

# **Park Visitor Welcome Kit: Northeast Florida**

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## **Welcome to your Florida State Parks!**

**Use this Park Visitor Welcome Kit to:**

- Find out what's new inside your state parks this year
- Learn how to engage your entire family's interest and create a memorable visit
- Check out the park rangers' top park recommendations for hiking, boating, biking & more
- Plan your next park adventure with the enclosed state parks map & guide
- Take advantage of fantastic offers from our sponsors

[www.ParkVisitors.com](http://www.ParkVisitors.com)

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# **Safety Tips, Park Passes, State Park Survey & Contact Information**

## **Florida State Parks Pass**

With your Florida State Parks Pass, you can enjoy unlimited entry to more than 160 state parks, historic sites and natural areas for a full 12 months.

Cost is \$40 plus tax for individuals or \$80 plus tax for families. Buy yours today at the Ranger Stations or go to [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org) to order online or download a form for a fax order.

Pass does not include camping and entitles bearer to a 33% discount on admission to Homosassa Springs and Skyway Fishing Pier state parks.

## **Florida State Parks Passport**

The Florida State Parks Passport is designed to help you discover Florida's award-winning state parks.

As a collector's journal, the passport will help you plan and record your experiences. To qualify for a commemorative gift, be sure to collect a unique stamp at each park you visit. Passports may be purchased for \$7.95 plus tax/shipping at many state parks or by calling (352) 628-1002.

## **Safety Tips to Help You Enjoy Your Parks**

Florida's sunshine provides many opportunities for recreation. Remember to use sunscreen to prevent burns. Drink lots of fluids to remain hydrated. Bug repellent will keep the insects away.

Never hike alone and always stay on trails—it's easy to get lost out here.

Park hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year unless posted.

Pets are permitted in designated areas only and must be on a leash no longer than six feet. Please pick up after your pet.

A helmet is required for all bicycle riders younger than 16.

Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only.

A Florida fishing license may be required.

Fireworks and hunting are prohibited in all state parks.

Alcoholic beverages are allowed in designated areas only.

During lightning storms, seek shelter or stay in your car.

All boaters under age 13 must wear Coast Guard-approved life jackets.

For a complete list of park regulations, go to the Ranger Station.

## **Safety Tip!**

Take responsibility for your children on the beach and in campgrounds. Make sure they always hike, bike, swim or boat with a partner or group.

## **What Do You Think?**

Give your opinion and you could win a Canon Digital camera!

Help us make the Park Visitor Welcome Kit even better, and you could win a new camera! Visit [www.parkvisitor.com](http://www.parkvisitor.com), complete a short survey and you will be entered to win a Canon EOS Rebel XSi. Tell us what you like about the Welcome Kit and what changes you'd like to see next year. The survey is anonymous, so your privacy is protected.

## Contact Information

Emergency: 911 or go to the ranger station

General Information: (850) 245-2157

Website: [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org)

Camping Reservations: [www.reserveamerica.com](http://www.reserveamerica.com),  
(800) 326-3521

Florida Department of Environmental Protection:  
[www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us)

**For advertising inquiries**, call (626) 229-9991.

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agency. For more information please visit  
[www.parkvisitor.com](http://www.parkvisitor.com)

## **Go Guide**

Exciting articles for exploring Your Florida State  
Parks today!

### **Ranger's Recommendations: The Very Best of Northeast Florida**

Who knows your state parks better than the men  
and women who maintain—and enjoy—them? Here  
are their top destinations for a wealth of  
recreational activities.

#### **FISHING**

##### **George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park**

Located northeast of Jacksonville is a mile-long,

pedestrian-only fishing bridge that spans Nassau Sound. Anglers catch a variety of fish, including whiting, jacks, drum and tarpon. The Nassau Sound Bait and Tackle Shop on the north end of the fishing bridge offers live bait, snacks and some of the best fishing advice in the area.

## **CANOEING/KAYAKING**

### **Wekiwa Springs State Park**

Rent a canoe or kayak at the park and explore the springs for a day. Canoe camping is a favorite of those looking to sleep under the stars. A campground is also available.

## **NATURE PRESERVE**

### **Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park**

East of Jacksonville's skyscrapers and west of the beaches, this area protects the water quality of the Nassau and St. Johns rivers, ensuring the survival of aquatic plants and animals and providing an

important refuge for birds. Wildlife is abundant and ranges from the threatened American alligator to the endangered wood stork. Equestrians, hikers and off-road bicyclists can explore five miles of multi-use trails. The park has a canoe/kayak launch accessible by a 500 foot portage to the marshes. Admission is free.

## **HORSEBACK RIDING**

### **Lake Louisa State Park**

A short distance from Orlando, this park is noted for its six beautiful lakes, rolling hills and scenic landscapes. Equestrians love the trail experiences along the Atlantic Ridge offering some of the broadest views in Florida. Primitive camping and cabins are available along with paddocks for horses. Advance reservations are recommended.

### **Wekiwa Springs, Lower Wekiva River and Rock Springs Run State Parks**

Located at the headwaters of the Wekiwa River, these 3 state parks offers a glimpse of life during the Timucuan Indian period. Trail guides are available to the public and private horses can be boarded overnight at the primitive equestrian camping areas at Rock Springs and Lower Wekiwa. Horses may be rented at Rock Springs Run. Equestrian riding is limited to day use only at Wekiwa Springs State Park.

## **CAMPGROUNDS**

### **Fort Clinch State Park**

The park features a well-preserved fort from the Civil War with period reenactors, a beautiful beach, nature trails and a full-facility campground.

### **Gamble Rogers Memorial State Park at Flagler Beach**

Nestled between the Atlantic Ocean and the Intra-coastal Waterway, this windswept park attracts

campers to the campground overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and the beach where visitors enjoy swimming, sunbathing, beachcombing or watching for shorebirds.

### **Little Talbot Island State Park**

The campground is located along the eastern salt marshes of Myrtle Creek and is an easy walk to more than five miles of beautiful beach. The diverse habitats in the park host a wealth of wildlife for viewing including river otters, marsh rabbits, bobcats and a variety of native and migratory birds.

### **BEACH**

#### **Anastasia State Park**

The beach attracts walkers, bicyclists, joggers, fishermen, birders and nature-lovers. The waves and seasonally warm water draw surfers and kayakers.

## **Big Talbot Island State Park**

The trees seen on beaches look like driftwood. These trees have fallen from the bluffs above as a result of erosion. These trees are a protected natural resource. The Black Rock Trail offers hiking.

## **Amelia Island State Park**

The only state park in Florida to offer horseback riding on the beach; a 45-minute riding tour follows the forest and along the Atlantic Coast. Close to Jacksonville, the park also protects more than 200 acres of wilderness along the southern tip of Amelia Island.

## **OUT OF THE ORDINARY**

### **DeLeon Springs State Park**

The Old Spanish Sugar Mill Restaurant is famous

for its make-your-own-pancakes breakfast where you control your own table-top griddle.

## **BEST IN THE STATE**

For a one-of-a-kind Florida adventure, head to Amelia Island State Park and enjoy a rare opportunity to ride a horse on a beach in Florida.

## **Best New Gear**

Recreation in the outdoors gets better with good gear. Here are five new items to help enhance your park experience this year... and most of them are good for the environment too!

### **Keen Newport Hemp**

Woven hemp fiber gives this popular Keen hybrid sandal- shoe a new look. The patented toe guard protects from errant roots and rocks on the trail,

while the airy — and eco-friendly — upper gives your feet a chance to breathe. \$95,

[www.keenfootwear.com](http://www.keenfootwear.com)

### **Jetboil PCS**

Conserve fuel and cook food faster. That's the promise of the JetboilPCS, an innovative personal camp stove that captures and focuses its heat.

Want proof? This burner boils two cups of water in just 2 minutes, which is twice as fast as comparable stoves. \$89, [www.jetboil.com](http://www.jetboil.com)

### **Solio Hybrid1000**

Solar power in a snap. The Solio clips to your backpack while you walk, sucking rays all day and saving the juice in its internal lithium-ion battery.

Later, plug in your iPod, or even a laptop computer, to bank off the device's 5-watt output — enough to power most portable devices. \$79,

### **Garmin Colorado 400c**

A top-end GPS, the 400c displays three-dimensional maps and lets you sift through endless navigational options via its “Rock ‘n Roller” input wheel. An electronic compass and altimeter provide direction and altitude readings for further data. \$639.99, [www.garmin.com](http://www.garmin.com)

### **REI Sahara Tech**

This long-sleeve travel shirt has built-in sun protection to the tune of a 50 UPF rating. A neck-shading collar and air vents in back further help you survive a hot hike under the summer sun. \$49.50, [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)

### **Stephen Regenold**

is a world-traveling adventurer journalist who writes The Gear Junkie column for several U.S.

newspapers. Go to [www.thegearjunkie.com](http://www.thegearjunkie.com) for video gear reviews, fitness, adventure travel and health tips, a daily blog and an archive of Regenold's work.

## **Easy Ways to Spark Your Children's Love of the Outdoors**

If you've brought your kids to the park today, let me congratulate you! You're doing your part to reverse what I call 'nature-deficit disorder.' You're probably already aware of this condition—your kids probably play outside less than you did or they play video games, not outdoor games, and they have little or no interest in, say, fishing, hiking or camping.

In my exploration of the disconnect between children and nature, I've found that parents almost

always tell stories about their own childhoods: this tree house or fort, that special woods or ditch or creek or meadow. They recall those “places of initiation,” in the words of naturalist Robert Michael Pyle, where they first sensed with awe and wonder the largeness of the natural world, both seen and unseen.

Knowing this, I’ll bet that’s one big reason you’ve brought your family here to the park. You want your kids to experience the joy and wonder of nature, like you did. You want them to create their own special memories. Fortunately, it’s easy to give that gift to them. Just get them outside and then let their natural curiosity take over.

## **FOUR FUN TIPS FOR KIDS OUTDOORS**

Invent your own nature game: Encourage them to find evidence of ten ‘critters’ in the form of actual animals, footprints, holes, nests or other signs of

activity.

Have your kids sit under a tree or in a meadow and use all five senses: Listen to every bird song and bug call, feel the grass or dirt underneath, smell the land, watch the breeze blow through the grass, trees or on the water.

Try wildlife photography with a digital camera. When capturing beautiful images, you and your children will actively “look” at nature—and appreciate it more.

Go fish. Let kids explore the water’s edge, and start fishing with simple techniques and gear. Bend down the barbs on the hooks for safety and to make it easier to release the fish.

The more your family explores nature together, the closer your family will become. Grown-ups

often mention outdoor adventures as their best childhood memories. Share them with your children.

Adapted from *LAST CHILD IN THE WOODS: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*

(© 2008 Algonquin Books), by Richard Louv, Chairman of the Children & Nature Network ([www.cnaturenet.org](http://www.cnaturenet.org)). Learn more and find additional resources at [www.lastchildinthewoods.com](http://www.lastchildinthewoods.com). Reprinted by permission.

## **Wellness Tips from Chris Carmichael**

By visiting your state parks, you've taken a step toward living a healthier and more enriching life. As you experience the park, take this chance to

unwind a bit, get a little—or a lot—of exercise, and reacquaint your senses with the land. The myriad of recreation activities available and the nature surrounding you will stimulate and strengthen your body and mind.

Embrace Life. I've traveled all over the world and learned that to get the most out of one's surroundings, you have to get outside and experience Mother Nature with all your senses. Only then will you rediscover the thrill of nature's power and beauty.

Live Vigorously. When you get outside, you'll feel compelled to do something. That's natural; we were meant to move. And the ball fields, trails, rivers, and lakes in our parks are the perfect place to get a move on and start living healthier lives that improve our well-being.

Earn Your Rewards. The mental satisfaction that comes from accomplishing something new is incredibly powerful. It can be as simple as paddling a boat, climbing a mountain, riding a horse, or for me, jumping on a bike. Fortunately, your state parks are full of such opportunities.

Chill Out. Interacting with nature on a regular basis in the form of fishing, a picnic, or a bike ride reduces stress and offers a retreat from the demands of our modern world. And reducing stress has been proven to lead to a healthier body. So make a park visit a regular habit—for your health!

CHRIS CARMICHAEL is an Olympian and former professional cyclist, and coach to Texas native and 7-time Tour de France Champion Lance Armstrong. For more of Chris's ideas and tips on training and nutrition, visit [www.trainright.com](http://www.trainright.com).

## **IT'S WILD IN FLORIDA**

The lands and waters in Florida provide some of the most unique animal habitats on earth. If you're lucky you may spot one of these Florida natives.

The endangered bald eagle has made a comeback in Florida and across the nation. Look for their nests in high trees along the shoreline.

The American alligator makes its home in freshwater swamps and marshes, rivers and lakes, and in the brackish waters of coastal canals, rivers and creeks.

Sea turtles have used the beaches of Florida to lay their eggs for eons.

## **ROADTRIP 2 DAYS//80 MILES**

## Beaches & Gardens

Full of natural beauty, this region's beaches and gardens are can't-miss destinations. Relax and enjoy the scenery on this easy weekend getaway.

### **DAY 1**

Pull into the campground at Anastasia State Park and set up for a weekend's stay. The barrier island features a broad beach on one side of the park and tidal marshes and a lagoon on the other. Spend the day on the beach, swimming in the surf or fishing in the lagoon. Or explore nearby historic St. Augustine, the nation's oldest city, built by the Spanish in the 1500s. A walking tour through Old Town is a must with stops at the old Spanish fortress and Cathedral-Basilica. Anastasia is an ideal basecamp for the weekend. Plan to stay here overnight and venture out each day to neighboring parks just a short drive away.

## **DAY 2**

Pile into your car for the short drive southwest to Ravine Gardens State Park, a ravine that was transformed into extensive formal gardens by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. After enjoying the 1.8-mile loop, head towards the Atlantic Ocean and Washington Oaks Gardens State Park, which features a remarkable collection of native and exotic flowers, from azaleas and camellias to the exquisite bird of paradise, all sheltered within a picturesque oak hammock. Don't forget your camera or sketch pad—the vibrant flowers make these parks an artist's paradise.

## **IN-THE-KNOW PIT STOP**

The Colonial Spanish Quarter in St. Augustine is a living- history museum that re-creates life from the

1740s. Daily tours of the Castillo de San Marcos are a must-see in St. Augustine. (904) 823-4569.

## **LEAVE NO TRACE: Handle With Care**

The manatees and sea turtles need your help! They're two of a hundred endangered plants, animals, birds, and fish living in or passing through your state parks. It's up to you to help preserve their critical habitat during your visit. Follow the tips below and your parks and beaches should stay wild and vibrant for yours and future generations.

### **Pack It Out**

Deposit all litter and food scraps in designated receptacles. Pick up any litter you may find along the way. No trash cans? Haul your waste out of the park.

## **Protect the Water**

Clean water is a precious resource in this region. Even a puddle can support a vibrant ecosystem. Stay out of water unless designated for swimming or boating. Camp at least 200 feet away from, and never wash dishes, yourself or deposit waste, in lakes and streams. Thousands of animals, insects and plants depend on that water.

## **Observe, Don't Disturb**

Leave rocks, plants and other nature elements as you found them. Same goes for cultural or historic construction and artifacts.

## **Be Fire Wise**

Use a camp stove for cooking. Where fires are permitted, only use established fire rings or BBQ grills. After wood and coals burn to ash and cool, scatter the ash.

## **Follow the Rules**

Specific park regulations were researched and designed to preserve the local ecology and let nature thrive.

## **Stick to Existing Sites & Trails**

Only camp in designated or existing campsites and keep your impact small. Stay off vegetation.

Always walk single file down the middle of an established trail, even when it's wet or muddy.

## **VOLUNTEER!**

Help maintain a trail, restore a natural area, or join a group to clean up your beaches or parks. Inquire at the ranger station for a list of Citizen Support Organizations working with your favorite parks or inquire at the ranger station to discover how you can help. [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org)

## **FL STATE FACTS**

Wrap your head around these Sunshine State Numbers

19 Million

Gallons of crystal clear water bubbling out of De Leon Springs each day

1513 AD

Approximate year that Spanish explorer Ponce De Leon landed in Florida near St. Augustine

30 Feet

The total descent of the St. Johns River from its headwaters to the sea

## **Northeast Florida**

**The Original Florida**

This region is dominated by history. Europeans settled the area close to 500 years ago. The strategic importance of the mighty St. Johns River has played a role in wars dating back to the Second Seminole War of the 1830s. Through it all, the region's abundant natural beauty has thrived. Wildlife flourishes here, including river otters, bobcats, deer and countless bird species. For more information, visit [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org).

### **Addison Blockhouse Historic State Park**

c/o Tomoka State Park

2099 North Beach Street

Ormond Beach, FL 32174

(386) 676-4050 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/addison](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/addison)

### **Amelia Island State Park**

Visitors can enjoy hour-long horseback rides along the beach at one of the few places on the east coast that allows horseback riding on the beach.

The shore is popular with anglers interested in surf casting as well as with seashell hunters and wildlife watchers. The surrounding area also offers fine dining and shopping.

(904) 251-2320 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/amelia](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/amelia)

### **Anastasia State Park**

The park boasts a broad beach flanked by dunes and a lagoon surrounded by tidal marshes. The hardwood forest of ancient oaks was young back when Juan Ponce de Leon landed near the park in 1513. Camping, beachcombing, swimming, kayaking, windsurfing and fishing are popular. Island Joe's camp store and grill sells sundries, camping and fishing supplies and rents bicycles and beach gear.

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(904) 461-2033 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/anastasia](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/anastasia)

## **Big Talbot Island State Park**

This nature preserve is a premier spot for nature study, bird watching and wildlife photography. The 20-foot bluffs create one of the most unique shorelines in the state. Over time, erosion has created the park's famous "boneyard beach" which is covered with the skeletons of live oak and cedar trees that once grew here.

(904) 251-2320 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/bigtalbot](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/bigtalbot)

## **Blue Spring State Park**

From November through March manatees swim upriver to spend nights in the warm waters of the spring, the largest on the St. Johns River. During the summer, the spring attracts swimmers,

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snorkelers and divers. Hiking, fishing and boating are favorite year-round activities.

(386) 775-3663 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/bluespring](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/bluespring)

### **Bulow Plantation Ruins & Creek State Park**

This was once the site of a prosperous plantation destroyed during the Second Seminole War in 1836. The ruins of a sugar mill, wells, spring house and foundation stones of the plantation house remain. The park is home to the 400-year-old Fairchild Oak tree.

(386) 517-2084 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/bulow](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/bulow)

### **De Leon Springs State Park**

In the late 19th century, the springs were a winter resort based around the "fountain of youth" promised by a dip in the warm, crystal waters. Today, canoe, kayak and paddleboat rentals are available for a paddling tour of the spring and

spring run. The more adventurous can follow the run into the Lake Woodruff National Wildlife Refuge and explore 18,000 acres of lakes, creeks and marshes.

(386) 985-4212 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/deleon](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/deleon)

### **Dunns Creek State Park**

One of the newest additions to the state park system, this park's natural community includes sandhills covered with longleaf pines and wiregrass, and sand pine scrub.

(386) 329-3721 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/dunns creek](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/dunns creek)

### **Faver-Dykes State Park**

The creek, pine flatwoods and hardwood hammock are home to deer, turkeys, hawks, bobcats and river otters. The picnic area overlooks scenic Pellicer Creek. Fishing, camping and wildlife viewing make this a pleasant

destination for a vacation getaway.

(904) 794-0997 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/faverdykes](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/faverdykes)

### **Fort Clinch State Park**

One of the oldest state parks in Florida, this is a well-preserved Civil War-era fort that saw use during the Spanish-American War and World War II. It was renovated by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. Fort tours are offered daily.

(904) 277-7274 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ftclinch](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ftclinch)

### **Fort George Island Cultural State Park**

Over 6,000 years of history is just waiting to be found among moss-draped laurel and live oaks. The historic Ribault Club, originally built in 1928 as a golf and country club, now serves as gateway to the Timucuan Trail State and National Parks.

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(904) 251-2320 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ftgeorge](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ftgeorge)

### **Fort Mose Historic State Park**

In 1738 the Spanish governor of Florida chartered Fort Mose as a settlement for freed Africans who had escaped slavery in the British-held Carolinas. When Spain gave up Florida, the residents migrated to Cuba or fled into the Florida wilderness.

(904) 823-2232 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ftmose](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ftmose)

### **Gamble Rogers Memorial State Park at Flagler Beach**

This windswept park on the Atlantic coast memorializes folk singer Gamble Rogers and features beachfront camping, picnicking, swimming, fishing and wildlife viewing. Low tide is the ideal time to check out shore birds feeding in the tidal ponds.

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(386) 517-2086 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/gamblerogers](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/gamblerogers)

### **George Crady Bridge Fishing Pier State Park**

The fishing bridge spans Nassau Sound and provides easy access to one of the best fishing spots in northeast Florida. Access the bridge via Amelia Island or Big Talbot Island state parks.

(904) 251-2320 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/georgecrady](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/georgecrady)

### **Haw Creek Preserve State Park**

The preserve, accessible by boat only, contains seven distinct natural communities, including old growth hardwood forests, hammocks, pine flatwoods, marshes, swamps and a blackwater stream. The name "haw" comes from a flowering shrub that grows along the banks of the creek.

(386) 676-4050 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/hawcreek](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/hawcreek)

## **Hontoon Island State Park**

The large mounds visible from the park's nature trail consist largely of discarded snail shells which were an important source of food for the Native Americans living along the St. Johns River. Reach the park by boat or passenger ferry and spend a quiet day in a natural paradise. Overnight boat slip rentals and a tent-only campground are also available.

(386) 736-5309 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/hontoon](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/hontoon)

## **Lake Griffin State Park**

The park is home to one of the state's largest live oaks, which is more than 300 years old. A canal connects the park to Lake Griffin where visitors can boat or fish for largemouth bass, bluegill, speckled perch and catfish. Hiking and camping are also popular.

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(352) 360-6760 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lakegriffin](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lakegriffin)

## **Lake Louisa State Park**

Lake Louisa is the largest in a chain of 13 lakes connected by the Palatka River. The park contains 10 distinct ecosystems that are home to marsh rabbits, gray squirrels, pocket gophers, foxes, bobcats, deer, and alligators. Horseback riders can explore miles of equestrian trails.

(352) 394-3969 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lakelouisa](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/lakelouisa)

## **Little Talbot Island State Park**

The park, which covers the entire five-mile long island, is one of the few remaining undeveloped barrier islands in northeast Florida. Maritime forests, sand dunes and salt marshes offer hours of quiet exploration. Anglers can cast into the surf or tidal creeks behind the island.

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(904) 251-2320 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/littlealbot](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/littlealbot)

### **Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park**

Stroll along the Sand Hill Nature Trail and you may catch a glimpse of river otters, sandhill cranes and unique plant life. Or, explore the park by paddling the scenic Wekiva River.

(407) 884-2008 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/wekiva](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/wekiva)

### **Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park**

As one of Florida's first state parks, this park offers a refreshing swim, fishing in lake or a lazy afternoon of canoeing.

(352) 473-4701 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/mikeroess](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/mikeroess)

### **North Peninsula State Park**

(386) 517-2086 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/northpeninsula](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/northpeninsula)

### **Pumpkin Hill Creek Preserve State Park**

This preserve was created to protect a large tract of coastal uplands that are critical to the water quality of the Nassau and St. Johns rivers. Trails meander through sandhills, hammock forests, tidal marshes, cypress dome habitat and several creek and marsh systems.

(904) 696-5980 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/pumpkinhill](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/pumpkinhill)

### **Ravine Gardens State Park**

A ravine formed by water flowing down to the St. Johns River was transformed into a dramatic formal garden during the Great Depression by the Federal Works Progress Administration. Either bike or drive through the scenic Ravine Loop.

(386) 329-3721 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ravine](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/ravine)

### **Rock Springs Run State Park**

The park offers hiking, mountain biking, rustic camping, horseback riding and equestrian camping. A horseback riding concession provides guided trail rides and horse rental. Campsites line Rock Springs Run and the Wekiva River.

Reservations are recommended.

(407) 884-2008 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/rocksprings](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/rocksprings)

### **Tomoka State Park**

Located near the confluence of the Tomoka and Halifax rivers, the park sits on the past home of Native Americans who lived off the fish-filled lagoons. Today, visitors enjoy picnics, camping, nature trails, boating (canoe rentals available) and fishing.

(386) 676-4050 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/tomoka](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/tomoka)

### **Washington Oaks Gardens State Park**

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Sandwiched between the Atlantic Ocean and Matanzas River, this park's land has been cultivated by people for hundreds of years. In the 1930s, the formal garden was established that features roses, citrus, camellias, azaleas and other ornamentals.

(386) 446-6780 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/washoaks](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/washoaks)

### **Wekiva Springs State Park**

Here's your best chance to catch site of the Florida black bear among many other wildlife inhabitants. Rent a canoe and paddle the Wekiwa River from the headsprings or enjoy camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding or backcountry camping.

(407) 884-2008 // [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/wekiva](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/wekiva)

### **Yellow Bluff Fort Historic State Park**

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(904) 251-2320 //

[www.parkvisitor.com/fl/yellowbluff](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/yellowbluff)

# **More ways to ENJOY your PARKS**

## **Calendar and Cool Ideas**

This Park Visitor Welcome Kit is made possible by sponsors who share our vision for protecting parks and the environment. We think you'll love what they have to say.

## **I N S I D E**

### **Looking for outdoor photography tips?**

Find photography tips from expert photographers and a chance to win a park trip and a camera when

you enter the Canon Photography in the Parks Contest.

### **Planting a tree is as easy as clicking your mouse!**

Go to [www.odwalla.com](http://www.odwalla.com) and plant a tree in a park in the blink of an eye. No purchase is necessary. Each visitor can plant up to 5 trees!

### **Learn about ending 'nature deficit disorder'**

Also, find out how you can make all your travel, Travel for Good, with Travelocity

### **Tips for a responsible park experience**

### **Create lasting memories from your trip**

Shutterfly has a special offer only for park visitors. Go to [www.shutterfly.com/parkvisitor](http://www.shutterfly.com/parkvisitor) to get yours

### **Florida State Parks Event Calendar**

There's more to explore online

For more gear reviews, road trip ideas, loads of park information, recipes, travel tips, special offers, and more, visit [www.parkvisitor.com](http://www.parkvisitor.com)

## **20% for Parks**

The Park Visitor Welcome Kit was created at no cost to State Parks or taxpayers.

Funding is generously provided by its sponsors, and 20% of its net proceeds are donated to your state parks.

To learn more, visit [www.20ForParks.com](http://www.20ForParks.com)

**Sponsors:** Canon, Odwalla, Travelocity, GEICO and Shutterfly

## **Florida State Parks Calendar**

Check out all the fun events in your state parks—guided hikes, night programs, festivals, kids programs, athletic events, how-to clinics, and much more! Add these to your to-do list today and visit your state parks often.

**June 1, 2008**

### **Mattie Kelley Choctawhatchee Estuary Festival at Fred Gannon Rocky Bayou State Park**

Come out for a day of family-g geared activities—fish printing on T-shirts, crab races, guided kayak tours, guided hikes, and seining exercises for kids to examine local fish. Learn all about the Choctawhatchee River and Bay, as well as a restoration project for the Okaloosa Darter, a locally threatened fish. Other displays and lectures

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will focus on snakes, red tide, sturgeon population, and water nitrate testing. More info: (850) 650-5928

**June 7, 2008**

**Early Boat Tour at Edward Ball Wakulla Springs State Park**

Get an eyeful of alligators, turtles, deer, birds, and other wildlife on an early morning cruise of the scenic Wakulla River. Reservations suggested. More info: (850) 926-0700

**June 14, 2008**

**Annual Free Kids' Fishing Clinic at Fort Clinch State Park**

This one-day clinic helps your kids learn all the basics and how to be responsible anglers. The first 500 kids receive a free rod and reel. Bait is provided. More info: (904) 277-7274

**June 16-21, 2008**

## **Wildlife Week in the Park at Homosassa**

**Springs Wildlife State Park** This weeklong day camp exposes the children to Florida's wildlife and their habitats through activities and crafts. Open to children going into third and fourth grades in the fall. Advance registration required. More info: (352) 628-5343

**July 4, 2008**

## **Old Fashioned 4th of July Picnic at The Barnacle Historic State Park**

Celebrate our nation's birthday with an old-fashioned relaxing family picnic at a 19th century pioneer homesite. Show your spirit by wearing a period costume for all the festivities, including lawn games, fireworks, and kite-making demonstrations. More info: (305) 442-6866

**August 2, 2008**

## **A Day in Florida History of De Leon Springs at De Leon Springs State Park**

Come and see a battle between soldiers and settlers of the early 1800s and Seminole Indians re-enacted with actual weapons of the period.

Afterwards, take in some Indian dance performances before exploring an authentic Indian village and soldier's encampment—complete with Indian artifacts, old rifles and weapons, and artisans.

More info: (386) 985-4212

## **September 6, 2008**

### **First Saturday Coffeehouse at Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center**

Enjoy a coffee, tea and dessert while taking in songs, stories, music or poetry at this open stage night at the park auditorium. More info: (386) 397-4331

**September 20, 2008**

**Marion County Springs Festival at Silver River State Park**

This annual festival has an incredible program—live music, door prize giveaways, an arts and crafts show, interactive exhibits, storytelling, guided hikes, a silent auction, art show, horse drawn trolley, food vendors, and more. More info: (352) 236-7148

**September 20-21, 2008**

**Spanish American War Event at Fort Clinch State Park**

Fascinated by the period of the Spanish American War in 1898? Then, don't miss a day of reenactments and historical presentations. More info: (904) 277-7274

**October 4, 2008**

## **Children's Cane Pole Fishing Tournament at De Leon Springs State Park**

Leave the fancy rods and reels at home. All you'll need for this tournament are a simple cane pole, bobber, and hook. Bait provided, and prizes awarded for different age groups—the largest, the smallest and the most fish caught. More info:

(386) 985-4212

**October 11-12, 2008**

## **Confederate Garrisons at Fort Clinch State Park**

Civil War reenactors portray life at Fort Clinch with black powder artillery demonstrations, marching drills, and other activities. Don't miss the candlelight viewing on Saturday evening. More info: (904) 277-7274

**October 24, 2008**

## **Heritage Day at Forest Capital Museum State Park**

Volunteers dressed in period costumes create a living history at the 1863 Cracker Homestead, with exhibitions of: pine straw basket weaving, blacksmithing, plowing with mule, Civil war encampment, cracker cooking, cracker whip demo, cracker cowboy, crocheting, knitting, tatting and more. More info: (850) 584-3227

**October 24-25, 2008**

## **16th Annual Haunted Woods at Hillsborough River State Park**

Looking for a safe, fun alternative to trick-or-treating? This event has something for the whole family—haunted woods trail, coloring contest, family tram ride, refreshments, games, goodies, moonwalk, costume contests and more. More info: (813) 987-6771

**October 25, 2008**

**53rd Florida Forest Festival at Forest Capital  
Museum State Park**

Don't miss this tree-rific day packed with festivities for the whole family—a downtown parade, the world's largest fish fry, carnival, pageants, parades, storytelling, vendors galore, antique cars, arts and crafts, live music and entertainment, and chainsaw competitions. More info: (850) 584-3227

**October 25-31, 2008**

**Haunting of Fort Taylor at Fort Zachary Taylor**

Looking for a good fright? Come experience the haunting of Fort Taylor, a Civil War Fortress in which nearly 400 soldiers died of yellow fever.

More info: (305) 292-6713

**November 2-9, 2008**

**Key West Offshore Powerboat World  
Championship at Fort Zachary Taylor State  
Park**

View the annual offshore powerboat racing series from the best beach in Key West. More info: (305) 292-6713

**November 3-4, 2008**

**Quiksilver "King of the Peak" Surf Contest at  
Sebastian Inlet State Park**

Watch some of the best surfers in the world "shoot the tube" and compete for \$10,000 in prize money. More info: [www.quiksilver.com](http://www.quiksilver.com)

**Thursdays, Nov – April 2008**

**Gentle Walk & Talk at Paynes Prairie Preserve  
State Park**

This gentle walk takes you to the edge of the prairie basin and Alachua Sink, plus areas of the Preserve only accessible with a guide. Challenge

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yourself to identify birds, butterflies, trees, and wildflowers along the way, or just enjoy a peaceful stroll. This walk is suitable for those who aren't hikers but still want to have an outdoor experience. More info: (352) 466-4100

**December 5-7, 2008**

**Pirates in Paradise at Fort Zachary Taylor  
Historic State Park**

Arrr mate! Best not miss this event, or you'll have to walk the plank. Re-enactors portray the pirate's life in the late 1700s—swords, cannon fire and all. Festivities include a reenactment of the trial of Ann Bonnie and Mary Reid, as well as mock battles with English Red Coats and the pirates at land and sea. More info: (305) 292-6713

For more information on these and other State Park events, visit [www.parkvisitor.com/fl/events](http://www.parkvisitor.com/fl/events)

## **EXTEND YOUR TRIP**

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