



# NORTH AMERICAN SKAL CONGRESS

TAMPA BAY, FL 2025

## Know Before You Go



**SHERATON SAND KEY RESORT  
CLEARWATER BEACH, FLORIDA  
APRIL 30 – MAY 3**

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**NORTH AMERICAN  
SKAL CONGRESS**  
TAMPA BAY, FL 2025

## Welcome to the SKAL NASC 2025!

Dear SKAL NASC 2025 Attendees,

On behalf of the SKAL NASC 2025 organizing team, I am delighted to welcome you to what promises to be an incredible event in the heart of the beautiful and vibrant Tampa Bay area! As your host, it is my honor to have you join us for this exciting occasion, where we will come together to share our knowledge, strengthen our professional relationships, and further our collective mission of promoting global tourism and friendship within the travel and hospitality industry. I'm confident that your participation will make this year's gathering one to remember.

We've carefully crafted an engaging program designed to provide valuable networking opportunities, educational sessions, and a chance to experience the unique charm and culture of Tampa Bay. From dynamic keynote speakers to interactive tours and social events, there's something for everyone to enjoy. I encourage you to take full advantage of these opportunities to connect with your peers, exchange ideas, and leave with new insights that will help shape the future of our industry.

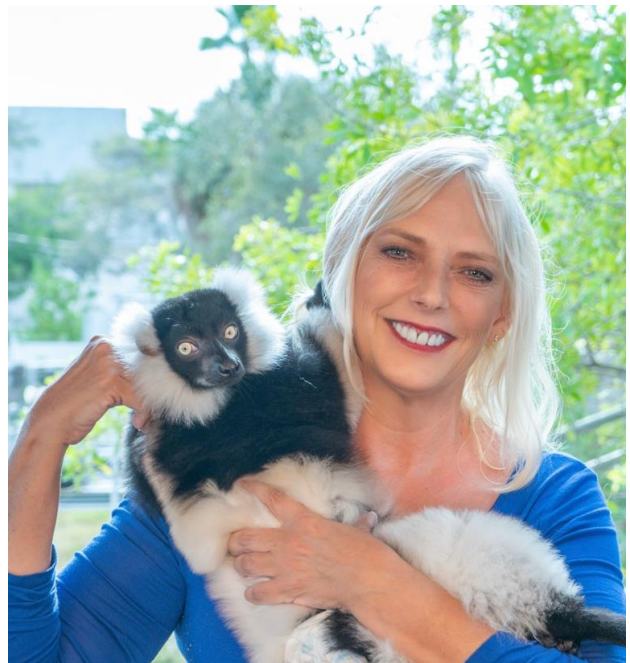
I am truly excited to have you with us, and I look forward to seeing the incredible collaborations and friendships that will emerge from this event. Whether you are a first-time attendee or a long-standing member of SKAL, your presence here is vital in fostering the spirit of camaraderie and professionalism that defines our community. Thank you for being part of SKAL NASC 2025 – together, let's make this event one for the books!

Warm regards,

Sonny Flynn

Host, SKAL NASC 2025

President, SKAL Tampa Bay



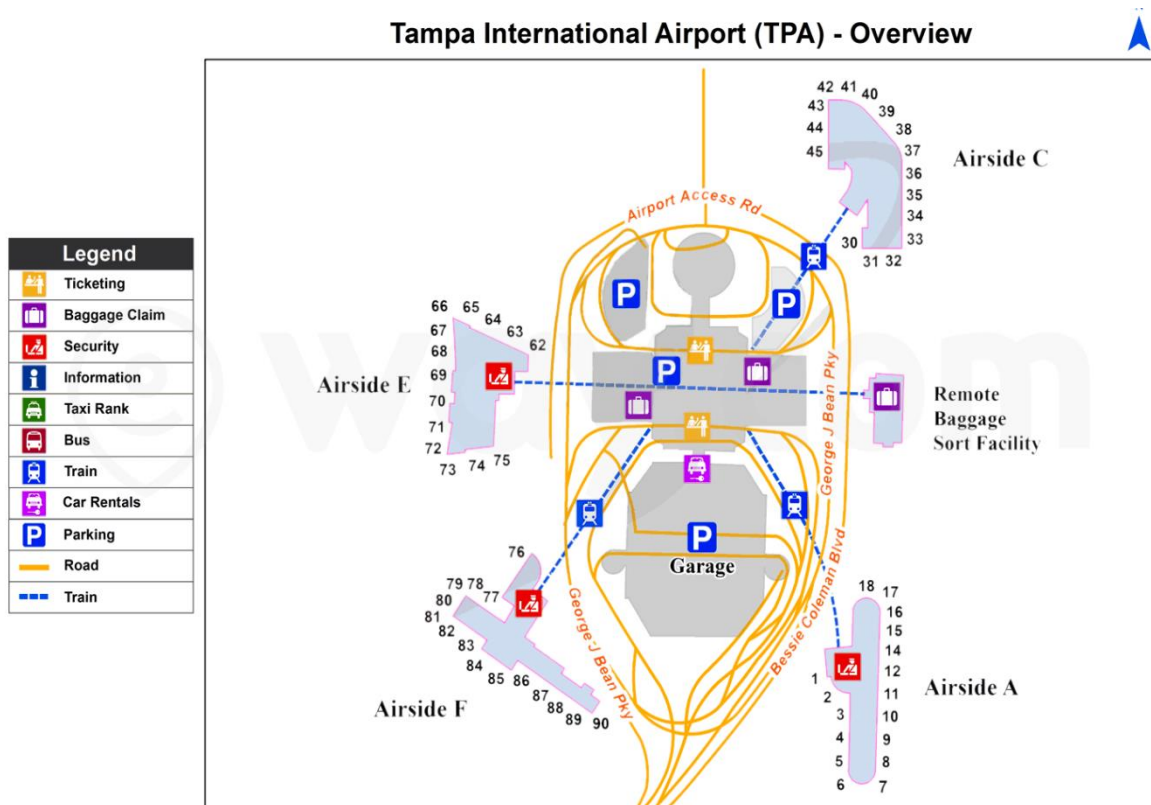
## Arriving at TPA



Tampa International Airport (TPA) is the major airport located in Tampa, Florida, serving as a hub for both domestic and international flights. Upon arriving at TPA, passengers can expect a modern and efficient airport experience, with clear signage, well-organized terminals, and various amenities to ensure a smooth journey.

TPA is divided into four main terminals: A, C, E, and F, which serve different airlines. Depending on the airline you flew with, you will arrive at a specific terminal. The airport offers multiple services for passengers, including transportation options like taxis, ride-sharing services (Uber, Lyft), rental cars, and public transportation.

### Tampa International Airport (TPA) - Overview





## Airlines that Service TPA

Tampa International Airport is served by numerous major airlines offering both domestic and international flights. Some of the key airlines include:

American Airlines

JetBlue Airways

Spirit Airlines

Southwest Airlines

United Airlines

Sun Country Airlines

Delta Air Lines

Allegiant Air

There are two airline clubs at TPA:

- American Airlines (terminal A)
- Delta Airlines (terminal C)

There are no Priority Pass lounges at TPA.

## Canadian/Mexican Guests

For Canadian and Mexican visitors arriving at TPA, the process from getting off the plane to baggage claim involves a few steps. Here's an overview of the typical process:

### 1. Disembarkation

After your flight lands, you will exit the plane and follow signs leading to U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The walk to immigration will depend on your arrival gate.

### 2. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

Upon arrival at TPA, all international travelers, including Canadian and Mexican visitors, must go through U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). Here, you will present your passport, answer basic questions regarding your trip (purpose of visit, how long you'll stay, etc.), and have your photo and fingerprints taken.

### 3. Automated Passport Control (APC)

Many Canadian and Mexican travelers can use the Automated Passport Control kiosks, which can speed up the process. You'll scan your passport, answer a few questions on the screen, and receive a receipt. You may then proceed to the CBP officer to complete the process.

### 4. CBP Inspection

After using the kiosk, you will meet with a CBP officer, who may ask additional questions. The officer will stamp your passport and allow you entry into the U.S. This is a required step for all international arrivals.

### 5. International Baggage Claim

After clearing customs, you'll proceed to the baggage claim area. TPA has clearly marked signs guiding you to the correct carousel for your flight's baggage. Keep your baggage claim ticket handy, as it may be checked before you pick up your luggage.

## 6. Customs Inspection

Once you have your bags, you may be subject to a random customs inspection. If this happens, an officer will ask about the contents of your luggage. If everything is in order, you can proceed to the exit.

## 7. Exit and Ground Transportation

After collecting your baggage (if applicable), you'll exit through the Customs and Border Control area. Once you're in the main terminal, you can find ground transportation options, such as taxis, ride-share services (Uber, Lyft), or rental car services, to continue your journey.

## 8. Important Notes:

- a. **ESTA: Canadian and Mexican citizens do not need an ESTA (Electronic System for Travel Authorization) to travel to the United States.** Since both countries are part of the Visa Waiver Program (VWP), Canadian and Mexican citizens are generally allowed to enter the U.S. without a visa for short visits (tourism, business, or transit) of up to six months. However, you will still need a valid passport to enter the U.S. Always make sure to check the specific entry requirements for your situation before traveling.
- b. **Travel Documents: Ensure you have your valid passport with you**, as this is required for entry into the U.S.

This process is generally efficient, though it can take some time depending on the volume of travelers at the airport. Always allow plenty of time to go through these steps.

## Baggage Claim

Baggage Claim is on Level 1 of the Main Terminal and is divided into Red on the north side and Blue on the south side. Signage above escalators and elevators will tell you on which side your airline is located.

## Ground Transportation at TPA

There are a variety of ground transportation options between Tampa International Airport and the Sheraton Sand Key.

Red Baggage Claim: Pick up all ground transportation at the exit nearest to Baggage Belt #9

Blue Baggage Claim: Pick up all ground transportation at the exit nearest to Baggage Belt #7

## Ride Share

Guests departing the Airport using Lyft, Uber or Wridz can be picked up at Red Baggage Claim, the Blue Express Curbside, or the SkyCenter One office building remote curbside. The approximate ride-

share fare from Tampa International Airport to the Sheraton Sand Key Resort in Clearwater Beach typically ranges from **\$35 to \$45** one way.

## Taxis

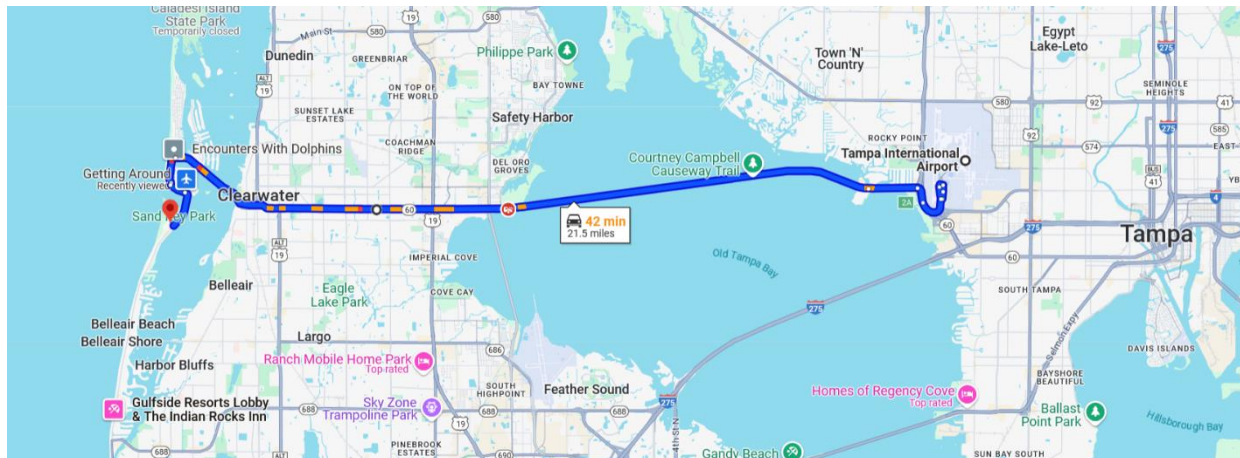
Taxi service by Yellow Cab is available at the curbside outside the Baggage Claim Level at the Ground Transportation Areas, Red 1 and Blue 2. The fares are: \$3.50 for the first 1/5 of a mile or part thereof, plus \$2.50 per mile. The minimum fee from the airport is \$20 and the approximate fare is around **\$40 to \$50** one way.

## Rental Cars

On-airport rental car companies are located in the Rental Car Center which can be reached by taking the SkyConnect train from the Main Terminal. The SkyConnect train service is accessible from Levels 1 through 3 of the Main Terminal. Follows signs for Rental Cars, Public Bus, or SkyConnect.

## Way2Go Rides

Private airport shuttles for \$79.50 for up to 6 people. Book in advance online at [way2gorides.com](http://way2gorides.com) (recommended) or call 727-424-5458. Save \$10 per ride when booking with code **SKAL**.



Sheraton Sand Key Resort is a **22-mile drive from TPA** (depending on time of day/traffic) and takes about **35 - 50 minutes**.

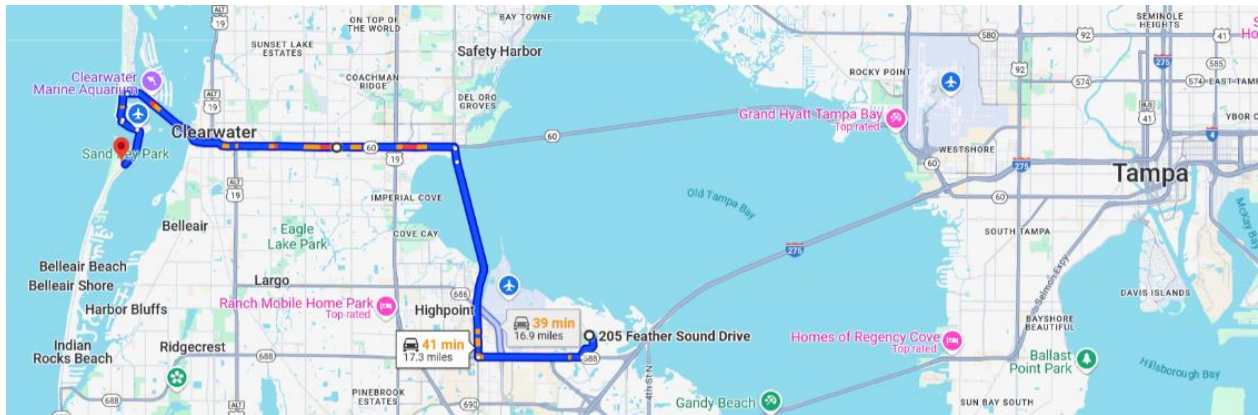
## Arriving at PIE

St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE) primarily serves as a base for Allegiant Air, which is the main airline offering flights to and from the airport. There are no airline clubs at this airport.

The **Grouper Airport Express** is the most cost-effective service that provides rides between the airport and the Sheraton Sand Key Resort. Fares begin at **\$8 for single riders**, \$20 for a group of four, and \$30 for groups of five to eight. The airport also has taxis, Lyft and Uber. The approximate **taxi** fare from St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport to the Sheraton Sand Key Resort in Clearwater Beach is around **\$30 to \$40** one way. The approximate **ride-share fare** typically ranges from **\$25 to \$35** one way.

**Way2Go Rides** offers private airport shuttles for **\$59.50** for up to 6 people. Book in advance online at way2gorides.com (recommended) or call 727-424-5458. Save \$10 per ride when booking with code **SKAL**.

The Sheraton Sand Key Resort is a 17-mile drive from PIE (depending on time of day/traffic) and also takes about 30 - 45 minutes.



## [Hotel Logistics Information](#)

**Sheraton Sand Key Resort** is located at **1160 Gulf Boulevard**, Clearwater Beach, FL 33767. The phone number is **(727) 595-1611**. **Hotel check-in is at 4:00pm; check-out is at 11:00am.**

The Sheraton Sand Key Resort is the perfect choice for hosting the SKAL NASC 2025, offering a blend of business-friendly facilities and a serene beachside atmosphere. Located on Florida's west coast, this tropical paradise with stunning white beaches and aquamarine waters is home to a peaceful retreat after a day of meetings, with stunning Gulf Coast views and direct beach access. Its prime location allows you to enjoy both productivity and relaxation, making it an ideal spot for a great NASC.

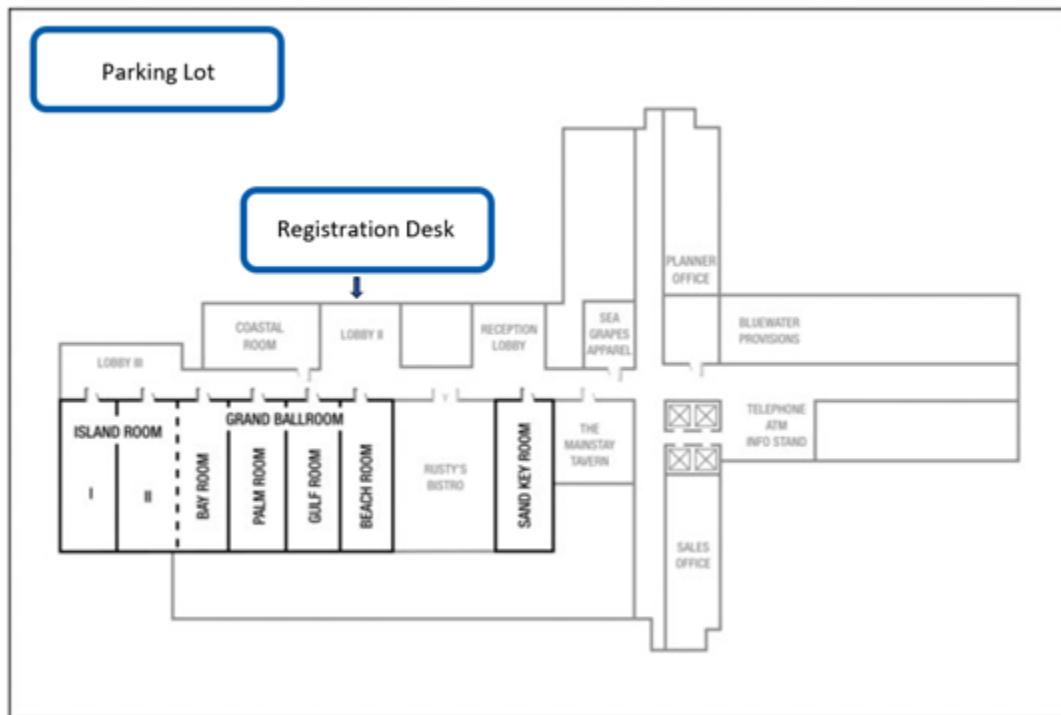
The resort features state-of-the-art meeting spaces, all equipped with high-speed internet. Additionally, you'll find convenient amenities like a business center, 24-hour fitness center, and a spa to help you unwind after a productive day.

In addition to its business facilities, at the Sheraton Sand Key you enjoy a heated outdoor pool, grab a bite at the Ocean Terrace restaurant, or sip cocktails at the Beachfront Tiki Bar while taking in the sunset over the Gulf. With its combination of professional amenities, beachfront location, and top-tier service, the Sheraton Sand Key Resort is the ideal destination to host the SKAL NASC 2025!

## SKAL NASC Registration Desk

You can pick up your attendee badge and book your optional tours at the registration desk located in Lobby II, down the hall from the Receptionist Lobby and close to our meeting space. The conference registration desk will be open:

Wednesday, April 30	12:00pm – 5:30pm
Thursday, May 1	8:00am – 4:30pm
Friday, May 2	8:00am – 3:00pm
Saturday, May 3	8:00am – 9:00am; 12:00pm – 2:00pm



## Three Fantastic Nightly Receptions

Your registration includes three fantastic nightly themed dinner events!

### **Fiesta Del Mar Opening Welcome Reception: Thursday, 6:00pm – 10:00pm**

Sponsored by Visit Saint Pete Clearwater with a welcome by Brian Lowack, President & CEO. Ignite your senses with a vibrant Latin-themed welcome reception featuring delectable Tampa Bay cuisine,



a complimentary welcome drink, premium beverage options, and live entertainment in a stunning beachfront setting. Unleash your inner salsa star! Embrace vibrant Latin colors and styles. **Please note that a group nearby has purchased a five-minute fireworks display at some point this evening.**

### **Sunsets & Soul Reception: Friday, 6:30pm – 10:00pm (meet in lobby at 6:15pm)**

Celebrate at the historic Birchwood Hotel with a stunning sunset backdrop, delicious seafood, a chilled seafood bar, Mahi Mahi, classic tunes spun by our DJ, and a semi-formal atmosphere. Please meet in the hotel lobby at 6:15pm as buses will leave promptly at 6:30pm to stay on schedule. **If you miss the buses, ride-share is approximately \$48, so please don't be late!**

### **Echoes of Jazz, A Presidential Farewell Celebration: Saturday, 6:30pm – 11:00pm**

Conclude the Congress with an elegant jazz-themed farewell celebration at the Sheraton Sand Key, featuring a delightful dinner, live music by "Hot Tonic," a silent auction, announcement of winners, and the 2026 prize giveaway. Embrace the spirit of jazz with your attire. Period-specific attire is encouraged.

### **Late Night Hospitality Sessions**

Relax and connect with colleagues on Thursday and Friday from 10:00pm – Midnight at the Mainstay Lounge on the first floor (cash bar).

### **Hockey Playoffs**

Monitors displaying the NHL playoff games will be in the Mainstay Lounge hospitality area on Thursday and Friday evenings as well as at the *Echoes of Jazz: A Presidential Farewell Celebration* closing dinner on Saturday.

### **Attire**

"Resort casual" is recommended for most sessions and events. SKAL attire (conference polos are available for sale at the registration desk if you forget to bring one) on Thursday during the day is recommended. Bring your bold bright colors and shorts/sandals for our ***Fiesta Del Mar Latin Celebration*** on the beach). Friday night feel free to dress to impress at the ***Sunset & Soul Reception*** or come business casual. Stay comfortable and resort casual during the day on Saturday, but then throw on your favorite era of jazz clothes for our ***Echoes of Jazz Presidential Farewell Celebration*** on Saturday night. Please remember hotel meeting rooms can often be chilly, so you might want to bring a sweater or light jacket.

## Special Presentation: Anthony Capuano, Marriott President & CEO

Anthony Capuano is an American businessman and the President and Chief Executive Officer of Marriott International, one of the world's largest hotel chains. He became the CEO of Marriott in 2021 after the passing of the company's long-time CEO, Arne Sorenson. Capuano is known for his leadership during difficult times, including navigating Marriott through the COVID-19 pandemic, which had a major impact on the travel and hospitality industry. Under his leadership, Marriott has focused on **global growth** and **sustainability initiatives** while continuing to manage its vast portfolio of hotels and resorts worldwide. Mark will join us for a live presentation via Zoom on Friday morning during the SKAL Connections session...this is one that you won't want to miss!



## Young Skal & First-Timers Networking

Connect with fellow Skal members in this exclusive meet-and-greet, Thursday from 3:00pm – 4:00pm in Lobby II (where the Registration Desk is). Complimentary beer will be served.

## Attendee Badges

Only registered 2025 SKAL NASC participants with attendee badges will be permitted to enter session rooms. Please note that **spouses, co-workers, children or any other non-registered persons are not allowed to attend event presentations or meal functions.** If you need a guest ticket for a single day or meal at the conference you can purchase admissions in advance on the website or on-site at the registration desk.

## Sponsors

The support of our great 2025 NASC sponsors is critical to the success of this year's conference. Please make time to connect with all of them to express our appreciation for their support in helping to make this year's NASC another great SKAL event!

Title Sponsor:	Visit St. Pete-Clearwater, FL
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Platinum Sponsor:	Frontiers North Adventures
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Annual Sponsor:	North Little Rock Tourism
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Gold Sponsor:	Way2Go Rides
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## Expected Weather

Historically the first week of May in Clearwater typically brings warm and pleasant weather, as the area transitions from spring to the beginning of the hot summer months. Here's a breakdown of the average weather conditions:

**Temperature:** The average high temperature during the day is around 85°F (29°C), while the low temperature at night is about 70°F (21°C).

**Humidity:** May marks the start of the wet season in Florida, so humidity levels can be quite high, generally ranging from 60% to 80%, making it feel warmer than the actual temperature.

**Rainfall:** There is a moderate chance of rain, with occasional afternoon thunderstorms becoming more common. On average, Clearwater sees about 2–3 inches of rain during the month of May.

**Sunshine:** Expect plenty of sunshine, though with some cloud cover and possible rain showers in the afternoon. Clear skies are frequent, and the region enjoys about 9-10 hours of daylight.

## Optional Tours – Book Early!

Five great tour itineraries, one on Wednesday night and four on Saturday afternoon, have been put together so you can immerse yourself in the unique culture and beauty of the area while visiting for the SKAL NASC. **All tours are capacity limited**, so we recommend booking in advance at [SKAL NASC 2025 Tours](#). If any seats are still available at the NASC, you can book at the registration table. Please note some Saturday tours must be booked in advance to provide appropriate head counts.



### Wednesday Only

#### **Experience the Flavors of Dunedin on a Curated Dining Tour!**

##### **Wednesday, 6:00pm – 10:00pm**

Join us for a delightful evening of dining as we explore the culinary gems of Dunedin. From the cozy corners of casual eateries to the sophisticated settings of fine dining, our Dine Around offers a palate-pleasing journey through diverse cuisines and atmospheres.

##### **What's Included:**

-  Transportation: Comfortable round-trip travel in a 15-passenger van from Sheraton Sand Key Clearwater to the heart of Dunedin. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the ride as we handle the driving.
-  First Beverage on Us: Start your dining experience with a complimentary first drink at each restaurant. Whether it's a craft beer, a house wine, or a signature cocktail, your first round is covered!

##### **Featured Restaurants and Dining Experiences:**

1. Café Alfresco - Enjoy a mix of American and international dishes in a relaxed setting. (Pricing: \$\$)
2. The Black Pearl - Indulge in French and New American cuisine in an intimate setting. One-time seating. **Limited to 6 guests.** (Pricing: \$\$\$\$)
3. Casa Tina - Dive into authentic Mexican flavors in a vibrant atmosphere. (Pricing: \$\$)
4. Dunedin Brewery - Relish hearty pub classics at Florida's oldest craft brewery. (Pricing: \$)
5. Bon Appétit - Dine in style with seafood and European dishes overlooking the water. (Pricing: \$\$\$\$)

##### **Explore at Your Leisure:**

Upon arrival in Dunedin, you'll have the freedom to stroll through its charming streets, visit local shops, and engage with the town's lively cultural scene. With designated times and a central meeting point, enjoy the independence to explore and dine at your own pace.

##### **Registration Required:**

Space is limited, and registration is necessary to ensure seating at each restaurant. Sign up early to secure your spot for an unforgettable evening of food, fun, and exploration.

**Price:** \$35 (max remaining capacity 26)

### Saturday Only





#### **John's Pass Village Shopping, Fishing & Exploring Tour, Madeira Beach, FL**

##### **Saturday, 12:00pm – 4:30pm**

Enjoy a self-guided adventure at John's Pass Village, a charming waterfront destination featuring over 100 unique shops, restaurants, and attractions. Stroll along the boardwalk, shop for coastal treasures, indulge in delicious seafood, or book an optional excursion for added excitement.



### What's Included:

-  Round-Trip Transportation from Sheraton Sand Key Resort
-  Four Hours of Free Time to Explore John's Pass Village at your Leisure
-  Exclusive Discounts at Select Shops and Eateries
-  A List of Recommended Activities and Dining Options








**Price:** \$45 (max remaining capacity 13)

### Discover the Charm of Ybor City: A Guided Cultural Experience

**Saturday, 12:00pm – 4:30pm**

Step back in time and experience the vibrant culture of Tampa's historic Ybor City on this immersive guided tour! Discover how this once-thriving Cuban cigar-making district became a melting pot of diverse cultures, shaping the unique atmosphere Ybor City is known for today.

### What's Included:

-  Visitor Center and Movie
-  Mini Walking Tour
-  Visit to Ybor City Farmer's Market
-  Visit to Ybor City Museum State Park
-  Visit to the J.C. Newman Cigar Company Founder's Day
-  Authentic Cuban Sandwich in Ybor City
-  All Transportation, Admissions and Gratuities







**Price:** \$75 (max remaining capacity 15)

### Chillaxing with the Dolphins Booze Cruise

**Saturday, 12:30pm – 4:30pm**

Are you ready to experience the ultimate relaxing adventure during your time at the SKAL NASC? Join us for the ***Chillaxing with the Dolphins Booze Cruise***, a 2 1/2-hour adventure at sea designed to give you an unforgettable tour of the beautiful US Gulf Coast. This isn't just any boat ride; you'll cover more water than any other tour in the area, ensuring that you get the best chance to witness an incredible wild bottlenose dolphin show, while enjoying unlimited wine, beer, soda, water and snacks!

### What's Included:

-  Two and a Half Hour Cruise Along the Gulf
-  Best Chance to View Dolphins in their Natural Wild Habitat
-  Complimentary and Unlimited Wine, Beer, Soda and Water
-  Complimentary Light Snacks
-  Tropical Music to Chill
-  All Transportation, Admissions and Gratuities




**Price:** \$75 (max remaining capacity 12)

**NOTE: Bookings close Friday at 1:00pm for this tour.**

### BrewBus Guided St Petersburg Brewery Tour

Join us for an exciting brewery tour at three of the Best Brewery's in St. Petersburg, FL! Get ready to hop on the BrewBus and explore some of the best craft beers in the Downtown St Petersburg area.

### What's Included:

-  Round-Trip Transportation from Sheraton Sand Key Resort
-  Tasting at Three Breweries
-  History of the Brewing Process and of each Brewery

**Price:** \$85 (max remaining capacity 23)

## Welcome to Tampa Bay – A Brief History!

The Tampa Bay area is a vibrant destination where history, culture, and modern innovation seamlessly blend together. Located on Florida's Gulf Coast, the Tampa Bay region is known for its warm weather, beautiful waterfront views, and bustling urban life. Whether you're here for a conference or just to take in the sights, the area offers something for everyone—from world-class dining to fascinating museums and outdoor adventures. But beyond its contemporary charm, Tampa Bay has a deep history that shapes its unique character.

The origins of Tampa Bay date back to its discovery by Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León in 1513, who named the bay "La Bahía de Tampa" after the local Native American word "tampa," meaning "sticks of fire," likely referring to the area's lightning storms. Over the centuries, Tampa evolved from a small fishing village to a thriving port city, playing a significant role in trade and military history. In the late 1800s, the arrival of the railroad and the establishment of cigar factories, especially in the historic Ybor City district (there is an optional Saturday afternoon tour to this area), marked Tampa as an important cultural and economic hub, attracting Cuban, Italian, and Spanish immigrants who brought their rich traditions to the area.

Today, Tampa is a vibrant, diverse city with a dynamic economy and a fascinating mix of old and new. The downtown area boasts a blend of modern architecture and historic buildings, including the restored Tampa Theatre and the iconic Sunshine Skyway Bridge. Ybor City remains a must-see, offering a taste of the past with its cobblestone streets and lively atmosphere, while nearby districts like the Riverwalk provide a picturesque view of the bay, perfect for a stroll or a boat tour. As the area has evolved, it has maintained its historical roots while becoming a hub for business, technology, and culture.

The nearby city of St. Petersburg, located just across the bay, offers its own unique history and charm. Originally founded as a resort town, it has transformed into a thriving arts and cultural district with a rich collection of museums, galleries, and entertainment. The region is also known for its stunning beaches and outdoor recreation, offering everything from waterfront parks to boat tours and kayaking.

## Local Restaurant Recommendations

### **Bob Heilman's Beachcomber (Steaks/Seafood)**

**Location:** 447 Mandalay Avenue, Clearwater Beach

**Price:** \$50 – \$100

**Google:** 4.2 (1,706 reviews)



**Hours:** 5:00pm – 10:00pm

**Miles from Hotel:** 2.2 miles. 8 minute drive. Estimated \$11 – \$13 ride share.

**Contact:** (727) 442-4144

**Menu:** [www.bobheilmanbeachcomber.com](http://www.bobheilmanbeachcomber.com)

**Important Info:**

-  Iconic fine-dining with an emphasis on classic seafood and steaks.
-  A longstanding favorite in the community, often highlighted by industry peers and recognized for its upscale ambiance.

**The Bait House Tackle & Tavern (Seafood)**

**Location:** 45 Causeway Blvd, Clearwater Beach

**Price:** \$20 - \$30

**Google:** 4.7 (2,850 reviews)




**Hours:** 11:30am – 9:00pm

**Miles from Hotel:** 2.1 miles. 8 minute drive. Estimated \$11 – \$13 ride share.

**Contact:** (727) 446-8134

**Menu:** [www.clearwaterbaithouse.com](http://www.clearwaterbaithouse.com)

**Important Info:**

-  A historic, casual dockside venue known for its fresh seafood, including its signature “drunken shrimp”.
-  Offers a relaxed, affordable dining experience ideal for casual lunches or dinners.
-  Well-rated locally and representative of independently owned establishments.

**Island Way Grill (Steaks/Seafood/Sushi)**

**Location:** 20 Island Way, Clearwater Beach

**Price:** \$30 - \$50

**Google:** 4.4 (4,641 reviews)

**Hours:** Monday – Thursday, 4:00pm – 9:00pm; Friday 4:00pm – 10:00pm;




Saturday 12:00pm – 10:00pm; Sunday Brunch 10:00am – 1:30pm, Dinner 4:00pm – 9:00pm

**Miles from Hotel:** 2.7 miles. 9 minute drive. Estimated \$12 – \$15 ride share.

**Contact:** (727) 461-6617

**Menu:** [www.islandwaygrill.com](http://www.islandwaygrill.com)

**Important Info:**

-  Mid-to-upscale venue.
-  A waterfront dining destination celebrated for fresh seafood, sushi, and wood-fired steaks.
-  Selected by conference attendees for its quality and local charm.

**Palm Pavilion Beachside Grill & Bar (Skal Tampa Bay Board Member!) (American/Seafood)**

**Location:** 10 Bay Esplanade, Clearwater Beach

**Price:** \$10 – \$20

**Google:** 4.5 (8,509 reviews)



**Hours:** Monday – Thursday and Sunday, 11:00am – 10:00pm; Friday/Saturday 11:00am – 11:00pm

**Miles from Hotel:** 2.6 miles. 10 minute drive. Estimated \$12 – \$15 ride share.

**Contact:** (727) 446-2642

**Menu:** [www.palmpavilion.com](http://www.palmpavilion.com)

**Important Info:**

-  Recognized as a **Skal Tampa Bay Board Member**, underscoring its commitment to quality.
-  Historic beachfront spot offering casual American and seafood dishes paired with live music and ocean views.

### **Backwaters on Sand Key (Seafood)**

**Location:** 1261 Gulf Blvd, Clearwater (Sand Key)

**Price:** \$20 - \$30

**Google:** 4.4 (1,888 reviews)




**Hours:** 11:00am – 10:00pm

**Miles from Hotel:** 0.3 miles. 1 minute drive; 7 minute walk

**Contact:** (727) 517-7383

**Menu:** [www.backwatersrestaurant.com](http://www.backwatersrestaurant.com)

#### **Important Info:**

-  A casual waterfront restaurant known for its fresh seafood selections like grouper sandwiches and shrimp dishes.
-  Celebrated as a locally owned business actively supporting community recovery.
-  Happy Hour: 11:00am – 6:00pm.

### **Cesare's at the Beach (Italian/Seafood)**

**Location:** 794 South Gulfview Boulevard, Clearwater Beach

**Price:** \$30 - \$50

**Google:** 4.5 (1,082 reviews)



**Hours:** 11:30am – 9:00pm

**Miles from Hotel:** 0.9 miles. 2 minute drive. Estimated \$9 – \$11 ride share.

**Contact:** (727) 449-8797

**Menu:** [www.cesareatthebeach.com](http://www.cesareatthebeach.com)

#### **Important Info:**

-  Independent Italian restaurant offering authentic homemade pastas and seafood, accompanied by an extensive wine list.
-  Its quality and independent spirit make it a strong mid-range option.

## **Things to do Before or After the Conference**

The Clearwater, St. Petersburg, and Tampa area is full of exciting attractions that highlight the region's natural beauty, rich culture, and history. Here are 10 must-visit spots when you're in the area:

1. **Clearwater Beach (Clearwater)** – Famous for its white sand and turquoise waters, Clearwater Beach is perfect for relaxing by the water or enjoying water activities like jet skiing, parasailing, or boat tours.
2. **Dali Museum (St. Petersburg)** – Home to the largest collection of Salvador Dalí's works outside of Spain, this world-renowned museum offers a fascinating look into the surrealist artist's life and art.
3. **Busch Gardens (Tampa)** – A thrilling theme park that combines high-speed roller coasters with incredible animal encounters, Busch Gardens is a must for thrill-seekers and families alike.
4. **The Florida Aquarium (Tampa)** – Explore the vibrant marine life of Florida and beyond at this interactive aquarium, featuring exhibits on local ecosystems, tropical species, and even a chance to swim with the sharks.



5. **Sunken Gardens (St. Petersburg)** – A beautiful 4-acre garden right in the heart of St. Petersburg, the Sunken Gardens offers lush landscaping, vibrant plants, and a peaceful escape from the hustle and bustle.
6. **Tampa Riverwalk (Tampa)** – This scenic 2.6-mile walk along the Hillsborough River connects parks, museums, restaurants, and attractions, offering a relaxing way to explore downtown Tampa.
7. **Clearwater Marine Aquarium (Clearwater)** – Known for its rescue and rehabilitation of marine animals, this aquarium is home to Winter, the dolphin star of the \*Dolphin Tale\* movies. Visitors can learn about marine life conservation and meet the rescued animals.
8. **St. Petersburg Pier (St. Petersburg)** – This recently renovated landmark features shops, restaurants, art installations, and stunning views of the Tampa Bay. It's a great spot to enjoy a day outdoors and take in the sights.
9. **Tampa Bay History Center (Tampa)** – Learn about the rich history of the Tampa Bay area through interactive exhibits and engaging displays that cover the region's indigenous people, Spanish exploration, and its role in the cigar industry.
10. **Fort De Soto Park (St. Petersburg)** – This 1,136-acre park offers pristine beaches, fishing piers, hiking trails, and kayaking opportunities, making it a perfect spot for outdoor recreation and nature lovers.

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## Thursday, May 1, 2025

- 8:00 AM - 5:30 PM: **Registration** – Open throughout the day for seamless arrival.
- 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM: **"Rise & Shine" Welcome Reception** – Begin your day with complimentary beverages, courtesy of Visit Fairfax.
- 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM: **Airport Shuttle Service** – Convenient transportation available (book your ride via Way2GoRides).
- 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM: **National Committee Meetings** – Skål Canada and Skål USA convene for strategic discussions, culminating in a special 'Project Future' update and luncheon.
- 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM: **Young Skål & First-Timers Networking** – Connect with fellow Skål members in this exclusive meet-and-greet.
- 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM: **Fiesta Del Mar Opening Welcome Reception** – Sponsored by Visit Saint Pete Clearwater with a welcome by Brian Lowack, President & CEO. Ignite your senses with a vibrant Latin-themed welcome reception featuring delectable Tampa Bay cuisine, a complimentary welcome drink, premium beverage options, and live entertainment in a stunning beachfront setting. Unleash your inner salsa star! Embrace vibrant Latin colors and styles.
- 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM: **Fiesta Del Mar Continues** – Enjoy extended networking, festive ambiance, and the official Congress opening ceremony.
- 10:00 PM - Midnight: **Late-Night Hospitality** – Relax and connect with colleagues at the cash bar.

## Friday, May 2, 2025

- 7:45 AM - 9:30 AM: **Inspiring Breakfast Keynote** – Begin your day with insightful presentations from Skål International President Denise Scrafton and the President/CEO of Visit Tampa Bay Santiago Corrada.
- 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM: **Registration** – Continues for late arrivals.
- 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM: **Marketplace & Refreshments** – Explore sponsor booths and enjoy complimentary hydration, sponsored by North Little Rock Tourism.
- 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM: **SKAL Connections** – Facilitated by the NASC Management Committee, maximizing opportunities for collaboration.
- 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM: **Luncheon & 2026 Congress Announcement** – Enjoy a delectable luncheon featuring a special announcement for the 2026 Skål Congress.
- 1:30 PM - 3:45 PM: **Eco-Explorers: Dive into Sustainability** – Join us for an enlightening session with speaker Kelly Moser as we explore the concept of sustainability. Engage in hands-on conservation efforts led by Tampa Bay Watch. Plus, don't miss the chance to meet and greet our exotic animal friends!
- 6:30 PM: **Champagne Bus Transfer** – Enjoy a stylish transfer to The Birchwood.
- 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM: **Sunsets & Soul Reception** – Celebrate at the historic Birchwood Hotel with a stunning sunset backdrop, delicious seafood, a chilled seafood bar, Mahi Mahi, classic tunes spun by our DJ, and a semi-formal atmosphere.
- 10:00 PM - 11:30 PM: **Busses Return to Hotel**
- 10:00 PM - Midnight: **Late-Night Hospitality** – Continue networking at the cash bar.

## Saturday, May 3, 2025

- 8:00 AM - 8:15 AM: **Departure for Historic Ft. Harrison**
- 8:30 AM - 11:00 AM: **Breakfast Innovations** – National and Club presentations on innovative programs, new resources, and best practices to energize your clubs, sponsored by The Fort Harrison Hotel.
- 11:30 AM: **Return to Hotel**
- 11:30 AM - 12:00 PM: **Grab & Go Lunch** – Convenient lunch option.
- 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM: **Relaxation & Recreation** – Enjoy optional tours, poolside relaxation, or beach time.
- 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM: **Closing Reception** – A final opportunity to connect with colleagues.
- 7:30 PM - 11:00 PM: **Echoes of Jazz: A Presidential Farewell Celebration** – Conclude the Congress with an elegant jazz-themed farewell celebration at the Sheraton Sand Key, featuring a delightful dinner, live music by "Hot Tonic," a silent auction, announcement of winners, and the 2026 prize giveaway. Embrace the spirit of jazz with your attire. Period-specific attire is encouraged.

We look forward to seeing you in Sunny Florida for  
**SKAL NASC 2025!**