Welcome to the sun-drenched, subtropical paradise that the University of South Florida calls home, from the white sands and blue-green waters of St. Petersburg and Sarasota beaches to the thriving metropolitan community of Tampa. Here’s the first thing you should know about the Tampa Bay area: There’s a lot to do along this stretch of the Gulf of Mexico. We’ll help you figure out where to start.

The primary stomping grounds of the Bulls are comprised of four counties (Sarasota, Manatee, Pinellas and Hillsborough) and metro areas including Sarasota, Tampa and St. Petersburg. Students come to learn, but these destinations are also ideal for anyone who loves the arts, good food, sports and outdoor adventures.

The region’s quirkiness (we have an annual pirate festival) is perfectly suited to the eclectic landscape, everything from barrier islands to mangrove tunnels and Class II river rapids. Our range of activities is just as diverse. We’ve compiled some of our favorites so you can plan an unforgettable Florida adventure.

GULF COAST BEACHES
WATER ACTIVITIES
ECO TOURISM
THE FLORIDA AQUARIUM
CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM

GULF COAST VISITOR GUIDE

EXPLORE THE ARTS
The Tampa Bay area has more than 100 art collections and museums across the region, from the world-famous Salvador Dalí Museum to the eclectic Ringling Museum of Art. The performing arts scene is equally as diverse, from symphonic and opera performances at the Mahaffey Theater and Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall to live theater, dance and comedy. Our local arts community is flush with talent and creativity—so much so that local artists and writers are referred to as “Tampa Bay originals.”

A TASTE OF THE BAYS
A food lover’s paradise, Tampa Bay is a foodie mecca with fresh-caught seafood, countless craft breweries and everything in between. Our favorite food-oriented destinations include Sparkman Wharf’s waterfront eateries; a Sarasota farmers market experience that features demonstrations by local chefs; and an array of ready-to-eat and take-home food at St. Petersburg’s Saturday Morning Market, the largest in the Southeast.

GET YOUR GAME ON
The Bulls’ turf is ideal for outdoor sports ranging from golf to deep-sea fishing, but it’s more than just a great place to work on your game. You can cheer on one of our professional sports teams. We’ve got it all: pro hockey and football in Tampa, pro soccer and baseball in St. Petersburg, 15 pro teams competing in the Gulf Coast Grapefruit league during spring training at ballfields from Sarasota to Tampa and beyond, and plenty of college action in a variety of school colors.

GO INTO NATURE
Biking through mangrove tunnels at the Weedon Island Preserve in Pinellas County. Sunbathing on the sugar-white sands of Siesta Key or Clearwater Beach (regulars on many best-beaches lists), or getting up close and personal with a manatee at the Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium. If you’re feeling really adventurous, there are many places to encounter an alligator in the wild. And be sure to say hi to Winter, star of the “Dolphin Tale” movies, at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium.

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