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# All roads lead to Florida fun

Tuesday, Mar 29, 2022  



by *Graham McKenzie*

## Three weeks in Florida sounds like a dream but how practical is it for the average tourist to take time out to tour the Sunshine State for three weeks or longer?

So, what does one require for such a long visit? Well, it has to be easy, exciting, offer value for money and there has to be great food. Florida for many reasons is a 365 day of the year choice and it just so happens I've just been there solo for over three weeks.

It is an ideal destination with a choice of three gateway airports offering regular and affordable direct flights from many of Europe's major cities. Getting around is very easy and you don't need a 'muscle' car to complete your tour. It won't be long before electronic vehicles are the transport of choice and then you can do a tour with a clear conscience as well as lower fuel costs.

I drove just over 2,000 miles in a modest Ford and encountered no difficulties. Major roads that go East-West are generally numbered even, whilst North-South is odd, so routing is easy. American cars have a number of safety features that are not fitted as standard in the United Kingdom and road signage is much larger and easier to follow. When you do stop the parking spaces are much bigger in the United States.

Excitement is around every corner. I am well into the baby boom generation, and on this trip I undertook my first paddleboarding lesson, first windsurfing lesson, ziplined, and rambled through woodlands. I rode a bike for 20 miles, played golf three times and went on numerous wildlife excursions to observe some of the most exotic wildlife on the planet.

A whole variety of accommodation is available throughout Florida from clean comfortable and safe, under £75 per night, up to 24/7 room service at any price. All of it in my experience offered

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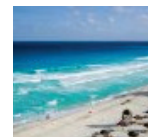
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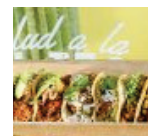
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excellent value for money, including all the 'standard' things one expects these days, such as free and fast WI-Fi plus cable television.

Finally, food: The state has undergone a culinary revolution over the past ten years. No longer does one have to settle for multinational chains as now each city, each town and each village has its own take on local, seasonal and fresh. The standard of cuisine throughout my three weeks was astounding and not at any stage did I yearn for beans on toast. It is also possible for even a seasoned traveller to discover new things and for me it was boiled peanuts. Sounds unappetising but they taste marvellous.

Coming out of all of this was a new sense of community and one that I was not aware of during my past visits to Florida. Each destination was bursting with pride, mixed with a determination to protect what they have. As we go forward in the post pandemic world of travel and tourism the phrases 'the bigger the better' and 'the more the merrier' may not sit so easily with local communities who want to preserve their own way of life as well as welcome new visitors.

The pandemic world may have given rise to stronger feelings and for most the biggest threat to this is overexploitation and greed. What can combat this? Well, the only answer is strong political leadership at a local level borne out of resident support and sensitive destination stewardship. In this way, what we as visitors hold dear and indeed what citizens cherish, will be preserved.



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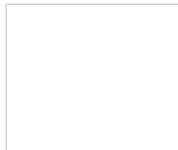


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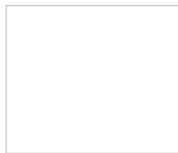


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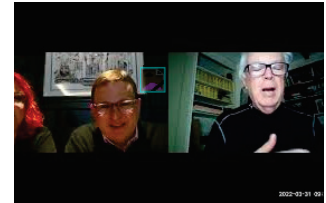
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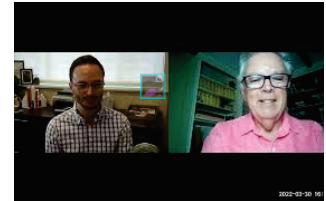
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