

## **RECOMMENDED NEARBY RESTAURANTS:**

### **ARMAND CIRCLE**

1. Tommy Bahama – should go there at least once. Good bar, good food, good music on Thurs, Fri, Saturday. One of the bartenders is from Norwalk.
2. Columbia – been there forever. Fun, big, very busy place. The tapas for 3 or 4 are good.
3. Cilantro Grill – breakfast and lunch place above Columbia – take the elevator. Pretty good breakfast with nice outdoor, upstairs view of the circle.
4. Crab and Fin – Nice outdoor seating. Very popular. Mixed reviews from guests, some love it, some not. Tuna tartare was not the best.
5. Madison Avenue Deli – ride the bike there, sit outside, drink coffee, eat pastries, read the NY papers, people watch. Breakfast only OK.
6. Daiquiri Deck – if you do go, don't do the happy hour. Rip off.
7. Mexico Lindo – Sat at the bar. Chips and salsa OK. Had a large margarita and Caesar Salad, Mexican style. Pretty good, not great. Didn't try any real entrees.
8. Shore Diner – first restaurant you get to on the right walking into the Circle. Located upstairs. Upscale, excellent food.
9. Surf Shack – Good happy hour. Be sure to ask for the spicy popcorn. Fun honky tonk atmosphere.
10. Blue Dolphin – 1<sup>st</sup> restaurant on the left heading into circle. Better than diner-quality breakfast.
11. 15 South Ristorante Enoteca – Good live music upstairs. Acoustic jazz combo Monday nights, Latin Dancing on weekends. Bar downstairs looks nice. OK Italian food throughout. See photo gallery.

### **DOWNTOWN**

1. C'est La Vie - downtown Sarasota. Very nice French Bistro for breakfast or lunch. The Croque Madame is excellent.
2. Marina Jack's – just over the bridge. Very nice outdoor seating. Solid food. Nice for lunch. Live music at night.
3. O'Leary's Tiki Bar – next door to Marina Jack's. Outdoor bar with tables, palm tree, etc. Funky place for a drink – lots of characters. Only had the bar food and margaritas, but enjoyable.
4. Selva Grill – downtown. Peruvian Food. Very good.
5. The Rosemary – near downtown Sarasota across Fruitville Ln. Good breakfast.
6. Mandeville Beer Garden – fun beer garden atmosphere – picnic tables, etc.
7. Owen's Fish Camp – in Burns District. Funky place with lots of memorabilia from its days as a Fish Camp, whatever that is. Art Cinema next door.
8. Boca – excellent food, trendy, younger crowd (for Sarasota), can be very noisy.
9. Duval's – excellent seafood. Expensive.
10. Two Señoritas – very mediocre Mexican food, but cool interior. Spotty service.
11. MoZaic – kind of California style. Mike liked it, Kathy not so crazy about it.
12. Station 400 – converted railway station (imported from Indiana) – very nice breakfast place. Interesting crowd.

13. The Breakfast House – not really downtown. On Fruitville Road in an old house. Lovingly run place, cozy. Interesting breakfasts with daily specials. Check out the store next door (Accessorize), run by the same woman. Tons of costume jewelry, scarves, women's clothes, etc.
14. Blue Dolphin – On 4<sup>th</sup> street, blues club. Good comfort food (burgers, fried chicken, meatloaf, etc.) Can be extremely loud. Go on Wednesday night for Al Fuller and his band. Walk-in musicians all night. Fun music, dancing. Worth a trip. Make reservations for best seating!!!

### **SIESTA KEY**

1. Drive down the main drag in town and there are numerous bars, honky-tonks with live music, mostly Dad-rock. No Michelin-starred restaurants here, but fun.
2. The Cottage – one of the places with better food. Nice service, bar.
3. Ophelia's – Super-romantic spot on the bay with nice gardens, gourmet food. Very nice.
4. Sun Garden – Top rated breakfast place. Creative breakfast menu. Outdoor seating. Nice.

### **LONGBOAT KEY**

1. Old Salty Dog – take the road to Longboat Key and turn right just before the big bridge. Across the street from Mote Aquarium. Outdoor seating on the water. Good service. Grouper sandwich is excellent. Careful ordering vegetables; the green beans were canned.
2. New Pass Grill – next door to Old Salty Dog. Best Bacon-Egg-Cheese sandwich in the world – ask for something other than American cheese.
3. Mar Vista - beautiful outdoor seating under trees on the water. Has a bit of a Caribbean feel. Just before the bridge to Santa Maria Island. Food is OK.

### **MAINLAND SARASOTA**

1. Cinebistro - Very good food to eat in the awesome movie theater. Great place to see a movie.
2. Bravo – same shopping center as Cinebistro. Pretty good, but we usually just end up eating in the theater.

### **DAY TRIPS, THINGS TO DO:**

#### **Lido Beach**

Walk to St. Armand Circle for breakfast, and then go to Lido Beach (a couple blocks past the circle). There is a parking lot with a pavilion where you can buy food and drinks, rent beach chairs and umbrellas (if you don't bring the ones from the condo) and find restrooms. Then walk back to the circle in time for happy hour. Afterwards, you can cool off at the pool back at the condo. Or you can just drive. Plenty of parking.

### **Siesta Key Beach**

It is a 15-20 minute car ride but worth the trip. It reminds me of Jones Beach but nicer sand. The sand is white and powdery and doesn't get hot.

### **Downtown Sarasota**

Very easy to get to by bike, and biking around downtown is fun. Driving is fine, because parking is not a huge problem. Lots of shopping. There is a Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings and first Friday is supposed to be a lot of fun too.

Check out the Blue Rooster on 4<sup>th</sup> street. Very fun music venue with pretty good food. Wednesday is a sort of open-mike night with mostly blues performers, run by Al Fuller, blues musician.

### **Eco-Boat Tours at Mote Marine Lab**

Takes you on a tour of the keys. You see lots of sea life, a bird rook and lots of multi-million dollar homes. You can go to the New Pass Grill before for the best BEC sandwich or go to the Salty Dog afterwards for lunch on the bay. Both are across the street. It is an easy bike ride to get to or you can drive.

### **Kayak and paddleboard:**

Our kayaks are in the racks, clearly marked with "A4." Life jackets and paddles are in the storage bin upstairs. Follow the shore by the expensive houses and go under the bridge to a cool lagoon and then up a little canal toward Armand circle.

If you get a chance, definitely do a self-guided tour of the mangrove tunnels (with their kayaks.) It's really fun. Here is the one we use:

Adventure Kayak Outfitters

<http://www.adventurekayakoutfitters.com/>

941-779-7426

### **Biking:**

The bikes are in good shape and we use them a lot. Helmets and pump are in the closet. Biking over the causeway to downtown is very easy with wide bike lanes, or you can just walk them on the pedestrian walk. For the more ambitious, there is a bike ride to Venice built onto the old rail bed. Paved and a pretty easy 15 miles. Can have lunch and ride back. This is the link to the [Sarasota Legacy Trail](#).

### **Golf**

All the country clubs want bodies on their courses. Use the GolfNow App to book tee times at a deep discount.

### **Tennis**

We enjoy playing tennis on Long Boat Key. There are clinics and round robins almost every day at a very reasonable cost - \$15 or \$20. Court time is also inexpensive.

## Longboat Key Public Tennis Center

590 Bay Isles Rd  
Longboat Key, FL  
(941) 316-8367

### **Theatre**

Definitely make reservations to see a play or other performance. We see many productions at Florida Studio Theater downtown. It's not Broadway, but it's pretty good. Here is a link to where you can find out what is going on or just Google it.

[http://www.visitsarasotaarts.org/performing-arts/theatre?gclid=CjwKEAjwluetBRD98L639p35p0QsJACC8BlKpLQA4j93k2QgmBzrQpPjqCPM4S8WS0UG0GNdvU7\\_bRoCupbw\\_wcB](http://www.visitsarasotaarts.org/performing-arts/theatre?gclid=CjwKEAjwluetBRD98L639p35p0QsJACC8BlKpLQA4j93k2QgmBzrQpPjqCPM4S8WS0UG0GNdvU7_bRoCupbw_wcB)

And don't miss the [Ringling Museum of Art](#). Check out the events or just go there and stroll through the grounds and museums.