

Are you ready to break out of the bubble?

Join your BBC friends and escape to

Fort Myers Beach & Vicinity

3 nights, 4 days

October 17-20, 2022

The BBC multi-day trips have been the "crown jewels" of the club's travel. This fall, the Best Western Waterfront Hotel in Fort Myers is holding 60 rooms for us, at a discounted rate for our members. This hotel will be our home base as we visit the area, soaking up sun, sand, museums and history in and around Fort Myers. Each day in Fort Myers will begin with breakfast in the BW waterfront restaurant.

Monday -10/17 Before our arrival at Fort Myers, we will stop at Englewood Beach for a few hours of gulf-front relaxation and lunch at your choice of 5 restaurants just across the street within 1-3 blocks of the park.

With sand in our toes, we'll drive @ 30 minutes to Fishermen's Village in Punta Gorda. This is the last stop before arriving at our hotel, so there's no need to conserve energy. You can stop 'til you drop at the boutique shops in Fishermen's Village. The guys might choose to stretch their legs less expensively outside (unless they decide to buy one of these boats.) The groups can then get back together over dinner at one of the Village's five restaurants shown on this webpage: www.fishermensvillage.com

Once we check-in at our hotel, less than 30 minutes from the Village, we can relax in its picturesque setting. You might consider joining others in our social room we reserved for our first evening, to meet fellow members, to chat or play games.

Tuesday 10/18 - Bus 1 (Buses 1 & 2 will take alternate routes to diminish our impact on the places we are visiting) So, this route will be on Wednesday for Bus 2.

Following our waterfront breakfast, we venture just 4 minutes away, just across the Caloosahatchee River, to the Edison and Ford Winter Estates built in 1885, the Edison Botanical Research Lab, and the Edison Ford Museum on more than 20 acres of gardens. Info at: www.edisonfordwinterestates.org. This destination is the Travelers Choice in 2022 according to TripAdvisor.

We'll spend approximately 90 minutes on a self-guided tour and downloading the Edison app on your phone to learn about the personal lives and brilliant works of Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. There will be time after the group tour for individually wandering about the property, gardens, and shops. There are plenty of places to relax and get off your feet if you wish. We'll then drive about 25 minutes to lunch at Doc Ford's Rum Bar and Grill followed by total relaxation and beach time at Bowditch Point Park, just 10 minutes away, at the northern tip of Estero Island.

This serene location offers a choice of scenic settings. The back-bay offers quiet waters, peaceful surroundings, and a close up look of vessels entering and exiting the bay, some followed by dolphins jumping in their wake. The gulf front provides a relaxed atmosphere for walkers, swimmers and sunbathers. Walking trails through the preserve area carry you through varied environments, and offer an excellent opportunity for bird watching while featuring panoramic views of Estero Bay. Learn more at <https://www.leegov.com/parks/beaches/bowditchpoint>.

Upon returning to our hotel in late afternoon, you can freshen up, have dinner on your own or with friends at one of three restaurants within a 2-minute walk of our hotel, including our hotel restaurant named 3 Fishermen Seafood, or IHOP.

Wednesday – 10/19 for Bus 1 (Tuesday for BUS 2)

Following our waterfront breakfast, we'll venture to Sanibel Island, about an hour away, where you have to choose between two options: the Ding-Darling Wildlife Refuge or the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum. (Yes, this is the toughest decision on the entire trip....that is unless you purchased a boat!)

The Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum offers in-depth information on local shelling and identification. There are 30 permanent exhibits, including the Great Hall of Shells which displays highlights of the Museum's collection of some 500,000 shells. The Beyond Shells living gallery of aquariums displays over 50 species of marine life. The discounted non-guided group tours cost \$17 per person for groups of 10 or more. More info at: www.shellmuseum.org.

In October, there are 2 additional temporary exhibits:

Adorned by Seashells – how seashells have inspired fashion both past and present;
Mollusk Hospital – how mollusks repair their shells when they have been damaged.

At Ding-Darling, you can take a 90-minute tram tour that includes an informative narrative (\$18). Experienced naturalists can help you spot wildlife most visitors would never see. Search for roseate spoonbills, herons, egrets, ibis, alligators and much more while learning about the refuge's ecology and history. If you'd prefer to strike out on your own at the Wildlife Refuge, you can hike the Indigo Trail for \$1.00. More info at: www.dingdarlingsociety.com.

We will then head to Times Square on Fort Myers Beach. After all, we can't have a day without at least one beach! Located in the downtown area of Fort Myers Beach and it is one of the most iconic areas of the Town. It is at the north end of Estero Island at the base of Matanzas Pass Bridge. A variety of beachfront retail and restaurant establishments along with the famous Lynn Hall Memorial Park pier and public beach access make up the square. Did we mention that there is a beach??? For more information, see: <https://www.fortmyersbeachfl.gov/1123/Times-Square>

Your bus will carry you back to the hotel in time to freshen up for dinner.

Wednesday night - optional excursion: The Murder Mystery Dinner Train

For those who are interested, we are offering a trip on the Murder Mystery Dinner Train. Included in each ticket price is a five-course meal, murder mystery show, and train ride. Join the fun and become a Super Sleuth as you try to solve Who Dunnit? during the comical murder mystery show that plays out in the aisles of each dining car in between the courses of your meal. Each passenger receives a playbill, clue sheet, and pen to follow along with the live scripted show, writing down clues as they go. Clue sheets are collected before the final resolution act. One prize will be awarded by the actors to the one super sleuth in each dining car. This theater venue is truly a unique experience - a combination of five meal courses, live theater and the lively conversation of your fellow tablemates. You can learn more about this experience at www.semgulf.com.

If the Murder Mystery doesn't ring your bell, you'll have the option to ride down to
TIMES SQUARE

Ah - another possibility of sundown on the beach! The vibe at Times Square is even more entertaining in the evening hours. Many of the establishments in Times Square provide live music and beachfront dining. Or bring a chair and sit on the beach with your beverage of choice and enjoy the beautiful sunset. We're not saying that you can't simply grab a bite to eat at one of our hotel restaurants and slip under the covers in your room, but you're on vacation - so make the most of it if you can.

Thursday - 10/20

Following our final waterfront breakfast, we head home, stopping for about 3 hours at the John and Mable Ringling Circus Museum. The Ringling is located in Sarasota and preserves the legacy of John and Mable Ringling. It is home to the State Art Museum of Florida, the historic Ca' d'Zan Mansion, Bayfront Gardens, the Art Library, two Circus Museums, and the Historic Asolo Theater. Enjoy lunch in one of the several venues located in the museum or in the garden grounds. For more information about this activity, visit www.ringling.org.

We then return to Lamers Bus Yard. For dinner, we suggest calling for carry out or checking your freezer for something to eat!

Costs payable to BBC:

\$150 per person payable by check now -- but not cashed by our club until October 1.

(This includes our 4-day transportation, admission to the Edison & Ford Estate, admission to the Ringling Museum, our drivers' rooms and tips, our breakfast staff tips, and our hotel mgmt. tips.) It does not include the tip for your room attendant.

\$109 per night for king bed or \$119 per night for 2 queen beds (plus 11 ½ % tax). When we notify you that you have been chosen in our lottery and have a seat on our bus, we will send you a link to make your reservation directly with the hotel. They will not accept reservations at our discounted rate via phone. Do not make your reservation until you receive confirmation that you have survived the lottery!

\$17 Optional Baily-Matthews National Shell Museum visit in Sanibel

\$18 Optional Ding-Darling Wildlife Refuge 90-minute tram tour on Sanibel

\$10 Optional Ringling Ca'd'Zan Mansion (not included in museum admission)

\$125 Optional Murder Mystery Dinner Train; this group rate includes tax & gratuity, but requires 24 people to qualify for the group rate. The regular rate shown on their website does NOT include taxes or gratuities.

Once the lottery is complete, we'll be able to determine if we meet the numbers required for group rates. We'll then send you an email with whatever balance is due at that time for your tours.

Cost of your meals (and any shoe, purse, and boat purchases) is NOT included.