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**ST. AUGUSTINE
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FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST®

Florida's Historic Coast's Announces Refreshing Wide-Open Spaces, New Exhibits and Museums, New Hotels and Restaurants

St. Augustine, Fla. (September 2020)– The new year brings new things to Florida's Historic Coast where 42 miles of pristine Atlantic Beaches, America's oldest city and outdoor recreation have been favorites in Florida for 455 years. New hotels, attractions and dining will make a visit here a memorable and refreshing experience.

Staying here has never been more comfortable. Health protocols are in place and wide-open spaces abound. There are many ways to safely experience the new additions on Florida's Historic Coast starting with some new hotels set to come online in 2021, and renovations at well-established lodgings.

In September 2020, the [Ponte Vedra Inn & Club](#) unveiled the historic Ocean House and Peyton House, offering 41 new oceanfront guest rooms and suites. The resort offers multiple dining venues for guests to enjoy. And in these times of social distancing, the popular Surf Deck Grille, which sits on the sand's edge offers full-service lunch and dinner with a panoramic view of the Atlantic Ocean. And, most important, the campus-style layout of the resort provides guests a real sense of confidence and comfort, as they don't have to go up and down elevators or crowded hallways to access guest rooms and resort amenities.

The new and improved [Hampton Inn & Suites on Vilano Beach](#) will be ready for Spring. This seaside Inn is currently undergoing an interior renovation with the expected completion date of March 1, 2021. The hotel remains a preferred choice of many families and business travelers, and these extensive renovations allow the Hampton Inn & Suites to provide the very best hotel experience for guests.

Vilano Beach is a hot spot for touristic development on Florida's Historic Coast. In addition to the Hampton Inn renovations, there are two new hotels scheduled to open in Spring 2021. The Holiday Inn Express Vilano Beach is scheduled to open with 50 rooms in early Spring and the Hyatt Place with an additional 120 rooms is scheduled to open on Vilano Beach in mid-2021.

In St. Augustine, the new [Homewood Suites by Hilton St. Augustine](#) sets on the banks of the San Sebastian River and will feature 117 guest rooms when it opens in Spring 2021. Hidden Harbor Marina is located on site and St. Augustine's historic attractions, dining and unique shopping are within walking distance.

In the heart of St. Augustine's Historic District, the [Renaissance Historic Downtown St. Augustine Hotel](#) scheduled to open in Spring 2021. This fantastic hotel is designed to replicate the historic San Marco Hotel that sat on the same spot during the Gilded Age. The new hotel will feature 89 guest rooms, distinct event spaces, world-class dining, traditional Southern hospitality and modern amenities.

And there is even more to see and do in 2021.

New Hotels are not the only thing happening on Vilano Beach. In early January 2021, the [Vilano Beach Restoration](#) project wraps up. The project included a 60-foot-wide extension of beach berm and dune reconstruction with native dune vegetation plantings. The completed project will help reduce future risk and vulnerability for homes, businesses and public infrastructure, while creating potential habitat for sea turtles and shorebirds and recreational area for the public to enjoy.

In St. Augustine, the iconic [Lightner Museum](#) recently completed an extensive renovation. The first floor of the museum has opened up and is refreshed with bright open spaces, and a new exhibit, Illuminate: Lightner Museum's Stained Glass Rediscovered that features 12 newly restored stained-glass windows from the Lightner Collection, in addition to a dramatic dragonfly lamp by Tiffany Studios. And, the museum will present a new temporary exhibit [American Impressionism: Treasures from the Daywood Collection](#), open April 8-July 5, 2021.

St. Augustine's newest attraction, [The Classic Car Museum of St. Augustine](#) showcases an impressive collection of classic cars, providing visitors the opportunity to experience cars from the 1800s to modern day sports cars. One-two Saturday mornings a month at the museum features Classic Cars and Coffee where auto enthusiasts grab a coffee and chat about their passion with others. With its outdoor spaces which become a stage for the collection it is becoming a very popular event space for themed parties and social distanced meet-ups.

[Sabrage Sailing Charters](#) has a 63-foot Custom Cooper Catamaran equipped with high-end finishes, and spacious decks that comfortably seats up to 110 guests. This sailing yacht specializes in daily excursions for individuals and group charter events including Sunset Cruise, Eco Cruise, Wine Tasting Cruise, and private events along the pristine waterways surrounding the Nation's Oldest City.

St. Augustine's [Red Boat Tours](#) is the recipient of the USA Today, Reader's Choice 10Best 2020 award for "Best Boat Tour" in the U.S. Red Boat Tour's White Pelican is a 45' Trident pontoon vessel with a 12' beam, that tours the area waterways and is certified to carry 36 passengers on a variety of tours. From Dolphin watch tours to narrated Historic Tour of the Oldest City from the water, the engaging crew shares their stories and knowledge providing guests with great local knowledge.

Great Eats! New restaurants that opened in 2020 include the latest gem in the [Southern Table Hospitality Group](#) crown of North Florida restaurants, the [St. Augustine Fish Camp](#). This new location on the San Sebastian River, along with their other Fish Camp locations in North Florida, is the result of a vision to create a restaurant with a neighborhood feel, the freshest seafood, amazing views, and old favorite entrees with creative, new twists. Open for lunch and dinner, The Fish Camp's seafood is fresh off the docks, and the waterfront dining is a simple gift.

The banks of the San Sebastian River are also home to the new location of [Culinary Outfitters](#). Their new 250-seat restaurant overlooks the San Sebastian from the St. Augustine Shipyards and features 8,000 square feet of outdoor dining space on a patio surrounded by fire pits and boat docks. The new location features a lunch menu like the original restaurant including popular favorites, with a new dinner menu created with a focus on locally sourced, seasonally fresh ingredients.

Aviles Street is one of St. Augustine's most treasured gems. Eclectic art galleries, crafters and important historic museums and great eats can be found here. The newest eatery on Aviles, [Forgotten Tonic](#), is open daily for lunch and dinner and features modern twists on comfort food, an extensive wine list and craft cocktails. And like all eateries on Aviles Street, you can dine al fresco on the oldest street in the nation. On the corner of Aviles and King Street, one of the newest restaurants in the area is the [Alta Marea](#), featuring local fresh seafood with Mediterranean influence as the main attraction. You can watch fresh pasta being made by hand in the front window, peruse the extensive Italian wine selections inside a walk-in wine cellar, or admire the painted octopus who spans the dining room.

Distillery tours, wine bars and breweries are another spirited way to explore St. Augustine, and there are several wine bars and craft beer tap rooms where locals and visitors alike can enjoy local IPA's and Ales. New to the collection of crafters is the [Sailbird Distilling Company](#), the area's only nano-distillery specializing in handcrafted small batch rum. They offer free tours and tastings at their St. Augustine location Tuesday – Saturday.

[City Gate Spirits](#) recently celebrate their 1st Anniversary, having distilled and blended over 50,000 bottles of flavored moonshine, rum, and vodka on-site in the heart of the historic district. And to celebrate, they just introduced their latest flavored spirits; Smoked Maple and Cinnamon Whiskeys.

The award-winning St. Augustine Distillery has added a new program - fill your own bottle. In the past decade visitors have been enjoying distillery tours and free samples of the New World Gin, Florida Cane Vodka, and Florida's best bourbons all produced at St. Augustine's first distillery. This year, the Distillery is offering [The Fill Your Own Bourbon Bottle Experience](#) which allows guests to step behind production lines to fill, label, cork, and seal their own bottle of cask-strength, unfiltered bourbon.

Food is an important part of the St. Augustine experience and deserves celebration. This year, the [St. Augustine Food & Wine Festival](#) is set to take place at the Renaissance World Golf Resort May 6-9, 2021. The Festival will showcase the culinary, beverage and culture of the area, and will feature celebrity guest chefs, local chefs, celebrity winemakers/proprietors, artisans, farmers, local craft spirits and beers, along with renowned wine, spirits, and beer brands from around the globe. Tickets & packages for the festival are now on sale.

Even the virtual experiences on Florida's Historic Coast are rich in culture and education.

The 2021 year-long celebration of the history and culture of Black Americans living and working in St. Augustine is showcased in "[Resilience: Black Heritage in St. Augustine.](#)" This series of virtual programs is a community project celebrating 455+ years of Black stories and contributions in St. Augustine. In addition to the calendar of events, the Resilience program provides a complete listing of sites, museums and tours where the St. Augustine Black History story can be visited.

And, this year with uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic still present, the largest annual event on Florida's Historic Coast, [THE PLAYERS® Championship at TPC Sawgrass](#), is set to take place March 11-14, 2021. This tournament is often referred to as golf's fifth major. This year there is a plan to offer limited spectator tickets, but increased coverage with THE PLAYERS via social media, PGA TOUR LIVE and of course, on NBC and the GOLF Channel to witness the game's best players.

Getting here is getting a little easier in 2021.

Florida's Historic Coast remains an easy access drive destination, but there is great air service available via [Jacksonville International Airport](#) (JAX), approximately 50 minutes north of St. Augustine and 30 minutes from Ponte Vedra, and [Daytona Beach International Airport](#) (DAB) is approximately 50 minutes to the south. Both airports are serviced by all major carriers.

New for 2021, JetBlue will begin offering non-stop daily flights between Los Angeles and Jacksonville on March 4, and starting February 11, non-stop flights will begin between Raleigh-Durham and Jacksonville. In December 2020, new air service was launched in Jacksonville via Silver Airways with nonstop twice-weekly flights to and from Tampa and Ft. Lauderdale. Also in December 2020, American Airlines added to their daily non-stop service to and from Dallas/Fort Worth and Daytona Beach, as well as between Philadelphia and Daytona Beach, making it just a little easier to get to Florida's Historic Coast.

[Click here for accompanying images.](#)

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 vacation opportunities in St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches, go to the Visitors and Convention Bureau website at www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com, become a fan on Facebook or call 1.800.653.2489.

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