

## **BCD Travel Recommends: Miami**

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### **A city spiced with the flavor of Latin American culture, music and food**



In honor of ACTE's choice of Miami as the site of its Global Education Conference this month, In Motion is moving to a Latin beat.

As a gateway to South and Central America and the third most popular city in the United States for international visitors (after Los Angeles and New York), Miami is a city generously spiced with the flavor of Latin American culture, music and food.

Greater Miami is also an international crossroads of commerce, finance, culture, sports, entertainment, transportation and tourism, which is, not surprisingly, the city's main source of income. The downtown Port of Miami is the largest cruise ship port in the world, handling more than three million passengers a year.

### **Welcome to My Neighborhood(s)**

Miami, known as Greater Miami and the Beaches or just Greater Miami for short, includes a number of islands and mainland communities, including two cities – Miami and Miami Beach. Much of Miami's appeal is due to its diverse neighborhoods, which range from the big-city, towering skyscrapers of downtown Miami (the commercial heart of the city) to Little Havana, home to the Cuban community, or to the trendy Miami Beach neighborhood of South Beach.



#### ***Bayside Marketplace***

A popular shopping and entertainment arcade, clustered around a small harbor and abuzz with bars, shops and market stalls. Bayside is the main stop for the water taxi service and the starting point for several boat tours of Miami Bay.

#### ***South Beach***

The place to see and be seen, and a magnet for celebrities and fun-lovers who thrive on its cosmopolitan atmosphere, designer shopping, upbeat restaurants and fast-paced nightlife. By day, a young, hip crowd of trendy film-star wannabes, international supermodels, artists, writers, tourists, strollers, strutters and the thriving local gay community all cruise Ocean Drive and the pedestrian-friendly Lincoln Road Mall. By night, salsa or techno music flows from the many dance clubs onto the busy streets.

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South Beach itself, with its white sands, palm trees and dazzling blue sea, stretches from Lincoln Road Mall to South Pointe Park at the southernmost tip (great for surfing, fishing and sunsets). However, the most striking feature of South Beach is its famous Art Deco Historic District – over 800 buildings within one square mile, all in the same streamlined architectural style, painted in pastel shades and lit with brilliantly colored neon lights. Tours of the district are offered on Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday mornings or Thursday evening and self-guided tour maps are always available at the Art Deco Welcome Center (1001 Ocean Drive, +1 305 531 3484, [www.mdpl.org](http://www.mdpl.org)).

### ***Little Havana***

After Fidel Castro took power in 1959, Cuban refugees settled in this neighborhood just west of downtown Miami. Today, with its 800,000-strong Cuban-American community, this colorful district has a distinctly Latin atmosphere with its Spanish signs, Cuban coffee bars and restaurants, small cigar factories and street-side food stalls, selling such delicacies as baho (Cuban stew) and freshly squeezed juices. Monuments to anti-Castro Cubans line the streets, especially around Calle Ocho (Eighth Street), the liveliest part of Little Havana and the venue for the Calle Ocho Festival, a famous annual spring carnival.



Transport: Metrorail Vizcaya; then bus 17 or 24.

### ***Coconut Grove***

Located on the edge of Biscayne Bay, south of downtown Miami, this is one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, with bohemian roots. Settled by a multicultural group of Bahamians and New Englanders, the neighborhood drew artists and intellectuals, who set up summer homes here. Today, it is a trendy district with a bustling village atmosphere, full of colorful galleries, theatres, nightclubs, fine restaurants, hip sidewalk cafés and shops. The main attraction is The Gallery at CocoWalk, a stylish shopping mall packed with restaurants, bars, shops and a cinema. It is also home to the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens.

Transport: Metrorail Coconut Grove.

### ***Key Biscayne***

Linked to the mainland by the Rickenbacker Causeway, Key Biscayne combines traditional Florida-style houses with ostentatious mansions belonging to some of Miami's wealthiest residents. The beaches here rank among Florida's best – their fine sand and relatively calm seas make them a popular choice for families. Other top attractions include two beautiful parks (Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Recreation Area and Crandon Park) both with magnificent beaches, bike trails and nature walks.

Transport: Bus B

### **Hot Bites**

Miami is a gastronomic paradise. A number of the world's hottest culinary talents have set up shop here, and the city boasts a huge range of restaurants catering to all tastes and pockets. One thing to keep in mind – unlike some cities, where hotel restaurants should be given a wide berth, some of Miami's true "destination" restaurants are to be found in its lovely hotels.

### **Blue Door at the Delano**

Creative culinary duo Claude Troisgros and Jeffrey Chodorow meld tropical and Asian ingredients with French and Brazilian techniques to yield remarkable meals. The stylish and sumptuous setting in the Delano Hotel means guests can be seated next to celebrities, also here for the well-crafted, seasonal dishes, like the Big Ravioli, filled with crab and scallop mousseline. Indoor or outdoor seating may be arranged. Reservations recommended.

*Delano Hotel, 1685 Collins Avenue, South Beach*

### **Norman's**

One of America's most celebrated chefs, Norman Van Aken is considered by many to be the originator of "New World cuisine" – a blend of Latin, Caribbean, Asian and American cooking – and his restaurant is one of Florida's finest. A daily changing menu may include a starter of yucca-stuffed crispy shrimp with a sour-orange mojo or a main of Elysian Fields Farm lamb loin and sausage with roasted garlic cake, grilled lettuce and violet mustard emulsion.

*21 Almeria Avenue, Coral Gables*

### **China Grill**

The name is misleading, as this buzzing, atmospheric restaurant combines ingredients, flavors and techniques from around the globe. Menu highlights include irresistible treats like the crispy duck with caramelized black vinegar sauce or the grilled garlic shrimp with black fettuccini and red curry coconut sauce.

*404 Washington Avenue, South Beach*

### **1220**

Located at the Tides, one of South Beach's most glamorous Art Deco hotels, this beautiful, minimalist restaurant is decorated almost entirely in white, with crisp linens, candles and fresh flowers on all the tables. The food is equally simple and uncluttered, focusing on fusion or "progressive American" cuisine, such as lobster gazpacho and grouper in a curry-ginger broth. There is a small but select wine list to complement the menu.

*Tides, 1220 Ocean Drive, South Beach*

### **Little Havana**

Proof positive that there is authentic Cuban food outside Calle Ocho, witness Little Havana in North Miami Beach, a friendly, popular choice with locals. Open daily for lunch and dinner, enjoy such menu items as lobster-stuffed yucca pastry or the masas de puerco, a tender, crispy fried pork dish that is a favorite among patrons.

*12727 Biscayne Boulevard, North Miami Beach*