



featured destination

# The Panhandle

## Try a new destination in Florida or Alabama

The Gulf Coast of Florida is a great place to start your adventure West. A year round destination, the temperatures average around 75 in the Spring and stay into the low 80's through June. The summer is hot and humid in the summer but starting again in September the temperatures drop and the weather is perfect for boating. Let Marinalife plan your cruise to this largely undiscovered area for a great fall cruise.

### Apalachicola

Once the third largest port on the Gulf of Mexico, Apalachicola's diverse and colorful past remains visible today. There are over 900 historic homes and buildings in the National Register Historic District. Visitors stroll along the wide tree-lined streets where picturesque Victorian homes display the charm of years gone by. Apalachicola's rich history and a maritime culture are complimented by the area's bountiful natural resources. Apalachicola has been selected by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of America's Dozen Distinctive Destinations for 2008 making the city one of the top twelve vacation destinations across the United States which offers an authentic visitor experience by combining dynamic downtowns, cultural diversity, attractive architecture, cultural landscapes and a strong commitment to historic preservation and revitalization.

#### Where to Dock: *Scipio Creek Marina*

Scipio Creek Marina is a family-owned business, located on Florida's northwest Gulf Coast, within walking distance of historic Apalachicola's famous waterfront shops, restaurants, and attractions. This well-equipped facility and their friendly staff can provide fuel, power, dry storage, and wet slips. (tel: 850.653.8030)

### Port St. Joe

An old 1800's port town, Port St. Joe had assistance from the St. Joe Company in dredging a channel from the gulf to the city. Originally home to a paper mill, the town is transitioning into a resort town, but has not lost its' friendly nature and southern charm. Everything is within walking distance in the historic town and the welcoming citizens are happy to help guide you through. Enjoy an afternoon docked at Cape Sandblast – the barrier "hook" that protects the Port St. Joe area and is home to wonderful late summer scalloping and tarpon which run into the late summer.

#### Where to Dock: *Port St. Joe Marina*

The Port St. Joe Marina is located along the shore of St. Jo-

seph Bay in Port St. Joe, between Panama City and Apalachicola. With easy access to the Gulf of Mexico and Florida's Intracoastal Waterway, the marina is within minutes of some of the area's favorite fishing, diving, sailing and other activities. Port St. Joe's business district includes gift shops, hardware stores, grocery stores, etc. and is within easy walking distance, approximately 4 blocks from the marina. Port St. Joe Marina, with easy access to the Gulf of Mexico and the ICW, has 120 wet slips, 22 with covers. The onsite store carries boating supplies, fishing gear, and beverages and snacks. (tel: 850.227.9393)

#### Marinalife Discount: *25% off Dockage*

On your way to Panama City boaters will enjoy the natural feel of the Panhandle with sightings of plenty of wildlife including ospreys, eagles and porpoises. Spend a day anchored on Shell Island – 7 1/2 miles of undisturbed barrier islands, Crooked Island or Mexico Beach, which was also owned by the Port St. John Company and has not been developed.

### Panama City

A new International airport will make this area much easier to access. In the meantime, come by boat and enjoy the unspoiled beauty of the area. With no bridge restrictions or speed zones, Panama City is easy to navigate. The Inner Coastal Waterway runs parallel to the gulf all along the beach towns and makes for an easy shelter from a rough gulf. The fishing is great, both deep sea and flats in the bay estuary which is fed by a 40 foot deep tidal flow. The area makes it easy for boaters to anchor out alone and still be just miles from civilizations.

#### Where to Dock: *Bay Point Marina*

From the Keys to the Texas coast, there is no sanctuary for the yachtsman quite like Bay Point. Bay Point Marina is also the premier "jumping off" point along the Gulf Coast for yachts heading across the Gulf of Mexico. Competitive fuel prices and flexible hours make Bay Point the ideal place to stop on the trip south. It is worth the trip to Bay Point just to dine at 30° Blue, northern Florida's hottest new fine dining

sensation. When you stay at the Bay Point Marina, you have access to the Marriott resort located on the property. Featuring a newly designed Nicholas golf course and the Serenity Spa, the resort offers all the first class amenities you could ask for. (tel: 850.233.0221)

**Marinalife Discount:** 25% off Dockage

## Destin

Deemed the “World’s Luckiest Fishing Village”, Destin is the home of five saltwater world record titles and holds some of the largest fishing tournaments around. Sporting the closest deep-water access on the Gulf of Mexico — up to 600-foot depths within 10 miles — Destin provides eager deep-sea anglers the speediest route to the richest of fishing waters. Truly a one of a kind boater destination, Destin’s white sand beaches and emerald green waters hold the acclaim of the #1 Beach in America by USA Today Readers and one of the Top 10 harbors from Coastal Living.

**Where to Stay:** *Baytowne Marina at Sandestin*

Baytowne Marina is located in the heart of Sandestin Golf & Beach Resort on tranquil Choctawhatchee Bay which meanders into the Gulf of Mexico. Baytowne Marina is a full-service, 98-slip marina in the heart of the 2400-acre ultimate playground resort and can accommodate yachts up to 140 ft. (tel: 850.267.7773)

**Marinalife Discount:** 10% off fuel

## Pensacola

You might be inclined to overlook Pensacola, tucked away as it is at the west end of the Panhandle. The city, on the northern bank of the broad Pensacola Bay, is five miles inland from the nearest beaches, and its prime features are a naval aviation school and some busy dockyards. Pensacola is, however, worth a visit – its white beaches are relatively untouched, and it is an historic center - the city was occupied by the Spanish from 1559. Only the hurricane two years later that ended their settlement prevented it becoming the oldest city in the US. It repeatedly changed hands among the Spanish, French and British until 1821 when it was the place where Florida was officially ceded by Spain to the US.

**Where to Dock:** *Palafox Pier and Yacht Harbor*

In the heart of downtown Pensacola, Palafox Pier and Yacht Harbor has floating docks and can accommodate vessels up to 175 feet in length. Designated a “Clean Marina” by the Department of Environmental Protection, Palafox Pier is equipped with handicap accessible ramps, docks, restrooms and showers. Other amenities on-site include fuel docks with gas, diesel, ice, oil and pump-outs. Located at the end of Pensacola Bay’s east channel, this marina’s 15-foot deep basin is a favorite of traveling yachtsmen. (tel: 850.432.9620)

As you leave Florida and head into Alabama you reach the area known as “LA” (for Lower Alabama!) in the 1970’s. The beaches of the gulf coast offer pristine white stretches with small islands waiting to be discovered and excellent amenities.



## Orange Beach

Orange Beach is home to great beaches, a peaceful atmosphere and delicious food. The beach is very quiet and peaceful, and is great for families. Even as it becomes more and more popular, it is still a hidden gem on the Alabama coast.

### Where to Stay: *Orange Beach Marina*

In the very center of the Gulf Coast's finest beaches, bays, and bayous, you'll find a sportfishing and boating haven. Orange Beach Marina, a full service marina in a fully protected harbor, is conveniently accessible from the Gulf, TennTom, Intercoastal Waterway, Mobile or Pensacola Bay. There's a full service private airport within minutes, and commercial flights are as close by as Mobile and Pensacola. On the premises you will find two restaurants, both highly recommended by and featured in Southern Living: Mangos, for casual waterfront dining, and Calypso's, an island favorite featuring the best of the Caribbean. On-site boat and yacht sales, brokerage, and engine repair, outfitting, fishing charters, and a dock store make this facility truly unique and the finest of Gulf Coast and Orange Beach marinas. Ten minutes by boat from Orange Beach Marina, you leave Perdido Pass and enter into some of the world's best sport fishing. There are also eight premier golf courses within minutes. (tel: 251.981.2094)

## Mobile


The busy port and paper manufacturing city of Mobile traces its origins back to a French community founded in 1702. These early white settlers brought with them Mardi Gras, celebrated

in Mobile continuously since 1704 – several years before New Orleans. Virtually every street is transformed in early spring by the delicate colors of azaleas, camellias and dogwoods – a beautiful complement to the many early eighteenth-century Spanish and colonial-style buildings. Parallels with New Orleans are everywhere you look, from wrought-iron balconies to street names like Conti and Bienville and gumbo specials in the restaurants.

### Where to Dock: *Dog River Marina*

Dog River Marina Complex is a full service marine facility and it houses all areas of the boating industry, from painting and hull repairs to new and used boat sales. The Complex's full-service repair facility is staffed with highly trained personnel to handle everything from simple repairs to complete overhauls. (tel: 251.471.5449)

Travel through the remainder of Mississippi and Louisiana remains scattered as the area is still recovering from the effects of Hurricane Katrina. Marinalife is staying on top of developments in this area and will continue to update our web site as information becomes available and marinas reopen. In the meantime, we do have options for boaters who are coming through the area from Texas or want to start their voyage further west. Happy Boating!

**Marinalife Discount:** *Free pumpout and free wireless internet* 

To view this cruise itinerary visit:  
[www.marinalife.com/cruises/panhandle](http://www.marinalife.com/cruises/panhandle)

