

Miami Vibe

Where the Cool Kids Play



Photo by Amy Smith

If you're thinking of dashing down to Miami *without* the kids, think again. You can still have a fierce getaway with kids in tow in a chic city that's, in fact, a playground your whole family will love. Trade in your stilettos for gladiators and discover a new side of Miami ... with kids.

Written by **Kristen Manieri**

LOEWS LOVES KIDS

So, maybe your Delano days are done, but that won't stop you from doing South Beach in style. You'll be experiencing some child-envy once you check into Loews Miami Beach and see how your little rascals are treated like major VIPs at the most family-friendly resort on the beach. Loews boasts a lending library of games and toys, a zero entry pool perfect for tots, a newly unveiled gourmet children's menu featuring PB&J sushi-esque rolls, and age-appropriate welcome gifts (toys) for every child.

The Loews is obviously trying to win over those hard-to-impress types with their most impressive kid-friendly amenity yet: A portable DVD player will be served to your kids while dining, complete with their own movie pick. The Pottery Barn PBTeen Cabanas for those tweens in your life will be a pleasant surprise. Splashed with aqua and pink and filled with posh loungers and iChairs, these poolside retreats introduce your kiddos to Miami luxury. Your older kids will appreciate the poolside Wii tournaments and movies playing on the Kidbana's flat-screen TV. We also LOVE the day and night "SoBe Kids Camp," occupying kids with Hula-Hoop contests, beach "Olympics" and sushi-making classes. Camp frees up mom and dad for hours at the beach, spa and some interruption-free moments at one of the resort's six restaurants.

The Loews also invites you to bring Fido along for some major pooch pampering, such as welcome gifts, his own room service menu and puppy spa services. Leave it to this family-focused resort to have all your travel necessities on hand, from car seats to strollers and night-lights to baby bathtubs.

The Loews Miami Beach is the perfect location on the beach and within walking distance from the quintessential South Beach outdoor mall experience, Lincoln Road.



DOWNTOWN...

Mixed in with the high-rises and power-lunch eateries, Downtown Miami is also home to several clever enticements for family daytime diversions. Completely interactive and totally tactile, the Miami Children's Museum invites kids from toddler on up to "play, learn, imagine and create." Engaging exhibits offer a unique learning experience your kids won't forget. They'll learn how to earn, save and spend money at the "Bank," dress up like a firefighter or police officer in the "Safety Zone," and become a veterinarian for the day at "Pet Central." Props to Target for sponsoring admission on "Free Third Fridays."

Less than a mile away, you'll find Jungle Island, a zoo-ish park that just introduced a "cool" new penguin encounter. This is the only place you'll see the largest crocodile in the Western Hemisphere as well as a liger, a cross between a female tiger and a male lion (seriously!). Kids and creatures strut their stuff in stage shows, interactive safaris and petting zoos where you can even feed the kangaroos.

Finish your downtown experience at Dolores But You Can Call Me Lolita. It's not just the name that's interesting; this candlelit and white-draped eatery is in the heart of downtown's Mary Brickell Village, which is an adorable little outdoor shopping experience. "Dolores & Lolita" boasts a unique dining concept you, your kids and your wallet are going to love. The menu is divided into two lists of entrees, those priced at \$18.75 and those priced at \$23.75. You pick an entrée, and your choice of apps is included. Desserts are only \$2.50, and wine starts at just \$4 a glass and \$13 per bottle. Best of all, your little foodies are going to love the Kobe beef mini-burgers and the bacon-wrapped chicken tenders.



The Miami Children's Museum is a vibrant and play-based learning experience for kids.



Nikki Beach is our favorite place for lounging in the sun, Miami-style.

THE BEACH...

Whether you're talking South Beach or Key Biscayne, Miami rocks when it comes to an endless variety of water-logged fun. The surprisingly kid-friendly Nikki Beach Club should be number one on your "must do" list. This tropical hideaway oozes Miami chic. Morcheeba and Groove Armada tunes provide the soundtrack at this outdoor beach club, located at the most southern end of Ocean Drive. The "lounge" area includes beds, couches and teepee-style cabanas for fierce family fun. Dad will enjoy the supermodel sightings too. PLAYGROUND tip: Wear your best and leave the cooler in the car. Off-site nosh is a major faux pas.

Breakfast on South Beach is practically a vacation tradition. Start the day off with breakfast at one of Ocean Drive's famous oceanfront cafes, likely still packed with last night's club crowd. Although it's not technically on Ocean Drive, we still love Big Pink. Tucked into the subdued "South of 5th" district of South Beach, Big Pink offers a diner-style experience minus the lively foot traffic you find on Ocean Drive. An ample and reasonably priced menu is filled with all-day breakfast, juicy burgers and more than two dozen sandwiches. Trust us; with a menu that reads more like a novel, there is something to please every eater in your clique.

After breakfast, head over to South Pointe Park, newly reopened after a \$22 million facelift. Chill at the interactive splash zone, fool around at the two children's playgrounds, stroll miles of walkway and afterwards settle in at neighboring Smith and Wollensky's waterfront steakhouse for lunch or dinner and views of the passing cruise ships and celebrity yachts. Don't hesitate to take in the Art Deco District Tour to give your clan the 411 on the iconic architecture that's made South Beach such a world-renowned destination.

Families that prefer to walk on the wild side flock to Key Biscayne, Miami's favorite barrier island. Miami's metropolis quickly becomes a distant memory in the midst of Key Biscayne's natural wonders, especially within Crandon Park's borders which burst with activities that make nature lovers positively giddy. Eco-adventures, such as Half Moon Wreck Snorkeling and Moonlight Kayaking, engage and amaze your busy bees while the endless coastal dunes are the ideal locale for your beach bums. We loved that you can rent private cabanas with showers inside. On your way back across the causeway, make a pit stop at the Rusty Pelican, famous for its iconic sunset and water views afforded to every single table, inside and out. The kitchen churns out a steady selection of favorites for your youngsters (mac and cheese, cheeseburgers, fish sticks), and the outdoor fire pits provide the perfect place to chill post-meal.



The new South Pointe Park is a favorite among residents and visitors of all ages.



Genius Jones, the design-conscious kids store in Miami's Design District.

“People never think of South Beach as being kid-friendly, but we love the playgrounds along Ocean Drive, and Samantha always makes us stop to look at the giant sand sculptures.”

Eddie, Jeni and Samantha Vazquez, Miami Residents





Camel Ride at Miami Metrozoo

...AND BEYOND!

Venturing out of Miami's usual hotspots, like downtown and South Beach, is something we highly recommend. In fact, places like Coconut Grove and Coral Gables are filled with attractions, shopping and restaurants your brood will love. Rated one of the top 10 zoos in the U.S. by Trip Advisor, the 300-acre Miami Metrozoo showcases more than a thousand animals and provides lots of up-close-and-personal opps for animal lovers. We love the giraffe feeding station, camel rides and the new "Amazon and Beyond" exhibit, which opened less than a year ago. Traverse the zoo by foot, tram, monorail or Segway. Consider snagging a "Tours that Talk" loaner, offering animal tidbits and serving as your very own Cliff Clavin for the day.

Chill those tired tootsies at the Venetian Pool at Coral Gables (guests aged 3 and over are welcome). Boasting coral caves, grottos and waterfalls, this spring-fed water haven is the perfect spot to relax and enjoy the sun.

With Miami as your playground, your family vaca is sure to be a huge success. All you need is a posh state of mind, a joie de vivre attitude and a sense of adventure.

MIAMI'S METRO

Using Miami's Metro is pretty hip. This rapid elevated train system links downtown to miles of stops along US1 and is a great option for your day trip to Coral Gables. While downtown, travel with Miami's executive hipsters on the Metro Mover. This FREE monorail-type train travels through downtown's inner loop, with stops a stone's throw from Miami's most notable downtown attractions, like the Miami Art Museum, Bayside Marketplace, Bayfront Park and the Adrienne Arsht Center. www.miamidade.gov/transit



For more tips and places to go, visit www.MiamiKids.net.

Loews Miami Beach
1601 Collins Avenue
Miami Beach, FL 33139
305-604-1601
www.loewshotels.com

Dolores But You Can Call Me Lolita Restaurant & Lounge
1000 S. Miami Ave.
Miami, FL 33130
305-403-3103
www.doloreslolita.com

Crandon Park
4000 Crandon Blvd.
Key Biscayne, FL 33149
305-361-5421
www.miamidade.gov/parks

The Rusty Pelican
3201 Rickenbacker Cswy.
Key Biscayne, FL 33149
305-361-3818
www.thrustypelican.com

Miami Children's Museum
980 Macarthur Cswy.
Miami, FL 33132
305-373-KIDS (5437)
www.miamichildrensmuseum.org

Big Pink
157 Collins Ave. at 2nd St.
Miami Beach, FL 33139
305-532-4700
www.bigpinkrestaurant.com

Miami Metrozoo
12400 SW 152nd St.
Miami, FL 33177
305-251-0400
www.miamimetrozoo.com

South Pointe Park
1 Washington Ave.
Miami Beach, FL 33139
305-673-7730

Jungle Island
1111 Parrot Jungle Trail
Miami, FL 33132
305-400-7000
www.jungleisland.com

Smith & Wollensky
1 Washington Ave.
(at South Pointe Park)
Miami Beach, FL 33139
305-673-2800
www.smithandwollenskysteakhouses.com

Venetian Pool
2701 De Soto Blvd.
Coral Gables, FL 33134
305-460-5306
www.coralgablesvenetianpool.com

The JCC's Early Childhood Learning Center

Now enrolling infants through Pre-K for our renowned preschool, where kids are given the tools to succeed in an atmosphere that emphasizes caring and compassion. At the JCC, all children of all faiths feel welcome and loved.



Proud to be **Orlando's Best Preschool**

2009 Nickelodeon Parents' Pick Award
Winner for Best Preschool in Orlando



Maitland: 851 N. Maitland Ave. | 407.645.0923
Dr. Phillips: 11184 S. Apopka-Vineland Rd. | 407.239.7411

www.orlandojcc.org



Roth JCC of Greater Orlando

Bring a smile to your child's face...



... and your own, knowing you've chosen the right pre-school and after-school care program.

There's a "new kid in town" and they're right around the corner. **Child's World of Learning** has brought their established reputation and expertise to Oviedo! Drop by to take a tour and see what they have to offer you and your little one.

Enrolling now!

- Ages 6 weeks - 12 years old
- Part and full time programs
- VPK offered
- Open 6:00 am - 6:30 pm
- Before/After School Programs
- Nationally recognized curriculum
- Fenced in playground and basketball court
- Nutritional snacks provided
- Transportation to local schools
- Friendly, personable staff
- All staff certified and background checked

Lowest tuitions in the area!

Enroll today and SAVE 40%*
Offer good for the first 20 enrollments. Please call and ask about our other discounts.



Child's World of Learning

407-366-1559
824 Executive Drive Oviedo, FL 32765
From Broadway, head east on Clark St, right on Executive Dr.

- This holiday, get your family photos taken by an award-winning editorial photographer.

Mini Sessions \$250 (limited appts available)

Package Includes: 1 - 8x10, 2 - 5x7's, 50 holiday cards
Session Dates: October 3, 4, 17 & 18 (20 minutes each)
Location: Downtown Orlando



407.896.2757

View more online at www.focustudios.com