

A 5-Step Guide to Coconut Grove Now That It's Cool Again

It's time to head back to CocoWalk, whether you need Sunday brunch or after-hours cigars



BY MARIETTE WILLIAMS

The oldest neighborhood in Miami has a new look. Coconut Grove, founded by Bahamian settlers, is the earliest permanent settlement in Miami-Dade County. Over the years, the area has become an attractive option for those looking for lush parks, neighborhood cafes and funky boutiques — all less than a 15-minute ride from Miami Beach.

If you visited Coconut Grove during the mid-aughts, you probably spent some time at CocoWalk. The entertainment destination had a second-story Fat Tuesday bar, along with a Cheesecake Factory and a Hooters. While it was certainly the go-to hangout in Coconut Grove, the rest of the neighborhood was a mix of historic Spanish mansions, shotgun-style Bahamian homes and college bars packed with students from the University of Miami.

Twenty years later, the neighborhood looks a little different. In 2018, the old CocoWalk was totally demolished and in 2021 it was replaced with a mix of upscale restaurants, boutiques and specialty stores. While Coconut Grove has still kept its cultural connections — the Bahamian Goombay Festival still takes place here every year — the city is also embracing its position as one of the hottest neighborhoods in Dade County.

If your experience with “The Grove” hasn’t evolved since its Fat Tuesday days, it’s time to give it another look. Below, a few ideas for getting reacquainted with one of Miami’s most storied neighborhoods.

The Key Club

Anchoring CocoWalk’s revitalization project is the Key Club. The 6,700-square-foot restaurant comes from David Grutman’s Groot Hospitality, the same group behind the Goodtime Hotel and South Beach nightclubs LIV and Story. The interior features the sort of over-the-top design that you can get away with in Miami: blue velvet booths, translucent geometric lamps and wood-paneled ceilings. The Key Club’s menu has an eclectic mix of savory and comfort foods like sashimi, coconut lobster rolls, and chips and caviar; there’s also a delicious weekend brunch menu that features strawberry shortcake French toast and brioche pecan sticky puns, both perfect for a lazy Sunday.

Bayshore Club

Bayshore Club is a new waterfront destination from Miami’s Grove Bay Hospitality Group, whose portfolio includes restaurants like Stubborn Seed, Glass & Vine, and Stiltsville Fish Bar, among others. Located at the new Regatta Harbour in Coconut Grove, the restaurant offers coastal cuisine like chilled oysters, lobster rolls, burgers and grilled mahi-mahi. The restaurant comes with a bit of Coconut Grove history, too: The area used to be a Pan American seaplane terminal and hangar, and families used to come watch the planes take off and land. Bayshore Club features an expansive open-air deck with lots of seating, a 360-degree bar and a large-scale mural that reads “Greetings from Miami,” which will light up the night in bright neon and beckon boaters to dock and dine. Expect themed live music nights (Fridays feature steel-drum reggae) along with sweeping views of Biscayne Bay.

The Spot Barbershop

Get pampered at the Spot Barbershop, a full-service barber in CocoWalk decked out with motorcycles and vintage car parts. Pull up to one of the antique chairs for a haircut or a beard or mustache trim, or book a visit before a big event for waxing services, face masks or a hot towel shave. Most services also include a complimentary drink and a massage. Starting at 9 p.m., the barbershop can also be booked for after-hours events like bachelor parties and networking mixers, and bookings can be customized to include a bartender, photographer and DJ.

Amal Miami

If you have a craving for Middle Eastern food, you won’t have to go far. Amal Miami serves up shareable Lebanese plates in a modern, inviting space. Menu items include pistachio kababs (made with minced beef and lamb), falafel, and seafood dishes like octopus and tiger shrimp. The decor is Mediterranean-influenced with coral couches, oversized terracotta planters and hanging wicker lamps. Another nice feature is the rooftop bar that’s slated to open later this summer. The open-air space will feature a covered bar along with nighttime music and entertainment.

Coco Cigars

Another gem, Coco Cigars offers rare and vintage cigars and has been a Miami staple for almost 25 years. Guests can relax in a newly reimagined lounge environment with sleek marble floors, plush armchair seating and cheeky neon signs. There’s no rush here — take your time perusing the wall of cigars and enjoying a drink from the onsite bar. The staff is both helpful and knowledgeable, and the cigar store also offers ashtrays, cutters and lighters. Great for a weekday wind down, head here to watch TV, chat up regulars or enjoy a drink.