

# Palm Beach, Florida: The 'Rest' of Florida

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Sometimes, when you're a Disney fan, it's hard to remember that there's a whole world to explore in the rest of Florida.

Head down the Treasure Coast and Gold Coast along the eastern seaboard of the state, and there are plenty of fascinating places to visit. Of course, there's Disney's own resort at [Vero Beach](#), but if you keep heading south, roughly halfway between Vero Beach and [Miami](#), you'll come across Palm Beach, which offers plenty for visitors to enjoy.

Firstly, there's the [Flagler Museum](#), which celebrates the life and times of Henry Flagler, which we looked at in a [previous PassPorter newsletter article](#).

As you'd expect from a millionaire who had a 55-room mansion in the city, Flagler made quite an impact on Palm Beach. In a prime location, overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, stands the Breakers Hotel, the fourth of Flagler's impressive east coast hotels. It's a beautiful Italian Renaissance structure, and it wouldn't be out of place at some of Europe's finest resorts. With an impressive driveway, like any good resort, the excitement mounts as you drive up to it, and you see the beautiful architecture.

The hotel that's standing today is in fact the third one on the site. The first two were both destroyed by fire, first in 1903, and then again 22 years later. When you look at the hotel now, it's almost impossible to believe that this was actually built in less than a year. I'm guessing if anything happened to the building today, it would take a lot longer than that to replace it!

Flagler's impact on Palm Beach was much more than just building a hotel. With the opening of that hotel, and the beautiful year-round weather that Florida is blessed with, it immediately became a winter destination for those with money. Of course, money changes a place, and Palm Beach was no exception.

No more clearly can that be seen than in Worth Avenue. It's home to the world's biggest designer names, and is Palm Beach's version of Rodeo Drive. As we drove along it there were so many famous designer brands to be seen, including Chanel, Giorgio Armani, Hermes, Jimmy Choo, and Tiffany. To do anything more than just window shop here, you need have some serious wealth behind you.

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It's been that way for some time as well, judging by some of the photos I saw in my trusty guidebooks, with expensive cars all lined up in the street back in the 1930s. It all started with the construction of the Everglades Club at the western end of Worth Avenue, originally intended as a hospital for soldiers, but it never worked out that way. It never housed a single patient, and instead became the place for the town's social elite to be seen.

Today, not much has changed, with Palm Beach reputed to be the richest town in the States. As we strolled around, we saw plenty of top-range cars and very well-dressed shoppers. It's not a short road either, and is home to more than 250 clothing boutiques, antiques shops, and art galleries.

A couple of blocks from Worth Avenue lies the town hall, designed back in 1926, when the resort was first coming into prominence. Here, you can see the influence of another man who played a key role in Palm Beach's history. Architect Addison Mizner came to Palm Beach from New York to recover after an accident. He was soon designing houses in the town, adapting the style of old Spanish buildings, and creating a new type of architecture. He was so successful in his work that he became a multimillionaire. He was responsible for designing the town hall, and it's only fitting that his memory lives on with the Mizner Memorial Park that's been built nearby.

It's a grand name, considering it's hardly a park. It's essentially a fountain, supported by four galloping horses, with a narrow pool in front of it. It was a gift from Palm Beach to one of its favourite sons, unveiled a few years after his death. It's a lovely way to remember Mizner, but to look at it today, it's also a bit of a shame, as a road runs either side of the pool, meaning you have to dodge the traffic to get to it.

Considering the name of this place, it's surprising that the beach isn't more of an attraction. Although there is a public beach here, it's overshadowed by beaches along the coast at places like Fort Lauderdale, Delray Beach, and Miami Beach.

Impressive as Palm Beach is, it's also well worth taking a look at neighbouring West Palm Beach, with its multitude of skyscrapers. Today, the center of it is business orientated, although it had an interesting history. It's another place that's been shaped by Henry Flagler, who decided to move the workers and service businesses who were originally based in Palm Beach back to the mainland. There's not much to see when you get here, but you do get some wonderful views of the skyscrapers from the Flagler Museum and from the roads along the

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lakeside.

There's certainly plenty of high life to be found in Palm Beach, and because of its background as a social center, it's a unique place to visit. It's a relatively small town to explore, but a car is still a good idea to get around. With flavours of much bigger places, such as Miami and Los Angeles, Palm Beach offers a very different taste of Florida. Sure, it's a long way from Walt Disney World, but there are so many great places to explore along the eastern seaboard, that it's worth taking a drive down there one day.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)*

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