

KEYS TO THE CITY **OF FORT MYERS & SANIBEL**  
**BEST OF FORT MYERS & SANIBEL**

BY MARIAN COWHIG



The Shell Factory



The Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre



Miromar Outlets



Wildlife Drive in the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT BY TIENE MACDONALD/LAAMY, COURTESY OF THE BROADWAY PALM DINNER THEATRE, COURTESY OF MIROMAR OUTLETS, BY JAMES SCHWABER/LAAMY AND BY ELISABETH POLLERT SMITH/GETTY

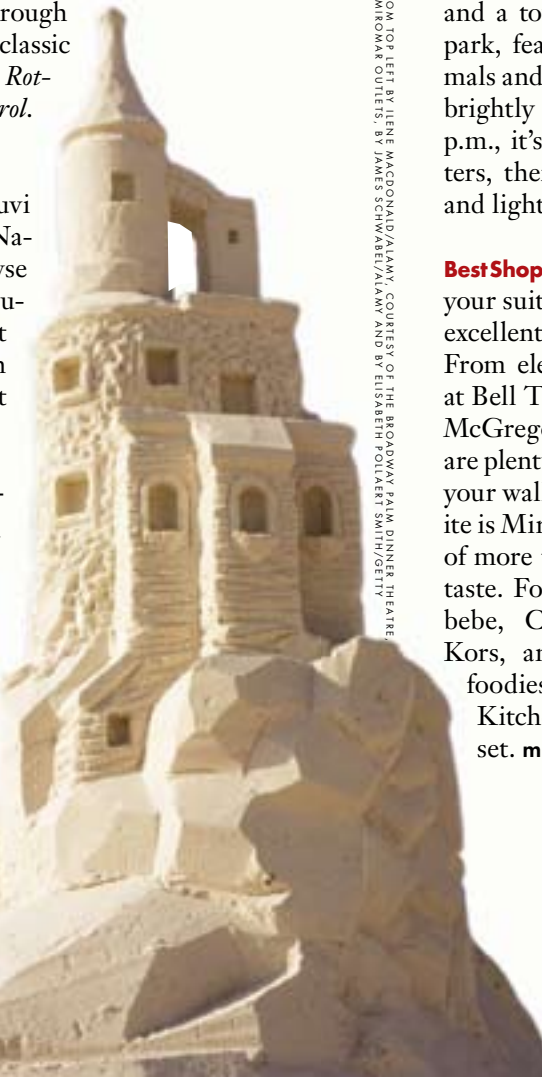
**Best Breakfast.** The Lighthouse Cafe on Sanibel Island attracts as many as 700 people a day during high season (so get there early!). For a truly yes-you're-on-vacation breakfast, try the coconut French toast or the ocean frittata (shrimp, scallops, and crabmeat sautéed with eggs and topped with an artichoke heart and Alfredo sauce). Add a mimosa and start your day on a high note. [lighthousecafe.com](http://lighthousecafe.com)

**Best Theater.** The Broadway Palm Dinner Theater brings the Great White Way to the beach, offering seven main-stage shows a year, as well as children's productions. Come early for cocktails

and a dinner buffet; the theater seats 448 and boasts 170,000 patrons annually. Through August 8, enjoy the family-friendly classic *Peter Pan*, and this fall catch *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* and *A Christmas Carol*. [broadwaypalm.com](http://broadwaypalm.com)

**Best Take-Home.** For variety in your souvenir hunt, head to The Shell Factory and Nature Park in North Fort Myers. Browse the shelves of this 70-year-old institution for exquisite shell jewelry, or just stick to the classics and take home an unadorned conch. Make a day of it

**Best Festival.** Festivals abound in Lee County – try Jazz on the Green in January or MangoMania Tropical Fruit Fair in July. But the biggest bang for your vacation-time buck is Islands FallFest, a 75-day collection of events such as the American Sandsculpting Championship Festival (Nov. 5–8); "Ding" Darling Days wildlife festival (Oct. 18–24); and Florida's Creative Coast Weekend (Nov. 13–15). Hotel packages, including goodies such as discounted rates, free meals, and spa trips, sweeten the deal. [fortmyers-sanibel.com](http://fortmyers-sanibel.com)



with lunch at Capt'n Fishbones and a tour of the on-site nature park, featuring hundreds of animals and a Rainforest Aviary with brightly colored parrots. At 8:30 p.m., it's time for Waltzing Waters, their colorful water, music, and light show. [shellfactory.com](http://shellfactory.com)

**Best Shopping.** Leave extra room in your suitcase — with Fort Myers' excellent shopping, you'll need it. From elegant Saks Fifth Avenue at Bell Tower Shops to the funky McGregor Antique Mall, there are plenty of opportunities to give your wallet a workout. Our favorite is Miromar Outlets, a bonanza of more than 140 shops for every taste. For fashionistas, there's 2b bebe, Coach Factory, Michael Kors, and True Religion. And foodies will flip for Calphalon Kitchen Outlet and Le Creuset. [miromaroutlets.com](http://miromaroutlets.com)

**Best Bike.** Hit the road on two wheels to see Lee County's coastline and expansive park system, boasting more than 130 paved bike paths. In addition, more than 20 miles of bike trails follow the Caloosahatchee River and go by parks such as the Calusa Nature Center and Planetarium, Centennial Park, the Four Mile Cove Ecological Park, and across the water to Sanibel and Pine islands. New road projects are also slated to include bike lanes, starting with an expanded stretch of U.S. 41, known locally as the Tamiami Trail. [leeparks.org](http://leeparks.org)

Lovely.  
Bones.



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[www.LeeMemorial.org](http://www.LeeMemorial.org)

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