City of Tampa Walking Tour: The Tampa Riverwalk

This walk is approximately 2.4 miles and takes about 90 minutes at a moderate to quick pace.

1 Riverwalk at I-275

Underneath the Interstate 275 overpass sits a colorful surprise – 200 linear feet of large tempered glass panels that span the length of the overpass. Artist Heidi Lippman utilizes the ancient medium of fused glass pigment with its interplay between opaque and transparent areas. She chose the title *Andante*, an Italian musical notation for a walking tempo or walking music, which brings to mind the users of the Riverwalk and the adjacent Performing Arts Center.

2 Riverwalk at Laurel Street Bridge

A bright surprise greets pedestrians as they walk underneath the Laurel Street Bridge. *Woven Waves* features folded ceramic steel panels to create a lenticular effect that changes with the viewer’s movement. Artist team, Re:Site, takes inspiration from the bridge, a literal and figurative connector – it connects Tampa geographically, but also connects communities socially. Using traditional West African, Cuban, and Scottish cultural patterns “stitched” in a composition evoking a quilt, is inspired by the various multicultural communities that make up and founded Tampa.

3 Riverwalk at Laurel Street

*America, America* by Barbara Neijna, one of the first sculptures acquired by the City in 1977, was relocated to the Riverwalk in 2016. Once tucked away behind the downtown library, the new location allows for a new experience, both drive-by and pedestrian. This modernist steel artwork is composed of two vertical forms, suggesting a ritual entryway. This artwork was made possible by the National Endowment For The Arts, Fine Arts Council of Florida, and City of Tampa. Although not the artist’s original intent, some suggest that the sculpture evokes the signature “You are Here” icon used today on digital maps.
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4 Straz Center

The David A. Straz, Jr. Center for the Performing Arts has brought quality performing arts programming to Tampa since the 1980s. In recent years, the Straz has been expanding their programming outdoors, along the Riverwalk. The Straz holds a rotating exhibit framed in the portable outdoor black frames called Art on the Walk. Two additional installations that you’ll see as you walk by the Straz Center are String Theory’s Fin Harp and Why Sit When You Can Play. Fin Harp is an interactive sculpture that adorns the performing arts center with 1,000 feet of musical brass wire, and literally transforms it into a gigantic interactive musical instrument. Why Sit When You Can Play?, by Urban Conga, is an 18-foot sculpture bench that doubles as a marimba, so stop by, sit and play!

5 Bridges

Lights On Tampa: Agua Luces is an initiative that has permanently lit five landmark bridges with low energy LED lighting. The impactful lighting, created by lighting artist, Tracey Dear, is on from sunset to sunrise and changes color every 30 seconds. The design provides a signature vista for the City of Tampa. Walking south down the Riverwalk, you’ll walk under Kennedy Boulevard Bridge. On your return, the Riverwalk will take you under Platt Street Bridge, Selmon Expressway Overpass, Brorein Street Bridge. The lighting of the the CSX Railroad Bridge Can be seen if you look north up the Hillsborough River.

6 Tampa Museum of Art

Laura with Bun is a monumental cast-iron sculpture based on an individual portrait by Spanish artist, Jaume Plensa. Laura with Bun serves as a grand entryway to the Tampa Museum of Art for visitors arriving from the north. Like other important portrait-based sculptures by Plensa, the artist invites viewers to consider multiple aspects of beauty, individuality, and human nature through this artwork. At 23 feet tall and more than 18,000 pounds, this artwork expresses both individual and universal traits on a grand and soaring scale. The sculpture was acquired in 2016 and is part of Tampa Museum of Art’s permanent collection, made possible through private donations.
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7 Mural at Poe Garage

The *Stay Curious* series of murals that wrap the perimeter of the Poe Parking Garage celebrates and promotes the creative culture of Tampa Bay. The meaningful message and designs by artists Bask & Tes encouraging visitors to continue learning and experience the arts.

Photo by Nicole Abbett

8 Glazer Children’s Museum

At the main entrance of the Glazer Children’s museum is an 80-foot mosaic by artist Mari Gardner titled *Spiral Fantasia*. As children enter the museum, they are able to touch the tiles and see their reflections in the fractured mirrored pieces. The spiral-within-a-spiral design, conveys discovery, imagination and playful expression.

Photo by City of Tampa

9 Tampa Museum of Art

The Tampa Museum of Art building was designed by Stanley Saitowitz and features a lighted façade by renowned artist, Leo Villareal. The artwork, *Sky* is an LED program that showcases movement and light; a sequencing of patterns created by the artist’s custom coded software that merge as a whole and result in random templates of flash, fade, trail and color. The matrix of 144 four-foot LED illuminators display a visual language of non-repeating patterns.

Photo by Tes One

10 Portal

The Portal consists of pedestrian friendly, digital monitors that are programmed with new media art and digital educational exhibitions. Content on the environment, history and culture is presented through the lens of the arts.

Riverwalk Monument Trail

As you walk along the Riverwalk, you’ll see bronze busts peppered along the 2.4 mile route. These works, by Florida artist, Steve Dickey, feature icons of Tampa’s past: From a representative of the Mocosos tribe from thousands of years ago, to Vicente Martinez-Ybor, who established his cigar industry east of downtown, now known as Ybor City.
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11 Mac Dill Park Plaques

These artist-designed plaques mounted on granite plinths, illustrate the significance of MacDill Airforce base to Tampa and its history.

12 Franklin St. at Convention Center

This sculpture, Zig Zag, by Linda Howard welcomes pedestrians to this entrance to the Tampa Riverwalk, and the Sail Pavilion, a popular bar for residents and visitors. Zig Zag has been in the collection for many years – it is one of the first in the collection – and the artist recently refurbished it by having it powder coated white.

Fun Idea

Why not bike this tour? The Tampa Riverwalk is a great place for a bike ride!

Don’t have a bike? No problem. Thanks to Coast Bike Share, bikes are now available downtown – for all locations and rental information, visit coastbikeshare.com or just look for the bike icon on this tour’s map.

13 Dick Greco Plaza

Dick Greco served as Tampa’s Mayor twice, First Term: October 1, 1967 - April 1, 1974, Second Term: April 1, 1995 - April 1, 2003. While in his second term, Greco played a vital role in bringing the modern streetcar system to the city and revitalizing the Channel District. This sculpture of Mayor Greco, can be found at the downtown TECOline Streetcar stop that takes you from downtown to the Channel District and Ybor.

14 Cotanchobee Park

The imagery of the ceramics that are embedded into the seatbacks are centered on the historic relevance of the site, Tampa’s industry and the downtown. Artist Peter King pulled from a wealth of resources including old maps, photographs, and textile patterns.

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15 Cotanchobee Park

Cenotaph literally means bones buried elsewhere - this is a space for reflection of the site. This site features bronze text panels that recount the complex history of the site at the time of Fort Brooke, which served as a major outpost during all three Seminole Indian Wars and the Civil War. The fort also played a part in the development of the village of Tampa. The panels include Seminole song of removal, maps, and statements by contemporary historians. Ceremonial Space, by Apache artist Bob Haozous, is a thoughtful tribute to the Seminole Indians. Underneath the sculpture, there are bricks in 4 quadrants indicating cardinal directions with culturally appropriate colors (which are also found in the flags of the Seminole Tribe of Florida) and the sculpture incorporates imagery of the cypress trees that were used for foundations of Seminole chickee homes.

16 Riverwalk at Beneficial Drive

The Riverwall by artist Bruce Marsh serves as an iconic entrance to the south end of the Tampa Riverwalk. Marsh photographed hundreds of images of the Hillsborough River to create a quilt of images to celebrate and document the River.

Interested in murals? Check out tampagov.net/murals to see what’s in the City’s collection!

Tampa Public Art is a program of the City of Tampa, Art Programs Division. The mission of the Division is the bring free access to artistic excellence.