

FAMILY FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

What can we do? Where can we go? I don't have anything to do!

As parents, we've all heard these statements, but Navarre Beach and Santa Rosa County visitors can find plenty to keep restless kids busy.

The new Fun Store located by Cocodries Restaurant on the island features a wide range of recreational toys for rent including the newest models of beach cruisers, surfboards, skateboards, boogie boards, sea kayaks, kites and more.

Navarre Beach Ski and Sail located at Juana's Pagodas features jet skis and sailboats for rent. Free fun can also be had at Juana's with several beach volleyball courts available for patrons. Leagues are often held there at night, but the courts are usually available during the day.

The Panhandle Butterfly House continues to educate and delight visitors and locals alike. Open Thursday through Sunday in the summer, the Panhandle Butterfly House marks its 11th year in 2008. Funded by donations, visitors can learn about the complete butterfly life cycle from the plants where they lay their eggs to the wondrous transition to caterpillars and ultimately butterflies. More than 200 seasonal species of butterflies are hatched at this beautiful indoor butterfly garden.

The Northwest Florida Zoo located in Midway (between Navarre and Gulf Breeze) is a regional family favorite. The Zoo recently added a new giraffe exhibit and two new giraffes. Many families enjoy summer and seasonal camps. The Zoo is also a popular birthday and family party destination. The Safari Line Limited Train winds through 30 acres of free-roaming wildlife. The Zoo features more than 140 species from adorable orangutans and spider monkeys, otters, lemurs, lions, gorillas and more.

The Navarre Park, located just across the bridge along Hwy. 98, features a meandering boardwalk along the Santa Rosa Sound. Children will enjoy state of the art playground equipment and a splash park. Picnic tables are plentiful and pine trees provide welcomed shade.

In nearby Gulf Breeze, there are movie theatres including The Breeze Cinema 8 showing first run movies and Gulf Breeze Cinemas which shows a variety of movies from documentaries to first run movies.

A few miles away in Milton, kids of all ages enjoy the L&N West Florida Railroad Museum. The Milton depot is on the National Register of Historic Places. Originally built in 1882 the lovingly restored depot includes a L&N Dining Car 2722, Globe Coffee House, L&N Dining Car 2715, two former Pullman sleeper cars, renovated into L&N baggage-dormitory cars 1652 and 1653, L&N caboose 1148, Frisco caboose 1102, L&N box car 18050 and L&N flat car 21107. Outbuildings include a bridge tenders house from the Escambia Bay trestle and a section shed with motor car. The Museum houses a wide variety of memorabilia from the L&N, Frisco, and other railroads.

Northern Santa Rosa County, dubbed the Canoe Capital of Florida, offers a bevy of fun, outdoor activities from canoeing, tubing and kayaking to exploring the many nature trails throughout the Blackwater State Forest area. Day rentals are available at Adventures Unlimited and the Blackwater Canoe Rentals and Sales. Horseback riding is another popular activity with two companies, Country Adventures and Creekside Stables, offering guided trail rides.

A short ride away, The Gulfarium on Okaloosa Island offers live marine shows daily. Also, the region's most popular water park, Big Kahuna's, is located just over the bridge in Destin – making it an easy day trip activity.

RESOURCES

Fun Store

Navarre Beach Location

8649 Gulf Blvd Navarre (next to Cocodrie's Restaurant)

Mainland Navarre

8690 Navarre Pkwy

850-936-8000

www.funstorefl.com

Navarre Ski and Sail (next to Juana's Pagodas)

1451 Navarre Pkwy

Navarre Beach, Fl

850-936-0932

www.juanaspagodas.com

Panhandle Butterfly House

Navarre Park at Navarre Beach Causeway

850-623-3868

www.panhandlebutterflyhouse.org

The Zoo Northwest Florida

5701 Gulf Breeze Pkwy

Gulf Breeze, Fl

850-932-2220

www.thezoonorthwestflorida.org

L&N West Florida Railroad Museum

5003 Henry St.

Milton, Fl

850-623-3645

www.wfrm.org

Gulf Breeze Cinema 4
Village Live Oak Shopping Center
Gulf Breeze, Fl
850-916-9404
www.gulfbreezecinema4.com

Blackwater River State Forest
7720 Deaton Bridge Road
Holt, Fl
850-983-5363
www.floridastateparks.org/blackwaterriver

Adventures Unlimited
8974 Tomahawk Landing Road
Milton, Fl
850.623.6197
www.adventuresunlimited.com

Gulfarium
1010 Miracle Strip Parkway, SE
Fort Walton Beach, Fl
850-243-9046 or 800-247-8575
www.gulfarium.com

Big Kahuna's Water and Adventure Park
1007 US Highway 98 East
Destin, Fl
(850) 837-8319
www.bigkahunas.com

Details: www.FloridaBeachestoRivers.com or 800-480-7263.