

Information current as of April 6, 2022

Auburn 4 hours north of Gulf Shores on I-65 and I-85

The University of Alabama Tuscaloosa 5 hours north of Gulf Shores

The area is a tourist mecca but not as bad as Florida and as such there are many souvenir shops and golf courses. If you like shrimp you have to try the Royal Reds. As you can see you won't lack for things to do but remember to schedule time to just sit on the beach. Watch for the flags to indicate beach conditions. <https://www.gulfshores.com/beach-water-activities/beaches/beach-flag-warning-system/>

I found the area one of the safest I have visited - March-April brings the college students and snowbirds are still there. Lots of families head down to the beach in the summer and also it is a big spring break draw. The Flora-Bama Lounge (Orange Beach) & The Hangout (Gulf Shores) are the two biggest draws for college students but nothing like Florida gets. Spring Break is booze free on Gulf Shores beaches <https://www.al.com/news/2022/01/no-booze-no-worries-for-sixth-year-spring-break-beach-to-be-booze-free-on-gulf-shores-beaches.html>

The Pensacola International Airport is about 40 miles east of the Gulf Shores/Orange beach area but it is mostly 2 lane roads so it takes about an hour. North out of Gulf Shores is Hwy 59 which can be stop-and-go with all the traffic so look for alternate routes if going north and south. A faster alternative to Hwy 59 is the Foley Beach Expressway but there is a toll booth to use the bridge. https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ipd/project_profiles/al_foley_beach.aspx If you need a Culver's fix there's one on Hwy 59 near Foley (north of Gulf Shores). Hwy 182, along the beach area east of Hwy 59 and Hwy 180, Coastal Connection going east Hwy 59 to Orange Beach, can be busy also. In that part of the state there aren't a lot of right turn lanes so the cars in front of you may come to a dead stop on the road to turn off the highway. They do however have turn lanes between the two directions of the roads (Hwy 59, 180, and 182) I call those "suicide merging" lanes - I hate them more than roundabouts.

Distances are from Gulf Shores beach area

Family Style restaurants

Lambert's Cafe III (251) 943-7655

Home of Throed Rolls Hwy 59 – Foley, AL

2981 S. McKenzie Foley, AL 36535

<https://throedrolls.com/lamberts-cafe-iii/>

Paula Deen's Family Kitchen at OWA (251) 236-4600

203 North OWA Blvd., #203, Foley AL 36535

<https://pauladeensfamilykitchen.com/location/paula-deens-family-kitchen-in-foley-al/>

Museum and national sites

National Naval Aviation Museum (27 miles east of Gulf Shores)

1750 Radford Blvd, Pensacola, FL 32508

<https://www.navalaviationmuseum.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NavalAviationMuseum>

It's a great place to spend a few hours but [according to their website] it is closed to the public unless you can find someone who has a DOD/Military ID card to act as an escort. While you can't get on the Naval base (see above) you can sometimes see the 2022 Blue Angels practice flight demonstrations out over the Gulf from the beach.

<https://www.navalaviationmuseum.org/blueangels/>

Fort Morgan National Historic Landmark (22 miles west of Gulf Shores)

<http://fort-morgan.org/>

<https://ahc.alabama.gov/properties/ftmorgan/ftmorgan.aspx>

<https://www.facebook.com/HistoricFortMorgan>

Animals

Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo (251)-256-7008 (about 6 miles north on Hwy 59) This was the first zoo in the United States to be completely built from scratch in over 20 years. The new zoo opened on March 11, 2020 <https://www.alabamagulfcoastzoo.com/uploads/The-Zoos-Amazing-Story.pdf>

20499 Oak Road East, Gulf Shores AL 36542

info@algulfcoastzoo.org

<https://www.alabamagulfcoastzoo.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/AlabamaGulfCoastZoo>

Dolphin Cruises

<https://www.tripshock.com/attractions/Gulf-Shores-Orange-Beach/Dolphin-Cruises-and-Tours/>

They said we had to wear white sole shoes but my shoes like most had black soles so I ended up buying a cheap pair. I found out that it's more of a suggestion because nobody checked. Oh well I have a good pair of deck shoes if I ever buy that yacht I have been looking at.

Alligator Alley (251) 946-2483 (about 20 miles north on Hwy 59) 600 alligators live here!

19950 Co Rd 71, Summerdale, AL 36580

<https://gatoralleyfarm.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/gatoralleyfarm/>

Theme Parks

OWA Theme Park (251) 923-2111 (about 12 miles north on Hwy 59)

1501 South OWA Blvd., Foley AL 36535

<https://visitowa.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/VisitOWA>

The Track - Gulf Shores (251) 270-0209 (about 3 miles north on Hwy 59)

3200 Gulf Shores Pkwy, Gulf Shores, AL 36542

<https://funatthetrack.com/pages/gulf-shores-location>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheTrackFamilyFunParks>

The Wharf (251) 948-2106

23101 Canal Road, Orange Beach, AL 36561

<https://alwharf.com/>

Waterville USA (less than a mile north on Hwy 59) 906 Gulf Shores Pkwy. Gulf Shores, AL 36542

<https://watervilleusa.com/><https://www.facebook.com/WatervilleUSA/>

Cool attractions

The big chair at the Hangout (you have to take a family picture here)

101 E. Beach Blvd, Gulf Shores, AL 36542

<https://www.thehangout.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/thehangoutgs>

Gulf State Park Pier You can fish from here or from shore

<https://www.alapark.com/parks/gulf-state-park/fishing-and-education-pier>

Hiking Hugh S. Branyon Backcountry Trail - Rosemary Dunes Trail head

<http://backcountrytrail.com/rosemary-dunes/>

World famous The Flora-Bama Lounge Floribama Shore, reality television series is/was filmed here (850) 492-0611

info@florabama.com

<http://www.florabama.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/florabama>

General Information Orange Beach: Tours and Tickets

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Products-g30753-a_contentId.35706503245+714503483-Orange_Beach_Alabama.html

Attractions In Gulf Shores & Orange Beach

<https://www.gulfshores.com/things-to-do/attractions/>

Be sure to check out Big Lagoon State Park!

Great small beach for families and small children

Nine Things to Know Before Your Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Vacation

<https://www.gulfshores.com/blog/2017/03/14/8-things-to-know-before-your-gulf-shores-and-orange-beach-vacation/>

Gulf Shores & Orange Beach What's Happening map!

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/steps-discover-explore/id1449597018>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.steps.app.steps>

Gulf Coast Food Lovers map <https://go.steps.me/Zs5yQbJuKlb>