



100 Things to Do in Coastal Mississippi Before You Die

Lisa Evans

story by **Gabbie Bowden**
photos courtesy of **Lisa Evans**



Lisa Evans,
author.

Lisa Evans, a Central New York native, moved to Gulfport some 10 years ago as an empty-nester. “I had family here, so I had visited both pre- and post- Katrina,” she says. “The first time I came, it was in February, so the weather here was absolutely gorgeous. I fell in love with the area – the water, the weather, just everything. It took me a long time, but I finally got here.” Her latest book from Reedy Press, *100 Things to Do in Coastal Mississippi Before You Die*, proudly displays that love for the local area.

After harboring a lifelong interest in writing, Evans had the opportunity to dive into travel journaling once her personal life slowed down. “In New York, I raised my kids and had a job, but once I moved down to the Coast, I started looking long-term,” she says. “They always tell you, do

what you like. I like to write, and I like to travel. So I went to little places and wrote little things, and I started taking some writing courses. I think I wrote my first travel article back in 2017.” From there, she took on more travel writing gigs and even joined a few professional writing associations.

When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in 2020, Evans turned to her local area for writing inspiration. “I think I had written one article prior to COVID about Coastal Mississippi,” she says. “But especially after COVID, I started writing more and more articles locally... and I really liked it, because there are a lot of misconceptions about Mississippi, especially Coastal Mississippi.”

Her interest in both travel writing and the Coast proved profitable when a



ABOVE (left to right): Angel Tree, Fishbone Alley, The Friendship Oak, Half Shell Oyster House, Mississippi Aquarium, Stennis Space Center, Pottery Studio, Kayaking, and Walter Anderson Museum of Art.

representative from Coastal Mississippi’s tourism bureau contacted her about what would eventually become her new book. “Reedy Press has a whole series on 100 Things, it’s all over the United States,” she says. “They reached out to Coastal Mississippi and asked if they knew a local writer for the project. A PR rep from Coastal Mississippi gave them my name, and they asked if I’d consider writing it. I said, Okay, sure! I’ll do it.”

Through her research, Lisa developed

an even deeper appreciation of South Mississippi – an appreciation she’s happy to share with both tourists and locals alike. “I found some really unique places,” she says. “Even people who have been born and bred here, they read the book and ask what’s that?, or where’s that? – or they say I haven’t been there in years. And that’s the whole point of the book. It’s not just for travelers from outside the area, but for locals who want to do a little staycation and try something new at

home.”

The Secret Coast, she believes, is a secret worth sharing for so many reasons, from seafood to sandy beaches, music history to museums, and so much more. “We have so many beautiful things and so much history, the music, the outdoors, there’s just so much – and people don’t know about it.” With her 100 Things travel guide, both tourists and locals alike can connect, and reconnect, with South Mississippi in new and surprising ways.