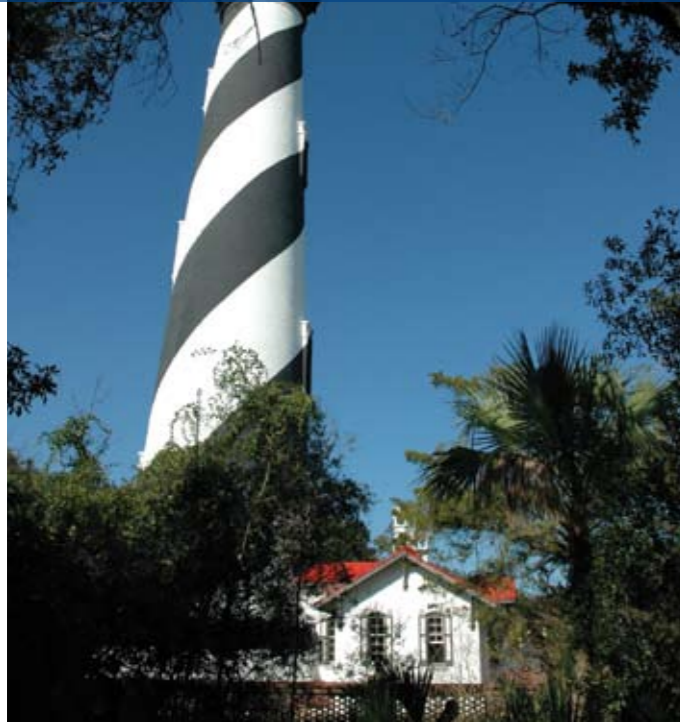


featured destination

St Augustine – Still Coming In First *by Megan O'Neill*



Arriving by boat to the oldest city in North America—it was founded in September 1565 by Spanish explorer, Pedro Menéndez, who incidentally also arrived aboard a vessel—gives visitors a taste for the conquistador life characteristic of St. Augustine's past. For centuries, the city's rich history, charming architecture and 43 miles of pristine beaches have attracted millions of international visitors with a hankering for culture (live music and art galleries abound but don't forget to visit the Castillo de San Marcos built in 1672), comfort (cozy B&Bs line the cobble-stone streets) and fun (water sports, ghosts tours and shopping entertain from morning to night). What keeps this aging city so popular today? Perhaps it's the resident Fountain of Youth, discovered by the infamous Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513, which you too can drink from in Matanzas Bay.

Whether you seek an elixir for longevity or a romantic weekend away or both, St. Augustine will certainly deliver. The beauty and historic scenery of St. Augustine

has much to offer. With so many things to see and do our weekend was relaxing and fun at the same time. So, here are a few places that will engage those sea legs of yours while you're docked in the Ancient City...

Coming by boat to St. Augustine you have several choices of marinas. Camachee Yacht Harbor is a fully protected marina hugging the Intracoastal Waterway and less than a mile from the St. Augustine Inlet and Atlantic Ocean and approximately 5-10 minutes by car to downtown. (904.829.5676; www.camacheeisland.com). St. Augustine Municipal Marina has an ideal location nestled in the heart of St. Augustine, just south of the Historic Bridge of Lions in the city's historic district. (904.825.1026; www.staugustinemarina.com).

Our first day of exploring St. Augustine was a leisurely stroll down St. George Street. This pedestrian strip, littered with restaurants, pubs and boutiques, links all of St. Augustine's delightful nooks and crannies revealed unexpected treasures from historic landmarks like the



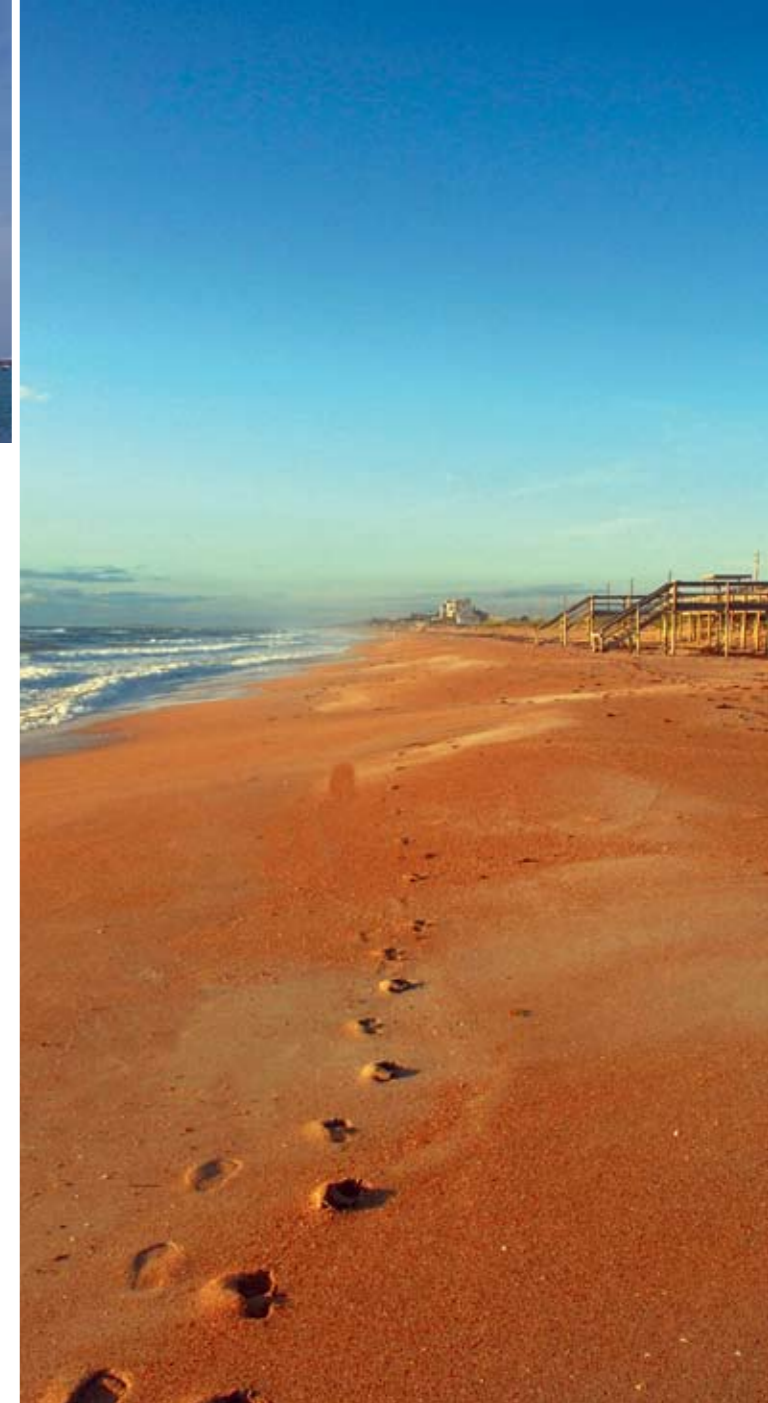
oldest wooden schoolhouse to apple strudels at the Bunnery Café.

After a long and glorious day walking St. George Street we stopped at A1A Ale Works for a tasty libation. We tried one of A1A's frothy offerings in a friendly upscale atmosphere where sailors, students from Flagler College just up the street, and businessmen and women convene for conversation, microbrews and delicious food. This seemed to be a popular destination so be sure to make a reservation (1 King Street, 904.829.2977; www.a1aaleworks.com).

Waking well rested and ready for another day we stopped for breakfast at Casa Maya. Whether you are looking for huevos rancheros or the best fruit plate in Florida, make sure to stop at this Mayan restaurant for their delectable breakfast and lunch offerings prepared with fresh organic ingredients (17 Hypolita Street, 904.823.1739).

The weather was spectacular and a day at the beach sounded like the perfect idea. With so many beaches to choose from we decided on Crescent Beach. Crescent Beach is located in the southern area of St. Johns County. It is situated on Anastasia Island, a wildlife refuge. This beach offers a serene, natural setting and is a great place for beachcombers. It is one of the most scenic, unspoiled beaches in Florida. Crescent Beach offers boating, diving, fishing, and many other attractions. It's a bit of a drive but well worth it. Location: South A1A about 25 minutes from downtown St. Augustine.

After a relaxing day at the beach, dinner at the Conch Restaurant was our choice to end a perfect day. Just over the bridge on Anastasia Island, this restaurant, lounge, motel, and marina invites guests to enjoy their meals—think conch fritters, fish sandwiches and giant



cocktails—in private huts elevated above the water or in the communal tree house-like dining room. And, in season, the Sunday afternoon reggae sessions are not to be missed (57 Comares Avenue, 904.829.8648; www.conch-house.com).

With just enough time before our weekend came to an end we stopped at Claude's Chocolate. Fresh and homemade in St. Augustine, the hot chocolate, truffles and cocoa-infused treats at Claude's are complete unadulterated pleasure. What's sweeter than this? They will ship their edible bliss anywhere (15 Hypolita Street, 904.808.8395). [mi](#)