

An insider's guide to Miami

From speedboat rides to swimming with stingrays, Florida's southern city is jam-packed with adventures



Miami nice: Ocean Drive is the perfect place to people-watch



Woman's Rachel Bassett

WHY GO?

Miami is every bit the vibrant city seen on film and TV. Walking

along Ocean Drive, with its ice cream-coloured art deco buildings, rows of palm trees and sea views, it's not hard to see why big names like Cameron Diaz and Simon Cowell have made it their chill-out spot of choice - because it really does have something for everyone...



TOURS WITH A TWIST

South Beach has 30 blocks of art deco buildings and you can whizz past the famous landmarks on a Bike and Roll Segway Tour Ride. It's a fun way to see Ocean Drive, the Versace mansion and the Botanical Garden; from £38, bikemiami.com. Or sip around the city on a guided art deco-themed cocktail tour. Quaff mojitos and margaritas over two hours; £40, miami culinarytours.com. Or go on an Art and Bar Crawl with Urban Adventures, £19; urbanadventures.com



See the sights of South Beach by Segway

ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

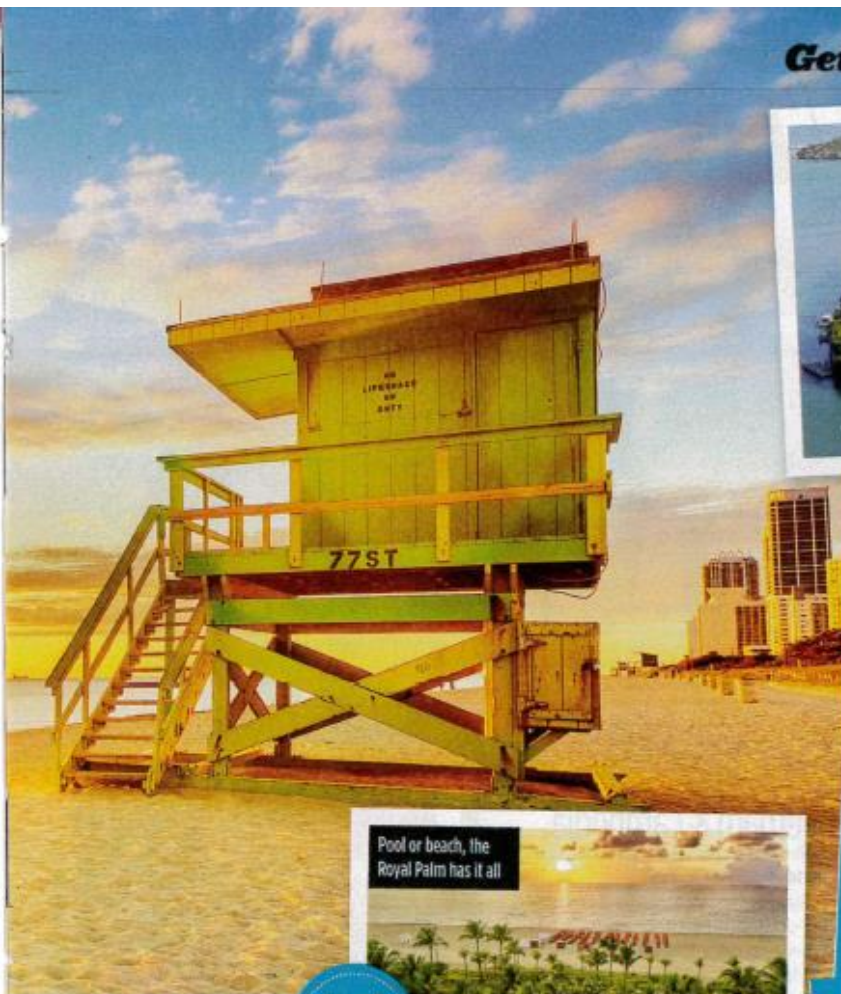
Head an hour south of Miami to the Everglades Alligator Farm, where you can zip through the swamps on an airboat ride. It is home to about 2,000 alligators of all sizes, so you're sure to spot these incredible creatures; everglades.com. The Sea Trek Reef Encounter at Miami Seaquarium is no ordinary marine museum. Here you can swim with stingrays, tropical fish and unique sea creatures in a 300,000 gallon tropical reef, all while wearing a state-of-the-art dive helmet that allows you to breath normally under water. Prices start at £69, miamiseaquarium.com



Snap up a ride to the alligator swamps

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Getting away from it all



It's called Star Island for a reason...

TAKE TO THE WATER

Locals will tell you the best view of Miami is from the water, and a Zodiac RIB ride by Ocean Force Adventures is a good place to start. You'll zip around the bay to see the multi-million dollar celebrity mansions of Star Island – a favourite haunt during the 1950s of Frank Sinatra – and also the last remaining stilt houses built over water; prices from £100 per group, oceanforceadventures.com. If something more relaxed is your thing, try a Sunset Cocktail cruise with sailo.com. Round off the day watching the million-dollar yachts sail by on the North River Drive, as you tuck into a king crab cocktail at renowned restaurant Sea Spice; seaspicemiami.com.

Pool or beach, the Royal Palm has it all



HOT HOTELS: ROYAL PALM SOUTH BEACH

First opened in 1939, this art deco hotel has its original lobby and reception, while rooms have views of the Miami skyline or the Atlantic Ocean. There's also a spa and direct beach access.

*** BOOK IT** Prices from £110 per night based on two sharing a Deluxe City View Room; royalpalmsouthbeach.com

BEACH
RETREAT

Home from home: A luxury suite at the Villa Bagatelle



VILLA BAGATELLE

Open for under a year, this glamorous hotel in the heart of South Beach has a rooftop pool. Rooms have washing machines, dryers, lounge and dining area and a fridge, making it ideal for families.

*** BOOK IT** Prices from £158 per night based on two sharing a King Suite; villabagatellemiamibeach.com

FAMILY
STYLE

GET ME THERE!

Virgin Atlantic (virgin-atlantic.com) offers return flights from London Heathrow to Miami International Airport from £510 per person. For more information visit miamiandbeaches.com

ELEGANT EATING

Variety is the spice of life, and when it comes to eating out in Miami, that's certainly true! Start the day in style with breakfast at the News Cafe on Ocean Drive. It's a must for big American portions of fresh fruit, omelettes and pancakes, while watching the rollerbladers speed by; newscafe.com. For a more tranquil setting, try the Peacock Garden Cafe in Coconut Grove. Make sure you sample the cakes washed down with homemade lemonade; peacockspot.com. Splashing out? Open-roofed Asian restaurant Bāoli is ideal for a special occasion. Eat sushi and sashimi rolls under the stars; from £11, lebaoli.com/baoli



Kick off the evening with a cocktail