

Drive begin the area known as “restaurant row.” This area has an extremely high concentration of restaurants that range from the favorite Chick-fil-A to high-end establishments such as Ruth Chris. There are also small, “must try” locations close to I-Drive that are local haunts such as Jr Columbian Burger (don’t forget to get extra sauce and napkins) and Mrs. Potato, which was featured on an episode on “Diners, Drive-Ins, and Dives.”

ENTERTAINMENT – BEFORE OR AFTER THE CONFERENCE

A trip to Florida just isn’t the same without a visit to the beach. Eight out of 25 of Trip Advisor’s Top 25 Beaches in the United States are in Florida. One of the best things about Orlando is that it is conveniently located in the middle of the state. An award-winning beach is 90 minutes away or less.

On the Atlantic Ocean side, Cocoa Beach, home to Ron Jon Surf Shop, is just a few minutes down the road from the Kennedy Space Center (NASA) Visitor Complex. Also on the Atlantic, Daytona Beach, home to APCO headquarters, has beautiful beaches where you can drive your car directly on the

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beach in search of the perfect sunbathing spot without having to lug around your beach gear. On your way back from Daytona, there are attractions to stop and visit such as the Central Florida Zoo or the African American Museum of Art.

On the Gulf Coast, a stopover at Crystal River Manatee Park is a Florida-only memory. Also on the Gulf, Clearwater Beach – No. 5 on Trip Advisor’s list – has pristine, clear water, and soft-sand beaches that are easy on the most tender feet. St. Pete Beach – No. 2 on the list – is just two hours from Orlando with fun attractions, wineries and restaurants to visit along the way. On your way back from the Gulf Coast, don’t forget to stop by the Dali Museum, Bush Gardens or the Tampa/Ybor City area, which has been designated a National Historic Landmark District. Ybor

City and the Soho District in Tampa are a foodie’s paradise with countless, delicious, eclectic restaurants.

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MAKE A NEW FRIEND

The Central Florida area is known for the fun and sun. Although there are theme parks and pristine beaches that will offer their visitors a once-in-a-lifetime experience, there are countless other hidden gems as well. Our recommendation? Make a new local APCO friend and ask them for a list of their favorites and then prepare yourself for an extraordinary experience. ●

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