



Priester's Pecans



Monroeville Courthouse



Peach Park



Durbin Farms



Bates House of Turkey

Beach Drive

Make the most of your trip to the beach.

BY JENNIFER KORNEGAY

PHOTOS COURTESY OF PRIESTER'S PECANS, CHAUTAQUA VINEYARDS AND BIRMINGHAM NEWS FILE PHOTOS

GOT PLANS TO HEAD DOWN to the Gulf Coast this summer for some R&R? While it can be tempting to push the pedal down to get your fun in the sun and sand started ASAP, we think the wisdom behind “It’s the journey, not the destination” is worth considering as you make your way south. Here are a few of our favorite stops between here and both the Alabama and Florida beaches.

Peach Park and Durbin Farms, Clanton

Look for the giant peach and leave I-65 to find both of these produce markets, where you can stock up on fresh fruits and veggies. They’re practically across the street from each other and both shine the spotlight on Chilton County’s famous fruit. At Peach Park, lick your way through a scoop of subtly sweet peach ice cream while you stroll around the Park’s garden area or relax in a rocking chair. Enjoy a heaping helping of warm peach cobbler at Durbin Farms, and be sure to snag a jar of peach butter before you leave.

Peach Park, 2300 Seventh St. S., Clanton | 205-755-2065

Durbin Farms, 2130 Seventh St. S., Clanton | 205-755-1672 | durbinfarms.com

Priester’s Pecans, Fort Deposit

Pop into this family owned shop and feel free to go a little nuts. Pick up a tin or two (or 10) of Priester’s huge pecans harvested from their grove just down the road. Enjoy them chocolate covered, cinnamon-sugar dusted, hot ‘n spicy or simply salted.

80 Bishop Bottom Road, Fort Deposit | 334-227-8355 | priesters.com

Bates House of Turkey, Greenville

If you didn’t fill up on juicy fruit in Clanton, stop here for lunch. Piled high with succulent meat sourced from the Bates family farm (where the birds are free-range and all natural), these turkey sandwiches are must-gobbles. You can even order carved turkey breast served with traditional Thanksgiving trimmings any day of the year.

1001 Fort Dale Road, Greenville | 334-382-6123 | batesturkey.com

The Courthouse, Monroeville

Got the kids in tow? Add a little literary education to your vacation and venture off your path about 20 miles to visit Monroeville, home of author Harper Lee and inspiration for the setting of her Pulitzer-Prize winning novel, “To Kill A Mockingbird.” See the gleaming white courthouse in the center of the town’s historic square and the Atticus Finch monument on its lawn.

31 North Alabama Ave., Monroeville | 251-575-7433 | monroecountymuseum.org

Doc’s Country Store, Opp

This vintage-sign-covered shack packed with nostalgia has a bit of everything and plenty of essentials for the beach-bound: bags, hats, T-shirts, flip-flops and more. Old-timey collectibles, locally produced jams, pickles and other goodies, penny candy, kids’ stuff and gift items round out the eclectic mix.

2863 U.S. 331, Opp | 334-493-4004

Burris Farm Market in Loxley

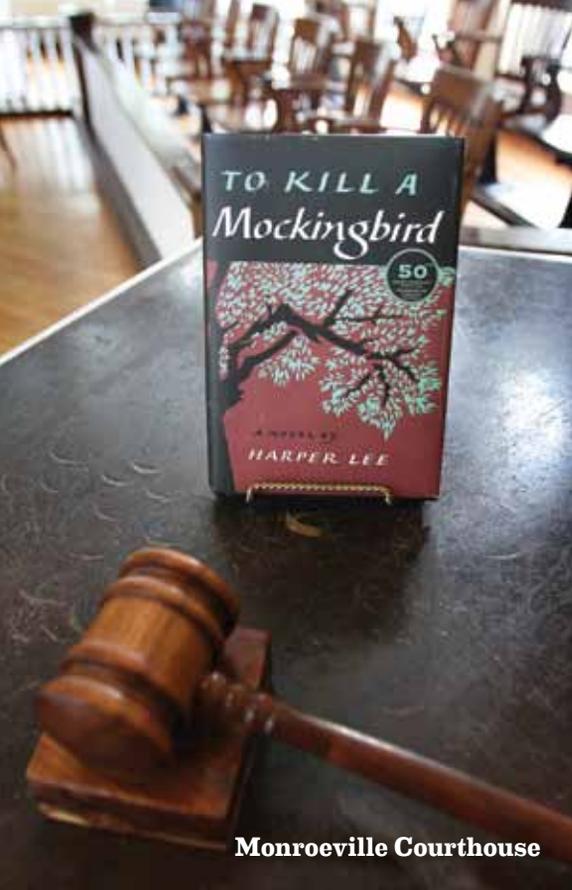
Didn’t stop in Clanton? No problem. Burris Farm Market in Loxley provides a bountiful selection of just-picked produce. The strawberry shortcake bursting with ripe berries has been a favorite treat of beach-goers for more than 25 years, and the homemade cobblers, pies and breads lining shelves in the full bakery are pretty tasty too.

3100 Hickory St., Loxley | 251-964-6464

Chautaqua Vineyards & Winery, DeFuniak Springs, Fla.

Muscadines are the South’s native grape, and their high sugar content yields a sweet vintage that makes refreshing summer sangria. Take the free facility tour and sample their wines, including their popular red made from the “Noble” variety. While you’re there, check out the nearby circular spring-fed lake that sits in the center of the city’s historic district. With its almost perfectly symmetrical shape, it is one of only two such lakes in the world.

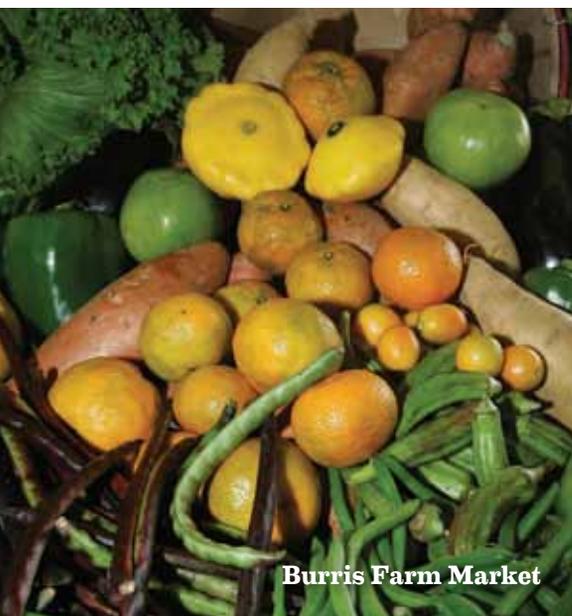
364 Hugh Adams Road, DeFuniak Springs, FL | 850-892-5887 | chautaquawinery.com ■



Monroeville Courthouse



Chautaqua Vineyards



Burris Farm Market