



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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January 2020

239-338-3500

Celebrate nationally recognized annual festivals at The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) – In addition to great, year-round weather, shell-drenched beaches and the sparkling Gulf of Mexico, The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in Southwest Florida continues to provide new experiences for visitors to Florida's unspoiled island destination. For the latest vacation information, visit FortMyers-Sanibel.com

Plan ahead

Save the dates for the **7th Annual Island Hopper Songwriter Fest**. Returning Sept. 18-27, 2020, the award-winning, 10-day event will include star-studded performances by some of country music's greatest singer-songwriters from Nashville and nationwide. It kicks off on Captiva Island Sept. 18-20 2020; moves to downtown Fort Myers Sept. 21-24; and ends at Fort Myers Beach Sept. 25-27.

Enjoy more than 80 artists and 100 shows. Most are free in small, intimate venues. Stay tuned for details at islandhopperfest.com or download the free Island Hopper Songwriter Fest app on iOS, Android and Google Play.

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown historic district

Jan. 31-Feb 2, 2020

239-768-3602

artfestfortmyers.com

On the waterfront in downtown Fort Myers, visitors enjoy made-in-USA original art by more than 200 artists. Enjoy food, music and fun for the whole family and opening night activities Jan. 31, 2020.

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Friends of Lovers Key Annual Vow Renewal, Lovers Key State Park

Feb. 14, 2020

239-463-5480

10 a.m., 1 p.m. or 4 p.m.

friendsofloverskey.org/event/valentines-vow-renewal

Love is always in the air at Lovers Key State Park, but even more so on Valentine's Day. Couples are invited to renew their vows by the gazebo on the beach and enjoy a champagne toast, meal by Truly Scrumptious, dancing, photos and a vow renewal certificate. Tickets: \$125 per couple. This memorable event always sells out so book now.

82nd Annual Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 15, 2020

239-334-2999

edisonfestival.org

During February, Fort Myers celebrates the birthday of its most illustrious historical resident, Thomas Alva Edison, in befitting fashion. Edison, who built a home on the banks of the Caloosahatchee River and spent 46 winters there, invented the light bulb and held more than 1,200 patents. It's appropriate that the month of activities culminates with a lighted night parade. Invention competitions, parties, craft shows and a 5K run are all part of the festival.

Spring Training 2020

The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel is the spring training home of the Boston Red Sox and the Minnesota Twins. Get up close and see your favorite baseball players. What could be better than beautiful spring days and great baseball? For a complete listing of packages, special rates and information on a spring training vacation, visit FortMyersSanibel.com.

Boston Red Sox spring training

Feb. 21-March 24, 2020 JetBlue

Park, Fort Myers redsox.com

Minnesota Twins spring training

Feb. 21-March 23, 2020

CenturyLink Sports Complex, Fort Myers

twinsbaseball.com

83rd Annual Sanibel Shell Fair & Show, Sanibel Island

March 5-7, 2020

Sanibel Community House

239-472-2155

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/p/84/shell-festival#.XT3cY_JKiiQ

Sanibel Island, named the best shelling beach in the U.S. and one of the best in the world, hosts

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shelling enthusiasts who gather each year for the shell fair that draws visitors from around the globe. One of the most unique events in the country, it began on a porch with just a few islanders and has evolved into today's fair.

21st Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival

Fort Myers Regional Library Campus

March 7, 2020

Celebrate the power of reading at the 21st annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival at the Fort Myers Regional Library campus at 2450 First St., Fort Myers. The free, family-oriented festival is a chance to meet well-known authors and to focus on the importance of reading. There will also be books and authors for kids and teens. readfest.org

62nd Annual Fort Myers Beach Shrimp Festival and Parade, Fort Myers Beach

March 14-15, 2020

fortmyersbeachshrimpfestival.com

The 62nd Annual Fort Myers Beach Shrimp Festival and Parade takes place at Lynn Hall Memorial Park on Fort Myers Beach. Both days are filled with fun, food and crafts as well as the world-famous Lions Club shrimp dinners. Shrimp are from our local fleets and are as fresh as you can get. Enjoy a 5K run, the Shrimp Festival Parade, crowning of the Shrimp Queen and a shrimp eating competition.

ECHO Global Food & Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March 13-14, 2020

echonet.org/food-and-farm-festival

For 29 years, ECHO (Educational Concern for Hunger Organization) has been host to Southwest Florida's premier festival focusing on sustainable living, agriculture and food. Partnering with local organizations and businesses, ECHO's Global Food and Farm Festival has provided thousands of attendees with the opportunity to taste exotic foods, experience life in a foreign country and explore the Global Farm, learning about food and culture in a new way.

Visitors will tour a tropical rainforest demonstration, a 300+ variety seed bank, take an educational tour of the fruit tree arboretum or learn about alternative energies. Kids of all ages can taste, touch and experience their way around the world as they learn about world hunger and ways they can make an impact.

14th annual Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival, Fort Myers Beach

April 22-26, 2020 fmbfilmfest.com

The Fort Myers Beach Film Festival invites independent film fans, filmmakers and distributors to spend four days to exchange ideas, make new contacts and enjoy some great films for all ages. Area accommodations offer special rates and packages to support this international celebration of independent filmmaking.

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**Smoke on the Water Barbecue Competition & Music Festival, downtown Fort Myers
April 26-27, 2020**

239-333-1933

sbdac.com/smoke-on-the-water-fort-myers

The Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center will host barbecue cook teams from across the South to compete in the 7th Annual Smoke on the Water Barbecue Competition & Music Festival 2020. This community event brings an authentic experience of craft barbecue, beer and bands.

10th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May 6-10, 2020

Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center fortmyersfilmfestival.com

The Fort Myers Film Festival is an intelligent independent filmmaker's preferred event to create, unite and showcase the finest artistic cinematic works. Known for its support of local filmmakers, the event is a must-attend for cineastes who love indie film and film festivals.

"Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tourney, Sanibel Island

May 22, 2020 239-472-1000

dingdarlingtarpontourney.org

To celebrate the history of the first documented tarpon caught on a rod-and-reel in "Ding" Darling's Tarpon Bay in 1885, Doc Ford's and the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge have partnered to host this 9th annual "catch, care and release" tournament.

Proceeds support the wildlife and conservation efforts at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

25th Annual MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival, Cape Coral

July 11-12, 2020

German-American Social Club

239-283-0888 mangomaniafl.net

The mango is the star attraction for two days each summer on Pine Island. Go wild for fruit as you sample locally grown delicacies at this annual affair, an unusual celebration of all the tropical fruit grown on the island. Fruit, exotic fruit trees and fruit-related products are available for purchase. This fun, family event celebrates Pine Island's mangoes and other tropical fruits. In addition to mango food and beverages, the event features live music, art and craft vendors, food and recipe contests, activities area for kids and a chance to meet the Mango Queen.

Roar Offshore, Fort Myers Beach

Oct. 8-10, 2020

fortmyersbeach.org/events/roar-offshore

Get ready to celebrate the return of Offshore Powerboat Racing to Fort Myers Beach with this National Championship Race. The entire race will be visible anywhere on the beach from the pier to mid-island and on the water in the spectator anchoring area.

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34th Annual Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

Oct. 16-18 and 23-25, 2020

German-American Social Club

239-283-1400

capecoraloktoberfest.com

Hosted by the German-American Social Club, this huge celebration brings organizes Munich to Cape Coral. The Cape Coral Oktoberfest is the largest party of the year in the community and is the event for fun, good food, freshly poured domestic and German beer, live music on several stages, laughter, dancing.

32nd Annual “Ding” Darling Day, Sanibel Island

Oct.18, 2020

239-472-1100

Check website for a list of free events throughout the day.

dingdarlingdays.com

Cape Coral CoCoNut Festival, Cape Coral

Nov. 12-15, 2020

239-573-3121

cocofest.com

Sun Splash Family Water Park

Cape Coral CoCoNut Festival celebrates Cape Coral’s reputation for coconuts, multi- cultural food, boating, fishing and wildlife. The festival will feature a national musical act, gymnastic entertainment, carnival rides, water-ski shows, tropical food, contests, coconut crafts and fireworks.

34th Annual American Sand Sculpting Championships, Fort Myers Beach

November 2020

In front of Wyndham Garden Hotel

239-454-7500

fmsandsculpting.com

Join the fun on Fort Myers Beach for the Annual American Sand Sculpting Championship.

Sponsored by the Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce, *USA Today* and *CNN Travel* have named a “must-see” and one of the 10 best sand-sculpting competitions in the world.

45th Annual Holiday Nights at the Edison and Ford Winter Estates, Fort Myers

239-334-7419

edisonfordwinterestates.org

A not-to-be-missed holiday tradition, the historic buildings and more than 20 acres of gardens are decorated with lights and traditional decorations. The event offers a special holiday tour,

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Children's Tree Trail, Santa visits on select nights, refreshments and shopping in the Ford Cottage Shoppe, museum store and garden shoppe. This year's theme is "River Reflection" and will incorporate nautical elements. New this year: the Mysore Fig, one of the largest historic trees on the property, will sparkle with thousands of animated lights choreographed to holiday music. edisonfordwinterstates.org/calendar

Edison Ford Holiday Nights reflect the many contributions of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford and their families to the local community. It was chosen by the editors of *USA Today* as one of the *10 Best Historic Homes for the Holidays*. In addition, The American Bus Association (ABA) designated the event as one of the *Top 100 Events in North America for 2016*.

14th Annual Festival of Trees presented by Goodwill Industries, downtown Fort Myers Sidney & Berne Davis Art Center December, 2020

goodwilltrees.com

Get into the holiday spirit with a stroll through a showcase of festive trees in the historic Fort Myers River District.

36th Annual Christmas Luminary Trail and Open House, Sanibel and Captiva islands Dec.4 on Sanibel Island and Dec. 5 on Captiva Island, 2020

sanibel-captiva.org

This event draws visitors from all over the world as they join local residents to celebrate the season with 3 miles of luminary candles and events.

8th Annual Holiday Stroll on South Seas Island Resort December, 2020

www.southseas.com.

South Seas Island Resort on Captiva Island hosts its 7th annual Holiday Stroll every Friday and Saturday night. In conjunction with the 2019 Captiva Holiday Village, the 330-acre resort transforms its picturesque marina and north end into a winter wonderland with thousands of twinkling lights. During the first weekend, Jimmy Buffet Band's Peter Mayer will perform two festive concerts from 8-9:30 p.m. on the Marina Walk in the Yacht Harbour Marina. The Holiday Stroll is free and concert is \$10.

River District Holidays, downtown Fort Myers Dec. 1, 2020-Jan. 2, 2021

fortmyersriverdistrictalliance.com/holidays

The calendar is packed with holiday events to get you in the spirit of the season. Festival of Trees, Holiday Stroll and Tree Lighting, Burroughs's Home & Gardens Holiday House, Music Walk, holiday concert and a New Year's Eve celebration to welcome 2021.

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Annual Port Boca Grande Lighthouse and Museum Lighting, Boca Grande

Dec. 12, 2020

barrierislandparkssociety.org/events

Celebrate the annual lighting of the Gasparilla Lighthouse at 6 p.m. with music and refreshments.

Gates open at 5:30 p.m.

Third annual Fort Myers Seafood & Music Festival, Fort Myers

River District

Jan. 8-10, 2021

seafoodfestivals.com/S-62-Ft.+Myers+Seafood+%26+Music+Festival

Enjoy great food, live music and a marketplace.

36th Annual Cape Coral Arts & Music Festival

January 2021, 2020

capecoralfestival.com

239-699-7942

This annual event draws hundreds of artists and more than 100,000 visitors.

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***Editor's note:** The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel in Southwest Florida includes: Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, Fort Myers Beach, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Cape Coral, Pine Island, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, North Fort Myers and Lehigh Acres. For media assistance, visit fortmyers-sanibel.com/media-central/*