

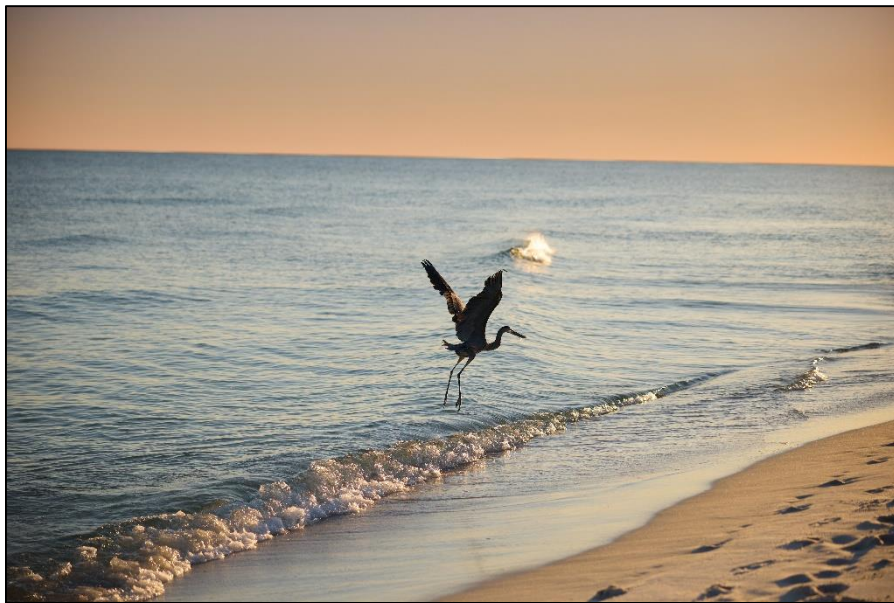


Beach “Shorts” from Alabama’s Beaches: A Look at What’s New

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama (February 10, 2026) – As we enter the second week of February (after a very cold start to the year for many of us), [Alabama’s Beaches](#) are gearing up for a sun- and sand-filled year ahead!

As a nod to the United States’ Semiquincentennial, Alabama’s Beaches developed a list of 250 beach road trip ideas. [The Great American Beach Trip](#) itinerary is filled with activities, outdoor adventures and must-visit restaurants in the coastal destinations of Gulf Shores, Orange Beach and Fort Morgan.

There’s always something new to experience in the region. In that spirit, we’ve rounded up a list of new offerings and short descriptions.



Alabama’s Beaches are gearing up for a sun- and sand-filled year ahead.
Photo Credit: Gulf Shores & Orange Beach Tourism

Lodging

- [Springhill Suites by Marriott Orange Beach](#) opened in January. The 120-suite hotel offers easy access to the sugar-white beaches, dining and outdoor experiences along Alabama’s Beaches. **Fun fact:** The hotel’s poolside bistro offers a signature cocktail called the Fred. It’s a Paloma-inspired drink whose name is a nod to what locals call all the great blue herons in the area. A portion of the proceeds from this drink supports coastal conservation efforts.
- Phase One of a new [Executive Campground at Gulf State Park](#) will open this spring. Featuring 107 large RV sites, three bath houses, a clubhouse, zero-entry pool, pickleball

courts, a small dog park and more, the new campground is part of the park's master plan. Phase Two will include another 100 campsites, with the entire project covering approximately 200 acres within the park.

- [The Lodge at Gulf State Park](#) will debut a brand-new resort pool at the property in March. With more space to relax, the family-friendly pool is three times the area of the original pool and will feature a splash pad, 200 lounge chairs, and poolside drinks and dining. The original pool will transition to an adults-only space.

Food & Beverage

- [Jimmy Buffett's Last Mango Bar & Chill](#) will open at [The Wharf](#) in Orange Beach this spring. Featuring an outdoor bar, full-service indoor restaurant and dedicated entertainment corner, the venue also features waterfront views and is designed to capture the laid-back spirit of Margaritaville. Last Mango Bar & Chill will open ahead of Margaritaville Resort Orange Beach at The Wharf, which is expected to have a phased opening between 2027 and 2029.
- [The Alabama Sweet Tea Company](#), which was founded in 2015 in Montgomery, opened a new location late last year at The Wharf in Orange Beach. The sweet, classic Southern beverage is made the "old-fashioned way," with no artificial ingredients or preservatives.
- [Mythic Beach Banana Bar](#) is a unique sweet shop offering frozen and irresistible treats ... namely chocolate-dipped bananas with assorted toppings. This seasonal shop, which debuted last year, will reopen this spring.
- [Nami Sushi](#) is a new Japanese restaurant offering a variety of sushi rolls, sashimi, yaki, soba, udon, Japanese Hibachi, bento boxes and more. **Insider tip:** Feast on sushi pizza or the Lover Boat, a 10-piece sushi dish, along with 18 pieces of sashimi and a dragon roll, all presented in a boat.
- [Pho-Mo Asian Kitchen and Grill](#) is a local, family-run restaurant with such signature dishes as pho, Vietnamese noodle soup, dumplings, egg rolls, fried rice and an unexpected recommendation: the variety of smash burgers on the menu.

Attractions

- [Beachside Circle Boats](#) offers a new and exciting way to explore the water ... on inflatable boats that can cruise the bays, island-hop, or dock for a waterfront meal.
- [Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo](#), which plays a key role in helping to preserve and save rare species as a partner in the AZA SAFE program, recently welcomed two critically endangered American red wolves and a melanistic Amur leopard, which is among the most endangered big cats in the world.
- [Bubba's Seaside Mini Golf](#) will bring 36 holes of mini-golf to Orange Beach when the new course opens this spring, with a pizza and ice cream shop on site.
- [Laguna Cove Nature Park](#) in Gulf Shores is expected to open later this year. The 53-acre park will offer space for conservation and outdoor recreation. Funded by the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) grant funds from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the project includes restoration of wetlands and critical habitats, an accessible kayak launch, interpretive boardwalks, and public restrooms.

Education & Camps for the Young and Young-at-Heart

- Additionally, [The Learning Campus at Gulf State Park](#) and [Gulf State Park Nature Center](#) offer programs and activities year-round. A monthly highlight is "Stargazing at the Pier,"

during which participants have an opportunity to explore the night sky and learn about stars, planets and constellations.

- Each year, organizations around the destination develop and host [incredible summer camps](#) for kids. Who says your beach vacation can't include a very cool summer camp like [Summer Sail Camp](#) hosted by the City of Orange Beach, [Gulf Camp](#) hosted by the Gulf Coast Eco Center, [Summer Zoo Camp](#) at Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, and [Gulf State Park Camp](#) at The Learning Campus.

Seasonal and Annual Events

These seasonal and annual events are not new, but beloved traditions that are worth marking on your calendar. A full list of annual events can be found [here](#).

- [Orange Beach Festival of Art](#) is set for March 14-15. This nationally recognized festival is held at Waterfront Park and celebrates visual, performing, musical and culinary arts.
- [Alabama Coastal BirdFest](#) takes place April 23-26. Hosted by Alabama Audubon, BirdFest brings together participants to experience peak spring migration while learning about protecting the region's unique habitats through tours, lectures and bird-banding programs.
- To celebrate America's birthday on July 4, the legendary [Flora-Bama](#) will host the Annual Flora-Bama Freedom Run followed by an All-American 4th of July Party with live music and late-night fireworks from the beach.

Sustainability and Conservation News from Alabama's Beaches

Gulf Shores, Orange Beach and Fort Morgan are committed to responsible tourism and protecting and maintaining Alabama's Beaches. While these experiences are not "open" to the general public, we're sharing some updates on initiatives below, and more information can be found [here](#).

- In partnership with local restaurants, the [Alabama Oyster Shell Recycling Program](#) has collected 28.4 million shells since its inception nine years ago. Because of this initiative, more than 26 acres of oyster reefs were restored last year, strengthening the area's coastal ecosystems and marine habitats.
- The [Orange Beach Wildlife Center](#) expanded into a state-of-the-art facility in January. The 10-acre site features a triage room, surgery and treatment rooms, rehab rooms, and more. Since its humble beginnings in the 1990s, the city program has assisted more than 8,000 animals.
- A brand-new facility dedicated to helping rehabilitate injured sea turtles is expected to open this spring. [Alabama's Beaches](#) are home to dozens of nesting sea turtles each year from May through October, and the Coastal Alabama Sea Turtle Triage facility will make access to emergency care quicker for the three species of sea turtles that nest and inhabit the area.

Discover more of "what's new" in Alabama's Beaches, and get started on your planning at [AlabamasBeaches.com](#).

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