



Canaveral National Seashore Real Florida Guide

Note: Colored numbers correspond with numbers on the map. **Red** = Day 1, **Green** = Day 2, **Blue** = Day 3 and **Yellow** = Other Activities

[Canaveral National Seashore](#), located along Florida's east coast between the Cities of New Smyrna Beach and Titusville, has a variety of habitats, including barrier island, open lagoon, coastal hammock, pine flatwoods and offshore waters. As a result, outdoor activities are numerous, ranging from kayaking to birdwatching. Primitive camping is allowed at the Apollo Beach end of the park. Make reservations by calling (877) 444-6777 or [online](#). Camping is also allowed on 14 small islands in the Mosquito Lagoon, accessible by boat, canoe or kayak. Permits may be obtained [online](#) or by calling (877) 444-6777.



This itinerary includes the adjacent [Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge](#). Like the national seashore, the refuge was established as a buffer zone for the nearby National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) activities. It covers 140,000 scenic acres of brackish estuaries, marshes, coastal dunes, scrub oaks, pine forests and flatwoods, and palm and oak hammocks.

The region features the 1,515-mile [Florida](#)



[Circumnavigational Saltwater Paddling Trail](#), Segment 22, in case you are in the mood for a multi-day paddling trip. It is also part of the [Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail](#). Every January, the area hosts the multi-day [Space Coast Birding & Wildlife Festival](#), considered the largest festival of its type in the country. Growing in popularity are several existing and planned long distance paved bike trails, including the [East Central Florida Regional Rail Trail](#), the [St. Johns River-to-Sea Loop](#), the [Space Coast Loop Trail](#), the [East Coast Greenway](#) and the [Florida Coast to Coast Trail](#).

Day 1

Hike the canopied [Castle Windy Trail \(1\)](#) at Parking Area Number 3. This 0.8 mile out and back trail leads to a large Timucuan Indian midden which dates back to 1000 A.D. Another outstanding trail is the .5 mile [Eldora Hammock Trail \(2\)](#) on Eldora Road. You can also hike along Florida's longest unspoiled beach, a total of 24 miles. This beach is a true sanctuary for people and wildlife, but be aware some areas of the beach are frequented by nudists, especially on Playalinda Beach south of Brevard County (since nude sunbathing is prohibited in Brevard County).

Day 2

Explore the [Mosquito Lagoon \(3\)](#) by boat, canoe or kayak. Canoe rentals are available at the Apollo Beach Visitor Center, and you can also launch a kayak or canoe behind the center. Other launch sites include the picnic area behind Turtle Mound, Eldora



Parking Lot Number 7, and Beach Parking Lot Number 5. See the itinerary section above for island camping information.

The Mosquito Lagoon is an inviting place of unspoiled islands and a labyrinth of tidal creeks sheltered from the Atlantic Ocean by Cape Canaveral and Merritt Island. This estuary is a vital nursery for fish, oysters, clams, shrimp and other sea life and, not surprisingly, it's one of Florida's most famous fishing grounds. If traveling in warm weather, bring bug repellent because the lagoon can live up to its namesake.



Mosquito Lagoon is part of the larger Indian River Lagoon, considered to be North America's most diverse estuary. Overlapping boundaries of tropical and subtropical climates helped to create a system which supports 4,300 plants and animals, 72 of which are endangered or threatened. Visitors on the water are almost guaranteed to spot sea turtles, manatees, dolphins and a wide variety of bird life, from roseate spoonbills to bald eagles, depending on the season.

Day 3

The Indian River Lagoon and Mosquito Lagoon estuaries have attracted people for thousands of years. Timucuan Indians annually migrated to these shores from inland areas to gather clams and oysters, and to catch fish. They left behind giant shell mounds, two of which can be seen today — Seminole Rest and Turtle Mound, both are managed by the Canaveral National Seashore.

[Turtle Mound \(4\)](#) was built from discarded oyster shells by generations of Timucuan Indians. At 660 feet long and 50 feet tall, it is the largest shell midden in the United





States and the view from the summit is worth the climb.

South of Turtle Mound are two of the original buildings from the 1876 Town of [Eldora \(5\)](#), once a small agricultural community. The Eldora “State House” now serves as an area history museum. It is open three days a week, Friday through Sunday, from noon to 4 p.m.

On the mainland near the City of Oak Hill, [Seminole Rest \(6\)](#) consists of several prehistoric shell mounds along with two turn-of-the-century buildings which aided in mound preservation. While most mounds in the region became fill dirt for modern structures, such as railroad beds and roads, the Seminole Rest mounds are relatively intact. The largest mound is Snyder’s Mound, used by Native Americans to process clams for about 400 years. It is about 13 feet high and stretches about 740 feet north-to-south and 340 feet east-to-west.

Other Activities

To explore beyond the Canaveral National Seashore, take the 166-mile [Indian River Lagoon National Scenic Byway](#). Besides covering part of the Seashore, it encompasses two national wildlife refuges, [Sebastian Inlet State Park \(7\)](#), [Brevard Zoo \(8\)](#), and many beaches, museums and historic sites along the way.



The Greater Titusville Area, also known as [Florida’s Space Coast](#), has many other attractions to check out, including the [Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex \(9\)](#) and several parks and museums.

