

destination focus



St. Augustine

Located on Florida's Northeast Atlantic coast, a 45-minute drive from Daytona Beach, the community of St. Augustine - **the oldest city in the United States** - boasts more than 60 historic sites and attractions.

The architecture of St. Augustine provides a cross section of life spanning nearly five centuries of Americana. Architectural stylings in St. Augustine range from the simplicity of coquina rock and tabby cottages along ancient brick lanes to the magnificence of early 20th-century structures capped by towers, turrets and red clay roofs.

There are more than 85 historic sites and attractions, including a massive fort, missions and living history museums. Two national monuments reflect the prevalent Spanish heritage: the impenetrable fort Castillo de San Marcos (1695), the nation's oldest masonry fortress with Spanish soldier re-enactors firing cannons and, south of St. Augustine, the mysterious, brooding Fort Matanzas (1742), reachable only by boat. The heart of St. Augustine can be found in the 11 pedestrian-only blocks of St. Augustine's historic district. The main thoroughfare is St. George Street, lined by 18th-century Spanish Colonial houses that are now historic landmarks and dotted with boutiques laden with arts and antiques. Family favorites include the century-old St. Augustine Alligator Farm (1893) crawling with 2,700 gators and croc-

odiles, the only facility in the world housing every species of crocodilian. Attractions accenting the unusual are Ripley's Believe It or Not!, featuring artifacts from the Robert Ripley collection and Potter's Wax Museum, where one can come face-to-face with incredibly lifelike recreations of historical figures, including presidents and motion picture stars. For visitors with a sweet tooth, the Whetstone Chocolate Factory tour offers a close-up view-and sample-of chocolate treats in the making.

Every day is eventful in St. Augustine with more than 40 spirited year-round celebrations staged annually. Re-enactments are particularly popular and include: the 16th-century Menendez Birthday Festival; the Blessing of the Fleet, replete with an armada of colorfully bedecked boats; recreations of 17th century life in a Spanish colonial capital, and the torchlight Grande Illumination of the 1770s.

A three-decade old tradition, the St. Augustine Easter Festival is celebrated with a month-long tribute including passion plays and a promenade of horses donning floral Easter chapeaux. St. Augustine's Olde World Christmas fills the Yuletide

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Each November through January, the city's spectacular Nights of Lights celebration adds a stunning element of holiday beauty to the historic city with millions of twinkling white lights adorning most of downtown St. Augustine and the beaches, including the Bridge of Lions and even the palms in Cathedral Plaza.

Golf takes center stage at World Golf Village, located only eight miles northwest of St. Augustine. Here, the World Golf Hall of Fame presents golf's story in more than 70 separate exhibits that combine historic artifacts with the latest in golf interactive technology. Awaiting golfers are the acclaimed "Slammer and Squire" par-72 championship course and the "King and Bear" course designed exclusively by golf legends Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer. The resort's lodging centerpiece is the 300-room World Golf Village Resort Hotel, which adjoins the new 40,000-square-foot St. Johns County Convention Center.

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while visiting > > St. Augustine ACCOMMODATIONS

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