

Palm Beach

Florida's playground to the rich and famous serves up culture galore

story Laurie Wallace-Lynch

Palm Beach Florida is like that friend that seems to have everything going for them: beauty, glamour, charm, sophistication, wealth, artistic talent and a sense of adventure.

Palm Beach has long been known as a playground for the rich and famous including U.S. President Donald Trump's famous **Mar-a-Lago Club** and Five-Star Diamond Award winning **Trump Golf**. The private club is nestled amongst hundreds of luxury homes that dot the seaside in this prestigious area. Tall, coiffed hedges—some as high as 20 feet, offer privacy to distinguished homeowners.

For Canadian visitors, Palm Beach offers sun, sand,

surf and a wide variety of things to see and do, including water sports, deep sea fishing and golfing in Florida's Golf Capital which boasts more than 160 courses. You can also spend the afternoon shopping on Worth Avenue—the Rodeo Drive of Florida, where luxury shops include names like **Chanel**, **Louis Vuitton** and **Jimmy Choo**. What many visitors may be surprised to discover however, is that Palm Beach County is an arts and cultural mecca boasting a plethora of museums, art galleries and cultural venues.

The **Flagler Museum** is a must-see historic site. Completed in 1902, Whitehall is the former home of railroad baron Henry Flagler. Today, Whitehall is a



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Natural Historic Landmark that is open to the public for guided tours. Visitors have a rare opportunity to marvel at the opulence of the great hall, to climb the great solid wood staircase to view the bedrooms, take a peek at the family photos and visit the waterfront glass atrium which houses Henry Flagler's personal railway car.

Nearby, the *Ann Norton Sculpture Gardens* showcase the artist's talents in the form of giant sculptures which are found along winding paths leading into her tropical garden.

The Norton Museum of Art was founded in 1941 and is now one of Florida's major cultural institutions. The museum is renowned for its distinguished permanent collection of American, Chinese, European Art, Contemporary Art and Photography including works by Monet, Picasso, O'Keeffe and Matisse.

Located in the resort community of Palm Beach, the *Society of the Four Arts* showcases seasonal cultural programs and art exhibitions, as well as a beautiful sculpture and botanical gardens.

Downtown West Palm Beach is home to *The Raymond F. Kravis Center of the Performing Arts*, one of the premier performing arts centres in the Southeast. Hop in the car for a short drive to Delray Beach where you will discover a vibrant, first-class resort destination situated on the Atlantic Ocean between Boca Raton and West Palm Beach. Florida's heritage is showcased in the restored 1924 *Cason Cottage Historic House and Museum* in the *Pineapple Grove Arts District* in Delray Beach.

For a relaxing afternoon, take a stroll through the beautiful *Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens*.

Founded in 1977, winding trails lead over beautiful bridges and ponds as you discover the tranquility of the Japanese gardens.

In nearby Boca Raton, people of all ages will enjoy a visit to *Gumbo Limbo Nature Centre* to see the turtles. Gumbo Limbo sits on a 20 acre protected barrier island, offering refuge and medical aid to turtles, along with other animals, some of which are rare or endangered.





Boca Raton also boasts the must-visit *Boca Raton Museum of Art* featuring special collections and exhibitions. This is just one of the many museums and galleries assisted by The Cultural Council of Palm Beach Country, a support agency for arts and culture in The Palm Beaches, serving non-profit organizations, artists and art districts.

After a morning of museum and gallery hopping, nothing is better than spending the afternoon swimming or relaxing on the beach in Palm Beach. The beach is within walking distance from the historic *Brazilian Court Hotel* where I stayed, but guests can also ride to the beach on one of the hotel's hot pink Lilley Pulitzer designer bikes, or the concierge will gladly drive you in the hotel Mercedes. Their signature beach service includes having the friendly concierge escort you on to the beach where he sets up your beach chair and umbrella, hands you an icy cold bottle of water and a free magazine and a giant smile as other beach-bathers stare in envy. How's that for living the good life? 🍷

above Ann Norton Sculpture gardens photo supplied by Palm Beach County

opposite from top to bottom Worth Avenue luxury designer shopping district, Gumbo Limbo Nature Centre in Boca Raton, Worth Avenue Clocktower photos supplied by Palm Beach County

Where to Stay

The Brazilian Court, Palm Beach

This stunningly beautiful Spanish Colonial hotel offers luxurious accommodations and top notch personalized service in a relaxing oasis. Ideally located within walking distance to the beach and Worth Avenue. The Brazilian Court was named one of the Best Hotels in the World in 2016 by Travel & Leisure Magazine. www.braziliancourt.com,

Where to Eat

Cafe Boulud at The Brazilian Court

Internationally acclaimed Chef Daniel Boulud specializes in French cuisine and creates delicious and beautiful food and wine pairings. There is also a Cafe Boulud in Toronto. cafeboulud.com/palmbeach

Buccan, Palm Beach

Chic and trendy, this open concept restaurant is super popular with the locals. They specialize in fresh seafood and wood-fired tacos. buccanpalmbeach.com

Al Fresco Pizzeria Ristorante, West Palm Beach

Executive Chef Jose Gracia specializes in tasty Italian cuisine served in a stunningly beautiful restaurant, bar and courtyard. pizzaalfresco.com.

Charley's Crab House, Palm Beach

Make a reservation and a personalized menu will be on your table when you arrive! This beautiful beach-front restaurant is famous for their fish and chips, Maryland Style Crab Cakes, and other fresh fish and seafood delights created by Chef Austin Evane. facebook.com/charleyscrabpalmbeach

For more info visit: The Culture Council of Palm Beach County www.palmbeachculture.com

