

By Tom Swick
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[Hollywood](#) sits between [Fort Lauderdale](#) and Miami and has mostly escaped the new ritziness of the former and the trendiness of the latter. Yes, Hollywood Beach recently got a face-lift, including an attractive sea wall along the Broadwalk. But the people promenading are the same solid, hard-working, budget-minded folks -- many from Quebec -- who have been coming for years.

[Hollywood](#) is a little bit of Old Florida and definitely a family vacation place that would be familiar to anyone who spent childhood summers at the Jersey Shore. Take a stroll, eat some Italian water ice, catch the free concerts at the beachfront bandshell. In Hollywood, unlike Fort Lauderdale to the north, restaurants and shops run along what's called the Broadwalk, a wide 2-mile long paved path on the beach. (You can rent bikes and other pedaled vehicles to travel its length).

A few miles north is [Dania Beach](#) in [John U. Lloyd State Park](#). Here, even when it's crowded, you feel removed from the world, with only ocean in front of you and trees behind you (hiding the parking lot). French Canadians play petanque (the French version of bocci) and, around 5 p.m. on weekends, cruise ships sail out from nearby [Port Everglades](#).

Downtown Hollywood has become a pleasant place to spend an evening, with a wide variety of ethnic restaurants (including Turkish and Transylvanian) and some colorful characters. Young Circle Park and Amphitheater, a circular, 10-acre space with an ArtsPark, an interactive fountain, some exotic trees (check out the baobab) and a children's play area, has frequent weekend festivals.

The [Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino](#) is west of downtown along [Florida's Turnpike](#). In addition to gambling, there are a number of restaurants, shops and a theater showcasing big-name acts. And during the day, children can watch the alligator presentation at the Seminole Okalee Village.

On Hollywood Beach and the narrow streets between the beach and A1A, rental apartments are more numerous than hotels. Many visitors come back to the same place year after year.

For food, [Le Tub](#) is a wonderfully rustic joint on the Intracoastal. A great place to sit -- most of the tables are outside -- and eat some beer-steamed shrimp or the burgers GQ magazine named the best in country. (1100 N. Ocean Drive; 954-921-9425.) A few blocks south is [Taverna Opa](#), famous for delicious Greek food,

blasting Greek music and dancing on tables. There are some outside tables for those who like to eat their gyros in peace. (410 N. Ocean Drive; 954-929-4010)