

Northwest Florida

St. George Island State Park

Best Kept Secret Along the Forgotten Coast

Real Fun in the Real Florida

Welcome to St. George Island State Park, one of Florida's Gulf Coast barrier islands. Just four miles offshore between Apalachicola Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, St. George Island is best known for its secluded beaches, Apalachicola Bay oysters and abundant local seafood.

The park offers nine miles of **pristine beaches** popular for **swimming** and **sunbathing**. Four miles are located along the main drive; five miles are accessible only by foot. *Please remember that no lifeguards are provided.*

Canoeing and **kayaking** are favorite activities in shallow Apalachicola Bay. Two boat ramps provide access to the bay and accommodate shallow draft boats up to 24 feet long. **Surf** and bay **fishing** yield catches of flounder, redfish, sea trout, pompano, whiting and sometimes

Spanish mackerel. *A saltwater fishing license may be required.*

The two and half mile **nature trail** to Gap Point meanders from the campground through the pine forests and coastal scrub to the bay. Adventurous campers may hike the trail to the **primitive campsites** at Gap Point, which is also accessible by boat.

Six large **picnic** shelters on the beach are equipped with restrooms and showers. Each shelter has grills for cooking and several picnic tables for visitors.

The park offers a full-facility family campground with 60 campsites, a **playground**, electricity, water hookups and dump station nearby. Two buildings provide hot showers and restrooms. The park also has a **youth camp** available for group camping.

History & Nature

Early in the island's estimated 5,000 years of existence, pre-Columbian native peoples visited St. George Island at least seasonally to collect oysters and seafood. Remnant middens, or trash mounds,

contain evidence of shellfish harvests, fishing and pottery-making. Checked and incised ceramics, stone gaming pieces and a grinding stone have been recovered from sites within the park.

During the early and mid-1900s, the island's pine forests were turpented. Many "cat-face" scars are still visible on the island's larger slash pines.

During World War II, the island was used by troops at Camp Gordon Johnson for numerous training exercises carried out over the area's vast dunes.

Acquisition of land for the park in 1963 and the 1965 completion of the Bryant G. Patton Bridge crossing Apalachicola Bay to St. George Island led to increased recreational use of the island's beaches. Construction of park facilities was completed in 1980 and St. George Island State Park opened to the public.

The Gulf of Mexico and the Apalachicola Bay Aquatic Preserve provide the perfect setting for this picturesque state park. With nine miles of undeveloped beaches and dunes, the park covers 1,962 acres of the east end of this long, narrow barrier island. Natural features include sandy coves, salt marshes, tall pines and fragrant rosemary.

Ecosystems in the park include slash pine forests and remnant coastal scrub. The bay supports numerous needlerush and spartina marshes, while the gulf and bay support an abundance of marine life. Small ponds and tidal creeks provide a limited freshwater habitat in an otherwise arid climate.

Directions

The park is roughly 76 miles southwest of Tallahassee on US 319/US 98 on St. George Island, 10 miles southeast of Eastpoint.

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected. Collection, destruction or disturbance is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.

- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Intoxicants, fireworks and hunting are prohibited in all Florida state parks.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- For camping information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521 or (866) I CAMP FL or TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit ReserveAmerica.com.
- 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

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