



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACTS: Ray Sarracino, Jackie Parker, Miriam Dotson 239-338-3500

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

Shellcast visits Boca Grande, guest rooms open, 38th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts and more

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) – As the Fort Myers area continues to recover from the impact of Hurricane Ian, 65% of the county's guest rooms have opened with more to come in the weeks and months ahead. This milestone of 9,302 rooms opening throughout Lee County is another step in the right direction.

For information about the accommodations and attractions that are currently open, please visit visitfortmyers.com/open. As information is rapidly changing and there may be limited availability, hours and amenities, please check with the individual businesses on their status.

Attractions and entertainment

The 2023 **Bluegrass with NITROGRASS tour** will perform its final Florida concert at the Caloosa Sound Amphitheater, downtown Fort Myers on Jan. 18. Consisting of members Charles Wood, Darren Nicholson and Colby Laney, NITROGRASS is known for its carefree brand of bluegrass and sonically unique and visually appealing acoustic performances. Tickets are \$10. Bring blankets and foldable lawn chairs. For details, visit luminaryhotel.com/events/bluegrass-with-nitrograss

Don't miss the 38th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts in Cape Coral Jan. 14-15. The event was named 5th best art festival in the country by Sunshine Artists. capecoralfestival.com

Downtown Fort Myers monthly events

Art Walk on Jan. 6, 6-10 p.m.

Support local and regional artists as they sell and display one-of-a-kind pieces. myriverdistrict.com

Music Walk on Jan. 20, 6 p.m.-10 p.m.

Downtown Fort Myers comes alive on the third Friday of each month as regional musicians line the streets with everything from jazz and blues to rock and roll. Free.

myriverdistrict.com

Spring Training 2023 tickets go on sale this month. Check for details:

Boston Red Sox

Feb. 24-March 28

Opening game with Tampa Bay Rays

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

Feb. 25-March 27

Opening game with Tampa Bay Rays

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

ECHO Global Farm Tours, North Fort Myers

Experience farming and gardening at its most creative, with unique demonstrations, plants and techniques being used to help farming families around the world. ECHO is also home to one of the largest collections of tropical food plants in the U.S. Guided walking tours are 90 minutes, 9:30 a.m. Tuesday-Saturday. echonet.org

Butterfly House tours, Monday, Friday and Saturday, Cape Coral

The Tom Allen Memorial Butterfly House is home to many native Florida butterfly species, including the zebra longwing, the state butterfly. Guides explain the different butterflies, their caterpillars and host plants. Donations are accepted. 10:30 a.m. Monday, Friday and Saturday. Ccfriendsofwildlife.org/tom-allen-memorial-butterfly-garden

True Tours, River District History Tours, Fort Myers

This Fort Myers walking tour educates and entertains with narratives of local history and stories about the colorful personalities of the founders of Fort Myers. Tour at 10:30 a.m. each first and third Saturday of the month. True Tours, 2200 First St., Fort Myers, 239-945-0405, truetours.net

Airport news

New air service at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

-**Sun Country Airlines** has new nonstop service to Eau Claire, Wisconsin (EAU) twice weekly. suncountry.com.

-**Avelo Airlines** Raleigh-Durham (RDU) beginning Feb. 16, 2023, Wilmington, Delaware, (ILG) weekly, beginning Feb. 3.

For the latest RSW information visit flyrsw.com

Keep in touch: latest Shellcast podcast focuses on Boca Grande

Listen to our latest episode of Shellcast which was recorded during the holiday Lighting of the Lighthouse at Port Boca Grande on Gasparilla Island. Hear from the locals about how this island community is recovering from Hurricane Ian with interviews with Sharon McKenzie, executive director, Barrier Island Parks Society; Gary Cross, president of Boca Grande Chamber of Commerce; Sue Herbert, resident of Fremont, Ohio, and Englewood, Florida; Andrew and

Brittany Madison, residents of Englewood; Paul Townsend, lighthouse docent. Shellcast is available wherever fine podcasts are downloaded, at [VisitFortMyers.com/shellcast](https://www.visitfortmyers.com/shellcast) and at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=533TLP3U1Qo>

In the news

Susan Glaser, travel editor of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, recently visited the area and produced a series of five articles Check them out here:

1. Sanibel Island after Ian: Causeway reopens to public Jan. 2 but recovery will take years
[cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/sanibel-island-after-ian-causeway-reopens-to-public-jan-2-but-recovery-will-take-years.html](https://www.cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/sanibel-island-after-ian-causeway-reopens-to-public-jan-2-but-recovery-will-take-years.html)
2. Rebuilding Fort Myers Beach: Hurricane Ian prompts debate over island's future
[cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/rebuilding-fort-myers-beach-hurricane-ian-prompts-debate-over-islands-future.html](https://www.cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/rebuilding-fort-myers-beach-hurricane-ian-prompts-debate-over-islands-future.html)
3. Exploring downtown Fort Myers, an alternative waterfront destination in Southwest Florida
[cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/exploring-downtown-fort-myers-an-alternative-waterfront-destination-in-southwest-florida.html](https://www.cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/exploring-downtown-fort-myers-an-alternative-waterfront-destination-in-southwest-florida.html)
4. Overnighting in old Florida, at Pine Island's Tarpon Lodge
[cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/overnighting-in-old-florida-at-pine-islands-tarpon-lodge.html](https://www.cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/overnighting-in-old-florida-at-pine-islands-tarpon-lodge.html)
5. With beaches near Fort Myers still closed, head to Boca Grande on Gasparilla Island for sun and sand
[cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/with-beaches-near-fort-myers-still-closed-head-to-boca-grande-on-gasparilla-island-for-sun-and-sand.html](https://www.cleveland.com/travel/2022/12/with-beaches-near-fort-myers-still-closed-head-to-boca-grande-on-gasparilla-island-for-sun-and-sand.html)

Annual festivals and events 2023 (Dates subject to change, please confirm)

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

Jan. 14-15

[capecoralfestival.com](https://www.capecoralfestival.com)

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

Feb. 3-5

[artfestfortmyers.com](https://www.artfestfortmyers.com)

21st Annual Burrowing Owl Festival, Cape Coral

Feb. 25

Rotary Park

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

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 18

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

Spring training 2023

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Feb. 24-March 28

Opening game with Tampa Bay Rays

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

Feb. 25-March 27

Opening game with Tampa Bay Rays

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

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

13th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May 17-21

fortmyersfilmfestival.com

Captiva Pride Weekend

June 2-4

tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend

National Seashell Day

June 21

visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 22-Oct. 1

island-hopperfest.visitfortmyers.com

Sanibel Island Writers Conference

November TBD

www.fgcu.edu/siwc

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***EDITOR'S NOTE:** Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods include: 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*