VISITOR GUIDE









WELCOME TO Panama City



WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE

round here, we like to say life is better bayside—and once you spend a little time in Panama City, you'll see why. Whether you're wandering the shops in Historic St. Andrews, paddling out on St. Andrews Bay, or grabbing oysters downtown before sunset, you'll feel at home the moment you arrive.

This is the kind of place where stories are shared over dockside dinners, where pop-up art shows transform some of our most loved spaces, and where live music fills the air every night of the week. We're laid-back by nature, proud of our local flavor, and always happy to point you toward something worth checking out—a local hangout, a fresh plate of oysters, a scenic paddle, or your new favorite spot to watch the sunset.

This guide is packed with the kind of stuff locals love—places to eat, drink, explore, and get a real taste of what makes Panama City special. Flip through, find something new, and enjoy every moment.

See you around the bay,

Jennifer Vigil

President & CEO Destination Panama City

DESTINATION PANAMA CITY VISITORS CENTER



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OVERVIEW

GETTING HERE IS A BREEZE

Panama City is easy to reach via land, air, or sea!









BY CAR

Located in the heart of the Florida

Panhandle, Panama City is easily

accessible via U.S. Highway 98 and

just a short drive from I-10. Road-

tripping from a neighboring state

well-connected highways and scenic

routes make getting here part of the

or cruising through Florida, the

adventure.

BY AIR

Northwest Florida Beaches

International Airport (ECP) is

an easy 30 minute drive away,

providing numerous non-stop

flights, including major hubs like

Atlanta, Dallas, Nashville, and more.

BY WATER

Arriving by boat? Panama City's eight marinas embrace seafarers, offering everything from overnight dockage to comprehensive service facilities.



The second you roll into town, you'll feel it—that laid-back, bayside energy that makes Panama City easy to love. Spend your days on the water, kicking back with good food, or mixing in a little bit of everything. This is the kind of place that lets you take it all at your own pace.





PLANNING A GULF BEACH DAY? STAY SAFE WHILE YOU SOAK UP THE SUN

Many visitors take a day trip to nearby Panama City Beach to enjoy the sand and surf. If you're heading that way, make sure to check beach conditions before you go—Gulf waters can change quickly, and staying informed helps keep your day safe. While the protected waters of St. Andrews Bay do not use a flag warning system, it is always smart to stay aware of your surroundings and use caution when you're out on the water.



THE LAY OF THE LAND: MAPS & MUST-KNOWS

Surrounded by the sparkling waters of St. Andrews Bay and gateways to the Gulf, Panama City is a true coastal retreat. Within its four distinct districts, you'll find a mix of historic charm, artsy enclaves, and a welcoming waterfront vibe.

Downtown Panama City – Anchored by the Panama City Marina, Downtown Panama City is the vibrant heart of the city. It buzzes with local shops, inviting restaurants, and a lively Saturday market that brings the community together every week.

Historic St. Andrews – St. Andrews is a bayside neighborhood with a salty soul, where fishing boats bib in the marina, locals trade tall tales over oysters, and every corner tells a story. Walkable and wonderfully offbeat, it's home to quirky shops, fresh seafood joints, and parks perfect for sunset strolls. Steeped in maritime history, St. Andrews is the epitome of coastal charm.

Millville – Millville is one of Panama City's oldest neighborhoods, built on grit, shipbuilding, and the hard working hands of generations who kept the kept the paper mill running. It's a place where blue-collar pride runs deep, stories are shared over cold beer and oysters at the city's oldest oyster bar, and world-class vessels are still crafted at Eastern Shipbuilding. With new additions like the Snug Harbor Boat Launch, Millville Waterfront Park, and Watson Landings Marina, this historic neighborhood is evolving with purpose and pride.

Glenwood – Glenwood is a proud neighborhood with a powerful legacy that's built on resilience, heritage, and deep community roots. As a historic center of African–American life in Panama City, it honors its past through festivals, delectable soulful food, and community. Glenwood is more than a neighborhood; it's a living celebration of culture and connection.

KNOW THE



GREEN LOW HAZARD Calm conditions, exercise caution

YELLOW MEDIUM HAZARD Moderate surf and/or currents

Moderate surf and/or currents

RED



RED OVER RED Water closed to public

HIGH HAZARD



PURPLE Dangerous marine life

Sign up to receive alerts for flag changes by texting **PCBFLAGS** to **888777**

NEED-TO-KNOW TIPS FOR A SMOOTH TRIP

Pack for Sunshine – It's Florida, after all! Light, breathable clothing, sunscreen, and sunglasses are must-haves year-round.

Bring Your Appetite – Fresh seafood is a way of life here—get ready for local shrimp, oysters, and Gulf fish that are too good to pass up.

Pet-Friendly Paradise – Many parks, restaurants, and events welcome fourlegged companions. Explore dog-friendly patios and beaches while you're here.

Stay a Little Longer – With so much to see and do, a weekend barely scratches the surface. Plan for a few extra days to soak in all the fun.





HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS





HISTORIC ST. ANDREWS

Historic St. Andrews, things move a little slower—and that's exactly the way folks like it. Conversations stretch long over coffee, live music drifts from the patios, and there's always a breeze rolling off the bay. The waterfront charm has deep roots here, with generations of stories anchored to the docks, the porches, and the people who've helped shape this place into something special.

SALTWATER ROOTS & LIVING HISTORY

St. Andrews has always been tied to the water. Once a working waterfront, fishing village, and saltwork hub during the Civil War, St. Andrews is still a place where daily life is shaped by maritime tradition. Oaks by the Bay Park sits right at the edge of it all, home to a towering centuries-old oak and a historic salt kettle once used to supply salt during the Civil War. Tucked between the shops and the shorelines, it's these kinds of details that make St. Andrews feel like a place where the past and present intertwine.



WATERFRONT VIEWS There's a laid-back rhythm to eating in St. Andrews. Trays of ice-cold oysters, fresh Gulf seafood, and easygoing company by the bay are all part of the experience. The decks stretch wide, the views are hard to beat, and the kind of sunset that makes you stay for one more round are always close at hand. It's easy to see why locals keep coming back and visitors start planning their return before the check even

hits the table.







OYSTERS, BREWS, AND

SEE YOU IN ST. ANDREWS

Historic St. Andrews has soul. You can see it in the colorful murals scattered around town, hear it in the laughter from a dockside patio, and feel it during Market Day on Saturdays, where you can shop for everything from fresh produce to handmade crafts. It's the kind of place where everyone feels like a local. You come for the view, but you stay because it feels like home. We'll #SeeYouInStAndrews.

DOWNTOWN PANAMA CITY

owntown Panama City is where creativity meets coastal living, with a dash of southern charm. It's walkable, full of history, good food, and personality. Downtown always has something going on—from music and film festivals to mural walks and sidewalk chats over coffee. In Downtown Panama City, everything is easygoing, a little offbeat, and all heart.

BAYSIDE STROLLS & COASTAL STROLLS

The stretch between Downtown and Historic St. Andrews is one of the prettiest drives in town, hugging the bay along West Beach Drive. Locals head here to catch the sunset, launch a paddleboard, or sit on the swings at Asbell Park. Downtown itself is built for wandering, with historic streets, shady spots to sit, and a short stroll to the water no matter where you start.

ART ON EVERY CORNER

Downtown wears its creativity loud and proud. At the heart of it all is the Panama City Center for the Arts, located inside a historic building and packed with rotating exhibits and community events. The mural trail wraps the neighborhood in color, while galleries, studios, and pop-up festivals keep things fresh. Even a quick stroll might lead to a glassblowing demo, a street musician, or an impromptu art market in the park.

DOCKSIDE BITES & PATIO NIGHTS

Downtown days are best spent lingering—over fresh seafood, bay breezes, and good company. Settle in on a patio with friends, grab a rooftop seat for golden hour, or enjoy a quiet table by the water as the day's catch comes in fresh off the boat. Creative cocktails, coastal flavors, and a walkable social district make it easy to spend an afternoon that turns into evening, without ever checking the time. The streets stay lively with laughter and live music all day long, wrapped in the easygoing charm of a city that knows how to savor every moment.

MEET ME DOWNTOWN

Downtown still wears its history in its architecture and streets – but there is new energy here. Boutique shops, art spaces, and gathering places are bringing fresh life to old buildings, and every year seems to add something new. It's all about character, community, and discovering something new every time you #MeetMeDowntown.











MILLVILLE

Nituated along Watson Bayou, Millville has always been shaped by the water. Once a mill town, this area grew around sawmills, shipyards, and the people who powered them. The rhythm is slow and easy here, and the pride and character still run deep.

Today, the waterfront is still the main draw. Millville Waterfront Park offers colorful porch-style swings lining the shoreline, perfect for watching the boats drift by. A pair of marinas keep the boating crowd coming and going, and the brand-new Snug Harbor Boat Launch makes it easier than ever to get out on the water. Add in a few laid-back seafood spots-where the only thing fancy is the view—and you've got a quiet stretch of town that's all about easy coastal living.

Locals know where to go when they're craving oysters—and Gene's has been serving them up for generations. Slide onto a stool, order a tray, and soak in the salty air with a side of Old Florida charm. Millville moves at its own pace, with cozy spots to eat, quiet places to cast off, and a view that always makes staying a little longer feel like the right call.



WALK THROUGH **HISTORY**

Download the free **Otocast app** and search for the **Glenwood Historical Marker Trail** to enjoy a self–guided audio tour and hear the stories that helped shape one of Panama City's most historic neighborhoods.



DOWNLOAD OTOCAST ON **iPHONE**



DOWNLOAD OTOCAST ON ANDROID



or over a century, Glenwood has been the heart and soul of Panama City's African American community. During segregation, it thrived as a selfsustaining district. It was home to Black-owned businesses, churches, and gathering spaces that brought neighbors together and built a strong sense of community. From bustling barbershops to legendary juke joints, it was a place of connection and strength.

GLENWOOD

That spirit lives on today. The Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center remains a gathering place for sports and cultural events, while historic churches continue as pillars of faith. Soul food restaurants serve up comfort and tradition, and the Glenwood Market fills the streets with local vendors, fresh produce, and community connection every Saturday morning.







Value

GEN

Oys

SU





STAY AWHILE

Panama City, where you stay is part of the 🚺 adventure. Sleep steps from the marina, wake up to bay views, or check into a spot with as much personality as the streets outside. From boutique hotels to sailboats you can sleep on, there's a stay to match every kind of trip.



WATERFRONT VIEWS

The waterfront options here are full of charm with rooftop cocktails to gentle waves right outside your window. Hotel Indigo overlooks St. Andrews Bay with stylish rooms, a popular rooftop bar, and easy access to Downtown's shops, galleries, and dining. For something a little different, spend the night on a docked sailboat at one of the city's marinas—proof that in Panama City, even your stay can be part of the story.

STAY YOUR STYLE

Every stay has its own personality, especially in Panama City. Choose from modern Airbnbs with private pools overlooking the bay, eclectic artist-owned rentals in Historic St. Andrews, or cozy lofts tucked above Downtown shops and cafes. Want something quiet and full of character? There's a cottage for that. Prefer a bold design with waterfront views? You'll find it. From laid-back to luxurious, every option adds something special to your stay.



COMFORT & CONVENIENCE

Traveling with a group? Sticking to a schedule? Prefer all the extras in one place? Panama City's trusted hotel brands like Holiday Inn, La Quinta, Comfort Inn, and others offer easy access to shopping centers, restaurants, hospitals, and major roadways—plus all the amenities that make travel smooth. simple, and stress-free.

10 LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT PANAMA CITY

STORIES, SECRETS, AND FUN FACTS WORTH KNOWING.

- 1. What's in a Name? Panama City got its name thanks to George Mortimer West, a land developer who thought the connection to the Panama Canal would bring buzz and boost sales. As the closest developed U.S. port at the time, he pinned a map line straight to Panama—and the name 5. The Bridge Still Rises stuck.
- 2. On the Civil Rights Trail The Gideon v. Wainwright case started right here in Panama City. It changed the legal rights of millions by upholding the Sixth Amendment and quaranteeing everyone the right to an attorney. Today, the story lives on as part of Florida's official Civil Rights Trail.



3. Forged by the Bay: A Shipbuilding Legacy During World War II, Panama City was a vital shipbuilding hub. Along Watson and Massalina Bayous, shipyards produced warships especially minesweepers critical to the U.S. Navy.

4. Basic Training Before the **Red Carpet** Movie star Clark Gable trained at Tyndall Field, now known as Tyndall Air Force Base, during WWII before serving in the U.S. Army Air Forces.



- 6. Gene's Is a Local Legend Gene's Oyster Bar has been Panama City tradition.
- 7. Speed Shuckin' Royalty the seafood world.





The last working drawbridge in Northwest Florida lives right here in Panama City-watch it lift as boats pass through between Massalina Bayou and St. Andrews Bay.

shucking since the 1960s and is the oldest in Bay County. Grab a stool, order a tray, and taste a true

Honor Allen, a six-time national oyster shucking champion, calls Panama City home. His recordbreaking speed and signature style have earned him a spot at the top of 8. Best Farmers Market in Florida Downtown's farmers market brings plenty of charm and it was officially named the best in the state. Expect fresh produce, live tunes, and a great Saturday stroll.

9. Live Music, No Jacket Required Locals know the best seats in town come with a breeze. From cozy patios to waterfront decks, you'll find live music playing almost every night of the week.

10. Mardi Gras on the Bay Historic St. Andrews throws the biggest Mardi Gras celebration in Bay County, complete with floats,

beads, marching bands, and plenty of king cake energy.

WATCH THE OYSTER SHUCKER

Scan the QR code to catch the short documentary and meet Honor Allen.



YOUR TRIP, YOUR WAY

lanning a relaxing escape with your besties or embarking on a high-energy road trip with the whole crew? Either way, you'll discover the perfect blend of coastal charm, crave-worthy local eats, and unforgettable experiences waiting to be explored.

GIRLS' GETAWAY: SIP, SHOP & SOAK UP THE SUN

This is what girl trips are made of. Discover the laid-back vibes and inviting energy of Panama City's waterfront, history-rich neighborhoods. Gather your besties and follow the breeze past oyster bars, vibrant murals, and beloved local shops. Cozy cafés offer the perfect pause, while waterfront views set the stage for long conversations and lasting memories. combo that feels like it was made It's a destination designed for moments you'll want to relive again and again.

Coffee enthusiasts will find their happy place at Amavida Coffee, a local favorite known for its ethically For a sun and sea escape, gather the sourced brews and breezy seating next to the St. Andrews Marina. For something a bit stronger, Thistle & Thorne crafts cocktails with flair, served in a cozy space that feels both intimate and Instagramworthy.

Retail therapy is a must, and Panama City offers a walkable collection of locally owned treasures. Sage is a go-to for beachy, boho fashion; Jute & Palm curates beautiful home and lifestyle pieces, and Bookish invites you to unwind with a good read and a glass of wine in a warm, creative space. It's the kind of bookstore-meets-wine-bar for a girls' trip. Vintage seekers will adore Main Street Antiques, a 16,000-square-foot showroom where every item is carefully curated by the owner.

group and book a private pontoon to Shell Island. This pristine barrier island features soft white sands. emerald waters, and plenty of space to spread out. Panama City Pontoon Charters offers captained





luxury double-decker pontoons with a slide, plus paddleboards and a lily pad for lounging right on the water. It's ideal for shell hunting, sunbathing, and capturing golden hour photos that will stay in your group text forever.

Foodies will feel right at home. Luna Muna, located in Historic St. Andrews, serves bold breakfast flavors in a relaxed setting. For dinner, Ferrucci Ristorante offers comforting Italian dishes made from scratch, perfect for sharing and reminiscing about the day's adventures.

Beyond the highlights, Panama City is all about the moments in between. Morning yoga at Asbell Park, wandering through weekend farmers' markets, or simply enjoying the sea breeze with your friends. In Panama City, you'll find joy in the unplanned and the unforgettable in the everyday.

BROCATION ON THE BAY? LET'S DO IT!

Gather the crew and get ready for the ultimate vacation where the beer is cold, the seafood is fresh, and the adventures keep coming. Relax on a salty-air patio where local charm and stories of historical lore flow from the taps of the city's cherished small-batch brewery. After a flight or two, dive into platters of Gulf oysters, smoked tuna dip, and fish tacos that taste like they came straight off the boat—because they did. Spend your days reeling in big catches, riding the waves, and chasing sun-soaked thrills across the bay. With a mix of flavor, grit, and easygoing charm, this is the kind of guys' trip that practically plans itself—and one you'll talk about long after the last toast.





Start strong at Finn's Island Style Grub, a go-to spot for bold, Bajainspired breakfast and lunch. Located in the Historic St. Andrews neighborhood with open-air seating and a chill surfer vibe, Finn's keeps it real with scratchmade dishes that hit the spot.

is always worth the stop.



For anglers, Last Local Guide Service offers inshore fishing trips with expert captains who know where the redfish and tarpon are biting. You'll cast lines through winding bayous, grassy flats, and tuckedaway spots where the fish are biting, and the scenery steals the show.

Break for lunch and grab a table at House of Henry for Irish pub favorites and live music, or swing by The Slice House for a hot, cheesy pizza that hits the spot. Both are local go-tos where the welcome is warm and the food

When it's time to turn up the action, AAA Jet Ski has you covered with jet ski rentals. Want something wilder? Boggy Bayou Airboat Tours delivers heart-pounding adventures through local marshes where gators, herons, and raw nature steal the show.

Back on shore, cool down with a pint at History Class Brewing Company, where the beer is brewed with purpose—and named after local legends. The taproom is full of fun Florida trivia and historic photos, creating a vibe that is equal parts hometown pride and hangout heaven.

Be sure to stop by El Weirdo, a brew-pub adorned with neon lights, imaginative drinks, and an anything-goes attitude. They serve up street tacos alongside craft pours, with a playlist that matches the quality of the pours. It's the kind of place where the night tends to stretch a little longer than planned.

SUNSETS, SEASIDE STROLLS & **SWOON-WORTHY MOMENTS**

here, it is reflected in the golden glow of a sunset sail and tucked into the quiet corners of romantic restaurants. Couples looking to reconnect, celebrate, or slow down will effortlessly find the mood set. Share a bottle of wine over housemade pasta, toast on a rooftop as boats glide past below, or wander hand-in-hand through art-lined streets and waterfront parks.

At Harrison's Kitchen & Bar, locally inspired brunch favorites, such as shrimp and grits or fluffy lemon ricotta pancakes, are served with sweeping views of the marina, setting the perfect tone for lingering conversations, stolen glances, and a morning made for romance.

Romance thrives in the details—and Sunset sailings are a must, and Emerald Coast Sailing Excursions offers private charters that glide along St. Andrews Bay just as the sky turns gold. Bring along a curated charcuterie board from Burgunbarrel, a boutique wine and cheese shop with grab-and-go options perfect for pairing with the salty air and slow-moving water.

> When the sails are down and the stars start to appear, Uncle Ernie's offers a dinner with a view that steals the show. This historic home-turned-restaurant is known for its laid-back elegance, fresh Gulf seafood, and cozy ambiance, especially on the upstairs porch as the harbor lights flicker to life.



As night settles in, elevate the evening with a final toast. Steam on 5, perched atop Hotel Indigo, delivers rooftop views and craft cocktails with a sophisticated flair. Prefer something more intimate? Atelier blends artful décor with lounge vibes and plush corners perfect for lingering late.

BIG ADVENTURES FOR LITTLE TRAVELERS

Panama City is full of surprises, and it's not just the grown-ups who get to have all the fun. This town is filled with pint-sized adventures that blend imagination, energy, and wide-eyed wonder into memorymaking moments for the entire family.

Sweet moments start with sprinkles and sticky fingers at the local favorite, Dan-D-Donuts, where fresh-baked treats come in every color and flavor imaginable. Pick up a box and head to the bayside beach behind Destination Panama City for a laid-back waterfront picnic, where little ones can build sandcastles and splash in the shallows.









For families who enjoy moving and exploring, the options are endless. Anchor Charters offers private boat tours across St. Andrews Bay, where kids may catch glimpses of dolphins, herons, or even stingrays along the way. Prefer to keep your feet dry? St. Andrews State Park is a natural wonderland filled with scenic trails. protected lagoons, and wildlife sightings that are perfect for curious



When it's time to cool down, or burn off more energy, head indoors. The Portal is an interactive gaming space that blends a soda shop with classic board game fun, while local game rooms and arcades offer a range of activities, from retro gaming with pinball to escape rooms.

Colorful photo ops await on the Panama City Mural Trail, where bold, whimsical street art adorns buildings throughout the city—ideal for playful scavenger hunts and Instagram-worthy family photos.

Dinnertime brings a dose of magic at Bayou Joe's, where kids can feed the fish from the dock as colorful underwater lights illuminate the bayou below—offering a front-row seat to the fish swimming beneath your feet. Cap off the evening with hand-scooped treats from Drew's Ice Cream, followed by a stroll along the marina, where dolphins are known to make surprise appearances.

And for curious minds? The Science & Discovery Center of Northwest Florida is full of hands-on exhibits that make learning feel like play, from fossil finds to interactive robotics.

PANAMA CITY: A NAME WITH A STORY

ack in 1906, land developer George Mortimer West had a hunch. With the world focused on the construction of the Panama Canal, he figured the name "Panama City" might just get people's attention—and it did. As the D closest developed U.S. port to Panama at the time, he drew a line straight down the map and gave this bayside town a name that still turns heads. It started as a smart marketing move, but more than a century later, Panama City keeps folks curious for a whole different reason: the stories, the scenery, and the one-of-a-kind life on the bay.



MEET THE MASSALINAS: PIONEERS OF PANAMA CITY'S WATERFRONT

The Massalina family played a significant role in shaping Panama City's history, leaving a lasting egacy along the shores of Massalina 1941. Today, visitors can explore this Bayou that continues to resonate today. In the early 1800s, Jose Massalina, a skilled boat builder, became the area's first Black settler, continues to inspire. establishing a thriving waterfront community. His son, Narcisco "Hawk" Massalina, was a fisherman, preacher, and local legend known for spotting fish from a mile away.

For generations, families gathered along Redfish Point, a vibrant neighborhood lost to development in rich history at Massalina Bayou and the Bay County History Museum, where the Massalina legacy





ONE MAN, ONE PENCIL, ONE LEGAL LANDMARK

Sometimes, history unfolds in the most unexpected places—like a small jail cell near the waters of St. Andrews Bay. In 1961, Clarence Earl Gideon was arrested for burglary at the Bay Harbor Pool Room on U.S. Highway 98. Unable to afford a lawyer, he took matters into his own hands. With a pencil and determination, he handwrote an appeal from his Panama City jail cell, sending it to the U.S. Supreme Court.

That plea sparked a legal revolution. The case, Gideon v. Wainwright, ensured every American's right to an attorney, regardless of financial status. Today, you can walk the same streets where Gideon's fight for justice began—proof that one voice can change history.

MAKING WAVES IN WWII

During World War II, Panama City transformed from a quiet coastal town into a vital shipbuilding hub. Along Watson and Massalina Bayous, shipyards like Wainwright Shipyard roared to life, producing warships—especially minesweepers critical to the U.S. Navy. The real driving force? Hardworking locals, including women, stepped into industrial roles as welders and machinists along Sherman Avenue's bustling waterfront.

From dawn till dusk, the clang of steel and welding torches filled the air as the community united to support the war effort. Today, visitors can explore Historic St. Andrews and Downtown Panama City, where traces of this industrious past meet a revitalized waterfront, honoring a legacy of resilience that shaped the city and the world.









HARBOR HOPPING

anama City knows its way around the water. With eight marinas tucked into scenic bays and bayous, it's easy to launch an adventure, tie up for lunch, or kick back and enjoy the view. Whether you're here to fish, sail, or just soak up that salt air, each stop offers a different way to experience the bay. Some are quiet and tucked away, others are steps from the action—but all of them are ready when you are.





PANAMA CITY MARINA

Located at the edge of Downtown, Panama City Marina offers a convenient launch point for exploring both the water and the city. There's a fuel dock, a public boat ramp, and a long waterfront promenade perfect for a morning walk or sunset stroll. It's within walking distance to Hotel Indigo, Harrison's Kitchen & Bar, and Downtown's growing list of restaurants, shops, and galleries. Each December, the marina lights up as the host of the annual Boat Parade of Lights—one of Panama City's most beloved holiday traditions.



ST. ANDREWS MARINA

In the heart of Historic St. Andrews, this full-service public marina is a hub for charters, excursions, and locals heading out for the day. The marina store is stocked with essentials, and the wooden boardwalk along Bayview Avenue offers a peaceful stroll with front-row views of the boats. There's even a gazebo to catch the breeze or snap a photo. It's also one of the best places in town to dock and dine—pull up along the seawall and head straight to Alice's on Bayview for dinner or grab a drink at Newby's Brewhouse on the Bay.

CSS YACHT BASIN

Right in the heart of Historic St. Andrews, CSS Yacht Basin is a small, well-protected marina surrounded by more than two dozen restaurants, bars, shops, and waterfront parks—all just steps away. Excursions head out from here regularly, and it's a favorite among Great Loopers looking for easy access to town and a safe place to dock. With quick access to open water, green space for leashed pups, and some of the best sunset views around, it's a laid-back spot with everything you need close by.

SUN HARBOR MARINA

Situated just off the Intracoastal Waterway, Sun Harbor is a deepwater marina that serves as an ideal stop for cruisers, especially Great Loopers seeking a hassle-free experience. With fuel, power, and a well-stocked ship store, it offers everything you need before setting out or settling in. The location provides a tranquil yet central vibe, granting easy access to town while maintaining a relaxed, easygoing atmosphere. The new waterfront restaurant on the marina will be opening in summer 2025.

BRISTOL HARBOR

Nestled within the well-protected waters of Massalina Bayou, Bristol Harbor is a favorite among Great Loopers and anyone seeking a quiet slip near the action. Excursions depart regularly from the docks, including sailing trips with Emerald Coast Sailing and scuba dives with the Big Blue Dive Boat. You can even reserve a stay aboard a docked sailboat through Airbnb for a unique overnight experience on the bayou. It's tranquil, close to Downtown, and perfectly positioned for your next adventure.

MASSALINA MARINA

Also tucked into the calm waters of Massalina Bayou, this marina is a launch point for dolphin cruises, sailing trips, and quick excursions to Shell Island. It's right next to Bayou

Joe's Marina & Grill—a come-asyou-are spot that literally sits over the water. Once home to the historic Etheridge Marina, it's no longer a fuel stop, but you can still tie up to the pillars and climb straight in through the sliding windows, or dock at Massalina Marina and walk around to the front. Either way, it's the kind of place where the breeze rolls through and the bayou's always part of the view.

WATSON LANDINGS

This modern marina sits along Business 98 in Millville, just minutes from the Gulf. It offers both wet slips and dry boat storage, plus a few extras you don't always see—like a members-only pool, a tiki bar, and a lighted fish-cleaning station. With showers, bagged ice, and secure access, it's a favorite for boaters who like to keep things simple but still appreciate the perks.

EMERALD HARBOR

Set deep in Watson Bayou, Emerald Harbor is a calm and well– protected area within the Millville neighborhood. Located on the Intracoastal Waterway—directly across from the northern shore of Shell Island and approximately seven miles from the Gulf—it serves as an ideal stop for those seeking refuge while staying close to the action. Next door, Millville Waterfront Park provides open green space, a fishing pier, and expansive bayou views, making it easy to slow down and stay awhile.





BELOW THE SURFACE

EXPLORE ST. ANDREWS BAY WITH A MARINE BIOLOGIST WHO'S GOT JOKES, KNOWLEDGE, AND A KILLER DOLPHIN IMPRESSION

you want to really experience the bay, climb aboard with someone who knows it like the back of their paddle. Flippin' Awesome Adventures offers small-group boat tours led by Captain Chris, a local marine biologist with a big laugh, a love for dad jokes, and a mission to make sure everyone on board has a day they'll talk about long after the towels are dry. His trips are fun, flexible, and full of those unforgettable moments you actually came for.

C

Every trip is custom-built. Want to spot dolphins and sea turtles? He knows where to look. Bringing the kids along? There's a hands-on "Critter Corner" where they can safely hold sea stars, urchins, and other local marine life. Up for snorkeling? There's a good chance you'll be diving into clear waters near an uninhabited barrier island like Shell Island. Every tour is different—and that's the point. You tell him what kind of day you're hoping for, and he'll make it happen.

MEET CAPTAIN CHRIS

Captain Chris isn't your typical tour guide. He's got a background in marine biology, sure—but he's also got a quick wit and a talent for turning science into stories. Kids stay engaged, adults stay laughing, and everyone walks away having learned something. What sets this apart from your average boat tour is the heart behind it. Captain Chris is known for his passion for the bay and for helping people connect with it in a real, memorable way. His goal is to help people understand St. Andrews Bay—to see what makes it special and why it's worth protecting. You might leave with sun-kissed cheeks and a few new fish facts, but you'll also leave with a deeper respect for the water and the wildlife that call it home.





CUSTOMIZE YOUR ECO-ADVENTURE





THE LOOP LIFE

he Great Loop is one of America's most epic boating adventures—a 6,000-mile journey that winds through inland waterways, rivers, and coastal routes that loops all the way around the eastern U.S and parts of Canada. For the boaters who take it on, life moves at a different pace: part bucket list, part lifestyle. Panama City is a favorite stop along the way, thanks to its protected marinas, walkable historic neighborhoods, and a chance to kick back and enjoy the bay.

ABOARD M/V LADY BETZ:

6,000+ Miles, Dozens of Marinas, and One Memorable **Stop in Panama City**

There's a certain kind of traveler who doesn't need a hotel room just a good boat, a solid plan (or not), and an appetite for adventure. For Joe and Betsy Boyd, that meant stepping aboard their 40-foot Mainship 390 trawler, Lady Betz, and setting out to complete the Great Loop.

They dreamed about the Loop for years before finally setting off in March 2024 from Sanford, Florida, and thirteen months later, they're about to "cross their wake"—Loop-speak for completing the full circuit. Along the way, they've traveled through winding rivers, open bays, canal systems, and the Gulf. But it's not just about the miles covered—it's about the lifestyle.



LIFE ON THE WATER

"No two days are the same," Betsy says. Travel days start early, with pre-departure rituals like engine checks, disconnecting power, and prepping lines. Then it's hours of cruising before docking, reconnecting, and getting into the rhythm of wherever they've landed. Non-travel days often mean laundry, provisioning, boat maintenance or a little exploring. Loopers swap stories over "docktails," share local recommendations, and usually call it a night early. After all, "Looper Midnight" is 8 p.m.

What's surprised them most? "How much we love living on the boat," Betsy says. "It's small, but life is simpler. Everything has a place and a purpose." Flexibility, they've learned, is key. Weather delays and mechanical hiccups are inevitable, but often lead to their favorite memories.



DOCKING IN PANAMA CITY

When Lady Betz arrived in Panama City, they ended up docking at two marinas—first Sun Harbor, then Bristol Harbor. Each brought something different to the table.

At Sun Harbor, the team was welcoming and helpful, even arranging rides into town. "It's a beautiful new facility," Joe says, "and it's going to be even better when the restaurant opens." A weather delay turned into a threenight stay, with a standout dinner at Alice's on Bayview—a meal they now rank as one of their favorites from the entire Loop.

Bristol Harbor offered something different: a five-night stop filled with local charm. Harbormaster Seth gave up his own slip to make room for them, and fellow liveaboards welcomed them like old friends. "We felt at home right away," Betsy says. With downtown just a short walk away, they wandered the Saturday Farmers Market, enjoyed meals at Ferrucci Ristorante, El Weirdo, Bayou Joe's, and Tarpon Dock Seafood, and even went on a personalized tour with Panama Pedal Tours thanks to a surprise gift from their daughter.





The Boyds say planning ahead matters—but so does knowing when to let go of the plan. Delays are part of the journey. "Don't let a schedule make decisions for you," they say. "Some of our best memories happened when things didn't go as expected."

Their biggest piece of advice for new Loopers? Join the America's Great Loop Cruisers Association (AGLCA). "The community is incredible," says Betsy. "Loopers want to help. You'll never be fully ready, but you'll learn what you need along the way."

LESSONS LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

PANAMA CITY LEFT A MARK

"Panama City was a highlight," Betsy said. "It's vibrant, walkable, and full of great places to shop, eat, and relax." After nearly 6,000 miles and dozens of ports, it's a stop they plan to return to—with a few favorite spots already picked out and a couple of new friends they hope to see again.





THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO BOATING & FISHING IN PANAMA CITY

WHERE TO CAST OFF, WHAT'S BITING, AND HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DAY ON THE WATER.

P anama City is a paradise for anglers, offering easy access to St. Andrews Bay, the Gulf, and freshwater springs. You can cast off from the shore, book a charter from the bistorie St. Andrews Bay, the Gulf, and freshwater springs. near Shell Island. From trophy redfish or dinner-ready snapper, there's always something biting.

CHARTER FISHING

Fishing here happens all year long. With offshore, inshore, onshore, and off. The Gulf fills up with snapper, even freshwater options, there's always something biting in Panama City. And thanks to our mild winters someone's probably caught it. and warm Gulf currents, you do not have to be an expert to have a good day on the water.

Winter brings cool mornings and steady action, especially for redfish—a local favorite that sticks around all year and doesn't mind the chill. Bonito and speckled trout also keep things interesting while the water's calm and the crowds are low.

Spring starts heating things up, with Spanish mackerel and sheepshead making a strong showing, and tarpon cruising in as late spring hits. It's a great time to get on the water before the summer sizzle really sets in.

are golden. Redfish and speckled trout are up and moving at first light, and the offshore action takes grouper, mahi mahi, mackerel, jacks, triggerfish—you name it,

Summer means early mornings

Fall might just be the best season of all. With cooler temps, northern winds, and schools of baitfish flooding the bay, the bite is on. Mangrove snapper, redfish, speckled trout, flounder, Spanish mackerel, and jacks all show up for the season's final act.

Hiring a local guide is the easiest way to have a great day on the water. Our charter captains are some of the best around. They know the tides, the hot spots, and the tricks of the trade—and all you really need to do is show up. Local pros like Panama City Inshore will handle the rest.





RENT A BOAT AND FISH YOUR WAY

Captaining your own day on the water is a great way to experience the bay on your own terms. Local spots like Beachy Boat Rentals and Scotty Boat Rentals offer center consoles, pontoons, and fishingready vessels that work well for both beginners and seasoned anglers. Bring your tackle, pick your playlist, and head out into the bay to find your own perfect fishing hole. Cast near the bridges, drift through the backwaters, or drop anchor near Shell Island—it's your trip, fish it your way.

WHERE LOCALS CAST **FROM LAND**

No boat? No problem. Plenty of locals keep their feet on the ground and still pull in a great catch. Shoreline access along Beach Drive is perfect—especially near sunset or cast off the Panama City Marina promenade, where you'll find regulars tossing lines in the heart of Downtown. At Carl Gray Park, you'll find quiet shoreline stretches perfect for casting, plus nearby spots to hang out with tables and grassy areas for picnics to spend the day.

KNOW BEFORE YOU CAST

If you're fishing on a charter, your license is covered. But if you're planning to fish from a rented boat or off the shore, you'll need to grab one.



PURCHASE YOURS AT: GOOUtdoorsFlorida.com

If you're trailering in, Panama City makes it simple to launch and go. Boat ramps in our historic neighborhoods offer easy access to the bay, with plenty of trailer parking and nearby marinas for fuel, supplies, and last-minute gear. Snug Harbor Boat Launch in Millville is one of the newest and most convenient, and there are also ramps near St. Andrews Marina, Carl Gray Park, and Downtown's Panama City Marina.



BRINGING YOUR OWN BOAT? WE'VE GOT YOU.

Bonus: Several hotels, like the Hilton Garden Inn, offer boat trailer parking and quick access to the water, so you can stay close to the action without sacrificing comfort.







HOOK & COOK



Fresh off the line and onto your plate—that's how you do dinner. If you reel in a keeper and want to eat it fresh, a few local spots will happily cook it up for you. Bring your cleaned catch to Alice's on Bayview, Captain's Table, or Hunt's Oyster Bar, and let the pros handle the rest. However you like it grilled, blackened, or fried—there's something extra satisfying about a meal you caught yourself.

GAME FISH SPECIES

Panama City is a perfect destination for fishing, thanks to our variety of aquatic habitats and fish species, scenic natural beauty, and thriving downtown areas. The city is located on the tranquil St. Andrews Bay, just minutes from Gulf waters and surrounded by numerous bayous, inlets, and freshwater environments.



REDFISH

RIDE THE WIND

anama City may be known for its world-class fishing and subtropical climate, but for wind sport D enthusiasts, it's the Gulf Coast's best-kept secret. With consistent seasonal winds, shallow sandy-bottom bays, and stunning stretches of seaweed-free water, the area offers ideal conditions for kiteboarding, wingfoiling, and electric foiling. Whether you're chasing adrenaline or simply learning to ride, this destination delivers an unbeatable blend of natural conditions and a tight-knit community ready to welcome you to the wind.

One of those converts is Rick Kollanda, who traded Rhode Island's chilly coastline for Panama City's breezy bays after a fateful YouTube click in college. "I was probably procrastinating homework," Rick laughs, recalling the 2010 moment he stumbled on a kiteboarding video featuring pro rider Aaron Hadlow. That moment sparked a passion and eventually led to a crosscountry move.

With a beginner's mix of ambition and online tutorials, Rick cobbled together a kite kit and learned to ride solo (a route he now strongly discourages for others). However, it was Panama City's reliable conditions—and a friendly, active local Facebook group that ultimately drew him south in 2021. "Literally because of kiteboarding," he says. "This place had everything."

Panama City's geography creates perfect wind corridors. The narrow beaches and expansive bay provide calm, accessible waters, making them ideal for learning and refining skills. Wingfoiling, which is more beginner-friendly and doesn't require a large setup or a launch partner, is particularly popular. "It's easy to self-teach in the bay," Rick explains. "And if the wind dies down, we've got paddle and electric foil boards to keep the day going."

For Rick, the allure of Panama City Popular local launch spots include extends beyond the wind. "We love Carl Gray Park, where shallow water helping others get better. That's the and easy parking make it ideal spirit of wind sports here," he says. "If you're new, talk to a local before for beginners. Asbell Park and the Destination Panama City waterfront, setting up. We'll share safety tips, affectionately nicknamed "Tres hidden hazards, and make sure you Palmas," are top choices on days find your footing. Respect the space, with south or west winds. Spring enjoy the wind—and we'll see you brings the steadiest breeze, but on the water." locals ride year-round.



The bay itself is a standout feature due to its forgiving terrain. Submerged sandbars create natural wave breaks, keeping riders close to shore, which helps them, especially beginners, build confidence. However, it's not just the water that wins people over. "Wind sports are better with buddies," Rick says. "This community is incredible always willing to share tips or help vou launch."



GREAT OUTDOORS







GO WITH THE FLOW

GLOW FLOATS, PADDLE YOGA, AND BYO BOARD ADVENTURES

round here, the water is calm, the views are wide Open, and the best kind of traffic jam involves dolphins. St. Andrews Bay is made for paddlingand how you do it is entirely up to you. Rent a board, take a yoga class, float under the stars, or bring your own gear and go exploring. However calm coves. Need gear or advice? you move, you're in the right place.

If you're staying downtown, Bayside Rentals makes it easy. You can rent a paddleboard or kayak and launch right from their dock into St. Andrews Bay. Want something different? They also rent pedalpowered water bikes—great if you want a fun ride without getting your balance tested.

For something a little more peaceful (or sweaty), Katie's Paddleboarding Adventures offers one-on-one lessons and paddleboard yoga. The pace is slow, the instruction is local, and the views are hard to beat.

If you're into glowing water and a little nighttime magic, check out Glow Float or All Inclusive Adventures. Their clear-bottom kayaks light up the water as you paddle through the bay after dark. Tours launch from Downtown Panama City and Carl Gray Park, depending on the season and the wind.

Got your own board? Great. You've got options. Launch into the bay from Carl Gray Park, the Panama City Marina, or any of the bayside beaches tucked into neighborhoods like Beach Drive or Millville. St. Andrews State Park is another favorite for longer paddles and Head over to Sunjammers, where the staff can set you up and point you in the right direction.

Some paddle for peace and quiet. Some do it for the exercise. Others go because it's the easiest way to spend a few hours soaking up the water, the sky, and the vibe that makes this part of Florida feel a little slower in the best possible way.







BAYSIDE BEACHES

Ind your favorite bayside beach to relax, picnic, or go on a bayside excursion. Along the Florida Gulf Coast, Panama City's bayside beaches offer a more laid-back way to enjoy the water. Sheltered by Shell Island and set against the calm stretch of St. Andrews Bay, these local favorites are great for swimming, paddling, fishing, or simply unwinding by the shore. Each one brings something different—pick your favorite and make a day of it.

BEST FOR BRINGING THE PUP

OAKS BY THE BAY PARK

Towering oaks, open grassy space, and a breeze off the bay make this park a favorite for laid-back mornings and slow afternoon strolls. Follow the dune walkover to the shoreline, pause under the centuries-old live oak, named The Old Sentry, or check out the historic salt pot that hints at the area's past. It's spacious, shady, and just steps from the shops and cafés of Historic St. Andrews—including pet-friendly Amavida Coffee, the perfect stop after a walk.



DAKS BY THE BAY PARK



BEST FOR ALL-DAY FUN

PAPA JOE'S BAYSIDE

There's a reason people end up spending the whole day here. Start with a jet ski ride or hop aboard the Grand-Mére for a dolphin cruise or a trip to Shell Island. When you're back on shore, grab lunch from the food trucks and kick back in the open green space—complete with lounge chairs, yard games, and tables under the string lights. The sandy shores are perfect for cooling off between rounds of pickleball or live music sets. Whether you're chasing adventure or just a place to chill, this spot delivers.

BEST FOR FAMILIES

DESTINATION PANAMA CITY BEACHFRONT

This bayside beach behind the Visitors Center is easy to access, with plenty of parking just steps from the sand. Kids can splash in the calm, shallow water while grown-ups relax under the palms or string up a hammock between the trees. There's even a bayside swing with a front-row seat to the view—perfect for a snack break or a breezy moment in the shade.

BEST FOR FISHING & LAUNCHING YOUR BOARD

CARL GRAY PARK

This bayside spot has everything you need for a low-key day on the water—an easy boat launch, calm shoreline for paddleboarding, and plenty of space to cast a line right from the beach. Kids love the waterfront playground, and the covered picnic pavilions make it a great place to refuel and relax between adventures. It's peaceful, open, and perfect for spending a few easygoing hours by the bay.

BEST FOR PICNICS

ASBELL PARK

Tucked between Lake Caroline and the bay, this peaceful patch of waterfront has plenty of green space and room to spread out. It's a favorite for family picnics, sunrise yoga, or paddling out from shore. You'll see folks wading in with fishing poles, crabbing near the edge, or strumming guitars while sitting along the seawall. No schedule, no rush just one of those places that feels good to linger.

BEST FOR ACCESSIBILITY

CALHOUN BEACH PARK

Tucked away in Historic St. Andrews, this quiet little beach is the kind of place you've got to know to find. It's one of the only spots in town with a Mobi-Mat—making it easier for wheelchairs, strollers, and anyone who could use a smoother path to the water. It's low-key, peaceful, and a great place to enjoy the bay without the crowds.



VILLA GATEWAY PARK

This little pocket park doesn't lead to the beach—but it's one of the best places in town to catch the sunset. After dinner at Uncle Ernie's, stroll down to the swing and take in the view over St. Andrews Marina. It's quiet, breezy, and perfectly positioned for golden hour.



ARL GRAY PARK



ALWAYS BAYSIDE

Tune in to our Bay Cam for live views of the water—sunsets, sailboats, and peaceful moments anytime you need a little Panama City in your day.



SCAN HERE FOR OUR BAY CAM

TOP 5 OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES FOR FAMILIES

ADVENTURES EVERYONE CAN ENJOY

Panama City is full of way to get outside that are all fun, active, and totally kid-approved. These five outdoor favorites offer a little something for every kind of crew—from splash zones to state parks and everything in between.

KINGDOM SPLASH FEST PANAMA PEDAL TOURS

Located right next to the Destination Panama City Visitors Center, this year-round floating waterpark is a hit with kids of all ages. Giant inflatables, a ninja obstacle course, and Go Boat rentals make it the ultimate spot to burn off energy on warm days. It's an easy stop to cool off and keep the fun going without skipping a beat.

BOGGY BAYOU AIRBOAT TOUR

Get ready see the wilder side of Panama City. Boggy Bayou Airboat Tours takes you through more than 30,000 acres of salt marshes, swamps, and backwater bayous where the scenery is untouched and the wildlife steals the show. These high-powered rides are part eco tour, part thrill ride—with sunset and night tours that take it up a notch. Want to get behind the controls? They're the only airboat company on the Gulf Coast that lets you drive. It's loud, it's wild, and it's home. a whole lot of fun.

Older kids (and parents) will love cruising the streets of Historic St. Andrews or Downtown on this pedal-powered party bike. With music pumping and plenty of laughs along the way, it's a fun way to explore the city together no coordination required, just a willingness to pedal.

EMERALD & **FORGOTTEN COAST ADVENTURES**

This hands-on eco-tour is perfect for curious kids and grown-ups who love to learn while they explore. Led by local guides, these private trips include activities like seine netting—where you help collect and ID fish and marine critters and even test the water to see how healthy the bay really is. It's a fun, interactive way to experience St. Andrews Bay while picking up real insight on local conservation and the creatures that call the water

ST. ANDREWS STATE PARK

With nature trails, shallow swimming spots, and plenty of space to run around, this state park is a must for outdoorsy families. Bring a picnic, rent a paddleboard, or hop on the shuttle to Shell Island for a full day of coastal adventure.





HIT THE TRAILS

troll through Panama City's self-guided mural trail, culinary trails, and historic walking tours. These self-guided trails are the perfect way to explore Panama City at your own pace. Follow the color, follow the flavor, or follow the stories that have shaped this city for generations.

MURAL TRAIL

Art spills into the streets here. Follow the mural trail to find over two dozen works-bright, bold, and painted by local and national artists. brews in town, including a stop You'll spot everything from towering turtles to postcard-style panoramas, all with a free mural map to guide your way.

OYSTER TRAIL

Oysters are a big part of the story here—and the best way to experience them is by tasting your way through town. The Oyster Trail takes you from historic oyster bars to waterfront hangouts and cozy cafes, each with its own spin on this Gulf Coast staple. You'll find everything from classic raw oysters to grilled, baked, and fully dressed bites. Come hungry, stay curious, and get to know Panama City one oyster at a time.





ALE TRAIL

Prefer a pint? The Ale Trail features local breweries, taprooms, and spots pouring some of the best at a retro arcade that's fun for all ages. In Downtown, you can walk between stops, grab a drink in the social district, and explore as you go. Whether you're into bold IPAs, easy-drinking lagers, or something creative on tap, there's always something worth sipping.

HISTORIC WALKING TOURS

Get to know Panama City's roots with three self-guided walking tours: Downtown, Historic St. Andrews, and Glenwood. Each one dives into a different part of the city's past, from its earliest industries and architecture to the people and stories that still shape it todav.



ENTERTA





GET INKED

EXPLORE THE LEGACY OF OLD-SCHOOL PRINTMAKING AT THE PANAMA CITY PUBLISHING MUSEUM.

ucked into a red brick building in Historic St. Andrews, the Panama City Publishing Museum is one of those places that surprises you—in the best way. Built in the 1920s, it was the first brick structure in Historic St. Andrews—and it's still standing strong as the home of the Panama City Publishing Museum. Back in its heyday, this was the headquarters of the Panama City Pilot, the city's very first newspaper, where presses clattered and ideas were printed by hand, one letter at a time.

Today, this spot still feels like the presses might roll out tomorrow. The smell of ink, the click of metal type—it's all still here, and still working. You can catch live demonstrations on vintage printing presses, see how paper and ink came together with hands-on demos, and



even take home a letterpress print of progress, challenging injustice, your own. Exhibits change monthly, so there's always something new to learn, whether it's about early newspaper cartoons or the invention of the printing press.

Much of that legacy traces back to George Mortimer West, a local publisher and civic leader who helped shape Panama City's early identity. Alongside his wife, Lillian Carlisle West, the two ran a string of local papers right out of this building—championing





and giving voice to a growing waterfront town. After George's passing in 1926, Lillian took the reins and kept the papers running, becoming the first registered woman to vote in St. Andrews and a respected editor in her own right.

More than 70 original artifacts are on display, including George's cameras and logbooks, Lillian's desk and typewriter, and the original presses that were still in use by their great-great-grandson until 2005. When the City of Panama City purchased the building and restored it in 2008, they turned it into a space that honors not only the craft of printmaking, but the people who helped write this city's story.

Stop by, get a little ink on your hands, and walk out with a deeper connection to the people and presses that helped write the story of Panama City.



PLAYTIME ACTIVATED

INDOOR FUN THAT'S A LITTLE QUIRKY, A LITTLE CRAFTY, AND WAY MORE FUN THAN YOU'D EXPECT.

ou came for the waterfront, but Panama City's got some serious fun with unexpected twists waiting indoors too. We're talking fizzy sodas, flaming glass, candle-pouring cocktails bars, and enough games for unlimited good times.





THE PORTAL

Grab a custom soda, pick your board game, and let the good times roll. The Portal is a local favorite for laid-back fun, offering a long list of creative drink combos (think dirty sodas and sweet sips with a twist) and shelves stacked with everything from classics to cultfavorite tabletop games. It's a go-to spot for game night with friends, a chill family hangout, or a low-key afternoon that turns into evening without anyone checking the time.

POINT BREAK ARCADE

Bright lights, button mashing, and full-on fun—this arcade brings the energy without needing a single quarter. Pay once at the door and play all day with everything from retro classics to new-school favorites. It's also a stop on the Ale Trail, so the grown-ups can sip while the kids take on the high score board. It's great for families, friend groups, and anyone who still takes their high score seriously.

ESCAPE MANOR

Step into a themed room, follow the clues, solve the puzzles, and see if you can beat the clock. These escape games are big on detail, high on suspense, and best enjoyed with a group that doesn't mind thinking under pressure.



ATELIER CANDLE BAR

Choose your scents, pour your candle, sip your drink—that's the Atelier way. This courtyard café-meets-creative-studio invites you to unwind with a cocktail while crafting your own handpoured candle from start to finish. With live music, thoughtful details, and a full food menu, it is easy to make an evening of it. You are not grabbing something off a shelf. You are creating something memorable to take home.

RAGE CAGE

Need to let off some steam? Suit up, grab a bat, and start smashing. Rage Cage gives you a safe space to break bottles, bash electronics, and blow off stress in the most satisfying way possible. It's messy, loud, and ridiculously fun. Perfect for groups, celebrations, or anytime you feel like making a little noise.

PANAMA CITY HOT GLASS

Here, creativity comes with a blowtorch and some serious heat. Glassblowing classes let you shape and swirl molten glass into something beautiful, from sea stars to ornaments to bowls and vases that you get to take home when you're finished. If you're more of a spectator, grab a seat in the viewing area and watch the process unfold. The full showroom gallery is open year-round and packed with one-of-akind glass pieces you can take home—no class required.



BLESSI OF THE FLEET & FREE YOUR

A SALTY SENDOFF STEEPED IN WATERFRONT TRADITION.

In Historic St. Andrews, the start of boating season comes with a little ceremony, a lot of character, and if you're doing it right, bare feet.

BLESSING OF THE FLEET

The Blessing of the Fleet is one of Panama City's most beloved traditions. Held each spring along the docks of the St. Andrews Marina, this long-running tradition honors the community, local sailors, and the deep connection this waterfront town has to its working boats and open water. You'll see shrimp boats and sailboats lined up along the seawall, some decked out in streamers, some just showing up like they always have—ready to be blessed for safe voyages and smooth water ahead.



BURNING OF THE SOCKS

After the boats are blessed, the socks come off. Literally.

In the weeks leading up to the event, Historic St. Andrews gets a little saltier. Strings of socks appear across porches, patios, and storefronts, hung like salty little banners that leave first-timers asking, "What's up with the socks?" Locals know—it's almost time to lose the shoes and welcome in warmer days.

Event goers gather around to burn their socks in a communal fire pit—a lighthearted ritual that marks the changing of seasons and says, in true coastal fashion: it's time to let go of the layers and get back to the water. It's a nod to sailors who, after a long winter in boots and shoes, couldn't wait to free their feet and feel the deck under bare feet again. Around here, it's equal parts good luck, good fun, and a great reason to join the party.

So go ahead. Free your feet, bless your boat (or cheer on the ones that pass by), and take part in one of the quirkiest, most beloved traditions on this side of the bay.

LOVEPC ALL YEAR LONG WITH LOCAL EVENTS







anama City keeps the good times rolling all year. Live music, local markets, colorful parades, and neighborhood festivals bring people together with a whole lot of local flavor. Catch beads at St. Andrews Mardi Gras, stroll through art shows downtown, or browse handmade goods at pop-up markets throughout the year. These events add something special to every season—and there's always a reason to come back for more. Here are a few to mark on your calendar.

anamaCity.com

SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL

ANNUAL EVENTS



MARDI GRAS FESTIVAL

FEBRUARY

A weekend of parades, live music, and non-stop fun in Historic St. Andrews.



FLLUXE ARTS FESTIVAL **AARCH**

A dynamic street festival featuring live painting, interactive art, and music in Downtown Panama City.



BLESSING OF THE FLEET/ BURNING OF THE SOCKS

APRIL

A maritime tradition celebrating the local fishing community and the arrival of warmer weather.



JULY 4TH SALUTE TO FREEDOM FESTIVAL

JULY

A patriotic celebration with fireworks, live music, and family-friendly activities.



46 DestinationPanamaCity.com

BACKSTAGE PASS SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

A series of six weekly outdoor concerts featuring regional artists across a variety of genres.





VOLKSMARCH **SEPTEMBER**

Enjoy traditional German fare on a festive journey through pubs and eateries.







NOVEMBER intimate venues.





DECEMBER

A dazzling holiday spectacle where festively decorated boats cruise St. Andrews Bay.

MARDI GRAS FESTIVAL

OKTOBERFEST

A festive celebration of German culture with beer, food, and traditional music.

SONGWRITERS FESTIVAL

A showcase of talented songwriters performing their original music in

PUBLIC EYE SOAR

A free digital projection art festival that lights up Panama City's streets and

BOAT PARADE OF LIGHTS





FLAVC

you are visiting during stone crab season (October 15th – May 1st), consider yourself lucky—this Gulf Coast delicacy is one of Florida's most prized and sustainably harvested seafood treasures. Surprisingly, many people, including some locals, are still discovering the incredible world that lies just beneath the surface of the bay. "People live their whole lives here and never realize we have stone crab," says Beckah Kozlowsky, co-founder of Saltwater Social. This community-focused lifestyle brand celebrates coastal living through curated experiences, outdoor education, and waterfront adventures. "It blows their minds when they find out because they're such a delicacy!"

Stone crab season is about more than what ends up on the plate—it's rooted in tradition and a deep connection to place. Locals eagerly anticipate the experience of scouting and harvesting stone crabs each fall, often by hand or with small, sustainable traps in the calm local bays. "There's something special about it—it's a ritual. We scout our spots, harvest carefully, and enjoy them fresh," Beckah explains.

Different than other crabs, stone crab is renowned for its sweet, firm, and distinctly clean flavor. "It has a natural saltiness, but there's also a sweetness that sets it apart from blue crab or snow crab," Beckah says.

Preparation is usually simple: claws are boiled to perfection, cracked open, and served with melted butter or mustard sauce. For something extra indulgent, Beckah recommends her favorite twist: "Stone crab on top of oysters with butter, imperial sauce, baked, and topped with green onion delicious!"



Want to try it for yourself? Head to Tarpon Dock Seafood Market, a trusted source for freshly harvested claws of all sizes, pulled straight from local waters during the season. Whether you enjoy them at a waterfront restaurant or pick some up to prepare at your vacation rental, stone crab offers an authentic taste of Panama City's coastal identity.



SEA TO TABLE

anama City may be celebrated for its postcard-perfect views, but it's the Gulf and St. Andrews Bay that feed both the soul and the table. Fresh seafood is part of the culture here, woven into the daily rhythm and the flavors that define it.

Around here, "sea-to-table" isn't just a buzzword—it's a way of life. The day's catch often goes straight from boat to kitchen to plate, with no middleman required. It all starts at Tarpon Dock Seafood Market, a beloved local fixture that sits right on the bay. Their fleet docks just steps from the storefront, bringing in everything from Gulf shrimp and grouper to oysters and, in season, prized stone crab. Grab a few fillets to cook yourself or stay and enjoy a made-to-order meal at their openair kitchen, where fresh flavor is always on the menu and the view is as good as the food. It's fresh, flavorful, and as local as it gets.

Want a more hands-on approach? Book a Hook and Cook charter with a local guide. After reeling in your catch, head to a participating spot like Alice's on Bayview or Hunt's Oyster Bar, where chefs will clean and cook your fish just the way you like it. It's a true Gulf Coast experience—from dock to dish. For a side of heritage with your seafood, don't miss Captain's Table Fish House, a familyowned landmark in Historic St. Andrews since 1967. Many dishes are made from fish caught by their own boats, showcasing a commitment to freshness and sustainability that keeps diners returning time and again.

No matter how you enjoy it—cooked dockside, caught yourself, or served with a sunset view—seafood in Panama City isn't just a meal; it's a celebration of place, tradition, and the bounty of the bay.







THE GOLDEN **OYSTER** AT HUNT'S

A BITE TO REMEMBER

here's something unforgettable about your first oyster—especially when it happens at Hunt's Oyster Bar, a beloved Panama City landmark that has served Gulf Coast seafood since 1966. Nestled just off Beck Avenue in the heart of St. Andrews, Hunt's is more than a restaurant; it's a rite of passage.

As soon as you walk in, you'll hear it: the sizzle of seafood on the flat top, the rhythmic clatter of oyster shells hitting metal trays, and the hum of stories being shared over cold drinks and steaming plates. Inside, local memorabilia, vintage photos, and decades of good times line the walls. It's casual, loud in the best way, and filled with regulars who know the staff by name—and visitors who quickly feel like locals.

One lively afternoon, a young kid sat wide-eyed in front of their very first oyster, with parents and grandparents cheering him on. There was laughter, hesitation, a little peer pressure—and then the triumphant slurp. That first oyster was more than just a bite; it was a memory. A moment worth celebrating.

And just like that, the Golden Oyster was born.

With a touch of fanfare, a bit of fun, and a whole lot of heart, this tradition honors those brave enough to try their first oyster at Hunt's. If the crew spots you going for it, they might reward you with a handpainted golden oyster shell for you to have as a keepsake that says, "You did it."







At Hunt's, perfect technique takes a backseat to good company and great stories. Gather around a tray of oysters, cheer each other on, and enjoy a moment that only gets better with each retelling. Seasoned shuckers and first-timers alike are welcome here. Grab a table and become part of a Panama City tradition, one golden bite at a time.





ARTS & CULTURE

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Bay County Historical Museum

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Gallery of Art 850

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Panama City Music Association

4002 Dolphin Dr, Panama City Beach, FL 32408 (850) 236-1260 | pcmusicassociation.com

Panama City Symphony

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The Panama City Publishing **Company Museum**

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Mochinut Panama City 1000 E 23rd St a3, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 215-0118 | mochinutpc.com

Mosey's Downtown 🎇 425 Grace Ave, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 215-4802 facebook.com/moseysdowntown

New York's Famous Pizza and Pasta 1000 E 23rd St, Panama City, FL 32405

(850) 215-5639 newyorkfamouspizzaandpasta.com

Newk's Eatery

676 W 23rd St, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 640-0186 locations.newks.com/fl/panamacity/676-west-23rd-street

O'Charley's Restaurant & Bar

311 E 23rd St, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 784-8110 | ocharleys.com

Ocean Oriental Market 🔛 571 Harrison Ave, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 785-4279 | oceanorientalmarket.com

Olive Garden Italian Restaurant 2397 FL-77, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 769-4002 olivegarden.com/locations/fl/panamacity/panama-city-sr-77/1395

On the Go Oyster 🛞 😂 1150 Beck Ave, Panama City, FL 32401

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Panaderia La Real

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Papa Johns Pizza

628 W 23rd St, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 387-2586 locations.papajohns.com/united-states/ fl/32405/panama-city/628-w-23rd-st

Pepper's Mexican Grill and Cantina

2061 N Cove Blvd, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 785-2227 peppersmexicancantina.com

Persis Biryani Indian Grill

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Sweets Bakery

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663 W 23rd St, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 215-0240 | tacocasapc.com

Tally-Ho Drive In

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Tarpon Dock Seafood Market 🚯 🏶 🐑 234 E Beach Dr, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 769-6029 | tarpondockseafoodmarket.com

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Taziki's Mediterranean Cafe - Panama City 103 W 23rd St E7, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 640-1380 tazikis.com/location/panamacity

Thai Basil 🎇

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Thai Chef Restaurant 🆓

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The Bagel Maker

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The Bistro Southern Cafeteria

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The Drip Coffee Co.

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Minutes and Miles

228 Harrison Ave #104, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 780-0210 | minutesandmiles.com

Native Spirit Museum & Gallery 1101 Beck Ave, Panama City, FL 32401 (850) 319-6703 nativespiritmuseumandgallery.com

Out of the Box Gifts & More

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Holiday Inn Panama City by IHG

2001 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Panama City, FL 32405 (850) 769-0000 ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/panama-city/ pfnml/hoteldetail



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wyndhamhotels.com/laquinta/panamacity-florida/la-quinta-panama-city

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