

The Perfect Setting...

With easy access to the Gulf of Mexico's warm, emerald-hued water, to the fertile fishing grounds of Santa Rosa Sound and to Pensacola Bay, known for 450 years as one of the finest anchorages on the Gulf Coast, Pensacola Beach has long been considered a water wonderland for locals and vacationers alike. Area sailors and boaters know the beauty of the clean area waters, fed by upland rivers. The result is an ideal aquatic playground perfect for cruising, racing day sailers, windsurfing, and of course, romantic sunset sails, tours of our historic waterfront and opportunities to get up close and personal with playful, bottlenose dolphins.

Adrift on a sailboat, running quietly before the wind, is to sample the oneness of nature and the peace that it can bring. Ride the wind to the pristine beaches along Gulf Islands National Seashore. Enjoy swimming and snorkeling in the emerald waters of the Gulf of Mexico, or sail the protected waters of Pensacola Bay and find hidden locations along Fort Pickens and Fort McRee, places where you feel your footprint in the sand is the first...ever. Wherever you drop anchor, as you stroll the dazzling white sands, keep an eye out for giant lightning whelks, sand dollars, olive shells, fighting conchs and other prizes from the Gulf of Mexico.



For Setting Sail

By sailing in Pensacola's water you join a long history dating to 1559 when Spanish explorer Don Tristan de Luna crossed with his 11 ships into what is now Pensacola Bay, establishing the first European settlement in the United States. Gazing across the vast sweep of Pensacola Bay today, it is easy to see why De Luna anchored here and why it remains one of nature's finest deep-water harbors.

Today around Pensacola Bay you still can find the hulk of Fort Pickens, a pre-Civil War brick fortress, the ruins of Fort McRee, Pickens' one-time companion across the mouth of Pensacola Bay, and elegant Pensacola Lighthouse whose beam guided home generations of deep-water sailors. All are reminders of Pensacola's centuries of history and of the five countries whose flags have flown here.

And with a day on Pensacola's waters, all can be yours.



Island Cross stands tall on Pensacola Beach

Standing tall on a sand dune on Pensacola Beach is a 10-foot, cast concrete cross commemorating the first Christian mass held in the United States. The Knights of Columbus first placed it on the north side of Fort Pickens Road in 1559 as part of the Quadra centennial celebration of Don Tristan de Luna's landing in Pensacola, establishing the first European settlement in the United States. Some time later, the cross was moved to its current home on the south side of Fort Pickens Road and has stood firm through many bouts with Mother Nature.

