



## *While you are in Florida...*

### **Do you want to see:**

A Florida alligator in the wild?

A miniature scale-model of the Ringling Circus?

An Alexander Calder art exhibit in a botanical garden?

If you are arriving early or leaving a few days after the LAI East Coast Tours, there is plenty to see and do in the Sarasota-Bradenton area.

### **Here are a few highlights:**

**Myakka River State Park** is the largest in the state of Florida and is located a few miles east of Interstate 75. Thousands of acres of preserved land and you are guaranteed to see an alligator! <https://www.floridastateparks.org/parks-and-trails/myakka-river-state-park>

**The Ringling** includes John and Mabel Ringling's bayfront home, their private art museum, and a museum all about the circus, including the Howard Tibbals scale model circus. <https://www.ringling.org/>

**Marie Selby Botanical Gardens** is the world's first net-positive-energy botanical garden and the world's only botanical garden focused on epiphytes. Selby maintains the world's largest scientifically documented collection of orchids and bromeliads. On exhibit now is the immersive exhibition Alexander Calder and the Nature of Movement. <https://selby.org/>

**Architecture Sarasota** is a non-profit focused on the innovative mid-century modern designs that put Sarasota on the architectural map in the 1940s - 1960s. The gallery is conveniently located near downtown hotels and offers a chance to learn about Sarasota's role in advancing modernist architecture. <https://www.architecturesarasota.org/>

**John Nolen's 1926 City of Venice Plan** can be seen in the form of a modern city that was John Nolen's first project to design an entire city on raw land. Venice is located approximately 20 miles south of downtown Sarasota. Nolen's plan of streets, neighborhoods and parks continues to serve the community today. Learn more as Venice celebrates the centennial of the Nolen Plan. <https://venicemuseum.org>

If you go to Venice...**Sharkey's on the Pier** is the one of two Gulf-front fine dining establishments. <https://www.sharkysonthepier.com/> the other is the Sandbar Restaurant on Anna Maria Island (described below).

**Sarasota Art Museum** is a component of the Ringling College of Art + Design. The museum is in a 1927 former high school and focuses on modern art. It is conveniently located just outside of the downtown area. There are three exhibits running now, including Janet Echelman, Selia Roman, and an exhibit featuring 100 posters from the Art Deco era. <https://www.sarasotaartmuseum.org/>

**Mote Marine Laboratory and SEA Aquarium** is an internationally known marine science center with a new public aquarium located near Interstate 75. <https://mote.org>

**Sarasota Jungle Gardens** is a 1940s-era tropical jungle north of Sarasota on the way to The Ringling. Palm lined pathways provide a quite place to unwind, and the only place you can mingle with real flamingos! <https://sarasotajunglegardens.com/>

Modern Architectural Design meets Number 1 Beach at world famous **Siesta Public Beach**. With sand that is 99% pure quartz this popular public beach welcomes millions of visitors annually. <https://www.sarasotacountyparks.com/parks-and-facilities/discover-a-park/destination-parks/siesta-beach>

**Sarasota African American Cultural Coalition** is located north of downtown Sarasota in one of Sarasota's most historic homes. Now relocated for the second time to save it from the wrecking ball, the house now serves as a cultural center and museum of Sarasota's African American history. <https://thesaacc.org/>

**Rosemary District - Gilbert Mural Initiative** is located on the north side of downtown in the Rosemary District. What used to be Sarasota's original African American community has changed so much that there is little left to remind us of what it was like. Local resident Walter Gilbert did not want to see the history forgotten, so he partnered with others and commissioned murals to preserve the history in this up-and coming part of downtown Sarasota. <https://ncfcatalyst.com/the-gilbert-mural-initiative-tells-the-story-of-sarasotas-first-black-community/>

If you liked the boat tour so much you want to get back out on the water? **LeBarge Tropical Cruises** is based on Sarasota's downtown bayfront. They offer a variety of cruises including a

daily sunset cruise. Tour the bay on the only boat with palm trees growing on it! <https://lebargetropicalcruises.com/>

**Bradenton Riverwalk** is a former piece of unused land that was strategically repurposed and designed as a community connector and economic stimulator. Located 15 miles north of downtown Sarasota, the riverwalk is a must-see for anyone who likes to see stranded assets turned into economic drivers! <https://www.bradentongulfislands.com/listing/bradenton-riverwalk/>

**Cortez Village** is one of the last of the Old Florida fishing villages, located west of Bradenton. This is the place for fresh local seafood and breathing in that salty air. <https://www.starfishcompany.com/about/>

**Bishop Museum of Science in Nature** is located in downtown Bradenton. The Bishop is the largest natural science museum on the west coast of Florida, with displays interpreting the region from the Pleistocene to today. Features include updated exhibitions and the area's only planetarium. <https://bishopsience.org/>

**Hungry and want to watch the sunset?** Visit the famous Sandbar Restaurant on Anna Maria Island just west of downtown Bradenton. Predict the exact moment of the sunset and win a bottle of bubbly. <https://www.sandbardining.com/>

**Have time for more?**

<https://www.visitsarasota.com/>

<https://www.bradentongulfislands.com/travel-guide>