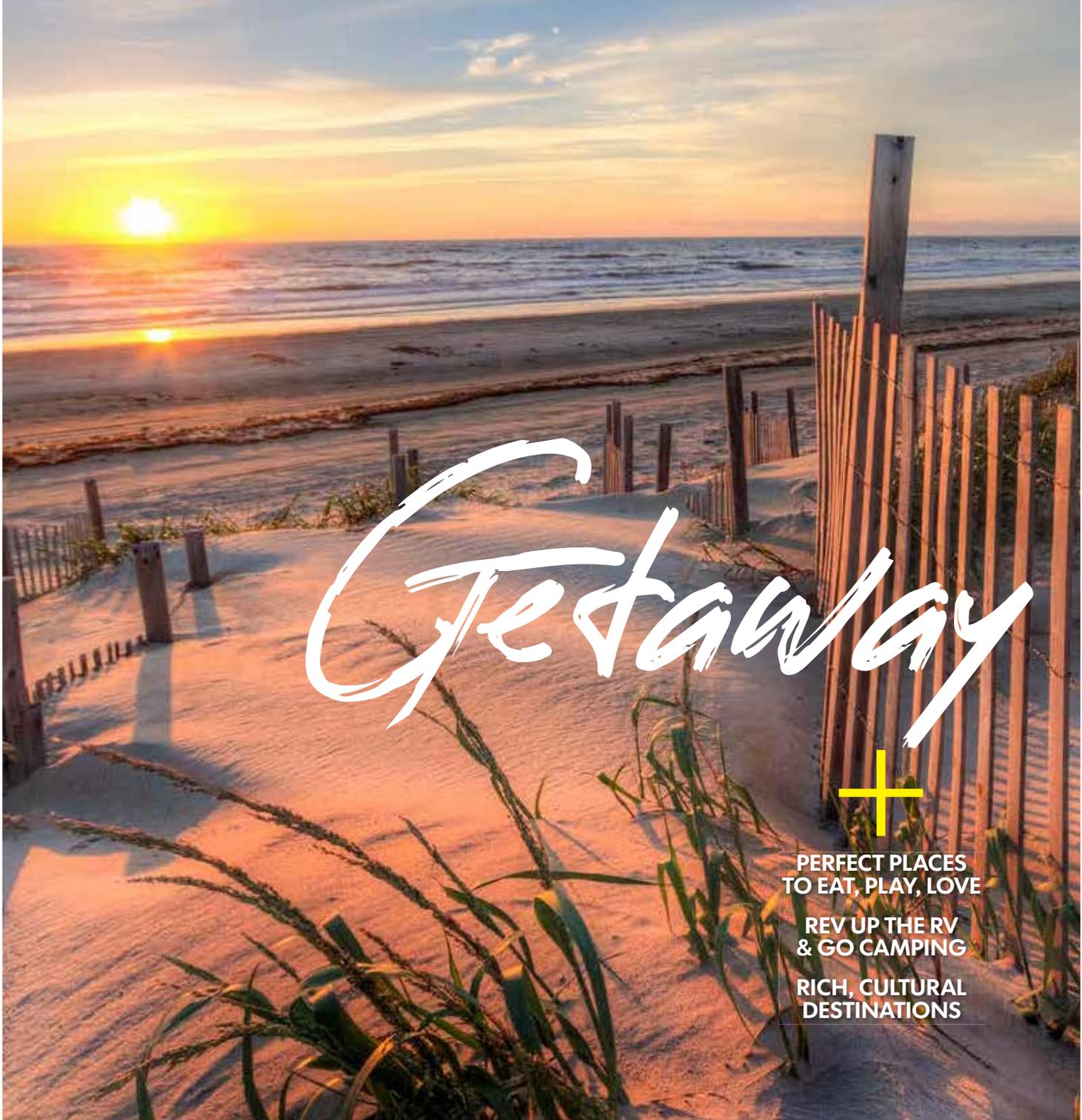


● USA TODAY TRAVEL | DISCOVER IDYLIC ISLAND GEMS

# GO ESCAPE

SUMMER 2020



*Getaway*



PERFECT PLACES  
TO EAT, PLAY, LOVE

REV UP THE RV  
& GO CAMPING

RICH, CULTURAL  
DESTINATIONS

# Happy Camper

Bond with nature and stargaze all night long

BY SUSAN B. BARNES

**P**itch a tent or pull up your camper and be lulled to sleep by the sound of waves lapping on the shore at these beachside campsites on Florida's Gulf Coast — no white noise app necessary.



## CAPTIVA

Accessible only by private boat, ferry (Captiva Cruises from Captiva Island, Punta Gorda and Pine Island; reservations required) or kayak, campers who stay at **Cayo Costa State Park** will feel they have the entire 9-mile-long island to themselves. Each of the 30 primitive tent campsites has picnic tables, ground grills and access to potable water, and the nearby restrooms have cold showers and flush toilets. Other than that, campers are on their own to enjoy fishing, swimming, snorkeling, shelling, walking and bicycling along the nature trails, not to mention the 9.5 miles of undisturbed beach. Wildlife spotted from the island may include manatees, dolphins, shorebirds and even sea turtles that nest on the island's beaches.



Make sure you visit **The Bubble Room**, an iconic restaurant on Captiva that has been serving lunch, dinner and fabulous desserts in its distinctive setting for 40 years.



If you don't find enough shells on **Cayo Costa**, ferry over to the islands of Sanibel and Captiva and perform the "Sanibel Stoop" as you sift through the 400 varieties.

**DESTIN**

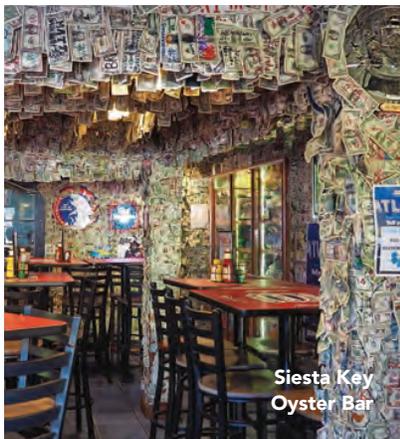
**Henderson Beach State Park** was established for the preservation and protection of the region’s natural features, including the last remaining coastal scrub area in Destin. The park’s 60 campsites can be reserved up to 11 months in advance and accommodate tents or recreational vehicles with water, electricity, picnic tables and grills. Additional amenities include heated and air-conditioned restrooms with showers and coin-operated washers and dryers. Follow the boardwalk through 30-foot white sand dunes to the pristine, mile-long coastline where you can swim, fish and watch for wildlife.



Overlooking Destin Harbor, nearby **Dewey Destin’s** restaurant serves up a fresh catch of the day, plus a variety of other seafood options in a casual setting.



The calm waters of the Gulf of Mexico are perfect for paddleboarding, and for those who have some experience, **Paddle Tribe Co.** also offers paddle yoga classes. Fishermen and women will want to visit the **Destin History and Fishing Museum**, with a mission to preserve and honor the history of the “Luckiest Fishing Village in the World.”



Siesta Key Oyster Bar

**SIESTA KEY**

Set up camp for up to 30 nights at **Turtle Beach Campground** on Siesta Key, known for its powder-soft white sand and turquoise waters. Reservations for the 40-plus campsites, which accommodate tents and RVs, can be made up to 12 months in advance. Each campsite includes electricity, water, sewer and free Wi-Fi; laundry facilities and restrooms with showers are centrally located, and a picnic area with grills is available. From May through October, there’s a good chance campers can spot loggerhead and green sea turtles laying eggs and hatching on the beach at night.



Take the free, open-air trolley from the campground to **Siesta Key Village**, where you can find a variety of dining options, including **Siesta Key Oyster Bar**, which offers live music.



Campers can don their gear and enjoy some of the best snorkeling in the waters around **Point of Rocks at Crescent Beach**, a short, free trolley ride away.

VISITSARASOTACOUNTY: HENDERSON BEACH STATE PARK

