

VISIT PANAMA CITY BEACH

FALL 2018 MAGAZINE

Tea Time

Noli South
brews up a
winner

Roughin' It

Top spots
for PCB
camping

Shake It Up

Treats too
impossible to
resist

GREAT OUTDOORS

Breezy and beautiful beaches
beckon as autumn winds take hold



FAMILY EATS One
blogging mom takes
a look at the best places
to take your family
out to eat in Panama
City Beach



Panama City Beach

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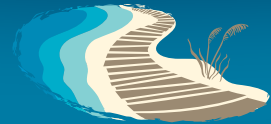
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"The Bloody Mary & Music Festival on the beach behind Schooners. Super fun and the backdrop is the Gulf of Mexico!"
— Tracy Rudhall



"The Grand Lagoon Grand Slam Fishing Tournament, it's a fun event the whole family can attend and check out the diverse fisheries of PCB."
— J. Michael Brown



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— Renee Lalanne-Wuerdeman



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— Traci Smith



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As you flip through the pages of this issue, you will find stories and tips to help you plan your next autumn adventure. Here at Visit Panama City Beach, we are in the business of making memories, and by sharing our local favorites and tricks for your next trip, we are helping you do just that! If you are looking for a more unique vacation experience, check out our feature on “Coastal Camping” (pg. 36). Learn where to go, what to bring and how to escape with the help of Northwest Florida native and Gray Outdoors owner, Gabriel Gray. If you are looking for a different type of green this fall, look no further than the golf feature (pg. 20), and learn how you can get the kids involved in your favorite vacation pastime.

Fall brings ample fishing to Northwest Florida, allowing visitors to reel in grouper, king mackerel and snook, just to name a few. Captain Nate Chennaux, local expert and fishing guide in Panama City Beach, shares his perspective of what lies in the emerald green waters — and what is to be expected for the rest of the season (pg. 29). No matter what your age or experience,



Panama City Beach offers opportunities for you to catch these trophy fish yourself. Hop aboard the Jubilee and learn more about how you and your family can catch tonight’s dinner (pg. 24)!

However you plan to spend your next fall holiday, whether it is with your better half or the whole family, we hope it is filled with memories that will last a lifetime.

Sunny Regards,

DAN ROWE
President and CEO

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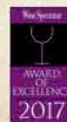


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LIVE VIEWS OF PCB

Even if you can't be here in person, you can catch a glimpse of Panama City Beach from anywhere in the world! Check out the white sand, emerald green water or last night's sunset!

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Panama City Beach

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- “Back Beach Road” Panama City Beach Parkway
- “Middle Beach Road” Hutchison Boulevard
- “City Pier” Russell-Fields Pier
- “County Pier” M.B. Miller Pier

**NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

Major Road

Bike Path



Distance Chart

Atlanta, GA	297 mi	470 km
Birmingham, AL	280 mi	440 km
Dallas, TX	751 mi	1,310 km
Houston, TX	639 mi	1,034 km
Montgomery, AL	186 mi	206 km
Nashville, TN	476 mi	744 km
New Orleans, LA	305 mi	513 km
Orlando, FL	340 mi	617 km
St. Louis, MO	745 mi	1,243 km
Tallahassee, FL	98 mi	171 km
Tampa, FL	339 mi	546 km

Natural Treasures

By land and by sea, animals enrich the Gulf of Mexico experience

BY STEVE BORNHOFT
ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN RUSSO

DESERTS CAN BE made to bloom. Just add water. Doubt that? Consider, then, the sands of Panama City Beach, its surf line and the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico extending to the horizon.

Those environments attract and host a myriad of life forms, a mere small sample of which is represented in the drawing before you. Some, at the bottom of food chains, are so small as to go unseen; others are too big to be reeled in.

To be sure, all add to the experience of visiting the beach. It is possible to enjoy each on a surface level, but you may also be inclined to go granular — see what we did there? — and seek answers to the questions they invite: How do sand dollars eat? Of what advantage to snowy egrets are yellow feet? All groupers mature first as females! What's that all about?

And, hey, we haven't even gotten around to marine mammals, including that bottlenose leaper who elicits oohs and aahs whenever it takes to the air. ●



Laughing Gull



Great Blue Heron



Sandpiper



Speckled Sea Trout



Flounder



Redfish



Whiting



Callico Scallop



Fighting Conch



Coquina Shells

Osprey



Brown Pelican



Snowy Egret



Mahi Mahi



Pompano



Red Snapper



Grouper



Common Nutmeg



Florida Augers



Olive Shell



Alphabet Cone



Sand Dollar





Golfers' Paradise

FOR THE SERIOUS

GOLFER — or the lucky beginner — there could be no Panama City Beach souvenir more precious than a hole-in-one. Courses here offer easy-to-reach par 3s that make such an achievement possible. There are plenty of holes that will tempt you to take your driver out of the bag. And hey, if your sand wedge is a little rusty, there's no better way to sharpen your sand play than to practice at the beach before hitting the links.

Panama City Beach's five-course golf menu includes: **BAY POINT**, offering two layouts, the only Nicklaus Design course in the region and a more subtle Walter Byrd layout; **HOLIDAY GOLF**, home to both a regulation 18-hole layout and a lighted par-3 executive course; **HOMBRE**, formerly three courses, these 18 holes provides a distinctive challenge and lots of water; **SIGNAL HILL**, which delivers a varied 18 holes, open on the front side but dicier on the back.




~~~~~  
**YOUNGSTERS**  
have year-round options if they want to hit the course and learn how to pitch and putt.  
~~~~~

LEARNING LINKS

~~~~~  
Youngsters learn golf from ground up at PCB courses

**BY THOMAS J. MONIGAN**

**S**tart young, learn more.

It sounds simple, and this saying applies to many aspects of our lives.

Ask anyone who makes a living connected to a golf course, and they will tell you: The younger you are when you start playing the game, the more you can learn and the better you can become.

That's what it's all about for local teaching pros Adam Brack and Ryan Mulvey.

Brack is the founder of Experience Better Golf Academy, which holds lessons at Signal Hill Golf Course in Panama City Beach and Panama Country Club in Lynn Haven.

Mulvey is the KemperSports general manager at Bay Point Golf Club, which is part of the Sheraton Bay Point Resort.

Of course, playing here has the added bonus of observing wildlife, such as ospreys, hawks, herons, fish — and the occasional alligator.

“Kids really enjoy that,” Mulvey said.

Brack agreed: “No other sport gives you that environment.”

Brack often mentions the term “screen time” when he talks about the rising generation, based on its constant affection toward anything connected with a cell phone or a computer.

“Their ability to be open minded to try things is probably the strength

Teacher and coach  
**ADAM BRACK**  
says the outdoor  
experience offered  
by golf is a big  
draw for kids.





**“It’s for their development, not just as golfers but also as juniors. As their bodies are growing and developing, we help coach their fundamental skills for how their bodies are supposed to work with their movement, strength and mobility. If we have a junior in the program for three or four years and they decide they don’t want to play golf, they can go into other sports.”**

**ADAM BRACK**

we have to work with,” he said. “They just love to be outside. We’re missing the outdoors and family time in our culture because of all the ‘screen time.’”

His camps are held every Wednesday after school and in June and July when school is out. These involve age groups 5 to 7, 8 to 11, and 12 to 15.

“We also have tournaments once a month where we do competition, have dinner together and do awards,” Brack said. “These are for 5-year-olds all the way up to high schoolers.”

Erin Brack, Adam’s wife, is a coach in the Youth Development Program, which features teaching pros David Cantu and Anika Story. Brack’s daughters Adalyn, 7, and Emery, 11, are both involved.

“It’s for their development, not just as golfers but also as juniors,” Brack said. “As their bodies are growing and developing, we help coach their fundamental skills for how their bodies are supposed to work with their movement, strength and mobility.

“If we have a junior in the program

for three or four years and they decide they don’t want to play golf, they can go into other sports,” he added.

At Bay Point, Mulvey is proud of Dew Sweepers Performance Academy, which is connected to Alabama native Tony Ruggiero.

Ruggiero has worked extensively in the Florida Panhandle, and among his credentials is being named a Top 100 Instructor by Golf Magazine. Jay Hendley is the local staff instructor at Bay Point, and Ruggiero visits from Mobile, Alabama.

“We have weekly junior clinics year round, and we have summer camps,” Mulvey said. “Plus, kids under 12 play for free with paid adult.”

Bay Point also hosts the local boys and girls teams from three area high schools — Bay, Arnold and Mosley — so they can practice and play at no charge.

The golf business is tough, it’s a disposable income game,” Mulvey says, “so you’ve got to find a way to be back filling those generations. And we understand that.”

EXPERIENCE BETTER GOLF ACADEMY



Mulvey said he started “hitting” at age 3, and both his children are involved with the game. They are daughter Ryan, 6, and son Liam, 3.

“With my daughter, I don’t want to push her too hard because I don’t want her to not like it,” Mulvey said. “But my son, man, he’ll hit balls until I tell him to stop — he loves it, loves it, loves it.”

With young ones of his own, Mulvey is well aware of challenges and rewards when it comes to teaching golf.

“Kids say whatever’s on their minds, they are very open about it,” Mulvey said. “They have a lot of fun, and seeing a kid hit a great golf shot is pretty special thing. Keeping them focused is always a challenge. The great thing is it teaches them respect, and it teaches them etiquette.”

That’s not all.

“It really teaches them how to persevere,” Mulvey said. “You can hit good shots and get bad results. You can hit it in the water, and then it’s a very frustrating game.” ●

PANAMA CITY BEACH offers several options for large-group fishing tours that can venture 10-to-40 miles offshore.



# RALLY FISHING

Party boats welcome mixed bag of anglers

BY STEVE BORNHOFT

Capt. Charlie Paprocki leaves the engines of the Jubilee to idle and convenes a meeting of the anglers on board. Many are about to experience deep-sea fishing for the first time. Others, the folks who arrived with their own rods and reels and bait and sharp hooks, have made dozens of trips, so many that they have qualified for premium angling stations at the stern of the vessel.

For the unfamiliar, Paprocki explains the operation of the Penn Senator reels they will be using. There's not much

to it, really. A lever is used to engage and release the spool. It's important to slow the rotation of the reel with a thumb as weight and bait head to the bottom and then quickly stop the rotation when the floor of the Gulf is contacted. Fail to do that, and the result is called a "bird's nest" or worse. Respond to a bite not by jerking but winding. If a bite doesn't result in a hooked fish, it's best to reel in and check your baits. You may be "fishing on credit."

But what Paprocki most emphasizes in his meetings





CAPT. ANDERSON'S MARINA



MATT BURKE



## Go Fish!

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**THAT'S THE** latitude and longitude for Panama City Beach, Florida, a world-class fishing destination with easy access to year-round angling opportunities.

What do you dream of reeling in? Do you see yourself chasing a big cobia or pulling a large grouper or snapper up off of a shipwreck on the Gulf floor?

In Panama City Beach, you can troll for mackerel, target redfish and tarpon on fly tackle or just take the kids out for a day on the water to have a good time.

With three public piers on the Gulf of Mexico, lucky spots to fish from shore and countless charters available, Panama City Beach has something to offer every angler. Remember, in Panama City Beach, fishing season lasts all year long.

is respect. Some tangling of lines is to be expected when a boatload of 70 anglers fish shoulder-to-shoulder. Some rods, unaccountably, will prove hotter than others. But, says the captain, "Let's all remember that we are all here first and foremost to have a good time. We don't allow cussing, and we ask that people keep their drinking to a beer or two."

Paprocki owns the Jubilee and the Treasure Island. Both boats dock at the Treasure Island Marina on Grand Lagoon off Thomas Drive

and sail on trips of four to eight hours. Spectators, who generally laze on the boat's upper decks, are welcome. Most trips are conducted within 10 to 20 miles off shore.

Anglers can expect to catch white snapper, vermillion snapper (often called beeliners), triggerfish, king mackerel, and the occasional groupers and flounder — along with the fish most prized by party boat anglers, the red snapper. Paprocki, like all captains in the business of operating recreational angling

boats for hire, pays close attention to the announcement of snapper season, the length of which has varied greatly through recent years.

"Those are very important dates for us," Paprocki said. "Lots of folks plan their trips to coincide with snapper season."

Across Grand Lagoon, Capt. Scott Adkison agreed. His customers, he said, thrill at the prospect of boating an "American red" of 20 pounds or more.

Adkison captains the Capt. Anderson, a 78-foot vessel that

# Sunset



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was built in Warren, Rhode Island, and deployed before moving south on whale-watching excursions. It is generally reserved for 10-hour daytime trips, although an 8-hour evening trip is added when demand peaks during snapper season. Adkison's boat is one of five "head boats" that fish out of

~~~~~  
Dozens of anglers can accompany a daylong fishing excursion into the **GULF OF MEXICO**.
~~~~~

Capt. Anderson's marina and may range 30-40 miles offshore.

While Paprocki has been at it for

about 30 years, his operation is a relative newcomer versus his competition. The Anderson family began running charter boats in 1935 out of the St. Andrews Marina in Panama City, long before the invention of the circle hook that is now required for reef fishing.

Circle hooks are popular among mates whose job it is to handle the fish boated by customers. The circle hooks tend to lodge in the corner of a fish's mouth, making their removal easy and increasing the likelihood that a released fish will survive. (Gut-hooked fish don't fare so well.)

Terminal tackle comprises two-hook rigs and lead weights of 8 or 10 ounces.

Paprocki and the Anderson boats supply anglers with squid for bait and throw in some cut baits, usually chunks of cigar minnows. The captains discourage people from thinking that

a big bait is required to catch a big fish.

"This is rally fishing," Adkison said. "When the bite is on, you are as likely to catch a keeper grouper or a big snapper on a piece of squid as you are on a whole cigar minnow."

The captains have been heartened by the reopening of triggerfish season and, in April, were looking forward to the opening of the amberjack and red snapper seasons.

"There's a lot of triggerfish out there," Adkison said then, noting recent trips that had produced 20 head or more.

Adkison encourages anglers to bring on board hats, sunscreen — and cameras.

"With seasons the way they are, we catch a lot of fish that we are required to release," Adkison said. "You don't want to wind in a 30-pounder and then have to let it go without getting a picture." ●

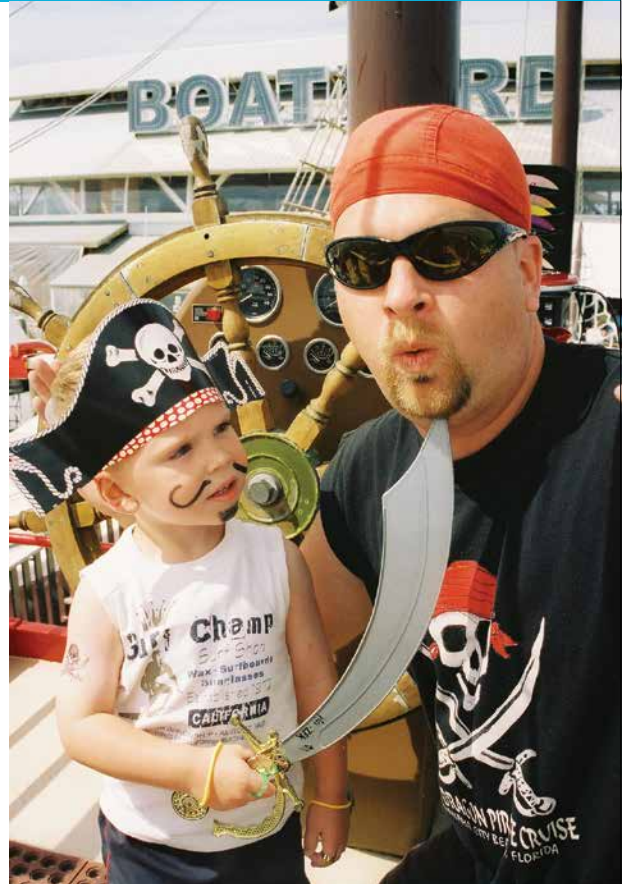
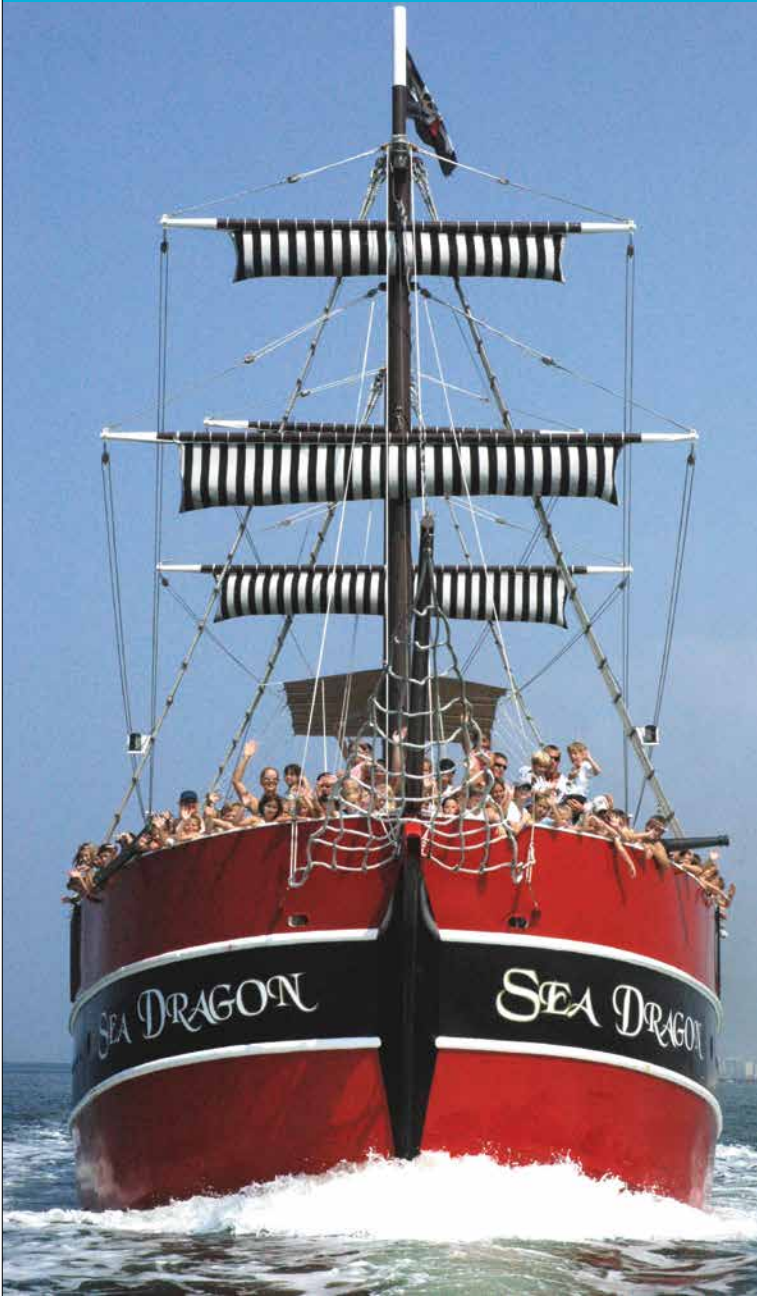


**"Those are very important dates for us. Lots of folks plan their trips to coincide with snapper season." CAPT. CHARLIE PAPROCKI**



CAPT. ANDERSON'S MARINA

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**We're located on Grand Lagoon at the Lighthouse Marina. Open March through October!**



# FISHES OF THE FALL

## Panama City Beach Inshore Fishing Report

BY CAPT. NATHAN CHENNAUX

**IF YOU'RE AN ANGLER** looking for some fun, productive time on the water, then fall is definitely the time of year to be in Panama City Beach. As the water temperature cools, predator fish begin to gorge on the massive schools of baitfish preparing to migrate to warmer waters — the so-called “mullet run” — and that triggers some exciting fishing action. Whether you prefer to cast a line inshore, around the inlets or along the beaches, there will be plenty of fish to catch.

Flounder are one of the most anticipated migrations of the fall as they make their way out into the Gulf of Mexico. The exact timing of this movement varies from year to year depending on conditions, but it generally takes place sometime between late September and early November.

As the flounder transition from the bay to the Gulf, they must travel through the various inlets, and these choke points are where you'll find the highest concentrations of fish. If you happen to catch the run at its peak, then be prepared to catch upwards of 100 fish. (Recreational anglers can't harvest that many fish, but they are just as much fun to catch and release as they are to catch and throw in the cooler.) By paying attention to what's happening, you can follow the flow of fish until they reach the Gulf and begin to congregate around natural and artificial reefs.

The elusive tarpon also swims our waters during the fall season. Instead of cruising down the beach as they do in the spring, silver kings move into the bays during fall and begin feeding on large schools of red minnows. You can often see them rolling the surface in depths around 30 feet, especially around thick bait pods. It's rare to catch them near the surface, so I opt for heavy jig heads with soft plastic bodies fished near the bottom. The vast majority of strikes will occur

when you slowly raise the lure off the bottom and then allow it to flutter back down. Tarpon almost never strike when bait is twitched or displays any type of erratic action.

Lots of big Spanish mackerel also will stay close to the bait balls, so it's a good idea to always have a small spoon with a light piece of leader wire at the ready. These fish usually jump out of the water when feeding on the surface, so locating them is fairly easy. I don't usually go around looking for them, but if I run across a school of feeding fish, I usually stop and make a few casts. Bigger fish are often hanging out below, waiting for leftovers from the feeding frenzy to sink down toward them. Big bull redfish, cobia, kingfish and other species are likely to be lurking near spots where other fish are feeding in open water.

In the shallows, speckled trout will begin to transition from shallow grass and sand flats toward the deeper bayous and creeks where they will spend most of the winter. This is a great time to target trout because they tend to be out and moving during the early fall and concentrated in small areas in late fall. The end of the fall season is the best time to target the bigger fish since the first few cold fronts will push them deep into the bayous. Small suspending twitch baits consistently outperform most other lures when it comes to landing the big trout.

Panama City Beach has a dependable year-round redfish bite, but fall is fantastic after the fish school up in big numbers and start chasing bait balls around the bay. I usually rely on birds and other surface-feeding fish to locate them and then use my bottom machine to pinpoint their exact location. Once the fish are found, you can use medium to heavy jigs that get down to them quickly. These are generally big, over-slot fish that you can't keep but they're a blast to catch.

Fall is also when you begin to see big bull redfish cruising down shallow flats in search of mullet, crabs, shrimp or pretty much anything else they can fit into their mouth. Remember — big redfish cannot be harvested, so minimize their time out of the water and make sure you release them in a safe and healthy manner.

Good luck and good fishing! ●



As the waters and the temperatures cool down, migrating season begins for many Gulf fish.

# Family EATS and TREATS

Top five family places to eat in Panama City Beach

*BY DANI AGNEW, Story and photos originally published on DailyMom.com*







~~~~~  
EVEN PICKY EATERS can find something sweet and tasty in Panama City Beach.
 ~~~~~



**R**olling around in the sandy white beaches and body surfing in the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico is bound to work up an appetite in your kids — and, of course, yourself — so be sure to find the family-friendliest spots to eat in Panama City Beach.

Whether it's breakfast, lunch, or dinner, this beach town offers the yummiest and most unique restaurants, cafes and diners. Don't worry about popping in with your sandy bikini and cover up or trying to stifle the loud excitement of your sun kissed toddlers — these places welcome young and old, with relaxed, casual, and comfortable atmospheres. Bon appetite beach bums!

» **BREAKFAST**

**ANDY'S FLOUR POWER CAFE & BAKERY**

Serving their loyal customers from a brand new location, Andy's Flour Power Cafe & Bakery is THE place to get your breakfast on while staying in Panama City Beach. This award winning (boasting accolades from Urban Spoon — Top 101 Great Breakfasts in the U.S. — and Google) cafe and bakery cooks up fresh, homemade food that is classically delicious and perfect for the whole family to enjoy, picky eaters included.

John Certo is a third generation chef from New York City and owns Andy's Flour Power Cafe & Bakery. Since he was 9 years old, he's been cooking and creating delicacies that people go nuts over. Proudly serving breakfast, lunch and brunch seven days a week, one of the most popular meals on Andy's menu is the Flour Power French

Toast, featuring “thick country French bread dipped in cinnamon and brown sugar batter, grilled 'till golden perfection and topped with toasted nuts, fresh strawberries and powdered sugar.” Southern Living Magazine and Daily Mom both say it's a must-have when dining here!

Enjoy your morning meal in the casual, family-friendly dining room, which is brightly decorated with flowers and vivid artwork, and then grab a muffin, cookie or a piece of cake for the road from the bakery display. Keep your Andy's fix going all day long.

**THOMAS' DONUT & SNACK SHOP**

When your morning sweet tooth is in full swing, just swing by Thomas' Donut & Snack Shop and pick up a classically homemade donut. Since 1971, this fun snack shack has been serving up all

the classics for beach goers, from delicious breakfast sandwiches to unique Texas-style kolaches.

You can walk right up to the outside counter, order inside, dine outside amidst the morning breeze on a picnic table or slide in a booth in the cozy indoor dining room. It's the perfect place on the beach to get your morning joe with a side of sweetness. Open seven days a week from 6 a.m. until 10 p.m., it'll be your trusty go-to while vacationing in Panama City Beach.

## » LUNCH

**SPINNAKER BEACH CLUB & PARADISE GRILL** If eating lunch with Gulf of Mexico views and cool breezes is your family's way to dine, then Spinnaker Beach Club &

Paradise Grill is the perfect lunch spot for you. This restaurant and entertainment hotspot is beyond popular with locals and visitors alike. Pull up a seat, order a cocktail or craft beer and let the kids run free on the sandy front yard while they wait for their macaroni and cheese. If the weather isn't so favorable, you can still enjoy the amazing seafood and cold drinks from their air-conditioned indoor or outdoor covered dining rooms. The place is so huge, there's the perfect seat for any family in any condition, including the Waterfall Deck, an open-air area where the sun kisses your cheeks as you sip on a concoction from the Rum Bar.

Serving up coastal Southern entrees, such as the mouth-watering five spiced seared tuna — seared

yellowfin tuna with a Creole remoulade drizzle, served with sweet corn mashed potatoes and a warm black-eyed pea and corn salad — and chocolate-dipped Key Lime Pie on a stick, their all-new menu is bursting at the seams with delicious lunch and dinner dishes.

If you roam around the property, you'll see white baby grand pianos, stages galore, beach bars, lawn games and social seating everywhere you turn. During after-hours on the weekends, Spinnaker Beach Club & Paradise Grill turns into an entertainment paradise. With events such as karaoke, dueling pianos, concerts, ladies nights and more, this beach nightclub packs a punch for those who crave good music, good food and good company.

**BEACH ACCESS** is a plus for families when lunch or dinner rolls around. Bathing suit dining is a way of life in Florida.







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» **DINNER**

**POMPANO JOE'S SEAFOOD HOUSE** Located in the heart of Pier Park, the premier shopping and dining destination of Panama City Beach, lies a seafood lover's dream, Pompano Joe's Seafood House. This hoppin' restaurant serves up the freshest seafood in the Gulf and has been featured by The Travel Channel as the ultimate beach snack shack and one of the world's best beach restaurants. Their award-winning seafood gumbo is a menu must-have, and treating the kids to virgin daiquiris all night will easily win you best parent status.

**THE GRAND MARLIN RESTAURANT & OYSTER BAR** This second location of The Grand Marlin Restaurant & Oyster Bar opened in 2016, offering locals and visitors the freshest seafood, mixed with a passion for oysters, delicious cocktails and stunning sunset views over the waters of the Grand Lagoon. For a more upscale vibe, but still family-friendly, this is the place to enjoy a relaxing dinner with those who love lobster, wine and decadent desserts.

This two-story restaurant allows you to sit indoors or outdoors, all with sweeping views of serene waters and boats dotting the marina. Enjoy the freshest catch of the

~~~~~  
FAMILY-FRIENDLY LOCATIONS dot the landscape in PCB, offering food that kids love and breathtaking beach views.
~~~~~



day as the menu changes daily, ensuring you the most delicious and perfect plates. Whether you opt for a lighter course of crispy lobster fingers and a field greens salad or go big with the grilled lobster tail, your taste buds will be pleasantly satisfied after the plate is licked clean. ●



# Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center



## Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center

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# CAMP YOUR STYLE

A guide to enjoying the beach  
in portable accommodations

*STORY BY KARI C. BARLOW  
PHOTOS BY DESIREE GARDNER*

Find some serenity away from  
the shore with a camping trip  
to a serene setting — such as  
**ST. ANDREWS STATE PARK.**



Camping in Panama City Beach is an experience like no other.

Not only can you sleep out under the stars, hike beautiful trails and roast marshmallows over a campfire — you can do it all within walking distance of the sparkling Gulf of Mexico!

Whether you prefer to pitch a tent, crank up the RV or glamp it up in style with all the comforts of home, Panama City Beach has the perfect spot for you.

Read on for some helpful tips on where to stay, what to bring and how to stay safe to make your visit an adventure you'll never forget!

### **DISCOVER THE WONDERS OF ST. ANDREWS**

For that old-fashioned camping experience, Panama City Beach is home to St. Andrews State Park, where visitors can explore more than 1,200 acres of unique coastal terrain.

One of the most popular state parks in Florida, St. Andrews is perfect for tent campers and folks with RVs. With 176 campsites — for tents and RVs up to 45 feet — in the pinewoods near Grand Lagoon, the park has the largest selection of camping accommodations in the area.

“It’s such a unique, beautiful park,” says Gabriel Gray, a conservationist, firefighter and owner of Gray Outdoors, which leads outdoor exhibitions across the United States. “You can camp close to the water. You can go catch dinner right out your back door. You can go fishing or set out a crab trap.”

The campground area includes fire rings, grills, picnic tables, two bathhouses, a playground, plus electricity and running water.

Gray, a Florida native who lives on a farm in nearby Chipley, says St. Andrews has something special for campers of all ages and interests.

The park offers more than a mile and a half of sugar-white beachfront, and for those who like to hike or simply stroll through nature, there are two main inland trails. Heron Pond Trail takes visitors through a flatwood pine

**“You can go catch  
dinner right out your  
back door.” GABRIEL GRAY**



## **Natural Diversions**

**SET OUT TO  
EXPLORE** local state parks and beaches and find out firsthand how diverse and rare animal species and plant life make Panama City Beach a nature lover’s wonderland. With 27 miles of beach, a multitude of parks and forests and a 700-acre natural barrier island, ecotourists have their choice of wonderful adventures, from hiking and biking to kayaking and canoeing. You don’t have to go far to enjoy a swim, look for shells or just log some great bird-watching time.





No problem. Most of the local campgrounds offer swimming pools and hot and cold showers. Traveling with a four-legged friend? You'll find several pet-friendly properties — all with strict rules regarding leashes and cleanup — and a few with designated dog-walking paths.

For those campers who like to meet new people, we recommend a property with a clubhouse or recreation centers where you can enjoy everything from shuffleboard and bocce ball to potlucks and movie nights. If you need to get a little work done while you're on vacation, don't panic. Wi-Fi is widely available, and it's a complimentary feature at some campgrounds.

forest and past a historic turpentine still, while Gator Lake Trail offers a scenic view of Gator Lake. Other activities include watching wading birds at Button Bush Marsh, shore and pier fishing in the Gulf of Mexico and taking the boat shuttle to Shell Island, a pristine barrier island across the channel from the park.

"There are so many possibilities," Gray says. "If you're into birding, there are all kinds of birds. You can take your paddleboard out, take your kayak. On my paddleboard ... I've had dolphin swim beside me. I've seen green sea turtles. There's so much marine life there."

What's his best advice?

"Be mindful of the weather. Do your research before you come. ... And book super early!"

### PLACES TO CAMP

Most other campgrounds in Panama City Beach are resort-style properties that offer a combination of old-school tent camping, cabins and RV access as well as a variety of amenities.

They're all located minutes away from the beach with safe and easy access points. Not a fan of saltwater and waves?

## HERE ARE SOME GREAT PICKS

### CAMPERS INN

Located roughly 300 yards from the Gulf of Mexico, this full-service RV resort has something for everyone. In addition to almost 100 spaces for all sizes of RVs, it offers rustic 12-by-14 cabins and sites for tent camping. Amenities include a freshwater pool, laundry facilities, showers, a recreation center, complimentary Wi-Fi and a general store that sells everything from sand pails to boiled peanuts. [CampersInn.net](http://CampersInn.net), (866) 872-2267.

### EMERALD COAST RV BEACH RESORT

This gated community caters primarily to serious RV campers — either short-term or long-term — with a variety of paved sites, some offering patio furniture and gas grills. Other accommodations include small rental cottages that sleep 4-to-6 people. Amenities include two swimming pools, a playground, fire pits, Wi-Fi, a library and a fitness center. [SunRVResorts.com/resorts/south/florida/emerald-coast/](http://SunRVResorts.com/resorts/south/florida/emerald-coast/), (844)377-9074.

### RACCOON RIVER CAMPGROUND

Although this campground sits in the heart of Panama City Beach and is surrounded by some of its most popular eateries and attractions, you'll feel as if you're miles away from the action. Shady campsites accommodate RVs and tents, and amenities include fishing, a pool, a fenced playground, showers, cable TV and Wi-Fi. [RaccoonRiver.net](http://RaccoonRiver.net), (877) 234-0181.

### OTHER CAMPGROUND AND RV PARK OPTIONS INCLUDE:

#### Venture Out at Panama City Beach

4345 Thomas Drive, [VentureOutatPCB.com](http://VentureOutatPCB.com), (850) 234-2247

#### Pineglen Motorcoach and RV Park

11930 Panama City Beach Parkway, [PineglenRVPark.com](http://PineglenRVPark.com), (850) 230-8535

#### Panama City Beach RV Resort

4702 Thomas Drive, [PanamaCityRVResort.com](http://PanamaCityRVResort.com), (850) 249-7352





AIRSTREAM

## WHAT TO BRING

When you're going camping, it never hurts to make a list. Here are some of our best suggestions:

- » Sunscreen
- » Beach toys
- » Fishing supplies
- » Life jackets
- » Paddleboards and surfboards
- » Kayaks
- » Bug repellent (Lots of it. Seriously, our mosquitoes are big and hungry)
- » Citronella candles
- » Bicycles and helmets
- » Golf carts (Some properties restrict golf carts to certain areas)

## NATIVE WATERS

Gray recently launched "Native Waters," a project that will document family-friendly micro-adventures across the Southeast via Instagram (@grayoutdoors), YouTube and by blogging on his website, [GRAYOUTDOORS.COM](http://GRAYOUTDOORS.COM).

"Hopefully, it will inspire families to get outside and go explore," says Gray, an avid fisherman, hiker and stand-up paddleboarder. "I'll be spreading leave-no-trace camping tips and what to do and not to do, best gear for the job and much more."

For more information, visit the project online at [grayoutdoors.com/projects-2](http://grayoutdoors.com/projects-2).

"Our goal ... is to kick up some dust and inspire change in the form of breaking personal bubbles in the pursuit of adventure," Gray says.

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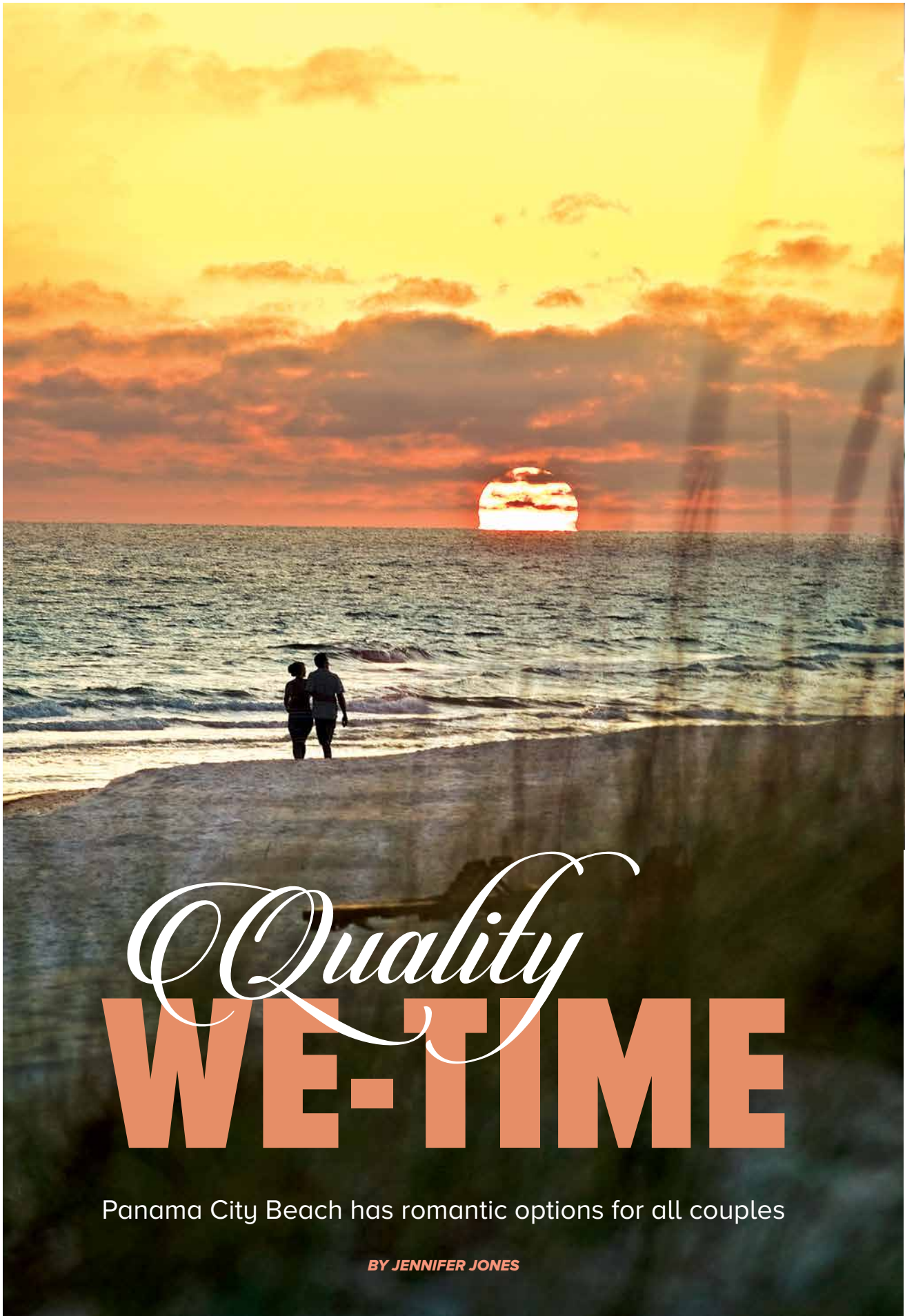
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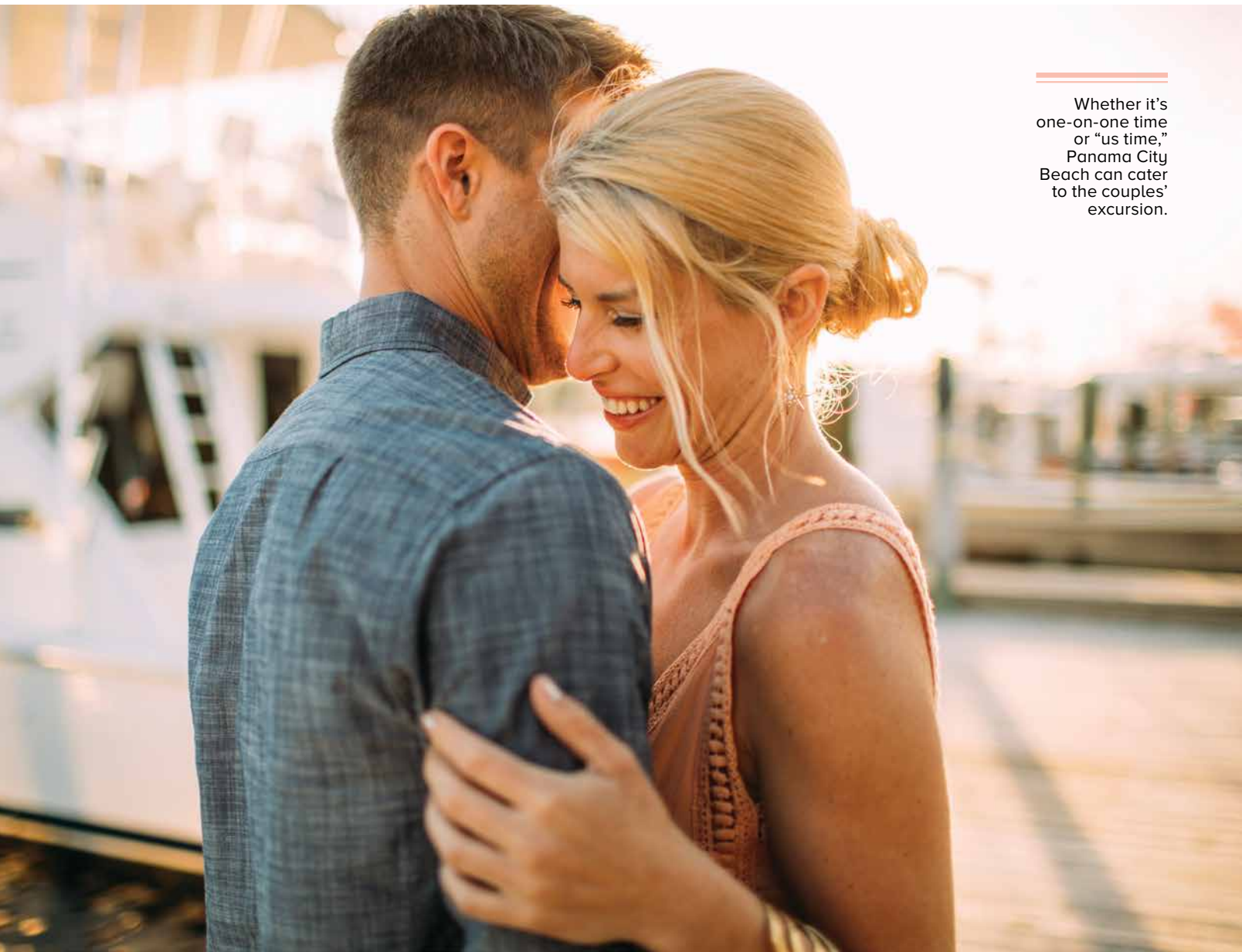


# *Quality* **WE-TIME**

Panama City Beach has romantic options for all couples

*BY JENNIFER JONES*





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Whether it's one-on-one time or "us time," Panama City Beach can cater to the couples' excursion.

**A**s You Like It" — that's the name of, arguably, Shakespeare's most definitive romance. The phrase expresses the idea that love is a very subjective thing. Just as a phrase by any other name would sound as sweet, Panama City Beach offers a setting sure to speak to your definition of romantic.

As with love, there are many ways to find romance in Panama City Beach.

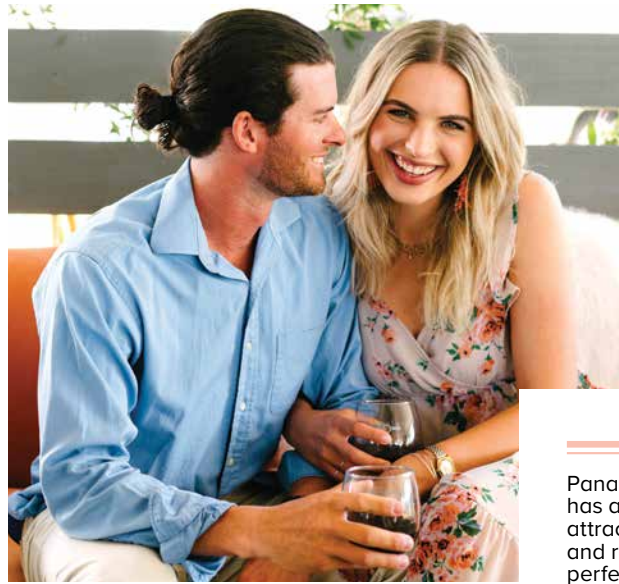
Whatever floats your boat: The Gulf of Mexico is a sea of love. Whether you want to dip your toes or just want to ride the waves, dive and boat charters in Panama City Beach offer adventures year-round. Many local businesses can help you navigate a tailor-made romantic excursion.

The emerald waters of Panama City Beach host a wide variety of marine life. Sea turtles, goliath groupers and bottlenose dolphins are just

a few of the species that you can spot in the blue green waters of Northwest Florida. Dive Locker, Dolphin and Snorkel Tours or Panama City Dive Center make Panama City Beach an ideal jumping off point for those looking to take the plunge under the waves.

If above the water is more your speed, parasailing with Adventures at Sea or a sunset cruise on Island Time Sailing Cruises or Paradise Adventures can take you through the Grand Lagoon pass and beyond. Take your loved one and view the horizon with a bird's eye view or relax as the sunset fills an orange colored sky.

To Each His Own: "Me time" can be "us time" when it's at one of the area's spas. Luxurious spa treatments are an escape into relaxation at Indigo Earth Spa, which provides organic facials, waxing and Ayurvedic balancing treatments in downtown Panama



Panama City Beach has a number of attractions, venues and restaurants perfect for couples.

City, or you can cocoon yourself at Therapeutic Beach Massages, where they offer many services, including clay therapies, scrubs and, yes, full body wraps. For the ultimate couples activity, try a couple's massage at Serenity Spa at Sheraton Bay Point Resort.

Getting lovely — for the one you love or with them — is the ultimate indulgence.

A Matter of Taste: Runaway Island Beach Bar and Grill and The Grand Marlin all provide outside decks for you and yours to take in the breathtaking views of the gulf while enjoying catch-of-the-day seafoods and cocktails.

If feeding your enduring bliss or first blushes by candlelight is your preference, a romantic dinner can elevate a necessity to a whole other level. The best option around might be Firefly, named Open Tables' "2017 Most Romantic Restaurant." The award-winning cuisine and magical Mediterranean bistro atmosphere will whisk you and your lover off your feet.

If it Makes You Happy: Instead of the usual romantic clichés, perhaps you're looking for something a bit more engaging. The young at heart can be entertained together at nostalgic beach attractions like Race City Amusement Park's bumper boats and Coconut Creek's putt-putt golf, Cobra Adventure Park's go-cart racing or more state-of-the-art entertainment such as Dave and Buster's or Emerald Coast Mirror Maze & Laser Craze.

If the games are a little too virtual, Panama City Beach has a selection of nightclubs and live music venues. Tootsie's Orchid Lounge is the place to do some serious two-steppin' as local bands and loaners from Nashville's original landmark venue play the country music couple's jam. Spinnaker Beach Club hosts music loving couples with a pair of Dueling Pianos every Friday and Saturday night, and Sharky's has cocktails for those who like to enjoy a signature beverage while listening to the sounds of live music.

What tickles your fancy: If retailing is what does it for you, there's a lot to be had for the purchasing pair. Shops all along

the shore have everything from surfboards to designer apparel to artful decorator items.

Custom-embroidered clothes and personalized trinkets or glassware are just a few of the items that you can add to your shopping list. Designer and licensed apparel can be found at a long list of clothing store including Hy's Toggery, Harley Davidson and Irene & Company. Meanwhile, Avenue Sea has a tastefully curated inventory that will make your home a daily reminder of your romantic vacation until your return.

Free to be we: If money can't buy you love, Panama City Beach affords nearly 60 maintained free to the public boardwalks onto the sugar white shore beginning with Access No. 1 at the east end of Thomas Drive behind Patches Pub and ending not far west of Pier Park.

See them from bicycles rented from Barley's Bike Rental and lay out on any of the chaise cabanas under the Florida sun. If a canopy of leaves rather than canvas is more your speed, there are miles to explore from Camp Helen State Park to Gayle's Trails to St. Andrews State Park.

Regardless of your idea of a romantic vacation, you can make it a reality in Panama City Beach. It's only a matter of pursuing your ideal your way. Start with [visitpanamacitybeach.com](http://visitpanamacitybeach.com) and let your imagination and passions guide you on a trip of a love-life time. And ... hey. Get a room, you two! ●



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# FIZZY


## FERMENTED FUN

Noli South Kombucha brews up a tasty new beverage with Mother Nature's help

STORY BY KARI C. BARLOW // PHOTOS BY MICHAEL BOINI







**ORGANIC AND ALL NATURAL**, Noli South's kombucha is a mix of centuries-old brewing techniques and modern-day flavors.

**H**ang out with Summer and Stephen Kole long enough, and chances are you'll learn more than you ever thought possible about kombucha.

That's because the Koles are breaking ground as Panama City Beach's first small-batch brewer of the ancient-but-suddenly-popular fizzy and fermented tea.

"Kombucha has really become a part of our lives," Summer says. "Most of our job is informing people, which we love. We are passionate about it!"

Noli South Kombucha, which began bottling their beverage commercially in 2016, has taken the Emerald Coast by storm. Available in five flavors — Hibiscus Grape, Carrot Orange, Ginger Lime, Lemongrass Lavender and Blueberry Lemon — it can be found on shelves and menus at 36 locations between Gainesville and Santa Rosa Beach. It's sold locally at several eateries and markets, including Fatty's Sandwich Shop, Finns Island Style Grub, Lucky's Market, Amavida and The Wild Root.

Summer, a native of Panama City Beach, and Stephen, who hails from Lafayette, Louisiana, chose the name because of their shared love of the South and to honor their oldest daughter, Magnolia, who's called Noli. As avid recyclers and staunch advocates of a plant-based diet and lifestyle, the Koles handcraft their kombucha with organic and all-natural ingredients, viewing their customers as friends and the entire endeavor as far more than a business.

"We're not just selling a product," Summer says. "We're building a community."

#### **MOTHER NATURE AT WORK**

At first glance, the scene inside the Noli South Kombucha brewery — located at the Beach Commerce Park on Back Beach Road — can be a little disconcerting.

On one wall are wide shelves lined with hundreds of two-gallon jars or

“vessels,” all filled to the brim with fermenting amber-colored tea and tightly covered with black cloth. Inside each vessel floats a flesh-colored blob of bacteria and yeast that resembles a deflated jellyfish.

“That’s the mother,” Summer says, pointing to one with a wide smile.

The blob is also known as a SCOBY, or “symbiotic culture of bacteria and yeast,” and it can yield “babies” or smaller strands of SCOBY from which other batches of kombucha can be brewed. The SCOBY is formed after sugar-sweetened tea is added to high-quality, plain kombucha and sealed into a glass jar to ferment for 1-to-2 weeks.

“Mother Nature does the brewing. She gets all of the credit,” Summer says. “It becomes naturally carbonated. As the yeast eats the sugar, it produces carbon dioxide.”

She discovered kombucha about six years ago while poking around a local health food store. She wasn’t feeling well at the time and figured it couldn’t hurt to try some fermented tea. “I had never heard of it,” she says. “I took a sip and was like, ‘Wow! I was just drawn to it.’”

After sharing it with Stephen, who also liked it, they started researching the brewing process and the many theories about its medicinal qualities. While kombucha’s origins are not known, it is thought to have been consumed for centuries in China, Japan and parts of Eastern Europe and Russia.

“What’s so incredible is you have to have kombucha to make kombucha, so all kombucha is linked,” Summer says. “It’s really a spiritual drink. . . . Kombucha is always living. It’s always fermenting.”

Although some enthusiasts assert that kombucha can help with everything from anxiety and depression to liver detoxification and weight loss, there is little scientific proof to back up most claims about its effects on human health. But the drink is chock-full of live bacteria, and a growing number of physicians say good bacteria, or probiotics, can aid in digestion and better support the immune system.

**“I’M A MORNING PERSON, AND DRINKING KOMBUCHA GIVES ME A GOOD BOOST OF ENERGY. ... IT’S REFRESHING. IT’S FULL OF VITAMINS — B1, B6, B12!”**

**— SUMMER KOLE**



**SUMMER AND STEPHEN COLE**, with children Magnolia and Oak, have turned Noli South into a family affair — from brewing and bottling, to capping and boxing.





For the Koles, a healthy 3-year-old Magnolia is all the proof they need. As an infant, she had food sensitivities from breast milk. When she was about 6 months old, Summer began giving her a few drops to half an ounce of kombucha each day. Soon, Magnolia's tummy troubles were a thing of the past.

"She really opened us up to the actual healing power of kombucha," Summer says. "She loves it. Magnolia drinks at least 12 ounces a day."

In fact, the entire family — including their youngest daughter, 1-year-old Oak — has incorporated kombucha into their daily regimen.

"I'm a morning person, and drinking kombucha gives me a good boost of energy," Summer says. "... It's refreshing. It's full of vitamins — B1, B6, B12!"

### I NEED MY 'BUCHI

A couple of years after first trying kombucha, the Koles began brewing it at home. Friends and family loved it as Summer and Stephen tinkered with the process and with different flavors while using a variety of cold-pressed juices.

"It was a lot of trial and error," Summer says. "We had exploding bottles. We had flat kombucha. We had everything."

Eventually, their hobby started to feel more like work. Friends would call looking for more of their delicious brew before Summer finally made a decision: either stop brewing or start a business.

In 2016, they did just that — using a batch of kombucha from Lafayette, Louisiana, that they both really liked. Stephen designed the logo — a triangle with three lines inside it to represent the beach when the surf is high, choppy and flat — with colors that align with each flavor. "I just wanted something really cool and beautiful that would draw you in," says Stephen, whose creative side also extends to woodworking.

The first time Magnolia saw her namesake kombucha in a store was at Lucky's Market, and she was excited. "She was like, 'Dad, that's us! Dad, that's my favorite!'" Stephen says. "I think she's kind of proud of it."

By December 2017, they moved into the 1,600-square-foot space at commerce park so they could increase their output, which is roughly 400

gallons of kombucha every two weeks.

Summer's family also lends a hand, helping sterilize vessels and prep the kombucha for bottling and boxing.

"We do everything by hand," Stephen says. "It's a lot more work, but we have a lot of help from family right now. My mom does the bottling, and my brother does the capping."

In a small corner of the warehouse, they set up a cozy living area with carpet, a sofa and one of Stephen's bookshelves with books and toys for Magnolia and Oak. When not at the brewery, they're either out on the road, checking in with their customers or attracting new ones at local farmer's markets.

"What makes it worth it is the way the community is responding," Summer says. "If someone tells me they're drinking kombucha instead of soda, that makes me so happy!" ●





# MILKSHAKE WARS

PCB's finest, most outlandish  
milkshakes will soothe your  
craving for sweetness

*BY LIESEL SCHMIDT*





**S**hakes are, by definition, the perfect hybrid of ice cream and milk: a creamy, frozen and frosty glimpse of heaven transported via straw. And depending on where you're ordering — and what you're ordering — modern-day milkshakes can make those dinky plastic-lidded cups passed across the counters of so many chain eateries quiver in fear.

Whether you're a purist who prefers the classic trifecta of flavors or you're a creative who loves to blend outside the lines, there's a shake with your name on it. But we

must warn you — you might find that most of these Panama City Beach milkshakes rest well outside the domain of a straw. You might very well need a spoon or a fork.

That's the mission and the reason for the 28 shake flavors gracing the menu at The Yard Milkshake Bar, a gourmet shake shop where the sole focus is, you guessed it, milkshakes. And while their mixologists might have predesigned shakes down cold, their extensive list of 50 insane and gravity-defying toppings — such as chocolate-dipped bacon, a waffle, a slice of cheesecake, a doughnut,

an entire cupcake, as well as nine types of cookie dough (made in-house) — mean that their 28 base flavors of premium Hershey's ice creams can be combined into customized shakes so numerous that they would give a statistician pause. Served up in massive Mason jars printed with The Yard's logo, every shake is an experience you'll remember by way of the souvenir vessel you get to take home — but those flavors will doubtless be something you'll never forget.

Since opening the Panama City Beach location in early 2018,



**THE YARD'S MILKSHAKES**

incorporate hearty toppings, such as king cake, a waffle, cotton candy or an entire cupcake.

owners Logan and Chelsea Green have taken their Orange Beach, Alabama-based concept to take a new area by storm. They boast signatures such as “The Unicorn,” with its enchanted purple-and-white sweet cream ice cream swirled with sweet and sour cherry and blue raspberry rainbows bedazzled



THE YARD MILKSHAKE BAR

with star-colored lemon flakes, blended thick and served in a marshmallow cream-dipped jar adorned with rainbow-colored sprinkles, whipped cream, clouds of cotton candy, a sour rainbow and a sugar cone “unicorn” horn. Or maybe you’re in the mood for the “Cookie Dough Delicious,” an explosion of cookie dough ice cream served in a jar rimmed with chocolate icing topped with a mountain of chocolate chips, whipped cream and a colossal scoop of edible cookie dough. The shakes at The Yard are

anything but ordinary. And if you’re familiar with the pop charts of the early 2000’s, you’ll appreciate the name, as their milkshakes most certainly do bring all the boys (and girls) to The Yard. **15801 L.C Hilton Jr. Drive #110, (850) 708-3226, [TheYardMilkshakeBar.com](http://TheYardMilkshakeBar.com).**

Off-the-wall is the name of the game at Gulf Coast Burger Co., whether you’re talking creative burgers that push the limit or milkshakes so weird and colorful you’ll wonder who comes up with these things. The brainchild of Justin Greene and Dustin Kelly, Gulf Coast Burger’s shakes shake up the dessert scene with flavors such as the sugar-packed “Sugar Rush,” a vanilla base loaded with Fruity Pebbles and festooned with an enormous lollypop, some Nerds Rope, Airhead Extremes and cotton candy ... then topped with a cherry. Love a Reese’s peanut butter cup? Order the peanut-butter-chip-and-Reese’s-cups packed “Peanut Butter shake,” which is topped with a smattering of Cracker Jacks. For cookie monsters, the “Cookies & Cream” offers up a shake thick with cookie crumbles garnished with not one but two oversized cookies and a chocolate drizzle. Since opening in the fall of 2017, Gulf Coast Burger Co. has defined itself as a burger and shake shack on steroids. They’re so big and bold, their creamy concoctions of craziness are known as Cat-5 Shakes. And while you can certainly order a classic shake reminiscent of an old-time soda fountain, the fun twists they put on their shakes likely will

**GULF COAST BURGER CO.** makes a variety of decadent shakes worth sharing — or keeping all to yourself.



GULF COAST BURGER CO.





GULF COAST BURGER CO.

**FANS OF MILKSHAKES** in Panama City Beach are the real winners of these elaborate dessert battles.

make their vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, cherry, butterscotch, peanut butter or caramel shakes, Thomas widens their menu of flavors with their ability to create shakes or malts from any of the 36 varieties of premium quality

ice creams, frozen yogurt, sorbets and sherbets they serve in the shop. Originally just focusing on its namesakes when it opened in 1971, Thomas Donut & Snack Shop expanded its offerings in 2015, building the ice cream shop that gave even greater appeal to an already flourishing family-owned business. Since then, this crew has handily proven that “old-fashioned” is definitely still in style. **19208 Front Beach Road, (850) 234-8039, ThomasDonutAndSnackShop.com.**

In the face of battle, the biggest and the oddest may certainly have their advantage — after all, whose eyes don't roll in their head at the very thought of a milkshake so monstrous in size that it requires two hands to manage, decorated with cookies, candies and cake with enough sugar rush to power an entire kindergarten class? The sheer decadence is awesome in its lack of apology, its ingenuity and its creativity and boldness. And whether you heed to the siren call of that over-the-top sugar rush or stay true to the purity of a classic, a milkshake is a treat by any standard, a break from the routine to indulge in a bit of nostalgia for those childhood days gone by. ●

tempt you to the dark side — their spiked shakes make this kid-like indulgence anything but child's play. **10031 Hutchison Blvd, (850) 775-1312, GCBurgerco.com.**

If you're looking for scratch-made ice cream to shake up your day, Marble Slab Creamery has your number. From favorites like Cookies 'n Cream, Cookie Dough, Strawberry Shortcake, Cotton Candy, Snickers and Coffee, Marble Slab starts with a base of their freshly churned, small-batch ice cream to create a shake worth busting your diet for, offering your choice of additional mix-ins from more than 65 options of fruits, nuts, candies, sauces and cakes. Since opening in 2012, Marble Slab's PCB location has been chillin', and owner Vic Patel has kept his team of creamers creating everything from shakes and smoothies to sundaes and ice cream cakes that pair perfectly with Great American Cookie Co.'s fresh-baked selection of cookies, cookie cakes and brownies. Served up with a stunning display of garnishes and toppings, these massive shakes might not give you brain freeze, but they'll certainly freeze you in place with an array of flavors and colors. **9956 Hutchison Blvd, (850) 234-9999, MarbleSlab.com.**

There are, of course, the steadfast shake-makers who stand not on the strength of odd-ball mix-ins and gargantuan garnishes, but on the simplicity of their old-fashioned formula: milk plus ice cream. That traditionalist method still appeals, as one can easily see from the happy faces of those enjoying a shake from Thomas Donut & Snack Shop. Using a base of premium vanilla bean ice cream to



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# A TODDLER'S DREAM TRIP

A TRAVEL BLOG FOR ADVENTURE LOVERS,  
*Story and photos via [Vagabond3.com](http://Vagabond3.com)*





## AGELESS SHORES

are welcome sites  
for kids and adults  
of all ages.



**T**his is my second time to Panama City Beach. I first fell in love with it the first time, when I was only 6 months old and playing on one of my favorite beaches in the world — Shell Island. But let's back up. Shell Island, a small barrier island off the coast of Panama City Beach, is only accessible by boat (pontoon boat, sail boat, speed boat — it doesn't discriminate. Kayaks and canoes are welcome too.) It's 7 miles of per bliss and a can't miss when you're planning your trip to PCB.

For this trip, we joined eight other families for a weekend of exploration and adventure. While I had never met them before, all the kids soon became my new

**NO MATTER** where your beach adventure takes you, dressing comfy and cute will make the perfect beach photo-op! Tassels and pompoms of all different colors are a must when playing in the sand!



“THE GULF IS SO CALM AND WARM COMPARED TO THE ATLANTIC COAST — PERFECT FOR A COOL 2.5 YEAR OLD LIKE ME.”

besties, and the four days at the beach was not nearly enough time.

**Here’s what we did:**

We flew in late Thursday afternoon and watched the sunset from our oceanfront balcony at The Holiday Inn Resort Panama City Beach, the No. 1-rated family beach hotel in all of PCB. The family rooms at the hotel are super cool for kids of any age, but I loved hiding and climbing on the bunkbeds.

In the morning, we got up and went to breakfast at Andy’s Flour Power, a

favorite pancake spot of my mom’s and a great way to start the day. We were already in our bathing suits, so as soon as we got back, we hopped over to the splash pad before conquering the pool.

The beach was our next stop, and splashing in the emerald green waters was top priority. The Gulf is so calm and warm compared to the Atlantic Coast — perfect for a cool 2.5 year old like me.

After we played hard, we stopped by the oceanfront Sea Glass Bar for tacos and kiddo piña colodas. They were my favorite.

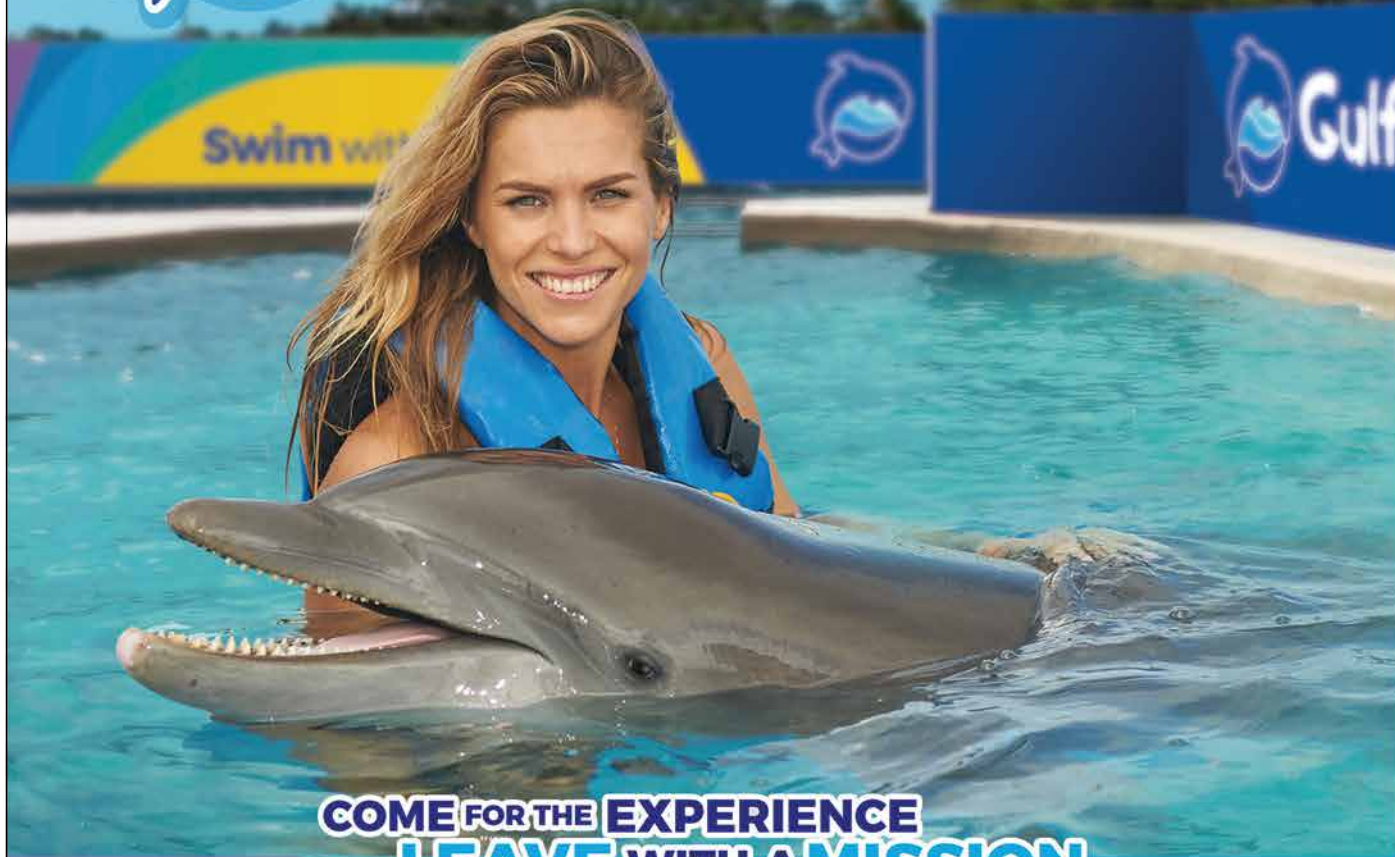
We ended the night with a sunset dolphin cruise with Island Time Sailing. We saw so many dolphins. If you know me at all, you know I love unicorns, flamingos and dolphins the most. I wanted to jump in and swim with them, but my dad said I had to wait until I was a big kid. Fair enough.

The next morning, we woke up early to catch a pontoon boat over to Shell Island via Shell Island Snorkeling. A little PSA: This is a must when visiting Panama City Beach, or really any beach town on the Gulf Coast off 30A. St. Andrews State Park and Shell Island are slices of heaven. From deer running on the beach to private inlets that feel like you’re on another planet (or at least in the Caribbean), it’s so nice to





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**WHETHER YOU'RE EXPLORING** the pool playground, sailing to Shell Island or sending off the sun by campfire, it is all about the backdrop! Panama City Beach is packed with perfect places to take the best beach selfie.

know that places like this exist in Florida and don't require a passport.

After Shell Island (which I never wanted to leave), we came back to the hotel and took a quick nap before heading over to Pier Park and City Pier.

Then we met the whole group back on the beach for tacos and s'mores from Juan Taco and Endless Beach Rentals. If you're looking to entertain a big group of people and have a lot of kiddos who can't sit still at a restaurant (hey, that's me), this

was perfect. The kiddos were able to play in the ocean and build sand castles, and the adults were able to chat, eat and enjoy not worrying so much about us. It was a blast.

The final morning, we immediately got up and headed to the beach. We wanted to soak up every last second before we had to leave. But we didn't forget breakfast. Nope, we had donuts at Thomas Donut & Snack Shop and then played across the street at the beach all morning. Pro tip: Get there early or be prepared to wait in line. The donuts are GOOD, and people come from all over to get their share each morning.

Until next time, PCB. Maybe then I'll be a "big kid" and can snorkel with the dolphins and rays!  
xox, Kid Augustine ●

## FROM MY MOM

**PLANNING YOUR OWN TRIP? HERE ARE SOME OF OUR FAVORITE PLACES TO EAT AND THINGS TO DO IN PCB:**

### DINING:

- » Hook'd Pier Bar and Grille
- » Craft Bar
- » Finn's Island Style Grub
- » Spinnaker's Beach Club
- » The Grand Marlin
- » Liza's Kitchen (breakfast)

### ACTIVITIES:

- » Gulf World Marine Park
- » Shipwreck Island Waterpark (maybe when A is a little older)
- » Conservation Park for hiking
- » Carillon Beach SUP
- » Helicopter Tour over the coastline
- » Snorkeling or diving
- » Kayak fishing



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This fully staffed, clean marina located next to St. Andrew Pass is open 7 days a week. Radio dispatched dock attendants are fully trained to handle your docking experience with ease. From a well-marked channel to an easy approach fuel dock with customer discounts, Bay Point Marina is a place you and your boat should call home.



OCTOBER 5-6 PIER PARK | OCTOBER 7 GRAND LAGOON

# PIRATES OF THE HIGH SEAS FEST



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LIVE MUSIC  
MAGIC SHOWS  
PIRATE FLOTILLA

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# RED. SPECKLED. FLAT. NICE SPECIES!

BY STEVE BORNHOFT // ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN RUSSO

For creationists and evolutionists alike, the flounder is surely confounding. “What was the Master Designer thinking?” some must wonder. Others are left to contemplate how on God’s green earth it was possible that a series of genetic events resulted in a fish that has a migrating eye and metamorphoses from upright to flat.

The flounder, then, might be the least probable member of a trio that shallow-water anglers call the Inshore Slam. But for anyone who associates trout with cold-water streams in Colorado or Patagonia, the presence in warm Gulf waters of “specks,” fish that would not look out of place tucked behind a boulder in a riffle, might seem odd. And what

of redfish, which more accurately might be called copperfish? How does a fish with its mouth on the underside of its head manage to inhale a top-water lure? And what’s with that tail spot? Each of the species has its devotees who salivate at the thought of redfish tailing in shoreline reeds or speckled trout bunched up in creeks in the winter or flounders congregating on a near-shore wreck. Catching all them in a day — managing the Slam — is possible, certainly, but that happens accidentally far more often than it does as the result of deliberate effort.

A live shrimp will tempt each. And so, too, will lead-headed jigs tipped with soft, plastic tails that vibrate when bumped along the

bottom or slowly retrieved or trolled. Slip a bit of thawed shrimp on the jig hook, and you will increase your chances. While their appearances are divergent, the members of the threesome have this in common: They all eat well. Cleaning them is best accomplished with a razor-sharp knife, especially in the case of flounder and reds. Flounder is often paired with crabmeat, specks with butter and batter and redfish with Cajun spices.

To consider that a person might sit down to a dinner of all three coupled with sweet corn and new potatoes — well, it’s almost too much. ●

REDFISH

SPECKLED TROUT

GULF FLOUNDER





~~~~~  
THOMAS RHETT
will be the Sunday
headliner at this year's
Pepsi Gulf Coast Jam,
which is scheduled for
Labor Day weekend at
Frank Brown Park.
~~~~~



# Get Active

» FALL CALENDAR BLOOMS WITH FESTIVALS, RALLIES AND MORE **AUG.–OCT. 2018**

## PEPSI GULF COAST JAM



**AUG. 31-SEPT. 2**

Kick off an event-filled fall with this

Labor Day weekend mainstay. This highly anticipated concert has been bringing the hottest country music stars to the beach since 2013. Headliners for this year's sixth-annual event include Florida Georgia Line, Eric Church and Thomas Rhett. Festival-goers can ride free shuttles to the stage at Frank Brown Park. [GulfCoastJam.com](http://GulfCoastJam.com)



## GRAND LAGOON WATERFRONT MARKET

**Weekends** Wildly popular farmer's market has outgrown the grassy areas of Pirate's Cove Marina and has arrived at Capt. Anderson's restaurant. The market hosts the region's favorite makers, bakers and growers on Saturday and Sunday mornings from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Hailed by The New York Times as "Top 10 Things to do at PCB." [facebook.com/GrandLagoon.Waterfront.Farmers.Market/](https://www.facebook.com/GrandLagoon.Waterfront.Farmers.Market/)

## GROOVIN' ON THE GREEN

**Aug. 6-Sept. 2 (Mondays, First Sunday in Sept.)** Enjoy an evening of music at Carillon Beach's Village Green for this summer concert series. Admission is free and guests are welcome to bring chairs, blankets and coolers with your beverage of choice while listening to a myriad of musical stylings — including bluegrass, top 40, beach, reggae, country, blues and jazz. [facebook.com/GroovinontheGreen](https://www.facebook.com/GroovinontheGreen)

## SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

**Aug. 2 & 9 (Thursdays)** Hot summer nights are made for music, and the Summer Concert Series has become a beloved summertime tradition in PCB. Enjoy a free concert at the park every Thursday at Aaron Bessant Park Amphitheater — bring your lawn chair and blankets and enjoy the sounds of summer music. Coolers, food and pets are welcome. The 2018 lineup can be found at [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)

## GRAND LAGOON GRAND SLAM FISHING TOURNAMENT

**Aug. 10-12** This offshore fishing tournament is limited to outboard powered fishing boats (including center consoles, walkarounds, cuddy cabin boats, catamarans, etc.). Teams will target gamefish and billfish, including tuna, wahoo and dolphin. [grandlagoongrandslam.com](http://grandlagoongrandslam.com)

## 9-11 STAIR CLIMB

**Sept. 8** The Panama City Beach 9-11 Memorial

Stair Climb Fundraiser started back in 2011 as a special way to remember the 10th Anniversary of the tragic events that happened on September 11, 2001. Held at Edgewater Beach and Golf Resort, all money raised goes towards the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and local First Responder projects. [firehero.org/events/9-11-stair-climbs/](http://firehero.org/events/9-11-stair-climbs/)

## PANAMA JACK PADDLEBOARD CLASSIC/ EDGEWATER BEACH RESORT

**Sept. 14-15** Annual pier-to-pier SUP race will be held at Sharky's. Registration starts at 7:30 a.m., race will be 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. [facebook.com/PierToPier10kSUPRace/](http://facebook.com/PierToPier10kSUPRace/)

## GULF COAST BLUEGRASS & FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL

**Sept. 28-29** This annual music festival, held at Aaron Bessant Park, helps raise funds for the Boys and Girls Club of Bay County. [facebook.com/gulfcoastbluegrassand-folkfestival/](http://facebook.com/gulfcoastbluegrassand-folkfestival/)

## LOBSTER FESTIVAL & TOURNAMENT SEPT. 17-23



The biggest seven-day lobster festival in Florida takes place at Schooners during the middle of September. Lobster tournament divers hunt for local lobsters and vie for prizes, while spectators devour delicious lobster dishes and participate in a sand-sculpting contest. [Schooners.com](http://Schooners.com)

**PIRATES OF THE HIGH SEAS FEST**

**Oct. 5-7** Columbus Day weekend brings waves of fun-filled adventure to Panama City Beach each year with this annual event at Pier Park. The whole family can play together, and weekend activities include a scavenger hunt, pirate invasions, water battle, kids parade and main parade, live music, fireworks and much more. [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)

**SUDS & CLUBS CRAFT BEER GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**Oct. 6** A golf tournament unlike any other — 18 holes of beautiful golf in a two-person scramble format, with 14 holes offering unlimited craft beer sampling and four holes hosting east from some of Bay County's best restaurants. Event will be held at the Nicklaus Course at Bay Point Golf Club. Find the event on [eventbrite.com](http://eventbrite.com) for more info.

**BLOODY MARY & MUSIC FESTIVAL**

**Oct. 20** Enjoy all-you-can-drink bloody mary samples from over two dozen vendors before casting your vote for the best bloody mary. The winner (the "Big Tomato") will be awarded a trophy and bragging rights. A full bar and local eats will also be available.

**OKTOBERFEST**  
**OCT. 12-13**

Music lovers and fans of German food and craft beer will don their lederhosen and dirndls and gather at Aaron Bessant Park for the Panama City Beach Oktoberfest. Local brewers will pour their core beers and other seasonal offerings while local food vendors will highlight German fare. [pcboktoberfest.com](http://pcboktoberfest.com)



Admission is \$20 per person (\$15 for military/first responders with ID). The spectacular Grand Lagoon provides the backdrop for this event, hosted by Schooners Last Local Beach Club. [GrandLagoon.org](http://GrandLagoon.org)

**THUNDER BEACH MOTORCYCLE RALLY**

**Oct. 24-28** Motorcyclists will be roaring into town to celebrate the annual spring rally and the autumn events. Bikers from around the nation head south to enjoy contests, rocking entertainment and bike shows. Known as "The Most Biker Friendly FREE Rally in the United States," Thunder Beach Motorcycle Rally is held twice yearly in Panama City Beach during the first weekend in May and mid-October. Bikers from around the country enjoy scenic rides along the Emerald

Coast, live entertainment and local cuisine. [ThunderBeachProductions.com](http://ThunderBeachProductions.com)

**IRONMAN FLORIDA**

**Nov. 3** What began as a challenge between groups of Navy Seals has become one of the most recognized endurance events in the world. The Ironman consists of a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run, with the Florida edition of the challenge serving as one of the most popular races on the circuit. Too much to take on? Check out the new Ironman 70.3 Gulf Coast in May ... half the course with all the fun! [Ironman.com](http://Ironman.com)

**HOLLY FAIR**

**Nov. 15-18** Northwest Florida's Southern holiday upscale shopping event will feature an entirely indoor and newly remolded venue at Edgewater Golf & Beach



**EMERALD COAST CRUIZIN' CAR SHOW**

**NOV. 7-10** Twice a year, Panama City Beach pays homage to the classics ... cars that is. Activities at Aaron Bessant Park include cruise-ins, concerts, parties, vendors, food, parades and celebrity appearances. Car enthusiasts of all ages are welcome to check out the thousands of hot rods, customs, muscle cars, trucks and classics on display. [EmeraldCoastCruizin.com](http://EmeraldCoastCruizin.com)





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Resort. All proceeds from this event support the Junior League of Panama City's mission of developing positive community change. [jlpanamacity.org/hollyfair](http://jlpanamacity.org/hollyfair)

**AMERICAN CORNHOLE ORGANIZATION**

**Nov. 16-17** The ACO presents a Master Series tournament in Panama City Beach for the first time. The inaugural event is set to take place at the Laketown Wharf Event Center and its 28,000 square-foot indoor complex.

**TURKEY TROT**

**Nov. 22** Choose from a family fun race

or the 5K to help support the Wesley Burnham Foundation, which helps provide preschool scholarships and music program funding. [sheratonbaypoint.com/turkeytrot](http://sheratonbaypoint.com/turkeytrot)

**BEACH HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS**

**Nov. 23-24** Kicking off Thanksgiving weekend, Beach Home for the Holidays includes a fun-filled lineup of activities and events to entice families from far and wide to build new traditions and celebrate the season together in Panama City Beach. Highlights include the lighting of

a 100-foot Christmas tree, magical Santa's Village and holiday music concerts (past acts include Wynonna Judd, John Berry and Panama City POPS Orchestra) at Aaron Bessant Park. [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)

**PANAMA CITY BEACH MARATHON**

**Dec. 1** Runners can choose from a marathon, half-marathon, 5K or kid's fun run in this popular annual event — regardless of the division, all win with a view of the Gulf of Mexico to guide them along. [PCBMarathon.com](http://PCBMarathon.com)



**NEW YEAR'S EVE BEACH BALL DROP** Dec. 31



Celebrate New Year's Eve on the beach. A family-friendly countdown at 8 p.m. culminates with fireworks and 10,000 beach balls being dropped over the crowd. As the seconds tick down to midnight, thousands of revelers watch the Celebration Tower as a glowing beach ball descends to signify the start of a New Year and kicks off a second round of fireworks. Live music sets a festive tone all night long! [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)

**YEARLY EVENTS**

**PANAMA CITY BEACH MARDI GRAS AND MUSIC FESTIVAL**

**February** The most family-friendly Mardi Gras celebration on the Gulf Coast, this two-day festival takes place in Pier Park and is one of the most fun Mardi Gras events anywhere. Enjoy a weekend filled with parades, float tours, street fair, kids zone and live music (and lots and lots of beads). [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)

**UNWINED**

**March** Guests can raise a glass while mixing and mingling with elite chefs, mixologists and top tastemakers at this hip signature spring event. UNwined features superb craft beer, spirits and wine from around the world, along with culinary creations by Northwest Florida's leading chefs, accompanied by outstanding musical talent (2017 featured Birmingham-based soul band St. Paul & the Broken Bones). [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com)

**PEPSI SANDJAM FEST**

**April** Get ready to join a few thousand of your closest friends on the sand as the Pepsi Sandjam Fest returns to MB Miller Pier. Talent for last year's star-studded, alternative rock event included Incubus, Sublime, the Gin Blossoms and Better Than Ezra. [SandJamFest.com](http://SandJamFest.com)

**SEABREEZE JAZZ FESTIVAL**

**April** Named a "Top 10 Jazz Festival in the USA" by JazzIZ Magazine and recently nominated as "Best Jazz Festival" at the Oasis Smooth Jazz Awards, the Seabreeze Jazz Festival combines top national smooth jazz artists with a full weekend of fun, sun, great beaches and good times — all on the west end of Panama City Beach. The event attracts thousands of fans from the U.S., Canada and Europe for the ultimate performance-packed weekend of jazz. [SeabreezeJazzFestival.com](http://SeabreezeJazzFestival.com)

**JEEP BEACH JAM**

**May** Jeep enthusiasts from throughout the United States travel to Frank Brown Park for this five-day event dedicated to all things Jeep. Industry-leading companies will be present with information, seminars and merchandise. This family-friendly event includes obstacle courses, bonfires, jeep parade, bounce houses, live music and more. [JeepBeachJam.com](http://JeepBeachJam.com)

**REAL.FUN.FOURTH. EVENTS**

**July** No Independence Day is complete without sparkling, vibrant fireworks displays. This week-long celebration boasts activities around Panama City Beach, capped off with a fireworks show at the city & county piers.



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If you are looking for the best gear for your favorite outdoor concert or to spend an afternoon on the sand — we have you covered. Stay cool and look sharp in one of **MOJO SPORTSWEAR'S COASTAL LINEN** long sleeve button up shirts. Native to Northwest Florida, Mojo Sportswear serves as an industry innovator in lifestyle clothing, providing apparel for your next Real. FUN. Adventure! [GetYourMojoon.com](http://GetYourMojoon.com)



The concerts aren't going to be the only things rocking this fall! Stay comfortable and lean back in the **GCI OUTDOOR FREESTYLE ROCKER CHAIR** this season. This portable, lightweight design will be great for traveling from the sand to Frank Brown Park. *Dick's Sporting Goods, 15700 Panama City Beach Parkway, #400, Panama City Beach, (850) 238-3322*





**ALL DRESSED UP BOUTIQUE AND GIFTS**, located in the heart of Pier Park, provides some of our area's trendiest and affordable clothing, shoes and jewelry. Nothing says "southern beach fashion" like a lightweight, off the shoulder romper. This &Merci romper can be used as a cover up after spending an afternoon on the beach, or your go-to outfit for a night out on the town. Another great option for the fall nights on the sand is a Kori America Front Tie Top, paired with white YMI Ankle cut jeans. Top it off with a pair of cute and affordable Blowfish MALIBU sandals to complete the look. **15600 Starfish Street, #110 Panama City Beach, (850) 708-3191**

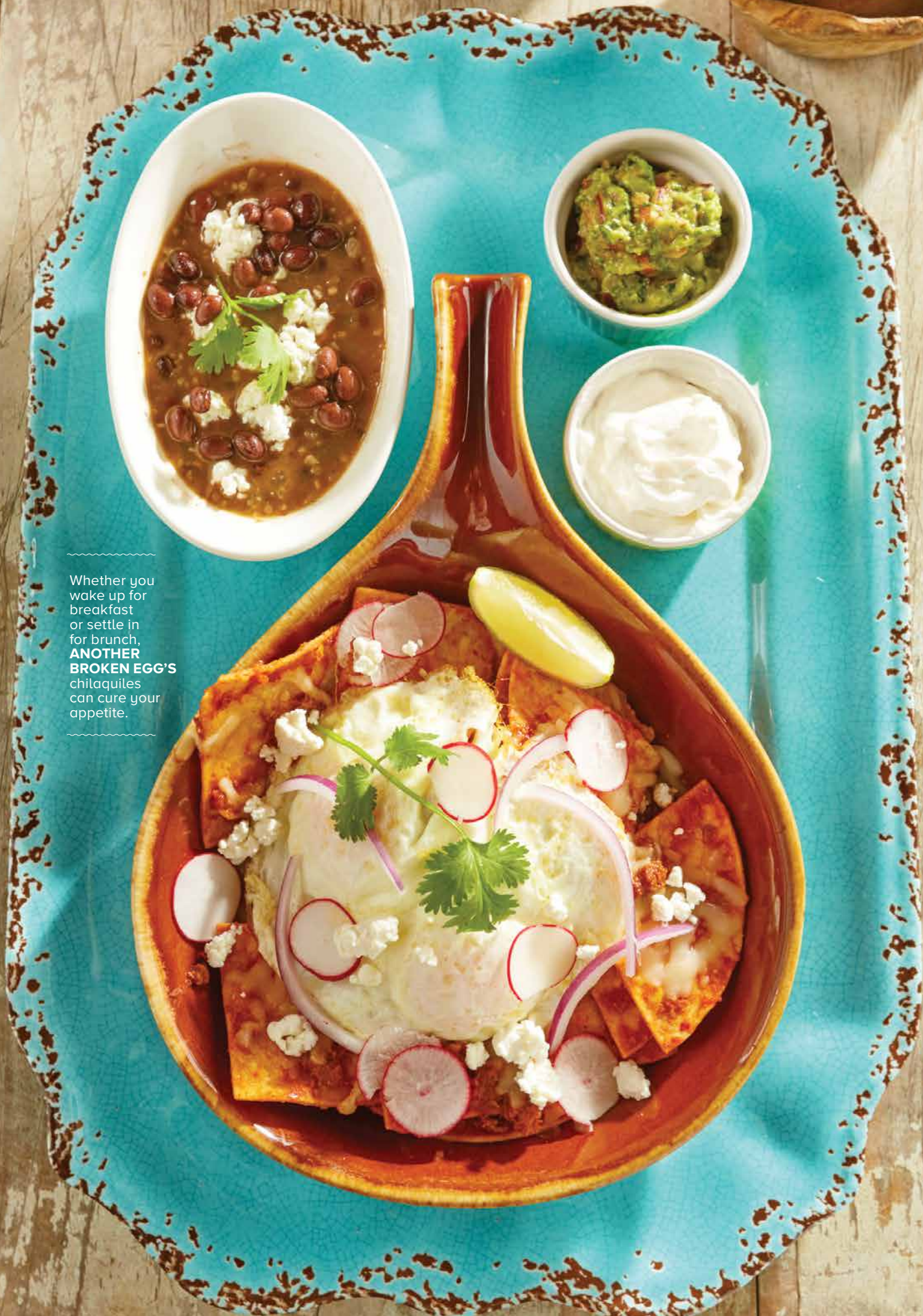


Ready to crank out some beach tunes? Look no further than the **KICKER BULLFROG BF200**. This waterproof, Bluetooth speaker can connect to your phone up to 100 feet and is perfect for listening to the Real.FUN.Beach. Pandora station while catching some rays. **Kicker.com**





~~~~~  
Whether you
wake up for
breakfast
or settle in
for brunch,
**ANOTHER
BROKEN EGG'S**
chilaquiles
can cure your
appetite.
~~~~~





# MORNING GLORIOUS

PCB's best places to do breakfast and brunch will leave you sunny-side up

**BY LIESEL SCHMIDT**

It's considered the most important meal of the day, but maybe choosing where to take that first bite of breakfast or brunch is the most important decision of the day. With so many great eateries to wake up your morning, Panama City Beach may make picking your place just a little bit harder. ... So set your alarms and get ready to dig in!

## ANOTHER BROKEN EGG CAFÉ

Though it's part of a mostly-Southeastern chain, Another Broken Egg Café isn't just another eatery offering early morning meals. Born in the converted barn of a Louisiana chef, the ABE reputation now spans coast to coast for its flavorful menu of homestyle cooking, and that homegrown touch is working the skillet every morning right here on Panama City Beach. Choose from guest favorites such as the sweet cinnamon roll French toast or the perennially popular Floridian omelet filled with cream cheese and topped with fresh crabmeat and melted Monterey Jack. If waffles make you waffle, their fluffy Belgians can be ordered almost any way imaginable, from Fosters-style loaded with caramelized bananas and drizzled with rich bananas Foster sauce, whipped cream and chopped pecans to chicken and waffles served with a honey chipotle syrup.



Paired up with a mimosa, a bloody mary, or one of their seriously spiked lattes, Another Broken Egg has the perfect way to get your day crackin'. **11535 Hutchinson Boulevard, Panama City Beach.** For more information, call (850) 249-2007 or visit [AnotherBrokenEgg.com](http://AnotherBrokenEgg.com).

## DAT CAJUN PLACE

The Jazz Brunch at Dat Cajun Place lives up to its name, welcoming guests to start their Sunday morning on the perfect note with lively music played by a local jazz band. Serving Cajun and New Orleans-style favorites cooked up by Louisiana natives dedicated to bringing

the bayou to the beach, dis is definitely dat place you'll add to your favorites. Scrambled eggs and pork sausage with fried red-skinned potatoes, sautéed onions and tomatoes topped off with melted cheese, the Scrambled Hash is a parade of flavor worthy of Bourbon Street. Love yourself some mudbugs? Dat Benedict adds a tender, golden fried crawfish cake to a classic breakfast, smothering it with spicy crawfish étouffée to bring on the heat. What brunch would be complete without a bloody mary? Mixing up the morning with their award-winning libation, Dat Cajun's got everything you need to jazz

up your day. *8501 Thomas Drive, (850) 588-5314, DatCajunPlace.com.*

**LIZA'S KITCHEN, CAFÉ & CATERING**

Serving up home-cooked meals with traditional Southern fare, Liza's Kitchen, Café & Catering is the perfect wake-up call, making everything daily from scratch, from their fresh-baked focaccia bread to their sandwich dressings. A go-to spot for breakfast and brunch dishes that will really hit your spot, Liza's has a reputation for cooking up creativity on a plate, with bestsellers like their hippie hash. An artful jumble of roasted red peppers, seasoned potatoes, diced seasoned chicken, chopped onions, salty bacon bits and shredded cheese baked to gooey perfection and topped with two poached eggs slathered with fresh hollandaise and chopped scallions, one bite of The Hippie Hash will knock your slippers off. Whether you make it in for the wee hours or shuffle in after hitting the snooze button, Liza's has the perfect way to clear the sleep from your eyes. *7328 Thomas Drive, Suite L, (850) 233-9000, LoveLizas.com.*



**SCHOONERS**

Serving up a side of waterfront views with their famous bagels and lox, Schooners is the perfect place to indulge in a beachside brunch as you wipe the sand out of your eyes and trade it out for some sand under your feet. Creating every dish from scratch, these chefs get the weekend off to a great start with creative signature dishes that put a twist on some old favorites. Stacking up deep fried sourdough bread with sliced ham, havarti cheese and the sweet and tangy combination of raspberry preserves and Dijon mustard, the Monte Cristo will definitely wake your taste buds right on up. For some rich and creamy Southern flavor with a punch of spice, the shrimp and grits tops off smoked Gouda and tasso grits with plump grilled shrimp and ladles on a luscious mushroom cream sauce. From first bite to last, Schooners will put the wind in your sails. *5121 Gulf Drive, (850) 235-3555, Schooners.com.*







### **SISTERS OF THE SEA & THE DIVE BAR**

If chowing down on brunch helps you dive into your day, Sisters of the Sea is sure to get you hooked, serving up brunch-time classics with twists so bizarre you'll swear you're seeing pirates and mermaids. Not that you'd be imagining things — their sparkling pool is populated by these sirens of the sea, and pirates do, indeed, roam the grounds. So while you enjoy the fun atmosphere of this unique eatery overlooking the lagoon, take a plunge into dishes like the not-to-be-missed Mason-Dixon eggs Benedict topped with tender, juicy brisket or the Jezebel Benedict, a Southern-style fried green tomato topped with hollandaise sauce and moist lump crabmeat. Not to be forgotten, their build-your-own bloody mary bar is a PCB favorite, allowing you the creativity to fully customize this concoction of spicy sinfulness. With legendary flavors to go with their legendary sites, Sisters of the Sea is one place that'll definitely have you on the line. **3901 Thomas Drive, (850) 233-0334, [SistersofTheSea.net](http://SistersofTheSea.net).**



SISTERS OF THE SEA

### **SUNNYSIDE GRILL**

Open since 1986 and one of the only original mom-and-pop restaurants left on Panama City Beach, the little pink house known as Sunnyside Grill is serving up eye-opening flavor in each of its sunny dishes, creating every item on the menu from scratch to achieve home-cooked goodness that'll chase away the morning gloom. Serving up daily breakfast dishes that segue into the lunchtime hours, Sunnyside's real claims to fame are bestsellers like their rib omelets, Western omelets, scratch made biscuits and gravy, eggs Benedict, and their gut-busting pancakes. Heralded as one of the top destinations to dine in the state, Sunnyside Grill is cracking the shell on the local restaurant scene to serve up home cooking so delicious it'll tempt you away from your snooze button. **21828 Front Beach Road, (850) 233-0729. ●**





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# COME TOGETHER

Whether it's business or personal, reunions shine in PCB **BY LIESEL SCHMIDT**

Time together is a precious commodity that often gets lost as our lives get busier, our families grow and our circumstances scatter us around the country or the globe. We lose touch with people who are important to us, seeing them only for major events as we try our best to squeeze in a phone call or send an e-mail to let them know they're on our minds. Sometimes those connections are frayed or even lost.

That is why reunions have become an important way for people to make sure that everyone has taken the time to actually spend time together — whether it's a group of girlfriends reuniting for a girls-only weekend or a full-blown, multigenerational gathering of family who want to strengthen that familial bond.

Whatever the case, Panama City Beach is an ideal destination for reunions of all kinds and sizes, and the team of experts at Visit Panama City Beach can offer their knowledge and support through the entire planning process. Armed with their extensive network of area

Groups can find everything they need to make a memorable get-together in **PANAMA CITY BEACH.**





~~~~~  
BRINGING LOVED
ones together at the
beach reinforces the
timeless nature of
family and the coast.
~~~~~



accommodations, attractions and venues, the Convention and Visitors Bureau can provide guidance in creating a trip itinerary. That includes suggestions on the best booking times, assistance in finding group accommodations and venues, coordination for site tours and even providing visiting groups with welcome packages, door prizes and other fun tools to make reunions the best they can be.

“We consider Visit Panama City Beach a full service CVB,” says Ann Gager, Vice President of Sales for Visit Panama City

Beach. “We can help the groups from start to finish, and we have the capability and resources to show them the area.”

And what an area it is. “People generally love to come to Panama City Beach for their reunion, because we’ve got beautiful beaches, as well as a wide variety of options for activities — all in a city where people are extremely welcoming and friendly,” Gager added.

No matter the size, groups that book reunions in Panama City Beach can take advantage of all the region has to offer —

spending time at the beach, eating at its many amazing restaurants, shopping at its unique stores or participating in activities available on the property accommodating the group. Depending on the time of year, Panama City Beach’s community events also are a popular draw.

There are a number of things to consider when planning a reunion, not the least of which is the timeframe. According to the CVB, the months of June through August see the biggest influx of tourists and the highest hotel rates, so



JESSICA PEOPLES PHOTOGRAPHY

**“We’ve been having our Christmas party and reunion at Panama City Beach for the past 15 (years) because of the wonderful hospitality we receive from Mrs. Hilton at The Holiday Inn and the warm welcome we receive from the CVB.”**

**JOHN SCHMITZ**

they recommend that reunions be planned during the offseason. Even during those peak summer times, however, they’ll work closely with groups to find them the best ways to enjoy their reunion time and accommodate their needs in as many ways as possible.

To date, the highest head count for a reunion at Panama City Beach has been a family totaling 300, but 75-100 people is the average. Family reunions are the most frequently booked, with high school reunions and military reunions taking the next slots.

Of all the groups who come to Panama City Beach to reunite, however, there are several who have become favorites to the CVB. “Our favorite groups to work with are our military men and women because they have such great stories. Even though they come from all different backgrounds, they have the common thread of history to band them together. We want to support them as much as they support us,” says Gager.

Those military groups certainly appreciate that support.

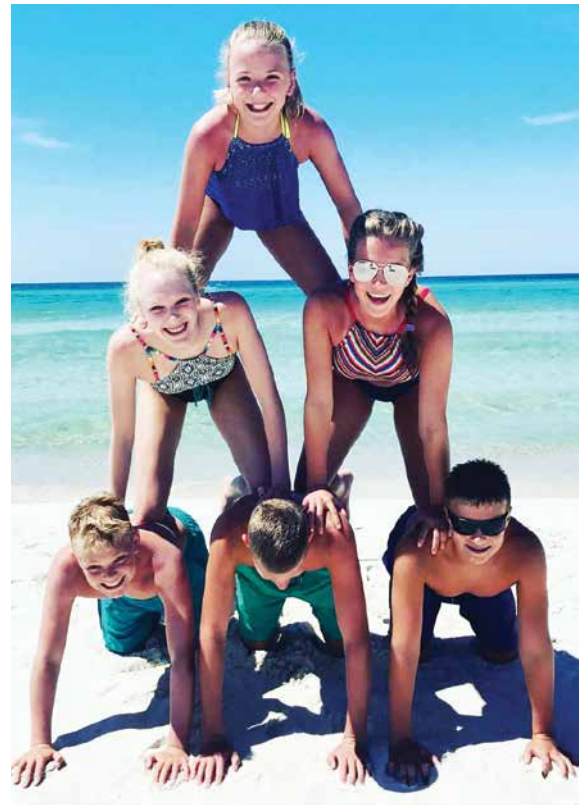
“We’ve been having our Christmas party and reunion at

Panama City Beach for the past 15 (years) because of the wonderful hospitality we receive from Mrs. Hilton at The Holiday Inn and the warm welcome we receive from the CVB,” says John Schmitz, a retired Navy submariner. Schmitz gathers each year with nearly 150 fellow retired World War II submariners and their widows from around the southeast to celebrate a Christmas-time bash on the beach.

“They can accommodate everyone so that we’re not scattered all over the place,” Schmitz says, “and they provide us with a wonderful welcome package. That’s not something you’ll get everywhere.”

Several other annual Naval reunion groups have made the city their preferred host as a result of their experience during the submariners’ Christmas reunion and banquet, and the trend continues to grow.

For a quiet weekend or a major bash filled with fun in the sun, Panama City Beach is the place to come together and spend time reconnecting and reuniting with the people you treasure in your life. ●



**REUNIONS** in Panama City Beach can range from small groups to over 300, and the city has the facilities to accommodate groups of any size.





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# MAKING A HEALTHY VACATION

Here are a few ways to stay active as you hit the beach

BY ROB RUSHIN

**Y**ou made it to your vacation! The coming days or weeks will be nothing but surf and sunshine with good food and drinks. But before you take off on a spree of beach-related revelry, perhaps some fried seafood and frosty beverages, here are some strategies to help keep you “fit and functional” while you kick back with some “rest and relaxation.”

Panama City Beach offers an abundance of activities to fill any vacation itinerary — but it also provides many opportunities to maintain your healthy lifestyle as you take a break from work and your life. Aside from the simplest pleasure of long walks along gorgeous sugar-white beaches, there’s a few ways to keep you feeling physically inspired.







●

**SKIP THE GYM**

Panama City Beach has some fun and sunny options to keep you fit while on your beach vacation.





**BICYCLING**

What’s the best thing about biking around Panama City Beach? The land is almost perfectly flat, so anybody can enjoy biking here.

Feeling a bit strung out after a few days of commuting back and forth between the beach? Biking around the Panama City Beach is a great way to explore and see things that just fly by in a blur when you are in a car. Add a little pedal power to your beach excursion and burn a few calories while you tick off some of the most popular sites along Panama City Beach.

There are too many rental outlets to count, but a quick visit to [VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com) will help you find places such as Barley’s Bike Rentals and Bike the Beach PCB, where they can take care of finding the best ride for you or your family. They will set you up with helmets, locks,

**ON TURF OR ON THE SURF**, Panama City Beach has a number of ways to burn off those vacation pounds.

sunscreen and other essentials. You can rent your gear for as long as you want — from a couple hours to several weeks.

Pro tip: Biking is also a great way to tire out the kids. Just saying.

**KAYAKS, CANOES AND BOARDS (PLUS YOGA)**

Done with land excursions and want to get out on the water? Renting a kayak or canoe in PCB is as easy as renting a bike. Spend some time alone with nature and get a look at the parts of Panama City Beach that most rarely see when you take off on your favorite self-powered water craft.

Stretch your arms as you take a kayak or canoe on the emerald gulf waters



or sit back for a trip through some of the off-the-beaten-path waterways, lagoons and lakes. There’s also stand up paddleboarding (or SUP), which has surged in popularity and is a unique way to explore local waters.

Miss your weekly yoga routine? Panama City Beach also has paddleboard yoga, yoga on the beach and aerial yoga to help you find your center while on a whirlwind vacation.

[VisitPanamaCityBeach.com](http://VisitPanamaCityBeach.com) can point you toward local trainers and



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## FANTASTIC FALL RATES





**STAND UP PADDLEBOARDING** is one of the hottest trends around, but a game of beach volleyball never goes out of style.

vendors that will help set you up, help you select the right equipment and give you tips on how to use the gear properly. With watercraft, most vendors are happy to deliver and pick them up — and some even offer shuttle services so you can make your paddle journey one-way.

Call ahead or just stop in. Like all the businesses along the coast, the atmosphere is friendly and helpful.

### **VOLLEYBALL**

If you need something more competitive than beach yoga, beach volleyball has grown in popularity for both participants and spectators. Like most beach destinations, Panama City Beach is loaded with places to show your best Olympic form.

Work off that big lunch with an afternoon at the net with friends or a pick-up game with the family. On the beach, places such as Schooners, Sharky's and Hook'd Pier Bar offer pickup games where you can work up a thirst or just watch the action.

Many of the resorts in the area provide multiple courts for guests to unwind

with a little friendly sportsmanship. For extended stay guests, there are several league options to choose from.

### **FITNESS CLUBS AND CLASSES**

Getting away from the same old routine is part of the charm of a vacation. But you might want to maintain your regular fitness practice at one of the area's 20-plus fitness centers, including some national chains where your home membership might apply. Ask your gym to see if there is a partner facility here you can use.

You will also find specialized fitness regimens, like martial arts academies offering everything from karate and aikido to Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Class levels range from beginner to black belt, so check ahead to find the right class for you and your family.

For those leaning toward a more sedate exertion, there are dozens of nearby options for every kind of yoga imaginable. Call ahead to find the place that suits you best.

Now enjoy putting a healthy twist on your vacation.

You'll be glad you did. ●







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# VIEWS WORTH SAVORING

As cooler weather arrives, here are a few spots to enjoy the outdoors as you dine

STORY BY LIESEL SCHMIDT



When you're mere steps away from the freshest, most celebrated seafood in the country, the thought of boxing yourself into a restaurant dining room, walled off from the fresh air, sunshine and sounds of the shoreline can seem almost like sacrilege. But those view-obstructing walls don't have to be an issue if you play your cards right, and Panama City Beach has plenty of fantastic restaurants serving up beautiful vantage points and gorgeous views of the water you don't want to miss.



"We've got a view that's one-in-a-million," says Melissa Whitted, the operations manager at **Runaway Island**. That observation is well founded as Runaway offers unobstructed views of the sun sinking into a watercolor of sunset hues each afternoon from their deck bar, sunset deck and dining deck, as well as their flag room and ballyhoo bar on their upper level. Perfect for those days when you feel like relaxing in a casual atmosphere and long to hear some live music on the deck while you dine on fresh, local fare and sip some killer cocktails or wicked frozen drinks, Runaway is the perfect escape — especially as the weather gets cooler and that sea breeze blows in.

*14521 Front Beach Road,  
Panama City Beach. For  
more information, call  
(850) 634-4884 or visit  
[RunawayIslandPCB.com](http://RunawayIslandPCB.com).*





An old-fashioned shack built on the beach back in the '70s, **Schooners** has a locale right along the surf, putting your toes steps away from a good wiggle in the sand and the tide right at eye level as you breathe in the salt air and feast on some of the area's best seafood. Enjoying this seaside shack's "sunset-perfect perspective," guests love to gather for the countdown before the sunset blast of the old Schooners cannon as the sun dips below the surface of the Gulf. From midday meals to late-night drinks, Schooners has the course charted for great waterfront dining, and their views will definitely put some wind in your sails.

5121 Gulf Drive, Panama City Beach.  
For more information, call (850) 235-3555 or visit [Schooners.com](http://Schooners.com).

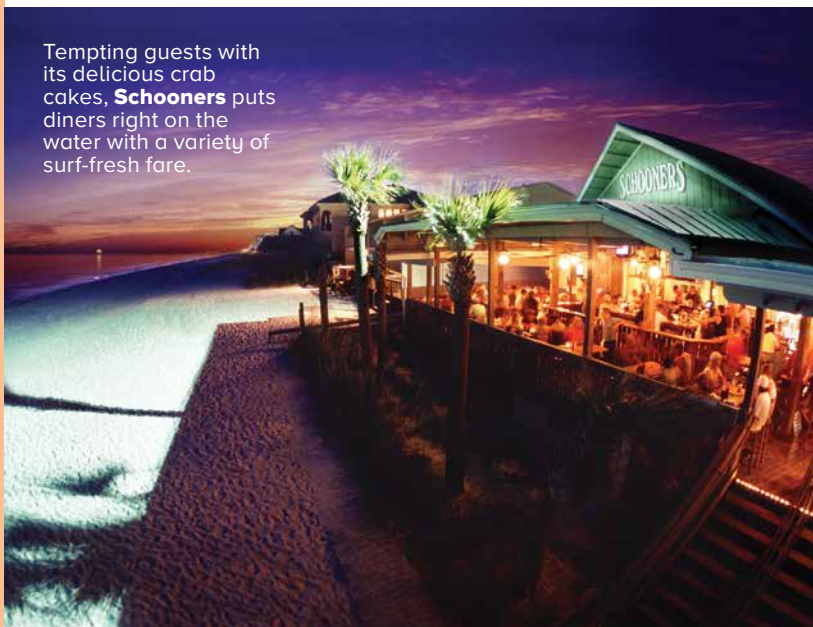
Located directly on the beautiful white sand beaches overlooking the Gulf of Mexico, **Harpoon Harry's** 16-foot windows serve up a big old platter of "wow" with sweeping 180-degree views of the Gulf of Mexico. Opening out onto an outdoor dining area raised high above the sand, the sunset experience is made even more complete with frozen drinks from the tiki bar or one of the restaurant's famous "monster harpoon" drinks. Salting the air with every breeze rolling in off the waves, the fantastic

view here will stir up your appetite, and Harpoon Harry's menu of burgers, steaks and seafood will spear your hunger right on through.

12627 Front Beach Road, Panama City Beach.  
For more information, call (850) 234-6060 or visit [HarpoonHarry.com](http://HarpoonHarry.com).

Offering multiple views of the Gulf of Mexico from its three dining areas, **Spinnaker** has deck-top dining and rail seats overlooking the waves as they roll in — not to mention a fun-filled bar experience at Spinnaker's dual-level portside bar and stage. Complete with an actual waterfall, the waterfall deck is the perfect open-air setting for dining on Spinnaker's plethora of local fish and seafood, coastal Southern fare and burgers. The deck also gives you the ideal vantage point to view the sunset on the beach with refreshing cocktails in hand and tasty food at your fingertips. Whether you

Tempting guests with its delicious crab cakes, **Schooners** puts diners right on the water with a variety of surf-fresh fare.



SCHOONERS



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Chasin' The Sun explores the diverse fisheries found in the turquoise waters off the coast of Panama City Beach. Hosts and professional fishing guides Capt. Justin Leake and Capt. Travis Holeman provide an in-depth look at the irresistible coastal lifestyle, highlighting the region's rich culture and revealing why Panama City Beach is a fishing and diving hot spot and family vacation destination.





come in during the season for a nightly encounter with a pirate or rock out to live music on Friday and Saturday nights, the breathtaking views at Spinnaker will get your boat cruising.

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 8795 Thomas Drive, Panama City Beach. For more information, call (850) 234-7892 or visit [SpinnakerBeachClub.com](http://SpinnakerBeachClub.com).

Serving a full menu of great seafood, sandwiches and cocktails from daybreak until the stars come out and play, you might have to leave the sands of the beach to come in and dine at **Barefoot on the Beach**, but their waterfront views will make you feel like you never left. One

of a trio of Barefoot restaurants known throughout the area for their fresh, casual fare and fantastic drinks, this beach-side eatery has options aplenty, offering a fun open-air dining experience with the beach just a hop, skip and a jump down the dunes. Whether you come in for an eye-opening breakfast or close out the day with a cocktail in hand and your toes tapping to live music, Barefoot on the Beach will keep the water within view but the hunger at bay. ●

.....  
 11073 Front Beach Road, Panama City Beach. For more information, call (850) 249-2442 or visit [BarefootRestaurants.com](http://BarefootRestaurants.com).



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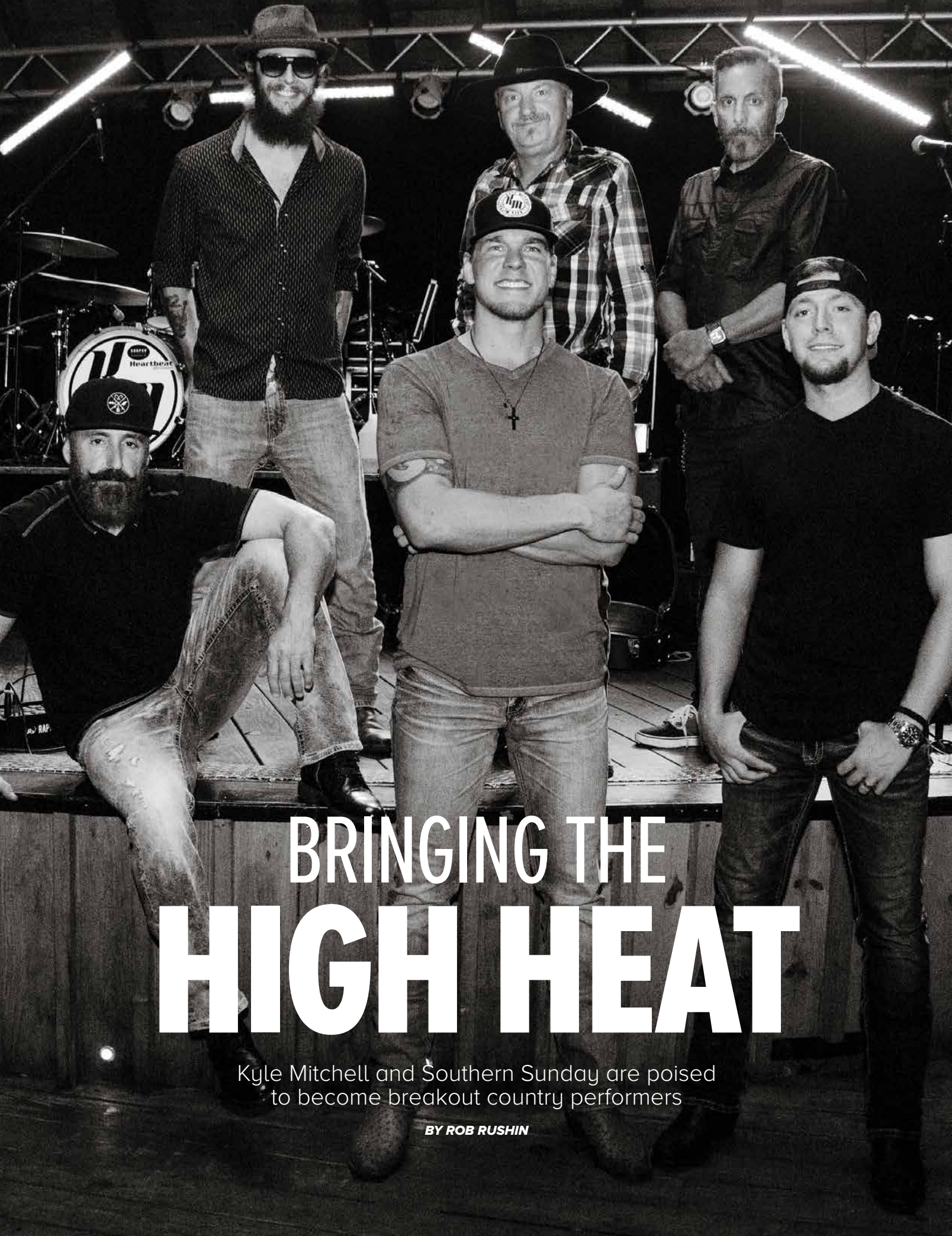
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# BRINGING THE HIGH HEAT

Kyle Mitchell and Southern Sunday are poised to become breakout country performers

BY ROB RUSHIN



On one of these gentle Panama City Beach nights, you might find yourself walking into the Spinnaker Beach Club or Diego's. And you might find yourself captivated by a singer, an imposing presence at 6-foot-5, with a voice that delivers the kind of depth and nuance that typifies the best of what industry types call "new country." And you might ask yourself: "How in the heck did Blake Shelton end up in Panama City Beach?" But look again. This is not the case of an icon falling to earth; big Blake's star shows no signs of dimming.

No, this is your lucky night to catch a young artist on the hot track to fame. Kyle Mitchell, born and raised in Panama City, brings the voice, the energy and the sheer charisma a singer needs to stand out in the wild world of the music industry. Along with

his band, Southern Sunday, Kyle serves up traditional country, Southern blues, honky tonk, sad ballads and the kinds of country anthem blockbusters that any self-respecting F-150 driver is going to sing at the top of his or her lungs.

It almost never happened. For most of his life, Kyle was one of the Gulf Coast's best baseball players, a hard-throwing pitcher drafted out of high school by the Minnesota Twins. But his dreams of making the majors ended when he blew out his shoulder.

"Man, that was hard," he says. "I'll always remember that coming down."

Turning his focus to singing, Kyle joined Alec Koutrous to form a duo in 2013. These days, Southern Sunday might appear in any combination — from a duo to a six-piece pop-country powerhouse. But no

matter where they play, Kyle and the team always seem to attract a full house of dedicated fans and folks wondering why in the heck they've never heard of these guys.

Kyle cites Keith Whitley, Chris Young, Randy Travis

~~~~~  
KYLE MITCHELL

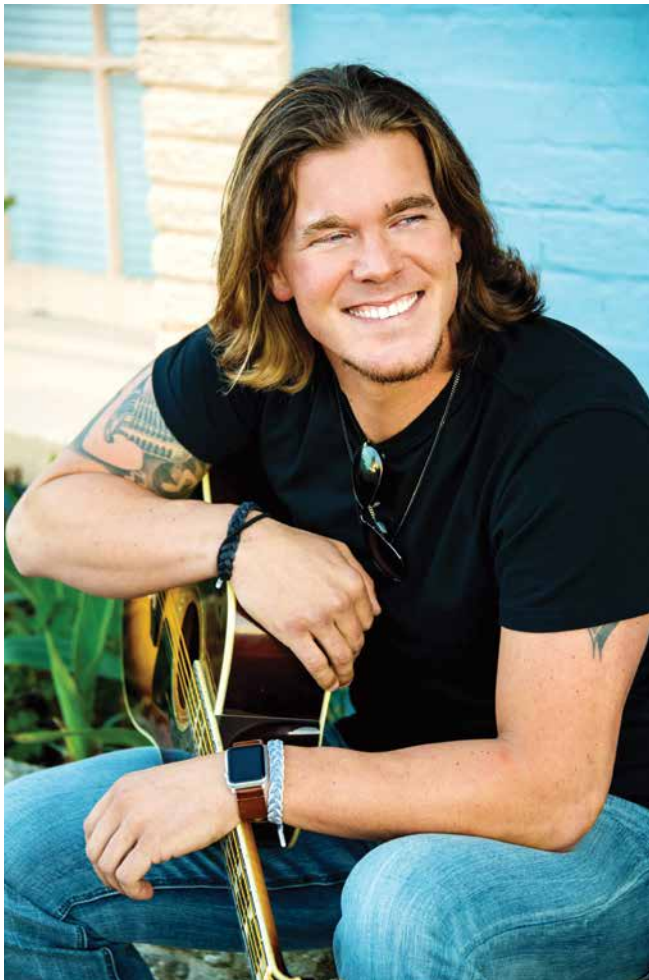
(bottom center) and Southern Sunday feature the talents of (top row, l-r) Tyler James Arnold, Bob Rhea, Scott Fryer, (bottom row, l-r) Chip Chester and Alec Koutrous.

~~~~~  
and Garth Brooks as influences, and you can certainly hear their echoes. We also recognize traces of Jason Aldean, Luke Bryan and Dustin Lynch.

But never mind the influences: What you get when you listen to Southern Sunday is Kyle Mitchell, pure and simple. After years on club stages, singing old hits and originals thousands of times, Mitchell has arrived at a voice of his own. It is the sound of classic country with a power pop edge.

"I've taken certain tendencies from those people and developed my own sound. I used to try to mimic people, but within the last year, I found my own voice," Mitchell says. "Finally, I don't really question myself. I've got the confidence, and I know what I'm doing and who I am."

From their home base in Bay County, Southern Sunday has spent the past five



JACQUELINE WARD IMAGES

years gigging up and down the Gulf Coast. It was the typical forced march of the dedicated artist logging stage time and paying dues for not much pay, all the while working a series of construction jobs to keep food on the table. Earlier this year, Kyle and Alec took the leap and dropped the day gigs and are putting all their time and effort into cracking the big time.

They are well positioned for the next step. With management support in place from Magnolia Artists, Kyle traveled to Nashville to record a few tracks with several of the cats from Aldean's band. This was his first exposure to the big time, so we wanted to know how he felt that day.

"At first I was wondering, 'Am I ready for this?' I really questioned myself, but you just jump in and go. And now

I know: I am ready. My confidence is strong and my voice sounds better all the time," he says.

Released in May, the single "One in Georgia" showcases Mitchell's songwriting skills and considerable vocal chops. Pro tip: Bet on "One in Georgia" becoming one of those songs that you start to hear everywhere.

It is just another one of those crazy things that happens on vacation on the Emerald Coast — you catch a glimpse of the future, even though you might not realize it. But catch him soon. With a hot single and the same management that launched Aldean and Florida Georgia Line to stardom, he won't be playing the beach clubs much longer.

Trust us on this: Some day you will tell your friends how you saw Kyle Mitchell down at Panama City Beach, way back before he was KYLE MITCHELL, y'all. Don't miss it. ●



**"I used to try to mimic people, but within the last year, I found my own voice. Finally, I don't really question myself." KYLE MITCHELL**



KYLE MITCHELL cites Randy Travis and Garth Brooks, among others, as his musical influences.



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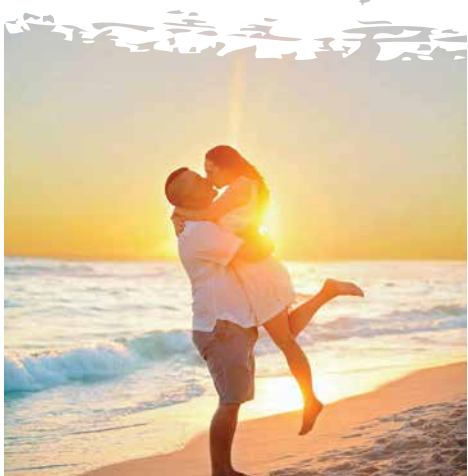
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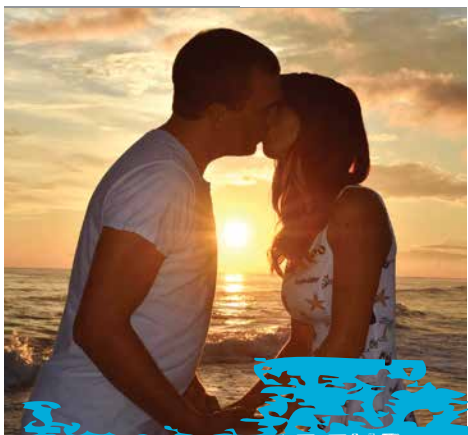
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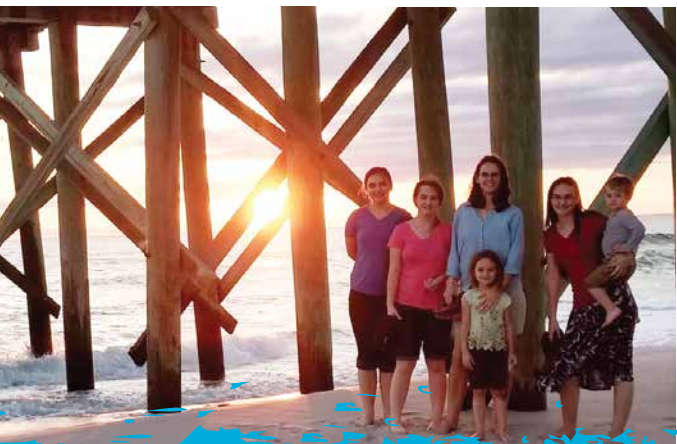
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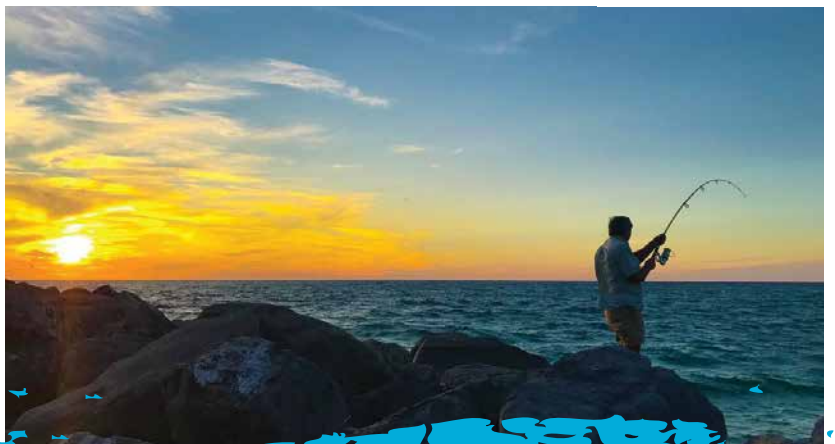
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Sign up to receive alerts for flag changes by texting **FLAG** to **313131**.



**GREEN – LOW HAZARD**  
Calm conditions, exercise caution



**YELLOW – MEDIUM HAZARD**  
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**PANAMA CITY BEACH** is known for having the “World’s Most Beautiful Beaches,” and we would like to keep it that way for the enjoyment of locals and tourists alike! For this reason, the “Leave No Trace” ordinance was adopted in 2012. Anything you bring to the beach should also leave the beach with you. Anything left on the beach overnight could be cleared off the beach by the time you return in the morning. Our goal is to protect our pristine beaches and the natural wildlife, such as nesting sea turtles, by leaving no trace of personal items on the beaches overnight. Please do your part in maintaining our beautiful beaches!

The “Leave No Trace” ordinance states that all personal items will be removed and disposed of if

left on the beach between the hours of 7 p.m. and 7 a.m. These items include, but are not limited to, tents, chairs, toys, umbrellas and coolers. On public beaches or with the upland landowner’s permission, beachgoers may store personal belongings overnight at the toe of the dune. The toe of the dune is the area of the beach immediately seaward of the dune and beach vegetation. To be specific, it is the area of the beach that is furthest from the water that is not in a sand dune or beach access point.

Those who store their personal items overnight do so at their own risk. The county, the city, the Tourist Development Council and the beach maintenance contractor do not assume any liability for any items left on the beach.







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