SUMMER PASSPORT
The season’s leisure calendar offers a melting pot of international experiences

1. Culture Close-up. A movie can say more things about a country and its people than any history volume. Global Lens 2010 is a film series presented by the Global Film Initiative, a non-profit organization that supports independent films from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East through screenings all over the country. In Florida this year, said screenings will take place at the Tampa Museum of Art starting this month (every second Thursday) through December. On the schedule for summer is Uruguay’s Leo’s Room (June 10), the story of a young man confronting his sexuality; Mexico’s Becloud (July 8), the tale of three boyhood friends reuniting as adults; and Serbia’s Ordinary People (August 12), about soldiers enlisted to execute civilian prisoners.

120 West Gasparilla Plaza, Tampa, 813/274-8130.

2. Cheers, Salud & Everything Else. Wine fairs are no stranger to Florida but the Florida International Wine Challenge, June 24-25, ups the ante by throwing competition into the swirl-sniff-and-sip equation. In addition to letting visitors sample from up to 400 wines from more than 15 countries, the fair also includes a taste test in which connoisseurs from across the country sample the many juices offered to award bronze, silver or gold medals. The various wines awarded gold medals during the run of the fair then go vino-a-vino in a “Best in Show” competition on the final day. Admission to the fair is $80 per person for one day or $100 for both days. Palms Hotel, 3025 Collins Avenue, Miami Beach, 954/336-6733.

3. Domo Arigato. The Morikami Museum & Gardens in Delray Beach are a little slice of Japan smack in the middle of South Florida. The monthly Sushi & Stroll Summer Series, June 11 & July 9, offers visitors a chance to explore this Eastern nirvana just as the sun begins to set. On the agenda are taiko drum performances, self-guided audio tours of the gardens and cold green tea and sashimi (and other bites) at the Cornell Café. Also this season: Tanabata, July 7-14, a celebration of the Japanese holiday that traces its origins to a legend about two stars. As the story goes, the Cowherd Star (Altair) and the Weaver Star (Vega) are lovers separated by the Milky Way who are allowed to meet only once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month. In Japan, citizens celebrate the holiday by writing their wishes on colorful strips of paper and hanging them, along with other paper ornaments, on bamboo branches at their homes. Mirroring that tradition, visitors to the Morikami can pen their wishes for the future and hang them on the Tanabata bamboo in the lobby. 4000 Morikami Park Road, Delray Beach, 561/495-0233.

4. Taste & History. As the oldest city in the continental United States, St. Augustine has had its fair share of influences from cultures far and wide. Most prevalent of all is its Spanish heritage — after all, Ponce de Leon, then governor of nearby Puerto Rico, first explored the city in 1513. First Food: St. Augustine and the Birth of American Cuisine, June 19, traces the history of the capital through food. Los Compañeros de la Cocina (The Companions of the Kitchen), a group of re-enactors and historians, will present programs about 16th century Florida cuisine and culinary customs, as well as tastings of Native American, Spanish colonial, French and Hispano-African foods. Colonial Spanish Quarter, 19 Saint George Street, St. Augustine, 407/345-3127.