

SIDETRIP

America's Oldest City
St. Augustine, FL

Founded in 1565, the oldest city in the country is just one hour north of Daytona. Parts of beautiful and charming St. Augustine still look and feel like an old European town. Since most of its historical sites and attractions are grouped in a small area, it's easy to park the car and amble along. But first, take a sightseeing tour, the best way to get an overview of the area and an appreciation for its history.

On the **Old Town Trolley Tour** (phone 904/829-3800), you'll go by the **Old Jail** (not to be missed), **Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth** (kind of cheesy), the **Oldest House**, **Wooden Schoolhouse**, and **Drugstore** (all interesting), **Ripley's Believe It or Not** (for the kids), the **San Sebastian Winery** (for the adults), and more. The admission price lets you get off and back on at any of its 19 stops.

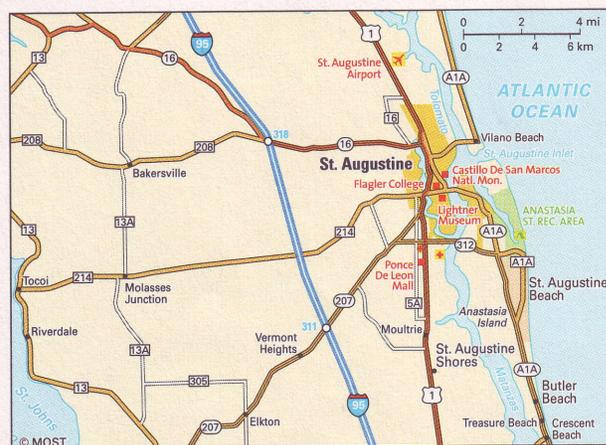
One of the stops worth checking out is the **Castillo de San Marcos**. Wander through the rooms of this fort completed in 1695, listen to tour guides, and watch reenactors and cannon-firing demonstrations on the weekends. The Castillo is also a good place to let the kids run around.

Another worthwhile trolley stop is the pedestrian-only **St. George Street** walking mall, in the heart of the historic district. This narrow street is packed with shops, antiques stores, restaurants, old buildings, and the **Spanish Quarter Village**. Full of friendly and talkative reenactors, the Village's old homes and buildings are set in 1740. Afterwards, get a scoop of St. Augustine Mud ice cream at **Kilwin's**.

Next, cross the Bridge of Lions to Anastasia Island and the **Alligator Farm and Zoological Park**, one of the oldest alligator parks in the country and filled with all

types and sizes of crocodiles and alligators—some quite close to the walks. Don't miss the albino alligator, which looks like it's been carved out of white chocolate. If it turns its pink eyes on you, legend says it's a sign of coming good fortune.

End the day with dinner at one of the waterfront restaurants and a carriage ride. If you're really adventurous, spend the evening looking for ghosts on one of the city's many tours. Take your pick among haunted cemeteries, haunted pubs, pirate ghosts, and more.



For more St. Augustine recommendations, go to www.mobiltravelguide.com