

TO / FROM THE AIRPORT

SuperShuttle

305/871-2000, supershuttle.com

A van will deliver you to any address in Miami, though the route can be circuitous and long because of all the passengers it picks up and drops off. Book return trips at least 24 hours in advance. \$10–\$16 each way.

Taxis

Taxis are the quickest option from the Miami airport. Some fares are set at a flat rate according to seven zones. A one-way trip downtown costs about \$19, while South Beach is \$28.

Note: The fee is per car, not per passenger.

Car rental

The only practical option for reaching Miami from the Fort Lauderdale airport, which most of the new budget carriers like JetBlue and Song use as their South Florida hub. The ride into Miami is about 45 minutes.

GETTING AROUND

Public buses & trains

305/770-3131, miamidade.gov/transit/

Miami's local bus system is slow but easy to use. Handiest routes include the no. 24 to Coral Gables and the C, K, and S, which all connect to South Beach and run north. \$1.50 (exact change only). The Metrorail system makes 22 stops, each a mile apart, along a single north–south line between Palmetto and Dadeland South. Tourists, though, can use it as a quick option to whiz down to Coral Gables. \$1.50 (exact change only).

Free shuttles

South Beach Local 305/535-9160, **Metromover** 305/770-3131, **Coral Gables Trolley** 305/460-5070, coralgables.com/cgweb/trolley.aspx

Convenient, district-specific public transport includes the South Beach Local (25¢), which runs in a loop from Washington Ave. to Dade Blvd. and then to Alton Rd. Downtown, the Metromover light-rail (free) ribbons around the central business district, making regular stops on the waterfront and in the Brickell and Omni districts. Coral Gables has its own daytime trolley service (free), which whisks you from Douglas Rd. to the Miracle Mile, making regular stops on the way.

Taxis

You'll have no problem hailing a cab on the streets of South Beach. (Elsewhere in the city is more difficult.) Fares run \$1.70 for the first eleventh of a mile, then 20¢ for each additional eleventh of a mile. Call Central Cab, 305/532-5555.

WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND TOWN

Ocean Drive magazine, oceandrive.com

The *Miami Herald's* weeklong listings supplement, free with the newspaper every Friday

Miami New Times, miaminewtimes.com

Go Anywhere, Do Anything magazine (GADA)

Deco Drive TV show, nightly on WSVN-TV, Channel 7

“Nobody pretends
that Miami is a
city to look at; it is
a city to be in.”

—Jan Morris

TOURS

The Urban Tour Host

305/663-4455, miamicultural tours.com

Choose from an array of thematic tours: Watch workers roll cigars in Little Havana, see the homes of early Bahamian settlers, or join ecoguides in Everglades National Park. Call for schedule and pickup points. From \$49 per person, includes lunch.

Historical Museum of South Florida tours

101 W. Flagler St., 305/375-1621, historical-museum.org

Rotating schedule of about 20 historical walking and cycling trips that take in every aspect of the city: guided ghost walks, boat tours of the Miami River, and bike rides to the Bacardi Buildings on Biscayne Blvd. Call or check the website for current schedule. From \$15.

Miami Design Preservation League

1001 Ocean Dr., 305/672-2014, mdpl.org

Highly recommended. Informative tours of the deco highlights run by the South Beach–based preservation society, which cherry-picks the best buildings along Collins and Washington aves., as well as Ocean Dr. \$20. Wed.–Sun.

NUMBERS TO KNOW

Information 411

Emergencies Police, fire, ambulance 911

Area codes 305, 786

Tourist info 800/933-8448

Sports, theater & concert tickets Ticketmaster 305/358-5885

Budget Travel

SNAP GUIDE

Miami / Sleep

CORAL GABLES Gables Inn

730 S. Dixie Hwy., 305/661-7999, thegablesinn.net

A comfortable Mediterranean-style motel with arched, deep-ocher walkways and marble-tile floors. The downside: The highway location can make it noisy, so bring earplugs if you're a light sleeper. Doubles from \$68.

DOWNTOWN Holiday Inn Port of Miami Downtown

340 Biscayne Blvd., 305/371-4400 or 800/526-5655, holiday-inn.com

Recently renovated, with a nice view of the Port of Miami. Large, light rooms and easy access to public transportation. Outdoor pool. Kids eat free. Doubles from \$109.

DOWNTOWN Miami River Inn

118 SW S. River Dr., 305/325-0045 or 800/468-3589, miamiriverinn.com

An offbeat charmer with 40 guest rooms in a cluster of cottages around a courtyard and small pool. Rooms have hardwood floors and antique beds and dressers. "Well-behaved" pets welcome. Doubles from \$69 in summer, \$89 in winter.

“Miami Beach
is where neon
goes to die.”

—Lenny Bruce

SOUTH BEACH Aqua Hotel

1530 Collins Ave., 305/538-4361, aquamiami.com

Funky motel conversion a block from the beach with spartan-chic rooms (concrete floors, modern furniture) overlooking a courtyard. The private sundeck makes a terrific (and quiet) sunbathing spot. Doubles from \$99 in summer, \$150 in winter.

SOUTH BEACH Hotel Astor

956 Washington Ave., 305/531-8081 or 800/270-4981, hotelastor.com

The beige rooms are huge for an old deco hotel, with nice touches like TVs on swivel poles and rain-head showers. The staff is reliably friendly. It's a two-block walk to the beach. Doubles from \$125 in summer, \$190 in winter.

SOUTH BEACH Royal South Beach Condo Hotel

758 Washington Ave., 305/673-9009 or 888/394-6835, royalsouthbeach.com

A funky bargain with a candy-colored lobby and futuristic accents. White rooms have injection-molded plastic bed frames, curvy chaise lounges, and other *Jetsons*-style furniture. Every room has a microwave, coffeemaker, and free toothpaste. The beach is two blocks away. Doubles from \$89.

SOUTH BEACH South Beach Plaza Villas

1411 Collins Ave., 305/531-1331, southbeachplazavillas.com

A shady group of buildings crowded together and outfitted with dark-wood furniture and handsome, tone-on-tone fabrics. One of the best low-cost options near the water, with a lush tropical courtyard just a half-block off the beach. Doubles from \$129.

SOUTH BEACH The Standard

40 Island Ave., 305/673-1717, standardhotel.com

A scene-y hotel on South Beach's western side, 10 blocks from the beach. There's a sumptuous spa with Turkish baths, waterfall hot tubs, nude mud baths, and an on-site yoga center. Rooms are small and basic. Doubles from \$150, opens Oct. 2005.

SOUTH BEACH Townhouse

150 20th St., 305/534-3800 or 877/534-3800, townhousehotel.com

The best boutique hotel near the beach, with an attentive, laid-back staff; small, beautifully minimalist rooms; and an inviting roof deck with crimson water beds for sunbathing. A two-minute walk to the water. Doubles from \$135.

APPRECIATING ART DECO

Miami is famous for its art deco architecture, especially the hotels that dominate South Beach's skyline. Deco comes in different styles that are easy to spot.

- Art deco boasts bas-relief murals, neon lights, "eyebrows" (3-D concrete shades) above the windows, and details designed to look like ships, right down to their porthole-shaped windows.
- Depression moderne is less ornamental, and most of its decorations are on the interior. A prime example is the Miami Beach Post Office building at 1300 Washington Ave.
- Streamline moderne is marked by rounded-off corners and curves that make buildings seem to move.

To learn more, take one of the walking tours run by the MDPL (see the Essentials page).

SEE Bayfront Park

301 N. Biscayne Blvd., 305/358-7550, bayfrontparkmiami.com

A generous waterfront green space, dotted with sculptures and large, leafy trees as well as wide benches where you can rest a while and watch the boats in the harbor. Isamu Noguchi's moody, white, geometric memorial to the 1986 Challenger disaster is at its southern end, and the controversial Torch of Friendship is to the north of the park, on Biscayne Blvd. It's a visual emblem for Cuba's political isolation: There are coats of arms from every Latin American country showcased here alphabetically, with a telling gap where the insignia of Castro's country should sit.

SEE Freedom Tower

600 Biscayne Blvd., 305/416-4456, terradevolvers.com

Miami's answer to Ellis Island, this Mediterranean revival replica of the striped Giralda Tower at the Seville Cathedral in Spain (the same one used as a model for the Biltmore Hotel—see “Coral Gables”) served as an immigration processing post and community center for the more than 650,000 Cuban refugees who arrived between 1961 and 1974. There's no public access to the interior now, though, as the building is earmarked for development; even so, it's an irresistible, iconic photo op.

SEE Miami Art Museum

101 W. Flagler St., 305/375-3000, miamiartmuseum.org

A remarkable collection of postwar art, accessibly and intelligently curated in a building designed by architectural icon Philip Johnson. Look for surrealist works from Marcel Duchamp and conceptual art by the late Cuban-American artist Felix Gonzalez-Torres, including a stack of paper intended to look like sculpture. (Help yourself to one of the sheets.) The museum also hosts temporary exhibits. \$5, free every Sunday and the second Saturday of each month. Closed Mon.

EAT Garcia's Seafood Grille

398 NW N. River Dr., 305/375-0765

Join the Customs guys at this riverside fish café. It's bustling and efficient, with a small counter in the front and racks of waterfront picnic tables out back. Look for specials on the blackboard, or try the lemon-grilled grouper.

EAT La Paris

251 SE 2nd St., 305/371-5181

One of downtown's better divey Cuban diners. Try a pressed pork sandwich for \$5 and, of course, a thimbleful of toxically sweet *café cubano*. The counter seating is limited, but the turnover is fast.

EAT Mosaico

1000 S. Miami Ave., 305/371-3473, mosaicorestaurant.com

An upscale Spanish restaurant in a former firehouse. Some nights the huge wooden patio is open for dinner as well as drinks. Opt for the soupy *arroz caldoso* (lobster risotto).

DRINK The Pawn Shop Lounge

1222 NE 2nd Ave., 305/373-3511, thepawnshoplounge.com

A massive pawnshop converted into a bar (the exterior is unchanged). Inside, it's decked out in a trippy, postmodern style. Somehow there's room for a school bus inside the bar. Cover from \$15.

DRINK Tobacco Road

626 S. Miami Ave., 305/374-1198, tobacco-road.com

Gritty and fun, and Miami's first bar (it holds the oldest liquor license still in circulation). Two stages host mostly jazz and rock; the menu is burgers and basics. Free weekdays; Fri. and Sat. \$5 for cabaret upstairs.

PLAY I/O

30 NE 14th St., 305/358-8007, iolounge.com

Club-cum-music venue known for its vast selection of dance, indie rock, punk, and pop music. There's a large bar with cheap drinks and an outdoor garden; the main space features live bands every night at 11 P.M. Free—\$15.

PLAY Nocturnal

50 NE 11 St., 305/576-6996, nocturnalmiami.com

A high-tech nightclub where waiters carry gizmos that not only summon a bottle to your table wirelessly, but can also ask the valet to prepare your car so that it's already waiting by the time you get downstairs. There are several dance floors, as well as a dreamy roof deck with dazzling city views. From \$20.

PLAY Olympia Theater

Gusman Center for the Performing Arts, 174 E. Flagler St., 305/374-2444, gusmancenter.org

Beautifully renovated vintage performance space home to an eclectic program: classical music, dance, and touring productions. One of its hits: *Sing-a-Long Sound of Music*. From \$30.

TIP **Española Way** Picturesque Hispanic crafts market, lined by shops, restaurants, and galleries. Between Drexel and Washington aves., 305/531-0038. Open Sat., 10 A.M.—midnight, and Sun., 11 A.M.—9 P.M. Also open Fri., 7 P.M.—midnight from Nov. to July. For sangria and live music, Tapas & Tintos (448 Española Way, 305/538-8272).

SEE The Holocaust Memorial

1933-1945 Meridian Ave., 305/538-1663, holocaustmmb.org
A contemplative, sobering experience, nodding to the large number of Holocaust survivors who chose to make Miami Beach their home. Graphic and unflinching, a massive cast-bronze hand reaches for the sky, surrounded by black granite panels etched with the names of victims. \$2 donation for brochure.

SEE Lincoln Road Mall

Part outdoor mall (it's lined with trendy shops and restaurants) and part catwalk (locals strut here daily, with dog-walking throngs on Sundays), Lincoln Road is the soul of South Beach. No one should leave Miami without grabbing a coffee and watching the skaters whiz by, or window-shopping at the high-end stores.

SEE Ocean Drive

Photo shoots are a rarity along Ocean Dr. now, but at 7 A.M. it's easy to understand why South Beach became the fashion location of choice in the early 1990s—the light is sensational. What to look for: the Versace mansion, now a private members-only social club, at no. 1116; and ravishing art deco hotels, including the Park Central at no. 640. For maximum art deco sights, concentrate on the strip between 5th and 14th sts.

SEE Parrot Jungle Island

1111 Parrot Jungle Trail, Watson Island, 305/258-6453, parrotjungle.com
One of the city's best family attractions, built on an island close to South Beach and easily accessible by car. The vast aviary and gardens are home to more than 300 parrots, including hatchlings in the parrot nursery, as well as hundreds of other creatures, such as monkeys, reptiles, and a showy flock of flamingos. Adults \$25, kids \$20, parking \$6.

SEE The Wolfsonian

1001 Washington Ave., 305/531-1001, wolfsonian.fiu.edu
A hulking old Mediterranean revival building, once the headquarters of a storage company, houses the decorative-arts museum's collection of trinkets, which includes World's Fair-related ephemera and propagandist posters, as well as British arts and crafts furniture by William Morris and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. \$7, free Friday 6 P.M.–9 P.M. Closed Wed. (and Mon.–Tues. in summer).

EAT Big Pink

157 Collins Ave., 305/532-4700, bigpinkrestaurant.com
A Day-Glo diner that's famous for its satisfying TV dinners served on vintage trays at cafeteria-style tables. The huge menu offers burgers, salads, and desserts like red velvet cake.

EAT David's Café II

1654 Meridian Ave., 305/672-8707
Above-average Cuban restaurant with a take-out window serving hearty sandwiches and coffee, plus an eat-in dining room serving staples like *ropa vieja* (shredded beef stew).

EAT Miss Yip Chinese Café

1661 Meridian Ave., 305/534-5488, missyipchinesecafe.com
With a slick feel recalling Shanghai's decadent 1930s heyday, this Chinese restaurant serves old-world Cantonese fare. Try dim sum at lunchtime and dinner staples like moo shu pork.

EAT News Café

800 Ocean Dr., 305/538-6397
A major player from the early-'90s South Beach scene, the café is still a great place to hang out—just don't expect much from the food. The ratio of models to mortals is 1:1.

EAT Pizza Rustica

863 Washington Ave., 305/674-8244
Beach pit stop serving huge slices of tangy pizza. Order the namesake, piled high with artichokes, olives, ham, and sun-dried tomatoes.

EAT Tap Tap

819 5th St., 305/672-2898
Haitian fave known for its intriguing menu—say, goat stewed in a peppery tomato broth, or a mango, avocado, and water-cress salad—and bright fruity drinks. Caribbean art plasters the walls. Live Haitian folk music at 8:30 P.M. on Thurs. and Sat.

§ SPLURGE Prime One Twelve

In the Browns Hotel, 112 Ocean Dr., 305/532-8112, prime112.com
One of South Beach's hottest restaurants, in a converted 1915 hotel; it's popular with visiting celebs like Calvin Klein, Claudia Schiffer, and Sting. The waiters sport butcher-style aprons and the menu is steak-heavy. The flavor-packed \$20 Kobe beef hot dog is more than worth it.

TIP Gawk at gothic castles Of the sand variety, that is, reaching upwards of 10 feet with turrets, towers, and spires. They're built and touched up daily by a 20-something artist known around town as "the Sand Castle Guy." At Lummus Park and 10th St. in the heart of South Beach.

DRINK Raleigh Martini Bar

Inside the Raleigh Hotel, 1775 Collins Ave., 305/534-6300
Chic, wood-paneled spot for sipping signature martinis like the Campari-heavy Bitter Queen. Jazz and 1940s classics provide the appropriate soundtrack.

SHOP Bal Harbour Shops

9700 Collins Ave., Bal Harbour, 305/866-0311, balharbourshops.com
Head north for 15 minutes or so along Miami Beach to reach the most famous mall in Miami. Home to every designer name imaginable as well as a few more-wallet-friendly labels.

“It’s sweaty
in Miami—but the
diamonds will keep
me cool.”

—Lil’ Kim

SHOP Banana Republic

1100 Lincoln Rd., 305/534-4706
A local branch that merits a visit for the space, not the styles. Once a bank, the store retains many of its original features: The fitting rooms, for instance, are in the old vault, complete with huge, swinging metal door.

PLAY Lincoln Theatre

541 Lincoln Rd., 305/673-3330, nws.org
Home base for the New World Symphony, which is composed of grad students from across the world who endure rigorous auditions to secure three-year fellowships. The performances are consistently superb. Occasionally free, tickets from \$12.

THE TOP BEACHES

The Miami Beach sandbar is edged with beautiful beaches, but the strip down at 3rd St. by Ocean Dr. is the best place for families—it has lifeguards, restrooms, picnic tables, and showers. If you’re more adventurous, there’s a popular nudist beach a few miles north at Haulover Beach Park. Note that the beaches at Sunny Isles Beach, heavily promoted for family fun, are less appealing—the vicious riptides near the shore can make swimming tricky.

PLAY MyntLounge

1921 Collins Ave., 786/276-6132, myntlounge.com
There’s a 30-foot waterfall cascading down the wall in the main room and an enormous mosaic-tiled bar at this reigning hotspot. Dress up and be prepared to sweet-talk the bouncer. Cover \$20 on weekends, free on Wed. and Thurs.

SPLURGE Crobar

1445 Washington Ave., 305/531-5027, crobarmiami.com
Hardest-partying nightclub on the beach, with young, frenetic dancers and thumping music in its massive honeycomb of rooms. Cover from \$20.

ESCAPES

Key West

A four-hour drive down the US-1 highway, Key West is the “anything goes” capital of the United States. It’s full of artsy locals, old wooden houses, and laid-back bars and restaurants. It was a hippie hangout in the 1970s before becoming a popular gay destination. Now, it’s rapidly gentrifying while trying to hold on to its avant-garde edge. Rent a car and make sure to allow plenty of time for the journey: Traffic can be heavy, though at least you’ll catch views of the other keys along the way. Best spot for an overnight stay is undoubtedly one of the cozy cottages at the Key Lime Inn (725 Truman Ave., 305/294-5229, keylimeinn.com) where doubles start at \$109. More info: fla-keys.com.

The Everglades

Rent a car and head south from Miami on US-1, following the signs for the community of Homestead. From there, it’s a short drive to The Everglades, a waterlogged, mysterious national park that fills the southern tip of Florida. You can stare out across a horizon with nothing but the occasional tree interrupting the acres of knee-high grass; see alligators swim wild in the rivers; spot rare nesting birds; or kayak through the ragged, mangrove-crammed coastline. If you want to stay in the park, it’s best to camp, though there is a no-frills hotel, the Flamingo Lodge & Marina (239/695-3101, flamingolodge.com, doubles from \$65), at its southernmost tip. More info: nps.gov/ever.

TIP Salsa on the cheap Miami specializes in the square dance-style salsa called *Rueda de Casino*. Brush up with a free hour-long lesson at Café Mystique (7250 NW 11th St., 305/262-9500, Thurs. at 11 P.M.).

SEE **The Biltmore Hotel**

1200 Anastasia Ave., 305/445-1926, biltmorehotel.com

Enormous landmark modeled after the same Seville cathedral as the Freedom Tower. It looks like a movie set, with 25-foot-high frescoed walls, vaulted ceilings, and immense fireplaces. A one-time celebrity hangout for the likes of Judy Garland and Al Capone, it's now a mainstream hotel, though the huge pool still oozes glam. Free tours of the premises every Sunday afternoon at 1:30 P.M. and 2:30 P.M.

SEE **International Villages**

Coral Gables was built in the 1920s as a planned city and intended as a livable, beautiful alternative to then-grimy Miami. The developers cleverly incorporated points of interest around town, including clusters of buildings designed to ape exotic overseas lands; these hamlets were nicknamed the International Villages. The most photo-worthy? The Chinese Village, with brightly colored roofs and ornately carved balconies (on Sansovino and Castania aves.); and the French Normandy Village, which looks thoroughly Renaissance thanks to its thick, chocolate-brown stucco facade and red-tile roofs (400 block of Viscaya Ave. at Le Jeune Rd.).

SEE **Venetian Pool**

2701 De Soto Blvd., 305/460-5356, venetianpool.com

A coral rock quarry that was dug in 1923, while the city was being constructed, and then turned into a public pool. Surrounded by shaded porticos, wrought-iron railings, and Venetian-style bridges, the water winds its way through coral rock caves and spills over two waterfalls. There's even a man-made beach for sunbathers. \$6.25–\$9.50, depending on season.

EAT **Burger Bob's**

2001 Granada Blvd., 305/567-3100

A homey café in the clubhouse of the public Granada Golf Course. Expect green Formica chairs, white plastic tables, yellow mustard bottles, and first-rate chili.

EAT **Estate Wines**

92 Miracle Mile, 305/442-9915

Wine store–café specializing in hot and cold sandwiches (the gooey ham-and-cheese is a standout) and house-baked pastries. Sit at the communal table and meet the locals.

EAT **Les Halles**

2415 Ponce de Leon Blvd., 305/461-1099, leshalles.net

Cozy, mid-priced French bistro that serves classics such as steak tartare and mussels and fries in an authentic atmosphere.

\$ SPLURGE **Ortanique on the Mile**

278 Miracle Mile, 305/446-7710

Understated foodie favorite that couldn't be more different than the faddish hotspots in South Beach. Serving innovative, adventurous, tropical fusion in a lush setting, it's the ideal place for an anniversary dinner or a first date. (Save room for the passion fruit sabayon.)

DRINK **JohnMartin's**

253 Miracle Mile, 305/445-3777, johnmartins.com

A friendly Irish bar where you can drink a pint of Guinness amid wood-paneled veneer. Free live music starts around 8:30 P.M. every Fri. and Sat.

DRINK **Titanic Brewery & Restaurant**

5813 Ponce de Leon Blvd., 305/667-2537, titanicbrewery.com

Captain Smith's Rye Ale and other top-notch beers are made on the premises. A Wed.–Sun. lineup of live pop/rock bands is another draw for frat boys and students from the nearby University of Miami. The free shows start at 9 P.M. on weekdays and 10 P.M. on weekends.

SHOP **Books & Books**

265 Aragon Ave., 305/442-4408, booksandbooks.com

Lovingly stocked independent bookstore with browsable shelves featuring an impressive selection of travel and local-interest titles. There's also an on-site café with seating in the enclosed courtyard. Free jazz starts at 7 P.M. on Fri.

\$ SPLURGE **Rene Ruiz Couture**

262 Miracle Mile, 305/445-2352

A local fashion legend, red-carpet staple Ruiz is known for his stretchy chiffon-and-lace gowns and sequined accessories—all at couture prices.

PLAY **Actors' Playhouse**

280 Miracle Mile, 305/444-9293, actorsplayhouse.org

Restored 600-seat art deco movie theater that's now home to many excellent Broadway projects, like *Little Shop of Horrors*. Tickets from \$30.

PLAY **GableStage**

1200 Anastasia Ave., 305/445-1119, gablestage.org

Florida premieres of off-Broadway hits set against the stunning Biltmore backdrop. Worth checking out even if you're not a diehard theater fan. From \$35.

SEE Bacardi Buildings

2100 Biscayne Blvd., 305/573-8511

A modernist masterpiece, best known for the white and blue floral murals sprawling across its facades, which were designed and installed by Brazilian artist Francisco Brennand in the early 1960s. There's a small, so-so museum of Bacardi memorabilia on the main floor here, but unlike the original museum in Puerto Rico, this one is normally off-limits to visitors.

SEE Living Room Building

4000 Miami Ave.

Local husband-and-wife architects Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt's low-rise office building has an exterior entryway that looks like a living room (hence the name). There's a giant concrete couch, an oversized floor lamp, and even a "painting"—a framed hole through which you can see the sky.

SEE Little Haiti

The main drag of this vibrant immigrant district is 54th St. just west of Biscayne Blvd. The blocks are filled with cafés, stores selling books in Creole and French, and record shops buzzing with Caribbean rhythms. There are also several botanicas, where adherents of the voodoo-like Santería can purchase ritual potions, candles, and statuettes. Passersby are welcome to enter, but not to take photographs.

SEE The Margulies Collection at the Warehouse

591 NW 27th St., 305/576-1051, margulieswarehouse.com

Art maven Marty Margulies recently renovated his museum, which showcases his astonishing collection of avant-garde art, especially photography. Diverse talents such as classic writer/photographer Eudora Welty and contemporary artist Vanessa Beecroft are represented, along with 3-D installations. Open Oct.–May, Fri.–Sat. 11 A.M.–4 P.M.; free.

EAT Cafe Cafe

5580 NE 4th Ct., 305/754-6700

A down-home café with mismatched furniture—overstuffed leather sofas, antique tables, bent wooden chairs—and a leafy, grove-like patio shaded by umbrellas. Simple salads and sandwiches make up the menu.

TIP **Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park** At the tip of Key Biscayne, this scene-free, family-friendly alternative to most Miami beaches has a historic 1825 lighthouse, picnic spots, and bike rentals for \$5 per hour (1200 S. Crandon Blvd., 305/361-5811).

EAT The District

35 NE 40th St., 305/576-7242, thedistrictmiami.com

Trendy bar/restaurant/lounge with a palm-shaded courtyard, a fountain in front, and a larger seating area inside at the back. Note the unusual yet stylish touches throughout, like the flowers encased in the backlit Lucite bar. The modern American food is less impressive than the stiff, fruity cocktails.

EAT Dogma Grill

7030 Biscayne Blvd., 305/759-3433

Cheery hot-dog stand with red tables, white umbrellas, and an inventive menu—you'll find standard favorites like chili dogs and less-standard concoctions such as the Athens, sprinkled with feta cheese, olives, tomato, and cucumber.

DRINK Grass Restaurant & Lounge

28 NE 40th St., 305/573-3355

A French Polynesian bar that looks like a Dior-designed tiki hut. Come dressed to the nines if you want a peek inside—it's notorious for velvet-rope burn. Cover from \$20.

DRINK Magnum Restaurant and Lounge

709 NE 79th St., 305/757-3368

Lush red banquettes and a hidden entrance give this out-of-the-way Little Haiti restaurant/bar the impression of a bordello or speakeasy. Go for the live Casablanca-style piano.

PLAY Churchill's

5501 NE 2nd Ave., 305/757-1807, churchillspub.com

Brit-inflected—a huge Union Jack covers the exterior, soccer games play on the TV—and reliable rock venue that's nurtured emerging and local talent for 20 years. Both Marilyn Manson and the Mavericks played their first gigs here. Covers range from free to \$10.

FOOD & DRINK

Though Miami has its own menu lingo, it's easy enough to decipher. Those touting "Floribbean" food basically serve bikini-ready cuisine: light, diet-friendly dishes composed of fruit, fresh fish, and Caribbean spices. Cuban cuisine is more indulgent, much of it deep-fried—*vaca frita* (chunks of beef fried with onions), *tostones* (mashed, fried plantains), and *ropa vieja* (literally "old clothes," but actually a rich, decadent combo of shredded beef and vegetables stewed with spices). Be sure to try one of the Caribbean cocktails on most menus. There's the thirst-quenching Cuba libre (a rum and Coke with a squeeze of fresh lime) and the aromatic *mojito*, made from a blend of rum, muddled mint, lime, and sugar.