

# THE MANUAL

## CULTURE

### All the Reasons to Catch an MLB Spring Training Game in Clearwater, Florida

*The Boys of Summer* by Roger Kahn is a nostalgic literary examination of the Brooklyn Dodgers and the team's historic victory in 1955. The [World Series](#) is often referred to as "The Fall Classic," and while it is true that baseball season spans largely over summer and fall, it is perhaps in the spring — in the sweet center of March — that building a weekend getaway (or even a spring break vacation) around America's favorite pastime might be your best getaway idea yet.

Every year, before the official first pitch of the season, baseball teams gather in some of the country's most desirable vacation destinations to partake in [spring training games](#). These games, designed to figure out the rotations, try out new players, and clean up the kinks, etc., are arguably some of the most fun games to attend the entire year (and are far more casual and far less expensive than regular season games).

Major League Baseball, like all sports, is divided into conferences. The Western Conference, known affectionately during spring training as the Cactus League, plays its games in Arizona. The Eastern Conference, known as the Grapefruit League, plays throughout [Florida](#); a high concentration of the game's best teams play in and around Clearwater.



Photo by John Coletti/Getty Images

Clearwater is home to Spectrum Field and the Philadelphia Phillies. The Toronto Blue Jays are also in the vicinity, and George M. Steinbrenner Stadium, spring headquarters of the famed New York Yankees, is only a half-hour drive from town. These stadiums are typically a quarter the size of a typical MLB stadium, creating a more intimate feeling, and given their proximity to one another, baseball enthusiasts can get an early look at more teams than they could in their hometowns.

Perhaps the MLB chose locations like Clearwater to ensure warm temperatures and limited rain delays, but these mid-size cities also offer terrific amenities, world-class dining opportunities, and other outdoor activities. For the 2018 season, games begin February 21 and run until March 27; tickets and scheduling can be found [here](#). Here's everything else you need to know to make a spring break, spring training game trip to Clearwater, an ideal spot for the beer-drinking, food-loving, adventure-seeking baseball fan.



Philadelphia Phillies/Facebook

We suggest staying at the [Wyndham Grand Clearwater Beach](#). It the perfect hub to make the most of Florida's spring training season and even offers discounted rates for games at Spectrum Field.

Fans will love the [St. Pete/Clearwater's Craft Beer Trail](#). This "trail" runs from Clearwater to Dunedin, and showcases more than 30 craft breweries along the way. Get a [Gulp Coast Craft Brewery Passport](#) to keep track of the visits with a stamp from the bartender at each stop.

For dining options, try the [Ocean Hai](#). Located inside the Wyndham Grand Clearwater Beach, Ocean Hai specializes in Asian-fusion cuisine. [The Restorative](#) in Dunedin is a casual neighborhood restaurant with an ever-evolving menu, and [The Mill](#) features craft cocktails and American food with a southern curve.

For a bit more culture, head to nearby St. Petersburg. The [Imagine Museum](#) showcases contemporary studio glass by emerging American artists. The [Morean Arts Center](#), also located in Saint Petersburg, is home to world renowned glass artist Dale Chihuly's first permanent exhibit. There is also the [Salvador Dalí Museum](#), which is dedicated to the prominent Spanish surrealist.

Adventurous guests can take a break from the ballpark and go out on a [boating excursion](#) to Caladesi Island go bird-watching on Anclote Key, or take a snorkeling trip to Egmont Key.