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THE MAGAZINE FOR TODAY'S TRAVELER



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March | April 2009

# Been There, Haven't Done That

Florida has world-renowned theme parks, fabulous beaches and spectacular dining. In addition to these gems of the Sunshine State, it's also home to some of the world's most fascinating and offbeat attractions. Here are 10 of our favorites:

## 1 Northwest Florida Caverns State Park, Marianna

One of the few state parks in the U.S. with dry (air-filled) caves, and is the only Florida state park to offer cave tours to the public. The cave has dazzling formations of limestone stalactites, stalagmites, soda straws, flowstones and draperies. Native Americans used the caverns for shelter for thousands of years.



## 3 Northeast Cummer Museum of Art & Gardens, Jacksonville

What began as a 60-piece collection in 1961 has evolved into the largest fine arts collection in Northeast Florida. More than 2.5 acres of historic gardens, the first of which was planted on the original residence in 1903, blossom along the St. Johns River.

## 6 Central Reptile World Serpentarium, St. Cloud

Reptile World is more than snake displays. It is a working farm providing venom for use worldwide in medicine and herpetological research. You can watch while staff milk venomous snakes to harvest their valuable venom.

## 2 North Central Mission San Luis, Tallahassee

Visit the only reconstructed Spanish mission site in Florida. Meet the people of San Luis going about the tasks that sustained life in this 17th-century Western capital of Spanish Florida. On site, you'll also want to visit the Spanish fort and the Franciscan Mission Church. Then check out the Apalachee Indian Council House, which could hold up to 3,000 people and is the largest-known historic-era Indian building in the Southeast U.S.



## 4 West Central Swim with Manatees, Crystal River and Homosassa Springs

Crystal River is the only place in the U.S. where you can legally swim with wild manatees. The best time to go is in the winter, when these "sea cows" come searching for warm waters. In Homosassa Springs, you can stay dry while observing manatees through their famous "fishbowl."



## 7 East Central Bioluminescent Kayaking, Titusville

Flicks and waves of blue-green light look like flying embers from an undersea fire, but they are naturally occurring bioluminescent organisms concentrated in the lagoon waters of the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Everything underwater—sea grass, fish and even your hand—takes on a ghostly glowing dimension. Kayaking is the preferred way to experience this wizardry, with tours offered summer to early fall through a number of area outfitters.

## 5 Florida Keys Jules Underwater Lodge, Key Largo

Stay the night under the sea in this authentic underwater research habitat located in a mangrove lagoon. If you've never scuba dived before, you can take a class to get acquainted with the equipment and procedures. The lodge also offers three-day diver certification classes—available while staying under the sea.

## 8 Southwest Paddling for Sharks' Teeth, Peace River, Arcadia


Voted the best river/lake for canoeing in Florida 12 years in a row, the Peace River is rife with sharks' teeth. Go for a half day, a full day or more and see how good you get at spotting those shark teeth.





## 9 Southwest Sugarland Tours, Clewiston

Tour a sugar cane farm where you'll chop and chew some fresh sugar cane. The excursion includes the Clewiston sugar mill, the sugar refinery and citrus juice plant, and a tour of the renovated Clewiston Museum.



## 10 Southeast Hollywood Beach Broadwalk, Hollywood

The Hollywood Beach Broadwalk is more than two miles long, featuring miles of car-free enjoyment and a brick-lined pedestrian promenade that combines dramatic coastal views of award-winning Blue Wave beaches.

**Discover these and other quirky Florida destinations at [AAA.com/VISITFLORIDA](http://AAA.com/VISITFLORIDA). To plan a Florida getaway call or visit your local AAA office.**

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#### Winner Receives:

- Two nights at the beautiful DoubleTree Hotel located near the entrance to Universal
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**Send your photos to:**  
AAA *Going Places*  
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1515 N. Westshore Blvd.  
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### Been There, Done That!

Florida has some wonderfully quirky attractions and landmarks. Along with these offbeat offerings, you'll also find expansive botanical gardens, extraordinary wildlife and spectacular beaches. VISIT FLORIDA has compiled 124 of the very best off-the-beaten-track venues Florida has to offer at [AAA.com/VISITFLORIDA](http://AAA.com/VISITFLORIDA).



\*Must be 18 or older to enter. AAA and VISIT FLORIDA employees and their families not eligible to win. Must be received by May 15, 2009. Photos will not be returned. Visit [AAA.com/VISITFLORIDA](http://AAA.com/VISITFLORIDA) for list of destinations and complete contest details.