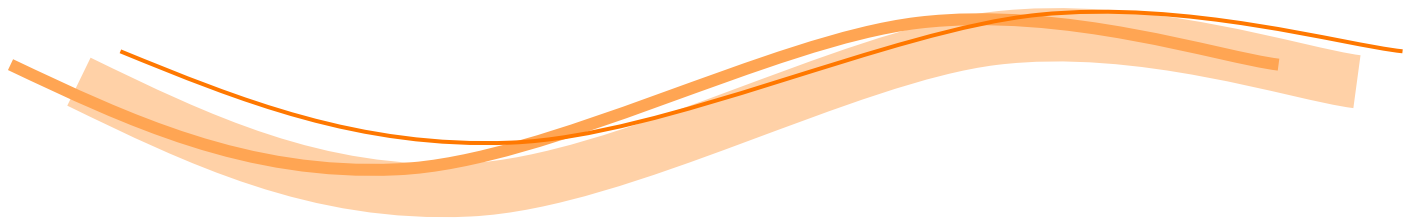




# Chris' Travel Notes: TAMPA





## TAMPA

The perfect getaway is a blend of excitement and relaxation – and in Tampa Bay, there is plenty of both. From balloon rides, strawberry farms and lush nature to walkable neighborhoods there are plenty of opportunities to kick back and soak up the Florida sunshine at a slower pace. However – Tampa Bay is also the only city to be invaded by a band of pirates (during the annual Gasparilla celebration) and special events and festivals abound. Tampa Bay easily blends its rich cultural heritage with big-city style. There’s much to experience in this exciting, authentic metropolis.

Unlock the treasures of Tampa Bay – a feast of adventure, activities, nature, sports, shopping and fine dining await you!

### Historic Tampa Bay

Watch a hand-rolled cigar being made in Ybor City, Tampa’s historic Latin Quarter. Once known as the Cigar Capital of the World it produced over 700 million hand-rolled cigars annually at its peak. Although there are only two cigar factories still active in this now thriving entertainment and historic district, you can still see cigars being hand-rolled as you walk down 7th Avenue.

Ybor City is also home of the “Original Cuban Sandwich.” There’s more to this culinary confection than just ham, roast pork, salami, swiss cheese, mustard, pickles and bread. Nestled deep within that freshly baked loaf of Cuban bread is a rich history dating back more than a century, when Cuban immigrants filled Ybor City’s bustling cigar factories.

Ybor City’s Saturday market is a popular shopping destination for items unique to Tampa Bay. Purchase locally grown produce, gifts, and enjoy delicious homemade desserts, breads, pastas, and even popsicles! You can also stroll along historic 7th Avenue for Cuban and Spanish favorites like café con leche.

Tampa Bay has restored some of the buildings from its original attractions in the Roaring Twenties. Each movie at the Historic Tampa Theatre begins with a unique performance played on the celebrated Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ. This is truly a Tampa Bay treasure! Built in 1926 as one of America’s most elaborate movie theatres, the ornate Mediterranean-style structure offers a movie experience unlike any other! It was recently ranked as the number three movie theatre in the world.

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	Visit the Tampa Bay Hotel, built in 1891 and now the Henry B. Plant Museum, named after its founder. With its magnificent Moorish architecture, opulent furnishings, and tropical gardens, a visit to the restored rooms of the former Tampa Bay Hotel will transport you back to Victorian splendor
<b>Location</b>	Tampa is situated half way down the Gulf Coast of Florida.
<b>Geography</b>	Tampa is bordered by two bodies of water, Old Tampa Bay and Hillsborough Bay, both of which flow together to form Tampa Bay, which in turn flows into the Gulf of Mexico. The Hillsborough River flows out into Hillsborough Bay, passing directly in front of Downtown Tampa and supplying Tampa's main source of fresh water. Palm River is a smaller river flowing from just east of the city into McKay Bay, which is a smaller inlet, sited at the northeast end of Hillsborough Bay Tampa's geography is marked by the Interbay Peninsula which divides Hillsborough Bay (the eastern) from Old Tampa Bay (the western).
<b>Name</b>	The word "Tampa" may mean "sticks of fire" in the language of the Calusa, a Native American tribe that once lived south of today's Tampa. This might be a reference to the many lightning strikes that the area receives during the summer months.
<b>Population</b>	Tampa has a population of 350,000 and the Metro Area has 2.8 million.
<b>Language</b>	English
<b>Currency</b>	US Dollar (the Canadian Dollar stands at 92 cents US as at August 2014)
<b>Tipping</b>	Tipping is expected: 10% - 15% where appropriate
<b>Government</b>	Democracy
<b>Documentation</b>	Passports are required for Canadian citizens
<b>Time zone</b>	EST: Central Standard Time – so Tampa is in the same time zone as Toronto and Montreal
<b>Health</b>	Fine medical facilities - but take travel insurance as medical treatment is the US can be very expensive.
<b>Safety tips</b>	This destination is relatively safe for the tourist. One should use the same precautions as when traveling anywhere - try not to travel alone and avoid deserted areas at night

<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	Tampa's climate generally features hot summer days with frequent thunderstorms in the summer (rain is less frequent in the fall and winter), and a threat of a light winter freeze from November 15 through March 5 caused by occasional cold fronts from the north.
<b>Today's weather</b>	Today (23 Aug 2014) is 33C with sun and showers
<b>Best time to visit</b>	This is very much a year round destination. High season for accommodation costs is January-April; low season is Sept-Dec. Tampa enjoys an average of 361 days per year with some sunshine according

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to the National Weather Service.

<b>GETTING AROUND</b>	
<b>Getting There</b>	Tampa International Airport has been rated one of the USA's best for many years by the International Passenger Traffic Association and other polls. There are direct flights from Toronto and Montreal and flight time is approximately 3 hours.
<b>Cities</b>	Ybor City, once known as the "Cigar Capital of the World" produced an estimated 700 million cigars a year at the industry's peak between 1910 & 1920 and is one of only three National Historic Landmark Districts in Florida.
<b>Distances</b>	Tampa is 2400 kilometres from Toronto and Montreal by road
<b>Trains</b>	Since 1912, Tampa's intercity passenger rail service has been based at Tampa Union Station. The historic facility, adjacent to downtown between the Channel District and Ybor City, is served by Amtrak today. Amtrak's Silver Star calls on Tampa twice daily: number 91 southbound to Miami and number 92 northbound for New York City.
<b>Car Rental</b>	All major car rental companies are represented at Tampa Airport.
<b>Buses</b>	Union Station also serves as the transfer hub for Amtrak Thruway Motorcoach service, offering bus connections to several cities in Southwest Florida, as well as to Orlando for transfers to the northbound Silver Meteor. Take the Streetcar to Ybor Saturday Market: The Streetcar will take you from downtown Tampa to Ybor City, Tampa's Historic Latin Quarter. Ybor City's Saturday market is a popular shopping destination for locally produced items unique to Tampa Bay. You can also stroll along historic 7th Avenue and uncover Ybor's unique attributes including Cuban and Spanish favorites like café con leche.
<b>Passes</b>	<b>CityPASS Tampa Bay</b> gives you admission to Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo and Busch Gardens and The Florida Aquarium and then in addition the Clearwater Marine Aquarium - plus either the Museum of Science and Industry in Tampa or the Chihuly Glass Collection in St Petersburg. All for \$199 for the over 10's and \$99 for kids 3-9. Buy online at <a href="http://www.citypass.com">www.citypass.com</a> or at any CityPASS attraction for the same low price. Save 39% on Busch Gardens plus 4 more top Tampa Bay / St Petersburg Clearwater attractions. Visit Busch Gardens in Tampa and one other attraction – and you have paid for your CityPASS! It's convenient as you get all your attraction tickets in one easy purchase. Plus you save time as you skip most ticket lines with your CityPASS. CityPASS is as flexible as your trip – it is perfect for a weekend but is valid for up to 9 days. No wonder 12 million CityPASS booklets have been sold to travellers to the various destinations on offer and 97% of users would recommend CityPASS.

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<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	<p>Tampa Bay dares to be different - the selection of accommodations ranges from lavish resort hotels to cozy motels and four-diamond delights. Stay in touch with state-of-the-art business centres and complimentary Wi-Fi in many locations. From fully-stocked kitchens for longer stays to delicious in-room dining, hotels in Tampa Bay not only meet the needs of any traveller, but they boast a daring spirit and welcoming attitude that will give your Tampa Bay stay that extra flair of a daring destination. Tampa Bay is the perfect destination to unlock your vacation - whether it's a quick getaway or warm-weather vacation.</p>
<b>LIFESTYLES</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	<p>Young explorers gain new appreciation for art and the way the world works in the air-conditioned comfort of the <b>Glazer Children's Museum</b>. More than 170 interactive activities provide a fun way to learn, exploring wide-ranging ideas with cultural applications from banking and commerce to flying an airplane.</p> <p>Have a unique “eco-tourism” experience. Go kayaking or canoeing in one of the scenic, tranquil waterways – a paddling paradise. Explore the Hillsborough River through the 16,000-acre wilderness park and see birds, turtles and gators on a two-hour to full-day paddling adventure with Canoe Escape. Urban paddleboarding is all the rage and offered through Urban Kai.</p> <p>Be a crew mate on Capt. Gus’s Crabby Adventures. Learn how to bait and pull crab traps on your tour and then cook and eat your own blue crabs and stone crabs bay side.</p>
<b>Teens</b>	<p><b>Busch Gardens</b></p> <p>For thrill seekers – look no further than the roller coasters at Busch Gardens. Cheetah Hunt, the park’s newest mega-attraction and Florida’s first triple-launch coaster accelerates riders from 0 to 60 in seconds. Busch Gardens Tampa Bay is where the unexpected comes together with an unparalleled combination of thrilling rides, world-class live shows and one of the premier zoos in the US with more than 2,500 animals.</p> <p>Younger kids will love Sesame Street Safari of Fun - filled with kid-size rides, cool water fun, shows and memorable adventures that celebrate the spirit of Africa. Also check out Jungala, a lush jungle village where guests have the chance to connect with the natural world. You’ll come nose-to-nose with orangutans, test your strength against a Bengal tiger, explore a three-story play land of climbing nets, mazes and tunnels, and soar above the treetops on a zip line adventure.</p>
<b>Romance</b>	<p>The Gulf sunsets are world-famous: kindle those romantic sparks with a sunset walk along one of the more deserted beaches and watch for the elusive ‘green flash’ that sometimes follows a fiery sunset.</p>

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<b>Zoomers</b>	This is a wonderful destination for Canadian “Snow birds” escaping our winter – perfect winter climate and lots of activities arranged for Snow Birds...not to mention copious Seniors discounts.
<b>UNIQUES</b>	Sunshine Skyway Bridge is the world’s longest cable-stayed concrete bridge – as long as Mount Everest is high at 8.4 kms.
<b>Surprising</b>	The world’s first commercial flight took place on January 1st 1914 from St Petersburg to Tampa...and the cost was \$400!
<b>History</b>	<p>The current location of Tampa was once inhabited by indigenous peoples of the Safety Harbor culture, most notably the Tocobaga and the Pohoy, who lived along the shores of Tampa Bay. It was explored by Spanish explorers in the 16th century, resulting in brief and violent conflicts with the native peoples and the introduction of European diseases, which wiped out the original native cultures over the next few decades. While Spain claimed Florida as part of New Spain, it did not found a colony in the Tampa area, and there were no permanent American or European settlements within today's city limits until after the United States had acquired Florida from Spain in 1819.</p> <p>In 1824, the United States Army established a frontier outpost called Fort Brooke at the mouth of the Hillsborough River, near the site of today's Tampa Convention Center. The first civilian residents were pioneers who settled near the fort for protection from the nearby Seminole population, and the small village was first incorporated as "Tampa" in 1849.</p> <p>The town grew slowly until the 1880s, when railroad links, the discovery of phosphate, and the arrival of the cigar industry jump-started its development, helping it to grow from a quiet village of less than 800 residents in 1880 to a bustling city of over 30,000 by the early 1900s.</p>
<b>Recommended Reading</b>	<p>“Florida, Eh?” – by Isobel Warren and Milan Chvostek, Cedar Cave Books</p> <p>Frommer’s Florida is my favourite guidebook.</p>
<b>1000 Places to See Before You Die</b>	Baseball Spring Training in Tampa is listed in the USA and Canada edition of Patricia Schulz’s book.
<b>Must Sees</b>	See Tampa’s Historical Roots – Visit the Tampa Bay Hotel, built in 1891 and a stop along the Plant Railroad System, which brought a lot of visitors and businesses to Tampa Bay over 120 years ago. Home to the University of Tampa since 1933, the hotel is now the Henry B. Plant Museum, named after its founder.
<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	<p>Tampa Bay Buccaneers (NFL);</p> <p>Tampa Bay Devil Rays (baseball);</p> <p>Tampa Bay Lightning (hockey)</p> <p>Baseball Spring Training in March each year: the Blue Jays are in Dunedin just north of Tampa.</p>

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	The nearby beaches and climate provide year-round swimming, sailing, water-skiing, jet skiing, windsurfing, parasailing, diving and shelling.
<b>Golf</b>	With 361 days of sunshine – Tampa Bay is the perfect place to tee off! With year-round golf the area offers more than 100 courses to play, from Saddlebrook Resort to TPC Tampa Bay.
<b>Fishing</b>	Learn to fish like a pro - fishing charters help newbies navigate the tides and professionals experience the deep sea. And if you prefer to leave the sport to the professionals – Tampa Bay has professional baseball, hockey and football teams.
<b>Hiking</b>	Take a walk downtown using one of six engaging 2-3km self-guided walking routes that highlight public art, architecture, history and legends. The 2.5km Riverwalk waterfront walkway along the Hillsborough River is perfect for strolling, biking, roller blading – or roll your way around Tampa’s Riverwalk and the streets of downtown on a Segway tour.
<b>Cycling</b>	Explore the paved and off-road trails and greenways. Cyclists, hikers, walkers, runners, inline skaters, and equestrian riders can experience over 160 kms of trails - a great way to enjoy the natural wonders of Tampa’s urban, suburban and rural environments. The first Saturday of every month there is an historic bike tour through the city neighbourhoods (tours are free, bike rental for a fee).
<b>Diving</b>	Dive with the sharks or swim with the fishes at The Florida Aquarium. If you are a certified SCUBA diver, age 15 and older, you can go face-to-face with live sharks in the Aquarium's largest tank, the Coral Reef Exhibit. Dive in warm clear water teeming with massive sharks, moray eels, barracuda, a green sea turtle and more! Non divers won’t miss out either. Age six and older can swim with the fishes through a replica of one of the Florida Keys' most beautiful coral reef dive sites.
<b>Other Activities</b>	Get a birds-eye view of Tampa Bay’s skyscrapers and the landmark Bayshore Boulevard to Ybor City and Davis Islands on a helicopter tour. Or take a balloon ride and discover Tampa Bay’s landscapes, wildlife, and waterfront from a whole new perspective! You can take an exhilarating speedboat tour of Tampa Bay to discover its diverse marine life. Plus environmentally friendly electric boats are available for charter on the Hillsborough River. Stop and explore the numerous attractions in Downtown Tampa, take a guided tour, or picnic onboard as you watch the sunset.

<b>CULTURE</b>	
<b>Arts</b>	Tampa is home to a variety of stage and performing arts venues and theatres, including The David A. Straz Jr. Center for the Performing Arts, Tampa Theatre, Gorilla Theatre, and the MidFlorida Credit Union Amphitheatre next to the Florida State Fairgrounds.

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	Performing arts companies and organizations based in Tampa include The Florida Orchestra, Opera Tampa, Jobsite Theater, The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, Stageworks Theatre, Spanish Lyric Theater, and the Tampa Bay Symphony.
<b>Music</b>	Tampa is home to several death metal bands, an extreme form of heavy metal music that evolved from thrash metal. Many of the genre's pioneers and foremost figures are based in and around the city. Chief among these are Deicide, Six Feet Under, Obituary, Cannibal Corpse, and Morbid Angel. The Tampa scene grew with the birth of Morrisound Recording, which established itself as an international recording destination for metal bands.
<b>Arts Walk</b>	Find creativity at the Waterfront Arts District, along the Tampa Riverwalk – Stop at a venue in the waterfront arts district, including Tampa Museum of Art; David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts – the largest arts center in the southeastern U.S.; or the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts to see creativity at its best!
<b>Museums</b>	<p>The Tampa area is home to a number of museums that cover a wide array of subjects and studies. These include the Museum of Science &amp; Industry (MOSI), see below; the Tampa Museum of Art; the USF Contemporary Art Museum; the Tampa Bay History Center; the Tampa Firefighters Museum; the Henry B. Plant Museum; and Ybor City Museum State Park. Permanently docked in downtown's Channel District is the SS American Victory, a former World War II Victory Ship which is now used as a museum ship.</p> <p><b>Museum of Science and Industry</b>          The largest science centre in the Southeast USA, the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) has 450 interactive science exhibits and a colossal IMAX dome movie theatre with an 82-foot hemispherical movie screen.</p> <p>The Museum of Science and Industry is great fun for adults and kids alike. Slippery Science includes a series of interactive exhibits that teach friction, physics and more! MOSI has also teamed up with NASA to create Mission: Moonbase. MOSI's guests can travel to the moon on a space transport to help operate a lunar colony. Become part of a team, living and working on the moon in the year 2070. Then head outside to experience an adrenaline rush like no other on MOSI's Sky Trail Ropes Course and brand new Zip Line.</p>
<b>Festivals</b>	Perhaps the most well-known and anticipated events are those from Tampa's annual celebration of "Gasparilla", particularly the <b>Gasparilla Pirate Festival</b> , a mock pirate invasion held since 1904 in late January or early February. Often referred to as Tampa's "Mardi Gras", the invasion flotilla led by the pirate ship, Jose Gasparilla, and subsequent parade draw over 400,000 attendees, contributing tens of millions of

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	<p>dollars to the city's economy. Beyond the initial invasion, numerous Gasparilla festivities take place each year between January and March, including the Gasparilla Children's Parade, the more adult-oriented Sant'Yago Knight Parade, the Gasparilla Distance Classic, Gasparilla Festival of the Arts, and the Gasparilla International Film Festival, among other pirate themed events.</p> <p>Other notable events include the Outback Bowl, which is held New Year's Day at Raymond James Stadium. Each February, The Florida State Fair brings crowds from across the state, while "Fiesta Day" celebrates Tampa's Cuban, German, Italian, African-Cuban, Jewish and Spanish immigrant heritage. The India International Film Festival (IIFF) of Tampa Bay also takes place in February. In April the MacDill Air Fest entertains as one of the largest military air shows in the U.S.</p> <p>Guavaween, a nighttime street celebration infuses Halloween with the Latin flavor of Ybor City.</p> <p>Downtown Tampa hosts the largest anime convention in Florida, Metrocon, a three-day event held in either June or July at the Tampa Convention Center. Ybor also hosts "GaYbor Days", an annual street party in the GLBT-friendly GaYbor district.</p> <p><b>The Ringling International Arts Festival</b> October 15 – 18, 2014 brings over one hundred performers from across the US, Central and South America, the Middle East, Europe, and Great Britain in a full roster of dance, jazz, comic puppetry, world music, a touch of circus, and even intergalactic space adventure. Affordably priced performances are presented in four theaters within walking-distance proximity of each other.</p>
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<b>ATTRACTIONS</b>	
<b>Beaches</b>	<p>When it comes to Tampa Bay, picturesque scenery and an average of 361 days of sunshine each year create an ideal setting for those ready to explore and discover new treasures. Here you'll find some of the world's top-rated beaches, creating a year-round haven for outdoor enthusiasts. After experiencing an afternoon of kayaking the calm waters of Tampa Bay or discovering the unique wildlife along the Hillsborough River, relax with a picnic on just one of the many pristine, white-sand beaches the area has to offer. If you're lucky, you may even spot a manatee or dolphin from the shore line.</p> <p><b>Ben T. Davis Beach:</b> Fronting Tampa Bay and offering one of the first sights of sand for those entering Tampa via Tampa International Airport, this narrow beach is attractively landscaped and stretches along the Courtney Campbell Causeway that connects Tampa with Clearwater.</p>
<b>Nature</b>	<p>You can observe endangered Florida <b>manatees</b> in their natural habitat. When the bay's water temperature falls below 68 degrees Fahrenheit,</p>

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	<p>the shy and gentle manatees gather in the warm waters surrounding TECO's Manatee Viewing Center.</p> <p><b>Tampa's Lowry Park Zoo</b> has more than 2,000 animals including manatees, alligators, cheetah, okapi, hippo, hogs, storks and more - all housed on 56 acres of lush natural habitats!</p>
<b>Parks</b>	<p>The city of Tampa operates over 165 parks and beaches covering 2,286 acres (9.25 km<sup>2</sup>) within city limits; 42 more in surrounding suburbs covering 70,000 acres (280 km<sup>2</sup>), are maintained by Hillsborough County. These areas include the Hillsborough River State Park, just northeast of the city.</p>
<b>Gardens</b>	<p><b>University of South Florida Botanical Gardens</b></p> <p>The USF Botanical Gardens offer 10 acres of landscape displays and collections, a plant shop and bookstore. Enjoy orchids, begonias, palms, tropicals, carnivorous plants, birds, butterflies and more.</p>
<b>Historical Sites</b>	<p>Each movie at the Historic Tampa Theatre begins with a unique performance played on the historic Mighty Wurlitzer Theatre Organ. Built in 1926 as one of America's most elaborate movie theaters, the ornate Mediterranean-style structure was recently ranked as the number three movie theater in the world.</p> <p>Visit the Tampa Bay Hotel, built in 1891 and now the Henry B. Plant Museum, named after its founder. With its magnificent Moorish architecture, opulent furnishings, and tropical gardens, a visit to the restored rooms of the former Tampa Bay Hotel will transport you back to Victorian splendour.</p>

<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Shopping</b>	<p>Tampa Bay visitors have a number of choices when it comes to buying new treasures. Whether you are looking for high-end fashion and luxury items or quality, quaint boutiques with one-of-a kind finds, Tampa Bay is the ideal place to find your perfect fit!</p> <p>Shopping Malls: Tampa Bay's transition into high-end retail began in 1998 and has since flourished with the opening of International Plaza (in 2001) further putting the Bay area on the map as a world-class retail market. With over 350 stores between International Plaza and Westshore Plaza, those in search of luxury and high fashion will certainly discover the perfect store.</p> <p>Explore the boutiques in Palma Ceia, one of Tampa's most charming neighbourhoods. The antique red brick roads shaded by enormous oaks make this the perfect place to find some of the city's top boutiques. Park on the street and discover the hidden treasures located in this district that offers over 100 unique spots including art galleries, boutiques, antique shops, restaurants and cafes. Stop in at Villa Rosa</p>

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	<p>for fine linens, find distinct gifts and hand-blended teas at the Royal Tea Room, and you'll find the latest styles and trends at DKM Accessories, Sweet Emotion and Why Not Boutique.</p> <p>Nestled on the outer boundary of the Swann Estates neighbourhood in South Tampa, you will quickly uncover a shopper's dream – an exceptional blend of shops offering everything from home furnishings to the latest fashion. Park your car and just stroll from store to store – start at Carriage Trade Plaza, home to Smarty Pants, Kate MacKenzie Clothiers, Keys Country, You Boutique, and KT Janes. Then head south as you won't want to miss Apropos for that special-occasion attire or even JC's Boutique to find one-of-a kind, trendy apparel at an affordable price point.</p> <p>Hyde Park Village, located in the heart of the historic Hyde Park neighbourhood, offers high-end retailers and boutique shopping in a warm and friendly neighbourhood. From Restoration Hardware and Pottery Barn Kids, to the fashionable Kit's Well Heeled &amp; Well Dressed or the laid-back casual comfort offered by Anthropologie – Hyde Park offers an exceptional shopping experience.</p>
<b>Markets</b>	Ybor City's Saturday market is a popular shopping destination for items unique to Tampa Bay. Purchase locally grown produce, gifts, and enjoy delicious homemade desserts, breads, pastas, and even popsicles! You can also stroll along historic 7th Avenue for Cuban and Spanish favorites like café con leche.
<b>Nightlife</b>	Current popular nightlife districts include Channelside, Ybor City, SoHo, International Plaza and Bay Street, and Seminole Hard Rock. Downtown Tampa also contains some nightlife, and there are more clubs/bars to be found in other areas of the city. Tampa is rated sixth on Maxim magazine's list of top party cities.
<b>Casinos</b>	Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino

<b>CUISINE</b>	
<b>Food</b>	You have to try a Cuban sandwich when in Tampa! It's a sandwich made of ham, roast pork, salami, swiss cheese, mustard, pickles and bread. Nestled deep within that freshly baked loaf of Cuban bread is a rich history dating back more than a century, when Cuban immigrants filled Ybor City's bustling cigar factories.
<b>Drink</b>	Tampa is home to the first licensed brew pub in Florida, Tampa Bay Brewing Company, which opened in 1996.
<b>Restaurants</b>	Ybor City has the <b>Columbia Restaurant</b> - the oldest restaurant in Florida and the largest Spanish restaurant in the world! Columbia is still family owned and operated by members of the 4th and 5th generation founding family. The Don Quixote Dining room was the first

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	<p>air-conditioned dining room (built in 1935) in Tampa. The restaurant was named an All-American Icon by Nation's Restaurant News, one of only fifty restaurants in the U.S. chosen for this honour in 2010. According to the magazine, "No other institution in Tampa is as entwined with the city's history."</p> <p>The wine list of the Columbia has been recognized by many of Spain's leading winemakers, including Miguel Torres Sr. of Bodegas Torres and Pablo Alvarez of Bodegas Vega Sicilia as having the world's best collection in the world of wines from Spain, and the most complete. The Columbia's wine list contains more than 1,056 wines with an inventory now exceeding 50,000 bottles</p> <p>The Columbia Restaurant's Original "1905" Salad was named "One of the 10 Great Places to Make a Meal Out of a Salad" by USA Today - the only restaurant in Florida named to this list.</p> <p>And there are some other great fun places to eat in Tampa Bay... For one of a kind fine dining - and a sugar rush - visit <b>Berns'</b> world-famous steakhouse. It's known for its vast collection of wine, perfectly aged steaks and the upstairs Dessert Room complete with private booths made from old wine casks. The atmosphere lends itself to after-dinner beverages, quieter conversations and a tantalizing menu of unique, decadent desserts.</p> <p>Or enjoy Great Gatsby-inspired good times at <b>Ciro's Speakeasy</b>.</p>
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<b>FOR MORE INFO</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.visittampabay.com">www.visittampabay.com</a> Telephone: 1-800-44-TAMPA Email: <a href="mailto:Info@VisitTampaBay.com">Info@VisitTampaBay.com</a> Connect with Tampa Bay on facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/VisitTampaBay">https://www.facebook.com/VisitTampaBay</a> Follow Tampa Bay on Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/VisitTampaBay">https://twitter.com/VisitTampaBay</a>
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<b>CURRENT DEALS</b>	The Tampa CityPASS is a great place to start your savings trail: <a href="http://www.citypass.com/tampa">http://www.citypass.com/tampa</a> Then go to the special section of the Tampa website where all their current deals are listed – from accommodations to attractions: <a href="http://www.visittampabay.com/tampa-deals/">http://www.visittampabay.com/tampa-deals/</a>
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