

TAPOOZ TRAVEL

tours & adventures for travelers of all abilities, families & friends



MIAMI AND REGION



In and Around Miami Beach, and Southern Florida

Introduction

The cities of Miami and its neighboring Miami Beach are a fitting start of your adventure in South Florida. Day or night, their neighborhoods are alive with a vibrant mix of Latin, Caribbean and American vibe. There is the trendy nightlife of South Beach (“sobe” to the locals), the glitzy the Art Deco district, the hip Wynwood neighborhood, and the bustling Calle Ocho along the miles of white sand beaches. Add on the world class museums and a unique music scene with throngs of beautiful people and you know you are in for a good time.

Located in the tropical southeastern United States, the Florida Keys are a top destination for visitors of all ages. The drive from Miami to Key West is one of America’s most iconic road trips, passing through charming little towns and natural parks that you’d never find yourself in otherwise. The road spans some 110 miles of bridges and causeways, connecting small villages and towns from Key Largo to Key West, each with its own flavor and character,

Everglades National Park, at the southern tip of Florida, is often described as “a river of grass”, an enormous body of water flowing imperceptibly from the hinterland into the sea. The exceptional variety of water habitats has made it a sanctuary for a large number of birds and reptiles, as well as a haven for threatened species such as the manatee. We promise that you will see many alligators. On rare occasions, one can even encounter a unique specie of Everglade Black Bears.

A ride on an accessible “airboat” —a flat barge-like vessel powered by a propeller plane engine — through the swamps is an experience that promises to be as noisy as it is unforgettable. Gliding on the surface of the shallow swamp waters is a unique way to explore the huge expanse of the Everglades National Park and its particular flora and fauna (and of course alligators).

We love working with a specific company in the Everglades called Coopertown. They are very attentive to the needs of wheelchair-users and have adapted a couple their boats specifically for that purpose.

<http://coopertownairboats.com/>

There is human way to experience all that Miami and Southern Florida have to offer. The following are suggestions for what we consider the “must-do” given the length of your visit. Naturally, we encourage you to read about the region and plan according to your taste!

These three links are a good place to start:

<https://www.miamiandbeaches.com/>

<https://miamitouristguide.com/>

<https://www.visitflorida.com/en-us/cities/miami.html>

Getting around in Miami, Miami Beach and Southern Florida

It is very easy to get around Miami Beach. Your hotel is perfectly located in South Beach ("Sobe" to the locals) on Collins Avenue. Collins Avenue, running North to South parallel to the ocean, is the "beating heart" of this vibrant neighborhood. It is home to restaurants, bars, galleries, music and performance venues.

You can roll-and-walk to almost any place in Sobe. It is flat, with good and even pavement. In addition to that, a free trolley service provides an easy and quick access to many parts of the neighborhood and beyond. At the time of this writing, about one in two trolleys are fully wheelchair accessible. Its runs every 10-15 minutes and a stop is conveniently located across from the hotel on Collins Avenue. Ask the concierge at the hotel for a schedule and a map of the routes. With a little planning, you can visit other parts of Miami Beach (North Beach) or decide to walk all the way to South Point and return with the trolley.

This is a good guide on how to use the trolley system in Miami Beach:

<https://www.tripsavvy.com/how-to-ride-the-miami-beach-trolley-4173041>

From getting to and from Miami per se (the City of Miami is across Biscayne Bay and connected by a bridges), the most efficient way is to use a taxi or a ride service such as Uber.

It is only a 10-15 minute ride from the hotel to the main attractions in Miami (see below). The concierge at the hotel can assist you in calling for the dispatch of an accessible cab. You will be pay the driver directly for the ride. Credit cards are accepted.

Uber operates an increasing number of accessible vehicles in Miami. Use the app on your phone to order a Uber Wave.

To return to the hotel from a location in Miami, you will need to make prior arrangements for pick up or call the dispatch directly for an accessible cab: Super Yellow Cab (1) 305 888 7777 Or order an accessible Uber Wave.

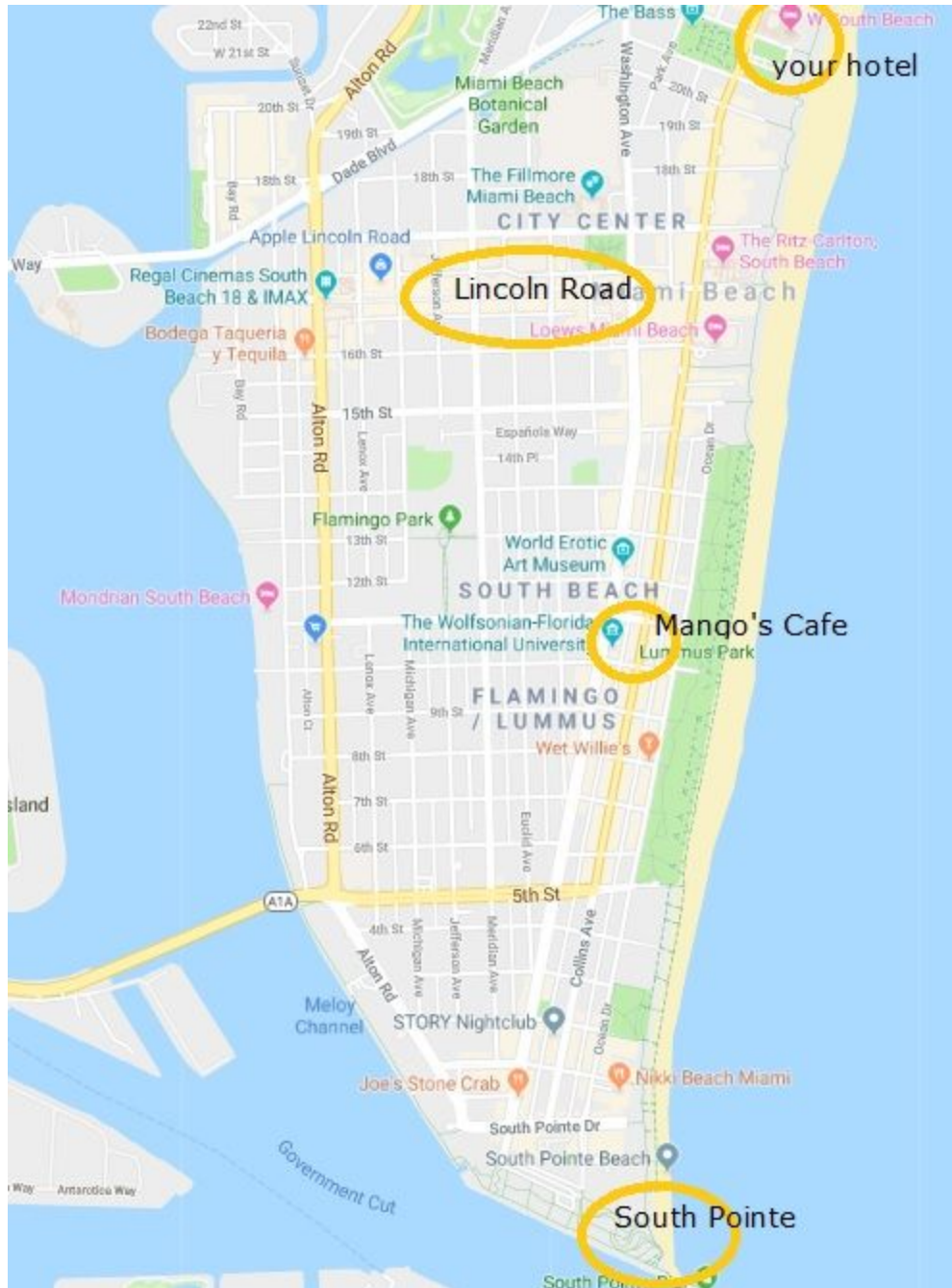
In Miami itself, you can again use the extensive trolley system.

<https://www.miamiandbeaches.com/plan-your-trip/transportation/how-to-use-miami-s-trolley-system>

If you prefer a pre-arranged accessible transportation service (for example, a day of multiple visits in Miami) or to travel further away outside of Miami and Southern Florida, we recommend a dedicated service with itransport Services. This is our local trusted provider in the region. You can call Anabel Martinez directly and plan specific dates and times for pick up and drop-off.

<http://www.itransportservices.com/>

Miami Beach / South Beach



If our hotel is conveniently located on Collins Avenue, the main “drag” of South Beach and its vibrant life, you are in luck. At any time of the day or the night (South Beach is essence never goes to sleep), you can stroll Collins Avenue and Ocean Avenue for restaurants, bars, live music, galleries and entertainment. The very end of Collins/Ocean Avenues and the tip of Miami Beach is called “South Pointe”. There you will find a gorgeous beach and a wheelchair accessible pier that goes straight in the ocean.

A few minutes walking distance from your hotel is Lincoln Road, a pedestrian avenue (close to car traffic) that runs East-West in the art of the Art Deco district. You can easily spend a few hours doing what the locals love to do: take it slow, enjoy an ice-cream and a coffee at any number of cafes on the Mall, and (most importantly) engage in people-watching. Many galleries and stores are located in architecturally significant buildings along the Road.

More details here:

<https://lincolnroad.com/>

On a sunny day, Lummus Park (bordering Ocean Avenue) is a welcome green oasis. This could be a great place for a picnic in the shade with one of the enormous (and delicious) creations you could pick up from the nearby La Sandwicherie on 14th Street just behind Collins Avenue. The locals will tell you that they make the best "cubano" sandwich in town.

<http://www.lasandwicherie.com/>

A visit of South Beach will not be complete without an evening at the most joyous and fun place in Miami: Mango's Tropical.

This wheelchair accessible iconic cafe is known for its extravagant dinner and show. Their dance floor is one of the best places to move to salsa music.

Check out details here:

<https://mangos.com/mangos-miami-beach/>

The beaches of Miami Beach are of course one of the main reasons people come here from all over the world. You can access the beach directly from your hotel or decide to explore further south by following the wheelchair-accessible beach boardwalk. It goes uninterrupted from your hotel to South Pointe. Every so often, you will notice pathways that go from the boardwalk to the ocean. Look for the handicap sign. These wheelchair-accessible pathways will take you closer to the water.

If you want to get close to the water, the city of Miami Beach has a number of beach-wheelchair available for free for visitors. A number of them are even motorized and very easy to control. If you feel that you are able to transfer, please ask the concierge upon your arrival to reserve one for you.

Miami

Miami is a city of neighborhoods, each with its particular flavor, character, sights and sounds. Again here, given the time, we recommend these three in priority.

Little Havana is the heart of the Cuban community of Miami. English is a second language there, if spoken at all. Spend some time strolling along "Calle Ocho" (8th Street). No need to hurry. An afternoon is well spent mixing with the local champs at Domino Park, visiting Jose Montagne's Guantanamera Cigar Store (best cigars and the strongest cafe in town), ending with a traditional Cuban cuisine dinner at the celebrated restaurant Versailles.

More details here:

www.timeout.com/miami/little-havana

The Wynwood Art District is a relatively new phenomenon in Miami. A group of leading-edge artists and entrepreneurs have transformed this neighborhood of old warehouses and garages into a vibrant and incredibly creative district. Galleries, exhibition spaces, open air art forums, tons of excellent restaurants and cafes make this a great evening destination.

More details here:

<https://wynwoodmiami.com/>

A more traditional destination (and a little more touristic) is the Bayside Marketplace, part of the development along water in the general area of downtown Miami. A great destination for an afternoon of shopping and relaxing with a drink by the harbor marina.

More details here:

www.baysidemarketplace.com

This is also the point of departure for the cruises on Biscayne Bay. This is a great way to experience the connection between Miami and the Ocean. This is an easy and relaxed 1.5 hour tour. We recommend strongly to reserve a space for a cruise around sunset. The changing colors in the sky and the sun setting behind the Miami skyline will add to a memorable experience.

More details here:

<https://miamitourcompany.com/biscayne-bay>

Outside of Miami

The Everglades

The Everglades are of course another major reason to visit Southern Florida.

You will have the opportunity to experience a portion of the the Everglades by taking a tour with an airboat. But there is much more to see and to do in this enormous National Park.

Time permitting, we recommend a visit to the "Shark Valley" portion of the Park. It has a number of wheelchair accessible easy trails from the Visitor Center itself and an accessible tram service that will take you deep into the Park to an observation tower.

More details here:

www.nps.gov/ever/index.htm

www.nps.gov/ever/planyourvisit/svdirections.htm

www.visitflorida.com/en-us/things-to-do/outdoors-nature/everglades-national-park.html

The Florida Keys

From Key Largo to Key West, more than a dozen fishing villages and small towns dot along the 100 miles of bridges and elevated causeways. These keys are in essence small islands, each with its character and flavor. We like Islamorada in particular for its local fresh fish restaurants right on the water. The Hungry Tarpon is a local favorite.

As you "turn the corner" and are now facing West, the sunsets are magnificent.

For more details, see here:

<https://floridakeys.com/>

<https://hungrytarpon.com/>

Wildlife reserves

Southern Florida is truly a paradise for wildlife enthusiasts. From the easily accessible parks to the more remote and savage environments, there is something for every taste and level of adventure. This is a short selection of what we recommend.

Seaquarium Miami. Not "wildlife" per se, but one of the best places to experience a close encounter / swim with dolphins. With a little preparation, it is wheelchair accessible but the person with the disability need to be able to wear a wetsuit (supplied by the park) and spend about ½ hour in the water.

<https://www.miamiseaquarium.com/things-to-do/experiences/dolphin-encounter>

Florida Panther National Refuge. Part of the State of Florida Wildlife Service. A bit remote in the Big Cypress part of the Everglades. Rugged but unique opportunity to see endangered/protected panther species.

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Florida_Panther/visit/plan_your_visit.html

Flamingo Gardens. Botanical gardens and Everglades Wildlife Sanctuary. Sprawling site. Very well organized and set up. One of the largest in the US with over 85 native species of animals and birds.

<https://www.flamingogardens.org/visit.html>

Butterfly World. Largest butterfly park in the world with over 10,000 butterflies / 150 species. Well organized and accessible.

www.butterflyworld.com

Dagny Johnson Hammock State Park. in Key Largo. Well maintained wheelchair accessible trails into the swampy areas. Alligators and others' natural habitat.

www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/dagny-johnson-key-largo-hammock-botanical-state-park

Zoological Wildlife Foundation. Close to Miami. Lots of exotic animals.

<https://zoologicalwildlifefoundation.com/wildlife-tours/animals/>