



Laboratory for Coastal Research & National Healthy Beaches Campaign

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“Dr. Beach” Names **Caladesi Island America’s Best**

Miami, FL — Caladesi Island State Park takes the number one spot in the 18th Annual Top 10 Beaches ranking produced by coastal expert [Dr. Stephen Leatherman](#), Director of Florida International University’s Laboratory for Coastal Research.

Caladesi is a pristine getaway beach in the Clearwater/St. Petersburg area, only 20 miles west of bustling downtown Tampa. Traveling to this island is an experience itself as it is reached by pedestrian ferry, complete with old salts telling interesting tales, or by private boat. The bayshore is a mangrove forest interlaced with kayak trails and is a bird lover’s paradise. The only mode of transportation on this lovely island, dominated by palm trees, is by foot over the super fine white sand. There is a great snack bar and other creature comforts to enhance your island experience, and both the grounds and landscape are well maintained. Lifeguards are on duty during the summer beach season, but the waves are generally only measured in inches so don’t bring your surfboard.

Caladesi is a well-kept secret. Surrounded by the beauty of a lush state park, few people in Tampa seem to know its whereabouts, while everyone is familiar with the popular Pier 60 at nearby Clearwater Beach. Caladesi’s real attraction is its powder white sand, warm, crystal clear water and beautiful nature, all making it the number one beach to enjoy and decompress.

As “[Dr. Beach](#),” Leatherman has selected the annual Top 10 Beaches since 1991. Fifty criteria are used to evaluate the beaches, including water and sand quality, as well as facilities and environmental management, as part of the National Healthy Beaches Campaign.

What makes Dr. Leatherman’s selections unique is his knowledge as a Ph.D. coastal scientist with over 30 years of experience studying storm impacts, beach erosion and ways to improve beach health and safety.

The [National Healthy Beaches Campaign](#) was established to acknowledge the many beautiful and “healthy” beaches around the country, from seaside to lakeside destinations, for any taste. The [Storm & Tides Project](#) is a component of the NHBC.

TOP 10 BEACHES 2008

1. **Caladesi Island State Park**
Clearwater/Dunedin, Florida
2. **Hanalei Beach**
Kauai, Hawaii
3. **Siesta Beach**
Sarasota, Florida
4. **Coopers Beach**
Southampton, New York
5. **Coronado Beach**
San Diego, California
6. **Main Beach**
East Hampton, New York
7. **Hamoa Beach**
Maui, Hawaii
8. **Cape Hatteras**
Outer Banks of North Carolina
9. **Cape Florida State Park**
Key Biscayne, Florida
10. **Beachwalker Park**
Kiawah Island, South Carolina

Watch for a forthcoming debut TV Special on “America’s Best Beaches” during Independence Day weekend; check your local listings.