



AllWays Traveller

The beach at Naples, Florida

www.allwaystraveller.com

A place to put you in a perfect state of mind

Naples, which is constantly listed as having one of the world's top beaches, is seven miles of white sand that meets the warm, shallow, waters of the Gulf of Mexico in Southwest Florida.

This is a truly natural environment offering spectacular sunsets.

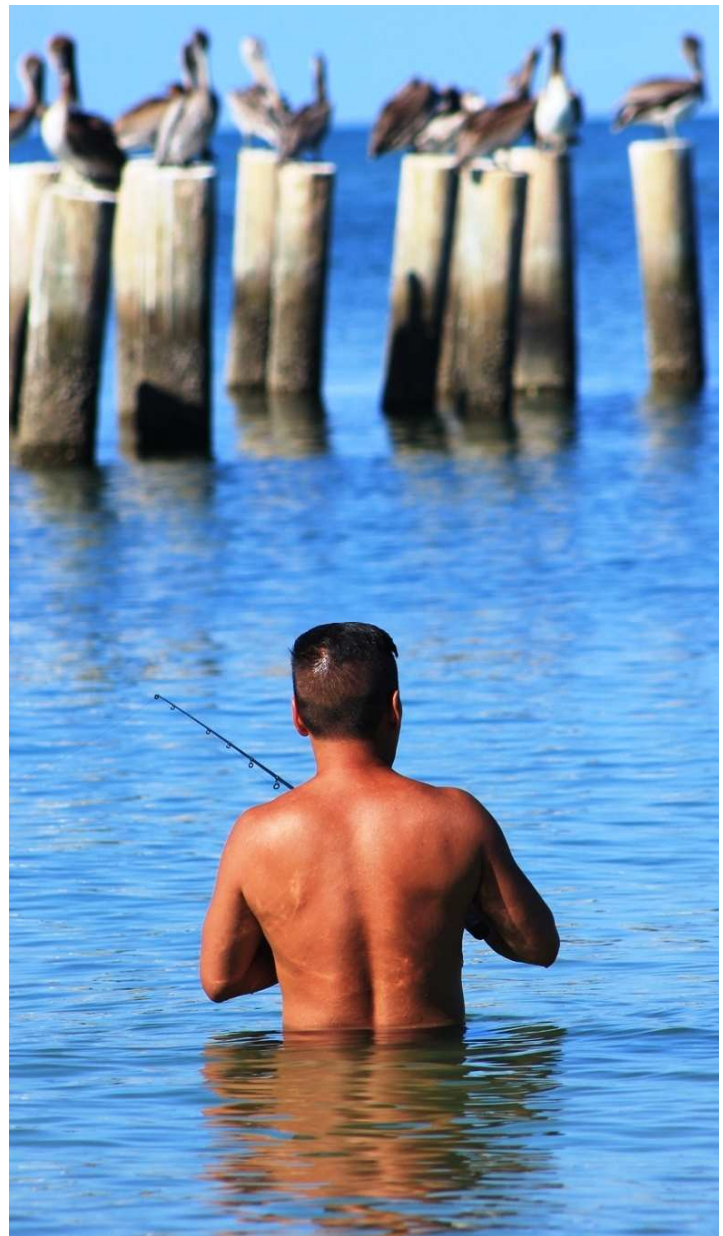
Unlike many other beach front communities, there are no shirt shops, fast food outlets or bars and restaurants clustering the beach.

It has long been a place for those looking to get a way from it all in a sub-tropical climate.

The nearby Naples Downtown area, centred around 5th Avenue South and 3rd Street South, is a sophisticated mix of fine dining, arts and craft studios, designer shopping and a community theatre. located conveniently between Miami and Fort Myers.

Ashley Gibbins

Managing editor
AllWays traveller





Downtown Naples



The Naples Downtown area, around 5th Avenue South and 3rd Street South, is the hub for all that is attractive about this place.

There's fine dining and great bars, arts and craft studios, designer shopping and a wonderful community theatre.

Evenings in Downtown Naples



Downtown Naples after dark, with its excellent choice of bars and restaurants, is a bustling place in a sophisticated way.

I urge you to start the early evening with happy hour in the piano lounge of *Trulucks* restaurant.

The live pianist is sure to be good, the half price appetisers delicious and their margarita's 'to die for'.

Truluck's restaurant itself also comes highly recommended.

www.trulucks.com/pages/naples-florida

Making plans in a daydream land

By Ashley Gibbins

I am lazing in the sun on Naples beach thinking just how good life is at times like these.

And while I am minded to go nowhere for a while my mind, which is in day dream mode.

What if I were able to take this seven miles of beach, declare independence from Florida, and indeed the Union, and establish Naples Beach State?

And the beach is all I would want.

I am not any sort megalomaniac always looking to expand his empire.

No, the stretch of white sandy shore and as far out into the Gulf waters as I could wade to waist deep will do me nicely.

But there will be decisions to make.

The Naples Beach state flag?

OK this is going to be a vertical tricolour of blue, blue and white.

Top band a light azure blue to represent the colour of the sky around these parts, middle a slightly deeper blue band for the sea and finally a creamy white band to match the sand on the beaches.

The state song?

Every state has to have a song. Well for Naples beach it will be simply the sound of never ending waves lapping gently on the shore.

If there is something geared to instilling peace and goodwill this is it.

And the state bird?



That's easy, a brown pelican. (So OK we may have to fight Louisiana on this one.)

The pelican is one of my favourite birds, if only because I am always somewhere special when I see one.

And you see dozens and dozens of pelicans on Naples Beach.

It is a bird of wonderful contrast.

Graceful when skimming the surface of the water, explosive when plunging for fish and amusingly awkward when on land.

Seated in my white 'adironck' seat of power (now there's a strange word) or patrolling my new State barefoot, I will be the most benevolent of rulers.

Visitors will be more than welcome, no visa's required.

Just a willingness to follow the laid back approach to life that permeates here and for the duration of the stay.

But while visitors will be welcome we will retain the limited existing access points to the beach and not allow concessionaires to clutter the beach.

It will be essential to ensure the beach remains pristine.

Let's get back to that chair



The adironck chair, for those who don't know, is a simple rustic wooden outdoor chair.

It is traditionally made with 11 flat wooden boards, with a straight back and seat. It also features wide armrests.

Now I need a state motto? Let me think about this one.

Naples Botanical Gardens



These botanical gardens are a delight with 170 acres created by some of the worlds finest landscape gardeners.

In addition to the cultivated Brazilian, Asian and Caribbean gardens, there is a water garden, children's area, butterfly house and 90 acres of restored natural Floridian habitat.

www.naplesgarden.org

Naples Zoo



Naples Zoo is in an historic 53 acre old tropical botanical garden and, while not huge, provides a delightful half day.

The primate expedition cruise is a 30 minute boat trip around the islands that are the cage free homes for the zoo's primates

www.napleszoo.org

The Naples trolley tour

For those preferring a more easy option for getting around the Naples trolley tours provide hop on-hop-off, guided tours of the area that cover all points of interest.

The service runs seven days a week from 9.30am to 5.30pm.

www.naplestrolleytours.com

The pier – a stately capital building



The state capital building will be the fishing shelter on Naples Pier, which will afford a little shelter for the few occasions when it rains here.

The Pier is also the midway point of Naples Beach and is the best spot to view and pay homage to the glorious Floridian sunsets.

It will also be the centre of the state's fishing industry and, with the vast majority of the catch returned to the water by our anglers, a highly sustainable one at that.

And our major tourist attraction?

The state's main tourist attraction will be self-guided beach Safaris, with the opportunity to spot our 'big five'.



That's dolphin (particularly around Naples Pier), needle fish, ghost crabs (which get washed up onto the beach after dark, take a quick look around and scamper back into the water), turtles and osprey.



No points for spotting snowy egrets, terns or sandpipers.

These bird's, although wonderful to watch, are everywhere along with the anhinga and, of course, pelicans.

Visiting dignitaries will be accommodated in the splendid Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club, which has been welcoming guests since Henry B. Watkins Sr. purchased this tropical Florida beach resort back in 1946.

Oh and I forgot, the state motto : "I've had another really nice day."

For more information :

www.naples-Florida.com

The Phil



That Philharmonic Center for the Arts is a stunning arts and performance centre.

Its 15 galleries are dedicated to displaying world class paintings, sculpture, drawings and other art forms.



As a performance venue the Phil also attracts the world's finest musicians and entertainers, of all genres.

www.thephil.org

Tin City



Tin City is a former oyster processing plant now converted into a tin roofed cluster of gift shops and restaurants.

www.tin-city.com

Miromar Outlets Centre

The Miromar Centre is a 30 minute drive away, but well worth the trip for those looking for the bargains the outlets offer.

It is also a very attractive complex with excellent dining by the lake.

www.miromaroutlets.com



As soon as you step into The Naples Beach Hotel & Golf Club you relax writes Ann Mealor.

This resort oozes old world Florida charm, which comes as no surprise when you hear about its rich historical past.

Originally built in the 1880's, it was purchased in 1946 by Henry B. Watkins and has been owned by the Watkins family ever since.

It is now Southwest Florida's only beachfront resort with an on-site championship golf course, world-class spa, and award-winning tennis center.

The family has developed and refurbished the property over the years (since 1998 over \$65 million dollars have been spent on improvements), while maintaining its old style Floridian character.

Orchids from the hotel's nursery provide elegant splashes of colour throughout the resort along with original artwork and hand made ceramics from local artists.

The family continue to take a keen interest in the resort and are often around to greet the loyal guests who come back year after year.

The family is committed to Naples, organising free Summer Jazz concerts on the lawn for the local community and hotel guests.

Rooms are spacious, many with balconies and stunning views.

Whatever room you choose, the layout of the hotel gives you the opportunity to relax undisturbed and do your own thing.



Ours had a real Floridian feel with its own kitchen and balcony overlooking the glorious beach.

And that is what makes this hotel really special - its stunning location. It is one of only two hotels on Naples beach and is in a prime position.

Being able to stroll straight onto the beach is a real treat. The ocean is warm and tranquil and the sand white and soft.

The of wildlife you see while just paddling is amazing - silvery blue Needle fish over a foot long with pointed snouts hover in the water and then zip away.

Turtles pop up unexpectedly and dolphins, playful and always seemingly with a smile on their face are always passing through.

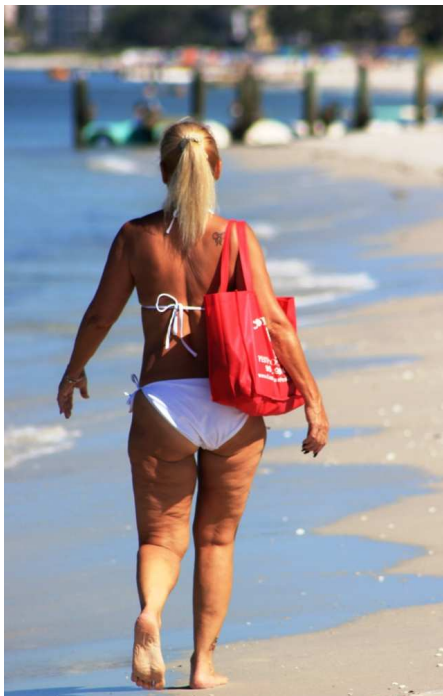
The sea throws up beautiful shells in abundance which means beach combing is always on the activity list.

Here, you have the glorious coastline, but it is also an easy walk past some of the most spectacular homes in Florida, to the shops and restaurants of Fifth Avenue.

Who could ask for more? A bike perhaps, which we hired from the Beach Club to explore the beautiful town of Naples.



www.naplesbeachhotel.com



Doing the airport in style – using the executive lounge



How often have you heard it said that it is the airport that is the worst part of flying.

The time it takes to get through security, the panic at the thought of checking in late and missing the flight and then the wait in crowded departure areas.

So is the best approach to spend as little time there as possible?

No. To avoid the stress and pressure of flying, get to the airport three hours earlier than necessary, check in and clear security in a leisurely 'no sweat' fashion and then head to one of the airport lounges to relax or work in style.



This costs a little more but, with all that lounges offer to make guests comfortable, it is money very well spent .



Comfortable chairs and a good view of the aircraft; Wi-Fi access and power points; a complimentary choice of hot and soft drinks and a selection of fine food and a wide range of newspapers and magazines (for reading there and on the plane).



This makes the airport experience a pleasure rather than a pain.



Nº1 TRAVELLER

Passengers flying out of London (as I tend to do) should opt for the premium lounges by *No.1 Traveller*.

No.1 Traveller offers 'pay-as-you-go' airport lounges at Heathrow Terminal 3, Gatwick North and South Terminals, Stansted and also at Birmingham.

In addition to its premium lounges, *No.1 Traveller* also offers chauffeur-driven airport transfers to provide a 'driveway to runway' service, as well as travel spas and bedrooms.

You can then look forward to enjoying the flight in a fit state.



www.No1Traveller.com

AllWays traveller and the International Travel Writers Alliance



AllWays

www.allwaystraveller.com

AllWays traveller provides independent travellers with a view of the world from the journalists in the International Travel Writers Alliance.



The International Travel Writers Alliance

www.itwalliance.com

The International Travel Writers Alliance is the world's largest association of professional travel journalists.

Ashley Gibbins

Ashley Gibbins is Chief Executive of the International Travel Writers Alliance and Managing Editor of *AllWays traveller*

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