

MIAMI TOURISM AND BUILDINGS ARE GOING GREEN



If one thinks of environmental friendliness and green initiatives, the U.S. don't usually come to mind right away. But the shimmering metropolis of Miami wants to get greener – and it has something to do with tourists.

Cranes characterize the cityscape of Miami, in many places new skyscrapers and hotels are being built. In addition, Miami has the largest cruise port in the world with five million passengers per year.

However, **Miami is also the city of two national parks.** The Everglades with their unique marshland in the west and the Biscayne National Park, which is almost in the city itself. The fine beaches attract many tourists. Some politicians, as well as inhabitants, are aware of the transience of these natural beauties and the ecosystem.

No Plastic Containers

One of the green initiatives of the city is the ban of all plastic containers on Miami Beach. This is very unusual in the USA. No drinks in plastic cups, no food “to go”. On the beach and in the parks of Miami Beach, care is also taken to ensure that everyone remembers their good nursery.

If you bring something to the sea, you should take it with you. The punishment for those who are caught the first time “littering” – that is, leaving their garbage – is 1500 dollars.

The fact that even this high fine does not prevent everyone from simply throwing away their garbage is shown by the regular cleaning of beaches. These are organized by private groups as well as public institutions and companies.

No Panels Because of Hurricanes

But there are more examples of pro-environmental activity affecting not only the nature but Miami tourism as well. For example, the staff of the hotel The Palms takes part in a special green program every three months. This includes not running the air conditioning at full speed, garbage is avoided or recycled, bed linen and towels changed only on request. There are motion detectors and energy-saving lamps.

The kitchen team of Essenzia, the hotel's own restaurant, runs its own garden that grows tropical fruits and herbs that come from the region – and end up in the dishes and drinks at the bar. In addition, the restaurant operates in a so-called farm-to-table system. The products used come fresh from the farms in the region.

These are things that are often taken for granted in Europe, but not in the USA. Why are there no solar panels on the roof? The reason is simple. The hurricane season from June to November is a danger for the panels. This is not only a costly loss but also quite dangerous.

Free Trains and Rental Bicycles

New ideas for environmental protection and sustainability projects are constantly being developed. An important factor is public transport. Miami has a Metromover, a remote-controlled, electric train on stilts that runs through the city centre, regularly back and forth, free of charge for the passengers.

There are also buses and trolleys, as well as rental bicycles. Recently Miami has become a cyclist-friendly city. A few years ago, a big bank took over the sponsorship of wheels and stations. Since then the wheels are blue and their number has grown significantly.

Above all, two problems are avoidable with bikes: huge parking fees and the difficulty of getting across the bridge from Downtown Miami to Miami Beach.

Wind from the Sea as Air Conditioning

In addition, old buildings are being retrofitted and new ones built to be environmentally friendly. The huge American Airlines Arena in downtown Miami has set up a canopy with integrated solar panels of more than 2000 square meters in size.

The recently opened Phillip and Patricia Frost Museum of Science has already emphasized sustainability in architecture. The wind that blows from the sea can blow through the partly open buildings at any time. In front of the entrance are solar trees, through whose panels the solar energy is collected.

The Brickell City Center (BCC) in the financial district of Miami also shows architecture that has adapted to the climate. A hotel, two towers with luxury apartments and a mall with numerous restaurants have emerged where people used to go to work and then drive home without detours.

With the aim that the architecture of the towers has an incomparable face, the planners have commissioned the architect Hugh Dutton to connect the buildings by a so-called climate strip.

These shades not only ensure that no direct sunlight falls on the shops, they have also managed to capture the breeze from the sea and make sure that there is always a light breeze.

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