

# ALACHUA COUNTY

FLORIDA MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - COURTESY OF VISIT FLORIDA



## Gainesville, Florida

Cheer for your favorite contender at a medieval jousting match or gaze at exotic fish and animals from the depths of the Amazon all while vacationing in Gainesville, Florida.

Gainesville kicks off a year of festivals and fun with their 24th Annual Hoggetowne Medieval Faire on January 30-31 and February 5-7. You'll be swept away by medieval magic as troupes of actors, street performers and musicians journey back to the days of yore. Children can enjoy rides on a camel, pony or even an elephant. Human-powered push rides further add to the authentic medieval fun.

You can also get a fresh catch at the "Amazon Voyage Vicious Fishes and Other Riches" exhibit at the Florida Museum of Natural History until January 17. Visitors travel through seven unique ports-of-call while learning about the incredible biodiversity of the Amazon River by participating in several hands-on activities. The FMNH is also home to a tranquil yet towering four-story Butterfly Rainforest. There visitors can observe and be awed by hundreds of fluttering, floating and flat-out breathtaking flyers.

As Gainesville's slogan puts it, "Where nature and culture meet," now a trip to Gainesville wouldn't be complete without crossing a nature path. Kanapaha's Botanical Garden is Florida's second largest botanical garden and it

is absolutely vibrant especially during its 18th Annual Spring Garden Festival on March 29-30. This festival is the region's premier gardening event, with more than 200 booths featuring plants, landscape displays, auctions, children's activity area, arts and crafts, educational exhibits, food and walk-through butterfly house. A special offering this year is a wetland plant exhibition on display in Summer House.

Cap off the Gainesville experience with a stay at one of the seven historic bed and breakfasts. Most built in the 1890s Victorian, Queen Anne architectural style, offers charming, wrap-around porches, perfect for rocking and relaxing with a glass of wine or savoring a warm sip of cider.

Spring here for the 39th Annual Spring Arts Festival, April 5-6. Approximately 250 artists from around the nation display their work. Visitors enjoy a variety of live entertainment, different music and dance troupes, and food vendors offer refreshments throughout the day. \*

860-778-5002 | [www.visitgainesville.com](http://www.visitgainesville.com)

# Alachua County... festivals and fun!

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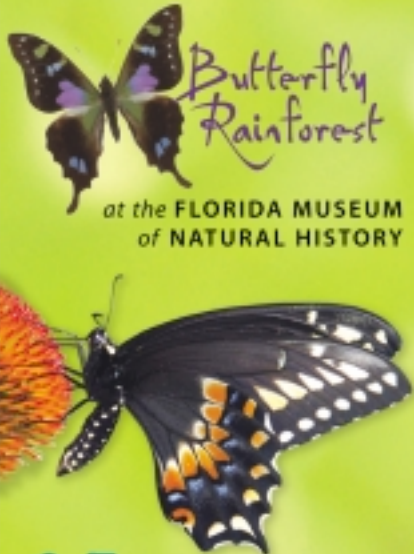
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