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**History Comes to Life on Florida’s Historic Coast**

***Visitors to Experience Interactive Events and Activities that will Educate and Entertain***

**ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla.** – History comes to life in St. Augustine, the nation’s oldest city. Who can brush off history as boring when there are cannons firing or an archeological dig happening right in the heart of a historic district reminiscent of the colonial days? Florida’s Historic Coast is brimming with affordable, regularly-scheduled re-enactments, celebrations, tours and interactive activities that put you right in the middle of 450 years of history.

Historic Weapons Demonstrations are held Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at [Castillo de San Marcos](http://www.nps.gov/casa), the historic district’s signature attraction. Park ranger re-enactors in period dress give historical weapons demonstrations, as well as presentations on the life and experiences of the Spanish soldiers stationed in St. Augustine in the 1740s. For a more relaxed experience, join the rangers for candlelight tours of the fort on the third Saturday of each month.

[Fort Mose](http://www.floridastateparks.org/fortmose) is the site of the first, legally-sanctioned, free black community in the United States. Visitors can view the land where the settlement once stood, stroll the boardwalk and imagine life in the eighteenth century. Special engagements occur throughout the year, including Colonial Children Story Time and Crafts, where visitors learn about what life was like for African children living at Fort Mose in 1738 through storytellers, making their own Spanish colonial crafts, learning about flint lock muskets and drilling with the Spanish soldiers who defended Fort Mose.

The [Saint Augustine Garrison](http://historic-florida-militia.org/st-augustine-garrison/) is a group of re-enactors who portray the life and times of the Spanish soldiers and their families in 1740s Colonial Spanish Saint Augustine. Families visiting today can see what camp life was like for families in the 1700s. Events such as Drake’s Raid are scheduled throughout the year. Drake’s is held in June and features a 16th century-style military encampment at the Fountain of Youth Park with drills, demonstrations and living history interpretation during the day. As sun sets in the historic district, the reenactment of the sacking and burning of the town commences.

The [Sea Your History Weekends](http://www.staugustinelighthouse.org/events/sea-your-history) at the St. Augustine Lighthouse celebrate a different influence on St. Augustine's maritime culture from the early European settlers to the contributions of African-American and Native American groups. Experience traditional wooden boatbuilding, shipwreck secrets, maritime history and special tours.

Northeast Florida locals and visitors alike, rejoice in the annual Nights of Lights celebration. One highlight is the [Colonial Night Watch,](http://www.historiccoastculture.com/event/detail/22775/St_Augustine_Colonial_Night_Watch) which is a reenactment of the ceremony used on special occasions and holidays during the British Period of St. Augustine, 1763 to 1783. Every night, the town was secured by guards marching by lantern light to lock the gates, but on special occasions, it was made festive by involving the public in a candle or lantern lit parade that ended with volleys of muskets, singing, and songs. Visitors are invited to join in a unique reenactment - a public participation parade and march behind the reenactors dressed as British Redcoats as they secure St. Augustine. The event is held the first full weekend in December each year.

Take a step back in time to an era of grandeur and elegance at Flagler College – once the Hotel Ponce De Leon, opened in 1888. The hotel is a landmark in American architecture with Spanish Renaissance architecture and lavish decoration, which in its heyday attracted the wealthy and the elite, from presidents to movie stars. [Legacy Tours of Flagler College](http://legacy.flagler.edu/Tours-sp8.html) highlight the architectural heritage of the former Hotel Ponce de Leon and depart daily from the majestic Rotunda on the Flagler College campus at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tours are only $1 for children under the age of 12 and $10 for adults.

For a modern look at St. Augustine’s history, join [St. Augustine Black Heritage Tours Inc](http://www.StAugustineBlackHeritageTours.com). during their free historic walking tour at 5 p.m. every Saturday. Learn about St. Augustine's historic role in Black History and events leading up to the Civil Rights act of 1964.

For more information about living history exhibitions on Florida’s Historic Coast, visit [www.historiccoastculture.com](http://www.historiccoastculture.com/living-history?utm_source=Media_List&utm_medium=Email&utm_content=Living_History&utm_campaign=PR), or call (904) 808-7330. There is “Culture Around Every Corner.”

**About St. Johns Cultural Council**The St. Johns Cultural Council is a 501 © (3) not-for-profit agency. Under agreement with the St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners, the SJCC provides arts, culture and heritage tourism destination marketing services to the county’s Tourist Development Council (TDC). Funding for marketing services comes from a portion of the county’s bed tax. For more information, call (904) 808-7330 or visit [www.stjohnsculture.com](http://www.stjohnsculture.com).

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