



Bob Therina

A Weekend on the Beach

Panama City Beach, 2 Days

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: This guide is meant to give you a romantic, intimate weekend with some fun places for lunch and upscale dining at night. Enjoy!

Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Panama City Beach



Bay Point Marriott Resort

Adventure & Relaxation



Hammerhead Fred's

Fresh Local Seafood and Music in a great atmosphere.



Saltwater Grill

Awesome Food

Day 2 - Panama City Beach



Calypso Beach Café

Put Your Game Face On



Breakers Restaurant

Lively, beach-side, surf n' turf restaurant

Day 1 - Panama City Beach

QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +1 850 236 6000
fax: +1 850 236 6158
<http://www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/pfnbp-bay-point-marr>

location:

4200 MARRIOTT DRIVE
Panama City FL 32408

1 Bay Point Marriott Resort

DESCRIPTION: Ranked among the nation's top golf and tennis resorts, Bay Point Marriott is a great value, not to mention the centerpiece of a manicured development sprawling over 1,100 acres on a wildlife sanctuary bordered by St. Andrews Bay and the Grand Lagoon. Situated beside the lagoon, the vivid coral stucco hotel is surrounded by beautiful gardens. From the glamorous three-story lobby, window walls look out to scenic water views and two pools (one in its own glass-enclosed building). Guest rooms are spacious and luxurious, some with balconies or patios. The recently renovated Golf Villas at Bay Point Marriott is a group of seven buildings situated next to the only Nicklaus Golf Course in Northwest Florida. Watersports are available at the resort's Grand Lagoon Beach. There's also a free water shuttle to beautiful Shell Island on the Gulf of Mexico. The 11,000-square-foot Serenity Spa at Bay Point opened in 2007. **Facilities:** 2 restaurants; 3 bars; 3 heated outdoor pools; indoor pool; 2 golf courses; 5 tennis courts; health club; Jacuzzi; watersports equipment/rentals; concierge; business center; room service; massage; babysitting; laundry service; free washers/dryers © Frommer's



Hotels.com

contact:

tel: (850) 233-3907
<http://www.hammerheadfreds.com/>

location:

8752 Thomas Drive
Panama City Bch FL 32408

2 Hammerhead Fred's

OUR LOCAL EXPERT SAYS:

Hammerhead Fred's offers free parking and has a gift shop on site. It is also across the street from two of the top nightclubs in Panama City Beach, Spinnaker's and Club La Vela. Look for coupons in your hotel's visitor guide.

DESCRIPTION:

From the time you pull in to the parking lot at Hammerhead Fred's, you get a taste of what it in store for you as you dine. The restaurant's signage includes a tail strung Great White Shark. It can't hurt you, but it is excellent for picture taking. As you exit your car, the sound of steel drums and Caribbean style music fill your ears as you walk up to the well landscaped entry way and waiting area. Once enter Hammerhead Fred's, the upbeat and positive atmosphere continues. The wait staff was fun and informed and willing to make a suggestion. This is important because the service industry has to deal with spring breakers each year and can, at times, become jaded to tourists. This has not been the case on any of my visits to Hammerhead Fred's. In fact, the love for visitors is visible in all aspects of the restaurant. Bring a permanent marker and leave your mark, literally. Feel free to write on your table, seat, wall, or wherever you can find space to fit your name. Reading the scribbling of



www.hammerheadfreds.com

other patrons is one of the more entertaining ways to wait for your meal. The menu truly does have something for everyone. I know this cliché' but, it does. The seafood is always fresh, and Apalachicola Oysters are one of the specialties which are one of the many reasons to visit. Hammerhead Fred's prices are in line with most of the other restaurants that fall within this category making it even more desirable due to the fact that the food is excellent. If you arrive in Panama City Beach and are inundated with dining options, do your family a favor and visit Hammerhead Fred's. © NileGuide

contact:

tel: +1 850 230 2739
<http://www.saltwatergrillpcb.com/>

location:

11040 Middle Beach Road
Panama City Beach FL 32407

hours:

Su to Th from 04:00 PM to
10:00 PM, Fr to Sa from 04:00
PM to 11:00 PM

3 Saltwater Grill

DESCRIPTION: The Saltwater Grill serves fantastic seafood and steaks. Live music is featured Tuesday through Thursday and space is available for weddings or other special events. © wcities.com



wcities

Day 2 - Panama City Beach

QUICK NOTE

contact:

tel: +1 850 234 6788
http://www.calypsobeachcafe.com/index.htm

location:

15812 Front Beach Road
Panama City Beach FL 32413

1 Calypso Beach Café

DESCRIPTION: Calypso Beach Café serves up delectable seafood, wings, burgers, and ice cold beers. The food merges the gap between spicy and sweet and represents the cuisine of New Orleans and the Caribbean. Go all out with the Etouffée or the Shrimp Creole. If you're in the mood for a just a snack, check out the sports menu for nachos, dips, and of course, beer. It is open daily from 11 am onwards. © wcities.com



wcities

contact:

tel: 8502346060
fax: +1 850 233 2004
Breakerspcbeach.com

location:

12627 Front Beach Rd.
Panama City Beach FL 32407

hours:

Open Daily at 4:00pm

2 Breakers Restaurant

DESCRIPTION: So many steak and seafood restaurants but so little time. Having a hard time choosing? Roll the dice with Breakers. Get crazy with the Filet Mignon with Bleu Cheese Herb Crust or take it easy with the Snapper Aioli. The kids can get jiggy with the children's menu. Don't forget to wash it down with an ice cold beer or cocktail. If you have one to many, stay away from the ocean! It is open daily from 4.30 pm. © wcities.com



wcities

My List

contact:

tel: +1 850 233 5100

fax: +1 850 233 5108

http://www.pcbgov.com/visitors_citypier.htm

location:

16101 Front Beach Road

Panama City Beach FL 32413



Dan Russell Pier

DESCRIPTION: The City Pier is a popular spot for various festivals, and since the pier has beach for as far as the eyes can see to either side, it is usually pretty easy to find a spot, even with the big crowds. For the most popular festivals, it is advisable to get there early. © wcities.com



Dan Russell Pier

Panama City Beach Snapshot

Local Info

Welcome to "The Worlds Most Beautiful Beaches" Panama City Beach is a popular tourist destination in the Florida Panhandle and is located in Bay County Florida. While the town itself has only about 8,000 full time residents, over six million people a year flock to the sugar white sand and emerald waters of Panama City Beach. It is well known that the area is hugely popular for spring breakers, but it is also a top destination for "Snow Birds", retired people that come from Canada and the northern United States and stay throughout the winter to avoid the harsh winters. The "Snow Birds" are a major lifeline for the area as they continue to provide tourism dollars during the off-season. No matter what you enjoy, Panama City Beach is at no loss for entertainment. Miniature golf courses, museums, restaurants, amusement parks, and shopping are available at almost every turn. If you are looking to relax, stroll down to the pool (most hotels in town have their own) or head down and soak up the sun on the pristine, sugar white sand beaches. The water temperature is warm from late February through November and watersports are a major draw for thrill seekers. The nightlife scene is vibrant and diverse. You will have no problem finding a small quiet bar if that is your thing and the world's largest nightclub also resides in Panama City Beach. Most restaurants also have outdoor dining options that are almost always accompanied by live music. Panama City Beach is also an excellent value vacation spot. Of course there are high rise condos and upscale lodging, but there are plenty of places that you can stay that allow you to spend your hard earned money on having fun and not on a place to stay. There are many hidden gems amongst the lesser known hotels and motels and with very little effort you can find a place that is clean, comfortable, and affordable. The peak visit times are from February-September. Spring breakers start the season and are soon followed by "Thunder Beach" a motorcycle rally that takes place in the spring and again in the fall. Most of the time, the beach is filled with families looking for a relaxing break from the daily grind. The summer holidays are the busiest time outside of spring break and room rates definitely reflect that. If you are looking to visit on a budget and avoid the

crowd, September and October are your best bets. Room rates have typically gone down by then and all of the restaurants and attractions are still open and less crowded. The water temperature is still warm so you get to enjoy the last bit of summer. Panama City Beach is a fantastic place to visit. With the attractions, scenery, and laid back atmosphere, it is easy to see why so many people fall in love with the area. Come down and check out the beach and enjoy yourself. The only difficulty you will find is trying to fit everything in on one visit. © NileGuide

History

Beginning around the 1830s western landowners from Georgia and Alabama started spending their summers at St. Andrews Bay, about a mile west of what would become Panama City by 1909. St. Andrew's Bay was the main town in the Washington County region, known today as Bay County.

It wasn't until Florida's Land Boom of the 1920's that Panama City experience a major expansion. Americans finally had the money to buy real estate and travel. Accordingly, the automobile, an essential addition to the new and improved American lifestyle, encouraged Americans to journey by car to warm and sunny destinations like Florida. Yet, unlike previous travelers, the middle-class Americans that found their way to Florida were in search of homes rather than hotels and resorts.

Panama City and the surrounding areas benefited greatly from military spending during World War II. Beginning around 1941, a cluster of military bases sprung up, including Tyndall Naval Base, US Coast Guard Station Panama City, US Navy Mine Countermeasures Station, Naval Service Warfare Center, and the Wainwright Shipyard. Many of America's service men and women that had been temporarily stationed there returned to the area after the war to raise their families.

While military spending remains an important part of the Panama City economy, the growth of tourism, recreation, and

a student population attending the Gulf Coast Community College are adding to an important civilian mix and overall culture. ©

Hotel Insights

Panama City's relaxing, tourist-friendly atmosphere and long, glittering beaches make it an ideal spot to spend spring or summer break. With the beckoning waves and brilliant year-round sunshine, you'll want to book just the right hotel to make your vacation memorable. The vast majority of the town's hotels lie just a stone's throw away from the soothing waters of the gulf, so just pick a beach and there will be a hotel ready to pamper you.

Grand Lagoon

Much of the city's happenings take place in the large area around the romantic Grand Lagoon. The Marriott Bay Point Resort takes full advantage of this, providing fun for the whole family as it overlooks the resplendent St. Andrew Bay. On the other side of the lagoon, the Boardwalk Beach Resort and the Dunes of Panama Resort offer stunning views of the Gulf of Mexico's white sands and blue waters. Further south, Biltmore Beach's elegant Regency Towers provides agreeable comfort for the beach-weary tourist.

Edgewater Gulf Beach

This inviting beach stretches farther up the coast, along with some equally appealing hotels. The Edgewater Beach & Golf Resort provides the best of both worlds, offering patrons the luxury of enjoying both the sandy shores and the well-trimmed greens of the golf course. There's also the Holiday Inn SunSpree Resort, a good choice for those vacationing with a gaggle of kids in tow. It offers a number of kid-friendly activities without skimping on more adult pleasures. For some spring break fun, college kids hang out en masse at the budget-friendly Bikini Beach Resort Motel, where sunny fun is had by all without needing to take out another college loan.

Bahama & Gulf Beach Area

Panama City Beach Snapshot continued

A short ways north, vacationers can find several upstanding establishments that are eager to please. The Paradise Found Resorts & Hotels have all the standard amenities and also boast some amazing private-balcony views of the Gulf. Nearby, the Days Inn Beach spices up the commonplace "surf, sand & sun" routine by throwing the trendy Club 450 and Beachcomber Bar into the mix. The Plaza Motel attracts the starving student crowd, giving the youngsters an inexpensive week-long respite from the anxiety of upcoming finals.

West Panama City Beach

The beaches west of Panama City Beach are littered with resorts, guaranteeing there will be at least one that's a perfect match for your vacation plans. Peek's Motel caters to spring-breakers before Memorial Day, and the over-25 crowd afterwards. The Flamingo Motel & Tower, Driftwood Lodge and Beachbreak by the Sea provide quality comfort for the summer onslaught of families flocking to the beach. Budget travelers will find the Seascape Inn a desirable destination that doesn't break the bank.

Gulf Resort Beach

This stretch of tropical paradise is well-serviced by the Palmetto Inn & Suites, a prime hotel for the active vacationer, boasting fun-filled activities such as beach sports, wave running, para sailing, and more. Pleasure-seekers of all ages will find something to entertain them here. The Sandpiper Beacon Beach Resort doesn't skimp on entertainment either, even if there are some in your group that find the beach less than enthralling. With, among other diversions, a video game room, miniature golf, and a "Lazy River" float around the pool, the bikini-shy can still have a memorable time.

Laguna Beach

Though it may not be at the center of all of Panama City's attractions, Laguna Beach nonetheless contains plenty of fun destinations and accommodation options. Longue-Vue by the Sea offers family-sized

accommodations without the baggage of larger resorts. Sugar Sands Inn & Suites, with its high-rise buildings, shows off the spectacular beauty of Laguna Beach while providing all the amenities needed to make your stay comfortable. The Wisteria Inn, by permitting only adults, caters to travelers who vacation without kids. Now that sounds relaxing.

©

Restaurants Insights

Panama City Beach offer its visitors beautiful beaches and incredible views, but it also boasts some fantastic dining establishments. From seafood to hoagies, the variety of food is enough to satisfy the entire family.

Harpoon Harry's is a bar dedicated to its young clientele. With its reasonably priced food, affordable drinks, and party atmosphere, this is a sanctuary for all those in search of a fun night out. Spinnaker Beach Club offers the freshest local seafood, great burgers, vegetarian wraps, and delicious barbecue. Since then, the Club has added a VIP lounge, a waterfall, and an award-winning restaurant, Spinnaker's Paradise Grill. The restaurant offers the freshest local seafood, great burgers, vegetarian wraps, and delicious barbecue.

But, if you're in search of the best BBQ ribs in the nation voted by the National BBQ Association, make your way over to the award-winning Pineapple Willy's. Built atop the original "Pier 99," the restaurant not only offers amazing ribs, but is also known for its famous and delicious rum "Pineapple Willy."

If you're in the mood for something a little less messy and a bit more upscale, Saltwater Grill is the place for you. This fine-dining restaurant offers the mature traveler a place to indulge you in a variety of choices from steak to seafood. Sit at the bar and enjoy one of the largest saltwater aquariums in the area.

If you prefer watching sports with your meal, go to the Beef O'Brady's, founded by self-proclaimed misplaced sports fan. Flat-screen LCD TVs host some of the most

anticipated sport matches. While you savor your meal you can watch your favorite sport event live on your own exclusive tableside TV. Not a sports fan? No problem. The Calypso Beach Café serves food inspired by the cuisine of New Orleans and the Caribbean. The Shrimp Creole is not to be missed.

Montego Bay also serves food from abroad, specifically Creole cuisine. Classic dishes such as gumbo and étouffée are reinvented here and fresh oysters are served at the raw bar. If you have more of a Mediterranean palate, Terrace Restaurant will hit the spot with its upscale food at affordable prices. The Restaurant specializes in Greek cuisine, with tasty dishes that include Spanakopeta, Tiropeta, and Hummus. Wash it all down with a glass of specialty Greek wine or tapas. The newest addition to Panama City Beach is Pier Park where you will find a multitude of restaurants including Margaritaville, the Back Porch and many more.

©

Nightlife Insights

The Great Outdoors

Florida is famous for its warm weather and gorgeous beaches, so take advantage of the great outdoors. Swim with the fishes in the Gulf of Mexico on trip with Blue Dolphin Tours, and get up-close-and-personal in the dolphins' natural habitat in small, six person groups. Or if the water isn't your thing, see the Florida coast from the sky. Paradise Helicopter Service lets you get a breathtaking bird's-eye-view of the diverse natural systems of the coast, from the extensive wilderness to the Gulf's clear waters. Take advantage of Florida's extensive State Parks, not far from the city. Spend the day communing with nature in Falling Waters State Park, just an hour outside Panama city, and home to the state's largest waterfall, Falling Waters Sink. As long as you're there, go for a hike, take a spin in a kayak, or stay overnight at one of the park's many campsites. Crawl your way through the gorgeous dry caves at

Panama City Beach Snapshot continued

Florida Caverns State Park, the only State Park to offer public tours of its caves.

Family Fun

For a relaxed day in Panama City, take in a round of golf at one of the city's many courses, like the Bay Dunes Golf Club, which offers an 18-hole public course, and full practice facilities if you just want to hit balls for awhile. If you're looking to head to the links with the whole family, stop by Coconut Creek Family Fun Park for a day of miniature golf on two safari-theme courses. Don't miss the Gran Maze, a human-size labyrinth ready for individual or team competition. If you need a little break from the city itself, beautiful outlying destinations await you just a short drive from town. Check out Apalachicola Bay, home of classic Southern communities like Apalachicola, perfect for shopping and dining. Head further down the shoreline to Eastpoint on the heart of Forgotten Coast and taste one of the oysters for which the town is known.

Nightlife

If you think Panama City is warm during the day, by nightfall feel the entertainment temperature spike. From relaxed music scenes to the hippest clubs, this coastal city will never leave you wanting for action. With its laid back atmosphere, Schooner's serves up great food beachside all day long, and in the evenings features some of the best live music and DJ's that Panama City has to offer. If you're in the mood for a party with a little more of an edge, take it up a notch at Club La Vela, one of the largest clubs in the world where any party animal can really let loose. Dance the night away to the club's diverse playlist, and be sure to make a trip outside to the giant pool deck with an ocean view. But if you're looking for a piece of that classic Florida party, check out the Spinnaker Beach Club, historic site of MTV's first Spring Break. Now with an award-winning restaurant, waterfall, and VIP lounge, Spinnaker's has brought that high-energy beach party into the new millennium.

©

Things to Do Insights

Panama City is chock full of things to do and places to see. Whether you're interested in seeing wildlife, splashing around in the ocean or at a waterpark, or going out for a nice dinner, there are plenty of options in this Gulf city. Here are some sample itineraries for a great visit to the area.

Gulf World Marine Park

Even if you just want to stay along one main road like Front Beach Road, you won't run out of things to do in Panama City. Start the day off at the Gulf World Marine Park, where you can learn about marine animals and see the habitats of species like bottlenose dolphins and sea lions. After this, have a nice lunch at Angelo's Steak Pit, and then head over to ZooWorld for more animal viewing, or to the Coconut Creek Family Fun Park where you can play mini golf or find your way through a maze the size of a football field. End the day at Sharky's Beach Club where you can feast on Mexican food and enjoy a drink in one of the biggest tiki huts around.

St. Andrews State Park

Get an early start and hit a few rounds at the Signal Hill Golf Course. After a morning of activity, you'll be happy to sit down and enjoy a tasty meal at Spinnaker's Paradise Grill. Next, go south on Thomas Drive until you get to St. Andrews State Park. When you get tired or start to get sunburned from the hot Florida sun, climb back in the car and head to Hammerhead Fred's for dinner. Afterward, cool down with a drink at the Buck Wild Saloon, or heat things up at Club La Vela.

Downtown

To begin your day in downtown Panama City, start at the Junior Museum of Bay County, where the whole family can learn about everything from dinosaurs and anatomy to pioneer settlements. Afterward, head over to the historic marina area, where on Saturdays from May through October, you can visit the St. Andrews Waterfront Market. Purchase some produce and baked goods, and picnic at nearby McKenzie Park. After lunch, broaden your

cultural horizons at the Visual Arts Center of Northwest Florida, then do some shopping at the Paul Brent Gallery or Old Towne Antiques. After a full day downtown, head over to Captain Anderson's Restaurant for a nice seafood dinner.

Day Trips

If you've already seen everything you want to see in Panama City, including the Museum of Man in the Sea, try a little day trip outside the city limits. For nature-lovers, the options include Falling Waters State Park in Chipley, and Wakulla Springs State Park.

Tour Companies:

There are lots of tour companies in the Panama City Beach area, often specializing in boat tours and marine expeditions.

Adventures at Sea(+1 850 235 0009/<http://www.watersportspc.com>)

Airboat Adventures(+1 850 230 3822/<http://www.swampvette.com/>)

Bay Seaplanes& Airboat Tours(+1 850 234 1532/<http://www.panamacityairboat.com/>)

Blue Dolphin Tours(+1 850 236 3467/<http://www.bluedolphintour.com/>)

Captain Anderson Cruises(+1 850 234 5940/<http://www.captandersonsmarina.com/>)

Glass Bottom Boat(+1 850 234 8944)

Island Time Sailing(+1 850 234 7377/<http://islandtimesailing.com/>)

Lady Anderson Dining Yacht(+1 850 234 5940/<http://www.ladyanderson.com/>)

Panama City Tours(+1 800 409 3173/<http://www.panamacitytours.net/>)

Osprey Charters(+1 850 233 1959/<http://www.fishosprey.com/>)

Sea Dragon Pirate Cruise(+1 850 234 7400/<http://www.piratecruise.net>)

Sea Screamer Sightseeing Speed(+1 850 233 9107/<http://seascreeamer.net/>)

Shell Island Boat Rentals& Tours(+1 850 234 7245/<http://www.shellislandtours.com/>)

St. Andrews Marina(+1 850 872 7240/<http://www.pcgov.org>)

Sure Catch Fishing Charter(+1 850 832 7471/<http://surecatchcharters.com/>)

Panama City Beach Snapshot continued

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Travel Tips

Getting There:

By Air:

Panama City-Bay County International Airport(PFN)(+1 850 763 6751/ <http://www.pcairport.com>) is located north of downtown Jacksonville and facilitates the travel of over 350,000 passengers yearly.

Atlantic Southeast Airlines(+1 800 282 3424/ <http://www.flyasa.com>)

Chautauqua Airlines – Republic(+1 800 221 1212/ <http://www.flychautauqua.com>)

Comair- Delta(+1 800 221 1212/ <http://www.delta.com>)

Freedom Airlines(+1 800 221 1212)

Northwest Airlines(+1 800 225 2525/ <http://www.nwa.com>)

Taxi& Limo companies include:

Affordable Limousine Service(+1 850 233 0029)

Checker Cab(+1 850 236 6666)

Executive Taxi(+1 850 233 8299)

Mel's Limo Service(+1 850 230 6641)

Yellow Cab Co.(+1 850 784 6611)

Your Taxi Service(+1 850 223 8083)

Rental Car companies include:

Alamo(+1 800 327 9633)

Avis(+1 800 331 1212/ <http://www.avis.com>)

Budget(+1 800 527 0700/ <http://www.budget.com>)

Enterprise(+1 800 625 8007/ <http://www.enterprise.com>)

Hertz(+1 800 654 3131/ <http://www.hertz.com>)

National(+1 800 227 7368)

By Train:

Chipley Station(CIP), located in Chipley, Florida, serves as the nearest Amtrak(+1 800 872 7245/ <http://www.amtrak.com>) connection. This station is serviced by the prestigious Amtrak route, Sunset Limited(running between Los Angeles and Orlando). Call station for hours.

By Bus:

Greyhound(+1 800 231 2222/ <http://www.greyhound.com>) connects Panama City with virtually all of the Eastern Seaboard. The Panama City Greyhound Station,(+1 850 785 6111), is located at 917 Harrison Avenue.

By Car:

Panama City lies about 45 miles south of Interstate 10. Take the Panama City exit and follow the road signs.

Getting Around:

The Bay Town Trolley(+1 850 769 0557) offers transportation to various areas of the city. A ride will cost only USD0.50 and runs along Thomas Drive and Front Beach Road.

If traveling overseas, take the safety precaution of registering your trip at <https://travelregistration.state.gov> and for helpful, practical advice about traveling technicalities and safety standards check out <http://travel.state.gov/>.

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