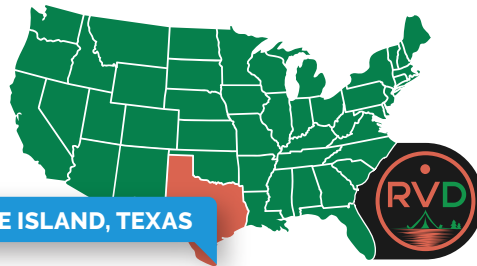


SOUTH PADRE ISLAND, TEXAS

SHOPPING



26.1118° N, 97.1681° W

If everything is bigger in Texas, South Padre Island, at the southern tip of the state, is a shining example of how to do everything big. From retirees to spring breakers, this 34-mile-long island of beautiful white sand and stunning emerald water has something for everyone. There's no shortage of places to stay, with an RV park directly on the Atlantic Ocean and a fantastic array of rentals. Are you more laid back, or do you like lots of action? You can enjoy anything from a walk on the beach to a dolphin ride or a party atmosphere at a beachfront bar, followed by a horseback ride in the surf. South Padre Island is the perfect island getaway.



Port Isabel Lighthouse
state historic site

PORT ISABEL LIGHTHOUSE

10 Wander the main drag on the island to find everything from kites to clothes to jewelry and so much more. Spend a casual afternoon grabbing a drink and a new book at Karma Coffee and Books. Forgot your kite for the beach? No problem, as there are tons of tourist shops that sell everything from kites to souvenirs. Looking for a new beach wardrobe? Tate's Clothiers has excellent choices for both men and women. Head to any of the fabulous candy shops to finish the day with a great selection of sweets or ice cream.



9 Take a quick drive from South Padre Island over the bridge to neighboring Port Isabel and take in the view from the top of the Port Isabel Lighthouse. A state historic site, the lighthouse has recently been renovated to its prior glory. Built in 1852, it became the country's 330th lighthouse to guide the way for many sea captains. Today, you can climb the 75 stairs that wind their way to the top and witness a stunning view of Port Isabel and over the bay to South Padre Island. Stop in the reconstructed lighthouse museum to learn more about this fascinating lighthouse.

8 A stunning way to experience the island is to head to the quieter north end and enjoy a horseback ride through the surf. South Padre Island Adventure Park offers a wide range of rides everyone can enjoy. A beach ride in the morning, during sunset or under the moonlit sky will be a lasting memory. If you haven't had enough fun yet, then head back to the adventure park and ride their zip-lines, go parasailing or even go for speed on the go-kart track.



BIRDWATCH

7 The South Padre Island Birding, Nature Center & Alligator Sanctuary is the perfect place to observe coastal birds in their natural habitat. A wooden boardwalk wanders through the grounds and provides ample opportunities to see hundreds of birds, as the island is home to more than 350 species throughout the year. You can also view alligators in the rescue sanctuary that takes in juvenile alligators and sends them to Gator Country in Beaumont when fully grown.



TAKE A DOLPHIN RIDE

6

Several companies offer dolphin rides that depart from the Sea Ranch Marina on the island. The trip's highlight is watching the playful dolphins swimming and frolicking in the ocean. The tours run throughout the day and last about 1.5 hours, making their way through the Gulf of Mexico. The boats are spacious and have plenty of room to move from one side to the other for a better view of these aquatic creatures. Plan for the day's conditions because it may be windy, and there can be many waves. Hopefully, you're fortunate enough to see many dolphins and have great pictures to take home.



5

Are you fascinated with space travel and rocket ships? The SpaceX launch facility is about a 45-minute drive from South Padre Island in Brownsville, Texas. You can get a close-up view of some of these advanced rockets because you can drive through the compound's center, which Elon Musk owns. You'll always have something to see as they continually work on new rockets. Head back to Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island to secure a fantastic view on one of the rocket launch days.



HEAD TO A BEACH BAR

4

There are a few fun beach bars on the island, but everyone needs to go to Clayton's Beach Bar & Grill at least once. They claim to be the biggest beach bar in Texas and have expanded their restaurant and bar to include a newly built pier that extends over the ocean and has stunning views. Here, you'll find a group of people living their best island life by enjoying the music, food and excitement at this fun beach bar.



SEA TURTLE, INC.

3

Everyone should stop at this incredible site that focuses on sea turtle conservation. You'll learn all about the sea turtles that frequent the area and the challenges they face, and you can watch daily presentations. The highlight of a visit is seeing injured turtles recuperating in large tanks, swimming lazily along. The center does research, educates the public, and provides medical care and rehabilitation for rescued turtles.



ISLA BLANCA PARK

2

This large park on the south end of the island has it all: a 600-plus spot RV park, walking trails, jetties for fishing, large pavilions and stands for food near the beach. There are also several concessioners you can book trips with for bay or offshore fishing, water sports, jet skis, parasailing and so much more. This is also the perfect spot to set up a chair and watch the launch of a SpaceX rocket. There is an entrance fee here, but it is well worth it with so much to do and the continuous improvements. This coastal park is a great place to play on the beach.



ENJOY THE BEACHES

1

With 34 miles of sand, there are so many ways to enjoy the beaches of South Padre Island. Many take long walks, collect shells or ride bikes in the sand. Others relax under beach umbrellas while having a casual picnic lunch before heading into the ocean. The ocean's surf here is one of the best places to kitesurf, parasail or go sailboarding because it has warm gulf waters and perfect winds throughout the year. From locals to vacationers, you'll always see people fishing from the beach or jetties, hoping to pull in the next big one. There are many access points throughout the island, so pack up your towels and cooler and enjoy a day on the beach.