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“Dr. Beach” Names

Siesta Beach America’s Best

Miami, FL—For release at 7 AM EST on Friday, May 27, 2011. Siesta Beach is the number one beach in the 21th annual Top 10 Beach List, produced by coastal expert Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman, Director of Florida International University’s Laboratory for Coastal Research.

Siesta Beach in Sarasota boasts that it has the finest and whitest sand in the world, and I cannot argue with this claim; the powdery sand is nearly pure quartz crystal. The beautiful blue-colored water is clean and clear, making it so inviting to bathers and swimmers. The beach is hundreds of yards wide, attracting volleyball players and beachcombers as well as those who just want to find their place in the sun. Waves at Siesta Beach are normally measured in inches and the beach gradually slopes into the Gulf waters, making it a very safe area for children.

This beach park is complete with showers and bathrooms, snack bars, grills, picnic tables, shade trees, and a large parking area, which does fill up on summer weekends. Siesta Beach is a smokeless beach, earning extra points for cleanliness and environmental management. My favorite time to visit is after Labor Day when things have calmed down, and the water is still warm enough for swimming until November. Snowbirds from northern climes call this area home during the winter because of the great weather. The beaches are for exploring, but not swimming at this time of year, albeit I have been in the water as early as March.

As “Dr. Beach” (www.DrBeach.org), Leatherman has selected the annual Top 10 Beaches since 1991. Fifty criteria are used to evaluate beaches, which include water and sand quality as well as safety and environmental management. Dr. Leatherman is an internationally known coastal scientist who has published 17 books with the recent release of *Rip Currents: Beach Safety, Physical Oceanography and Wave Modeling* (CRC Press, May 2011) and hundreds of scientific articles about storm impacts, erosion and ways to improve beach health and safety. A new website (www.Beachfinder.org) has recently been developed to help you find other great American beaches.

Additional Online Resources:

Biography for Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman: www.drbeach.org/pressreleases/CV_Leatherman.doc

Photographs: www.drbeach.org/mediakit.htm

Dr Beach’s 50 Criteria: www.drbeach.org/50criteria.htm

TOP 10 BEACHES 2011

1. Siesta Beach
Sarasota, Florida
2. Coronado Beach
San Diego, California
3. Kahanamoku Beach
Waikiki, Oahu, Hawaii
4. Main Beach
East Hampton, New York
5. Cape Hatteras
Outer Banks of North Carolina
6. St. George Island State Park
Florida panhandle
7. Beachwalker Park
Kiawah Island, South Carolina
8. Coast Guard Beach
Cape Cod, Massachusetts
9. Waimanalo Bay Beach Park
Oahu, Hawaii
10. Cape Florida State Park
Key Biscayne, Florida

Dr. Beach's Top 10 Beaches List Descriptions for 2011

1. Siesta Beach, Sarasota, Florida

With some of the finest, whitest sand in the world, this beach attracts sand collectors from all over. Siesta Beach has clear, warm waters that serve for ideal swimming. The beach is hundreds of yards wide in the shape of a crescent, due to anchoring of onshore rocks to the north and a unique underwater formation of coral rock and caves, providing for great snorkeling and scuba diving. This beach is great for volleyball and other types of recreational fitness.

2. Coronado Beach, San Diego, California

Coronado Beach is the toast of Southern California; it is a veritable oasis by the sea, measuring hundreds of yards wide. With its lush subtropical vegetation, unique Mediterranean climate, and fine sparkling sand, beach-goers flock to this beach for great ship watching and the summer's mild surf. The local landmark, Hotel del Coronado, was built over a hundred years ago, offering spectacular architecture and Old World elegance. Kings, sheiks, actors, and actresses have stayed at Hotel del Coronado, where food and drinks are served on the beach, and the hotel provides a great location for celebrities.

3. Kahanamoku Beach, Waikiki, Hawaii

This beach was named in the honor of Duke Paoa Kahanamoku who was a gold medal Olympic swimmer and credited with introducing surfing to the outside world. Kahanamoku Beach is bounded by the Ala Wai small boat harbor and the Hilton Hawaiian Village catamaran pier. A shallow offshore reef protects this beach from the big waves, making it a great swimming area for families with children.

4. Main Beach, East Hampton, New York

Main Beach provides the perfect blend of nature and built environment. Wealthy summertime residents flock here to the beaches protected by a conservation easement, dating back over 300 years. Main Beach is a great place for star-spotting, since many actors and actresses frequently visit this beach for its idyllic setting in a small village. The big, wide sandy beach made of quartz has towering sand dunes and beautiful clean and clear blue water. The best way to get around this beach is on bicycle in order to avoid parking and to take in the beautiful vista.

5. Cape Hatteras, Outer Banks, North Carolina

Bulging far offshore of the mainland coast as a barrier island, Cape Hatteras was the first National Seashore. Providing some of the best board surfing along the East Coast, as well as the most famous lighthouse in the United States, Cape Hatteras attracts beachgoers to its historic fishing villages. Nature lovers adore the excellent beachcombing and superb fishing.

6. St. George Island State Park, Florida

The Florida panhandle beaches are back as oil from the BP spill has vanished, and the sand is squeaky clean (just rub your feet on the sand and hear them squeak). The brilliant white sands and clear waters of St. George Island were fortunately not even impacted last summer. Stingrays are sometimes resting in the shallow waters so shuffle your feet when entering. Birding and fishing are very popular activities here.

7. Beachwalker Park, Kiawah Island, South Carolina

South of Charleston, Beachwalker Park is the public beach located on the southern end of Kiawah Island. Tennis and golf are featured here, as well as interpretative tours of the fauna and flora of the island. This is certainly a nature-lovers coast, so visitors should pack their canoes and kayaks to paddle through the tidal inlets or walk down to St. Sam's Inlet to see thousands of birds. The water is not clear here, but it is clean and provides for fantastic seafood for low-country cooking. Visitors can also pack their bicycles, since the sand is compact enough to ride along the 10-mile long barrier island.

8. Coast Guard Beach, Cape Cod, Massachusetts

Coast Guard Beach, accessible by bicycle or via shuttle bus from the Salt Pond Visitor's Center, was formed where a sand spit attached to the eroding glacial cliffs. The sand is fairly coarse, so the beach slopes steeply into the water. The picturesque old Coast Guard station still sits atop the glacial bluffs, allowing for a spectacular view down upon the Nauset Spit barrier system and bay. During the summer, beach-goers take quick, refreshing dips in the ocean, as water temperatures only reach 60-70 degrees.

9. Waimanalo Bay State Park, Oahu, Hawaii

This park has ample parking, restrooms, outdoor showers, and a good beach for swimming. While not as stunning as some other Hawaiian beaches, it is a safe beach because big waves and dangerous currents are rare and lifeguards are present. Hawaiians who live on Oahu frequent this beach.

10. Cape Florida State Park, Key Biscayne, Florida

Cape Florida State Park, located at the south tip of Key Biscayne, provides clear, emerald-colored waters and gentle surf. This fine, white coral sand beach is great for swimming, as waves are knocked down by a large sand shoal offshore. In addition, the Cape Florida Lighthouse allows for a breathtaking view of this beautiful beach.