



South Florida BY RAIL

Words by Angela Caraway-Carlton

Palm Beach. Fort Lauderdale. Miami.

These three cities are South Florida's most coveted vacation destinations and are so synonymous with summertime that you can almost feel the Sunshine State's warmth before you even arrive. You could rent a car and white-knuckle your way down Interstate 95, or you could let someone else do the driving.

Instead of fighting hectic traffic and stressful parking, imagine boarding a sleek high-speed train, settling into a cushy leather seat, ordering a drink, and watching the palm trees blur past your window.

High-speed rail has long been a staple of travel in Europe and Asia. According to the International Union of Railways, the term primarily refers to railway systems that operate at 155 mph (250 kph) or more on dedicated high-speed lines, but on upgraded lines, the threshold sits around 124 mph (200 kph). However, high-speed rail is still finding its footing in the United States. The country's intercity passenger rail system is largely anchored by Amtrak, a federally chartered corporation operated and managed as a for-profit company with the U.S. government as its controlling shareholder.

Brightline takes a different approach. Launched in South Florida in 2018 from a project originally known as All Aboard Florida, it is the only privately owned and operated intercity railroad in the country. Brightline's roughly 235-mile system was built on a mix of upgraded corridors and newly constructed passenger-dedicated segments, and the 35-mile stretch between Orlando and Cocoa sees trains reach up to 125 mph. Across the full route, speeds vary, but the broader appeal is less about peak velocity and more about traveling between destinations with ease.

The secret to a carefree summer adventure in southern Florida is Brightline. The sleek train zips from Miami to Aventura, Fort Lauderdale, Boca Raton, and West Palm Beach—and stretches all the way to Orlando—letting you stay in one place while enjoying day trips in every direction.

While train travel may sound nostalgic, Brightline is anything but old school. Expect modern and impeccably clean trains with intuitive doors, high-tech amenities, comfy seating, and onboard dining. With stations in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, and Orlando, what's often a stressful drive becomes a near-indulgent experience.

Ready to map it out and plan your trip? Base yourself near the West Palm Beach Brightline station and let the train handle the rest. Here's one way to spend four sun-soaked days along South Florida's coast.



YOUR HOME BASE: THE SINGER OCEANFRONT RESORT, SINGER ISLAND, PALM BEACH COUNTY

Just 15 minutes from the West Palm Beach Brightline station, Singer Island is a serene secret that often flies under vacationers' radar. While it sits minutes from the glamour of Palm Beach Island and the energy of downtown West Palm, Singer Island delivers a quieter experience. Long stretches of sand are edged by dunes, sea grapes, and swaying seagrass, and the water stays clear and brilliantly turquoise. At low tide, rocky tide pools appear, making days spent here perfect for shelling, wading, and unhurried beach wandering.

Check into The Singer Oceanfront Resort, a laid-back, unfussy beachfront escape with modern touches that keep things comfortable and coastal-cool. All rooms have a private balcony and an ocean view.



DAY 1: SETTLE IN, SLOW DOWN

It's easy to slip into The Singer's relaxed rhythm. Wake up to sit on your balcony with a cup of coffee and watch the sun come up over the ocean, or take a leisurely walk on the beach. Spend the afternoon stretched out on a lounge or shaded beneath a striped umbrella, sipping a spiked drink straight from a coconut. Families gravitate toward pool cabanas, which are perfect for escaping the sun between long dips in the pool.

When hunger calls, head to breezy Top Shell to share smoked fish dip and dig into a grouper sandwich or lobster roll, the whirl of the blender practically insisting on a frozen cocktail to go with your meal. As golden hour settles in, take a seat outdoors at Caretta Caretta for starters like crab fritters, followed by entrées like shrimp and grits with blistered tomatoes or Caribbean chicken.

In summer, the pool becomes the heart of the resort. On Friday nights, guests float beneath the stars for family-friendly movies projected poolside. Younger travelers can even don a mermaid tail and learn to swim like one—taught by a real mermaid, of course.



DAY 2: SINK INTO NATURAL BEAUTY

Today's agenda depends entirely on your mood. Just offshore from Riviera Beach sits Peanut Island, a quick 10-minute ferry ride away. The real draw is the snorkeling, with crystal-clear water, brightly colored fish, and—if luck is on your side—even a passing manatee or sea turtle. Beyond the water, you'll find shaded walking paths, quiet picnic spots, and plenty of spots for sunbathing.

If you'd rather stay on land, book a short ride using your ride-sharing service of choice to the Loggerhead Marinelife Center. This family-friendly conservation hub is dedicated to research and rehabilitating sick or injured sea turtles, and admission is free (donations are encouraged). Peek into the turtle hospital to watch veterinarians at work, then stop by the outdoor tanks where recovering patients glide through the water. For a deeper look, book a guided tour, including a behind-the-scenes option before opening hours, that dives into the turtles' backstories and the center's work.



DAY 3: FORT LAUDERDALE BY TRAIN

After two days of salt air and slow mornings, it's time to hop on the train again! Board the Brightline to head south to Fort Lauderdale, just 40 minutes away. From the station, snag a cab or book another quick ride to Las Olas Boulevard, where boutiques, al fresco cafés, and lively restaurants line the palm-shaded street. Pop into Ann's Florist & Coffee Bar, a local favorite that doubles as a cocktail bar with a dreamy setting.

Traveling with kids? Walk over to the Museum of Discovery and Science, an interactive space filled with live animal encounters and even an airboat simulator that nods to the region's Everglades roots.

Fort Lauderdale is known as the Yachting Capital of the World, so embrace the city the way locals do. Step aboard the water taxi at Las Olas or along the Riverwalk for a breezy cruise down the New River and the Intracoastal Waterway, gliding past mega-mansions and gleaming yachts.



DAY 4: MIAMI BY TRAIN

When you're ready for a final change of pace, board Brightline and head south to Miami, bypassing the frenzy of I-95 entirely. In just over an hour, you'll step off the train refreshed and ready to explore.

Two of the city's standout museums sit near the station. The Pérez Art Museum Miami pairs contemporary works with sweeping views of Biscayne Bay, while the neighboring Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science offers immersive exhibits, including a dramatic multilevel aquarium where sharks glide overhead.

From MiamiCentral, continue the day in Overtown at Red Rooster, where award-winning chef Marcus Samuelsson layers Southern and Caribbean influences onto crowd favorites like deviled eggs topped with chicken cracklings, smoky grilled oysters, and crisp fried chicken with collard greens.

After a few days spent drifting between beach towns and city streets, the return north feels just as easy as the ride down— a reminder that sometimes the best way to explore South Florida is simply to let someone else handle the drive. GG