

Meta Title: Explore the Enchantment of Old Town Sarasota - Discover Now!

Meta Description: Dive into the charm of Old Town Sarasota with our guide. Uncover historical sites, vibrant culture, and hidden gems in this picturesque locale.

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Old Town Sarasota: A Hidden Gem



Alt: City and sea view

Sarasota, located on the west coast of Florida, is a city known for its vibrant arts and culture scene. From theaters to art galleries, this city has something for every art lover. But did you know that Sarasota has a rich history dating back to the 1840s? In this article, we will take a tour of historic Sarasota, exploring its past and present, and discovering what makes it the City of the Fine Arts.

Old Town Sarasota

Sarasota, the county seat of Sarasota County, was once an agricultural wilderness in the mid-19th century. It wasn't until the late 1800s that the city started to develop into what it is today. The area was home to Native American tribes before European settlers arrived in the 1700s. The first permanent settlement was established in 1842 by William H. Whitaker from Savannah, Georgia, who settled on Whitaker Bayou.

After the [Civil War](#), developers and land speculators posed a threat to early settlers who farmed under the 1862 Homestead Act. This led to the formation of a Vigilance Committee by local farmers and ranchers to protect their land. However, conflicts between settlers and developers still arose, leading to the assassination of Postmaster Charles Abbe in 1884. The plot for his murder was hatched in the Alfred Bidwell House, which still stands at 849 Florida Avenue.

In 1888, a new era began when Sir John Gillespie of Edinburgh, Scotland, arrived in Sarasota. He founded the Florida Mortgage and Investment Company to promote land sales in the North and Europe. Gillespie also built Florida's first golf course in downtown Sarasota, marking the beginning of the city's transformation into a cultural hub.



Alt: View of the street with parked cars and people

The City of the Arts

Sarasota is often referred to as the "City of the Arts" due to its large number of theaters, art galleries, and museums. It is also home to the famous Ringling Art Museum, which houses a collection of over 21,000 works of art. The city has a thriving artist and literary community, making it a haven for creatives.

Theatres in Old Town Sarasota

A stroll around downtown Sarasota will reveal a plethora of theaters, each with its own unique history and charm. Here are some of the must-visit theaters in old town Sarasota:

1. Historic Asolo Theater

Located inside the Ringling Museum, the Historic Asolo Theater was originally built in Asolo, Italy, in 1798. It was dismantled and brought to Sarasota in the early 20th century by John

Ringling. Today, the theater hosts a variety of performances, from ballets to concerts, and is known for its exceptional acoustics.

2. Florida Studio Theatre

Founded in 1973, the Florida Studio Theatre is a professional regional theater that produces contemporary plays and musicals. It also offers educational programs and workshops for aspiring actors and playwrights. The theater is housed in the former Woman's Club building, which dates back to 1914.

3. Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Designed by renowned architect William Wesley Peters, the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall is a stunning waterfront venue that hosts a variety of performances, including Broadway shows, concerts, and comedy acts. The hall opened in 1970 and has since become a beloved landmark in Sarasota.

Art Galleries in Old Town Sarasota

Sarasota is also home to a vibrant art scene, with numerous galleries showcasing a diverse range of artworks. Here are some of the top art galleries in old town Sarasota:

1. The Dabbert Gallery

Founded in 1973, the Dabbert Gallery is one of the oldest and most respected galleries in Sarasota. It features contemporary art by local and international artists, with a focus on paintings, sculptures, and photography.

2. Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art

Located in the historic Burns Court district, Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art showcases modern and contemporary art from established and emerging artists. The gallery also hosts exhibitions and events throughout the year, making it a must-visit for art enthusiasts.

3. Art Center Sarasota

Founded in 1926, Art Center Sarasota is a non-profit organization that promotes contemporary visual arts through exhibitions, educational programs, and community outreach. The center has three galleries showcasing a variety of artworks, including paintings, sculptures, and mixed media pieces.



Alt: Green area with houses and lake, top view

Exploring Old Town Sarasota

Aside from its theaters and art galleries, old town Sarasota has plenty to offer for history buffs and nature lovers. Here are some of the top attractions to visit during your tour of historic Sarasota:

Historic Buildings

Sarasota is home to several historic buildings that have been preserved and restored over the years. These buildings offer a glimpse into the city's past and showcase its architectural diversity. Some notable examples include:

- The Bidwell-Wood House (1882), the oldest surviving residence in Sarasota.
- The Crocker Memorial Church (1901), a former church turned museum.
- The Chidsey Library (1910), now home to the Historical Society of Sarasota County.

Parks and Gardens

Sarasota is blessed with beautiful parks and gardens that provide a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle of the city. Here are some of the must-visit green spaces in old town Sarasota:

- Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, a stunning botanical garden with over 20,000 plants and flowers.
- Bayfront Park, a waterfront park with scenic views of Sarasota Bay.
- Pioneer Park, a historic park with a playground, picnic areas, and a gazebo.

Conclusion

From its humble beginnings as an agricultural wilderness to becoming the City of the Fine Arts, Sarasota has come a long way. Its rich history, vibrant arts scene, and charming old town make it a must-visit destination for anyone looking to explore Florida's west coast. So next time you're planning a trip to the Sunshine State, be sure to add old town Sarasota to your itinerary. You won't be disappointed.

Уникальность



Переспам



Водянистые
фразы



Читабельность



Проверка

