

I Heart My City: Rebecca's St. Pete



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A family pedals a bicycle surrey on the St. Pete Pier, a centerpiece of the city's downtown waterfront since the 19th century. (Photograph by James Schwabel, Alamy)

Rebecca Davis is a **St. Petersburg**—locals call it St. Pete—native through and through. A recent transplant to Washington, D.C., she now delights in visiting what she describes as a “tropical, art-conscious city with a laid-back beach vibe.” Rebecca gets to explore the world by way of photographs and stories as an associate producer at Nat Geo Travel, but she'll always be proud of her Florida roots. Here are a few of her favorite things about the “other” St. Petersburg.

Follow Rebecca's story on Instagram [@BeckyDavis1234](#) and Twitter [@Beckylane123](#).

St. Petersburg Is My City

When someone comes to visit me, the first place I take them is to the front porch of the [Vinoy Renaissance Resort](#) for a tropical drink accompanied by a view of Tampa Bay.

March is the best time to visit my city because while most people are shoveling snow, the people of St. Pete are applying sunscreen and enjoying the no-air-conditioning-needed weather.

You can see my city best from the top of the [Birchwood hotel](#) in downtown St. Pete.



Best Museum: The Salvador Dalí Museum (Photograph by matthewpaulson, Flickr)

Locals know to skip chain restaurants **and check out** locally owned ones like [4th Street Shrimp Store](#) and [Red Mesa](#) instead. St. Pete has really started to take off as a foodie city.

[Craftsman House](#) is the place to buy authentic, local souvenirs.

In the past, notable people like author [Dennis Lehane](#), legendary baseballer [Babe Ruth](#), and the late British racing driver [Dan Wheldon](#) **have called my city home.**

My city's best museum is the [Salvador Dalí Museum](#) **because** it houses the largest collection of the Catalan surrealist artist's work outside of Europe. Plus, the 2011 reveal of the museum's upgraded digs on the St. Pete waterfront elevated the exterior to a work of art.

If there's one thing you should know about getting around my city, it's that St. Pete is extremely biker-friendly.

The best place to spend time outdoors in my city is anywhere along the water. [Straub Park](#), the iconic [St. Pete Pier](#), and [Crescent Lake Park](#) are some of my favorites (and all welcome dogs).

My city really knows how to celebrate the arts. There's a plethora of museums to enjoy like the [Museum of Fine Arts](#) and the [Chihuly Collection](#). Local artists put their work on display in places like the [Craftsman House Gallery](#) and the [Saturday Morning Market](#), too.

You can tell if someone is from my city if they wear flip-flops year round.

For a fancy night out, I grab dinner at [BellaBrava](#) with some friends, and then we venture over to the [Canopy Rooftop Lounge](#) for cocktails and a beautiful view of the water.

Just outside my city, you can visit [Pass-A-Grille Beach](#) or go camping at historic [Fort Desoto Park](#).



A vendor sells fresh-fruit smoothies at the Saturday Morning Market. (Photograph by visitflorida, Flickr)

My city is known for being full of the elderly and retired, **but it's really** a family-friendly, up-and-coming foodie town with a slight hipster vibe.

The best outdoor market in my city is the Saturday Morning Market, a friendly conglomeration of local vendors, artisans, and performers.

[Banyan Café](#) is my favorite place to grab breakfast, and [Fortunato's Italian Market](#) is the spot for late-night eats.

To find out what's going on at night and on the weekends, read [Creative Loafing](#) magazine.

When I'm feeling cash-strapped, I bike or walk the [Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail](#), a 47-mile trail that snakes along an abandoned railroad corridor.

To escape the crowds, I head south to Fort Desoto to lounge on the less crowded white-sand beaches.

The dish that represents my city best is a grouper sandwich, and [Beach Blonde Ale](#) is my city's signature drink. Sample them at [Harvey's 4th Street Grill](#) and [3 Daughters Brewing](#) respectively.



St. Petersburg's Sunken Gardens provides a green oasis amid a bustling downtown. (Photograph by Dan Lundberg, Flickr)

[Jannus Live](#) is the best place to see live music, but if you're in the mood to dance, check out [Suite Six Lounge](#).

Wearing shorts to meet "Santa" in the park **could only happen in my city.**

In the spring you should marvel at the blooming [jacaranda trees](#).

In the summer you should cool off in a pool (try the [North Shore Aquatic Complex](#)) because the city gets extremely hot and humid.

In the fall you should explore [Weedon Island Preserve](#) and note the subtle change of season.

In the winter you should embrace Florida's green side and visit [Sunken Gardens](#), four acres of beautiful botanical gardens.

If you have kids (or are a kid at heart), you won't want to miss the [Great Explorations Children's Museum](#).