surf's up
WORDS JESSICA BOWERS

SEE FAMOUS RESCUE SEA ANIMALS AND ENJOY THE SURF AT CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, OR SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS

Lounging in the warm sand with the waves crashing nearby is at the top of everyone's summer vacation wish list, so jet off to Clearwater, Florida, or take a drive down to South Padre Island. Not only will you enjoy the sun and surf waiting for you at these award-winning beaches, you have an opportunity to learn more about protecting the creatures that call it home.

BY PLANE:
CLEARWATER, FL

WHAT TO DO
Last year the whole world fell in love with the inspirational story of a little dolphin without a tail named Winter in Disney's A Dolphin Tale. Winter may now be a movie star, but she hasn't let it go to her head, and you can visit her home at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Movie aficionados will love checking out the places where the film was shot, and while you're there, you can learn about the marine hospital's animal rescue efforts. If you're looking for something to do on four wheels -- or maybe two -- you can head over to Fun Ride Rentals. They have it all, from beach wheelchairs and strollers to mopeds and family-size surrey bikes. Kids will especially love zipping around on the miniature "Fun Coupes," and the whole family can try the Segway-like "Fun Gliders," which are small enough for young kids to navigate.

seewinter.com; 727/441-1790
funriderentals.com; 727/519-3008

WHERE TO STAY
The pink and coral LEGO-style construction of the Hyatt Regency stands out against the white sands and turquoise waters of Clearwater Beach. This newly built hotel is the perfect place to relax in luxury, with private balconies in every suite to allow you to take in the warm Gulf breezes and gorgeous ocean views. Each room is also appointed with a full kitchen and living area, allowing families plenty of room to spread out. While Dad takes his 5 iron for a spin and Mom treats herself to the spa, trained camp counselors will explore the bounties of nature with kids ages 3–12 in the waterfront Camp Hyatt.

clearwaterbeach.hyatt.com;
727/373-1234

WHERE TO EAT
Since 1926, the Palm Pavilion has been a laid-back place where the locals gather for beachfront dining overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. After enjoying the surf-and-turf menu options, kids can scurry down to the beach while the grownups sit on the deck and soak in the view -- and maybe another cold drink. Local music welcomes visitors most days, and the promise of a free sunset with the purchase of dinner ensures that the restaurant vibe is light-hearted and fun.
palm-pavilion.com; 727/446-2642
1 / The St. Pete/Clearwater area offers 35 miles of coastline on some eight major barrier islands.
2 / A view of Clearwater Beach's Hyatt Regency
3 / Winter smiles for the crowd at Clearwater Marine Aquarium. 4 / Warm Gulf waters welcome you to South Padre Island. 5 / The infamous Black Dragon takes to the seas in South Padre. 6 / Allison shares her story of ocean conservation at Sea Turtle Inc.

BY CAR: SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TX

WHAT TO DO
South Padre has the best sand and surf Texas has to offer, but it is also a location that can boast about its sea life conservation efforts. Hundreds of Kemp’s Ridley Sea Turtles, about the size of an Oreo, are painstakingly released at sunrise on the beaches while visitors cheer on their miraculous crawl to the ocean. Want more turtles? Head over to Sea Turtle Inc., a rehabilitation center that offers educational programs and the chance to go nose to nose with many varieties of sea turtles. During your visit, you’ll have a chance to meet Allison, the first turtle to survive the amputation of three flippers. For a bit of fun, ready your sea legs and board the Black Dragon, where a band of pirates will entertain with treasure hunts, water gun fights and other scurvy nonsense. seaturtleinc.org; ospreycruises.com; 956/761-6655

WHERE TO EAT
Batten the hatches and sail into Pirate’s Landing at Port Isabel, where the over-the-top pirate atmosphere is more than just a restaurant but an attraction all on its own. While waiting on chicken strips, shrimp or pasta marinara, kids can stay entertained watching the ships, including the infamous Black Dragon, sailing along in the nearby Laguna Madre. Parents will enjoy the most complete menu of fresh, wild-caught seafood in the area. Kids’ meals are served in an elaborate pirate ship basket and include a souvenir pirate mug and captain’s hat. After dinner, take in the entertainment and don’t miss the chance to get a tattoo from a real pirate or have your picture snapped with a parrot. piratelandingrestaurant.com; 956/943-3663

Waterpark OPEN Weekends In September
Stay & PLAY!
FREE PIRATES COVE TICKETS!
See website for details
Limited line offer

Pirates Cove
Making Fun Funnier!

No need to stay at Jallystone Park to visit Pirates Cove
NorthTexasJallystone.com  Piratess CoveFunZone.com

Waterpark
Open to the Public
Water Play Park
Indoor Fun Center

• Family Fun Resort
• Camping/Cottages
• Group Facilities
• Firetruck & Hayrides

888-855-9091 • Burleson, Texas

FREE BOTTLED WATER © VISITOR CENTER WARD

Scare Up Some Fun in Corsicana!

Watkins Wildlife Trophy Room is just one excitement awaiting your family in Corsicana. A new $8 million family fun complex, the state’s oldest soda fountain and largest planetarium, sweets from fruitcake to small-batch chocolate and a barrel full of Texas oil history, it’s all just...

An hour down the road, a world away!
www.visitcorsicana.com/family-itinerary

 Corsicana
 TEXAS

Pirates Cove Fun Zone
Corpus Christi, Texas

Pirates Cove Fun Zone
Corpus Christi, Texas

Pirates Cove Fun Zone
Corpus Christi, Texas

Pirates Cove Fun Zone
Corpus Christi, Texas
Getaways: Visit Clearwater, Florida, or South Padre Island, Texas

**The Details**

**Words:** Jessica Bowen

**Photography:** Courtesy of Yali St., Featuring Clearwater Marine Aquarium, Marineland Aquaria, and chooses for more awards.

**Top Reads**

1. **1. In Your Child Modeling Material?**
2. **2. Meredith Land**
3. **3. Betsy, It's Not Outside**
4. **4. Padre Rambler, so hot at Infiniti Knob in the Morning**
5. **5. The Playdate System**

Lounching in the warm sand with the waves crashing nearby is at the top of everyone’s summer vacation wish list. So jet off to Clearwater, Florida, or take a drive down to South Padre Island. Not only will you enjoy the sun and surf waiting for you at these award-winning beaches, you have an opportunity to learn more about protecting the creatures that call it home.

**By Plane: Clearwater, FL**

**What to Do**

Last year the whole world fell in love with the inspirational story of a little dolphin without a tail named Winter in Disney’s A Dolphin’s Tale. Winter may now be a movie star, but she hasn’t let it go to her head, and you can visit her home at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium. Movie aficionados will love checking out the places where the film was shot, and while you’re there, you can learn about the marine hospital’s animal rescue efforts. If you’re looking for something to do on four wheels – or maybe two – you can head over to Fun Ride Rentals. They have it all, from beach wheelchairs and strollers to nooks and family-size suv cabs. Kids will especially love dipping around on the miniature “Fun Coupons,” and the whole family can try the Segway-like “Fun Gliders,” which are small enough for young kids to navigate.

**Where to Stay**

The pink and coral LEGO-style construction of the Hyatt Regency stands out against the white sands and turquoise waters of Clearwater Beach. This newly built hotel is the perfect place to relax in luxury, with private balconies in every suite to allow you to take in the warm Gulf breezes and gorgeous ocean views. Each room is also appointed with a full kitchen and living area, allowing families plenty of room to spread out. While Dad takes his 5 ion for a spin and Mom treats herself to the spa, trained camp counselors will explore the beauteous of nature with kids ages 3–12 in the waterfront Camp Hyatt.

Clearwaterbeach.hyatt.com: 727-373-1234

**Where to Eat**

Since 1926, the Palm Pavilion has been a laid-back place where the locals gather for beachfront dining overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. After enjoying the surf-and-turf menu options, kids can scoot down to the beach while the grownups sit on the deck and soak in the view – and maybe another cold drink. Local music welcomes visitors most days, and the promise of a free meal with the purchase of dinner ensures that the restaurant vibe is light-hearted and fun.

Palmpavilion.com: 727-446-2642

**By Car: South Padre Island, TX**

**What to Do**

South Padre has the best sand and surf Texas has to offer, but it is also a location that can boast about its sea life conservation efforts. Hundreds of Kemp’s Ridley Sea Turtles, about the size of an Oreo, are painstakingly released at sunrise on the beaches while visitors cheer on their miraculous crawl to the ocean. Want more turtles? Head over to Sea Turtle Inc., a rehabilitation center that offers educational programs and the chance to go more to break with many varieties of sea turtles. During your visit, you’ll have a chance to meet Allison, the first turtle to survive the amputation of three flippers. For a bit of fun, ready your sea legs and board the Black Dragon, where a band of pirates will entertain with treasure hunts, water gun fights and other swashbuckling nonsense.

Southpadre.org, seaside.tx.gov, and 956-761-6655

**Where to Stay**

www.southpadreisland.com
With so much family fun right on the hotel grounds, you may be hard-pressed to venture out of the Pearl South Padre. As a reminder that everything is bigger in Texas, you can kick back in the 6,000-square-foot pool complex, which includes a shallow-entry children’s pool complete with giant frog slide. If you’re hoping for more adventure, you can enjoy wave runners, parasailing or breathtaking horseback riding. Kids (and parents) will be thrilled with the daily activities, including a dive-in movie with complimentary popcorn and rooftop fireworks displays. Don’t miss the twice-weekly sandcastle lessons offered by All American Sandcastle.
pearlsouthpade.com; 956/761-6555

Where to Eat
Bates the hatches and sail into Pirate’s Landing at Port Isabel, where the ever-so-top pirate atmosphere is more than just a restaurant but an attraction all on its own. While waiting on chicken strips, shrimp or pasta marinara, kids can stay entertained watching the ships, including the infamous Black Dragon, sailing along in the nearby Laguna Madre. Parents will enjoy the most complete menu of fresh, wild-caught seafood in the area. Kids’ meals are served in an elaborate pirate ship basket and include a souvenir pirate mug and captain’s hat. After dinner, take in the entertainment and don’t miss the chance to get a tattoo from a real pirate or have your picture snapped with a parrot.
piratelandingrestaurant.com; 956/943-3663