

Destination: Miami

Cash a concern? There's no place like home....

Words by Martin Haro



This year, as the cost of living took its toll on Miami—with record-high gas prices, surprisingly expensive trips to Publix, and a burst mortgage bubble—it became quite obvious that some tightening of the belts was in order. *Miami Living* would be remiss not to have noticed this unwelcome turn of events. Worse, perhaps, we would be unequivocally in the wrong if we did not offer you an alternative to ease your stress, so we say: Take a “staycation” already!

There is no better time than now, with the Magic City’s so-called “season” kicking into high gear, to look at everything that our sun-kissed, year-round city has to offer locals and visitors. From staying at home with a book or the new *Monopoly Miami and the Beaches* special edition board game, which highlights iconic landmarks and destinations, to going out on a budget, there is not a hotter destination for Miamians than Miami.

Since charity begins at home, we asked **Marisol Zinghini of Essential Ch’i, Inc.**, for tips on how we can make our homes the ultimate destination. “Choosing to stay at home for your vacation can be deliciously restful and rejuvenating,” she said. “Your space is alive with energy that has a huge impact on you, so firstly you must reconnect with your space. Ask yourself if you’re using every part of your home to its maximum potential.

“Secondly, you must de-clutter, de-clutter, de-clutter. Clutter can be depressing and exhausting. A truly stress-free home is a clutter-free home. Replace it with beautiful flowers or a healthy plant in every room. Zen-ify your environment, bring rest and beauty around you. And finally, set an intention for how you wish to spend your time off. This is a creative process. This way your staycation will be what you intended it to be, instead of becoming just a basket of ‘free’ time.”

Dining and the Magic City

Now that we have told you how to make your home the place to be this season, we want to let you in on a little secret: You do not, we repeat, you *do not* have to travel long distances to eat the best international cuisine. We literally have it all in our own backyard, and here are three of the finest examples:

Brosia is located in the heart of the Miami Design District (163 N.E. 39th St., (305) 572-1400, www.brosiamiami.com), and offers a taste of the Mediterranean in a modern, Manhattanesque dining room with a South Florida touch. The indoor dining room is long and intimate, and boasts large-scale art by local artists, while the outdoor dining terrace is surrounded by a handcrafted aqua mosaic mural and shaded by 150-year-old white oak trees.

Cuban-born chef **Arthur Artiles's** menu combines flavors from Italy, Spain, Greece, and Turkey that beg for repeat visits. His gazpacho soup “caprese” (\$6), with mozzarella cheese on a balsamic reduction and fresh basil, is quite easily the perfect appetizer—it leaves you wanting more.

If you are in the mood for a classic American supper club type of dinner, head up to Aventura Mall and try the recently opened **Ocean Prime** ((305) 931-4500, www.ocean-prime.com). Never mind that this 60-40 restaurant is located in the new wing of a *mall*—it is outstanding. Case in point: the \$16 “Surf and Turf” appetizer of diver scallops and slow-braised short ribs, is so good we had to have it twice while researching this story.

Select items, such as the generous \$29 ginger salmon with stir-fried snap peas and soy butter sauce, pull inspiration from French techniques and Asian esthetics to deliver standout flavors. And you can never go wrong with a \$37 10 oz. filet mignon that has been broiled at 1,200 degrees—pair it with black truffle macaroni and cheese and you will redefine decadence.

A trip to Japan will set you back a pretty penny, but you do not have to go that far for some of the best Japanese food you can have right here in the Magic City. South Miami’s **RA Sushi Bar Restaurant**