

Port Canaveral, Florida: A Visitors Guide

by Sue Kulick, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Thinking about taking a cruise out of Port Canaveral? It's a wonderful port, but even better than that, it's a great place to spend some time!

Less than an hour from Orlando International Airport, this area has a little something for everyone. First off, you will need a place to stay. The area has plenty of resorts to choose from, from a Motel 6 all the way up to beach front condos. We personally prefer the [The Radisson at Port Canaveral](#) but there are many other choices. Some of our readers have had great experiences at The Country Inn Suites and the Residence Inn. The Radisson offers packages that include a complimentary full breakfast, as well as cruise parking and shuttle service. We also love the funky beach theme, and the Sleep Number beds!

Once you've decided where to stay, it's time to decide what to see! You can start your experience by checking out this website: [Port Canaveral](#)

Spend some time outdoors, enjoying the Florida weather. You can visit the beach at beautiful Jetty Park (visit <http://www.portcanaveral.org> here to see a copy of the Jetty Park brochure), where you can swim, fish, camp and relax. A short distance away, Cocoa Beach has several oceanfront beaches to choose from. Try [Alan Shephard Park](#), a 2 acre county park with beautiful vistas, plenty of parking and all the relaxation you need.

Think you might like something a bit more adventurous? You can go fishing! There are plenty of piers in the area, including a popular one at Jetty Park, or you can charter a boat. This website gives you all the information you need to charter a boat that suits your needs: [Fish with the Best!](#)

Maybe, you would like to get back to nature. This area of Florida offers one of nature's most beautiful wildlife refuges, . This area, open to the public and located on the grounds of Kennedy Space Center, offers visitors walking trails, wildlife drives and observations platforms. You can spot a manatee, or maybe see a nest of bald eagles. The visitor's center is open daily, and sometimes the center holds special events such as bird walks and wildlife festivals. For some truly stunning pictures of the refuge, check out [Merritt Island Wildlife Association](#) (click on the "Wildlife Photography" link) and enjoy!

Of course, not all of us are nature girls and boys, so how about some

shopping? Let's begin with Cocoa Beach's most famous shop, [Ronjon's Surf Shop](#). Even if you don't surf, no trip to the Port Canaveral area is complete without a peak into this 52,000 square foot surfing Mecca! Maybe you forgot your sunscreen, or need a new pair of flip-flops. What a perfect excuse to go browse the king of all beach shops! For a truly unique experience, check out the [Cocoa Beach Pier](#). And, if it's true diehard shopping you are after, there is the [Merritt Square Mall!](#)

One thing you cannot miss in any vacation to the Port Canaveral area is [Kennedy Space Center](#). Kennedy Space Center and NASA work hard to keep state of the art space technology in perfect harmony with the surrounding natural resources. The result is an informative and exciting visitor's center that celebrates mankind's journey into space, while preserving the thousands of pristine acres that make up the complex. You can experience a simulated shuttle launch, see an IMAX movie or spend a quiet moment at the Astronaut's Memorial. There is so much to see and do here, plan on spending the whole day!

After a full day, you are hungry! And the Space Coast offers you plenty of choices. You have a lot of chains to choose from, but why not try something different and local? Our favorite is [Grill's Seafood and Tiki Bar](#), a place right on the water. Dock your boat and come on in! Grill's has indoor and outdoor seating, and an outside deck with live entertainment. Fun and funky, the food is fresh and delicious.

A lot of times, vacationers think of the Port Canaveral area as nothing more than a place to rest their head the night before they set sail on their cruise. But Port Canaveral has so much to offer. Plan to spend a day, a weekend, or a week to enjoy this gem in the necklace of Florida's Space Coast.

About The Author: Sue Kulick is a resident of the Pocono Mountains and an avid Disney fan. She and her husband, Steve, live in a log home with their Golden Retrievers, Cody and Belle and their cat Tigger.

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