

WAKE-UP CALL
Union's ideal breakfast?
"When I'm up before noon,
it's oatmeal," Union says,
dining here at her favorite
hotel, The Sagamore. "I
want pancakes and bacon,
but if I ate that, I'd go right
back to sleep." Tank top,
Etro. Sunglasses, Marni

BEAUTY NOTE Give lips a
fresh pop of color with
Neutrogena MoistureShine
Soothing LipSheers
in Sparkling Nude, \$9.



SAND SESSION
"Miami is the only place
I do a beach workout,"
Union says. "It's
convenient—it's right
outside your door!" Her
regular routine in L.A.
is different every day
and includes uphill
lunges and hilltop squats
in the canyons near
her home and sprints
and stairs at an outdoor
track. Bikini top, Abaeté.
Shorts, Loeffler Randall



SOME LIKE IT HOT

Steamy, sultry Miami is known as a place to have a good time—but to get healthy? Well, yes. For actress Gabrielle Union, it's where she escapes to energize her soul and sculpt her body into shape. Let her habits inspire you.

By Amy Gallo Photographs by Riccardo Tinelli



Union indulges herself a little when in Miami. A favorite treat: a foot-long hot dog. A favorite retreat: the Delano Hotel pool.



"I feel relaxed instantly here. It's like when you step out of a sauna or steam room. My skin looks better; I drink more water," Union says.

Look out the window on any given day in Miami and you're likely to see postcard-perfect blue skies and streams of sunlight: impossibly gorgeous weather. Then you step outside, into a dense hug of humid air. Your makeup slides off your face. Your forehead sprouts perspiration. You retreat to a house, a car, *anywhere* with air-conditioning. But not actress Gabrielle Union. For her, the steamy heat is bliss. "When I'm hit with the humidity, all the tension I hold in my shoulders loosens. It's like, Ahhh. I can exhale," says Union, who stars in this summer's *Meet Dave*. "When I have a project coming up and I need to relax and get into workout mode, I come to Miami."

UNION, 35, FIRST CAME TO SOUTH BEACH in 2002 to film *Bad Boys II*. The Omaha, Nebraska, native fell in love the moment she arrived. "There's a sense of freedom here," she says. "I think it comes from the fact that a lot of people have come to Miami from other places in search of freedom. When you've escaped poverty or oppression to get to America, you have a different perspective. You don't care about Britney Spears and who didn't wear underwear. You're just grateful for what you have." The city's diversity and come-as-you-are attitude embolden Union to explore new sides of herself. "At home, my closet is, like, black, khaki, brown. But when I visit Miami, my suitcase looks as if Easter exploded! There's one bright-yellow minidress that I wear only here. You feel more alive, so you want your clothes to reflect that."

TO KEEP THAT ALIVE, ENERGIZED FEELING GOING. Union works out. "I come here to get my mind, body and soul ready for a new experience," she says. "Los Angeles can be a pessimistic playground. At the gym, even though you're working out, your mind and soul are not being fed. The girl who got the job you wanted is on the next treadmill and you're feeling envy. Here, you're free from that. I can go work out and have a cool conversation without being inundated by actors." In Hollywood, Union usually hits the gym with iPod earphones firmly in place. In her Miami gym, "I'll listen to music I've never heard, like Brazilian drums or Latin jazz. It opens your brain a little more to being receptive to life." Union mixes it up with outdoor workouts, doing sprint-jog-walk intervals along the South Beach waterfront as well as squats and lunges on the stairs at a nearby boardwalk. The ocean views are a bonus, but there's another kind of scenery that keeps her motivated: "I was running the other day and thought, Maybe I'll go get some pasta. And some chick zoomed by me with this amazing butt and I was, like, Let me keep going! Let me move my ass!"

UNION HAS EVEN MANAGED TO TURN Miami's party scene into a source of replenishment. She gets her heart pumping with hours of dancing at local hot spots. ("It's not just that it's fun," she says. "You're getting your heart rate up! It's healthy!") Then she allows herself plenty of sleep. (She rarely gets up before noon.) But most of all, for Union, simply stepping away has major benefits. "In L.A., you can lose sight of what's real. There are real people with real problems, and losing a part is not like what's happening in Darfur. Let's put it in perspective!" Considering the clarifying and recharging effects Miami has on Union, it's no wonder she's looking to buy a home there. "Miami is an oasis. In L.A., it feels like I'm holding my breath, waiting for something to happen. Here, you can just *be*." ■

"I'M HAPPY WITH MY BODY. I FEEL STRONG, TONED AND FIRM WHERE I WANT AND SOFT WHERE I WANT TO BE SOFT."



SHAKING IT UP To blow off steam, Union loves to dance. At her favorite restaurant, Cafe Martorano, in nearby Fort Lauderdale, "the music is blaring, and you don't talk, you dance. People get up and dance around their tables!" she says. Dress, Luisa Beccaria. Styling, Lida Moore Musso; hair, Kyndra Beaudoin; makeup, Motoko for Exclusive Artists. See Get-It Guide.