

We had hoped to venture off to Venice next month but since we learned that there are, unfortunately, no handsome Venetian gondoliers in Venice, Florida, we changed our minds.

Perhaps more important, two other factors influencing our decision to leave Venice behind included the very high food prices at Sharky's on the Pier (where we previously spent the day) and the hidden and unpredictably dangerous entry and exit shoreline at nearby Venice Beach.

Therefore, we decided to return to one of our club's favorites, Nokomis Beach, after having to cancel our trip there in June due to bad weather.

Sooooo on August 19 from 8:30-7:45ish, we'll journey to North Jetty Park at Nokomis.

It may be one of the most simplistic, back-to-nature beaches we offer our members. How does 3+ hours of total relaxation in a beautiful setting on the Gulf sound to you? Since there is nothing commercial to distract us, the rest of the world will feel many miles away. As you can see, this park facing the Gulf is lined by a channel leading from the intercoastal waterway to the Gulf.

Some serious fishing happens in the Venice Inlet. There is a bait shop on site if you'd like to bring your rod and join these anglers. Just be sure your catch can be stored on ice in a cooler below the bus—out of aromatic range!

Or you can set up a chair to read a good book, occasionally looking up to watch boats pass by and see dolphins and large rays jumping in the inlet.

Oh yeah ~ there's also a quiet beach and crystal clear water awaiting your pleasure. To ensure your safety, there are lifeguards on duty year round. (Unfortunately, they tend to rescue girls under age 25 first.)

A modern concession serves only fresh made-to-order food worthy of the short wait you'll experience. As always, you are welcome to bring your lunch from home. There are also relatively new restrooms, covered picnic pavilions, and simple old-fashion picnic tables under the shade of waterfront trees.

But be sure to save some of your appetite for a special dinner on the way home at Fred's Market Restaurant in Riverview, Fla. This four-location restaurant has been lovingly passed down through the Johnson family since 1954. Their strong emphasis on FAMILY HERITAGE, VALUES and good ole' SOUTHERN CUISINE has contributed to making each Fred's Market Restaurants a place where friends, family and community can come together and connect, enjoying food cooked slow and served fast. They serve up a special taste of farm-to-plate freshness. Their food is cooked in a natural and unprocessed way, served in a cozy buffet atmosphere full of warmth and fun. "They don't compromise on quality or character whether it's the ingredients in their dishes or the attitudes of their people." The building may look small, but they can host 220 diners at a time.

Their all-you-can-eat Monday buffet includes—get ready for this!-- a Salad Table, Golden Fried Chicken, Crispy Catfish, Grilled Tilapia, Chicken Pot Pie, Sirloin Tips in Pan Gravy, Honey Barbeque Wings, and Smoked Ribs plus Fresh Vegetables, Casseroles, Yeast Rolls & Skillet Cornbread and a free coffee, tea, soda beverage. And if you've saved room, there's a Dessert Table too. Whewwww!

And all of this for only \$ 11.87 – (plus 18% suggested tip)

If you prefer to limit yourself to one trip/one plate to their hot buffet plus one trip/one plate to their Salad Table plus one dessert, and a free coffee, tea, soda beverage, the cost is only \$10.28 (plus 18% suggested tip). For those of you who want even lighter fare at a lighter price, visit their website menu at: <https://www.fredsmarket.com/lunch-menu>

Plus, 15% off Veterans with valid ID

After all of that, you may need to walk home 'cause

“Waist not, want not!”