

## What's there to do in Destin?



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## Gulf Breeze Zoo & Botanical Gardens



5701 Gulf Breeze Pkwy  
Gulf Breeze, FL 32563  
Phone: 850-932-2229  
Fax: 850-932-8575

Twenty minutes west of Fort Walton Beach, this zoo, set amid botanical gardens, shelters hundreds of domestic and exotic animals. The wildlife preserve offers glimpses of Gorilla Island, where primates live unhindered in a natural habitat. A ride on the zoo's diminutive train provides views as well. At the Farm, children can interact with tame animals and see how resident newborns are cared for. In addition, visitors will encounter rhinos, giraffes, bears and reptiles. White Bengal tigers, pygmy hippos and zebras also attract the attention of zoo-goers. Adults in particular will appreciate the Japanese gardens and the gift shop, which sells clothing, gifts and artwork.

## Okaloosa Island Boardwalk



1450 Miracle Strip Pkwy  
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548  
Phone: 850-259-9205  
Fax: 850-796-3652

The Boardwalk itself is an entertainment complex with clubs and restaurants, but its beaches are expansive. Lots of people, including military guys and college kids, come to bask in the sun, swim and play volleyball at the numerous local courts. Lifeguards are on duty along the coast, and changing rooms and restrooms can be found on the Boardwalk itself. If the sun gets to be too much, drink machines and snack bars are located nearby.

## Grayton Beach State Recreation Area



357 Main Park Rd  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459  
Phone: 850-245-2157

Home to some of the best beaches in the area, this state park covers 1133 acres and first opened to the public in 1968. Located near the community of Grayton Beach, it attracts visitors with its unspoiled beauty and abundant wildlife. Swimming and fishing are the top recreational activities, but campsites are great for overnight stays, and an extensive nature trail directs hikers around dunes and through pine forests. Boating is available on Western Lake.

## Emerald Coast Science Center



139 Brooks St  
Fort Walton Beach, FL  
32548  
Phone: 850-664-1261  
Fax: 850-664-6862

Located in a white geometric building, this interactive children's museum teaches kids about science and nature in an entertaining way. More than 250 hands-on exhibits allow visitors to learn about robotics, health, and the power and impact of hurricanes. Highlights also include a display on wind and flight and the opportunity to interact with live animals. An on-premises gift shop sells toys and games with a scientific theme and doesn't require a ticket for entrance.

## Big Kahuna's Water & Adventure Park



### BIG KAHUNA'S WATER & ADVENTURE PARK

1007 Hwy 98  
Destin, FL 32541  
Phone: 850-837-4061  
Fax: 850-837-7343

In the midst of Destin, this 23-acre entertainment complex boasts a water park and adventure park. Bustling with activity and peppered with shipwrecks, palm trees and observation areas, the park accommodates both children and adults. Wave pools and water slides are a cool, clean way to splash the day away, or you can test your skills with a putter or a steering wheel. If you're an adrenaline junkie, the selection of thrill rides will more than satisfy your need, and you can compete with your friends to see who shrieks loudest when the games begin!



## Boogies Watersports



16 Harbor Blvd  
Destin, FL 32541  
Phone: 850-654-4497

Boogies sits right on Destin Harbor in a pink clapboard building with a green roof, and can be seen easily from Destin Bridge. Its waterside location is a perfect jumping-off place for watersports and cruises of the area. The company rents wave runners and pontoon boats and can also arrange for parasailing adventures for up to three people at a time. Their glass-bottom boat is popular with guests who want to spot dolphins, check out underwater sea life, and see the area's sights and attractions. Rentals can be set up for an hour at a time, full and half-days, and by the week.

## Gulfarium



1010 Miracle Strip Pkwy SE  
(US 98)  
Okaloosa Island  
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548  
Phone: 850-243-9046

Instituted in 1955, this facility simultaneously educates and entertains visitors while promoting the welfare of marine life. Some venues feature performances by dolphins and sea lions; the Living Sea exhibit showcases turtles, sharks, eels and other animals, giving guests insight into their behavior and interaction. The complex also boasts penguins, otters, alligators and a touch pool where you can experience sea life firsthand. There's even an opportunity (with advance reservations) to swim with Kiwi and Daphne, two of the resident dolphins. The beachside attraction, which has indoor and outdoor displays, is open rain or shine; a gift shop sells clothing and souvenirs.

## Southern Star Dolphin Cruises



100 Harbor Blvd  
HarborWalk Village, Marina  
Level  
Destin, FL 32541  
Phone: 850-837-7741

A great family attraction, these cruises take a leisurely route along the coast, granting guests the chance to see dolphins frolic in the temperate waters. Narrated by knowledgeable guides, the trips are educational as well as entertaining. Music plays as you cruise, and air-conditioned areas guarantee your comfort. A snack bar serves light refreshments, but you're also free to bring your own food and drinks.

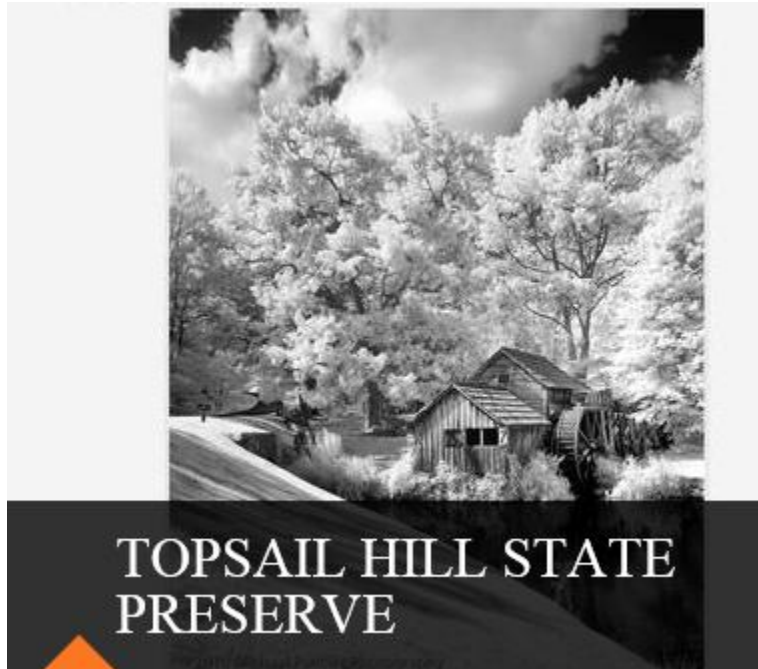
## Eden State Gardens



N State Rd 395 (off Hwy 98)  
Point Washington, FL 32454  
Phone: 850-231-4214

Live oaks festooned with Spanish moss surround a Greek Revival mansion that's the centerpiece of this impressive estate. Built in 1897, the home was refurbished in the 1960s and now sports period antiques and furnishings. The gardens were created at the time of the renovation and feature collections of azaleas, camellias and other flowering shrubs. When the grounds are in bloom each spring, the whole area is a riot of color and fragrance. Picnic tables by the Choctawhatchee River provide a great place to enjoy a simple lunch.

## Topsail Hill State Preserve



7525 W Scenic Hwy 30A  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459  
Phone: 850-267-8330

Almost totally undeveloped, this 1600-acre parcel of land encompasses some of the most beautiful terrain in the state. Freshwater lakes, pine forests, towering sand dunes, and a host of wildlife occupy the area and offer a glimpse of what Florida used to be. Facilities aren't elaborate but do include a parking lot and restrooms; nature trails wind through the site, and campsites can be found nearby (although not in the preserve). The beach itself stretches for more than three miles through the park.

Source: <http://www.10best.com/destinations/florida/destin/attractions/>

## Destin Florida – 10 Things to Do on a Budget



You don't have to spend a ton of money to have a good time in Destin, Florida. In fact, sometimes you don't even have to spend any money at all. Aside from there being inexpensive options for you and your limited budget, there are some free things to do as well. Here is a quick guide to 10 things you can do in Destin, Florida on a budget.

1. **The beach.** You can't visit Destin without visiting the beach. After all, that's probably why you came to start with. There are 24 miles of beaches in Destin and you can spend all day there-for free! The beautiful clear waters, the sparkling sand, and the tropical palm trees make this one of the top beaches in the United States.
2. **Grayton Beach Recreation Area-** This state park has over 1,000 acres of wildlife and natural beauty. Take a picnic, go camping, or swim at one of the beautiful beaches. You can also hire a kayak or a canoe for the day, even if you are on a budget.

3. **Snorkeling.** Many places offer snorkeling for less than \$50. In some places, you can see as far as 50 feet into the water. Destin's East Pass Channel is a fun place to go snorkeling with the whole family.
4. **Track Family Recreation Center-** Spend a day riding go-carts, playing mini-golf, and trying your hand at bungee jumping. Everyone can find something here that they enjoy.
5. **Destin Fishing Museum.** Destin is referred to as the "luckiest fishing village in the world." Visit this museum to see photographs depicting fishermen, settlers, and boat captains who first settled the area. You can also see a fishing rod that was once owned and used by Ernest Hemingway.
6. **Emerald Coast Science Center.** A children's museum, it is an interactive experience that even grownups can enjoy. There are more than 250 exhibits that help children learn about hurricanes, flight, wind, and robots.
7. **Visit Gator Beach.** Feed live alligators at Gator Beach. It's not as dangerous as it might sound, but it's awfully exciting.
8. **Go on a Dolphin Cruise.** For \$20 per person, take a few hours out of your day and go on a dolphin cruise. The cruises take you into the Gulf for 2 hours and are narrated. There are usually concession stands on-board, too.
9. **Go fishing.** Destin is known for its fishing, so why not try your hand at it? Some fish that can be caught in Destin include the Redsnapper, Yellow Fin Grouper, Flounder, King Mackerel, Tarpon, Blue Marlin, and Speckled Trout. Just don't forget to get your Florida fishing license first.

10. **Pleasure Island Waterpark.** Cool off for a day at the water park. There are also pontoon rentals, go-carts, and wave runners onsite, too.

No matter what your budget is, you will be sure to find something appealing in Destin, Florida. When in doubt, you can always just kick back on the beach and relax in the sun.

Source: <http://www.findcheapairfares.org/2010/03/09/destin-florida-10-things-to-do-on-a-budget/>



## Things to Do While Visiting Destin, Florida



Destin is a city in Florida. A little over 11,000 people call this city home. It is located on the Emerald Coast. Each year, the Emerald Coast gets about 4.5 million visitors. Approximately 80% of those travelers visit this fair city. There is a lot to be done in this city. Let's take a look at vacationing in Destin, Florida.

### Regatta Bay Golf & Country Club

Regatta Bay Golf & Country Club is located in Destin, Florida. It features a public championship golf course. The course was designed by Robert C. Walker. Mr. Walker is the former master architect for Arnold Palmer.

### Fishing

Destin, Florida is well-known to be one of the top fishing destinations in North America. Species found here include red snapper, cobia, dolphin, flounder, red drum, crevalle jack, and sheepshead, to name a few.

## **The Destin Rodeo**

This event is one of the top tournaments in the state of Florida for anglers. It is held each October. More than 30,000 anglers compete each year. There is more than \$100,000 in cash and prizes that goes to the winners of each division.

## **Boogie's Water Sports**

Boogie's Water Sports is located in Destin, Florida. This company rents waverunners, pontoon boats, and jet skis to the public. Rentals range from one hour to overnight.

## **The Glass-Bottom Boat**

The Glass-Bottom Boat is a favorite of visitors to Destin, Florida. It features underwater viewing, and is the only boat in the area to do so. Narrated cruises, bird feeding, and sightseeing, amongst other things, are offered.

## **The Track Recreation Center**

The Track Recreation Center is located in Destin, Florida. It is your destination for family fun. Miniature golf, Bumper Boats, a roller coaster, and Kid's Country are just a few of the things that are featured at The Track Recreation Center..

## **Pleasure Island Waterpark**

Located a short drive from Destin in Fort Walton Beach, Florida is Pleasure Island Waterpark. Some of the thrilling activities offered are pontoon boats, parasailing, and jet boats, to name a few.

## **Moodys**

Moodys is located in Destin, Florida. This company offers daily cruises aboard their ships, America II and Emerald Magic. Fun activities include viewing sunsets, playing with dolphins, and catching fish, some of which are bass, snapper, perch, and grouper.

## **Basmati's**

Basmati's serves great Asian cuisine and sushi. It is located on Draper Lake in Blue Mountain Beach. The menu consists of local produce and seafood, and the freshest sushi prepared by chef Derek Flores.

## **Frangista Seafood & Spirits**

Frangista Seafood & Spirits provides the most sought after upscale dining experience in the area. Delight in a fusion of flavors from Coastal Florida, France, and the Mediterranean. The restaurant is open each evening for dinner.

## **Henderson Beach State Park**

This is a beautiful state park. A small admission to get in but well worth it! The park and restrooms and beach are very clean! It is worth a stop if time allows! Activities for older children, Activities for young children

Source: <http://voices.yahoo.com/10-things-while-visiting-destin-florida-5134045.html>

## 10 Things to Do in Destin, FL, that Rock Your Socks Off



Everyone knows that Destin has some of the most beautiful beaches and best restaurants in the south. However, what does a tourist do when they're not stuffing their pie hole with fried grouper or getting burnt on the beach? Thanks to TripShock!, here is a list of the top ten things to do this summer that really rock!

**10) Big Kahuna's Water Park** – Big Kahuna's Water park is Destin's one and only water park. It's typically open from Memorial day to Labor Day and has a ton of cool slides and rides. It can get crowded during peak season (July and June), but it's worth every dollar if tourists plan their trip on an off day.

**9) Sailing Charter** – Hire a sail captain and cruise Destin. Fish, snorkel or just relax in the sun as the sail captain guides tourists through paradise. Although this is not the most inexpensive tour

available, it's well worth it when looking for a way to explore Destin's emerald green waters with close friends or family.

**8) Snorkeling at the Jetties** – Snorkeling the Destin Jetties is an exciting and mysterious experience that's great for the entire family. It's tough to tell sometimes what people will see underwater. It can be a dolphin, sea turtle, or even a grumpy old crab. Watch for the pinchers!

**7) Waverunner Rentals** – Explore the Destin Harbor and The Choctawatchee Bay while traveling at speeds topping 40 mph. Look for dolphins or ride some waves.

**6) Pontoon to Crab Island** – Every weekend during the summer, locals and tourists alike gather at Crab Island which is a sand bar located underneath the Destin Bridge. Rent a pontoon from a local dealer and get ready to have fun! Snorkel, socialize, frisbee, or just lay around and sip a favorite cocktail.

**5) Kayak Fishing Charter** – One of the new and cool things to do in Destin is Kayak Fishing. Hire a guide and go in the gulf or bay for a day of fishing. This is not recommended for small children or beginner anglers, but it's a fun and challenging sport and a great experience.

**4) Banana Boats** – This is for the tourist that is looking for more of a thrill. This is similar to the sport we call "tubing", but the passengers will ride a longer tube that fits up to 6 people. The passengers are pulled behind a boat that is guided around the Choctawatchee Bay. If the captain is feeling nice, he won't go over any big waves (no promises though).

**3) Shark Fishing** – Lucky for us, Jaws doesn't swim around Destin too often, but some large and mean sharks still do. Destin offers shark charters that offer the thrill of catching and releasing big game.

**2) Parasailing** – Don't miss out on the opportunity to fly over 800 feet in the air and see Destin from a bird's eye view. This is an activity that is great for nearly all ages and it's an exciting memory to bring back home.

**1) Deep Sea Fishing** – Deep sea fishing is the reason why Destin is where it is today. There are several charters available for hire and many of them will fit all budgets one way or another. If a charter is not affordable, go to the pier on Okaloosa Island and rent a fishing pole. It's best to avoid fishing on the beach because the swimmers will give dirty looks. Fishing for human was never on my bucket list anyway!