

Downtown Sundays

If you haven't been downtown on a Sunday recently, you might not recognize the place. It bears little to no resemblance to the attractive but sleepy area that I remember from just a few short years ago.

While the majority of downtown businesses still do not open on Sundays, many now do. Several of the newer retail establishments have limited Sunday afternoon hours year round now. No fewer than seven downtown restaurants (Fish House, Atlas, Vic & Ikes, Ragtyme Grill, Jaco's, The Leisure Club, and 600 South Italian Eatery and Wine Bar, now offer brunch (in addition to dinner). Two additional new restaurants opening later this summer will push that number to nine. All of these special breakfast/lunch combinations are in addition to New York Nicks, Hopjacks Pizza Kitchen, Subway and the Crab Trap which have full food service throughout the day on Sundays. Many of these open establishments also have sidewalk food service allowing the user to enjoy the magnificent Florida weather while enjoying a great meal or cold beverage.

These businesses have not missed the fact that over seven thousand people are attending church at one of the seven downtown houses of worship each and every Sunday morning. Many of the faithful are looking for a location to have a nice lunch/brunch after the church service they just left. Today, those folks have multiple options from which to choose.

Sundays are also the day of the week when one can see dozens of couples or entire families riding their bicycles through the streets and sidewalks of downtown. With the reduction in traditional workday traffic, Sundays are a great day to leisurely enjoy the outdoors in the historic and tree lined streets of downtown from atop a bicycle. And now that several new establishments have opened and so many more food and beverage establishments all over downtown are open on Sundays, it makes the experience even more enjoyable and inviting. Most cyclists find being able to stop at one of the many sidewalk cafes for a snack or cool drink along their routes a very desirable attribute.

Just like the addition of more bicycles, the number of families out for an afternoon or early evening walk in downtown has also increased. It is not unusual on a Sunday to see several mothers and fathers pushing a baby stroller or pulling a wagon with a toddler inside along the quaint streets and sidewalks of downtown. Children are also constantly seen on Sundays playing in the interactive fountain at Plaza de Luna. Without the noise and bustle of automobiles racing by, pedestrians can more fully absorb the beauty of the grand historic buildings, the majesty of the ancient oaks and magnolias, and the beauty of the waterfront. More and more families are discovering this cool, interesting and free playground for their children.

Shoreline cast fishing has always been a leisure activity enjoyed downtown. As more and more people discover Plaza de Luna, Commendencia Slip, or the Bartram Park shoreline, the ease of dropping a line in the water has grown. This family –friendly pastime can be addictive. On

Sundays, the cast of weekend anglers, and their families, grows by several fold as folks take time to enjoy the great outdoors as a family with a little fishing.

Performances at the Sanger Theatre, the Cultural Arts Center, or Vinyl Music Hall are occurring more frequently on Sunday afternoons and/or evenings – bringing even more people to downtown to walk the streets, eat in one of the open establishments, or to just enjoy the ambiance of a beautiful historic downtown at a more leisurely pace.

Sundays are no longer the “dead” day in Downtown Pensacola. There is much to do. In short, the streets and sidewalks of downtown are alive with uses, people, and sounds. Come experience what downtown has to offer on a more relaxed day of the week. See you next Sunday.

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Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board