

BLOGALICIOUS Weekend

2010 Family Friendly Guide

While Mom (or Auntie or Grandma or Dad) is away at the conference, the kids can play! Who says that your trip to Miami for Blogalicious 2010 has to be a solo one? We encourage you to bring your family with you - there are tons of attractions on lively South Beach to keep everyone happily busy.

Infants and Nursing Children. Children are welcome to accompany their parents to Blogalicious. We want the Weekend to be one that families can enjoy together. Of course, nursing mothers are welcome to bring their infants into the sessions.



Childcare at the Conference. For the second year in a row, we are pleased to be able to offer you FREE childcare services for your little one. [Ritz Kids](#), an on-site childcare service provided by the staff of the Ritz-Carlton, South Beach, will be open exclusively to the children of Blogalicious attendees. Please register your child for the Ritz Kids program when you purchase your conference registration. Ritz Kids will be open from Friday through Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for children ages 5-

12. For a list of activities available through the Ritz Kids Program, [click here](#).

Naturally ... The Great Outdoors.

A short hop from the beach and right off the MacArthur Causeway is *Parrot Jungle Island*. Parrot Jungle showcases its avian residents in a variety of settings and performances. At the Parrot Bowl, "Winged Wonders" is a 20-minute flight of fancy featuring countless colorful parrots, an Andean condor and a cassowary, an ostrich-like bird that can swallow an apple whole. "Manu Encounter," evoking the tall cliffs of Manu, Peru, is a more free-form experience, with macaws, parrots and squirrel monkeys having the run of the place and kids chasing after them. There are tigers and snakes, turtles and alligators to be seen, but the real thrill for the kids will be with what's flying overhead. (305) 2-JUNGLE; parrotjungle.com.



Life's a Beach. Things change over time, but one thing that hasn't changed is the beauty of Miami's *beaches*. *South Beach*, the stretch of Miami Beach from First Street to 30th Street, is a wide expanse of sand backed by colorful Art Deco hotels. The northern end of the beach, from 30th Street down to Lincoln Road (approximately 16th Street) will be most appealing to parents and small kids since it is quiet. As you move further south, the area

from roughly 12th to Fifth Streets is party central, with revelers and their cocktails creating a beach-y moveable feast. A long boardwalk connects the entire length of South Beach so you can stroll, bike or blade to the beach that best suits your needs.



A quick drive over to Key Biscayne brings you to *Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park*, a cozy stretch of sand routinely voted one of the top ten beaches in the U.S. The majestic Cape Florida lighthouse, built in 1825 and the oldest structure in Miami's Dade County, stands sentinel over the beach. Offshore, a sand bar protects the beach and virtually eliminates waves, making this an ideal swimming beach for

young kids. You can also rent bikes or walk a nature trail and the place is never crowded.

floridastateparks.org/capeflorida/

A (Sub)Urban Oasis. Feeling like a lobster yet? Maybe it's time for a visit to *Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden* in Coral Gables. This 83-acre former mangrove swamp has been transformed into a landscape of gardens, ponds and plants with many of the property's walking trails sheltered from the sun thanks to the lush canopy overhead. Take the 30-minute narrated tram ride for both its sun protection and wealth of knowledge – you'll learn about the gumbo limbo tree and the petticoat palm, whose fronds fold down (like a row of petticoat ruffles) once they die. 10901 Old Cutler Road, Coral Gables (305) 667-1651; fairchildgarden.org.



The *Venetian Pool*, a massive swimming hole carved from a coral rock quarry, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This Coral Gables landmark is fed with fresh spring water so it's nothing if not refreshing against sun-kissed skin. Kids will revel in the many waterfalls, caves and grottos and enjoy running across a cobblestone bridge. Note: kids three and under are not allowed in the facility. 2701 DeSoto Blvd., Coral

Gables; (305) 460-5306; venetianpool.com.

Experience Florida's prehistoric natives at the **Everglades Alligator Farm**. You'll see alligators, crocodiles, snakes, and other creatures during tours and animal shows held throughout the day. Monkey Island features 30 different species of primates, many of whom live in the wild on this protected reserve. 40351 SW 192nd Ave; (305) 247-2628; <http://www.everglades.com>.

Explore the wilds of South America, Asia and Africa. Witness crab-eating monkeys diving for treats at **Monkey Jungle**. Delve into the lush, tropical Amazonian rain forest filled with hundreds of exotic monkeys. New exhibit includes rare Amazon parrots, the Cameroon Jungle

and the Mandrill Baboons. 14805 Southwest 216th Street; (305) 235-1611;
<http://www.monkeyjungle.com>.

Everglades Safari Park features a professional tour guide will narrate your thrilling airboat ride as you glide through this jungle of wilderness: the legendary Florida Everglades. Recognized as the most unique ecosystem, tour guides will lead you through this natural wonder where you'll encounter lush vegetation and tranquility. You'll also see alligators, native flora and fauna, as well as other exotic wildlife. (305) 226-6923;
<http://www.evergladessafaripark.com>.

Explore **Biscayne National Park** for picnicking, kayaking, snorkeling, scuba diving, walking trails, fishing, and camping. Within sight of downtown Miami yet worlds away, the Biscayne National Park protects a rare combination of aquamarine waters, emerald islands, and fish-bejeweled coral reefs. It is a Miami attraction not to be missed.
<http://www.nps.gov/bisc/index.htm>.

For another outdoor family activity, be sure to set your sights on the **Everglades National Park**. This expansive ecosystem is the third largest national park in the continental U.S. Obviously, this Miami attraction is like no other in the world and offers endless sites. Stop by the visitor's center for a complete list of offerings. Take out a kayak for the day. Discover 156 miles of nature trails. Set up camp in one of 47 designated campsites and melt marshmallows over a crackling campfire. One of the park's major draws is its impressive array of rare and endangered species such as the American Crocodile, Florida panther, and West Indian Manatee. <http://www.nps.gov/ever/index.htm>.

Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden is a Miami attraction for the flora and fauna devotee. This magnificent assortment of tropical plants, a National Palm Collection, cycads, flowering trees, vines, and fruit trees is a stimulating outdoor abundance. Lose yourself wandering through exotic surroundings or relax under a shady tree and reflect on the enveloping beauty.
<http://www.fairchildgarden.org>.



The **Fruit & Spice Park** is the only tropical botanical garden of its kind in the United States. It hosts more than 500 varieties of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and other commercially important plant specimens from around the world. Additionally, the Fruit and Spice Park showcases 125 varieties of mango, 75 varieties of bananas, 70 bamboo varieties, and numerous other exotic edibles. Visitors are invited to munch at the park's store after enjoying the abundant 35-acre landscape.

This family activity is an incredible Miami attraction that must be seen to be believed. 24801 S.W. 187th Avenue, Homestead; (305) 247-5727; <http://fruitandspicepark.org/friends>.

An adventure on and off land.

The **Miami Metrozoo** is ranked as one of the best zoos in the world, and when you visit, you'll see why. The Metrozoo's animals are kept in large, open-air areas that closely match their natural habitat. And a variety of animal shows throughout the day reveal just how special these creatures are. 12400 SW 152 Street; (305) 251-0400; <http://www.miamimetrozoo.com>.



Miami Seaquarium features dozens of your favorite seafaring friends, including dolphins, sea lions, and killer whales. At the Seaquarium, you'll even get a chance to swim with dolphins! 4400 Rickenbacker Causeway, Key Biscayne; (305) 361-5705; <http://www.miamiseaquarium.com>.

The **Miami Science Museum** features national traveling exhibitions, an educational Wildlife Center with rare birds of prey and reptiles, and fascinating Planetarium shows. We are also an educational institution highly recognized for the training of teachers and students to better understand science as it relates to our everyday living. There are live science demonstrations and theater shows daily with a museum store on-site. 3280 S. Miami Avenue; (305) 646-4200; www.miamisci.org.

Captain Jimmy's Fiesta Cruises is a sightseeing Miami cruise company operating out of the Bayside Marketplace. The Fiesta is a 52' twin diesel-powered catamaran, Coast Guard approved for 83 passengers, and is equipped to cater to all party cruises and special event needs. It offers daily Millionaires' Row sightseeing cruises and nighttime disco party cruises open to the public. Group discounts are available for this Miami tour. (305) 371-3033; <http://www.fiestacruises.com>.



Angels Cypress Airboat Tours offers more than 35 years of Everglades guide experience, operating top-of-the-line airboats. See wildlife including birds, animals, alligators - even rare and endangered species, up close in a natural, unspoiled setting. An unforgettable adventure with incredible photo opportunities. When you want a Miami tour or Miami cruise lime you've never experienced, head to one of these awesome adventures. <http://www.cypressairboats.com>.



Coopertown Airboat Rides and Restaurant has been offering airboat rides and alligator exhibitions since 1945. Their always professional guides will lead you on a boat tour through Hardwood Hammock to see national wildlife in its native Everglades environment. After this fascinating and educational Miami tour through the Hardwood Hammock and beyond, relax and taste some down-home, Everglades-style cooking at the Coopertown Restaurant. You'll enjoy such

delicacies as frog legs, 'gator tail, catfish and more. (305) 226-6048; <http://www.coopertownairboats.com>.

Grapeland Water Park features four pools with slides, tube rides and recreational swimming. Pirates Plunge has slides and shallow water for kids 5 and under; Shipwreck Island has fast

slides for kids 6 and older; Captain's Lagoon is a large recreational pool; and the Buccaneer River Ride is a tube ride that winds around the whole park.

Island Queen Cruises Inc. offers tour and sightseeing options. A thrilling ride on the Bayside Blaster begins from Bayside Marketplace then speeds past the Port of Miami at over 25 mph. The Bayside Blaster is capable of seating up to 80 passengers. Also, the Island Queen Daily Dance Cruise departs from downtown Miami at Bayside Marketplace and cruises to the tip of Miami Beach thru the Port of Miami. The Gondola Natalia, a 30-foot Venetian-style gondola is beautifully handcrafted and is ideal for intimate weddings, private dinner cruises, and sightseeing cruises. Enjoy the privacy and luxury of your own yacht aboard the Recess. This Miami boat is available for half and full day charters with a minimum of 4 hours.

Directly across the Causeway is the *Miami Children's Museum*, a 56,000-square-foot facility where children come to "play, learn, imagine and create." Older kids will start at Mt. MiChiMu, a colorful climbing wall that greets you as you enter the [museum](http://miamichildrensmuseum.org). It won't be long before everyone has entered KidScape Village, where you can visit the dentist (his toothbrush is six feet long), "pick" some oranges (they fall fast!) and "rush" to the scene of a fire thanks to an interactive video display. Upstairs, kids will haul cargo with their own shipping cranes and proceed to navigate small ships as Biscayne Bay Pilots. The museum has wisely installed climbing structures outdoors for that much-needed fresh air break. (305) 373-5437; miamichildrensmuseum.org.

Where to eat.



Joe's Stone Crab is one of those stately institutions that will not rest on its laurels. Nearly a century after Joe first opened his doors at the tip of South Beach, the stone crab claws, served cracked and with butter or mayo, are still fresh and flavorful and taste like nothing else. Likewise, the sides of hash browns and cole slaw, just like Joe liked 'em, are still the way to go. Order the burger or an incredible lump-meat crab cake for the kids and let everyone share in the South's best Key lime pie. 11 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach; (305) 673-

0365; joesstonecrab.com.

In Miami's Little Havana district, *Versailles* is often referred to as "the Cuban Denny's." Huh? Sure, the over-the-top green and gold décor with countless mirrors would make Louis XVI cringe but the food is sensational. Start with any of the tropical fruit shakes on the menu – the flavor will easily trump the fact that the fruit is a mystery. The *media noche* ("midnight") sandwich melds ham, pork, Swiss cheese and pickles between lightly grilled Cuban bread while the croquettes, squishy rounds of deep-fried ham, chicken or fish, melt in the mouth. And don't forget the plantains, cooked any number of ways and each a delight. Finish with the *flan de turron*, a Cuban version of crème caramel that puts King Louis' version to shame. 3555 S.W. Eighth Street, Miami; (305) 444-0240.

Over at *Big Pink*, the boisterous crowd is having big fun while loading up on burgers and sandwiches with a heaping side of fries. The shakes are terrific and your kids will definitely not be heard above the din. Plan on a late lunch or early dinner to avoid a big wait. 157 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach; (305) 532-4700; bigpinkrestaurant.com.



The *Nexxt Café*, smack in the middle of mile-long Lincoln Road Mall, has a reputation for heaping portions and indifferent service. Next up: smiling waiters! The café has finally changed its tune and will deliver a *quesadilla* (the perfect kid-pleaser) promptly and courteously. 700 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach; (305) 532-6643.

The *Van Dyke Café*, just down the street, has an encyclopedic menu of salads, sandwiches and the like and more outdoor tables than you can count. The staff is pleasant and tries hard to make up for the many snooty patrons. 846 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach; (305) 534-3600.

At the *11th Street Diner*, your kids will have a ball with the retro kitsch and soda fountain-style menu. 1065 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach; (305) 534-6373.

For More Kid-Friendly Restaurants on South Beach, [visit Urban Spoon](#).

Shopping, anyone?



Lunch at the nearby *Village of Merrick Park*. This upscale, outdoor shopping mall boasts over 100 stores in an Italianate setting. Nordstrom and Neiman Marcus anchor the space and each has its own café; the Via Quadronno is another good choice for *panini* and an iced espresso drink. *LeJeune Rd. between U.S. 1 and Bird Rd., Coral Gables;* villageofmerrickpark.com.

The *Lincoln Road Mall* is South Beach's version of a town square. Spanning the pedestrian-only stretch of Lincoln Road between Collins Avenue and Alton Road, the street is teeming with eclectic shops, restaurants and cafes. Sidewalk tables spill out of almost every establishment. lincolnroadmiamibeach.org



*[Adapted from Sally's Place](#)

**Looking Forward to Seeing You & Your Family
In October!!!!**