

Northeast Florida

Ichetucknee Springs State Park

Florida's most pristine spring fed river

Real Fun in the Real Florida

Take a cool, relaxing tube float or snorkeling trip on a steamy summer day, or a serene, soothing canoe or kayak excursion on a calm winter day. Whichever you choose, the tranquil beauty of the wild and natural Ichetucknee is not to be surpassed.

Visitors can enjoy Florida at its finest and spend a day at Ichetucknee Springs State Park. The ever-flowing, clear aquamarine waters providing a view of the river bottom's fish and plants is what makes the park a "natural wonder." **Canoeing** or **kayaking** in the autumn, winter or spring allows paddlers an opportunity to see old Florida in its untouched state. **Hiking** the winding trails take visitors through different ecosystems and to the sights and sounds that make them distinct. The park offers **Picnicking** under the shade of huge live oaks at the historic north entrance, **swimming** at Ichetucknee headspring where the

edges are shallow, or **scuba diving** at Blue Hole Spring to depths of 40 feet (divers must be certified.) The park offers several **tubing** options: 45 minutes, 1 hour, 1.5 hours, 2.5 hours, or 3.5 hours.

Camping is available at **O'Leno State Park** just 12 miles away. Private camping is also available in the area. **Troy Springs State Park** and **River Rise State Park** are also nearby. After tubing, visitors can stop and grab a bite at the full-service **concession** at the south entrance, open during the summer season.

Nature & History

Perhaps the Ichetucknee's greatest historical treasure is the Mission de San Martin de Timucua. This Spanish/ Native American village was one of the major interior missions serving the important Spanish settlement of St. Augustine. The mission, built in 1608 flourished through most of that century. The river and springs were used consistently by even earlier cultures of Native Americans, dating back thousands of years.

During the 1800s, early travelers on the historic Bellamy Road often stopped at Ichetucknee

Springs to quench their thirst. Later that century, a gristmill and general store were located at Mill Pond Spring.

With high quantities of limestone at or just below the ground surface, the area became early headquarters for North Florida's phosphate industry in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Small surface mines are still visible throughout the park. Continuing through the 1940s, cypress and longleaf pine forests were harvested by the local timber and naval stores industries.

Ichetucknee Springs State Park was purchased by the State of Florida in 1970 from the Loncala Corporation to preserve one of the state's outstanding natural wonders. In 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior declared the Ichetucknee Spring a *National Natural Landmark*.

An astounding daily average of 233 million gallons of water flows, from seven large springs to form the Ichetucknee River. The 72-degree, crystal-clear river travels 6 miles before emptying into the Santa Fe River. The Ichetucknee is home to four distinct biological communities, including shady hardwood hammocks, sunny open sandhills, wild rice marshes, and swampy floodplain forests.

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required. Additional user fees may apply.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are not permitted on or near the water. Where allowed, pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing is not allowed.
- Scuba diving is only permitted October to March.
- Food, drink, tobacco products and disposable items are not permitted on the river.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.

- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

Contact Information

Florida State Parks
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks
Ichetucknee Springs State Park
12087 SW US Hwy 27
Ft. White, FL 32038
(386) 497-2511
FloridaStateParks.org