

# *Venice Beach*

***Monday October 21: 8:30 am-8:30 pm.***

Sunbathe on the soft white sand, swim the clear turquoise waters of the Gulf and hunt for fossilized prehistoric shark teeth in the Shark Tooth Capital of the World.

Venice is known as the “Shark Tooth Capital of the World” because of all the fossilized shark teeth that can be found along its beaches. They date back millions of years to when the area was underwater and a feeding ground for various sharks.

Please join us as we venture down to a beautiful beach famous not only for its 14-miles of world class beaches and stunning natural beauty but also for being a fascinating town with rich history and culture. Venice, just south of Sarasota on Florida’s Southwest Coast, is also a place to go for plentiful shopping with an Old Florida charm.

Approximately a 2 ½ hour drive from The Villages. Venice Beach, a certified Blue Wave Beach is the city’s most popular stretch of coastline, where visitors can look for fossils and reef dive a quarter-mile from shore.

For those of you who opt out of shopping in the afternoon, a trip to The Venice Rookery may be just the activity for you.

**Amenities: beach gear at \$31.80 a set (includes tax): (2 chairs, 1 umbrella).**

You will be dropped at the beach pavilion where you will pick up your beach gear. There is **NO SET-UP** of beach equipment; however there will be a representative waiting for you so please be generous as she worked hard to get all of these sets for us.

The chair and umbrella sets are \$31.80 (includes tax but not gratuity.) We ask that you pre-pay the beach rental to ensure that your request is waiting for you under the pavilion. It also ensures our group discount on the sets. Please indicate on the reservation form how many sets you want and include your payment along with your transportation payment. There are a limited number of sets available. We’re told that you can just rock the umbrella tip into the sand a couple of times to set it up – no drilling needed.

In a shady spot near the beach pavilion you will find restrooms, showers, and a changing room. There is also a concession with a picnic area. A lifeguard is on duty.

This beach is wheelchair accessible. Drinking alcohol is allowed on the beach. **NO GLASS**

After an abundance of sun we will depart the beach and head for West Venice Avenue for touring, shopping, and dining **OR** to The Rookery (bird watching) and then West Venice Ave for dinner.

## **Explore Downtown Historic Venice:**

Exploring the beautiful historic district of Downtown Venice is magical. The town was one of the first planned cities to be built, and due to the location along the bays and water the designers were inspired by Venice, Italy. You will find much of the historic downtown area has classic Italian architecture as well as beautifully manicured gardens and palm tree-lined boulevards.

West Venice Avenue, the gateway to the Gulf, captivates visitors with its tropical beauty. Stunning palms tower the street, while hibiscus, jasmine, and other flowering plants provide endless color along the street. An abundance of trees and benches create an inviting environment for shopping and dining or enjoy a stroll on the avenue and then some stillness under a gazebo.

Sculptures and two bronze statues-Maria and Sophia are displayed along the avenue. Further down the street is a mural titled, "Healing in the Enchanted Garden." showcasing area wildlife in wonderful detail.

There are also thirteen historical buildings showcased during a walking tour. The map can be viewed here. [visitvenicefl.org/historical-walking-tour/](http://visitvenicefl.org/historical-walking-tour/)

## **Venice Audubon Rookery Park:**

The Rookery Park is an oasis of natural beauty. The central feature of the small park is a rookery island where birds roost and nest. Visitors can view wildlife from benches in the pavilion or walk around the half mile pond.

Nesting season (December-May), is the busiest time but visitors can observe wildlife year round. Birds flock to the island each evening at sunset to roost safely for the night. Alligators patrol the lake, keeping predators away from the island's birds. For more information about Birds of the Rookery; [veniceaudubon.org](http://veniceaudubon.org)

The Venice Rookery is internationally known to bird photographers and is open to visitors year round. It is an all-volunteer project that brings educational programs, field trips, and events to anyone interested in amazing and unique birds. This link has beautiful photos of what is available to see at The Venice Rookery. [owendeutsch.com](http://owendeutsch.com)

There is also a Pollinator Garden at the Center which you are free to stroll through. The garden features more than 40 native and "Florida-friendly" plants. The plants provide nectar and act as larval hosts for more than 22 species of adult butterflies, such as Monarch, Gulf Fritillary, Zebra Long-wing, Giant Swallowtail, Pipe vine Swallowtail, Cassius Blue, Julia, Common Buckeye, Dainty Sulphur, Cloudless Sulphur, Viceroy, and Queen. The President of the Venice Area Audubon Society has offered to meet our group on site and provide a narrated tour.

## ***Dining:***

Your taste buds will delight in the dining options from Italian and Irish cuisine to pub and American fare. And the Avenue's special treats include French pastries, fine chocolates, ice cream, gelato, and scones.

**Abby's On Miami:** 220 Miami Ave W; seafood; [abbysonmiami.com](http://abbysonmiami.com)

**Bar Harbor Cheesecake Company:** 219 Miami Ave; 125 four-inch cheesecake flavors; No website available

**Burgundy Square Cafe:** 227 West Miami Ave; seafood. [burgundysquarecafe.website](http://burgundysquarecafe.website)

**Cafe Venice:** 101 West Venice Ave #2; tapas, flounder and filet.  
<https://www.cafevenicerestaurantandbar.com/our-menus/dinner>

**Ciao Gelato:** 317A West Venice Ave; gelato, sorbet, mousse, and pastries. No website available.

**Cote France:** 218 Tampa Avenue Avenue West; French; [cotefrancevenice.com](http://cotefrancevenice.com)

**Daiquiri Deck:** 300 West Venice Ave; seafood; [daiquirideck.com](http://daiquirideck.com)

**Devin's Wine Bar:** 101 West Venice Ave. #16; No website available.

**Made In Italy:** 117 West Venice Ave; Italian pies. Wood fired pizza; [madeinitaly-venice.com](http://madeinitaly-venice.com)

**TJ Carney's:** 231 West Venice Ave. Irish fare; [tjcarneys.com](http://tjcarneys.com)

**The Soda Fountain of Venice:** 349 West Venice Avenue; ice cream parlor;  
[thesodafountainofvenice.com](http://thesodafountainofvenice.com)

**Venice Avenue Creamery:** 249 West Venice Avenue; ice cream. No website available.

**Venice Wine & Coffee:** 201 West Venice Ave. CLOSSES at 6 pm. No website available.

### *Shopping:*

West Avenue offers more than forty different shops and boutiques ranging from products and services including men and women fashions and accessories, coastal apparel, jewelry, home decor, bath and body products, children's toys, handmade candles, hammocks, stationery, book and paper conservation, and fine wines. Many are listed below.

**Abode:** 225 Miami Ave West. No website available.

**Aqua Silks Studio:** 101 West Venice Ave. [aquasilksstudio.com](http://aquasilksstudio.com)

**B & B Bootery:** 311 West Venice Ave. No website available.

**Bonnell's Boutique & Winery:** 101 West Venice Ave. #3 No website available.

**Captain's Landing:** 243 West Venice avenue; [captainslanding.com](http://captainslanding.com)

**Celebration Corner:** 303A West Venice Avenue. Toys; No website available.

**Dana Tyler:** 233 West Venice Avenue; jewelry; [danatyler.com](http://danatyler.com)

**Florida Oil & Vinegar:** 307 West Venice Ave; [floridaoliveoil.com](http://floridaoliveoil.com)

**Island Gift Nook:** 227 West Venice Avenue; [islandgn.com](http://islandgn.com)

**Nest Venice:** 233A Miami Ave. W.; [nestvenice.com](http://nestvenice.com)

**Twist Boutique:** 137 West Venice Ave. [venicetwist.com](http://venicetwist.com)

At 6:00pm we will depart for The Villages. There is plenty of room for your purchases beneath the buses. Hope you have a great time!

**The price per person on this trip is significantly higher than our normal trip because of the driving distance to Venice Beach.**