

Things to Do Other than the Beach

Golf Your Heart Out

The Englewood area is a golfer's paradise with 162 holes of golf across a variety of beautiful and challenging courses. Explore **Boca Royale Golf & Country Club** (1601 Englewood Rd., Englewood; 941-475-6464; bocaroyale.com),

Lemon Bay Golf Club (9600 Eagle Preserve Dr., Englewood; 941-697-3729; lemonbaygolfclub.com),

Myakka Pines Golf Club (2550 S. River Rd., Englewood; 941-474-3296; myakkapinesgolfclub.com), and **Rotonda Golf & Country Club** (100 Rotonda Cir., Rotonda West; 941-697-2414; rotondagolf.com).



Take Everyone Out to the Ballgame

The Charlotte Stone Crabs, minor league affiliate of the Tampa Bay Rays, play from early April until early September. It's always the perfect time to enjoy a leisurely night at beautiful Charlotte Sports Park watching top-notch baseball. (2300 El Jobean Rd., Port Charlotte; 941-206-4487; stonecrabsbaseball.com).

Eat, Drink, and Be Merry

Olde Englewood's Dearborn Street boasts a wide variety of shops and restaurants and many special events. (W. Dearborn St., Englewood; oldeenglewood.com).

Giddy Up!

Enjoy a trail ride on a sweet horse or pony at **Branded Heart Stables** (1030 Morningside Dr., Englewood; 941-474-6773; search "Branded Heart Stables" on Facebook).

Shake Your Groove Thing

Switch things up with a fun movement class! **Dance Etc. Englewood** offers everything from belly dancing to tango, drumming classes, flash mob events, and parties. (3372 N. Access Rd., Englewood; 941-460-8072; danceenglewood.com).

Express Your Shelly Self

Sheryl's Shell Shop is the place to go for all things shell. You can even create a piece of resin art with your own treasures. (1185 S. McCall Rd., Englewood; 941-830-0901; search for "Sheryl's Shell Shop" on Facebook)

Go Bowling

Don't worry if you don't know how or have not done it in years; bowling is, well, a ball! Visit **Bowland Port Charlotte** (3192 Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte; 941-625-4794; facebook.com/bowlandcenters); **Treasure Lanes** (1059 Tamiami Tr., Port Charlotte; 941-625-3930; treasurelanes.com), and **Englewood Bowl** (299 S. Indiana Ave., Englewood; 941-474-5400; englewoodbowl.net).

Get Muddy!



There's no need to pay for an expensive mud treatment at the spa when there's the great outdoors! **Florida Tracks & Trails** is 1,000 acres of outdoor

adventure in east Charlotte County, offering motocross tracks and trails, an off-road area for Jeeps and trucks, paintball, and a fresh-water beach. (39450 Bermont Rd., Punta Gorda; 844-743-3388; floridatracksandtrails.com).

Find more weekend mudding fun at **74 Family Fun Park** with tracks, trails, mud, a sand track, clay flat track and national-style track. Bring your rod for freshwater fishing at their catch-and-release pond. (44800 Bermont Rd., Punta Gorda; 941-875-8944; 74familyfunpark.com).

Cruise the Harbor

A scenic cruise on Charlotte Harbor with **King Fisher Fleet** usually features a variety of birds and often dolphins swimming along with the boat. You can't beat the view on the Sunset Cruise! (1200 W. Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda; 941-639-0969; kingfisherfleet.com).

Rev Up!

Muscle Car City Museum showcases more than 200 cars from the '50s to the '70s and some special gems of today. (10175 Tamiami Tr., Punta Gorda; 941-575-5959; musclecarcity.net).



Walk Through the Closest Place to Oz

Octagon Wildlife Sanctuary does not have flying monkeys but they do have lions, tigers, and bears, along with a host of other exotic wildlife including leopards, hyenas, and baboons! (41660 Horseshoe Rd., Punta Gorda; 239-543-1130; octagonwildlife.org)

in Charlotte County

See the Tender Care of Native Florida Wildlife



The **Peace River Wildlife Center** in Ponce de Leon Park heals and cares for injured or orphaned native Florida wildlife. Residents include gopher tortoise, marsh rabbit, and a variety of birds including bald eagles,

black vultures, and ibis. The stars of the show are ambassadors Luna, a rare leucistic eastern screech owl, and Bella, a great horned owl. (3400 Ponce de Leon Pkwy., Punta Gorda; 941-637-3830; prwildlife.org)

Take it Inside, Then Break Out

If you like solving puzzles an escape room experience should be in your future. This family-friendly activity is a creative indoor adventure where your group works together to solve a mystery in less than an hour. Charlotte County has two: **Escape Rooms Unlocked** in Punta Gorda (401 E. Olympia Ave, Punta Gorda; 941-295-6880; escaperoomsunlocked.com) and **Escape Port Charlotte** (3191 Harbor Blvd., Unit C, Port Charlotte; 941-883-6296; escapeportcharlotte.com).

Shop. Dine. Catch a Movie.

The **Port Charlotte Town Center** mall is the perfect place to shop, eat, and catch a film. (1441 Tamiami Tr., Port Charlotte; 941-624-4447; portcharlottetowncenter.com).

The unique shops at **Fishermen's Village** are always a treat, and all four waterside restaurants feature spectacular harbor views. Don't miss **The Military Heritage Museum**, which displays thousands of military artifacts from the Spanish-American War to current conflicts. (Fishermen's Village, 1200 W. Retta Esplanade, Punta Gorda; 941-639-8721; fishville.com)

Live the Dream

Bert's Black Widow Harley-Davidson® is one of the top dealerships in the country, offering sales, rentals, service, and motorcycle riding lessons. Free beer is served daily and most weekends feature live music, a festival, or a themed ride. (2224 El Jobean Rd., Port Charlotte; 941-883-8000; bertblackwidow.com)

Explore the Natural Heart of Florida

Explore the real Florida on a **Babcock Ranch Eco Tours** 90-minute buggy tour through a working cattle ranch and the Telegraph Swamp. Wildlife sightings vary and can include white-tailed deer, wild boar, and alligators. There's a good chance you'll meet some of the resident cracker cattle. (8000 State Rd. 31, Punta Gorda; 800-500-5583; babcock-ranchecotours.com).



Browse Galleries and Chat with Artists

Charlotte County is home to hundreds of talented artists, affording ample opportunity to browse galleries and shop creative artwork of every conceivable medium and theme. Just a few options: **Artisan Atelier** (117 Herald Court Centre, Punta Gorda; 941-637-8484; facebook.com/artisanatelierpuntagorda), **Arts Alliance of Lemon Bay** (452 W. Dearborn St., Englewood; 941-475-7141; artsallianceoflemonbay.org), **Englewood Art Center** (350 S. McCall Rd., Englewood; 941-474-5548; ringling.edu/eac), **Old Florida Outdoor Center** (463 W. Dearborn St., Englewood; 941-460-1561), and the **Visual Arts Center of Punta Gorda** (210 Maud St., Punta Gorda; 941-639-8810).

Charlotte Arts has the newest gallery in town, the **Charlotte Arts Gallery**, in the Port Charlotte Town Center mall, across from DSW. Thursday–Sunday, 11:00 am–6:00 pm. Enter between J.C. Penney and Dillard's. (1441 Tamiami Tr., Port Charlotte; 941-764-8100; charlottearts.org)

Experience Where Art Meets Mother Nature



A 50 million-year-old stone fossil of a palm frond taken from a mountain top in Wyoming serves as the inspiration for the logo and signature sculpture of the **Peace River Botanical & Sculpture Gardens**.

More than a dozen large-scale sculptures adorn the landscape and flowering trees bloom throughout the year. (5827 Riverside Dr., Punta Gorda; 941-621-8299; peacerivergardens.org)



Call First

Before heading out to any of these businesses, check with them regarding hours of operation. Browse our complete list of things to do and events in the area at PureFlorida.com.

For resources on beach conditions, visit OurSafeTravel.com.