

YOUR ADVENTURE IN
**Northwest
Florida Beaches**



SANDSATION
Seaside is one of the 16 beach neighborhoods found in South Walton County.

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF VISIT SOUTH WALTON

From Panama City Beach to Pensacola, the coastal towns of Northwest Florida wow visitors with shimmering waters and white-sand beaches. Dig deeper, though, and you'll soon discover that the Panhandle sticks out for more than its geography.

BY AMANDA GLEASON

**BEGIN YOUR
ADVENTURE HERE**

What might be included in your ideal outing?



Adventure In Northwest Florida Beaches

If your favorite activities routinely involve...



GETTING THERE Fly into Northwest Florida Beaches International Airport (ECP) or Pensacola International Airport (PNS). iflybeaches.com, flypensacola.com



WATER WORLD
Kids ages 4 and under can visit Gulf World Marine Park for free.

→ ENCOUNTER MORE SALTWATER SWIMMERS AS YOU...

Admire Sea Life

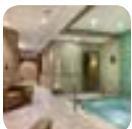
Gulf World Marine Park in Panama City Beach is the only facility in North America to house rough-toothed dolphins, which are darker in color and more slender than their well-known bottlenose cousins. Come eye to eye with one of the seven that live here—they were rescued after suffering injuries in the wild—during a dolphin meet and greet. The park is also home to alligators, sea lions, and other aquatic animals. And then there's the on-site Gulf World Marine Institute, dedicated to rehabilitating stranded sea turtles and other sea life. Since 1970, thousands of animals have been rescued and released. Visitors can't tour the rehab area, but they can attend the public releases, which are announced on the Gulf World Marine Park's Facebook page. Now that's definitely worthy of a "like." gulfworldmarinepark.com *Your adventure continues...*

THEN YOUR MOST IDEAL HOTEL IS...



Wyndham Bay Point Resort

This spread in Panama City Beach is nestled within a 1,100-acre wildlife preserve on St. Andrews Bay, where dolphin sightings are almost guaranteed.



Hilton Sandestin Beach

Sink into a luxurious treatment at this colossal South Walton County resort's Serenity by the Sea spa, which the property revamped in its recent \$12.5 million renovation.



Henderson Park Inn

Located in the mellow fishing village of Destin, this adults-only B&B has visitors and locals alike raving about the pepper-crusted tuna served at its on-site Beach Walk Café.

Which piques your curiosity the most?



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF GULF WORLD

If your curiosity is stirred by...



THEN DON'T MISS...



T.T. Wentworth Museum
Reopened in November after a six-month renovation, this Pensacola history hub houses artifacts like a 16th-century anchor from the fleet led by city founder Don Tristán de Luna.

YOLO Board Adventures
Coastal dune lakes are only found in a few places in the world—and South Walton County has 15 of them. Go stand-up paddleboarding with this outfitter, based at the Water-Color Inn & Resort in Santa Rosa Beach.

GETTING AROUND

Check each area's convention and visitor's bureau website for the easiest way to get around: visitpensacola.com, emeraldcoastfl.com, visitsouthwalton.com, visitpanamacitybeach.com

Which view do you prefer?



SHELLFISH INDULGENCE
Try the steamed littleneck clams at Havana Beach Restaurant.

GET ACQUAINTED WITH FLORIDA CUISINE WHEN YOU...

Sample Local Fare

Emeril Lagasse moved to South Walton County a few years ago, and we've got a feeling it had something to do with the outstanding local restaurants. Consider Grayton Bar & Grill in Santa Rosa Beach. You'll find perfectly sautéed flounder at this folksy establishment, where husband-and-wife owners Johnny and Debbie Earles often greet guests at the door. In Rosemary Beach, the elegant Havana Beach Restaurant at The Pearl hotel causes a stir with dishes like roasted cauliflower steak with grit cakes and mushroom cream sauce. And over in the community of Seaside, Bud & Alley's is known for its long-standing tradition of inviting guests to predict when the sun will set. The reward for a correct guess? A drink on the house. graytonbarandgrill.com, thepearlrb.com, budandalleys.com Your adventure continues...

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If your preferred vantage point is...

What might you reach for on the weekend?

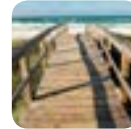


THEN PLAN AN AFTERNOON AT...



Mainline Art House

A gallery of works by local artists is only part of the draw—this new Pensacola shop also sells glass vases, stationery, and other home goods.



Shell Island

Catch glimpses of dolphins, deer, ghost crabs, and other wildlife at this undeveloped 7-mile barrier island, part of St. Andrews State Park in Panama City Beach.



Key Sailing

During a parasailing lesson on Pensacola Beach, you'll take in views from up to 800 feet. You can even share the ride with a buddy or two.

TAKE TO THE OPEN WATER AND...

Reel One In

You don't get dubbed the "world's luckiest fishing village" by chance. "Destin's proximity to the Gulf's deep waters makes for excellent conditions. It can take twice as long to reach these depths from other cities on the Gulf," says Captain Mike Eller, a 32-year veteran of the sport and owner of FishDestin.com, a company that books everything from party boat trips to deep-sea overnights. "From April through October, giant schools of bait fish migrate past here, with a ton of game fish following them." Anglers who prefer sturdy ground scurry to Okaloosa Island Fishing Pier, 7 miles west of Destin. (Need gear? The tackle shop rents rods and reels.) The 1,200-foot pier is prime for luring bonito, king mackerel, and pompano, which many call Florida's tastiest fish. fishdestin.com, okaloosaislandpier.com

FAMILIAR FISH
Red snapper is a common catch in Destin.



Your adventure continues...

GETTING OUT

Destin's Harbor-Walk Village hosts Rock the Docks Live, a free concert series held Saturday nights throughout the summer. destinboardwalk.com

Which dish is more appealing?



THEN PULL UP A CHAIR AT...



Clemenza's
This Fort Walton hideaway offers Italian cooking classes led by co-owner and head chef Dom Damiano, a second-generation Sicilian-American.



Edward's
The best fish tacos around—made with grilled grouper and topped with jalapeno-lime salsa—await you at this Rosemary Beach treasure. Dig in while enjoying live music on the patio.



Boshamps
After you've spent the day fishing, many restaurants in the area will cook your catch. This Destin Harbor favorite offers four decks with panoramic water views.

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PREFER THE HIGH LIFE? THEN IT'S TIME TO...

Eye the Sky

What weighs more than 24,000 pounds and reaches speeds of up to 700 mph? Aircraft flown by the world-famous Blue Angels, officially known as the U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron. Based at Naval Air Station Pensacola, this elite, 16-person team practices its swooping stunts above Pensacola's National Naval Aviation Museum most Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from March through November. The show doesn't end there, though. Inside the massive museum, you'll be floored by more than 150 restored military aircraft, including the first plane to ever land at the South Pole (it was equipped with skis!). Let one of the volunteer guides—most are retired members of the military—share personal flight stories as you take a free, hour-long tour. navalaviationmuseum.org



IN FORMATION
The Blue Angels' practice flights are a treat for onlookers.

And when you're done...