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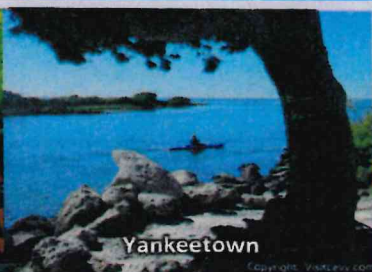
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Yankeetown



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Steamers, Cedar Key

The

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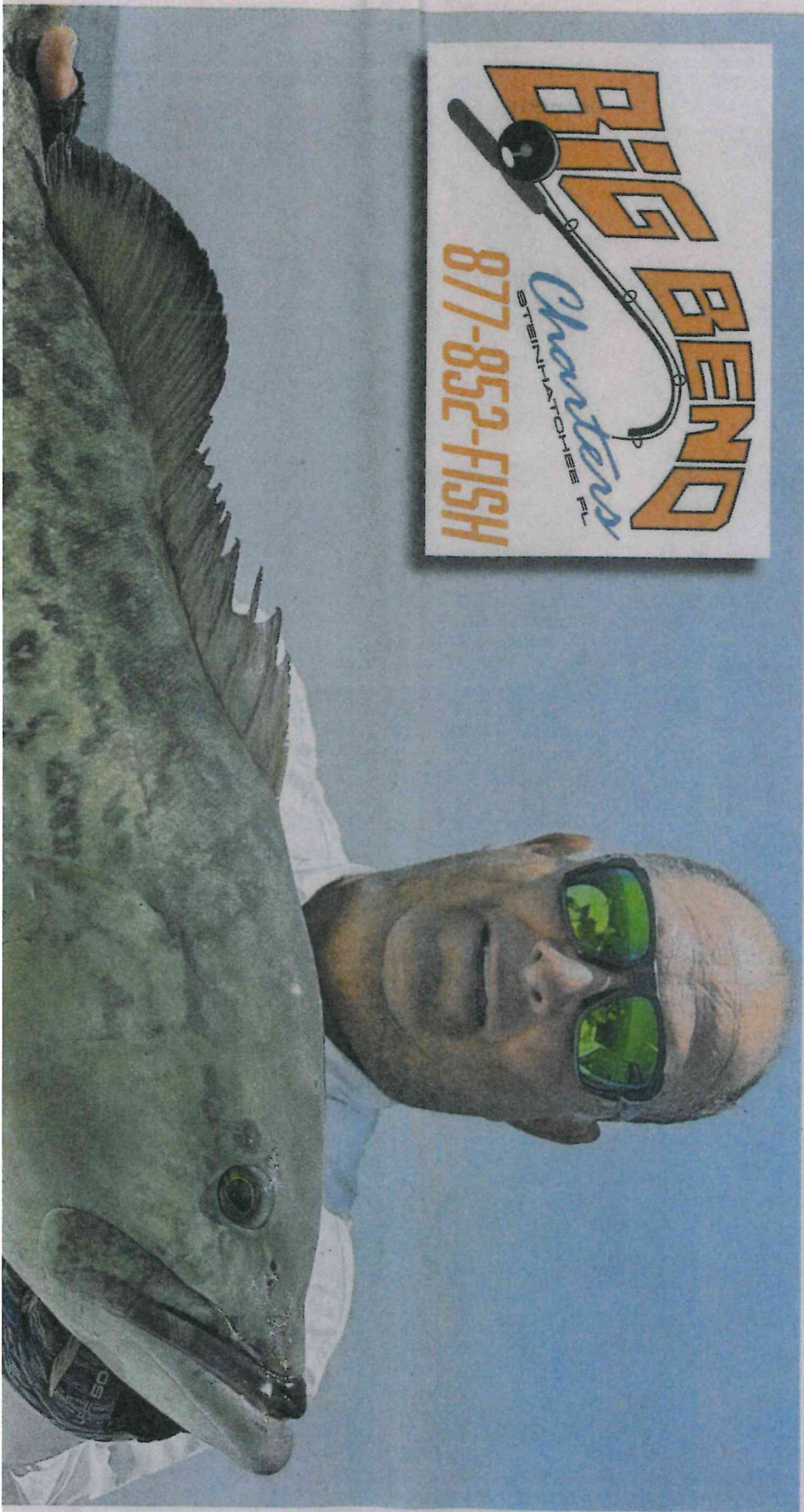
THE HIDDEN COAST'S MONTHLY TAB ON FISHING & OUTDOOR RECREATION

Volume 4 Edition 5 | May 2026



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The FISHING LOWDOWN
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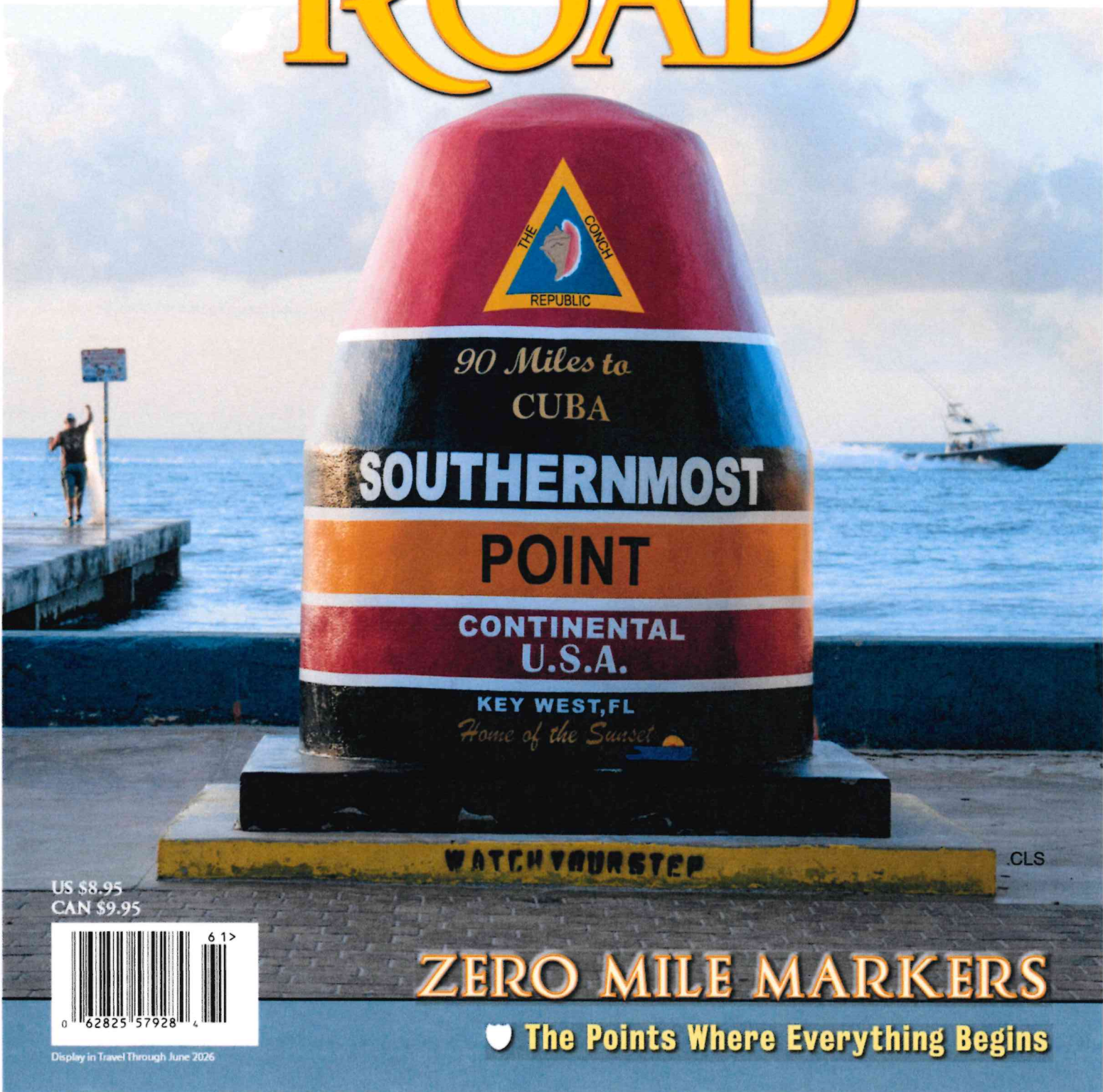
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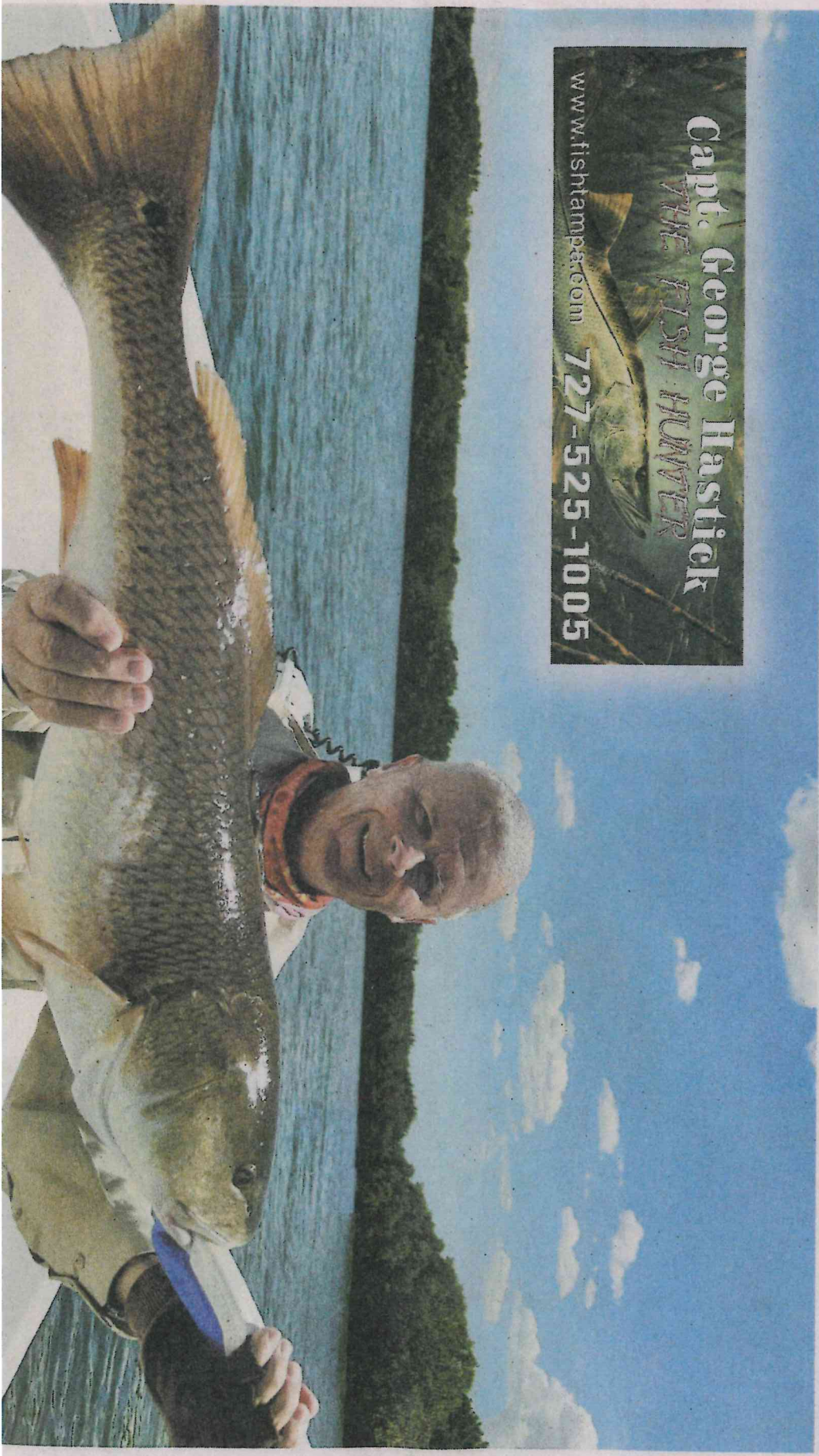
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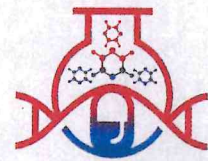
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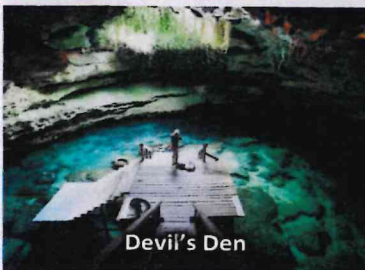


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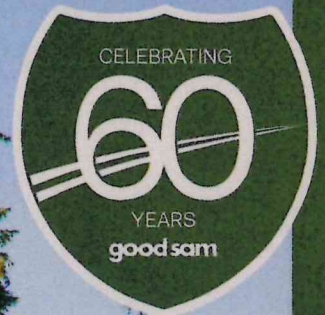
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See listing Williston, FL

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Spotlights



↑ Sunset in Cedar Key, a small community that embraces its "old Florida" label. Getty Images.

of Barefoot Beach Preserve, or lose themselves in the tranquil trails of Lover's Key State Park.

Prime Punta Gorda

Punta Gorda offers a compelling mix of resilience and recreation. Rebuilt after Hurricane Charley, the town boasts scenic Harborwalk, charming Fisherman's Village, and a series of vibrant murals celebrating local heritage. Its waterfront parks and galleries invite exploration, and the local farmer's markets, seafood festivals, and art shows keep the community buzzing year-round.

Pleasure hailed from here — and the Black Prong Equestrian Center serves as the launch point for more than 150 miles of scenic horseback trails. Riders meander through whispering flatwoods, splash through swamps, and breathe in the earthy, pine-scented air.

Spring into Adventure

But the adventures don't stop on land. Beneath the surface, some of Florida's most captivating freshwater springs lie hidden within the Suwannee River Basin. At Devil's Den Spring, divers descend into a prehistoric

underground chamber filled with crystal-clear water and natural light shafts. Nearby, the Blue Grotto lures divers into its sprawling limestone cavern, while those looking to stay closer to the surface can snorkel at Manatee Springs and Fanning Springs state parks, where the water is a refreshing 72 degrees year-round.

Paddle into the Wild

To truly experience the Nature Coast, take to the water. Canoes, kayaks, and small boats are the only way into the pristine heart of Waccasassa Bay Preserve State Park, a remote sanctuary on the Gulf. Or launch from Henry Beck Park onto the Wekiva River, where one of Florida's last untouched river systems gently flows through a State Canoe Trail. The only sounds you'll hear? The call of osprey, the rustle of palmettos, and your paddle dipping into tranquil and glassy water.

↓ Tiki Bar at Harbor Walk located on the Peace River in Punta Gorda. Getty Images.



Levy County/ Cedar Key

In Levy County — pronounced "Lee-vee" by the locals — Florida's wild side is alive and well. Nestled along the state's Gulf Coast, this unspoiled corner of north Florida is affectionately known as the Nature Coast, and it lives up to the name. Nearly 20 percent of the land here is protected, with dense forests, quiet marshes, and sweeping sandhills giving way to more than two dozen nature-based adventure spots. It's where you come to truly unplug—and reconnect with the world as it once was.

Outdoor Adventure Around Every Bend

The crown jewel of Levy County's wilderness is Goethe State Forest, stretching across 53,000 acres in the southeastern part of the county. This classic Florida horse country — 1975 Kentucky Derby winner Foolish

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Where Old Florida Still Lives

In Levy County's cozy, character-rich towns, time seems to slow down just enough for you to soak it all in. In Williston, where peanut farming reigns supreme, residents celebrate their beloved crop every October with the Central Florida Peanut Festival—complete with roasted, boiled, and even fried goobers. Not far from town, Cedar Lakes Woods and Gardens transforms a former lime rock quarry into a blooming paradise of waterfalls, koi ponds, and more than 50 botanical gardens.

The Keys to Wilderness

To the west, a string of 13 islands makes up the Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge — and at the heart of it lies the quaint village of Cedar Key, where history runs deep and the seafood is unforgettable. The town's roots stretch back to a 19th-century Army fort, and the Seahorse Key Lighthouse, perched atop the highest natural point on Florida's Gulf Coast, still stands as a sentinel of a bygone era.

Clam Capital

Cedar Key once boomed as the western terminus of Florida's first cross-state railroad. But its fortunes changed in 1994, when the state banned net fishing. The resilient locals

reinvented their coastal livelihoods and turned to clam farming — and today, Cedar Key is the clam capital of the United States. You can taste that salty-sweet success in every bowl of chowder at Steamers.

Go Fish

Want to reel in your own dinner? Cast a line from the Cedar Key Fishing Pier on Dock Street, then bring your catch to a nearby restaurant where they'll cook it up just the way you like it.

Stories Etched in Time

You'll find layers of Florida history tucked into every corner of Cedar Key. At the Cedar Key Historical Society Museum, discover how the town evolved from a vital 1800s Gulf port into today's artsy fishing village. The Cedar Key State Museum features local artifacts and seashells curated by early resident Saint Clair Whitman, lovingly preserved in his original 1880s home.

Mounds of History

Travel back even further in time at the Shell Mound Unit in the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge. Here, a towering midden of discarded shells — built by the Eastern Woodland Indians over centuries — chronicles people who lived in rhythm with the tides for more than a thousand years.

Madison County

Get ready to uncover a part of Florida that moves at a more relaxed pace. Madison County, situated near the Florida-Georgia border, about an hour east of Tallahassee, opens the door to quiet country roads, clear natural springs, and wild rivers. It's also a place that genuinely recaptures the nostalgia of vintage Florida, where small-town charm and historical sites provide a detour to simpler and more laid-back era.

Premier Natural Spring

Located off the banks of the Withlacoochee River North, Madison Blue Spring State Park is home to a crystal-clear freshwater spring that USA Today recognized as the country's top swimming hole. The blue spring is surrounded by lush forest and features a shallow spring run that flows down 150 feet to the Withlacoochee River. Spend your day swimming, snorkeling, or simply relaxing in the shade of overhanging oak trees by the glistening pool. If you're feeling adventurous, consider a cave diving excursion. Cave divers across the globe come to the park to go deep and explore the spring's extensive cave system, consisting of over 26,000 feet of underwater passages.

↪ Balanced Rock Trail is a short, multi-use trail for hiking and biking that circles a balanced rock formation on the Suwannee River. Getty Images



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March 2026

The Last of Old Florida

Old Florida Celebration of the Arts
April 11 & 12, 2026
Cedar Key, FL

Saturday, 10am-5pm | Sunday 10am-4pm

SEE PAGES 6-7 FOR MORE INFORMATION



The Stars of Cedar Key
by Glen Spaulding

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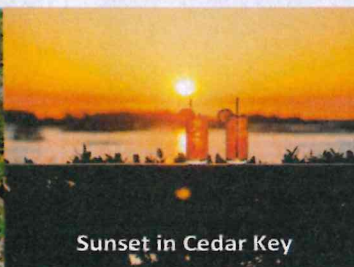
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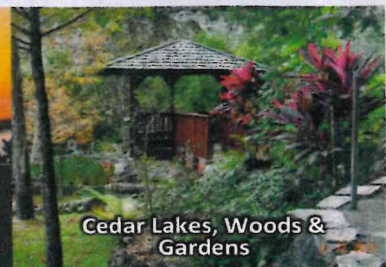
Blackwater Grill



Black Prong Resort



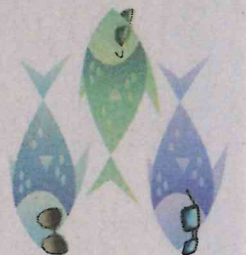
Sunset in Cedar Key



Cedar Lakes, Woods & Gardens

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THE HIDDEN COAST'S MONTHLY TAB ON FISHING & OUTDOOR RECREATION

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