

NASCAR
TRAVEL PLANNER

THE BEST PLACES TO:



SEE

STAY



EAT

AROUND **31** NASCAR-SANCTIONED TRACKS

SEE

ATTRACTIONS

Daytona Beach Area

ATLANTIC AVENUE.

Atlantic Avenue is filled with touristy but entertaining T-shirt and souvenir shops, the Racing 2000 memorabilia store, and several bars and restaurants—including the cheesy and fun Cruisin' Cafe at Atlantic and Main. Eat lunch in a booth made from a stock car and check out the autographed ceiling tiles.

THE BEACH.

The liveliest, most action-packed beach area is located between Seabreeze and International Speedway boulevards. The hard-packed sand that makes driving so easy is soft and textured enough to feel like you're walking on crushed velvet. This section is closed to public beach driving, but it's filled with the vehicles of vendors renting chairs, umbrellas, golf carts, and boogie boards.

After splashing around in the ocean, walk along the Boardwalk, an area packed with arcade games, go-karts, giant swinging rides, and refreshment stands, to the Daytona Beach Pier. As you walk, look down at the Salute to Speed, plaques built right into the sidewalk tracing the area's motorsports history. At the pier, catch a cool breeze aboard the gondola skyride or get a panoramic view of the area on the slowly revolving, 180-foot "Daytona 360" tower. The pier offers fishing, helicopter rides, and a full-service restaurant. Redevelopment plans include adding a second pier. Construction is expected to begin in 2005.

Sun Splash Park is south of International Speedway Boulevard and made for families. This park features an interactive water fountain, a shaded playground, picnic areas, and free parking.

During daylight hours, you can drive on 11 of the 23 miles of sand that run along the coast of the Daytona area. Follow the signs that mark the traffic lane. Remember that the days of racing on the beach are over: the speed limit is only 10 miles per hour. There is a small vehicle fee from February to November.

DAYTONA USA.

1801 W International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/947-6800. www.daytonausa.com.

Located just outside the speedway's Turn 4, this theme park is like a racing fan's Disney World—with track tours, loads of memorabilia, racing simulator rides, the actual car of the latest Daytona 500 winner, and two films in the IMAX Theatre, "NASCAR 3D: The IMAX Experience" and "Daytona 500: The Movie," which depicts action during the Daytona 500. In addition, it regularly hosts appearances by drivers and other celebrities. (Daily; closed Dec 25) \$\$\$\$

GOLFING AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.

Daytona Beach is home to the international headquarters of the Ladies Professional Golf Association. In addition to the LPGA's two golf courses, there are more than 20 other courses in the area including the Jack Nicklaus-designed Ocean Hammock golf club by the beach. For information on all of the area's courses, log onto www.golfdaytonabeach.com.

The area also has four wildly themed miniature golf courses, four go-kart tracks, and boating and fishing tours. Visit www.daytonabeach.com for specific information.

HALIFAX HISTORICAL MUSEUM.

252 S Beach St, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/255-6976. www.halifaxhistorical.org.

The museum occupies a historic bank building and contains memorabilia dating from the early days of beach car racing. (Tues-Fri 10 am-4 pm, Sat 10 am-noon) \$

LIVING LEGENDS OF AUTO RACING MUSEUM.

253 Riverside Dr, Holly Hill (32117). Phone 386/257-2828. www.livinglegendsofautoracing.com.

If you enjoy NASCAR's early history, visit this museum owned by a local group whose president, Ray Fox, is a Hall of Fame car builder credited with helping Junior Johnson win the 1960 Daytona 500. Employees are full of interesting stories about past drivers, owners, and pit crews. (Wed-Sat) FREE

MARINE SCIENCE CENTER.

100 Lighthouse Dr, Ponce Inlet (32127). Phone 386/304-5545. www.marinesciencecenter.com.

The inexpensive Marine Science Center is just around the corner from the Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse. It isn't very big, but inside you'll find small alligators, snakes, a moray eel, aquariums, and environmental exhibits. In the classroom lab, kids can make craft projects

such as sea turtle paper plates and paper bag pelicans. Outside, stroll Turtle Terrace to observe the sea turtle rehabilitation area. The sea bird rehabilitation center is on the other end of the parking lot, and a nature trail is located across the street. \$

OCEAN WALK SHOPPES @ THE VILLAGE.

250 N Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach (32118). Phone 386/566-6876; toll-free 877/845-WALK (9255). www.oceanwalkvillage.com. Nestled between the Hilton Daytona Beach Resort (formerly Adam's Mark) and the Ocean Walk Resort, this colorful new dining, shopping, and entertainment complex offers specialty shops, Cold Stone Creamery, Bubba Gump Shrimp Co., a ten-screen movie theater, live entertainment, and more. Just to the east sits the historic oceanfront Bandshell. Built in 1937 of coquina shells, the Bandshell hosts concerts and events throughout the year. The new **Daytona Lagoon** (www.daytonalagoon.com), with a water park, arcade, and go-karts, is scheduled to open across the street from the Shoppes in 2005.

PONCE DE LEON INLET LIGHTHOUSE.

4931 S Peninsula Dr, Ponce Inlet (32127). Phone 386/761-1821. www.ponceinlet.org. The scenic town of Ponce Inlet features the country's second-tallest lighthouse, located at the southern tip of the Daytona area's barrier island. At the top is an incredible view of both the Intracoastal Waterway and the ocean, but beware: the 203-step trip can be strenuous. Once back on solid ground, explore the original homes and buildings that surround the lighthouse. Each is filled with exhibits on lighthouse, maritime, and area history—including a continuously running black-and-white video of beach races from the 1940s. (Daily) \$

TROLLEYBOAT TOURS.

Ocean Walk Shoppes @ The Village, 250 N Atlantic Ave, Kiosk 2, Daytona Beach (32118). Phone 386/238-3738. www.daytonatrolleyboattours.net. This amphibious vehicle picks up in front of the Ocean Walk Shoppes and travels down a few streets before plunging into the Halifax River. While slowly floating along, tour guides talk about the area's history from its Native American inhabitants to the birth of NASCAR. You'll glimpse the mansion of Bill France Jr, former chairman and CEO of NASCAR—and you may spot a dolphin or two. During Speedweeks, the amphibious trolleys also go by the Halifax Harbor Marina as guides point out the boats of drivers such as Jeff Gordon, Dale Earnhardt

Jr, and Mark Martin. The tour ends with a drive on the beach, but at 75 minutes long, it probably moves a little slowly for most kids. \$\$\$\$

New Smyrna Beach

THE BEACH AND FLAGLER AVENUE SHOPS.

www.flaglerave.com. Lovely New Smyrna Beach's small-town atmosphere is quaint and laid back. Wander through the many shops, boutiques, and galleries that pack Flagler Avenue, then head to the town's pretty beach area, on the northern tip of Canaveral National Seashore.

Orlando

Located a little more than an hour from Daytona, Orlando is the theme park capital of the world, home to Disney World's four parks, Universal Studios and Islands of Adventure, Sea World, and Discovery Cove. However, there are smaller, slightly less expensive attractions as well: Gatorland, The Holy Land Experience, Titanic The Exhibition, the upside-down building that houses hands-on exhibits at Wonder Works, and Wet 'n Wild water park. It can become almost overwhelming trying to sort through all that's offered. Here's a sampling.

DOLLY PARTON'S DIXIE STAMPEDE.

8251 Vineland Ave, Orlando (32819). Phone 407/238-4455; toll-free 866/443-4943. www.dixiestampede.com. Dolly Parton opened Orlando's newest dinner theater, her Dixie Stampede Dinner and Show, in June 2003. The 1,200-seat facility, built at a cost of \$28 million, hosts an energetic North vs. South show featuring a large cast of elaborately costumed actors, live animals (including 32 horses), dramatic lighting, sound, and pyrotechnics—and don't forget the ostriches, pig races, and chicken chases. A four-course meal is served during the performance. (Showtimes vary) \$\$\$\$

GATORLAND.

14501 S Orange Blossom Trail, Orlando (32837). Phone 407/855-5496; toll-free 800/393-JAWS (5297). www.gatorland.com. For the quintessential Florida experience, visit this 110-acre park and wildlife preserve for thousands of alligators and crocodiles. After walking through the massive alligator head entrance, explore exhibits such as Alligator Island and Flamingo Lagoon, go through the petting zoo, and hop aboard the Gatorland Express. Shows include Jungle Crocs,

the Up Close snake show, Gator Wrestlin', and the Gator Jumparoo—where large alligators jump out of the water to grab food from a trainer's hand. (Daily 9 am-dusk) \$\$\$\$



For more attractions, go to www.mobiltravelguide.com

STAY

NOTE: At press time, some area hotels and restaurants were closed due to hurricane damage. Call ahead to check availability.

MOBIL STAR-RATED LODGINGS

Daytona Beach

BEACHCOMER DAYTONA BEACH RESORT. ★★

2000 N Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach (32118). Phone 386/252-8513; toll-free 800/245-3575. www.beachcomerresort.com. This tall, mint-green hotel offers a large heated beachside pool and deck, hot tub, children's pool, poolside snack shop, and full-service restaurant. The recreation staff provides year-round activities such as beach volleyball, ice cream socials, and pool bingo. Private balconies and refrigerators are standard, with a game room and laundry facilities on premises. 184 rooms, 7 story. Pets accepted. Check-in 3 pm, check-out 11 am. Laundry services. Restaurant, bar. Children's activity center. Beach. Outdoor pool, children's pool, whirlpool. \$



HAMPTON INN DAYTONA SPEEDWAY/AIRPORT. ★

1715 W International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/257-4030; toll-free 800/593-0344. www.hamptoninn.com. This newly renovated hotel is in a great location about three blocks from the track. It provides clean rooms with coffee makers, complimentary breakfast bar, and small fitness center. 122 rooms, 4 story. Complimentary continental breakfast. Check-in

PIT PASS

If you're staying in the infield and have questions about anything, head to one of the 15 Guest Information Centers located throughout the area. Booth staffers have the Holy Grail of information: the Big Binder. This fat three-ring notebook has information on everything from the price and location of ice to the names and numbers of RV repair shops that are pre-credentialed. This means that if you have any mechanical problems, you don't have to drive out of the infield looking for help. Instead, call any of the pre-credentialed vendors available and they'll come out and service your vehicle, right at the track. You still have to pay for the service—but the convenience can't be beat.



3 pm, check-out 11 am. Fitness room. Outdoor pool, whirlpool. \$



HILTON GARDEN INN DAYTONA BEACH AIRPORT. ★

189 Midway Ave, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/944-4000; toll-free 877/944-4001. www.hiltongardeninn.com. The best part of this hotel is its location: it's just one block east of Daytona International Speedway, across the street from the Volusia Mall, and next to the Cancun Lagoon Bar & Grill. You can see the track from upper rooms. All rooms come with microwaves and refrigerators. 156 rooms, 3 story. Check-in 4 pm, check-out 11 am. High-speed Internet access. Fitness room. Outdoor pool, whirlpool. \$



Ormond Beach**BEST WESTERN MAINSAIL INN & SUITES.**

281 S Atlantic Ave, Ormond Beach (32176). Phone 386/677-2131; toll-free 800/843-5142. www.bestwestern.com. 44 rooms, 4 story. Complimentary continental breakfast. Check-in 4 pm, check-out 11 am. Beach. Outdoor pool, children's pool. \$

CORAL BEACH MOTEL.

711 S Atlantic Ave, Ormond Beach (32176). Phone 386/677-4712; toll-free 800/553-4712. www.coralbeachmotel.com. This popular oceanfront resort's rooms are cozy and clean, with a microwave and refrigerator. Most come with private balconies. The Pirate's Cove miniature golf course is across the street. 97 rooms, 7 story. Check-in 3 pm, check-out 11 am. Laundry services. Indoor pool, outdoor pool. \$

RV AND CAMPING**Daytona Beach****INTERNATIONAL RV PARK AND CAMPGROUND.**

3175 W International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach (32124). Phone 386/239-0249; toll-free 866/261-3698. www.internationalrvdaytona.com. This park has spacious lots in a countrylike setting, and is less than 2 miles west of the speedway. A shuttle service is typically available to races. A swimming pool, general store, laundry, and showers are available, as well as hook-ups and pull-through sites.

RACETRACK RV PARK.

270 Coral Sea Way, Daytona Beach (32174). Mailing address: 2547 Bellevue Ave, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone toll-free 877/787-2246. www.racetrackrv.com. Only open for major events such as the Daytona 500, the Pepsi 400, and Bike Week, this campground is conveniently located within easy walking distance of the speedway. Hook-ups available.

Ormond Beach**TOMOKA STATE PARK.**

2099 N Beach St, Ormond Beach (32174). Phone 386/676-4050; toll-free 800/326-3521. Located near the confluence of the Tomoka and Halifax rivers, this park has fishing areas, canoe rentals, nature trails, guided tours, a boat ramp, and 100 campsites.



For more lodging recommendations, go to www.mobiltravelguide.com

EAT

MOBIL STAR-RATED RESTAURANTS**Daytona Beach****CHART HOUSE. ★★**

1100 Marina Pointe Dr, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/255-9022. www.chart-house.com. This beautiful restaurant serves outstanding, unique seafood dishes and steaks. It features friendly service and a gorgeous view of the Halifax Harbor Marina. It's popular with race drivers; several dock their boats at the marina during Speedweeks or stay in the condos just up the street. Due to its popularity, especially during racing events, reservations are strongly recommended. Seafood, steak menu. Dinner. Bar. Children's menu. Casual attire. Outdoor seating. \$\$\$

MAIN STREET STEAKHOUSE. ★

601 Main St, Daytona Beach (32014). Phone 386/255-2550. This casual restaurant has outdoor seating and reasonable prices. American menu. Dinner. Closed Sun-Tues. Bar. Casual attire. Outdoor seating. \$\$

MARIA BONITA. ★

1435 S Ridgewood Ave, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 904/255-3465. This authentic Mexican restaurant has become a favorite of locals for its food, good service, and prices. Mexican menu. Lunch, dinner. Bar. Children's menu. Casual attire. Outdoor seating. \$\$

New Smyrna Beach**NORWOOD'S RESTAURANT & WINE SHOP. ★★**

400 Second Ave, New Smyrna Beach (32169). Phone 386/428-4621. www.norwoods.com. You can't go through New Smyrna without dropping in at Norwood's. With dimmed lights and an intimate setting, this restaurant has been serving up good seafood and Angus beef since 1946. It offers a free wine tasting every Friday evening. At its wine shop, browse for bottles of wine, souvenirs, and gifts. Seafood menu. Lunch, dinner. Closed Dec 25. Bar. Children's menu. Casual attire. \$\$

LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Daytona Beach

CANCUN LAGOON BAR & GRILL.

1735 W International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/255-6500. www.cancunlagoon.com. Located amid all the racing action, Cancun Lagoon is just down the street from the speedway. The main dining area has the feel of an old Mexican courtyard, complete with stucco arches and a fountain. Outside, a small thatched-roof patio looks out onto the parking lot packed with vendors and displays during racing events. And if all that's not enough for you, the inside bar features hermit crab races on Wednesday nights. An extensive takeout menu is available. Mexican, American menu. Lunch, dinner, late-night. Casual attire. Outdoor seating. \$\$

CARIBBEAN JACK'S RESTAURANT & MARINA.

721 Ballough Rd, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/523-3000. www.caribbeanjacks.com. This colorful eatery next to the Halifax River provides fun with a tropical flair. Eat inside the large, island-inspired dining room or outside at glider picnic tables on the huge deck beside the marina's boats. Like most of Daytona's restaurants, fresh seafood and steaks are the specialty. The restaurant offers live music, daily happy-hour specials, and killer "riveritas." In addition, Caribbean Jack's is next door to the private marina where Bill France Jr docks his yacht. During Speedweeks, keep your eyes open for other drivers' boats docking. American menu. Lunch, dinner. Casual attire. Outdoor seating. \$\$

CRABBY JOE'S DECK & GRILL.

3701 S Atlantic Ave, Daytona Beach (32127). Phone 386/788-3364. www.sunglowpier.com. This restaurant is located on the ocean, on the Sunglow fishing pier. During Speedweeks, there's a good chance you'll catch Richard Petty dining here at least once around 5 pm. (He celebrated his birthday here in 2004.) American menu. Breakfast, lunch, dinner. Bar. Casual attire. Outdoor seating. \$\$

MR. GOODCENTS SUBS & PASTAS.

1808 International Speedway Blvd, Daytona Beach (32114). Phone 386/238-2368. www.mrgoodcents.com. DAYTONA USA fans flock across the street to this shop to enjoy its fresh subs. The staff puts take-out items into clear bags to ease the security process



ROAD FOOD

The family-owned **Aunt Catfish's on the River** has been named Best Restaurant by the Daytona Beach Area Convention and Visitors Bureau for the last five years, and no wonder: it serves up big portions of down-home cooking with extra-friendly service and a gorgeous view. This Port Orange eatery is popular with locals, race fans who return year after year, and drivers such as Richard Petty and Dale Jarrett. Its specialty catfish is served three ways; other seafood dishes, ribs, and rotisserie chicken are almost as good. Include a trip through the hot bar for baked beans, cornbread, and cheese grits. And enjoy drinks served in Mason jars. American menu. Lunch, dinner, brunch. Casual attire. Outdoor seating. \$\$ 4009 Halifax Dr (at Dunlawton Bridge). Phone 386/767-4768. www.auntcatfish.com.

at the track—and if you and your friends want to buy one big sub, you can have it sliced to fit exactly into a regulation 6 x 6 x 12-inch cooler. Deli menu. Lunch, dinner. Casual attire. \$

OCEAN DECK RESTAURANT & BEACH CLUB.

127 S Ocean Ave, Daytona Beach (32118). Phone 386/253-5224. www.oceandeck.com. You can walk into this laid-back, very popular restaurant right off the beach. About two blocks south of the Daytona Pier, the Deck's downstairs dining area serves everyone, including swimmers and sunbathers in for a break. From spicy Jamaican jerk buffalo wings to crab cakes and other seafood dishes, the salty sea breezes seem to make everything taste better. Children's menu items