

ShermansTravel

The Quaint, History-Filled Florida Beach Town That's Still a Secret

by Christina Valhouli



Dunedin, Florida — which is just 20 minutes from [Clearwater Beach](#) — feels like a world away. One of the oldest cities on Florida’s west coast, Dunedin was originally settled by Scottish immigrants, and its name is the Gaelic version of Edinburgh. Marked by the red telephone box and street signs with names like Scotland Street and Highland Avenue, the town celebrates its Scottish heritage. The annual [Dunedin Highland Games & Festival](#) in the spring and the [Dunedin Celtic Music and Craft Beer Festival](#) each fall make for great reasons to visit.

But, there’s plenty to do here beyond kilts and bag pipes. Dunedin is an arts and culture hub, thanks to its vibrant street art and galleries. Beyond the art, there are also craft breweries, restaurants, and boutiques to explore. What you won’t see are any chain stores or restaurants in downtown Dunedin, making it a perfect (and compact) taste of old Florida.

What to See and Do

Brush up on Dunedin’s past at the [Dunedin History Museum](#) (\$5 adult admission). The exhibits cover the town’s settlers as well as its railroad and citrus industries. [Jagged Lines](#), the museum’s current exhibit, looks at tattoo culture from Native Americans to the present day. The Fab Four are the focus of [Penny Lane, Beatles Museum](#), which is located above [Rosie’s Tavern of Dunedin](#) (free admission). The museum is the brainchild of Liverpool native and Dunedin resident Dr. Robert Entel, and the 650-square-foot space showcases his collection of Beatles memorabilia, from soap bubbles to cake toppers to ticket stubs.

The Beatles museum shares a space with [Stirling Art Studios & Gallery](#), an artist collective that's comprised of 10 studios. The exhibits are always rotating, and if you want to meet the people behind the works, plan your visit accordingly: an artists' reception is held the second Friday of every month. Additionally, [Ann's Monroe Street Gallery](#) looks like a residential home from the exterior, and showcases her acrylic paintings along with works from other artists.

You don't have to stop by a gallery to see art in Dunedin; the streets themselves are filled with colorful works. Keep an eye out for murals of oranges on building walls, which were painted by Stephen Spathelf, who was inspired by the vintage packing labels used to ship Dunedin's oranges in its heyday of citrus production. Downtown is also home to a mural poem by Jack Prelutsky, the first U.S. Children's Poet Laureate. One of the most popular pieces of street art is an enormous mural of the city's dogs, with the slogan "Welcome to Dogedin."

In addition to the murals, downtown Dunedin is packed with independent boutiques. [Key West Express Boutique](#) sells fun resort wear like tunics and linen pants. Pop into [Emilia's Apothecary](#) for teas, tinctures, and herbal remedies, along with products like rose shea butter and soy candles. Nearly all of the products here are made with organic or wild harvested herbs. Also, don't forget to pick up a beach read at [Back in the Day Books](#), an independent shop that sells new and used tomes.

Carve in some time to visit the [Fred Marquis Pinellas Trail](#), a pedestrian-only path which runs perpendicular to Main Street. Run, cycle, or stroll along this trail, which was once an abandoned railway path. The entire Pinellas trail spans 47 miles from St. Petersburg to Tarpon Springs. If you'd rather watch sports than participate in them, visit when the Toronto Blue Jays are in town for spring training and practicing at Dunedin Stadium.

One of Dunedin's biggest draws is its easy access to [Honeymoon Island](#). This state park is home to one of the most pristine beaches along the Gulf of Mexico (entrance fee is \$8 per car). There's four miles of beach to explore, along with hiking trails. There's also a café that serves up basic fare like burgers and fries. If you walk for a few minutes past the beach entrance, it's easy to find a stretch of sand to call your own for the day. You can reach Honeymoon Island via a short drive on the Dunedin Causeway, and rent a kayak to paddle there; alternatively, hire an electric bike from [Kafe Racer](#).

Where to Eat and Drink

Back on land, you won't be able to hit all of Dunedin's restaurants in a day but options include [Casa Tina](#), a casual spot with an eclectic Florida-meets-Mexico menu. This translates to fresh fruit margaritas and grouper fajitas, along with shrimp and mango quesadillas. [Hog Island Fish Camp](#) is named after the original moniker for Honeymoon Island when it was connected to Caladesi Island (a hurricane split the land in two). The specialty is, of course, fish, which shows up as appetizers of smoked fish dip, blackened shrimp flatbread, and catch of the day (think grouper, cobia, and hogfish) served blackened, grilled, or broiled. For a quick bite on the go, stop by the tiny [Taco Baby](#), which is located in a 54-square-foot stand that formerly held an ATM. On Tuesdays, you can score \$2 tacos. Craving something sweet? [Strachan's Ice Cream](#) scoops flavors like red velvet cake, salted caramel peanut, and Key lime pie.

No trip to Dunedin would be complete without sampling some craft beer. This compact town is home to seven breweries including [Dunedin Brewery](#), the oldest microbrewery in Florida. Swing by to sample the small batch Local Honey ale or Sun Zoom, a Belgian-style saison. In a hurry? Get yours to go in a growler or pick up a four pack of tallboy cans to bring a little taste of Dunedin home with you.