

Chalet Suzanne

Start the trip with an overnight, or at least a feast, at **Chalet Suzanne Restaurant and Country Inn**, a local gem with a rich history that began in the 1920s when the business of luring wealthy northerners to sunny Florida spawned a tourism boom that quickly cooled in the subsequent bust. Landowners Carl and Bertha Hinshaw got as far as building a clubhouse when Carl suddenly died in 1931 and their grand plans for a sprawling, country-club resort came to a screeching halt. But a resourceful and determined Bertha transformed her home into an inn (the building is now the reception office and gift shop), gave it her daughter's name, and gradually through the years a growing collection of whimsical buildings housing 26 guest rooms became the Chalet Suzanne still prized by weary travelers today.

Drive down the windy path from Chalet Suzanne Road or touch down on the inn's airplane landing strip, and the authentic family hospitality begins. Everything about the inn is charming and special. No two rooms are alike: Each door is painted a different vibrant color; guest rooms are splashed with a range of fanciful antiques collected over the years; even bathroom tiles are unique—some Chinese porcelain, some Italian mosaic—and stem from every corner of the globe, a result of decades of travel on Bertha's part.

In addition to a sparkling pool, a petite spa, and an onsite cannery whose tours allow visitors to see where the Chalet's famous soups are made, this delightful little village also houses a restaurant that's



Authentic family hospitality awaits at Chalet Suzanne

won so many prestigious dining awards that the family has literally run out of wall space to hang them. Perched on the edge of a little shimmering lake, the restaurant's five quaint dining rooms showcase the inn's extensive collection of vintage tableware, no two pieces alike.

Highlights include: breakfast's crepe-like, silver-dollar pancakes, best enjoyed slathered in lingonberry jam; the legendary Romaine soup, also known as "Moon soup," owing to its travels with the space crews of both the Apollo 15 and 16 missions; and five-star dinners, either a-la-

carte choices (like duck confit and rack of lamb) or the Chalet's famous five-course affair featuring the always-talked-about, broiled half grapefruit. Expect classic, fine-dining cuisine capped off with sweet favorites like pot de crème and crème brûlée. Whether the visit consists of a leisurely meal or a week-long retreat, a "getting away from it all" feel is part of the package along with a family-like, warm welcome that three generations of Hinshaws have been careful to preserve.

Chalet Suzanne Restaurant and Country Inn:
www.chaletsuzanne.com



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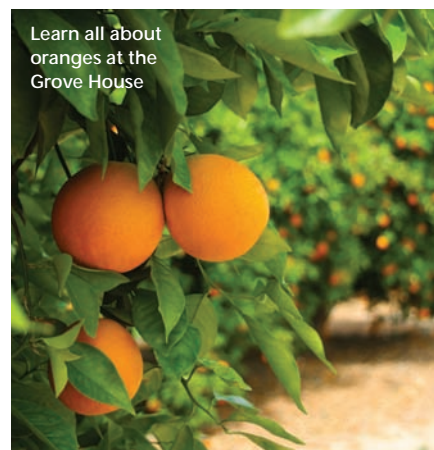
A path of azaleas in bloom at Bok Tower Gardens

Bok Tower Gardens

At Bok Tower Gardens, just three miles north of Lake Wales on CR 17A (Burns Avenue), visitors can peacefully meander through acres of meticulously manicured gardens as musical notes from Bok Tower, the grandiose marble carillon tower centerpiece, blow through the warm breeze. Sixty bronze bells, ranging in weight from 16 pounds to nearly 11 tons, sit atop this National Historic Landmark which is also the final resting place of Edward W. Bok, the Dutch immigrant who built the site, completed in 1929, as a gesture of gratitude for all the opportunities he had been given in the USA. Special events include daily carillon concerts, seasonal guided tours, moonlight recitals, an Easter sunrise service, and Christmas at Pinewood, when every inch of Pinewood Estate, the on-site, 20-room Mediterranean Revival mansion, is spectacularly decked out in holiday décor. **Bok Tower Gardens:** www.boktowergardens.org

Florida's Natural

Before leaving Lake Wales, be sure to visit a few other key points of interest, starting with the Grove House at Florida's Natural Growers, located a few miles south of Chalet Suzanne on Highway 27. Besides free samples of citrus juices and citrus-themed gifts from hand creams to neck ties, visitors also leave with mind-boggling know-how about the area's massive, orange-juice output, which tops 250 million liters of liquid sunshine annually, all squeezed from oranges picked from 50,000 acres of central Florida citrus groves. Their 14-minute video highlighting 78 years of Florida's natural history promises to transform the typical OJ lover into a venerable aficionado. **Florida's Natural:** www.floridasnatural.com/co-op/visitors-center



Learn all about oranges at the Grove House

