

2023-25 DESTINATION GUIDE

BRADENTON · ANNA MARIA ISLAND · LONGBOAT KEY

BRADENTON

Gulf Islands

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BEACH
BLISS *in the*
BRADENTON AREA



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EXPLORE
OUR CANVAS OF CREATIVITY

Plus

LOVE IT LIKE A LOCAL, CONSCIOUS CUISINE, RETAIL ADVENTURES & MORE

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CELEBRATE ART

Scan for more arts
& culture in the
Bradenton Area.

EX

OFTENTIMES, THE BEST WAY to truly experience a new destination is to understand and embrace its local culture. And good news — the Bradenton Area is proud to be filled with cultural offerings that have shaped this community into what it is today.

THIS PAGE

Divine Excess at
Village of the Arts



Cultural PRESSIONS

EXPERIENCE THE BRADENTON AREA'S
UNIQUE CULTURAL OFFERINGS *by Sharon
Therrien*

VILLAGE OF THE ARTS

For a day that's out of the ordinary, take in the whimsical style of the **Village of the Arts**, or VOTA, with its colorful display of eclectic influences. Created with the mission to "build a community where artists live and work while enhancing quality of life and creating a harmonious environment," this neighborhood gives locals a rare live/work/play mix.

This unique spot turns an entire village into a piece of art and celebrates different sources of creativity, from quilting to healing arts. Award-winning restaurants and specialty shops are mixed in with galleries and studios, all housed within a grouping of historical Florida homes and bungalows. See this remarkable area for yourself on monthly Art Walks on the first Friday night and Saturday afternoon, complete with live music, incredible food, and unique indie art spanning every genre. It's also the perfect opportunity to score one-of-a-kind souvenirs!

Just to the northwest of LECOM Park — where the Bradenton Marauders play and Pittsburgh Pirates spring train — visitors can stroll up and enjoy the wonder of VOTA before or after the game. Downtown Bradenton and the Riverwalk are also within walking distance of this rejuvenated neighborhood, where grassroots beautification continues as more residents and businesses call the area home. So be it an art walk, gallery visit, or delicious food from one of the many interests that attract you, the fun and family-friendly environment is a sight to see.

Known as "the friendly city," the charming downtown area of Bradenton is full of local shops and restaurants, a public market, and numerous cultural opportunities to explore.

DOWNTOWN CULTURE

THE BRADENTON RIVERWALK

A unique asset of Bradenton is the beautiful outdoor space that overlooks the Manatee River. The 1.5-mile park spanning downtown Bradenton has also become known as a home of public art.

Stroll the **Riverwalk** for a first-hand glimpse at numerous works of art and murals, including *Boats* by artist Jean Blackburn and *Our Roots Run Deep* by Don Brandes, both an homage to the impact of the Manatee River in Bradenton's history and growth. Famed artist and actor Jane Seymour's sculpture of her Open Hearts icon symbolizes the philosophy that "if your heart is open, love will find its way in." And the splash pad sculptures from artist Mark Fuller welcomes "happy splashers" to the Riverwalk splash pad.

The Riverwalk is also home to fantastic festivals and events. Be sure to check out the Bradenton Riverwalk Fine Art Festival at Riverwalk Pavilion at Rossi Park.

After a thorough sweeping of these artistic assets, visitors can also catch the Gulf Islands Water Ferry from the downtown stop located right on the Riverwalk.

MANATEE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

Since its start as a community theater in the 1940s, the **Manatee Performing Arts Center** has maintained its community feel through local auditions and a youth program. It has continued to evolve and grow, opening a new, state-of-the-art venue in 2013. Visit this active performing arts center to see an ever-changing array of live performances, including Broadway and other musicals, popular plays, concerts, and dance recitals.



ARTCENTER MANATEE

Take in unique art exhibits each month throughout the three galleries of **ArtCenter Manatee** in downtown Bradenton. This visual arts center also hosts classes and workshops in various mediums. You can even participate in a group creative night to draw, paint, craft jewelry, or design other creative pieces. Check the website to see current exhibits and events. ✦

