



GREATER MIAMI CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

701 Brickell Avenue, Suite 2700

Miami, Florida 33131

305/539-3084, Fax 305/539-2911

<http://www.MiamiAndBeaches.com>

E-mail: [Media@MiamiAndBeaches.com](mailto:Media@MiamiAndBeaches.com)

## GREATER MIAMI OFFERS SPECIAL ALLURE TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN VISITORS

Contact: Media Relations, 305-539-3084, 800-955-3646 (U.S./Canada)

(MIAMI) – Known worldwide for glorious weather, breathtaking beaches and nonstop nightlife, Greater Miami offers a special allure to African-American visitors -- with a rich cultural history that dates back over one hundred years to the time of the city's founding. A plethora of cultural institutions, museums and performance groups dedicated to celebrating the African-American experience, along with an ever-expanding schedule of entertainment events and festivals all signify a city that embraces its African-American heritage and is committed to fostering African-American tourism.

### ***Festivals Galore***

In a city known for great outdoor parties, one of Miami's most colorful events, the **Miami-Bahamas Goombay Festival** takes place in the city's oldest black community, Coconut Grove, every June. Settled in the 1890s by Bahamian immigrants, the "Grove" celebrates its roots with an annual week-long party that transforms Coconut Grove's Grand Avenue into Nassau's Bay Street. The annual event sends brilliantly costumed junkanoo groups into the streets, dancing to Caribbean rhythms to the accompaniment of rake n' scrape instruments ranging from drums and whistles to cowbells and combs. A wide

variety of arts, crafts, food and drink from more than 400 vendors line Grand Avenue.

With its legendary nightlife, top-tier celebrity scene and non-stop party atmosphere, South Beach hosts **Urban Beach Week** each Memorial Day Weekend. The huge event transforms the Art Deco District into a hip-hop paradise. Celebrities such as Allen Iverson, P.Diddy, Janet Jackson, Nelly, Ludacris, 50 Cent, Lil Kim, Beyonce, Sean Paul, Jay-Z, L.L. Cool J., Cash Money, R. Kelly and countless others have made the scene, joining stylish revelers from across the United States. Hotels and nightclubs are packed to capacity, while street traffic on Ocean Drive is brought to a standstill. Part hip-hop extravaganza, part beach blast, Urban Beach Week brings close to 250,000 revelers together to enjoy top musical acts, great weather and unprecedented people-watching in a safe, festive environment.

Miami sizzles all year long with hot events and one of the most scintillating is **Zo's Summer Groove**, a weekend-long slate of sports and entertainment events spearheaded by Miami Heat basketball star and local philanthropist Alonzo Mourning. The weekend offers a jam-packed roster of events designed to celebrate the spirit and culture of South Florida. Zo's high-profile friends in the basketball and entertainment communities join him for a "Mega Groove" concert/comedy show, celebrity gala/auction dinner, Zo's "BLOCK" Party and the grand finale – an All-star Basketball Game at the American Airlines Arena, featuring some of the NBA's top stars. All proceeds from Zo's Summer Groove are donated to the Children's Home Society, 100 Black Men of South Florida and the Overtown Youth Center.

### ***African-American Miami : History and Culture***

Miami is the proud home to a long list of non-profit organizations, cultural and performing arts groups and museums that honor and document the history of black Miami. Foremost among these, the **Black Archives History and Research Foundation**, located in the city's second oldest African-American settlement, Overtown, serves as the manuscript and photographic repository for the community's legacy. A national resource under the leadership of founder,

educator and native Miamian Dr. Dorothy Jenkins Fields, the Black Archives is the catalyst behind a renaissance in **Overtown**, formerly a thriving African-American community that included a vibrant entertainment district. The Black Archives own the historic Lyric Theater, built in 1913 and where in the 1930s the great African-American entertainers performed on NW 2nd Avenue's "Little Broadway." After decades of decline, Overtown is now on the upswing, with the renovation of the Lyric Theater, the Greater Bethel AME Church and D.A. Dorsey House (home of Miami's first black millionaire.) Other Overtown historic highlights include the Cola-Nip Building, the Chapman House and the Mt. Zion Baptist Church, built on its current site in 1896.

North of Overtown, the Liberty City neighborhood is home to the **African Heritage Cultural Arts Center**, an inner city oasis that houses a performance facility, gallery and educational center. With studio and rehearsal space, artists' studios, a summer arts camp and after school programs, this vital community anchor also hosts performances for new artists in comedy, jazz, and R&B, and hosts the Kwanzaa Kuumba Arts Fest and Jazz/Black Music Month Celebrations.

Many of these sights can be seen together during the month of February as part of Miami-Dade Transit's award-winning **Black History Tours**. With reservations booked far in advance, the three-hour tours, which began in 1994 in honor of Black History Month, travel through Miami's oldest black communities: Coconut Grove, Overtown, Liberty City and Brownsville, pointing out various landmarks and recounting events of historic significance. Other great inner-city heritage tours are offered by **Dragonfly Expeditions, Inc.**, **Urban Tour Hosts** and **Miami Cultural Community Tours**.

Miami's "old colored beach," **Virginia Key Beach Park**, held its official grand reopening on February 23, 2008. The park encompasses 82.5 lush acres of windswept beaches, landmark structures and the most unobstructed views of nature found anywhere in Miami-Dade County. Accessible only by boat from a downtown dock on the Miami River, Virginia Key Beach Park was opened on August 1, 1945 "for the exclusive use of Negroes." In 1982, the City of Miami closed the park, citing the high cost of maintenance and operations. The park remained closed until 1999, when a group of citizens called the Virginia Key

Beach Park Civil Rights Task Force was established in response to plans of private development of the historic property. In August 2002, Virginia Key Beach Park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Featuring a more recent black immigrant group, the colorful Caribbean neighborhood of Little Haiti is centered on Second Avenue in the 50s. Here, visitors can shop at botanicas selling herbs and healing oils, buy compas music and sample delicious kreyol cuisine.

For information on the above, visit [www.MiamiAndBeaches.com](http://www.MiamiAndBeaches.com). The Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) is an independent not-for-profit sales and marketing organization whose mission is to attract visitors to Greater Miami and the Beaches for leisure, business and conventions. For a vacation guide, visit our website at [www.MiamiAndBeaches.com](http://www.MiamiAndBeaches.com) or call 1-888-76-Miami (US/Canada only) or 305-447-7777. To reach the GMCVB offices dial 305-539-3000. Meeting planners may call 1-800-933-8448 (US/Canada only) or 305-539-3071 or visit [www.MiamiMeetings.com](http://www.MiamiMeetings.com).

###

*Updated: April, 2009*