Naples)427
 Cayo Costa State Park (Captiva Island)427
 Siesta Beach (Sarasota)427
 Fort DeSoto Park (St. Petersburg)427
 Caladesi Island State Park (Dunedin)428
 Washington Oaks State Park (Palm Coast)428
 Little Talbot Island State Park (Jacksonville)428

**Chapter 23: Ten or More of
Florida's Favorite Foods430**

Ambrosia430
Citrus Fruits431
Conch431
Cuban Cuisine431
Divinity431
Florida Lobster432
Grits432
Key Lime Pie432
Mullet432
Seafood432
Stone Crab Claws433

Appendix: Quick Concierge435

Florida A to Z: Facts at Your Fingertips434
Toll-Free Numbers and Web Sites436
Where to Get More Information439
 Online sources439
 Official state welcome centers440
 Other sources of information440

Index443