

Island Fun Facts

A Little History

The federal government sold Santa Rosa Island to Escambia County in 1929 for \$10,000. What a deal! Just a few years later, the casino was built, a combination dance hall and gathering place, and locals ferried back and forth from town.



Now that's no fish tale

Pensacola Beach Gulf Pier anglers have already reeled in two legal-size sailfish this year, but the biggest fish ever caught was an 87-pound cobia. That's enough to make up to 130 tasty fish sandwiches!



Clam Milkshake

While strolling the shoreline, look for clam shells with a small hole. Sea snails use a radula, their ribbon-shaped tongue, to drill a hole in the shell of the clam. While drilling, the snails soften the shells by secreting carbonic acid, inserting its siphon, the clam is digested within its shell. The snail then gulps down the resulting remains of what some Gulf Islands National Seashore rangers call a "clam milkshake."



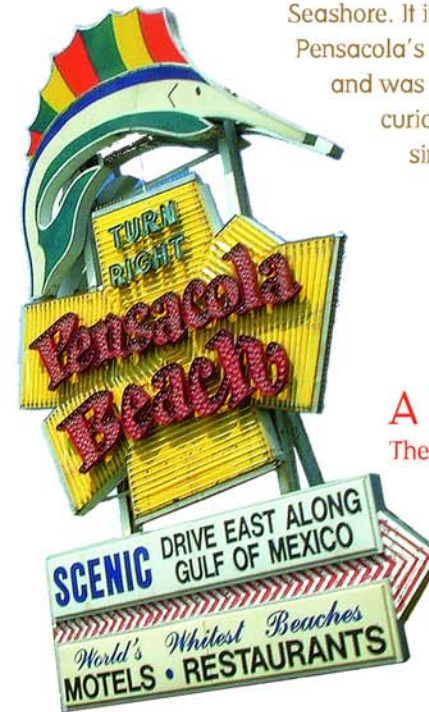
Geronimo

Famed Apache chief Geronimo was held captive in 1886 and 1887 at Fort Pickens, a massive pre-Civil War brick fortress now located at Gulf Islands National Seashore. It is believed that he was Pensacola's first tourist attraction and was once visited by 459 curious onlookers in a single day.



A Flashy Fish

The 40-foot flashing neon fish sign was created in 1955 for downtown Pensacola. In 1962, it was moved to its current location in Gulf Breeze standing as a welcome sign for out-of-town visitors leading the way to paradise.



Island Herbs

Santa Rosa Island is not only one of the world's longest barrier islands, it is also a prolific herb garden. A native mint, Conradina, looks similar to rosemary and is easily spotted on the island's western end near Fort Pickens. Other edible plants include muscadine grapes, wild onions and dewberries.



Local's Secret

A serpentine sand trail near Fort Pickens leads to a deep brackish lake that lies only yards from the Gulf. The lake, created by fresh water welling up from the deep sandstone aquifer, gives visitors a rare chance to take a dip in the salty Gulf before only seconds later plunging into almost-fresh water.

