



## Long sunny days on the beach at St Pete

**St. Pete Beach on Florida's Gulf of Mexico was first named St. Petersburg Beach, when it was incorporated in 1957.**

Then, in 1994, its residents voted for a name change to St. Pete Beach, to make the distinction between their city and that of St. Petersburg, a few miles to the east.

And the name defines this destination, offering, as it does, a 'step on' access to an extended stretch of white sand beach.

And this is what brings the visitors to St Pete Beach in their droves and again and again - are amply catered for by the string of beach side hotels, bars and restaurants.

[www.visitstpeteclearwater.com/communities/st-pete-beach](http://www.visitstpeteclearwater.com/communities/st-pete-beach)

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www.sirata.com

## Family and friends find a warm welcome on St Pete Beach

By Ashley Gibbins

**Florida's Gulf of Mexico really does step up to the plate when it comes to a stunning coastline and pristine beaches invariably basked in the warm sunshine and embraced by the semi-tropical climate.**

But while the sun, pure white sand and crystal clear water is found along its length, the Gulf of Mexico offers a real choice.

For sophistication and fine dining matched with art and culture one can opt for Naples or head to Longboat Key and from there take in Sarasota.

To enjoy a get away from it all experience there are the barrier islands of Sanibel and Captiva.

### For a fun filled break

But if one is looking for a short, 'fun-filled', beach break with family and friends, St Pete Beach makes for a great option.

Visitors come to St Pete Beach for a range of reasons.

It may be foot weary families seeking a short respite from the assault course of excitement that is the theme parks.

Or because parents and grandparents know their young offspring will be content to play safely for hours on the beach and in the sea.

St Pete Beach also attracts family or friend reunions or gathering of football fans for the Sunday night game.

And finally, there can be fewer better settings for a beach wedding, weather permitting, with that bride and groom kiss before a golden sunset sure to capture a truly memorable moment.

Whatever the reason for coming, everyone will be looking to make the very most of the beachside setting and party atmosphere that pervades a stay.

### What it says on the tin

With an average of 361 days of sunshine a year, St Pete Beach rewards those who want what it 'says on the tin'.

This is the place to feel 'at home' in sandals, shorts and a 'T' from start of the trip to finish.

We spent six nights at the Sirata Beach Hotel and, apart from one brief excursion into St Petersburg found everything we wanted within the confines of the hotel or along the beach.

We locked in a daily early morning stroll along the beach and again when the sun had set and darkness was falling.

These were the peaceful times with only a few determined walkers or joggers for company.

From mid-morning through to late afternoon the beach welcomes many more although, both its length and width, there is no risk of being crammed in.

Families clump around sun umbrellas and loungers.

From here the children will dash excitedly to splash in the water or beaver away with tireless and ultimately unrewarded enthusiasm, to make a sand castle that is impregnable to the encroaching waves.

At the same time the more adventurous pleasure seekers will paraglide, paddleboard, wind surf or kite board.

Beach bars and restaurants

Straddling the beach at strategic intervals are the bars and restaurants that serve from breakfast until late evening or early morning.

An initial 'reccy' will determine favourite for watching the sunset, exploiting the happy hour, dining or enjoying those performing live music.

And so the laid back cycle of beachside life continues throughout the stay.





## Murals, murals everywhere in downtown St Petersburg

Although much of this trip was geared towards a beach break, we did decide to have a relatively quick look at St Petersburg and opted to do this by taking the St. Pete Mural Tour.

St Petersburg has a thriving, vibrant arts community and this led to an ever growing number of murals or wall graffiti, or graffiti springing up.

These walking tours are provided by artistic entrepreneur Michael Novilla with *Florida CraftArt* to bring awareness to the Central Arts District in Downtown St Petersburg and highlight over 30 murals currently on display.

This is a fascinating and highly enjoyable way to get to know a part of the city that is full of character and to appreciate the way art can greatly enhance the urban environment.

Proceeds are used to commission ever more talented artists to continue to produce original murals for public display.

[www.StPeteMuralTour.com](http://www.StPeteMuralTour.com)

[www.DowntownSTPETE.com](http://www.DowntownSTPETE.com)



### The Dali

**In complementary contrast to its murals, *The Salvador Dali Museum* is housed in a state of the art building on the waterfront.**

It is devoted to and celebrates the life of Salvador Dali and displays the largest collection of his work outside of Europe.

There is an extensive permanent collection and rotating exhibitions exploring the artist's larger-than-life persona and the people, places and events that transformed him a surrealist sensation.

[www.thedali.org](http://www.thedali.org)



### The Ale Trail

And finally, for a beer lover like myself, a trip to St Petersburg just had to take in a stop at a craft brewery.

With Ann happily browsing the local art and craft stores I was even happier ensconced on a bar stool in the *Three sisters Brewing Company* getting through five (or was it six) small glasses of their beers.

The St Pete/Clearwater beer trail highlights over 30 small, independent craft breweries producing artisanal beers along the self-styled Gulp Coast.

[www.stpeteclearwater.com](http://www.stpeteclearwater.com)





## An old favourite heading into a sparkling future

**St Pete Beach offers a wide choice of beach side hotels, motels and inns.**

We opted for the pet friendly *Sirata Beach Resort*, which has been a favourite with visitors and locals for decades.

Located right on the beach, the Sirata is undergoing a 15 million dollar renovation that will be completed in fall of 2018.

The upgrade has created, what is referred to as a 'coastal casual design of blue and yellow hues that overlap a crisp palette of white and light gray'.

Whatever, it works a treat and fits perfectly with the resorts beachside setting and adds a renewed sparkle throughout while retaining its essential laid-back charm.

And the Sirata really does epitomises what St Pete Beach is all about, from the initial warm and relaxed, yet efficient, welcome on arrival.

The rooms and suits, which are all receiving a vibrant makeover, come fully equipped for those wishing the self-catering option.

Guests can also enjoy two beachfront pools and two whirlpools and there is a Kid's Splash Zone, private cabanas and a 'hanging chair garden' for those wanting to really chill out.

A lively time at Harry's



Wanting to spend as much time as possible out of doors, we found *Harry's Beach Bar* and *Rum Runners* just right.

*Harry's Beach Bar*, in particular, has a real party atmosphere with regular live music.

It attracts guests and locals alike - as it has been doing for over 25 years - and the enthusiastic 'join in' response to the excellent musicians who perform here must make playing Harry's a real pleasure.

For more refined, yet still relaxed dining, there is the *Compass Grille*.

The *Sirata Beach Resort* provides the perfect place to make the most of the fun and sunshine that pervades every aspect of a stay at St Pete Beach.

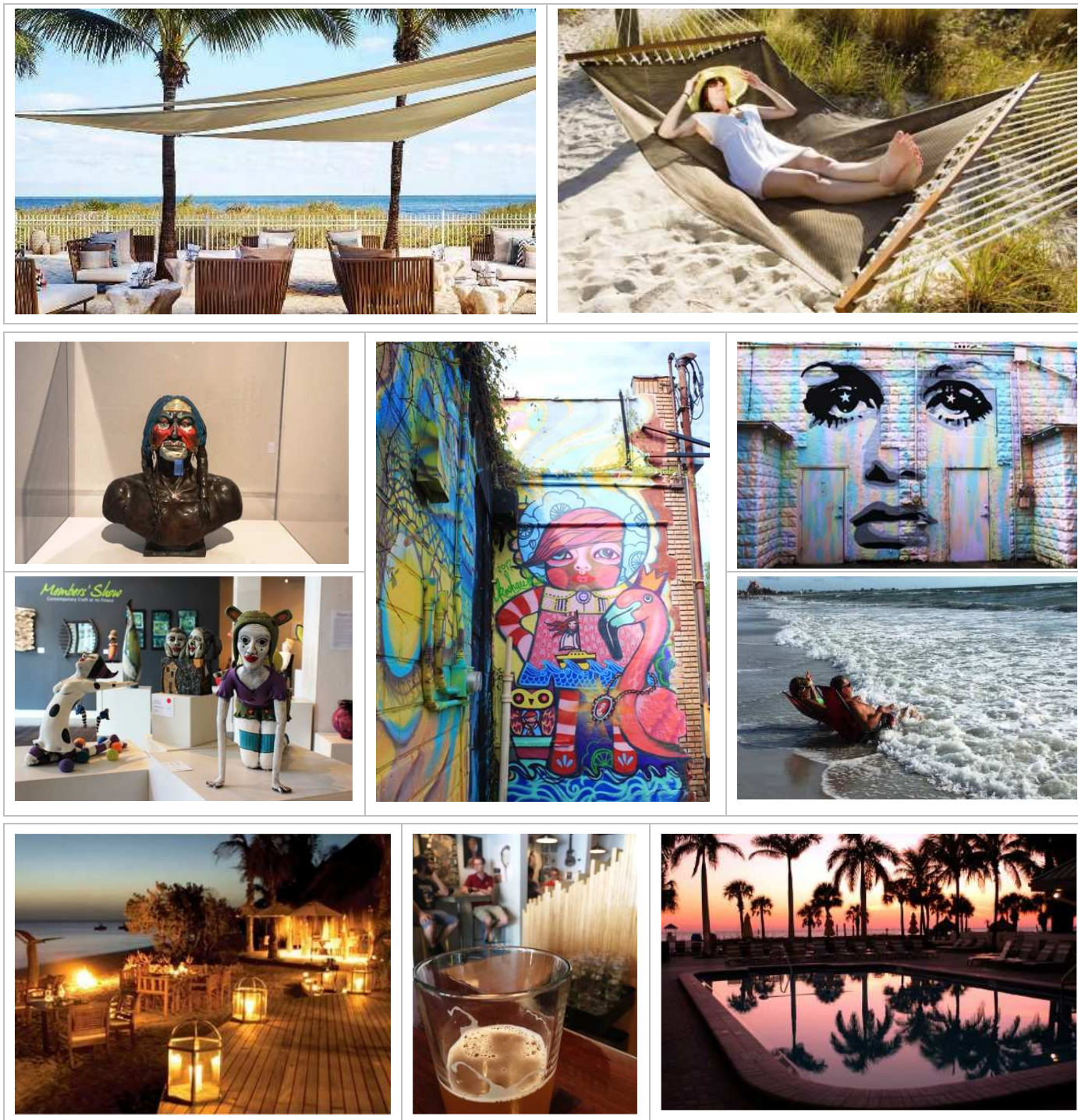


More information

[www.sirata.com](http://www.sirata.com)



## A snapshot of the St Pete Beach and St Petersburg



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