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**ST. AUGUSTINE  
PONTE VEDRA**  
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

## Exploring Beyond St. Augustine on Florida's Historic Coast®

*There's no shortage of fun this Fall when you journey off the beaten path!*

St. Augustine, Fla. (September 25, 2023) – When one thinks of St. Augustine, iconic landmarks immediately come to mind – the Castillo de San Marcos, sugar sand beaches, or Anastasia State Park. Ponte Vedra Beach conjures up thoughts of luxurious seaside escapes or some of golf's greatest modern-day moments at TPC Sawgrass. But if you journey outside the boundaries of the touristic areas of Florida's Historic Coast another layer of fun and adventure on Florida's Historic Coast awaits!

Travel southwest from St. Augustine on S.R. 207, and you'll run into the town of Hastings. When Henry Flagler built his popular tourist hotels in St. Augustine during the gilded age, he knew he would need a supply of fresh fruits and vegetables to feed his guests. He convinced his cousin, Thomas Horace Hastings, to develop a small farm that eventually grew into a community. Hastings is now known as the Potato Capital of Florida. It may be a tiny town, but Hastings offers many events and fun experiences stemming from its rich agricultural roots.

[Hastings Main Street](#) is the heart of activity in town. There is plenty planned for this fall to celebrate that heritage. Visitors and locals won't want to miss the inaugural [Hastings Main Street Fall Festival of Art](#) on November 25<sup>th</sup>. Presented in partnership with the St. Augustine Art Association, this one-day festival features a juried art show, a cottage artisans' market, live music, food trucks, and more. Demonstrations by two of the original Florida Highwaymen artists, R.L. Lewis and Curtis Arnett and presentations by Dr. Seth H. Bramson, America's top Florida history author, will be part of the festival. Then, on December 9<sup>th</sup> during the Hasting's Main Street is also the venue for the annual [Hastings Hometown Christmas Parade](#) and the [Pop-Up Market](#). On February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Main Street travels back in time with the [7<sup>th</sup> Annual Boulevard Car Show](#). Stroll amongst classic and unique cars while enjoying live music, food trucks, and prizes.

Hastings new attraction the [St. Johns Botanical Garden & Nature Preserve](#), dedicated to the conservation of rare and endangered species of plants from around the world, will celebrate its grand opening on Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Festivities include a Wild Wonders Show, a Butterfly Exhibit, live music, and more.

The eats in Hastings are pure country! Relax at a casual spot for a quick lunch or a tasty sandwich to-go at Sweet and Smoky's Barbecue – only open on Fridays or Saturdays, or enjoy Norma D's Kitchen on Main Street, for casual diner featuring true home cooking with a soul food spin. Home cooks will want to earmark time to peruse [County Line Produce Stand](#) for the area's bounty of fresh-from-the-fields fruits and vegetables.

The nearby community of Elkton also plays host to numerous cultural and community events. Perhaps most well-loved by the local community is the annual [Sykes Family Farms Crop Maze](#). Through October, kids and adults flock to Sykes Farm to participate in their uniquely themed maze. This year's design features Reba McEntire!

Other events taking place in Elkton this fall include the [64<sup>th</sup> Annual Cracker Day](#) on Saturday, October 21<sup>st</sup>. Taking place at the St. Johns County Fairgrounds Cracker Day showcases the history of Florida's cracker cattle and cowboys. On Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup> the [Cottonmouth Quarter Marathon and 5k](#) which benefit the St. Johns County 4-H Club starts from the Sykes Family Farm with a course that takes runners through lush Florida oaks and classic Florida farmland.

Then on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Armstrong Park in Elkton will echo with the sounds of traditional music, dance, food, and crafts at the [Gullah Geechee Heritage Festival](#). This a unique experience celebrates 450 years of West African Culture in St. Johns County. Gullah Geechee are descendants of Africans who were enslaved on plantations of the lower Atlantic coast.

Other excellent outdoor amenities in the area include the [Palatka to St. Augustine State Trail](#) is a pristine cycling trail that connects St. Augustine to Palatka. Guided kayak tour, nature walk, and naturalist training programs with [Earth Kinship Kayak Tours and Nature Education](#). Animal lovers can learn more about horses at the [St. Johns County Equestrian Center in Hastings](#). And great pizza, subs and more can be found at [Jim's Place](#), located in the renovated general store building, once known as Masters' Grocery.

For even more adventure, [head north on C.R. 13](#) from Elkton for a drive to explore the [William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway](#). This beautiful farmland/river drive is dotted with great county parks including [Alpine Groves Park](#), [Beluthahatchee](#), the former homestead of renowned author Stetson Kennedy, and Trout Creek Memorial Park & Marina .

Operating out of Trout Creek Memorial Park and Marina, [Sea Serpent Airboat Adventure Tours](#) allows passengers the opportunity to experience the Old Florida flora and fauna on a thrilling ride through parts of Trout Creek, Six Mile Creek, and Palmo Cove and the St. Johns River. And, [Woodpecker's Backyard BBQ](#), located at SR 16A and CR 13 shows up on numerous lists as one of the BBQ spots in the south.

Adventure happens when you journey beyond the boundaries! Be sure to take the roads less traveled and see the scenic beauty and fun that's to be had when you explore Florida's Historic Coast.

For images to accompany postings [click here](#).

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast includes historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra Beach, and 42 miles of pristine Atlantic beaches. For more information, call 1.800.653.2489 or go to the Visitors and Convention Bureau website at [www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com](http://www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com). Check us out on social media Instagram

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