



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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What's new from Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods

Celebrate July 4 with family fun, plan ahead for Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) – Fort Myers' Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods in Southwest Florida continues to provide new experiences for returning guests and first-time visitors. Whether you're looking for great year-round weather or shell-drenched beaches along the sparkling Gulf of Mexico, VisitFortMyers.com is the source for the most up-to-date vacation information.

The July 4 holiday takes us back to the old-fashioned, Independence Day celebrations that we enjoyed when we were kids. Parades, watermelon, gathering for cookouts in the backyard and fireworks that never get old no matter how many times you've seen them.

We have lots of reasons to celebrate July 4 this year as many of our favorite events are back and are happening throughout Lee County. Check out a few:

Cape Coral Red, White and Boom!

The City of Cape Coral brings food, fireworks and national entertainment at the foot of the Cape Coral Bridge. Check website for details, times and parking and bridge closure details.

capeboom.com

Star Spangled Bonita

The City of Bonita Springs marks Independence Day with a 9 a.m. parade in downtown Bonita beginning at Riverside Park. There will be fun activities for the whole family and live music. Fireworks begin at dusk. cityofbonitasprings.org

Downtown Fort Myers Freedom Fest

The fun goes from 6-10 p.m. with a street fair that includes food trucks, music by the Thunder Beach Band, crafts and fireworks. myriverdistrict.com/event/freedom-fest

See it all from above at the **Rooftop Bash at Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center** from 7 to 11 p.m. A barbeque buffet, drinks, music by the Freecoasters and more. Check out pricing and reservations at sbdac.com/4th-of-july-rooftop-bash-2022

Fort Myers Beach tradition

Celebrate as the Fort Myers Beach July 4 parade makes its way down Estero Boulevard with colorful floats and costumed participants. The parade starts at Bay Oaks Recreation Center at 10 a.m. and continues down the boulevard to Times Square. Fireworks begin at 9 p.m. at Times Square. fortmyersbeach.org

Sanibel Island

It's small town, old-fashioned fun. At 9:30 a.m., Sanibel Island's annual July 4 parade begins at the corner of Tarpon Bay Road and Periwinkle Way. The parade will travel down Periwinkle Way to Casa Ybel Road. Parade participants go all out decorating floats and have fun tossing trinkets to spectators lined up along the road. Catch the fireworks at 9 p.m. mysanibel.com

Plan ahead for Island Hopper 2022

Mark your calendar for Island Hopper Songwriter Fest 2022, returning for its eighth year. A 10-day music festival featuring performances by some of the country's most talented singer-songwriters, Island Hopper takes place in three areas, with the first weekend kicking off on Captiva Island, Sept. 16-18, then moving to downtown Fort Myers, Sept. 19-22, and ending with a weekend on Fort Myers Beach, Sept. 23-25. Most shows are free, with the exception of a few ticketed experiences, like our headliner shows. Stay up to date on festival news with the Island Hopper app or islandhopperfest.com

Accommodations news

IHG Hotels & Resorts, one of the world's leading hotel companies, has recognized the Holiday Inn Ft. Myers Airport @ Town Center team as Spirit of True Hospitality Awards recipients for 2021 accomplishments including exceptional performance among several key customer criteria. The property is one of 400 winners selected among the organization's nearly 4,300 mainstream, upscale and luxury hotels. holidayinn.com/ftmyerstownctr

Airport news

New air service at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

Breeze Airways: nonstop to Las Vegas (LAS) and Charleston, South Carolina (CHS), twice weekly.

Eurowings Discover: Frankfurt, Germany (FRA), weekly, year-round service

Alaska Airlines: Seattle (SEA) weekly, year-round service.

Attractions news

Mound House, Fort Myers Beach, offers summer lecture series

The iconic Mound House, one of the area's popular historic attractions, traces its roots to the ancient Calusa of over 2,000 years ago. This summer, the attraction is offering a new summer lecture series on the second Tuesday of each month and will run from July through September. For adults only, a wine-and-refreshments reception begins at 5:30 p.m. and the program runs from 6 to 7 p.m. Due to limited seating, advance registrations may be made at 239-765-0865. moundhouse.org/event-directory

Captiva Island fishing stories on Amazon

Check out an enlightening tale of Calusa and Cubans fishing the local waters, of fish camps and commercial fishing, the emergence of sport fishing and the industry that developed to support the sport, the origins of fishing guides and the famous visitors who came to Captiva Island to fish. Produced by the Captiva Island Historical Society.

[amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B09SB1QPS8/ref=atv_dp_cnc_0_0](https://www.amazon.com/gp/video/detail/B09SB1QPS8/ref=atv_dp_cnc_0_0)

Comic relief: Awkward Family Photos in Bonita Springs

Through July 25, this traveling exhibition at the Performing Arts Center on Bonita Beach Road, celebrates the imperfect moments that come with the family experience and provides a place for everyone to take comfort in the fact that their family is not alone. The collection includes more than two hundred classic awkward family photos and some of their hilarious stories.

artcenterbonita.org/exhibitions

Have fun and save with Fort Myers Sun Saver Passport

Fort Myers' Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods has launched a free mobile savings passport giving users access to exclusive deals on attractions, restaurants and experiences throughout the destination.

To participate:

- Sign up at explore.visitfortmyers.com
- The passport will be delivered to your mobile phone via text.
- Redeem it on your mobile phone at participating businesses.
- Visit the website for a complete list of attractions, restaurants and experiences.

Check in and have a good day: Fort Myers Discovery Challenge

Explore Fort Myers and surrounding areas to discover the arts and cultural attractions that make the islands, beaches and neighborhoods naturally unique. Embark on a guided tour of the Mound House that overlooks Estero Bay or walk the Calusa Heritage Trail on Pine Island. From the nationally recognized shell museum on Sanibel Island to the art galleries of Matlacha, there are so many ways to have a good day. Using your mobile device, check in to each location and you could find exclusive savings and deals. Even better, you can earn a variety of prizes.

visitfortmyers.com/challenge

Annual festivals and events

MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival, Pine Island

July 16

mangomaniafl.net

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 16-25

IslandHopperFest.com

Roar Offshore, Fort Myers Beach

Oct. 6-8

roaroffshore.com

Art in the Wild Day, J.N. “Ding” Darling Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island

Oct. 13

dingartinthewild.com

37th Annual Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

Oct. 21-23 and 28-30

capecoraloktoberfest.com

Lee County Alliance of the Arts 5th Annual Arts on Tap, Fort Myers

November TBD

Artinlee.org/ontap

2023 Events

38th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral

Jan. 14-15

capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

Feb. 3-5

artfestfortmyers.com

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 18

edisonfestival.org

Spring training 2023

Boston Red Sox

February-March

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

February-March

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

Boca Grande Film Festival

February TBD

friendsofbocagrande.org/events/boca-grande-film-festival

86th Annual Sanibel Shell Show and Festival, Sanibel Island

March 2-4

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/p/84/shell-festival

24th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers
March 4
readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers
March 7-11
echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-festival

65th Annual Fort Myers Beach Shrimp Festival, Fort Myers Beach
March 11-12
fortmyersbeach.org/events/fort-myers-beach-shrimp-festival

34th Annual “Ding” Darling Day, Lakes Park, Fort Myers
Conservation Carnival
April 22
dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/ding-darling-days

17th Annual Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival
April TBD
fmbfilmfest.com

13th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival
May 17-21
fortmyersfilmfestival.com

11th Annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament, Sanibel Island
May 19
dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1

Captiva Pride Weekend
June 2-4
tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend

National Seashell Day
June 21
visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

Editor’s note: Fort Myers and surrounding areas includes Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel & Captiva islands, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, Pine Island, Matlacha, Cape Coral, North Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. For media assistance, VisitFortMyers.com/media-central