

## ST. AUGUSTINE, GENERAL INFORMATION

As of February, 2024

*This is a partial listing of important names and places associated with St. Augustine.*

1) **Henry Flagler** was instrumental in developing St. Augustine as a tourist destination back in the late 1880's. Along with **John D. Rockefeller**, Flagler earned his fortune by establishing what became the **Standard Oil Company**. The architecture that he favored was Spanish Renaissance, and the city includes many beautiful Spanish-style buildings. For more details and pictures go to <http://www.augustine.com/> (click on attractions, history, etc.)

2) **The Menorcans** – This refers to a large group of people from the Mediterranean (the Spanish island of Menorca, Italy, Greece) who immigrated in 1768 to Florida where they worked as indentured servants on an indigo plantation in New Smyrna. Conditions were terrible, and about 600 of the survivors made the difficult 75-mile journey on foot to settle in St. Augustine in 1777. Many of the Menorcan surnames are well known in St. Augustine (Carrera, Manucy, Masters, Pacetti, Pellicer, Pomar, Ponce, Usina, Ximenez, etc.). The descendants of these early settlers have preserved their heritage and have played an important role in our area. The Menorcans (also spelled Minorcans) brought with them their famous **datil pepper** and are known for their version of pilaf called **pilau** and **Menorcan clam chowder**.

3) **Flagler College** – 74 King St., 904-823-3378, [www.flagler.edu](http://www.flagler.edu)

What is now **Flagler College** was once the **Hotel Ponce de Leon**, Flagler's first hotel in Florida. The hotel opened in January 1888 and was designed to attract the super wealthy who started coming down to Florida to spend the winters. Flagler achieved his ambitious plans to develop tourism in Florida by building hotels and the railroad extending all the way down the east coast to the Florida Keys. His friend **Thomas Alva Edison** installed the electricity (something very new in the 1880's) in his St. Augustine hotels, and another friend **Louis Comfort Tiffany** was contracted as interior designer. Tiffany designed the beautiful stained-glass windows in the Ponce de Leon dining room. Flagler opened Florida for tourism, spending much of his personal fortune to do so. Tickets for the daily tours must be reserved, and tours are currently scheduled at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. Check online for tickets and any changes in the schedule.

4) **The Lightner Museum** – 75 King St., 904-824-2874, [www.lightnermuseum.org](http://www.lightnermuseum.org)

This was the second hotel built by Flagler, and it's right across the street from **Flagler College**. Called the **Hotel Alcázar**, opened on Christmas day in 1888, it featured many recreational opportunities. At that time, it had the largest indoor swimming pool in the world, an elegant ballroom, a bowling alley, tennis courts, a bicycle riding academy, a golf course nearby, horseback riding, and a health spa with a Turkish bath, a Russian bath, a cold plunge pool, a gymnasium and massage room. It closed as a hotel in 1931, and in 1948 it was converted into the **Lightner Museum** that now houses a wide variety of collections (fine art, American brilliant cut glass, folk art, furniture, etc.) and a **gift shop** with a great selection of interesting items. **Otto Lightner**, a wealthy magazine publisher in Chicago, came to St. Augustine in 1946 and stayed in the Ponce de Leon. Lightner had amassed a huge number of artifacts, artwork, furniture, and collections of various items during the **Great Depression**. When he saw the empty former hotel, he bought the building to showcase his collections and opened it as a museum in 1948. The museum has undergone many renovations, restoring it to its original beauty. The former pool now houses the **Alcazar Café**.

5) **The Villa Zorayda** – 83 King St., 904-829-9887, [www.villazorayda.com](http://www.villazorayda.com)

This beautiful building, just a block down from the Lightner Museum, now a museum, was originally built as the winter home of Franklin W. Smith, a wealthy hardware merchant from Boston. The architecture mirrors a section of the **Alhambra**, a beautiful Moorish palace in Granada, Spain. Smith was the first to use the **poured concrete** method of construction, which was later used by Flagler. Villa Zorayda is open with self-guided audio tours available.

6) **Ripley's Believe It or Not** – 19 San Marco Ave., 904-824-1606, [www.ripleys.com](http://www.ripleys.com)

This is the first **Ripley's Believe It or Not**, and it is housed in the former winter home of William Warden, a business partner of Henry Flagler and John D. Rockefeller. The Moorish Revival home was built in 1887 and became a hotel in 1941. Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings (a popular American writer, author of *The Yearling*) once owned and ran the hotel. Robert S. Ripley (famous cartoonist and world traveler) stayed in the hotel and tried to buy it for his first museum. His family purchased it after his death and opened the museum in 1950.

7) **The Fountain of Youth** - 11 Magnolia Ave., 904-829-3168, [www.fountainofyouthflorida.com](http://www.fountainofyouthflorida.com)

This offers a great deal of interesting history with many activities for children. Peacocks wander around freely, and there is a good gift shop where small bottles of water from the Fountain of Youth and other Florida-related items can be purchased.

8) **The Alligator Farm** – 999 Anastasia Blvd., 904-824-3337, [www.alligatorfarm.com](http://www.alligatorfarm.com)

There are close to 800 alligators, and it's interesting to see them being fed. It's also a mini zoo with many different types of exotic animals including the lemurs of Madagascar. The rookery is huge and attracts a large variety of beautiful birds. There's also a zip line over the alligators for those adventurous enough to try it.

9) **Castillo de San Marcos** - 11 S Castillo Dr. 904-829-6506, [www.nps.gov/casa/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/casa/index.htm)

Standing sentry over St. Augustine, the formidable Castillo de San Marcos is the oldest masonry fort in the continental US. Positioned strategically on Matanzas Bay, the fort, started in 1672, was built by the Spanish to protect the town. The fort played a pivotal role in protecting Spanish St. Augustine from the 1700's to the late 1800's. In 1924, the Castillo, or Fort Marion as it was known at the time, was declared a national monument by President Calvin Coolidge. The fort is open daily and musket or cannon demonstrations take place on most weekends.

10) **Classic Car Museum of St. Augustine** – 4730 Dixie Hwy., 904-806-4610, [www.ccmstaug.com](http://www.ccmstaug.com)

This museum provides visitors with the opportunity to experience cars from the 1800's to modern day sports cars. Check the website for scheduled special events.

11) **Trolley Tours** - The trolley ride takes a little over an hour, and you learn a lot about the history of the city, with stops along the way. St. Johns County residents get a special discount (buy one, get one free) at the **Old Town Trolley** (904-203-8655). Apply first for the **Hometown Pass** to get the discount for the trolley and several other attractions ([www.hometownpass.com](http://www.hometownpass.com)). **Ripley's Red Train** (904-829-6545) offers 50% off for residents or buy one, get one half off for two seniors (55 and

older). The trolleys run throughout the day and are hop-on-hop-off, so you can explore areas of interest before completing the tour.

12) **Downtown St. Augustine** – The city is historically important with a great deal of interesting architecture and several small museums and galleries that are worth seeing. **St. George Street** is the main pedestrian street, but there are many nice little streets to explore.

## DISCOUNTS FOR ST. JOHNS COUNTY RESIDENTS

Many businesses and attractions offer discounts to St. Johns County residents with a valid ID. This is just a partial list, and it's always good to ask. Residents **are either free or given a discounted rate** to the following places. Call ahead to verify the details as this information changes frequently:

- **Lightner Museum**, 75 King St., 904-824-2874, [www.lightnermuseum.org](http://www.lightnermuseum.org)
- **The Oldest House** (St. Augustine Historical Society), **FREE**, 14 Francis St., 904-824-2872, <https://staugh.com>
- **Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse**, **FREE**, 14 Saint George St., 904-824-0192, [www.oldestwoodenschoolhouse.com](http://www.oldestwoodenschoolhouse.com)
- **City Walks tours**, part of Tour St. Augustine, (**SELECT TOURS ARE FREE** - Black History & Civil Rights tour, Pet Walk Pup Crawl and Plaza Stroll Walking Tour), 4 Granada St., 904-825-0087, [www.staugcitywalks.com](http://www.staugcitywalks.com)
- **St. Augustine Visitor Information Center exhibits**, **FREE**, 10 W. Castillo Drive, 904-825-1000, [www.visitstaugustine.com](http://www.visitstaugustine.com)
- **Ximenez-Fatio House**, 20 Aviles St., 904-829-3575, [www.ximenezfatiohouse.com](http://www.ximenezfatiohouse.com)
- **Spanish Military Hospital Museum**, 3 Aviles St., 904-342-7730, [www.smhmuseum.com](http://www.smhmuseum.com)
- **The St. Augustine Pirate & Treasure Museum**, 12 South Castillo Dr., 904-819-1444, [www.thepiratemuseum.com](http://www.thepiratemuseum.com)

## FREE FOR EVERYONE

- **San Sebastian Winery** (daily tours and wine tastings), 157 King St., 904-826-1594, [www.sansebastianwinery.com](http://www.sansebastianwinery.com)
- **Government House Museum**, 48 King St., 904-823-2212, [www.staugustine.ufl.edu](http://www.staugustine.ufl.edu) currently showing a special exhibit of St. Augustine paintings, many of them painted during Henry's Flagler's day, from the collection donated by Samuel H. and Roberta T. Vickers.
- **St. Augustine Distillery Company**, 112 Riberia St., in the Lincolnville section of downtown St. Augustine. Free tours and tastings. 904-825-4962, [staugustinedistillery.com](http://staugustinedistillery.com)
- **Fort Matanzas National Monument**, 8635 A1A South, 904-471-0116, [www.nps.gov/foma/](http://www.nps.gov/foma/), the free ferry runs Wednesday - Sunday
- **St. Photios Chapel**, 41 Saint George St., 904-829-8205, [www.stphotios.com](http://www.stphotios.com)
- **Peña-Peck House** (*donations suggested for tours*), 143 Saint George St., 904-829-5064, [penapeckhouse.com](http://penapeckhouse.com)
- **Father Miguel O'Reilly Museum**, 32 Aviles St., 904-826-0750, [www.fatheroreilly.house](http://www.fatheroreilly.house)
- **Mission Nombre de Dios Museum**, 27 Ocean Ave., from San Marco Avenue, 904-824-2809, [missionandshrine.org](http://missionandshrine.org)

- **St. Augustine Art Association**, 22 Marine St., 904-824-2310, [www.staaa.org](http://www.staaa.org)
- **Art Galleries of St. Augustine (AGOSA)**: An association of diverse and eclectic art galleries located in the nation's oldest city. Go to [www.visitstaugustine.com](http://www.visitstaugustine.com)
- **First Friday Art Walk**, 5 to 9 p.m. the first Friday of each month in St. Augustine galleries and other locations. Complimentary trolleys on art walk route from King Street. [www.visitstaugustine.com](http://www.visitstaugustine.com) or [www.facebook.com/ArtGalleriesOfStAugustine](http://www.facebook.com/ArtGalleriesOfStAugustine)
- **Uptown Saturday Night**, 5 to 9 p.m. the last Saturday of each month in shops along San Marco Avenue in Uptown St. Augustine. Stay updated at [www.facebook.com/UptownStAugustine](http://www.facebook.com/UptownStAugustine)
- **City of St. Augustine parks**, 10 city-managed parks near the parking garage in downtown St. Augustine. [www.citystaug.com](http://www.citystaug.com)
- **St. Johns County parks**, more than 30 parks throughout St. Johns County. [www.sjcfl.us](http://www.sjcfl.us)
- **Splash park and beachfront park** at St. Johns County Ocean Pier, 350 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine Beach, [www.visitstaugustine.com](http://www.visitstaugustine.com)
- **Self-guided walking tour**, [www.visitstaugustine.com](http://www.visitstaugustine.com)
- **Vilano Beach Pier & Pavilion**, 260 Vilano Road, Vilano Beach. [www.vilanobeachfl.com](http://www.vilanobeachfl.com)
- **Farmers markets**, Wednesdays at the St. Augustine Pier, Saturdays at the Amp (formerly the Amphitheatre), [www.theamp.com/farmers-market](http://www.theamp.com/farmers-market)
- **Beaches (admission is FREE to ALL St. Augustine and St. Johns County beaches)**: Find free parking and walk to the beach. There is a fee to drive and park on some beaches. Go to [www.sjcfl.us/Beaches](http://www.sjcfl.us/Beaches)

## PARKING DISCOUNTS

Previously, residents could buy a **ParkNow card** in the City Offices at 50 Bridge Street, 904-825-1090. The cards are being phased out, and you can get the **ParkNow app** ([www.ParkStAug.com](http://www.ParkStAug.com)) by registering your license plate at the City Offices or online. With the app you can park all day at the Parking Garage for only \$3 (instead of \$20). The app also gives you a discount rate of 50 cents at all public metered parking, and you can add time to the meter remotely.

## LOCAL RESOURCES

*St. Augustine Record* – good for local news

*Jacksonville Times-Union* – more focus on the Jacksonville area

**Carol Carnicelli's Weekly Newsletter** – sign up for this free and informative newsletter; Contact Carol at [carnicel@bellsouth.net](mailto:carnicel@bellsouth.net)  
Visit the website at <http://neighborhoodconciiergev.com>

**Turnberry Community Website** – includes a wealth of information about the community (landscaping, special notices, helpful links, etc.) <http://www.turnberrywgv.com>

**World Golf Village activities that are held at the King & Bear are open to all WGV residents. Make sure to get the decal for your car for access to the K & B. Some of the activities include:**

- Water Aerobics at the King & Bear pool, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. (seven days a week)
- Wide variety of classes at the Fitness Center
- Various scheduled activities at the Courtside Pavilion
- Food truck visits, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the K & B pool parking lot every Friday
- Holiday activities, craft fairs, trivia nights, bunco, bingo, bridge, various card games, etc., scheduled throughout the year

Contact **May Management**, 475 West Town Place, Suite 112, 904-940-1002, to get a decal for your car for access to the K & B (Olympic-size pool, the Poolside Pavilion, the Courtside Pavilion, the Fitness Center, various activities).

Sign up for **Next Door Digest** at [www.nextdoor.com](http://www.nextdoor.com) to find comments from local residents on a wide variety of topics.

**OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute)** – a program that offers a wide variety of courses and field trips for those 50 and over; most classes take place at UNF. Visit the website at [www.unf.edu/ce/olli.html](http://www.unf.edu/ce/olli.html) or call 904-620-4200.

**Newcomers of North St. Johns** – designed to welcome new residents and includes many opportunities to socialize with others (monthly luncheons, programs, field trips, games, etc.) See the website for more information: <https://newcomersofnorthstjohn.org>