

# 101 THINGS TO DO IN PORT ISABEL! Texas



1- CLIMB THE PORT ISABEL LIGHTHOUSE. The Port Isabel Lighthouse is the only lighthouse open to the public on the Texas Gulf Coast.

2- LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER'S COTTAGE. Visit the Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage for a free lighthouse memorabilia and artifact display.

3- TREASURES OF THE GULF MUSEUM. In 1554, a fleet of ships wrecked 30 miles north of Port Isabel. The Treasures Museum tells the tale of the survivors with a variety of displays. Gift shop.

4- PORT ISABEL HISTORIC MUSEUM. The Champion building, built in 1899, sports a fish mural painted by a one-armed man.

5- ILLUMINATING THE LIGHTHOUSE. The lighthouse is decorated and illuminated for celebrations or awareness during select times of the year.

6- BEULAH LEE PARK. In the center of Park District. Two gazebos, lots of outdoors.

7- PORT ISABEL EVENT & CULTURAL. Port Isabel's newest venue! Over 9,000 square feet of meeting and event space. 309 E. Railroad Ave.

8- TEXAS' LONGEST LIGHTED FISHING PIER. Don't have a rod and reel? Rent one. Don't want to fish... spectators are welcomed.

9- PORT ISABEL YACHT CLUB. Constructed in 1927, when Port Isabel was just incorporated and just a few years before the area got a deep water port.

10- BAY FISHING TRIP. Need a story to bring back home with you? Capable and local expert captain captains can find the fish. Skinny water, great big fish.

11- OFFSHORE FISHING TRIP. Skinny water not enough? Try an offshore fishing experience for a bigger fishing tale.

12- BUTTERFLY & BIRDWATCHING AT THE MUSEUMS. Specially selected foliage attracts birds and butterflies in public green areas all over town.

13- WATCHING PELICANS AT PELICAN STATION. Pelicans perch on the railroad pier pilings and boulders.

14- BUY FRESH SEAFOOD. If you don't want to catch your own, or just want to take home some succulent Gulf shrimp, shop Quik Stop, Joe's Seafood Market, Reyes Seafood or Gulf Seafood for your own fresh Gulf catch.

15- EAT FRESH SEAFOOD. Many restaurants offer to cook your catch and add their side dishes. Or choose from menus full of expertly prepared seafood.

16- SHOP TILL YOU DROP. Whatever you want? Browse and leave with just a postcard or a new address!

17- VIEW THE SHRIMP BOAT FLEETS. Visible from both South Shore & Port District, or from the end of Champion St.

18- CROSS THE ONLY SWING BRIDGE IN TEXAS. At the intersection of South Shore Drive and Garcia St., you can cross the only swing bridge in Texas.

19- GO ON A DOLPHIN CRUISE. Take a few friends or your family with you on a dolphin cruise and experience marine life close up and personal.

20- CITY OF PORT ISABEL CEMETERY. The City Cemetery is home to some of the earliest settlers to the area. Grave markers with countries of origins connect us to lands across the waters.

21- OLDEST CEMETERY IN PORT ISABEL. Located on Island Ave., right hand side, 1/2 block north of Queen Isabella Blvd.

22- VISIT THE QUEEN ISABEL INN. Constructed sometime in 1908-1909, the Queen Isabel Inn has been witness and triumphant to many of the area's hurricanes.

23- DRIVE MODERN VENICE. Carved from earth and water during the 1930s, Modern Venice offers a waterfront view for every resident.

24- DRIVE THE PORT ISABEL/SAN BENITO NAVIGATION DISTRICT. The southernmost

deepwater port in Texas is home to shrimping fleets, related industry and can facilitate large sea going vessels at its docks. Shrimp boats use the turning basin before heading back to dock. Barges, ships, fishing and pleasure craft pass through these waters.

25- PICNIC UNDER THE TREES AT THE PORT ISABEL LIGHTHOUSE STATE



HISTORIC SITE. Enjoy an afternoon in the sea breezes, under the trees, steps from the historic Port Isabel Lighthouse.

26- READ AN ADVENTURE AT THE PORT ISABEL PUBLIC LIBRARY. Take a break from all the action and settle in with a good book. Or check up on news from home on one of the library's computers. 213 Yturria St.

27- TAKE THE WALK OF GENERALS. Strategically placed in the Lighthouse District, the walk of Generals pays homage to the military giants that spent time in Port Isabel or on Brazos Santiago (Boca Chica beach).

28- HIKE OR BIKE THE EL PASEO TRAIL. 11 miles of marked trails will take you from the east end of Port Isabel to the County Park in Laguna Heights.

29- VISIT ALL 8 DISTRICTS IN PORT ISABEL. 8 districts offer a glimpse of the diverse character of Port Isabel.

30- SEE THE WETLANDS BEHIND H.E.B. The intersection of Highways 48 & 100 is a perfect example of the terrain of the Laguna Madre area before its settlement settlement in the early years.

31- WINDSURF THE LAGUNA MADRE. No shortage of fuel here! Navigate the bay from the flats on South Padre Island to the Port Isabel Side Channel in Port Isabel.

32- VISIT THE HISTORIC FORT POLK ON THE LIGHTHOUSE GROUNDS. Ft. Polk was the first occupant at the site of the Lighthouse. Zachary Taylor built the fort in 1846 which served the troops until 1850. In 1852, the Port Isabel Lighthouse was constructed at the cost of \$15,000.

33- TRY TO FINISH TEXAS' LARGEST FLOUR TORTILLAS. So big, they dwarf a dinner plate. Filled with anything you want. Not a challenge for the faint hearted. Isabel's Cafe and Manuels Restaurant both boast of Texas Monthly's best tortilla ratings!

34- VISIT ALL 11 KIOSKS ON THE EL PASEO WALK. When walking or biking the El Paseo trail, take advantage of the 11 rest areas. Shade, benches, bike racks, trash receptacles.

35- WATCH A MOVIE AT THE LIGHTHOUSE ESTABLISHMENT CINEMA. Free to the public.

Summers & Halloween weekend.

36- SEND A POSTCARD HOME FROM THE PORT ISABEL POST OFFICE. Share a memory. Don't just email home, buy and send an authentic postcard from Port Isabel.

37- SEND AN EMAIL FROM THE PORT ISABEL PUBLIC LIBRARY. Ok, sometimes the mail just isn't fast enough. Use the library's computers to let folks back home know what a great time you are having.

38- FLYFISH THE LAGUNA MADRE. Some of the best flyfishing on the Gulf coast will test your technique.

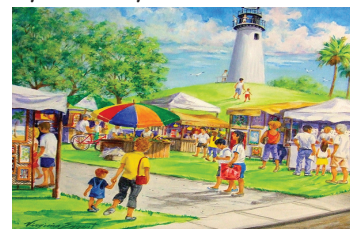
39- WADE FISH THE LAGUNA MADRE. Strap on the bait bucket and hit the Laguna Madre 'mano a mano'.

40- VISIT THE OLD PORT ISABEL FIRE HALL. Located southeast of the Port Isabel City Cemetery, the old Port Isabel Fire Hall is still used for community activities.

41- VISIT LAFITTE'S WELL. He had to get fresh water somewhere, why not dig a hole in Laguna Vista.

42- PLAY GOLF. On the shores of the Intracoastal Waterway at Long Island Village or on the banks of the Laguna Madre at SPI Golf Club.

43- LAUNCH YOUR BOAT AT THE POMPANO CITY DOCKS. You're not going to catch any fish if it stays on the trailer!



44- STORE YOUR BOAT AT SEARANCH II. Don't want to trailer your boat all the way from home? Might not be here for awhile? Dry dock your boat in Port Isabel.

45- DOCK YOUR BOAT AT THE POMPANO CITY DOCKS. Check at City Hall for information on the City Docks' accommodations. Call 956/943-2682.





**46- WATERFRONT DINING.** Pelican Station, Pirate's Landing or White Sands, pick one, or try them all.  
**47- SAIL THE BAY.** Challenge your skills, or drop anchor and enjoy the breeze and the peace and quiet.  
**48- STAY IN PORT ISABEL.** Nostalgic to waterfront to modern to a waterfront rv experience.

Moderately priced Port Isabel accommodations offer what you need.

**49- BUY FINE ART.** Take an original created by a local artist home with you. Many specialty shops feature local artist's wares.

**50- BUY SOMETHING OLD.** Like antiquing? Area shops offer collectibles to fill every nook and cranny of your luggage.

**51- BUY SOMETHING NAUTICAL.** Need a seashell? A port hole? A whole boat? Bay Quest Outfitters, Harris Sea Castle, Anglers Marine Center, Quik Stop or Twenty Four Ten Net Works Hardware will fill the bill.

**52- KAYAK THE CHANNELS.** For an off road view of Port Isabel, take a kayak ride through all the channels.

**53- JET SKI THE LAGUNA MADRE.** Kayaking too slow? Jet ski the Laguna Madre Bay!

**54- FISH IN TEXAS' OLDEST FISHING TOURNAMENT.** Port Isabel is home to the Texas International Fishing Tournament. Held annually the first weekend in August.

**55- RUN ACROSS TEXAS' LONGEST CAUSEWAY.** Held annually in January, Longest Causeway Run & Fitness walk is a 10k run that starts in Port Isabel and ends across the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge on South Padre Island.

**56- EAT THE WORLD'S BEST SHRIMP.** Many local restaurants serve fresh caught Gulf shrimp, expertly prepared. You can ample the finest at the Chamber's World's Championship Shrimp Cook-Off, annually, the first Sunday in November.

**57- VISIT THE VALLEY'S SPORTS HALL OF FAME & ONE OF THE LARGEST SPORTS MEMORIALIA COLLECTIONS IN THE RGV.** Drop in at Doubleday's Sports Bar.

**58- VISIT THE PIRATES AT PIRATES LANDING.** And enjoy a meal overlooking the Laguna Madre.

**59- SHOP MARKET DAYS.** Held twice a year in April and October, at the Port Isabel Lighthouse.

**60- VALLEY'S OLDEST DAY OF THE DEAD CELEBRATION.**

Held the Saturday before Halloween, Port Isabel's Day of the Dead Celebration is a day long event with lots of family friendly entertainment and displays at the Treasures of the Gulf Museum and the Historic Museum.

**61- SEE THE BROWNSVILLE SHIP CHANNEL.** From the intersection of Garcia Street and South Shore Drive or in the Port District, you can see large ocean going vessels, oil rigs heading out to the Gulf and barges turn in from the Intracoastal Waterway or the Gulf of Mexico enroute to the Brownsville Ship Channel.

**62- SEE THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY FROM THE TOP OF THE CAUSEWAY.** The darker deeper water seen from the top of the Causeway is the Intracoastal Waterway.

**63- SEE THE ORIGINAL QUEEN ISABELLA CAUSEWAY.** Cross the swing bridge on the end of Garcia Street and continue following the road to the left.

**64- WATCH THE FIREWORKS OVER THE BAY.** Fridays from Memorial Day to Labor Day, the City of South Padre Island creates a breathtaking fireworks display on the north side of the causeway over the Laguna Madre Bay.

**65- BIKE, SWIM, RIDE.** Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce hosts a Triathlon, first Saturday in June.

**66- TRICK OR TREAT THE LIGHTHOUSE SQUARE.** Every Halloween, local businesses pass out treats.

**67- CROSS THE LONGEST BRIDGE IN TEXAS.** Going to South Padre Island? You've got to cross the longest bridge in Texas at 2.6 miles over the Laguna Madre Bay.

**68- CAMP IN PORT ISABEL.** Enjoy the sounds of seagulls and the fresh sea breezes.

**69- SPRING BREAK IN PORT ISABEL.** From February to April, south Texas sees the migration of college students taking a little 'R & R'.

**70- WATCH THE LIGHTED BOAT PARADE.** The Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce hosts their Annual Lighted Boat Parade the first Saturday in December.



**71-VISIT ONE OF THE TOP THREE BEACHES IN AMERICA.** Cross the Queen Isabella Memorial Bridge to South Padre Island.

**72- WI-FI.** Need to make it a working vacation? Catch the free Wi-Fi at various locations around town.

**73- CANNON FIRE OVER THE BAY.** 6 p.m. daily, at the Cannon Bar, watch the crew of the Black Dragon fire a 6 pounder!

**74-TOUR PORT ISABEL'S 8 REGISTERED HISTORIC MARKERS.** The Port of Matamoros, located at Pirate's Landing; the Charles Champion Building; the Queen Isabella Causeway; Fort Polk located at the Point Isabel Lighthouse; Queen Isabel Inn; Alta Vista Apartments on Yturria St.; and the newest site, the Palangana Cemetery.

**75- FLOWERING PLANTS & TREES.** Varying with the seasons, look for Cactus, Yuccas (Spanish Dagger), Royal Poincians, Century Plant, Aloe Vera, Anacua (sandpaper plant), Sea Grape, palm trees, Mesquite, Ebony and much more.

**76- PLAY IN ALL THE PARKS.** Berrell Mock, Washington Park, Veterans Park, Episcopal Church Park, the Laguna Madre Park, Veteran's Park, Triangle Park and the Port Isabel Lighthouse State Historic Site.

**77- HISTORY BY THE MURALS.** From contemporary to historic, see the murals at the Port Isabel Museums, the fish mural on the Champion building, the mural on Port City Mercantile, inside Our Lady of the Sea Catholic Church, Pirate's Landing Restaurant interior and Doubleday Sports Bar.

**78- CHECK OUT THE UT/ROBERT RUNYON PHOTO DISPLAY.** The 50 photos that decorate the walls of Pelican Station Restaurant illustrate Port Isabel's ties to the railroad.

**79- COMMUNITY GALLERY.** On the Highway 100 side of the Treasures of the Gulf Museum, displays illustrate our past, present and future.

**80- SEE A REAL SHRIMP BOAT.** The Lady Bea II is on display at the north end of Garcia St.

**81- TROPICAL LANDSCAPING.** Everywhere... medians, corners, Triangle Park, Beulah Lee Park, First National Bank of Edinburg, Treasures of the Gulf Museum and Port Isabel Historic Museum.

**82- ANCHORS & NAUTICAL ARTIFACTS.** Drive, hike or bike and keep an eye out for all the anchors and floats that adorn both private and public properties.

**83- ARCHITECTURE.** The Port Isabel Lighthouse, the Keeper's Cottage, the Yacht Club, Alta Vista Apartments, Isla Vista Apartments, Wireless Station buildings, Champion building, Queen Isabel Inn, the Thompkins building, Old Port Isabel Fire Hall, shops on Maxan Street... discover our uniqueness.

**84- TAKE A RIDE ON THE THRILLER.** For an exciting and exhilarating trip on the Laguna Madre Bay.

**85- ZACHARY TAYLOR'S WELL.** Located between the Port Isabel Historic Museum and the Treasures of the Gulf Museum or Jean Lafitte's well in Laguna Vista.

**86- SITE OF THE MILITARY HOSPITAL.** Used from 1846 - 1865, this military hospital saw more discomfort caused by disease than injuries caused by both the US/Mexican and the US Civil Wars it was in use for. It's located at the Pirate's Landing Pier parking lot.

**87- CATCH UP ON THE LOCAL NEWS.** Pick up a Port Isabel/South Padre Press, Coastal Current, or the Parade for all the local information.

**88- STAY IN SHAPE.** Local gyms and fitness centers offer a full range of services.

**89- TAKE A BOATER'S SAFETY COURSE.** Check with the Laguna Madre Yacht Club for their next scheduled classes.

**90- ATTEND THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE.** Churches are located from Laguna Vista to South Padre Island.

**91- WANT TO MAKE IT PERMANENT?** If you are considering a move to the area, check out the real estate agents that could make your dream come true.

**92- GET A NEW DO.** Treat yourself to a new look or get help finding a creative way to live with the humidity.

**93- GET ALL THE AREA INFORMATION YOU WILL NEED.** Stop in at the Port Isabel Chamber of Commerce and Information Center at the Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage.

**94- LEARN A LITTLE ABOUT OUR LOCAL HISTORY.** Like our page at [facebook.com/portisabeltx](https://www.facebook.com/portisabeltx).

**95- WATCH A SUNSET.** Sunsets over the Laguna Madre are spectacular and free!

**96- WATCH A SUNRISE.** If you didn't stay out too late, take in a sunrise before heading to breakfast. They cost the same as a sunset.

**97- TRY ALL THE 'ALL YOU CAN EAT FISH' SPECIALS.** Pirate's Landing, White Sands, Mexiquito Restaurant, Marcello's Italian Restaurant. How hard could that be?

**98- TAKE A NIGHT TIME FISHING TRIP.** The Isabella leaves the Pirate's Landing Fishing Pier for a night fishing trip on the Laguna Madre Bay!

**99- VISIT THE BAHIA GRANDE ON HWY 48.** The world's largest wetlands restoration project is home to a variety of wildlife species.

**100- PORT ISABEL'S ANTIQUE & FLEA MARKET.** First Sunday, 1st & 3rd Sunday during winter months.

**101-P.L.A.N. To come back again!**



Beautiful Bahia Grande.



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