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April 12, 2017 By [DEBRA SCHROEDER](#) 17 COMMENTS *This post may contain affiliate links. Read my [DISCLOSURE](#) policies.*

What to Do in Miami on a 5-Hour Layover

Have a connection in Miami? You can fit in a trip to South Beach, the Everglades, or go shopping. Here's **what to do in Miami on a 5-hour layover**.

At Zeke's soccer tournament this weekend, Tami, mom of a friend of his, mentioned:

*“ We're going to Costa Rica this summer. We're excited about the trip. But we're flying on a red-eye flight and have a **5-hour layover in Miami**.*

During a 5-hour layover in Miami, Tami has time to see a little bit of Miami. She'll have to clear security when she gets back to the Miami airport. And she'll have to bring any carry-on bags with her. Or she can store them at the airport. But **visiting Miami on a short layover is possible**. Here's what to do in Miami on a 5-hour layover.



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What to Do in Miami on a 5-Hour Layover

Wandering around aimlessly, looking like zombie refugees. That's what a layover is like for most people. But a layover at the airport doesn't have to be a drag. If you, like Tami, have a short layover in Miami, here's a **quick guide on what to do in Miami on a 5-hour layover**.

During a 5-hour layover, after factoring in time to get through security (if they don't have TSA Pre-Check or Clear) and boarding time, Tami and her family will have a little over 2 hours to enjoy Miami. Because it can take longer than usual to clear security at Miami I've overestimated the time to give Tami extra time because no one wants to miss their flight.

With only 2 hours to explore Miami, it's still doable. Here's **what to do in Miami on a 5-hour layover**.

1. Airport Flyer Bus

Airport Flyer

Express bus service between
Miami International Airport,
Metrorail, and Miami Beach



\$2.35
FARE



Airport Flyer is the cheapest way to get to South Beach

Photo courtesy: Miamiade.gov

The **Airport Flyer Bus (route 150) express bus has a stop at the airport**. It's about a 3-minute walk from the terminal.

Tami can buy an **EASY Card** or **EASY Ticket** at the station. She can load it with the fare. It costs \$2.35 per person each way to Miami Beach. A 1-day pass is \$5 and valid through 2 am the next day. The Airport Flyer runs every 30 minutes from 6 am to 11 pm.

It takes about **36 minutes** to get **from the Miami Airport to South Beach on the Airport Flyer**. So Tami should plan on **1 1/2 hours round-trip** to get to and from South Beach.

Other options instead of Route 150 Airport Flyer Bus are to take a taxi, Super Shuttle, or use **Uber**. Taxis charge a flat rate of \$32 from the airport to South Beach. Super Shuttle is the most expensive option at \$20 per person. An Uber starts at \$19 each way.

Pro-tip: Get a **\$20 Uber credit** when you **sign-up with my [Uber referral link](#)**.

2. South Beach



Spend a couple of hours at the beach.

Photo courtesy: Pixabay

A trip to Miami isn't complete without a stop at the famous **South Beach**. South Beach is a great spot to stretch your legs after a long flight. Tami can **people watch, shop, enjoy a good meal** or **swim** in the **Atlantic Ocean**.

If you get tired of walking around or the heat is unbearable, hop on the **South Beach Local Trolley** and take a loop around South Beach. South Beach Local does a **loop** around South Beach. Rides are \$0.25 per trip. Tami can take a break from the heat and enjoy a scenic view of South Beach.

3. Holocaust Memorial



Garden of Meditation

Photo courtesy: Holocaust Memorial Miami

From South Beach, the [Holocaust Memorial](#) is an **8-minute drive** via [Uber](#) from the furthest end of South Beach. If you use the [SOBE Local](#) it takes **24 minutes**. But if Tami is done shopping at the [Lincoln Road Mall](#) the Holocaust Memorial is a short **7-minute walk**.

The Holocaust Memorial is open daily from 9:30 am to sunset or 9 pm whichever is earlier. Admission is free. Read [TripAdvisor reviews](#).

Pro-tip: Do not come in your bathing suit.

4. Miami Beach Botanical Garden



Legs stiff from a cramped airline seat? Stretch them out with a stroll through the Miami Beach Botanical Garden.
Photo courtesy: Miami Beach Botanical Garden

If you still have time, next to the Holocaust Memorial is the [Miami Beach Botanical Garden](#).

The Miami Botanical Garden is open Tuesday to Sunday from 9 am to 5 pm. You can visit the garden for **free**.

Pro-tip: You can catch the [Airport Flyer](#) back to the airport from the Collins Avenue stop (a 9-minute walk from the Garden).

5. Everglades Safari Park



Take a ride on an airboat through the Everglades.

Photo courtesy: Everglades Safari Park

If Tami is willing to take a chance and the timing works out, she can visit the [Everglades Safari Park](#). It's about a 40-minute drive from the Miami Airport.

The Everglades Safari Park is open daily from 9 am to 6 pm.

Daily tours include:

- 30 to 40-minute airboat ride
- Alligator show
- Museum and jungle trail

Adult tickets (12 and up) are \$25, \$12 for children age 5 to 11. Kids 4 and under get free admission.

The entire tour takes 1 1/2 hours. Getting there and back takes 1 hour 20 minutes. With a short layover of 5 hours or less, this could be a risky move.

Pro-tip: Use Uber if you visit the Everglades Safari Park on a short layover. Renting a car will take too much time. Because you have to pick up the car, get gas, and drop off the car.

6. Day Room at Hotel



You can freshen up, shower, or take a nap when you book a day room

Photo courtesy: Sheraton Miami Airport

If you're arriving into Miami on a red-eye and have a 5-hour layover, you may not feel like leaving the airport. Instead, Tami may want to **freshen up** before her next flight. She can **book a day room** at one of the **hotels near the Miami Airport**.

Closest to Miami Airport

- [MIA Hotel](#) – inside the airport, concourse E, before security
- [Hilton Miami Airport](#) – free airport shuttle
- [Miami Airport Marriott](#) – free shuttle

- [Sheraton Miami Airport Hotel & Executive Meeting Center](#) – across the freeway from the airport; free airport shuttle

Near Miami Airport With Free Breakfast

- [Clarion Inn & Suites Miami Airport](#) – free shuttle and hot breakfast
- [Hampton Inn & Suites Miami-Airport South](#) – free shuttle and hot breakfast
- [DoubleTree by Hilton Miami Airport & Convention Center](#) – free airport shuttle & chocolate chip cookies
- [Embassy Suites by Hilton Miami Airport](#) – free airport shuttle and hot breakfast
- [Homewood Suites Miami-Airport South-Blue Lagoon](#) – free shuttle and hot breakfast

Pro-tip: If arriving on an early morning flight, book the room the night before.

7. Airport Lounge

Sometimes it's easier to stay at the airport when you have a short layover. Especially if you have access to an airport lounge. There are **eight airport lounges at the Miami Airport after security**. Here's [how to get into every lounge at the Miami Airport](#).

American Airlines Admirals Club



Enjoy snacks, drinks, Wi-Fi, and a shower at the Admirals Club.

Photo courtesy: American Airlines

There are **two American Airlines Admirals Clubs at the Miami Airport**. The first is in **Concourse D, third floor**, across from **Gate 15**.

American Airlines Admirals Club

The second club is across from **Gate D30**.

Both Admirals Clubs are **open from 4:30 am to 10:30 pm daily**.

Amenities include:

- Snacks, drinks, wine and domestic beer
- Wi-Fi
- TVs

- Magazines and Newspapers
- Family room (Club D30)
- Printer, fax, and copier
- Computers
- Showers
- Additional food and top-shelf alcohol are available for purchase

Pro-tip: There are more showers at the Club at D30.

Admirals Club admittance is by:

- **Admirals Club membership**
- **Day pass**
- **First Class passengers** flying **nonstop** on American Airlines from **Miami to Los Angeles**
- **Citi AAdvantage Executive World Elite MasterCard**
- **Citi Prestige card** (with valid American Airlines boarding pass through July 23, 2017)

Club members and credit card holders can invite immediate family (spouse and children under 18) or up to 2 adult guests into the lounge. A day pass includes admission for up to 3 children under age of 18.

Pro-tip: She can apply the cost of her day pass to a yearly membership within 30 days.

Centurion Lounge



Get a free massage, facial or manicure at the Centurion Lounge.

Photo courtesy: Miami Airport

Also in Concourse D, near **Gate D12**, you'll find the **Centurion Lounge**. Take the elevator to the 4th floor.

Centurion Lounge amenities:

- Breakfast, lunch, dinner buffet, snacks, drinks, full bar
- High-speed Wi-Fi
- Flat-screen TVs
- Newspapers and magazines
- Private room for families
- Printer, fax, and copier
- Computers
- Showers
- Spa (back massage, facial, and manicures)

Tami can get into the Centurion Lounge if she has one of these American Express cards:

- **American Express Platinum** ([learn more](#))
- **Business Platinum card from American Express** ([learn more](#))
- Centurion card
- Any American Express card (must buy a \$50, day pass) (ends October 1, 2017)

The Centurion Lounge is open from 5 am to 11 pm.

American Express Platinum (personal or business) and Centurion cardholders can bring 2 guests to the lounge. Day Pass members can not bring in guests. Day pass use is limited.

Pro-tip: Make your free spa appointment when you check-in.

Premium Lounge

The Premium Lounge is in Concourse E on the fifth floor near Gate E2.

The Lounge is open daily. I'm not sure about the exact hours, possibly 6 am to 10:30 pm daily or not until 1 pm to 11 pm.

Amenities:

- Refreshments
- Premium liquors, wine, and beer
- TVs
- Children's room
- Showers

Tami can use the Premium Lounge if she:

- Is flying First Class or Business Class
- Has American Airlines Executive Platinum or Platinum elite status
- Is an Admirals Club member
- Buys a day pass for \$50

Club America

On the third floor of **Concourse F**, you'll find the **Club America Lounge**. Hours of operation are from 7:30 am to 10 pm daily.

You can get into the Club America Lounge for free if you're flying in First Class and Business Class on:

- Aruba Airlines
- BOA
- British Airways
- Eastern
- Virgin Atlantic
- XL Airways France

Coach passengers can buy a one-day pass for \$50 or use their [Priority Pass membership](#). 24-hour advance booking required.

You have to pay \$30 to \$35 to use the showers.

Pro-tip: Skip the Club America Lounge and go to the Centurion Lounge. If you can't get into the Centurion Lounge, pay for a day pass to the Admirals Club.

Delta Sky Club



A day pass gets you entry to the Delta Sky Club

Photo courtesy: Delta Airlines

The **Delta Sky Club** at the Miami Airport is in the **H and J connection**, on **level 2**, to the left of the H Concourse. The club is open **every day** from **5 am to 8:30 pm**.

Amenities include:

- Snacks
- Wine, beer, and spirits. Top-shelf alcohol at an extra cost
- Wi-Fi
- Newspapers and magazines
- Printers, fax machines

Tami can get into the Delta Sky Club lounge if she:

- Has a Delta Sky Club membership (executive or individual)
- Earned SkyTeam Elite Plus status and flying on a SkyTeam or Delta flight
- Is flying internationally in First Class or Business Class
- Has a Diamond Medallion Club membership
- Buys a one-day pass for \$59
- Is a [Delta Reserve](#) credit card holder and has a valid Delta boarding pass
- Has an American Express Platinum ([learn more](#)) card and flying on Delta

Avianca VIP Lounge

Star Alliance passengers can enjoy **24-hour** access to the [Avianca VIP Lounge](#) at the Miami Airport. The lounge is in **Concourse J**, near **Gate 12B** on the **third floor**. Turn left off the escalator, make another left, and go to the end of the hall.

Avianca VIP Lounge amenities:

- Light meals and snacks
- Alcohol
- Wi-Fi
- TV

Tami can get into this airport lounge if she is flying on a Star Alliance flight that day and:

- In Avianca Executive Class
- Has Avianca LifeMiles Gold and Diamond status (allowed one guest)
- Flying First Class (allowed one guest)
- A Business Class passenger
- Is a Star Alliance Gold elite member (allowed one guest)
- A United Club member
- An Air Canada Maple Leaf Club member
- Has a [Priority Pass membership](#)

VIP Lounge Operated by LATAM

The VIP Lounge operated by LATAM is in Concourse J, at Gate J6. Operating hours are as follows:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 5:30 a.m. – 1:30 a.m. Thursday, Saturday and Sunday 4:00 a.m. – 1:30 a.m.

VIP Lounge amenities:

- Refreshments
- Full bar including premium alcohol
- Wi-Fi
- Magazines and newspapers
- Printer, copier, and fax machine
- Showers

Tami can use the VIP Lounge Operated by LATAM if:

- Flying First Class on a oneworld airline (allows 1 guest)

- She has oneworld Sapphire or Emerald elite status (allows 1 guest)
- Flying Business Class on a oneworld airline
- She buys a [day pass](#) for \$60 (every person needs a pass including children)

Pro-tip: Priority Pass members can use the lounge on Monday and Tuesday from 12 pm to 3 pm. And on Wednesday to Sunday from 4 am to 3 pm. Priority Pass members can only stay up to 3 hours.

Baggage Storage

Tami can store her bags at the airport at the [Baggage Checkroom](#) or at Luggage Lounge. Luggage Lounge is near the beach. They are open from 9 am to 6 pm. You should use Luggage Lounge if you're already in Miami and want to hang out at the beach before an evening flight.

Storing bags at the airport is more convenient for someone on a layover. And I recommend this option. Tami can store her bags at the Baggage Checkroom located in Terminal E, second level, between doors 9 and 10. The Baggage Checkroom is open from 5 am to 9 pm. Perfect if you're coming off a red-eye flight. Daily rates begin at \$6 a bag.

Pro-tip: The Baggage Checkroom is before security. So you'll have to clear security with your bags

Get Global Entry



Save time, skip the line with Global Entry

If Tami leaves the airport, she has to go through security. Security lines can be long. She can **save time** if she has **TSA Pre-Check**. Tami can use the special TSA Pre-Check lanes when she gets to Miami Airport after visiting South Beach. She gets to **keep her shoes on, doesn't have to remove her laptop and liquids and can clear security fast**.

Here's how to get TSA Pre-Check: [apply and pay \\$80](#). But Tami should apply for [Global Entry](#). Because she'll **get TSA Pre-Check automatically with Global Entry**.

Global Entry costs **\$100 per person** and is **valid for 5 years**.

The **benefits of Global Entry**:

- **TSA Pre-Check on all domestic flights**
- Global Entry for when you come back into the US

When Tami flies back from Costa Rica, she can avoid the long wait in US Customs and Immigration line.

Tami can get a refund of her Global Entry fee if she has certain credit cards like the Citi Prestige Card, American Express Platinum card ([learn more](#)) and Expedia+ Voyager card.

Conclusion

Not sure what to do on a 5-hour layover in Miami? Even with a short connection, you have time to **explore Miami**. Tami can take the [Airport Flyer express bus](#) to South Beach and check out the scene, shop, eat, or take a dip in the ocean.

While she's in South Beach if she has the time she can visit the Holocaust Museum and Miami Beach Botanical Garden.

Another possibility is a trip to the Everglades Safari Park. This would be a risky move, but Tami might be willing to take that chance. I wouldn't...

So I suggested a couple of options such as a day room at a hotel near the Miami Airport or visiting an airport lounge. There are several **ways** Tami could [get into one of the many airport lounges](#) at Miami, including having an **American Express Platinum** ([learn more](#)) card or a **Priority Club membership**.

If Tami leaves the airport, she'll have to clear security. So she should get Global Entry which gives her TSA Pre-Check and access to special security lanes at the Miami Airport. Tami won't have to remove her shoes and she can keep her liquids and laptop in her carry-on bag. And when she comes back from Costa Rica, she can skip the long line at US Customs and Immigration.

There's so much to do in Miami like the [Miami Seaquarium](#), Miami Metro Zoo, [Jungle Island](#), and Monkey Jungle. But paying admission for a couple of hours isn't worth it. But if you have a longer layover in Miami and/or a layover on your return flight, you should get a [Go Miami Card](#).

Have you gone to South Beach on a 5-hour layover at the Miami Airport? If not, what did you do?

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- [How to Get Cheap Car Rentals for \\$5 a day](#)
- [How to Travel Free With Travel Rewards Cards](#)
- [Miami to New York Business Class for \\$94](#)
- [What to do When You Have a 5-Hour Layover in Seattle](#)
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