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Top Summer Family and Budget Friendly Adventures in St. Augustine Outdoor Explorations and Indoor Discoveries

St. Augustine, Florida (June 2017) – Summer is approaching as is the sound of the final bell ringing on the last day of school. Time to start planning your next vacation. Better yet, time to explore your own backyard and revel in Florida's Historic Coast – a perfect family-friendly destination. Filled with historical and cool indoor and outdoor opportunities, St. Augustine offers plenty of thrifty family adventures (*there's fun to be had for free or for just $10 or less per person*). Unwind on the white sandy beaches of Anastasia State Park or explore centuries old forts. See magnificent Spanish architecture in the historic district or catch a view of the city from the water aboard the St. Augustine Scenic Cruise boat. From outdoor adventures to cultural experiences, there is no shortage of fun at family-friendly prices in St. Augustine.

Fort Adventures
Spain founded St. Augustine in 1565, and by 1695 settlers built the Castillo de San Marcos. The fort, with its distinctive omni-directional bastions was built to help defend against hostile powers that preyed on the Spanish treasure fleets returning from Peru and Mexico. Formidable as it remains – now a National Monument – it is the oldest masonry fortress in the U.S. The Castillo is also unique for the material used in its construction. It is one of only two fortifications in the world built out of a semi-rare form of limestone called coquina. The other is Fort Matanzas National Monument 14 miles south. Explore the Castillo de San Marcos and learn from National Park Service guides how the fort was planned and constructed to protect the St. Augustine community. See cannon firing demonstrations and historical re-enactments. North of town, visitors will find the site of Spanish Fort Mose. In the 1720s, the fort settled runaway English slaves in the continent's first sanctioned African-American community. Visit Fort Mose on the first Saturday each month to be transported back to the 18th century. Learn from the members of the Fort Mose Militia as they practice firing drills and demonstrate how to use historic weapons. Entrance to the forts is $10 or less per person.

Beach time: Fun in the Sun
More than 500 years ago, Ponce de Leon spotted beautiful, inviting beaches that drew him to shore and led to the first documented European discovery of Florida. Today, St. Augustine is home to some of the most beautiful beaches in Florida — 42 miles of shoreline, to be exact. Elegant resorts with challenging golf courses line the shore of serene Ponte Vedra Beach. Perfect for strolling, and searching for shells and sharks teeth. There are plenty of spots for surfing and kayaking. Also make sure to check out the 40-foot sand dunes at Ponte Vedra Beach – they are among the tallest in Florida. Families can enjoy Anastasia State Park's four miles of pristine beach, a tidal marsh teeming with plant and animal life, or hike a nature trail that leads to ancient sand dunes. Speaking of sand – the park's white quartz sands are the perfect backdrop for a day at the beach with the family. Ample parking, permanent restroom facilities, and food and beverage stands make for an easy family day at the beach. One of St. Augustine's best-kept secrets is Vilano Beach, a charming little beach town. It's a great location for surfing, with a steep drop-off and stronger currents than many other area beaches. You can also charter a sailboat or enjoy deep-sea fishing boat from nearby Surfside Park.

Travel Back in Time
Let your first lesson in history start at The Oldest Wooden School House. Listen to the animated schoolmaster and his pupils as they depict what school life was like in the 1700s. Compare today's school days with those of the old days! This original building is more than 200 years old and made of red cedar and cypress. A true historic treasure. Step back in time to the Spanish Military Hospital Museum, where the doctor is always in. A guided tour will take visiting families back to Colonial Spanish days of medicine, including triage on the battlefield. Visit the apothecary and discover how Colonial herbs were the origins of some of today's most popular medicines.

The Old Jail completed in 1891 by the same company that later built Alcatraz, housed 72 inmates in crowded cells with no indoor plumbing until 1914. When visitors arrive, a costumed deputy puts them under arrest, marches the new prisoners through the creepy gallows, throws them in an iron-barred cell and threatens to leave them in the maximum-security area complete with shackles. A must-see for misbehaving kids! Entrance to the attraction is $10 or less per person.

Offbeat Amusement

St. Augustine is a center of originality – after all, it is the oldest continually occupied city in the United States. This makes for a plethora of historic attractions to visit, although some of the city's celebrated firsts are a bit unexpected. Villa Zorayda Museum was built in 1883 at one-tenth the scale of part of Spain's Alhambra Palace. You'll marvel at the architecture and the unique treasures inside, including the world's oldest carpet. More than 2,400 years old, the Sacred Cat Rug was woven completely from the hair of ancient Egyptian cats. Legend has it that the rug bears a curse; it was stolen from a tomb and wrapped around a mummy's foot, which is also on display! Entrance to the museum is $10 or less per person.

Mid-Week Lodging Deals Perfect for Families

Hosting families for more than 450 years doesn't mean there aren't lots of new adventures and fun waiting for visitors. There is plenty Old World charm and seaside elegance found along Florida's Historic Coast and today's families will enjoy these great mid-week travel deals. Nestled in the panoramic heart of St. Augustine's historic district, Bayfront Inn guests are spoiled by the soft cool sea-breezes and calming waters of the Matanzas Bay and the refreshing visions of ancestral old world lifestyles. Mid-week (Sun-Thurs) rates start at $129. A fun European-style lodging in the heart of St. Augustine's Historic District, the Pirate Haus Inn caters to families and couples in the private rooms, which have queen beds and one or two sets of bunk beds. Rates from $90 per night includes an all-you-can-eat pirate pancake breakfast, private room parking, WiFi and more. Enjoy a beachy-keen getaway at the Magic Beach Motel on Vilano Beach. Mid-week deals start at $119 a night at this eclectic seaside motel. The Beach House offers an ideal location also overlooking Vilano Beach, yet just minutes from historic downtown St. Augustine. Spacious, pet friendly guestrooms offer comfortable king beds and queen sofa-sleepers, kitchenettes, and complimentary continental breakfast daily. Mid-week rates starting at $229 a night. Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa is a spectacular getaway for families. The resort's One Suit Vacation Package provides a family suite at the Resort's Villas and access to all resort amenities, including the Cabana Beach Club. . Click here for more deals and specials on Florida's Historic Coast.

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast includes historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra and 42 miles of pristine Atlantic beaches. For more information on events, activities, holiday getaways, and accommodations and to plan your vacation in St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches, go to the Visitors and Convention Bureau website at http://www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com, become a fan of Viaja San Agustin's Facebook or call 1.800.653.2489.

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