



“I found myself inextricably drawn to Tenya’s wonderful backyard.”

Cool On Your island

I had nary an inkling the mythic Mississippi river would play a role in my flight to southern Florida to see...guess who? My travel buddy Tenya!

Do you remember the first time you heard the word Mississippi sung this way: M-I-crooked letter crooked letter -I- crooked letter crooked letter -I- humpback humpback-I? The cutesy curvaceous song came full circle as -I- pressed my sweat beaded forehead against the teeny airplane window. The mighty muddy Mississippi river water meandered down below (way down) doing what appeared to be busy big business- well with all the barges and cargo containers humming along.

Florida, HO!

Finally, four years after Tenya and her family made a nest on Sanibel Island I headed east to have a look-see at the tropi-

cal island she calls home. Sanibel is a boomerang shaped barrier island off the west coast of Florida that is a literal shell treasure trove. The ‘Sanibel stoop’ is a verb commonly used to describe the stooping posture sheller’s make while hunting for delightful seaside finds. Although I did spend some quality time building my own compilation of salty



shells, I found myself inextricably drawn to Tenya’s wonderful backyard. The divine culprit beckoning me was the sweet idyllic wooden dock perched over a glorious mangrove lined canal. I sprawled out on that dock for hours on end watching light sparkle and dance on the waters top. Fish were a’ jumping, manatee’s were floating, exotic birds were fishing, balmy breezes wafted and soothing sunshine peeked through the leafy trees. Yes, I day-dreamed all the live long day.

Then one morning, Tenya lovingly peeled me from ‘my’ dock and announced “let’s go to South Beach, Miami!”

Zing!

Talk about going from one extreme to the next. We made our way across the famed alligator stuffed everglades (we spotted many gators. Ack!) and landed ourselves smack dab in the middle of South Beach.

We immediately checked into our gorgeous hotel; The Raleigh (Google it, it’s fantastic). We giggled in the elevator, raced down the dim hallway to open our door, marveled at our room perfectly appointed with killer art deco furnishings and flung the windows open to let the humid ocean air in to join us in our joy. Kate Hudson was staying two floors above us. We didn’t see her though.

The thing I found most beguiling about South Beach was the tangible energy rippling through the atmosphere there. A heady alchemical mix of sultry intrigue combined with an international transient spirit permeated my senses as we walked through the streets and shops. We stood on Ocean Blvd. and let the classic art deco architecture weave its bold magic around us to our left while the electric aqua hued Atlantic Ocean ebbed and flowed to our right. The

blinding white sand made the ocean all the more blue.

To cover the shopping experience in Miami would take up another thousand words so trust me when I say the shopping in Miami is epic! If you run into me, ask me about the vintage Samsonite bag I found. Tee hee.

We ended our journey on a high noon note and headed back across the, “look at the size of that snout” Alligator Alley then over the causeway leading to Sanibel Island and back to Tenya’s home for some cool drinks on her island.

