



MAP NOT TO SCALE

Tampa, on the west coast of Florida, is a bundle of touristy treats. And there are plenty of ways to discover the city—cycle across town along one of the longest river-walks in North America or move swiftly on a Segway, tour the waters on a bike or take a boat ride. There is something for everyone and here are a few places that you must visit.

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHS **VAIBHAV MEHTA**

#### ► **ELLA'S AMERICANA FOLK ART CAFE**

A bright and sunny folk art cafe, buzzing with people, music, food and life. The artsy decor is a treat for the eye and the scrumptious food is a gastronomical treat. Located in the heart of Seminole Heights, Ella's is a few minutes from Downtown Tampa (the central business district of Tampa). They play live music on Fridays. During 'Soul Food Sundays', another popular activity at the restaurant, the chef creates a unique menu reflecting his creative personality and love for food.



Illustration: Swapnil Redkar



#### ▲ TAMPA BAY WATER BIKES

This is a unique way of exploring Tampa, while burning calories! Water bikes let you explore Tampa Bay's sparkling waterfront. Each bike sits atop two pontoons, making it extremely stable (some riders even take their dogs along). Pedal power takes you around the waterfront and up the Hillsborough River through downtown. Water bikes can be hired from near the Tampa Convention Centre.



#### ▲ OXFORD EXCHANGE

Oxford Exchange, a restaurant cum coffee bar cum bookstore cum home decor shop, is housed in a historic building near the University of Tampa. Oxford Exchange has become a popular haunt for breakfast, brunch and lunch within two years of its opening. The restaurant has an astounding decor and delectable food.

#### INTERNATIONAL PLAZA AND BAY STREET

Want to shop till you drop? Visit Tampa Bay's premier shopping venue International Plaza. This upscale mall houses luxury brands such as Tiffany's, Hugo Boss, and Tory Burch. Bay Street consists of high-end restaurants and clubs. International Plaza and Bay Street is one of the most distinctive shopping and dining destinations of Florida's west coast.



#### ▲ THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM DOLPHIN CRUISE

Look for wild dolphins in the open waters of Tampa Bay while the tour guide talks about the intricacies of Florida's environment. Afterward, tour the aquarium, which is home to 20,000 sea creatures. Test your courage by swimming with tiger sharks in the aquarium's Caribbean Reef tank.



#### ◀ BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA

Busch Gardens Tampa has been a part of Tampa Bay's landscape since the 1950s. Today, it's a unique combination of an African wildlife reserve and a theme park filled with pulse-pounding roller coasters. So while you could be feeding giraffes in the morning, just an hour later you could be coming down 335 ft on the tallest drop-tower in North America or experiencing some of the craziest and longest roller coaster rides ever made!

## ▼ TAMPA MUSEUM OF ART

There is no better view of downtown than from the covered plaza in front of the Tampa Museum of Art. Sono Café's thoroughly modern menu includes many vegetarian options in a setting that inspires, both inside and outside. The museum houses a collection ranging from ancient Greek and Roman to Pop Art legend Roy Lichtenstein. It also hosts many travelling exhibits, including the current show about the work of artist Christo. At night, the museum becomes a work of art itself when its façade comes to life with thousands of shifting colors in Leo Villareal's 'Sky (Tampa)'.



## ULELE

On the banks of the Hillsborough River, Ulele features a menu inspired by Tampa Bay's early native and Spanish explorers. The restaurant also has its own brewery. Ulele was created by Tampa Bay's Gonzmart family, now in their fifth generation and also owners of Columbia Restaurant. The restaurant included a \$5 million restoration of Tampa's original public water pump house, along with the spring that once supplied the city's drinking water. The patio is a great place to enjoy the sunset.



## ▲ YBOR CITY

Named after its founder, 19th-century cigar magnate Vicente Martinez-Ybor, this Tampa Bay community was the entry point and melting pot for generations of immigrants from Cuba, northern Spain, Sicily, Germany and Eastern Europe. During the day, restaurants fill with business people looking for lunch. In the evenings, Ybor City become the place for dinner and dancing. Late-night brings club-hoppers looking for the most cutting-edge bands. The brick streets and iron balconies are largely unchanged from a century ago, making Ybor City a distinct location and one of two historic districts in Florida.

## COLUMBIA RESTAURANT

Cesar Gonzmart founded this restaurant five generations ago as a sandwich shop. It is Florida's oldest diner and one of the largest Spanish restaurants in the world. The nightly flamenco show is a reminder of Ybor City's history. The menu includes authentic Spanish paella and other creations such as the 1905 salad. 1905 is the year that Columbia Restaurant was founded. The Cuban sandwich, which was invented in Ybor City to feed cigar workers, is a staple of Columbia's menu.

## QUICK FACTS

### GETTING THERE

Jet Airways operates daily flights to London from Mumbai and Delhi. From there, our codeshare partner United Airlines will fly to Washington and onward to Tampa.

### ACCOMMODATION

Tampa has several options from boutique hotels to guesthouses and B&Bs.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit [www.tampagov.net](http://www.tampagov.net)