

Miami Winter Party: Insider's guide

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Let's take a quick glance at weather.com, shall we? **New York City**: 39 degrees and snow showers. **Chicago**: 15 degrees and cloudy. And then there's **Miami** -- a balmy 80 degrees.

With all due respect to the cold-weather worshippers out there, there's a reason that South Beach's red-hot tourist season is in full swing; and for gay travelers there's no time like the present to spend time down south. Feb. 27-March 3 is **Winter Party Festival** (www.winterparty.com) in Miami with 20 events, ranging from a Lincoln Road fashion show and women's jazz brunch to club events and the must-do signature Beach Party on the sands of South Beach.

Fortunately, there's no need to feel guilty about splurging on a last-minute getaway -- Festival proceeds benefit the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the Miami-Dade LGBT community.

Once you've arrived, there's more than enough fest action to fill your days and nights, but you'll need nourishment between twirls around the dance floor. Step off the well-worn track for these local faves:

Food on the fly

La Sandwicherie (229 14th St., between Washington and Collins; 305-532-8934; www.lasandwicherie.com) stuffs fresh baguettes and croissants until the wee hours.

Salute to seafood

Get romantic over fresh fish dishes at one of **Altamar's** (1223 Lincoln Road; 305-532-3061) outside tables along the quiet west end of Lincoln Road.

Carnivores unite

Pricey Florentine grill **Tuscan Steak** (433 Washington Ave.; 305-534-2233; www.chinagrillmgt.com) never fails to delight beef lovers.

Carb loading

La Locanda (413 Washington Ave.; 305-538-6277) is a low-key 18-table trattoria with friendly staff, delicious homemade pasta and affordably priced wine.

Beyond the beach

If you've got a car, make a break for the Design District, where Miami's movers and shakers are dining on New American dishes at **Michael's Genuine Food and Drink** (130 N.E. 40th St.; 305-573-5550; www.michaelsgenuine.com).

Still hungry? Click [here](#) for our full guide to Miami dining -- because man cannot live on muscles alone.