

By Denise Reynolds

Oceanfront Oasis

Runners can find respite from the chill of winter in Fort Lauderdale



EVERYTHING'S BETTER WHEN SERVED with a side of sunshine, and running is no exception. With more than 3,000 hours of sunshine a year, 23 miles of white-sand beaches, and average year-round temperatures of 77 degrees, Fort Lauderdale's allure for beach runners is as clear as its sparkling tropical waters — and it's just what you need to chase away those winter blues.

Sunrise at the beach is the perfect time and place to kick off a Fort Lauderdale six-miler. Stretch out your calves by leaning on the beach's famous wavewall, where Sunrise Boulevard meets the ocean at Route A1A. From there, head south along A1A. Listen to

the sound of the surf, and let the rhythm of the waves propel you gently forward. You'll have plenty of company as you make your way: couples walking hand in hand along the palm-fringed pathway; tanned, bikini-clad beauties gliding by on their in-line skates, and other runners sharing in your endeavor.

On your right, you'll see a walled estate. That's the Bonnet House Museum & Gardens — the 1920s oceanfront home of painter Frederic Clay Bartlett. Those distinctive round-leaved trees peeking over the wall are sea grapes, native to the mangrove swamps that lined South Florida's coastline back then. For the next mile,

you'll enjoy Atlantic Ocean vistas on your left, along with an array of shops and sidewalk cafés.

At Casablanca Café, A1A splits; veer to the right. Then, about half a mile later, turn right onto Las Olas Boulevard, home to fashionable boutiques, art galleries, and restaurants. On the way, you'll head up a slight incline where a drawbridge crosses over the Intracoastal Waterway. If you happen to catch the bridge while it's up, you'll be rewarded with a close-up view of yachts on parade. Jog in place until the bridge lowers, then continue west on Las Olas, looking left to spy sailboats moored in a quiet inlet. Up ahead, you'll have a bird's-eye view of the megayachts docked behind their owners' palatial Las Olas Isles estates. With 300 miles of navigable waterways, Fort Lauderdale is home to more than 40,000 boats. Individual white bridges connect each residential street to the royal palm-lined boulevard, allowing you a glimpse into the watery playgrounds of the rich and famous.

Leave Millionaire's Row behind as you approach the trendy shops of Las Olas. Straight ahead you'll see the city's skyline in the distance. Turn right onto SE 15th Avenue, nodding to the landmark Floridian Restaurant on your left as you round the corner. Two-tenths of a mile later, turn right onto Broward Boulevard, where you'll enjoy a shady run. The road curves left, taking you onto Victoria Park Road, which winds gracefully through a charming



Dive In

If the sight of water tempts you off the road, get into the swim of things at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex, located just off the beach, south of Las Olas Boulevard. Four dollars will buy you a day pass to two million-gallon pools. While there, check out the International Swimming Hall of Fame museum, which showcases the greatest achievements in aquatic history. 501 Seabreeze Blvd., 954.828.4580; <http://ci.ftlaud.fl.us/flac> — D.R.

residential neighborhood. You'll pass a pair of waterfront parks on your right, complete with a picturesque gazebo.

Turn right onto NE 7th Street and follow the road a few blocks until it curves sharply left, turning into NE 20th Avenue. You'll pass an assortment of vintage resale shops and restaurants before turning right onto Sunrise Boulevard for your last mile. Continue across a stationary bridge that spans Middle River, a wide stretch of water popular with Jet Ski riders. Look left to see George English Park, and right to see luxury retailers at Galleria Mall. Then it's over another Intracoastal drawbridge; wave at the bridgekeeper up in his teal-topped perch as you whiz by. Coral Ridge Yacht Club, boasting beautiful boats aplenty, is on the left. Bid farewell to a collection of dockside restaurants below, and close the loop back at the beach, where, regrettably, your run will come to an end. Let the breeze cool you down as you enjoy the ocean view — it's a sight that, depending on where you're from, you might not see again until summer. 🏖️

Denise Reynolds is always happy to return home to Fort Lauderdale.

Getting There: Continental offers daily nonstop service to Fort Lauderdale from its hubs in Houston, New York/Newark, and Cleveland.