

WINTER 2020

# THE PINK PALM

The LGBTQ Travel Insider for Greater Miami and the Beaches



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On the Cover:  
Fabian Burgos Mural at SLS Lux Brickell.  
Photo by @el\_danrios

# WELCOME...

Just as temperatures are dropping everywhere else, things are just beginning to heat up in Greater Miami and the Beaches. We have an action-packed winter with some of the destination's most popular events such as TransArt, showcasing trans and gender non-conforming artists, Gay8 Festival, the largest Hispanic LGBTQ festival in the United States and the ever-popular Winter Party Festival – all set along with Greater Miami's most famous large-scale events like Miami Marathon, the South Beach Wine & Food Festival and the International Boat Show.

In this issue of The Pink Palm we'll get sweaty with Hotel Gaythering's sports leagues, where everyone is welcome every Sunday! Next, we'll visit one of our most beloved neighborhoods, Miami's Little Haiti, which proudly hosts a flourishing queer scene that's garnering the attention of locals and visitors alike. Then we meet up with local influencer Rich Rodriguez and his amazing family as they explore Greater Miami through the lens of an LGBTQ family. And before we go, we'll stop by and visit Stephanie and Natalie Otero, Miami's Happy Vegan Bakers, who are serving up Hispanic soul food even meat-eaters will love!

Stop by the LGBT Visitor Center for local and visitor information.

## LGBT Visitor Center

1130 Washington Ave., 1st Floor North, Miami Beach, FL 33139  
305/397-8914 • GoGayMiami.com

Hours of Operation: Mon-Fri: 9 A.M. – 6 P.M. • Sat & Sun: 11 A.M. – 4 P.M.



305/673-4440  
GayBizMiami.com

The Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (MDGLCC) is the largest not-for-profit corporation in the county for gay and lesbian businesses. MDGLCC offers the Pink Flamingo Hospitality Certification by training and certifying hospitality service professionals on issues related to gender and orientation, and giving them tools to respond appropriately to all people. This is essential for creating environments where all visitors and employees are welcome.

For a list of Pink Flamingo Certified Hotels and Businesses in Greater Miami and the Beaches, please visit [GayBizMiami.com](http://GayBizMiami.com)

## THE PINK PALM

The LGBTQ Travel Insider for  
Greater Miami and the Beaches

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EDEN ROC

MIAMI BEACH

A woman with dark hair, wearing a blue bikini, is floating on her back in a swimming pool. She is holding a large, bright red inflatable ring. The ring has the letters 'BE' and 'A' visible on it. The water is clear and blue, with ripples around the woman and the ring. The overall scene is bright and summery.

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# BALLS, BOYS & BEERS

Join Hotel Gaythering's sports leagues to meet new friends, get all sweaty and have a good time every Sunday!

by Ian Maloney

Surprisingly (not really), the gays love sports too! Hotel Gaythering is leading the way in Miami Beach by hosting a (mostly) gay sports league as part of their commitment to the local LGBTQ+ community. With a new season about to kick off as the famous Miami winter arrives, now is a great time to get involved and get active.

Even if you aren't really competitive or have never played a sport before, there is a place for you in this league. According to Hotel Gaythering owner Alex Guerra, they welcome players of all skill levels. "There's no body shaming and nobody should ever feel uncomfortable and that's something that, as gay people, we might worry about more than most. Many of us grew up afraid to play sports because we don't want to get picked on or we



are scared we aren't going to be good enough. We love it when we have the opportunity to help people break that stigma." The league isn't just for the gays though. They welcome everyone. Guerra went on to say, "It's open to all. We have lesbians and straight people who play in our league too!"

For the volleyball season, teams are divided into competitive and social levels depending on ability, but all the other sports just have one level and things are kept mostly social. No matter what your skill level, you will fit right in here.

Along with the Gaythering's Sunday Funday festivities, the sports league, unofficially called Gaythering Sports, makes Sundays one of the busiest days for the locally owned and operated hotel. After the games, many of the participants, as well as hotel guests and members of the community, are welcomed back to the Gaythering's bar for an all-day happy hour and BBQ – what they call Sunday Funday. Absolut®, which was one of the first companies to specifically market to the gay community, is the liquor sponsor and they often give out prizes and free drinks during the festivities.

The Fall sport is volleyball, which takes over the courts at Lummus Park – right on the sands of Miami Beach. Up next for Winter 2020 is kickball, which is played at Flamingo Park in Miami Beach. "We decided to do things differently this year to make it a little easier on our players," said Guerra. "Since there are so many events during the winter on the beach, we decided to switch our volleyball and kickball seasons around. We would often have to have two- or three-week breaks in between game days because there were other events happening during the high tourist season. So, we decided

to do volleyball in the fall, when there are fewer people on the beach and do kickball starting in January."

The sports league, organized and run with the help of South Florida Club Sport, is in its third year. It has



continued to grow from a small league of kickball players into a group with more than 200 participants, and has added new sports like flag football. It has become an important way for many people who might not have met any other way to make connections with other members of the community, and to stretch outside of their comfort zones. The members of one team are all friends because they met in the league and have become so close that they have dinner together nearly every Sunday night, even when there is a break between seasons. There has also been at least one couple formed when the guys met on the kickball field!

Find out more on Hotel Gaythering's Instagram or Facebook page. 🌸

CATEGORY IS...

# FLOURISHING QUEER SCENE!

Miami's hip up-and-coming district, Little Haiti, proudly hosts a queer scene worthy of attention.

Just minutes from Biscayne Bay is Little Haiti, a Miami community best known for its Caribbean roots, colorful personality and art-centric locals. Home to countless indie galleries, eclectic bars, beautiful street murals and Afro-Caribbean cultural sites, Little Haiti offers a global experience unlike anything else in the city.

As one of Miami's hip up-and-coming districts, Little Haiti also proudly hosts a flourishing queer scene, one that's garnering attention from both locals and visitors alike. Creative, diverse and welcoming, the neighborhood's growing queer community is proudly taking Miami's LGBTQ scene by storm.

## Can't-Miss Queer Events and Venues in Miami's Little Haiti

Whether you're new to the scene or already immersed in Miami's queer community, there are a handful of queer venues and events in Little Haiti that you should add to your must-do list.

### "Dollhouse Presents..." at Churchill Pub

Every Tuesday at Little Haiti's Churchill's Pub, the queer community takes over and delivers an evening of incredible entertainment during the "Dollhouse Presents..." performances. The pub has been a fixture of Miami nightlife since the late 1970s, hosting an impressively diverse assortment of artists and events over the years. With the weekly "Dollhouse Presents..." shows, Churchill's Pub opens its doors to the most talented local and national queer musicians and performers.

Usually, the event kicks off at 9 p.m. and runs until the early morning hours, offering the perfect mid-week party. You can generally count on a drag show as a featured element of the night, along with an always-changing list of guest performers. Past guests for "Dollhouse Presents..." have included names such as Sugar Candy Mountain, Kibi James, Gatecreeper and Spirit & the Cosmic Heart.

### Queer Improv: YAAAS Improv at Villain Theater

YAAAS Improv proudly describes itself as Miami's one and only LGBTQ improv troupe, and the community response has been nothing short of monumental. When the Villain Theater opened in October of 2017, it was flooded with both guests and talented improv artists. It was clear that this



was going to be something big. YAAAS Improv is one of Villain Theater's most popular house troupes, joining a performance lineup that includes a monthly drag-improv midnight brunch.

With shows usually taking place every Friday, YAAAS Improv welcomes guests to participate in a delightful comedic experience that celebrates Miami's best queer talents. Every performance is completely unique, so you can easily attend every Friday without ever getting bored of the fun – might we suggest making it a new weekly tradition?

### Simply Good Miami

When Max Pierre founded Simply Good Miami in 2018, his vision was to create a welcoming venue where Miami's most talented individuals could reach and exceed their goals. This one-of-a-kind space is part incubator, part pop-up shop space for an impressive variety of aspiring new stars in the arts, retail, food and beverage – so there's always something interesting going on here. Simply Good Miami is just outside of Little Haiti, but it nevertheless captures the vibrant spirit and passionate creativity of the neighborhood's flourishing queer community.

Depending on when you visit Simply Good Miami, you might see anything from gallery shows or special events to pop-up culinary offerings from Miami's best new chefs. At the heart of this innovative space is the belief that fitness and nutrition can play a vital role in a person's health and happiness, as well as transform the world around us for the better. Founder Max Pierre aims to make this belief truly come to life in Miami. In addition to joining the community for the various events at Simply Good Miami, you can also reserve the space for private events, photoshoots and many other uses.

### Swetboxx

Although Swetboxx is technically just outside of Little Haiti in the nearby community of Wynwood, it's still a top favorite of the Little Haiti queer community. Hosted by Red Bull Music, the warehouse rave-style event is a must for music lovers searching for a next-level experience. Over the course of



12 hours, a multitude of talented queer performers and artists take the stage, transforming the usual nightclub concept into something completely new. At the heart of Swetboxx is the belief that inclusion and individuality are infinitely valuable, and the event itself celebrates everything that makes the Miami queer community so unique.

In past years, Swetboxx has featured stars of the queer scene such as Mykki Blanco, Queef Latina, Miss Toto, DJ Haram, Adam R and so many more, as well as notable DJs from all over the world. It's an energetic, nonstop party and the first event of its kind in both Miami and the U.S.

### Discover the Best of Queer Miami

As the LGBTQ scene in Miami continues to grow and expand, so does the list of events, venues and organizations created for the purpose of celebrating the queer community. Often fondly referred to as "America's Gay Riviera," Miami has long been known for its vibrant and flourishing queer community, with a fun-loving attitude that's both sophisticated and refreshingly laidback. In Little Haiti and beyond, the queer scene is blossoming at an exciting rate – and it doesn't seem like it will be slowing down anytime soon. 🌸





# STAY AND PLAY MIAMI FOR LGBTQ+ FAMILIES

A thrilling LGBTQ+ family-friendly weekend visiting Miami's top attractions!

by Gino R. Campodónico // photos by Richard Rodriguez

Miami is a welcoming, fun and family-friendly destination for all types of families, including LGBTQ+ families. The city has a thriving cultural and entertainment industry, with multiple unique spots to entertain kids of all ages, including the grown-ups! Richard Rodríguez-Mahé, or Rich Rod (@richrod) as he's known on Instagram, his husband, Cédric Mahé-Rodríguez, and their son, Théo, have lived in Miami for several years. "Miami is a very welcoming city where staff is always respectful and happy to greet all families regardless of the makeup. We're glad to say we've never had a bad experience here," says Richard.

In addition to local attractions and cultural institutions, the city also offers fun in the sun with well-known beaches and outdoor activities. "Miami has fun for all ages and all walks of life. From the beach to the attractions and the water, you can't go wrong," says Richard. We followed him and his family along for an insider's look at a few local experiences where they feel most welcomed.

## Discover Miami Attractions for LGBTQ+ Families

Whether you are visiting for a day or a week, your family will love spending time at Miami's attractions. In Downtown Miami's Arts & Entertainment District, don't miss the HistoryMiami Museum where they host family activities starting at noon on the second Saturday of every month. Also in the area are the Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) and the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science. The PAMM Kids program promises to create new pathways to connect kids to art through an engaging and educational experience.

If you love animals, Jungle Island and Zoo Miami are must-visits. The art lovers in the family will appreciate The Wolfsonian-FIU and The Bass, both located in the heart of the Art Deco District in Miami Beach. In the Miami Design District, the recently opened Institute of Contemporary Art Miami encourages community engagement with art and design through interactive activities and performances during its free Family Days on the third Sunday of every month.



Richard and his family also recommend beach time. “We like the area just outside of South Beach, around 20th Street, because it’s just a little quieter but still good people-watching and nice sand.”

### Family Time with the Kids

A favorite for Richard and his family is the Miami Children’s Museum on Watson Island, one of the largest children’s museums in the U.S. It offers interactive exhibitions, programs and learning materials related to arts, culture and our community. Every June during LGBTQ+ Pride Month, the museum hosts “Rainbow Families Day,” a place for all children to celebrate pride and diversity with playful activities that show support for LGBTQ+ families. Richard shares that, “Théo loved the ‘Safety Zone’ emergency services exhibit section. He was able to ride a police motorcycle and dress up like a firefighter!”

Also on Watson Island, directly across from the Miami Children’s Museum, is Jungle Island, an eco-adventure park with animals from around the globe. “It’s just so pretty,” says Richard. “There is lush landscaping and exotic birds everywhere, but being up close with parrots and capybaras was definitely the highlight!”

At the Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science, Miami’s only planetarium, aquarium and science museum in one place, families can experience interactive exhibitions and unique shows in an experiential and expansive setting. The museum strives to be accepting and comforting for

all families. “We love to see the jellies and sharks. There’s also a fun interactive dance floor where kids have a blast,” says Richard.

### Family Fun and Beyond

LGBTQ+ families can get their “drag” on around town, including the infamous drag brunch at R House Wynwood, a vibrant and funky destination. Taking place every Saturday and Sunday throughout the year, the drag brunch is a favorite of Théo. Richard says, “He loves to dance with the drag queens!” Nearby, he recommends visiting The Salty Donut to satisfy all sweet cravings. “We love it there; these aren’t your grandma’s donuts – they are elaborate and delicious.”

Still hungry? Richard says, “The best place to go for pizza with a kid is probably Ironside Kitchen Pizza & Coffee Co. in the Little River area. There are always tons of kids having a good time and parents can enjoy an authentic Italian pizza. What’s also great is that they are BYOB!”

An annual highlight for the Rodríguez-Mahé family is Miami Beach Pride every April, which stretches the length of Ocean Drive along the Art Deco district. The parade and festival have become increasingly welcoming to families with family-safe play areas and activities. “We camp out on the lawn by Lummus Park and watch the floats go by. It’s a fun atmosphere and fun for the whole family,” he says.

Whether your family likes to have fun in the sun or have a ball at an attraction, Miami has a rainbow of activities available to satisfy all tastes and ages. 🌈

# HAPPY VEGAN BAKERS

Hispanic soul food even meat-eaters will love!



It's no secret that going vegan can sometimes mean having to say goodbye to some classic cuisine favorites – and for some vegans, those farewells are forever. But luckily for vegans in Miami, the happy couple at Happy Vegan Bakers is serving up a delicious assortment of vegan dishes in a friendly, laid-back atmosphere.

With a menu comprised of what the business and life partners describe as the “vegan version of all your favorite Hispanic soul food,” this café covers all the bases from sweet to savory. Whether you're just stopping for a quick bite or craving a hearty vegan meal, Happy Vegan Bakers is sure to satisfy.

## A Vegan Diner's Dream Born in Miami

Here, you'll be able to order without having to inquire about every item's ingredients, and there's no need to worry about an unexpected non-vegan element – at Happy Vegan Bakers, the entire menu is perfectly plant-based. Owners Stephanie and Natalie Otero had a vision for a compassionate way of eating that didn't sacrifice on flavor. The café was inspired by the couple's nostalgia for the favorite foods of their childhood and beyond – many of which they missed since transitioning to a vegan lifestyle.

Instead of giving up on the foods that they loved, the creators of Happy Vegan Bakers got to work in the kitchen, recreating the dishes they grew up with. They knew that if they were noticing a need for great homestyle



vegan food in Miami, the odds were that other vegans were too. So, in 2014, they began making cupcakes, brownies, cakes and other vegan-friendly sweet treats for friends and family. Then, their efforts expanded to include comfort foods, like empanadas and pastelitos, as they worked from a space in the beloved El Tejadito Bakery in Miami.

Word spread quickly, and the vegan pastelitos began making their way into vegan restaurants and shops all over Miami. As more and more Miami vegans added Happy Vegan Bakers to their list of go-to favorites, the space they were cooking from in El Tejadito's kitchen quickly became too small. Today, much to the excitement of vegans all over Miami, Happy Vegan Bakers has now expanded into its own vegan restaurant and bakery in the heart of Hialeah.

## Prepare to Discover Your Newest Favorite Vegan Dishes

From the moment you walk in, Happy Vegan Bakers welcomes you with a cheerful ambiance and a bright, charming space. With a chic farmhouse feel and gorgeous greenery throughout the café, you'll feel like you're settling into a friend's home – albeit a very stylish one.



The menu is filled with a well-rounded assortment of Colombian-style bites that you won't find in many other vegan restaurants, making Happy Vegan Bakers stand out in the Miami culinary community. Your heart, soul and appetite will be filled with the delicious dishes emerging from the Happy Vegan Bakers kitchen, which range from classic empanadas to pizza boats with a vegan spin. Enjoy one of the café's signature coffees with your meal or cool off with a sweet juice – a tasty complement to just about everything on the menu. The staff is always more than happy to recommend something new to try, so don't hesitate to ask for suggestions if you're a first-time visitor.

### Happy Vegan Bakers

2800 W. 84th St., Unit 6  
Hialeah, FL 33018  
[HappyVeganBakers.com](http://HappyVeganBakers.com)

### Sample More Restaurants in Miami

In a city that's home to countless celebrity chefs, critically acclaimed restaurants and hidden local gems, there's no shortage of places to enjoy a memorable and delicious meal. Greater Miami offers up a huge variety of dining options you are sure to enjoy. 🌸



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# LGBTQ

## Annual Events

For exact dates, websites and additional information, go to [VisitMiamiLGBTQ.com](http://VisitMiamiLGBTQ.com)

**TransArt**  
Jan

**Wigwood**  
Feb

**Gay8 Festival**  
Feb

**Winter Party Festival**  
Mar

**Miami Beach Pride**  
Mar/Apr

**Fling Women's Weekend**  
Apr

**OUTshine Film Festival**  
Apr

**Sizzle Miami**  
May

**Sweet Heat Miami**  
May

**Out in the Tropics**  
Apr/May

**Wynwood Pride**  
Jun

**Aqua Girl**  
Oct

**Celebrate Orgullo**  
Oct

**Hialeah Pride**  
Oct

**Circuit Miami**  
Nov/Dec

**Art Gaysel**  
Dec



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