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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**St. Augustine Sets the Standard for Socially Responsible Tourism on Florida's Historic Coast**

**ST. AUGUSTINE, FL (June 30, 2025)** – Long before the term “sustainable tourism” became a buzzword, St. Augustine was living it. As the oldest continuously inhabited European-established settlement in the continental United States, St. Augustine is a living museum of cultural preservation and environmental responsibility. But this isn't a city stuck in the past. It's a thriving community where heritage, ecology, and hospitality work together to create a more meaningful and responsible visitor experience.

**Preserving the Past, Protecting the Future**

St. Augustine's historic core is home to 46 properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including seven entire neighborhoods under consideration. Landmarks like the González-Alvarez House (dating to 1723) at the [Oldest House Museum and Complex](#) and [Castillo de San Marcos](#) (a 17th-century Spanish fortress) are lovingly maintained thanks to the work of local organizations, a dedicated Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), and even a full-time city archaeologist.

These efforts go far beyond aesthetics. [Preservation in St. Augustine](#) is about telling the full story. From pre-Hispanic indigenous sites like the [Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park](#) to sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement, including the homes and churches visited by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the city embraces a layered, complex history that enriches all who explore it.

**Environmental Responsibility on Land and Sea**

Beyond its historic streets, Florida's Historic Coast boasts 42 miles of unspoiled Atlantic beaches and thousands of acres of estuaries, marshes, and maritime forests. [Anastasia State Park](#) and the [Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve \(GTM Reserve\)](#) lead the way in coastal conservation, offering low-impact recreation and vital education programs.

St. Johns County was the first in Florida to ban balloon and lantern releases to protect coastal wildlife. Sea turtle nesting is also carefully monitored by volunteers and wildlife experts. Eco-tourism thrives with the support of local operators like Ripple Effect Ecotours and [GeoTrippin Adventure Company](#), which offer educational kayaking trips and sailing excursions that highlight the area's fragile ecosystems while ensuring they stay protected.

## Hispanic Heritage and Community Connection

St. Augustine's story is inseparable from its Hispanic heritage. Founded in 1565 by Spanish admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the city reflects centuries of Latin influence, not just in its architecture, but in its rhythms, flavors, and sense of community. Today, that legacy lives on in the growing Latin food scene and the small business owners, many of whom are Hispanic, who are shaping a new chapter of local enterprise.

In the [Lincolnvile](#) neighborhood, once a hub of African American culture and activism, the community continues to flourish. Local initiatives and collaborative events create opportunities for cultural expression, mutual support, and entrepreneurship. Longtime businesses welcome newcomers with open arms, helping each other succeed in an increasingly competitive tourism economy.

## Small Businesses, Big Impact

One of the clearest ways St. Augustine walks the talk of responsible tourism is by uplifting its local entrepreneurs. Walking food tours, such as those led by [The Tasting Tours](#) and [St. Augustine Experiences](#), prioritize stops at independently owned restaurants and food stalls, creating vital exposure and steady income for small businesses that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Standouts like [St. Augustine Distillery](#) exemplify this ethos. Located in a repurposed 1917 ice plant, the award-winning spirits company is committed to water conservation, solar power, and partnerships with local farmers. They source Florida-grown corn, wheat, and sugarcane for their spirits, and even return spent grains to local livestock operations — a closed-loop model that reduces waste and supports other small businesses in the region.

## Educational Anchors and Living History

Flagler College, housed in the stunning former [Ponce de León Hotel](#), plays a vital role in the city's sustainability and preservation efforts. Through programs in historic preservation, environmental science, and public history, the college actively engages students in the ongoing story of St. Augustine, equipping future generations to care for the region's natural and cultural assets.

Nearby, [Villa Zorayda](#), a 19th-century architectural masterpiece inspired by the Alhambra in Spain, offers guided tours that illuminate the city's eclectic influences, from Moorish to Mediterranean. Like so many of St. Augustine's historic attractions, it serves as a bridge between past and present, art and education, tourism and stewardship.

## Travel With Purpose on Florida's Historic Coast

As travelers increasingly seek out destinations that reflect their values, St. Augustine stands ready. Here, [sustainability isn't a checkbox](#). It's a guiding principle that touches everything from how buildings are restored to how fish are caught and cooked. It's found in the way tour guides tell stories, the way neighbors support each other, and the way visitors are encouraged to slow down, ask questions, and leave a lighter footprint.

## **Start Planning Your Visit**

**Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville**, Florida's Historic Coast includes historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra, the rural beauty of Hastings, Elkton, St. Johns, and 42 miles of pristine Atlantic beaches. Visitor Information Centers are located at 10 Castillo Drive, St. Augustine; 200 Solana Rd. Suite B, Ponte Vedra Beach; and at the St. Johns County Beach Pier Park, 350 A1A Beach Blvd., St. Augustine Beach. For advance travel 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 @FloridasHistoricCoast; @ViajaStAugustine, [Facebook.com/OfficialStAugustine](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialStAugustine), and [Facebook.com/ViajaStAugustine](https://www.facebook.com/ViajaStAugustine) and Twitter @FIHistoricCoast

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