



ST. AUGUSTINE PONTE VEDRA & THE BEACHES, FLORIDA

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BEACHES AND NATURE

The beaches of St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra and Anastasia Island offer beachgoers an exceptional 42-mile-long oceanside playground filled with the chance to explore, discover and experience this pristine beach environment. The activities they offer visitors are varied and plentiful. From swimming and surfing to shell collecting and hiking, the beaches of this beautiful stretch of Atlantic shoreline offer year-round fun in a seaside paradise.

The beaches stretch from Ponte Vedra, in the north, to Marineland, at the southern extremity of St. Johns County, Florida. The natural beauty of the beaches remains unspoiled and serves as a year-round magnet for visitors who enjoy sunshine, recreation and the sea. Places such as Vilano Beach, Crescent Beach, Summer Haven and St. Augustine Beach are ideal for swimming and fishing while water sport enthusiasts enjoy wind surfing and kite surfing. Every morning, fishermen can be found casting in the surf while beach walkers scan the sands in search of a variety of beautiful shells and sand dollars. Dolphins play in the surf and visitors with a sharp eye may catch a glimpse of the rare Northern Right Whales that migrate here each winter to give birth. In the summer months, manatee swim in our local waters and loggerhead and green sea turtles nest along our beaches. Enjoy the opportunity to view aquatic wildlife from a safe distance. Even our visitors can help protect these creatures – so please do not approach, disturb sea turtle nests or hatchlings, or feed any native wildlife.

Anastasia Island, south of St. Augustine, is nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intracoastal Waterway. Along its wide beaches and at the St. Johns County Pier, just south of popular Anastasia State Park, visitors enjoy fishing or simply relaxing in the sun.

Anastasia State Park offers seaside facilities for camping, hiking, fishing, picnics, barbecues, nature walks, and beach volleyball. The natural beauty of the area is accentuated by a 1,700-acre bird sanctuary with four miles of beach, lagoon waterways and plentiful wildlife. Experienced guides provide visitors with tours that highlight the colorful local flora and fauna.

Just north of St. Augustine, the beaches of Ponte Vedra are characterized by their towering dunes, shell-sprinkled shores and natural foliage. A vacationer's paradise with some of the finest resorts in the United States, visitors can ride horses in the surf, stroll in the soft sand, fish or simply sit back and enjoy a spectacular sunrise over the ocean.

Fishing and boating facilities attract sportsmen at Guana-Tolomato-Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, located on A1A south of Ponte Vedra Beach. Anglers can fish in the ocean or the Guana River or enjoy freshwater and saltwater fishing in Guana Lake. Boat launches are available at both the river and lake.

From professional birders seeking a glimpse of the rare and colorful painted bunting to families getting an up close and personal look at coastal birds calmly nesting just inches away, the area offers a rich natural world that is exciting, inspiring and accessible. The new environmental education facilities at Guana Reserve in Ponte Vedra and Anastasia State Park's naturalist programs allow visitors to learn about the natural habitats of our wildlife and pristine environment.

With eight stops on the Great Florida Birding Trail, the area is a bird watcher's paradise – especially the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park where thousands of coastal birds make their homes from March to June under the protection of the big 'gators. Giant sea turtles create their nests on the beaches during the warm summer nights and in winter, the rarest of whales, the Northern Right, give birth just offshore. St. Augustine hosts the annual Birding & FotoFest in April, when participants get the opportunity to participate in birding and photography workshops and special tours led by renowned naturalists and photographers. For more information, visit www.Getaway4Nature.com.

Be sure to visit www.TravelMediaBistro.com, the official media website for St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors and Convention Bureau.