

Don't Forget About America's Third Coast! These 5 Towns Are Perfect For A Dream Beach Getaway

America's "Third Coast" is often under-looked compared to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, but the coastline of the Gulf of Mexico is a fantastic destination in its own right. Fantastic beach towns are abundant, from tourist hotbeds and spring break destinations, to quiet and serene spots along the coast. We've compiled a list of some of our favorite beach towns on the Gulf of Mexico below.

And when it's time to book your Gulf getaway, TripAdvisor can help plan your whole itinerary. We check up to 200 booking sites to bring you the lowest price on hotels, plus we have thousands of bookable tours, excursions, attraction tickets, and more [directly on our site](#). Our new 24-hour cancellation policy (for in-destination experiences) means you can pre-book before arriving, but still have the flexibility to cancel if your itinerary changes.

Gulfport, Mississippi

Gulfport, Mississippi, one half of the Gulfport-Biloxi section of the Gulf Coast, was very nearly destroyed during Hurricane Katrina. The city has been gradually reconstructed, and the surrounding natural areas have been rebuilding themselves as well. Visit the barrier islands that form Gulf Islands National Seashore, a parkland along the Mississippi Sound. A ferry runs from Gulf Port to Ship Island, with unspoiled white beaches and tidal pools, boardwalks and historic sites to explore.

Destin, Florida

Destin is located on Florida's Emerald Coast, which gets its name from its beautiful, clear green water. Beaches here have extremely fine, soft sand, so if you're a beach-walker or your kids enjoy building sand castles, this could be a great destination for you.

Orange Beach, Alabama

A great family beach vacation spot, Orange Beach, Alabama, offers offer wonderful dining experiences, dolphin-sighting cruises, championship golf courses, fishing charters and nature hikes. Choose from national hotel and motel chains, camping or a variety of beach houses for your stay. There are numerous options for nightlife, from family entertainment to rocking roadhouses, enjoy your pick of plays, free concerts, dancing or just listening to any number of musical stylings at a local hot spot.

Port Aransas, Texas

With over 18 miles of beach, first-class Gulf of Mexico fishing, golfing, shopping, coastal dining and wildlife aplenty, there's no end to the breezy fun of Port Aransas. Located on the central flyway, Port A's estuaries, inlets and nature reserves draw hundreds of species of birds. You can kick your feet up in a luxury condo, hotel, motel, private home, cottage or a campsite under the stars, all just 30 minutes from Corpus Christi.

Marco Island, Florida

White beaches, a sparkling sea, a strawberry daiquiri in hand—what more do you need in a vacation? Marco Island brings visitors the best that the Ten Thousand Islands have to offer. Scavenge for seashells or hit the links for a sunny session of golf. Explore the Everglades in a swamp buggy or enjoy a rejuvenating nature hike at the Rookery Bay Reserve.