

## News Release

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ST. AUGUSTINE  
PONTE VEDRA  
FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST™

### *Exciting Tours, Special Offers and Events of Historic Proportion!*

## FLORIDA'S HISTORIC COAST: Our History is Not the Same Old Story!

**ST. AUGUSTINE, Fla. (April 15)** – St. Augustine is the Nation's oldest city, but visitors to this historic destination and the luxurious resorts of Ponte Vedra will find plenty that's "new" to enjoy for spring and summer 2012. In addition to rediscovering the Old World charm and seaside elegance found along the sunny shores of Florida's Historic Coast<sup>sm</sup>, visitors will be adding lots of new discoveries to the fun-filled stories they will share for years to come.

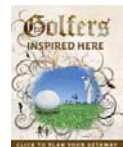
In 2012, TripAdvisor named St. Augustine, Florida a top "On the Rise" American Destination. With, the availability of affordable accommodations, 42 miles of wide sandy beach and 500 years of history to discover, it's no wonder the area has become so popular with visitors.

For centuries, St. Augustine has celebrated Ponce de Leon's discovery of the La Florida and the North American continent. The former Ponce de Leon Hotel, built in 1888 by Oil Tycoon and railroad magnet, Henry Flagler; the Fountain of Youth Archeological Park where visitors can sip from the fabled spring and learn about how 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish explorers navigated the seas to the New World; and authentic reenactments each year are just a few of the ways that Ponce has been celebrated here for generations.

To honor and celebrate [Florida's rich Spanish and early America Heritage](#), Florida's Historic Coast will play host to numerous events and celebrations in the coming years. These will begin in the spring of 2012 with *Culturally La Florida*, a presentation series highlighting the Spanish influences on Florida, and will continue with the 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Ponce's discovery of La Florida in 2013; in 2014, with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of St Augustine's pivotal role in the passage of the Civil Rights Act; and through 2015, and the Commemoration of the 450<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of St. Augustine, the nation's oldest city.

### **Accommodations and Travel Package Deals:**

The St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches Visitors Bureau is the best source for special offers and deals for visitors to experience Florida's Historic Coast. Each category of deals is customized to suit the interest of the different interests of visitors. Whether your interest is romance, golf or family getaways, these special offers provide an even better reason to visit Florida's Historic Coast.



**Special offers include Golf Getaways**, including packages with tickets to the 2012 PLAYERS Championship Tournament in May.



**Romantic Escapes**, to [St. Augustine](#), one of the most romantic cities in North America, and Ponte Vedra Beach, one of the Top 10 places to get away with out the kids, await for those looking for that special place to unwind and relax.



And, with summer just around the corner, it's time to start planning **Florida's Historic Coast Family Vacations**. From surf camps and historic attractions, resorts, hotels and attractions have myriad activities planned to make exciting family memories for our visitors.

**More....**

### **New for 2012: Special Behind-The-Scene Attractions Tours and Audio Tours:**

This year there are myriad new tours and experiences, each created to enhance the visitor experience and to make St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra more than just a vacation. These include special walking tours such as [The Plaza Stroll](#), a 75-minute tour that reveals the secrets of the Plaza de la Constitucion (the oldest town Plaza in the US) [Tour de Chocolate](#), features chocolate history - from the Aztecs and Mayans to Europe via the Spanish Conquistadors; [Whetstone Chocolate Factory Tours](#) featuring tastings, demonstrations and exhibits about harvesting the cacao to wrapping delicious artisan chocolates. You can even have your picture taken working on the chocolate-wrapping belt with Lucy!

In commemoration of the Civil Rights Act, the 40<sup>th</sup> Accord has just released the [Freedom Trail Audio Tour](#). The tour features a free audio description of events at 31 St. Augustine sites--each of which contributed to the passage of The Civil Rights Act.

[Ponce de Leon's Fountain of Youth Archeological Park](#) has been entertaining and enlightening visitors to St. Augustine for generations. Spanish Admiral Pedro Menendez landed here in 1565 to found the city of St. Augustine, the Timucua Indians lived here for hundreds of years and it is thought Ponce de Leon himself landed nearby. The Fountain of Youth Park recently broke ground for its new 16<sup>th</sup> century shipbuilding project. In the summer of 2012, visitors to the park will be able to see first hand how 16<sup>th</sup> century Spaniards built their ships in the same location where the city's 16<sup>th</sup> century boat works were located.

And, the [St. Augustine Lighthouse](#) has added three exciting tours and experiences that feature the rich maritime history of Florida's Historic Coast. These include volunteer boat-builders demonstrating **traditional wooden boatbuilding**, a **Lighthouse Behind-the-Scenes** guided tour takes visitors to parts of the Historic Light Station not usually seen, and the Lighthouse's newest tour, [The Lost Ships Tour](#) is a hands on experience that demonstrates maritime archaeology and how archaeologists find and excavate ancient shipwrecks found off the bar of St. Augustine.

### **Events and Happenings:**

Throughout the year, hundreds of events take place on Florida's Historic Coast. From THE PLAYERS Championship in May to Nights of Lights in the Christmas season, these events celebrate the area's unique historic and culture. For a list of special events through 2015, visit [www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com/events](http://www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com/events).

Located midway between Daytona Beach and Jacksonville, Florida's Historic Coast features historic St. Augustine, the outstanding golf and seaside elegance of Ponte Vedra, 42 miles of pristine Atlantic beaches – the same beaches that greeted Ponce de Leon in 1513 when he discovered and named La Florida - an area whose boundaries included what would later become the eastern United States. 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](http://www.FloridasHistoricCoast.com), become a fan on [Facebook](#) or call 1.800.653.2489.

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