

How about joining us from 8:30 – 7:15 on Monday, March 19,
for an adventure to New Smyrna Beach~
"a small quiet beach town in Florida done just right!"

But first, before dipping your toes in the sand, we will stop for about an hour at The Dunlawton Sugar Mill Gardens, a 10-acre property on the Halifax River maintained by the Botanical Gardens of Volusia, Inc. Entrance is free and there are no paid staff members; volunteers maintain the entire property solely on visitors' donations.

The Gardens is nice place to stroll and see well preserved sugar mill ruins. One visitor said that having seen many sugar mill ruins in his life (really??), he believed this is the most cohesive and best preserved. If you are interested in industry during the 1800's, this is a great place to visit. We will share more of its history during our drive there. Oh, but you might be interested to know now that in the 1950's, Dr. Perry Sperber created an amusement park there called Bongoland. He commissioned a builder to construct the concrete dinosaurs still found there today. Bongoland also featured an Indian village, animals, a train to ride around the paths and, of course, a monkey named Bongo. Once Bongoland closed, the property sat neglected, before it was bequeathed to Volusia County in 1963.

There are beautiful plants and flowers of all kinds, along with many birds and butterflies. There's always something in bloom there. The Asian Ti plants show off their vivid color no matter how cloudy the day may be. You can also tell the time of day by stepping on the Human Sundial. The huge Live Oak tree is not-to-be-missed for it's the largest Live Oak most visitors say they have ever seen. It's called the Confederate Oak, getting its name because such soldiers were alleged to have rested under it.

Proceeding to the beach, our buses will disembark on Flagler Avenue. Yes, you could just drop your chair in the sand and relax the rest of the day, but you might want to open this website to see all that Flagler Avenue has to offer for your shopping and luncheon pleasure once you start feeling a little restless.

<http://flaglerave.com/merchants/#shops>

You could begin your visit at some of their quaint seaside shops or by grabbing lunch at one of their most highly recommended places--The Breakers (for its award-winning burgers) at 518 Flagler Avenue--right on the beach where the bus will drop us off--or Manzano's Beachside Deli (for gourmet deli paninis) at 311 Flagler Avenue. How long's it been since you had a Big Lebowski sandwich?? Manzano's is only a 5-minute walk from the beach down colorful boutique-lined Flagler Avenue. If you look at the menu that opens in the link below, featuring "bread flown in from New York," I think you may find it worth the pleasant stroll:

<http://manzanonsb.com/menu>

You could even call in your order in advance at 386-402-4981. But if you just need something easy, bring your lunch from home. (Often there are food vendors on the beach too.) Rental chairs and umbrellas (price unknown) are available.

Just don't eat too heavily because we have an early dinner on the way home.

Because this is a drive-on beach, little ones--and we older folk--need to always watch out when crossing the sands. Otherwise, it's very clean white sand watched over by plenty of lifeguards and safety patrols that cruise up and down the beach. Clean restrooms and showers are available in the beachfront parking lot. (However, I think they may require coins?) Beach chairs and umbrellas are available for rent. It's a great place to enjoy and have fun in the sun!

HOWEVER, please be aware, it was confirmed again in 2017, that New Smyrna Beach sees more shark attacks annually than any other beach in the world. Happily, sharks mostly hang out at the Ponce de Leon Inlet--which we will avoid at all cost--and appear to favor the taste of salty surfers! It may be a bit comforting to know that none of the attacks here have ever been fatal. In fact, most attacks amount to minor nibbles by young bull sharks. But people in the water only knee-deep have often been bitten. So if you'd rather not be the "appetizer du jour," you may either want to surround yourself in the water by your other more tasty friends or just spend your time relaxing on the beautiful beach and enjoying the amenities offered in the town. I did forewarn you on Jan. 8 that if Steve sees you in the water, he will drag you out kickin' and screaming! (We're just too lazy to fill out all the necessary paperwork involved with shark nibblings.)

As we leave New Smyrna, we will drive you down the Canal Street Historic District hopefully to arouse your interest in returning to this area soon for shopping, dining, brew-pubbing(?) or attending their many artistic and historical events.

Then we'll have an early dinner at Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen--one of our favorites--in Sanford. Thankfully, they accepted our reservation for 112 guests between 4:00 and 4:15. As you can see from the following website, they offer an extensive menu at very affordable prices.

<https://www.restaurantmealprices.com/cheddars-prices/>

To join us on this trip, print the reservation form (click on green button below) and mail it along with your check (made out to the BBC) for **\$28** per person to the address below. On **March 5th**, we will conduct our lottery and you will be notified shortly thereafter of your seat confirmation or waitlist status.

I/we would like to go to New Smyrna Beach with the BBC on March 19th. Enclosed is my **\$28 check** (pp).

Print your name(s): _____

I/we wish to be on the bus with these friends (name up to four) _____

I/we still have a credit with the BBC and I would like to use that credit. _____