



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**February 2024**

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## **What's New from Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods**

*Spring training, Valentine's Day fun, accommodations reopen, special events*

**LEE COUNTY, Florida (U.S.A.)** – Planning a winter visit to our islands, beaches and neighborhoods? Be sure to check out the new 2024 Visitor Guide for everything you need to make unforgettable vacation memories.

[tinyurl.com/VisitorGuide2024](https://tinyurl.com/VisitorGuide2024)

### **Don't miss this month!**

The popular, annual **ArtFest Fort Myers** takes place in the downtown River District Feb. 2-4. Visitors enjoy art by more than 200 selected artists as well as entertainment, food and children's activities. [artfestfortmyers.com](https://artfestfortmyers.com)

The **Boston Red Sox** and the **Minnesota Twins** return for spring training beginning Feb. 23. Whether it's your first game or you're a seasoned fan,

there's nothing like being outside enjoying beautiful weather and feeling the excitement of a day at the ballpark. On Feb. 23, the Red Sox begin play at JetBlue Park and the Minnesota Twins also play their opening game at Lee Health Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers.

### **Boston Red Sox**

Feb. 23-March 24

[mlb.com/redsox/schedule/2024-02](https://mlb.com/redsox/schedule/2024-02)

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

### **Minnesota Twins**

Feb. 23-March 26

[mlb.com/twins/schedule/2024-02](https://mlb.com/twins/schedule/2024-02)

Lee Health Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

### **Southwest Florida Ag Expo, North Fort Myers**

Whether you go for the animal exhibitions, the steer auction, the midway thrills or the sweet and savory treats, there is something for everyone at the Southwest Florida Ag Expo from beginning Feb. 29 through March 10.

The Ag Expo celebrates the work and accomplishments of Southwest Florida youth active in 4-H, FFA and more while offering fun, food and rides.

Livestock exhibitions, as well as crafting and creative living, will be part of the fun.

For a schedule of events and ticketing information, visit [swflagexpo.com](https://swflagexpo.com) and [facebook.com/swflagexpo](https://facebook.com/swflagexpo).

### **Accommodations news**

#### **Sanibel Moorings Resort reopens**

The Sanibel Island resort has reopened half of its one- two- and three-bedroom

condo suites on the Gulf of Mexico. Each unit includes a living room, dining area, full kitchen and a large, private screened lanai. [sanibelmoorings.com](https://www.sanibelmoorings.com)

### **DoubleTree by Hilton Fort Myers at Bell Tower shops in Fort Myers**

The 224-room hotel opened with major renovations to the hotel's lobby, 6,196 square feet of meeting space. Shoeless Joe's Sports Cafe and deck are being completed. The hotel features refreshed guest rooms, a fitness center and a heated outdoor tropical pool. [hilton.com/en/hotels/fmybtdt-doubletree-fort-myers-at-bell-tower-shops](https://hilton.com/en/hotels/fmybtdt-doubletree-fort-myers-at-bell-tower-shops)

### **Attractions news and more**

#### **Sun Saver Passport: Dine, Play, Shop, Sip**

This popular, digital savings pass provides instant access to a variety of deals and experiences from area attractions, restaurants and more across four categories: Dine, Play, Shop and Sip. Sign-up is simple and free. Passports are instantly delivered to phones via text and email. And there is an option for users to save the pass on their home screen for one-tap access. Sign up now to start saving. [visitfortmyers.com/sun-saver-passport](https://visitfortmyers.com/sun-saver-passport)

#### **Cape Coral Quest 2.0: Win prizes and explore**

Start exploring with the latest pass to earn discounts and rewards in Cape Coral. Known for its unique shopping opportunities, restaurants, and more than 400 miles of canal waterways, the area is full of vibrant culture. Each participating location has a four-digit code somewhere on the property. Answer 20 riddles to be entered to win the grand prize: a two-night stay at The Westin Cape Coral with daily breakfast. Enter all 30 codes and you'll earn a 2024 Sunsplash Season Pass! Get your pass, check out details and tips at [visitfortmyers.com/cape-coral-quest](https://visitfortmyers.com/cape-coral-quest) and start participating on any mobile device.

#### **Manatee sightings, east Fort Myers**

During our cooler days, lots of manatees are to be spotted at Manatee Park. A

seasonal location for viewing non-captive Florida manatees in Lee County, the park is a refuge for these gentle creatures as they search for warm water during the cooler days in winter when the temperature in the Gulf of Mexico is below 68 degrees. The warm water in the Manatee Park canal comes from the Florida Power & Light power plant adjacent to Palm Beach Boulevard/S.R. 80 and is created as a byproduct of cooling off the equipment. If you haven't had this experience, be sure to visit on our next cool day.

[leegov.com/parks/parks/manateepark](http://leegov.com/parks/parks/manateepark)

### **Koreshan State Park Ghost Walk in Estero**

Combine history with a candlelight ghost walk and you have a fun evening with this theatrical production that supports the Koreshan State Park in Estero. With walks beginning at 6:45 p.m. on Feb. 2 and 3, this year's production immerses visitors in a timeline view of the life and times of Dr. Cyrus Teed and the Koreshan's Unity. Stroll past restored buildings from a bygone era and watch re-enactors perform scenes from throughout their lives in Southwest Florida.

Ticket information: [friendsofkoreshan.org/event-5519501](http://friendsofkoreshan.org/event-5519501)

### **Annual Antique Ford Car Show at Edison and Ford Winter Estates**

On Feb. 3, classic car owners exhibit more than 100 cars on the Ford estate lawn as a tribute to Henry Ford, the pioneer of the automobile industry. Antique Mustangs, Thunderbirds, Model T Fords and others will be on display. Along with the car show, visitors enjoy music, food trucks tours of the gardens, museum, laboratory and historic homes. Check details and ticket information at

[edisonfordwinterestates.org/events/annual-antique-car-show](http://edisonfordwinterestates.org/events/annual-antique-car-show)

### **Calusa Blueway speaker series, North Fort Myers**

The Calusa Blueway is one of the natural treasures of our area. Learn more about the 190-mile, marked paddling trail with a series of free Blueway-related programs set for 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 13, March 12 and 26 at the North Fort Myers Recreation Center. For directions and topics:

[visitfortmyers.com/event/calusa-blueway-speaker-series/5470](https://visitfortmyers.com/event/calusa-blueway-speaker-series/5470). Trail information is at [calusablueway.com](https://calusablueway.com)

### **Grand reopening of the original Chico's store at Periwinkle Place, Sanibel Island**

After closing due to extensive damage from Hurricane Ian, this iconic store, beloved by loyal Chico's fans from around the country, has been rebuilt and reopened. Part of Southwest Florida for 40 years, Chico's underwent a complete renovation allowing for the opportunity to modernize this historic location. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/chicos-sanibel>

### **Public electric vehicle (EV) station opens on Sanibel Island**

Sanibel and Captiva Islands visitors driving electric vehicles (EVs) will now be able to charge their cars while staying on the islands. The new electric vehicle charging station with two-plug-ins, the first public EV station on the islands, may be found in two parking spots at the back of the San/Cap Chamber Visitor Center. The station is open 24 hours daily and users may pay at the station by credit card or with the ChargePoint app. [sanibel-captiva.org](https://sanibel-captiva.org)

### **Restaurants/dining news**

It's open! **Rooftop at Riverside** has opened its much-anticipated food truck park in downtown Bonita Springs. With a two-story bar, unique Southwest Florida dining, the new venue is situated between historic landmarks, public parks and the Imperial River. [eatdrinkparadise.com](https://eatdrinkparadise.com)

### **Calling all would-be chocolatiers: Cooking with Love classes**

The art of making chocolates is not just reserved for world-class chefs as Norman Love Confections invites would-be chocolatiers to experience the artistry of chocolate during its 2024 **Cooking with Love** classes.

Reservations are now being accepted for those interested in creating chocolate confections including truffles, molded confections, novelties and Easter eggs.

Master chefs from Norman Love Confections will guide attendees step-by-step through a fun-filled, three-hour course as they learn to create decadent masterpieces of their own.

Guests will master the 100-year-old art of truffle making in classes on Feb. 16 and April 5. From the luscious hand-formed dark chocolate to the modern Swiss chocolate shell, students will create these treats with the guidance of master chocolatiers, and then bring their finished treasures home to enjoy. Check out all classes that run through May at

[normanloveconfections.com/chocolate-classes.html](http://normanloveconfections.com/chocolate-classes.html)

### **Valentine's Day fun**

#### **Show some love in February**

There are so many ways to celebrate Valentine's Day in Southwest Florida this year:

- Take a hike in a beautiful park.
- Treat yourself (and someone else) to a meal at your favorite local restaurant.
- Purchase a piece of art or jewelry from a local artist.
- Support your favorite brewery or distillery.
- Give a gift certificate to a local theater or entertainment event.

#### **Adventures in Paradise: Valentine's Day sunset dolphin cruise**

Valentine's Day Sunset Dolphin Cruise includes complimentary soft drinks, bottled water and a special treat. Listen to tropical music as you cruise the tranquil waters along the coastline of Sanibel. Experience of birds flocking to their evening roost, watch dolphins play in the wake, sightsee and enjoy narration by a knowledgeable captain.

[adventureinparadiseinc.com/cruises/holiday-cruises/valentines-day-cruise](http://adventureinparadiseinc.com/cruises/holiday-cruises/valentines-day-cruise)

#### **Waterfront romance: Valentine Getaway at the Luminary Hotel & Co, Fort Myers**

Package includes overnight accommodations, welcome bottle of bubbly and a petite box of Norman Love Chocolates, breakfast for two each morning of stay

and complimentary self-parking. Check for dates and pricing.

[luminaryhotel.com/offers/romance-at-luminary](https://luminaryhotel.com/offers/romance-at-luminary)

### **Norman Love Confections' 2024 Valentine's Day Collection**

Available through Feb. 14, the limited-edition collection features heart-shaped dark, white and milk chocolates in a variety of flavor combinations including Passion Orange, Crème Catalan, Tropical Rum, Chocolate Strawberry, Smoked Sea Salt, Champagne, Café Amore, Banana Foster, Kahlúa® Caramel, Mocha Almond. Order at [NormanLoveConfections.com](https://NormanLoveConfections.com) and in chocolate salons in Fort Myers and Estero.

### **Gulfoast Symphony Valentine's Candlelight Concert, Fort Myers**

Feb. 13

Music Arts Center

Enjoy this multi-sensory musical experience with two evening performances.

[gulfoastsymphony.org/concerts](https://gulfoastsymphony.org/concerts)

### **My Sweet Art, Cape Coral**

Take a trip to Paris! French pastry chef Yveline Mauclerc creates pastries that are well worth the calories. Whether it's a chocolate croissant, lemon tart, salted caramel chocolate tart, Napoleon, éclair or macaron, she makes them. The café also offers lunch, Sunday brunch and cooking classes. [my-sweet-art.com](https://my-sweet-art.com)

### **In the news**

**Travel + Leisure** calls Bonita Springs an undiscovered gem in Florida and says visitors "can expect uncrowded beaches, beautiful golf courses and quirky roadside attractions."

[travelandleisure.com/bonita-springs-florida-8426663](https://travelandleisure.com/bonita-springs-florida-8426663)

**Forbes** highlights Sanibel Island as "the seashell capital of the world," emphasizing its 15 miles of beaches with bike paths and diverse wildlife refuges. <http://tinyurl.com/forbes-sanibel>

**The Boston Globe** includes what to expect during a visit and the recent openings including Margaritaville Beach Resort, Fort Myers Beach and the reopening of Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina and more. ["Fort Myers, post-hurricane: What can visitors expect?"](#)

**Matador Network** writes about ["The Best Things To Do in Fort Myers, Plus Where To Eat and Stay."](#) Highlights: guided boat tours to Cayo Costa State Park, an exploration of J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, a guided kayak tour at Lovers Key State Park and Nautical Tiki Tours, dining and island gems.

### **Annual festivals and events**

#### **"Ding" Darling Lecture Series, Sanibel Island**

Feb. 1, March 7, 14 and 21

[dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-series](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-series)

#### **ArtFest Fort Myers, Downtown River District**

Feb. 2-4

[artfestfortmyers.com](http://artfestfortmyers.com)

#### **Lovers Key State Park history and wildlife programs, Fort Myers Beach**

Feb. 2-3, 7, 9-10, 13-14, 16-17 and 21

<https://bit.ly/FOLKS-Events>

#### **Edison and Fort Winter Estates Antique Ford Car Show, Fort Myers**

Feb. 3

[edisonfordwinterstates.org/events/annual-antique-car-show](http://edisonfordwinterstates.org/events/annual-antique-car-show)

#### **Sunrise Shell and Mollusk Stroll, Sanibel Island**

Lighthouse Beach

Feb. 8 and March 10

With a marine biologist from the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium [shellmuseum.org/sunrise-stroll](https://shellmuseum.org/sunrise-stroll)

**Bonita Springs National Art Festival**

Feb. 10-11, March 2-3

[artcenterbonita.org/artfest](https://artcenterbonita.org/artfest)

**Calusa Blueway speaker series, North Fort Myers**

Feb.13, March 12 and March 26 at the North Fort Myers Recreation Center

[visitfortmyers.com/event/calusa-blueway-speaker-series/5470](https://visitfortmyers.com/event/calusa-blueway-speaker-series/5470)

**Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers**

Feb. 17

[edisonfestival.org](https://edisonfestival.org)

**Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum & Aquarium lecture series, Sanibel Island**

Feb.19, March 20, April 11 at Sanibel Community House

[ShellMuseum.org/in-person-lectures](https://ShellMuseum.org/in-person-lectures)

**22nd annual Burrowing Owl Festival, Cape Coral**

Wildlife and Environmental Expo

Feb. 24

Rotary Park

[ccfriendsofwildlife.org/burrowing-owl-festival-2](https://ccfriendsofwildlife.org/burrowing-owl-festival-2)

**Spring training**

**Boston Red Sox**

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[mlb.com/redsox/schedule/2024-02](https://mlb.com/redsox/schedule/2024-02)

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

**Minnesota Twins**

Feb. 23-March 26

[mlb.com/twins/schedule/2024-02](https://mlb.com/twins/schedule/2024-02)

Lee Health Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

**Southwest Florida Ag Exposition**

Feb. 29-March 10

Lee County Civic Center Complex

[swflagexpo.com](https://swflagexpo.com)

**25th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers**

March 2

Fort Myers Regional Library, downtown Fort Myers

[readfest.org](https://readfest.org)

**88<sup>th</sup> Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, Sanibel Island**

March 7-9

Community House

[sanibelcommunityhouse.net/event/87th-annual-sanibel-shell-festival/2024-03-08](https://sanibelcommunityhouse.net/event/87th-annual-sanibel-shell-festival/2024-03-08)

**Sanibel Shell Show, Fort Myers**

March 8-9

Marriott Sanibel Harbour Resort

[sanibelshellclub.com/6306-2](https://sanibelshellclub.com/6306-2)

**Fort Myers Beach annual Lion's Club Shrimp Festival**

March 9-10

[fortmyersbeachshrimpfestival.com](https://fortmyersbeachshrimpfestival.com)

**ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers**

March 12-16

[echonet.org/events/global-food-and-towardwardl](http://echonet.org/events/global-food-and-towardwardl)

**Sounds of Jazz & Blues, Cape Coral**

March 23

Coral Oaks Golf Course

[capeconcerts.com](http://capeconcerts.com)

**Sounds of the Sand, Bell Tower, Fort Myers**

March 23-23

To support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Refuge education efforts

[dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/sounds-of-the-sand](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/sounds-of-the-sand)

**Concert in the Park, Cape Coral**

April 4

Four Freedoms Park

[capeconcerts.com](http://capeconcerts.com)

**34<sup>th</sup> Annual “Ding” Darling Day Conservation Carnival**

April 20

[dingdarlingday.com](http://dingdarlingday.com)

**Culture Fest, Cape Coral**

April 27

Cultural Park

[capeculturefest.com](http://capeculturefest.com)

**12<sup>th</sup> Annual “Ding” Darling and Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament**

May 10

[dingdarlingtarpontourney.com](http://dingdarlingtarpontourney.com)

**14th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival**

May 22-26

[fortmyersfilmfestival.com](http://fortmyersfilmfestival.com)

**Fringe Fort Myers**

June 6-9

[artinlee.org/experience/fringe](http://artinlee.org/experience/fringe)

**National Seashell Day**

June 21

[visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day](http://visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day)

**Red, White & BOOM! In Cape Coral**

July 4

[capeboom.com](http://capeboom.com)

**MangoMania**

July TBA

Pine Island

[pineislandchamber.org/chamber-events/mangomania](http://pineislandchamber.org/chamber-events/mangomania)

**Island Hopper Songwriter Fest**

Sept. 20-29

[island-hopperfest.visitfortmyers.com](http://island-hopperfest.visitfortmyers.com)

**FITMIX FEST, downtown Fort Myers**

Sept. 27-29

[fitmixfest.com](http://fitmixfest.com)

**J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge "Art in the Wild"**

October TBA

[dingartinthewild.com](http://dingartinthewild.com)

**Cape Coral Oktoberfest**

October TBA

[capecoraloktoberfest.com](http://capecoraloktoberfest.com)

**Sanibel Island Writers Conference**

November TBA

[fgcu.edu/siwc](http://fgcu.edu/siwc)

**Holiday Luminary and kick-off to Sanibel Island 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

Dec. 6-7

Sanibel and Captiva islands

13-month celebration of Sanibel's 50th anniversary.

[sanibel-island.sanibel-captiva.org](http://sanibel-island.sanibel-captiva.org)

**40th Annual Cape Coral Art Festival and Market Place**

January 2025

[capecoralartfestival.com](http://capecoralartfestival.com)

**Bacon Jam**

January 2025

Caloosa Sound Amphitheater, downtown Fort Myers

[bscevent.com/bacon-jam-fort-myers](http://bscevent.com/bacon-jam-fort-myers)

**34th Tour De Cape in Cape Coral**

January 2025

Rotary Park

[tourdecape.net](http://tourdecape.net)

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods includes: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Matlacha, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, North*

*Fort Myers, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. For more information, go to [visitfortmyers.com](https://www.visitfortmyers.com)*

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