

Five Timely, Sun-Filled Spring Trips Near Miami

by Tom Austin March 14, 2016



Courtesy of Sunset Key

In spring, when high season rates begin to ebb and reservations are easier to come by, it's an ideal—and relatively affordable—time to hit the open road in Florida.

Miami is a full-throttle destination, but it's always nice to escape the mad crush. At this time of year, peak rates are coming down and the activity is slowing down in the city, making it an ideal time to get out and explore the surrounding area. It's an easy drive to the moneyed Boca Raton and then on to nearby Delray Beach, with its first-rate museums and restaurants. To the south of Miami, the civilized Key West is a short drive away, while to the west, the Gulf Coast offers gentle beaches and smart restaurants. These five great getaway destinations are just the ticket for falling in love all over again with Florida.

The Gulf Coast

A two-hour drive across the Everglades from Miami yields Naples, the Palm Beach of the Gulf Coast. The culinary landscape of Naples includes two stellar restaurants with healthy, organic food: [The Local](#) and the [Cider Press Café](#). In Tampa, a few hours north, [Mise en Place](#) restaurant, the old-school [Bern's Steak House](#), and [Cigar City Brewing](#) were recently featured on Emeril Lagasse's show, "Emeril's Florida." The most elegant hotel in town is [Le Meridien Tampa](#), a Historic Hotels of America property set in a 100-year-old restored courthouse and featuring [Bizou Brasserie](#) restaurant.

Tom Austin is based in Miami and covers the Florida beat for Travel + Leisure. Follow him on Twitter at [@TomAustin_](#).