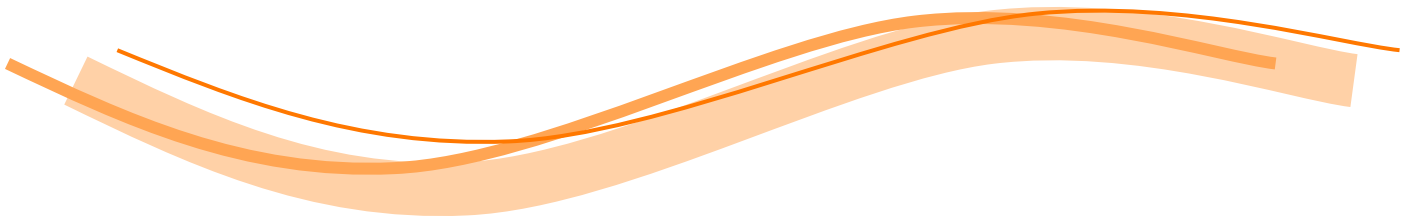




**DESTINATION**  
**St. Petersburg**  
**Clearwater, Florida**





<b>DESTINATION INFO</b>	<b>St. Petersburg Clearwater in Florida</b>
<b>Location</b>	Florida's Beach is located in the Pinellas County peninsula on Florida's west coast. Home to 26 communities including St. Petersburg and Clearwater, the area is bordered on the east by Tampa Bay and on the west by the Gulf of Mexico. In the center of Florida's Gulf Coast, Florida's Beach is within minutes of Florida's popular attractions -- just 30 minutes away is Busch Gardens in Tampa and 90 minutes away are the Walt Disney World Resort, Sea World and Universal Studios Escape.
<b>Geography</b>	Florida's Beach offers <b>35 miles of white-sand beaches</b> on some 20 barrier islands along the Gulf of Mexico. The area's 345 miles of shoreline around the peninsula encompass the resort communities of <b>Clearwater Beach, Dunedin, Indian Rocks Beach, Indian Shores, North Redington Beach, Redington Shores, Redington Beach, Belleair Beach, Madeira Beach, St. Petersburg, St. Pete Beach, Safety Harbor, Tarpon Springs, Treasure Island</b> and a host of other colorful communities for day-trips. The semi-tropical setting makes the 280 square miles of Florida's Beach a year-round playground for a variety of outdoor activities.
<b>Name</b>	Peter Demens, a Russian immigrant, brought his small gauge Orange Belt Railroad to the Gulf Coast of Florida whose new rail service produced a flood of new residents and visitors to the area. Demens named the city St. Petersburg after his hometown in Russia. The official name for the area encompassing Florida's Beach is Pinellas County. Pinellas comes from the phrase "punta pinal" or "point of pines," a name given the area by Spanish explorers who sailed the surrounding waters in the early 1500s. Florida's Beach is also known as the "Pinellas Suncoast."
<b>Population</b>	Florida's Beach (Pinellas County) all 26 communities    921,482 St. Petersburg    248,232 Clearwater    108,787
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Currency</b>	\$1 CDN = \$0.85 (Jan 2007)
<b>Tipping</b>	Yes: 10-15%
<b>Government</b>	Democracy
<b>Documentation</b>	On January 23, 2007, the United States implemented the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which requirea all air and sea travellers from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean and Bermuda, to present a passport to enter or re-enter the United States. This also includes children of all ages.
<b>Time zone</b>	EST
<b>Health</b>	As Canada, but make sure you have insurance!
<b>Safety tips</b>	Normal safety precautions

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<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	It is safe to say that Florida's Beach enjoys more sunshine than Honolulu. The Guinness Book of World Records credits St. Petersburg with the longest run of consecutive sunny days -- 768 days from Feb. 9, 1967 to March 17, 1969.
<b>Today's weather</b>	23 degrees centigrade and sunny
<b>Best time to visit</b>	For best accommodation costs: January-April Average \$83.62; May-August Average \$67.23; September-December Average \$64.00

<b>GETTING THERE</b>	The beaches and outlying communities on Florida's Beach are only 30 minutes away from Tampa International Airport, rated the nation's best for the past ten years by the International Passenger Traffic Association and other polls.
<b>Flying time</b>	3 hours; WestJet to Tampa
<b>Cities</b>	St. Petersburg and Clearwater; Tampa
<b>Distances</b>	1500 miles from Toronto and Montreal by road
<b>Ferries</b>	To Caladesi Island
<b>Car Rental</b>	Car rental from \$52/day, \$74 convertible
<b>Buses</b>	Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority operates 155 transit coaches and 9 trolleys on 38 fixed routes. Service also includes the Suncoast Beach Trolley with special fares and routes running along the Gulf beaches and into downtown St. Petersburg.
<b>Passes</b>	Passes and deals are listed under deals on the website.

<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	54 Hotels with 9,912 rooms; 434 Motels with 10,735 rooms; Rental condominiums and short-term apartments with 17,263 units
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<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	Just 30 minutes to Busch Gardens in Tampa and 90 minutes to Walt Disney World Resort, Sea World and Universal Studios; 3.5 hours Kennedy Space Centre <b>Busch Gardens:</b> 1 park pass is \$59 CDN thro WOV. KaTonga – musical tales from the jungle: music, dance, puppetry; Edge of Africa Safari; two of the tallest inverted roller coasters <b>Clearwater Marine Aquarium</b> – touch tanks, stingrays, starfish, non-profit, rehabilitation; watch for dolphins and manatees (\$35), turtles (Apr-Nov nesting)
<b>Teens</b>	<b>Sea Screamer</b> - Clearwater Municipal Marina, Slip #10, Clearwater Beach, FL 34630. Billed as the world's largest speedboat, this 73-foot craft takes you on both a scenic nature cruise and a thrilling, fast ride in the Gulf of Mexico. \$13.50 for adults; \$9 for kids 5-12

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	<p><b>Captain Memo's Pirate Cruise:</b> <a href="http://www.captainmemo.com">www.captainmemo.com</a> 2 hour cruises (kids \$20, adults \$32) to the less traveled road of briny buccaneers and seafaring seadogs. Set your course with the cool reggae island &amp; steel band music playing throughout the rigging of the Pirates Ransom. Every passenger will enjoy their choice of soft drinks, beer, wine, or champagne, while searching for the bountiful dolphins, while aboard ship. The spirited pirates may belly on up to our full service bar to purchase their favorite libation. The spirited pirates are individually selected by Captain Memo himself. They are chosen not only for their enthusiastic personalities and immeasurable politeness, but also for their knowledgeable seamanship capabilities. Wenches; Panama Pam, Diamond Diane, Money Up Front Michele, Captains; Dastardly Dan, Gangplank Gary, Powder keg Paul and pirates Mutiny Michael, Typhoon Tony, Jewel Thief Julie, Mischievous Melanie, Plundering Pete and Anchors Away Angela are anxious to meet you.</p>
<b>Romance</b>	<p><b>Island's End Resort</b> – on Pass-a-Grill, cottage retreat and hideaway, step right onto the beach</p>
<b>Honeymoons &amp; Weddings</b>	<p><b>Don CeSar Beach Resort and Spa</b> – dating back to 1928 and on National Register of Historic Places A wedding license may be obtained between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., at the Office of the Clerk of the Circuit Court. Offices are in the Clearwater Courthouse.</p>
<b>Seniors</b>	<p>Wonderful destination for Canadian "Snow birds" escaping our winter!</p>

<b>UNIQUES</b>	
<b>Surprising</b>	<p><b>Friendship Trail</b> - Located at the western end of Gandy Blvd. The "Old" Gandy Bridge spanning Tampa Bay north of St. Petersburg underwent a \$7 million transformation into a recreational park called the Friendship Trail Bridge. The 13,770.5-foot (2.6-mile) trail is the longest over-the-water recreation trail in the United States. Sharks teeth on Venice Beach with Florida Snow Shovels!</p>
<b>History</b>	<p>From early Native American settlements, to arrival of Spanish conquistadors in the 1500s, to pioneering citrus farmers, railroad barons and entrepreneurial land developers, Florida's Gulf coast has always attracted people in search of opportunity and adventure. Not only did they help build this thriving region, they left a rich and fascinating legacy. Thousands of years before the Spanish came, Native Americans flourished in the area. Burial mounds from the Pre-Columbian Native Americans are preserved throughout the county and can be seen at Philippe Park and Weedon Island Preserve. Hernando de Soto explored the area in 1539. In his search for wealth, de Soto reportedly discovered five mineral springs near a large Tocobaga Indian village in what is now Safety Harbor. He named the springs "Espiritu Santo" or "Springs of Sacred Spirit".</p>

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<b>Books</b>	“Florida, Eh?” – by Isobel Warren and Milan Chvostek, Cedar Cave Books Frommer’s Florida 2007
<b>1000 Places to see before you die</b>	<b>Swimming with manatees</b> at Crystal River, 90 miles to the north
<b>Must Sees</b>	<b>Clearwater Marine Aquarium</b> - 249 Windward Passage, Clearwater. Live and model displays of area marine life are on exhibit at this research and rehabilitation facility which frequently houses rehabilitating sea turtles and dolphin. Popular exhibits include tanks containing numerous varieties of fish, baby sea turtles and "Sam" the Bottlenose Dolphin.

<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL); Tampa Bay Devil Rays (baseball); Tampa Bay Lightning (hockey) Baseball Spring Training: March 2006 – Blue Jays in Dunedin info call 727-733-0429 The beaches and climate provide year-round swimming, sailing, water-skiing, jet skiing, windsurfing, parasailing, diving and shelling.
<b>Golf</b>	<b>20 courses within a few minutes drive</b> ; 50 public courses close by; Top golfers from around the world compete in the Tampa Bay Classic, a PGA tour event, in September.
<b>Fishing</b>	More than 300 species of fish can be caught in area waters, noted as one of Florida's premier fishing spots. Light tackle inshore bay and flats fishing charters as well as deep-sea charters available. All guides are licensed charter captains specializing in saltwater sport fishing in the Tampa Bay area. The prolific waters of the Tampa Bay area hold everything from pan fish to the mighty tarpon; 8 hours is \$170 per person.
<b>Horse riding</b>	<b>Hire A Pony Riding Academy</b> in Tampa – trail rides and lessons
<b>Hiking</b>	<b>Boyd Hill Nature Trail</b> - 1101 Country Club Way South, St. Petersburg, FL 33705. This area features 216 acres of natural beauty with six trails that lead visitors through Florida's various ecosystems. Wildlife abounds in this park and excellent photo opportunities exist on every trail.
<b>Cycling</b>	<b>Pinellas Trail</b> - Located throughout the St. Petersburg/Clearwater area. This 37-mile long, 15-foot wide trail is part of the county park system and is one of the longest linear parks in the southeastern United States. It enables visitors and residents alike to bike, in-line skate, jog or walk -- all without the hassle and safety concern of being in automobile traffic. There are rental shops for bikes and skates at numerous points along the trail.
<b>Diving</b>	If you don't know where to dive in the Tampa Bay area, Ned DeLoach's NEW 10th Edition "Diving Guide to Underwater Florida" is a must! Manatee trips

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<b>CULTURE</b>	
<b>Arts</b>	World-class museums, symphony performances, Broadway shows, rock concerts, ballet and art festivals are presented throughout the year. St. Petersburg's Bayfront Center with the 2,000-seat Mahaffey Theater and an 8,250-seat arena is the scene for many of these activities. Ruth Eckerd Hall, the 2,000-seat theatre in Clearwater's Richard Baumgardner Center for the Performing Arts, offers a wide array of cultural activities.
<b>Music</b>	County and community parks are regular sites for art shows and open-air concerts like the Clearwater Jazz Holiday in October, acclaimed as one of the South's premier jazz festivals.
<b>Films</b>	Ocean's Eleven; American Outlaws; The Punisher; Forever Mine; Summer Rental; To Die For; Filthy; Three-Point Turn; Whispering Thunder; Lethal Weapon 3; Cocoon; Great Expectations; The Break; Coupe de Ville; McCinsey's Island; H.E.A.L.T.H
<b>Museums</b>	<p><b>Salvador Dali Museum</b> - 1000 Third Street South, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. The Dali features the world's most comprehensive collection of work by the famous Spanish master. Valued at more than \$125 million, the collection includes 94 oil paintings, 200 watercolors and drawings and 1,000 graphics, sculptures and objects d'art.</p> <p>The Dunedin Railroad Historical Museum is housed in the original Orange Belt Railroad station that dates to 1889. In Largo, a walking tour of turn-of-the-century Pinellas is found at Heritage Village, a 21-acre site containing a collection of 22 restored buildings and homes.</p> <p><b>The St. Petersburg Museum of History</b> contains Native American artifacts from the Safety Harbor and Weedon Island sites, exhibits and demonstrations of early pioneer life. The historical and fine arts museum in Safety Harbor, located near a Native American mound, has a variety of exhibits which focus on the area's significance dating back 10,000 years and running through Spanish settlement to Philippe's arrival.</p> <p><b>Tarpon Springs' Cultural Center and Spongeorama</b> capture the history of the Greek community's sponge diving industry.</p>
<b>Festivals</b>	<p>Events: <b>The Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg</b> in March/April</p> <p>The Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg returns with the famed IndyCar Series auto racing, Infiniti Pro Series, SCCA World Speed Challenge, stunt plane airshows, concerts, celebrities and more. It is the second running of the event and the only street-circuit race in the IndyCar Series. The 2006 race attracted more than 70,000 attendees with a large live television audience broadcasted to more than 140 countries.</p> <p>Drivers will race at speeds in excess of 170 mph along a 14-turn, 1.8-mile temporary circuit that runs through the streets of St. Petersburg and through the Albert Whitted Airport, overlooking the picturesque St. Petersburg waterfront.</p>

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<p><b>ATTRACTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>St. Petersburg:</b> The Pier, Salvador Dali Museum, Great Explorations, Museum of Fine Arts, Bayfront Center, St. Petersburg Museum of History, Sunshine Skyway Bridge, Sunken Gardens, Fort De Soto Park, Derby Lane, Tropicana Field, Florida International Museum, Florida Holocaust Museum, Canoe Escape, Sweetwater Kayaks and Duck Tours</p> <p><b>Clearwater:</b> Captain Memo's Pirate Cruise, Celebration Station, Clearwater Marine Aquarium, Dolphin Encounter, Pier 60, Ruth Eckerd Hall, Sea Screamer, Sea Life Safari, Show Queen and The Starlite Majesty Dinner Boat</p>
<p><b>Beaches</b></p>	<p>Discover thirty-five miles of white sand beaches, home to <b>Fort De Soto Park</b> - America's number one beach in 2005, and to <b>Caladesi Island</b> - America's number two beach in 2006</p> <p><b>Shell Key Preserve</b> - Located south of St. Pete Beach. Named one of the state's most important birding sites by Audubon of Florida, this undeveloped barrier island is known for excellent shelling, sunbathing and bird watching.</p>
<p><b>Wildlife</b></p>	<p><b>Turtles:</b> In a typical year, more than 150 loggerhead sea turtles successfully nest on St. Petersburg/Clearwater area beaches, and of those, more than a third will be found on six miles of undeveloped shoreline on Fort De Soto Beach. Loggerheads are one of five species of endangered sea turtles that lay their eggs on Florida's beaches. While the green, leatherback, hawksbill and Kemp's Ridley can be found in local waters, the loggerhead is by far the most common. Peak nesting time runs May through August.</p> <p><b>Clearwater's Original Dolphin Encounter</b> - From Clearwater Beach Marina, this is a Clearwater tradition and offers a dolphin-sighting guarantee.</p>
<p><b>Parks</b></p>	<p>250 parks</p> <p><b>Brooker Creek Preserve</b> offers a nature trail, perfect for day hikes, while <b>Sawgrass Lake Park</b> in St. Petersburg take you back in time, showing the flora and fauna of decades past (and even live alligators of today!).</p>
<p><b>Gardens</b></p>	<p><b>Sunken Gardens:</b> 100 year old botanical garden, 50,000 tropical plants and flowers, flamingos, butterflies; Weedon Island in St. Petersburg offers a 3,000-foot boardwalk will take nature lovers through a mangrove forest to a four-story, 50-foot high observation tower offering panoramic views of Tampa Bay. The park also offers a canoe and kayak trail.</p>
<p><b>Castles/Forts</b></p>	<p><b>Fort De Soto</b> was built on Mullet Key in 1898 to protect Tampa Bay during the Spanish-American War. The war ended before construction was finished and the fort's cannon were never fired.</p>

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<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Shopping</b>	<b>International Plaza and Bay Street</b> – over 200 stores, pedestrianised, 22 miles St Petes
<b>Markets</b>	<b>Wagonwheel Flea Market</b> every weekend: 125 acres and 2000 booths
<b>Nightlife</b>	Located five floors above downtown St. Petersburg and nearly a mile out into Tampa Bay, <b>Cha Cha Coconuts</b> is one of the coolest spots in town. This bar/restaurant features entertainment nightly. <b>Dan Marino's Martini Bar</b> , Second Avenue N. St. Petersburg - The place to see and be seen. Listen to the smooth bluesy sounds of a live band while sipping on a Marino Margarita.
<b>Casinos</b>	Opening soon at Treasure Island, <b>The Casino Royale</b> will be a Las Vegas-style gaming vessel featuring over 500 slot machines and table games including Black Jack, Craps, Roulette and Mini-Baccarat; also featured is the Poker room and exclusive High Limit room.

<b>CUISINE</b>	
<b>Food</b>	<b>Lobster Pot</b> , Redington Shores – finest seafood and recommended by Frommer <b>Ted Peters' Famous Smoked Fish</b> – bring your own to be smoked
<b>Wine</b>	<b>Florida Orange Groves, Inc. &amp; Winery</b> in South Pasadena: This family-owned facility produces "citrus-based" fruit wines that are unique in their fermenting process allowing them to stay fresh for years. The facility includes a tasting bar with free wine tasting by appointment. Tours of the small factory where citrus is packaged and the wines are bottled are available year-round.
<b>Restaurants</b>	There are approximately <b>2,276 restaurants</b> capable of seating a total of more than 200,000 people throughout Florida's Beach. They offer everything from elegant to the most casual, barefoot dining and moonlight dinner cruises. <b>Fourth Street Shrimp Store</b> is perhaps the best bargain for eating in St Pete's.

<b>MORE INFO</b>	
<b>Brochures</b>	Phone <b>1-877-FL-BEACH</b> (1-877-352 3224)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.floridasbeach.com">www.floridasbeach.com</a> <a href="http://www.westjetvacations.com">www.westjetvacations.com</a>

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<b>HOTEL PRIZE PARTNER</b>	
<b>Location</b>	<b>The Dolphin Beach Resort</b> is situated in St. Pete Beach on 400 feet of a sugar white sand beach. Silver Sand Beach stretches for miles, perfect for a healthy morning run, afternoon tan and a romantic evening stroll. Located directly across from the hotels is the Dolphin Village Shopping Center which features numerous St Pete Beach restaurants and shops. In addition, there are several Tampa, Florida attractions that are a short drive from the hotel: Busch Gardens, Adventure Island, the Florida Aquarium, The Pier, Florida International Museum and Lowery Park Zoo are all accessible with a 20-45 minute drive.
<b>Facilities</b>	Large heated pool Dining room, Patio dining Cocktail lounge and beach bar with live entertainment on most days Watersports Volleyball Shuffleboard Video games room
<b>Accommodation</b>	The Dolphin Beach Resort offers oversized guest rooms that are larger than traditional hotels to make your stay more enjoyable in 173 room beachfront rooms (Maximum occupancy per room is 4 or 4 adults & 1 child or 3 adults & 2 children) 2 double beds Air-conditioned Satellite TV with 3 free movie channels Microwave, Mini-fridge, Coffeemaker, Iron & ironing board, Bathroom with tub, shower & hairdryer
<b>Activities</b>	Shuffle board, parasail & other water sports; boat tours
<b>Restaurants</b>	Boca Sands Grille / Lobby Lounge, Flipper's Beach Bar / Patio Dining

<b>AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNER</b>	<b>WestJet</b> WestJet Vacations is your one-stop shop to affordable, reliable and easy to book travel packages to more than 30 destinations in North America. Operating under parent company WestJet, you can count on the same outstanding, customer-friendly, fun-loving travel experience you've come to expect from the airline. Whether you simply want to get away for a weekend, or plan to enjoy a week-long holiday, WestJet Vacations takes you to great destinations, so put your seats in the just right position and choose from their wide selection of scheduled flights, as well as quality products and services available at all of WestJet's destinations in Canada and the U.S.
<b>Flight details</b>	<b>10.50 – 13.42 daily Toronto to Tampa</b> <b>08.15 – 11.35 Sun, Tues, Thurs Montreal - Tampa</b>

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