

Sunset Festival at Pier 60 on Clearwater beach

Monday, July 18th from 11am until 11pm

We hope you'll agree that there is nothing quite like watching the sun set from the beach. Clearwater feels strongly enough about it to host a Sunset Festival every night on Pier 60! In addition to the sunset, our favorite time of beach is after 4pm, when the families have headed home for dinner and the beach itself seems to quiet, anticipating the end of the day.

We'll get some extra sleep and depart for the beach at 11:00am. Beach chairs, umbrellas and cabanas are available on Clearwater Beach in abundance. Once we arrive, just decide where you want to sit. An attendant will find you and collect \$35 for 2 chairs + 1 umbrella, or \$45 for 2 chairs & a deluxe cabana. It's \$10 extra for an additional chair. The rates drop after 3pm to \$20 and \$25. Cash is not accepted – cards only. You are of course, welcome to bring your own beach gear, but it is a pretty deep beach. Clearwater Beach is a hub of activity that draws folks from everywhere! To learn more about Clearwater Beach, visit <https://www.awesomeclearwater.com/clearwater-beach.html>.

There are plenty of restaurants to choose from, even if you decide to have both lunch and dinner near the beach. We sampled a few of them recently when we went to check out the Sunset Festival in person. A full listing of restaurant options is shown below. We'll send a map with your Trip Details for your convenience so you can readily find them all.

There is also some great shopping within walking distance to the beach. You'll see turquoise SurfStyle bags on nearly every arm you pass. They carry everything you might need (and a lot of things you didn't even know you needed) for the beach or outdoors. It was the first place I ever saw 100 SPF sunscreen!

We walked to every restaurant mentioned, along the pier and along the beach before and after sunset. Streets, sidewalks, and boardwalks are all well-lit and easy to navigate. There were a few officers near the beach. We felt very safe among the people who were out & about, enjoying the summer evening.

Pier 60 had a full-feature fishing pier at its end. If you just want to walk to the end and gaze off into the Gulf, there is a \$1 fee, payable in the shop situated on the pier. They also rent fishing poles, sell bait and issue fishing permits, and are run by the City of Clearwater. Daily fishing fees for Seniors is \$8; rod rental is \$10, but you can bring your own as well. We heard that the night fishing is terrific.

Clearwater Beach has adventures unlike most of the beaches we visit. If you want a sea adventure, the selection at Clearwater is comprehensive. There is the Calypso Queen, Sea Screamer, Waverunner Rentals & Tours, Encounters with Dolphins, and Captain

Memo's Pirate Cruise. Captain Memo's offers a sunset cruise that leaves the dock at 7pm with a discounted price for seniors. If several of you decide to take the sunset cruise, we'll delay our departure for home by a few minutes to allow you to disembark from the 2-hour tour and cross the street to board your waiting bus. Reservations for the pirate sunset tour are suggested. You can make those by checking their website and following the instructions; <https://captainmemo.com/>.

Planning your beach day:

We'll arrive at the beach by 1pm. If you plan to watch the sunset from one of the rooftop bars, you'll probably want to have a substantial lunch since there is mostly finger food on the rooftops. If you rented beach equipment, it will expire at 5pm as the City of Clearwater wants the equipment stored shortly after 5pm. Our buses will return to the beach to collect the beach gear that you brought from home so that you don't have to keep it with you. This leaves you ample time to take a short walk to one of the area restaurants, have dinner, even shop a bit and return to Pier 60 for the sunset festivities.

The Festival begins 2 hours prior to sunset (which will be at 8:29pm on July 18th) and runs for 2 hours after sunset... or 6:30pm until 10:30pm. (But of course, none of us would be awake by then!) We recommend that you be back at the pier by 7:30 at the latest so you can enjoy the entertainment, browse the artisan vendor items and find a perch on the pier to watch the sunset, that is, if you are not perched in a rooftop bar! At 9pm, we will reluctantly board our buses to head back to The Villages, arriving around 11pm. That is your only real deadline for the day!

Restaurants:

Crabby's Dockside (across the street from the beach) <https://crabbysdocksideclearwater.com/>

Salt Cracker Fish Camp (across the street, behind Crabby's) <https://www.saltcrackerfishcamp.com/>

Marina Cantina (across the street, above Salt Cracker Fish Camp) <https://www.marinacantina.com/>

Bar Tiki above Marina Cantina (panoramic views) <https://www.marinacantina.com/rooftop.html>

Jimmy's Crows Nest (10th floor of the Pier House 60 Hotel) <https://www.jimmyscrowsnest.com/>

We, the Pizza - (a block south on Gulfview) <https://wethepizza.com/locations/clearwater-fl>

Holy Crepe (a bit of a hike south on Gulfway) <https://www.holycrepecwb.com/>

Carambola (in the Hilton on the round-about)

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/piecbhf-hilton-clearwater-beach-resort-and-spa/dining/>

Hooter's with The Lookout for sunset views (on the round-

about) <https://www.originalhooters.com/locations/tampa-bay/clearwater-beach>

Badfins (a block south on Coronado) <https://badfins.com/>

Beach Shanty Cafe (a block north on Gulfway - open for breakfast & lunch until 4pm) <https://beachshantycfe.net/>

Salty's Island Bar (a little south of the beach on Gulfview with 2nd level views) <https://saltysisland.com/>

Beverly's Ice Cream (a block south on Coronado) <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Beverlys-Ice-Cream/234345774562368>

Kilwin's (less than a block north on Gulfview) <https://www.kilwins.com/stores/kilwins-clearwater-beach>

All we can say is, if you leave hungry, it's not our fault!!