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# St. Augustine Is the Best Girlfriend Getaway

Call your girls, pack your bags, and head to the beach.

By **Southern Living** | March 03, 2022

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When the group text thread starts dreaming about a beach trip, don't wait—just book it. One of the best (and best kept secret) beach getaways is also a perfect vacation destination for a group of girlfriends looking for a weekend away. Set your sights on St. Augustine, Florida, for the best of all worlds: big stretches of sand for fun in the sun, lots of river- and oceanfront spots to explore, great shopping, and plenty of places to cool off with a cocktail in hand once the sun sinks low.

## Stay



Located in northeast Florida, St. Augustine has the distinction of being the oldest continuously occupied city in the U.S. There's nothing sleepy about this spot, though. It's a waterfront paradise located both on the Atlantic Ocean and along several waterways that weave through the area, including the San Sebastian, Matanzas and Tolomato rivers, the latter of which are connected to the Atlantic by the St Augustine Inlet.

When you visit, you'll have your pick of places to stay. If you're feeling spendy, you can't get much more central than [Casa Monica Resort & Spa](#), where you'll enjoy a rooftop pool and lush grounds. The nearby [Collector Luxury Inn & Gardens](#) is housed in 18th century buildings and has a beautiful courtyard. The [Bayfront Marin House](#) is another gorgeous spot with airy rooms and breezy porches in a bed-and-breakfast-style setting. You could also book a spot west of the river for easy access to Vilano Beach and the Vilano Beach Nature Boardwalk.



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## Eat

You're never far from a great eatery in St. Augustine. There's something for everyone—including loads of fresh seafood—downtown and along A1A Beach Boulevard, which has more ice cream shops along its route than you can shake a stick at. Try the St. Augustine Seafood Company and The Floridian Restaurant for classic seafood dishes, and be sure to check out Sainte-George and



Columbia Restaurant for upscale fare. Don't forget to add Preserved Restaurant, Boat Drinks, [Alta Marea](#), The Drunken Horse St. Augustine, Gaufres and Goods, Harry's Seafood Bar & Grill, Llama Restaurant, and Meehan's Irish Pub and Seafood House to the list.

For drinks, check out the menu at [Prohibition Kitchen](#), which serves up memorable food and live music too. There's also Forgotten Tonic, which has cocktails and wine in a bistro-style setting. Don't even think about missing out on a visit to [Ice Plant Bar](#), where you'll find a fantastic seasonal drinks menu in addition to farm-to-table fare. It's housed in a 1927 industrial building near the San Sebastian River. There's also the breezy veranda at The Tini Martini Bar, a popular spot on the harbor. And you can find drinks on Anastasia Island at Odd Birds Cocktail Lounge & Kitchen and The Pub on Anastasia.



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## Play

Whether your group is interested in lounging on the beach, exploring in nature, shopping the day away, or chartering a boat and setting out to sea, there's plenty to do in and around St. Augustine. Head to St. Augustine Beach on Anastasia Island where you can access wide Atlantic beaches perfect for sunning and

splashing. You'll also find a beachfront park for picnics and volleyball courts at St. Johns County Ocean Pier. There are great views at North Beach Park, Vilano Beach, and Surfside Park as well. They're quieter spots off A1A just north of St. Augustine. Another picturesque oceanfront stretch is Crescent Beach just south of St. Augustine Beach.

To hear live music, stroll through the city—it won't take long to find a bar or restaurant with a concert in progress. The [St. Augustine Seafood Company](#) is a perfect spot for that, as they often have live music playing at [Colonial Oak Music Park](#). You could also book tickets for a show at the 4,000-seat [St. Augustine Amphitheatre](#) (also known as The Amp), which has a big calendar of events.

For an outdoorsy excursion, lace up your sneakers and explore Anastasia State Park, a green space stretching over 1,600 acres on Anastasia Island. It's just across Matanzas Bay and a quick drive from downtown St. Augustine. Another great spot for outdoor adventure is Ocean Hammock Park, which has a nature trail and picnic areas. If you have thrill seekers among you, check out the St. Augustine Alligator Farm Zoological Park, which is one of the state's oldest attractions and a destination for learning about—and marveling at—crocodiles and other reptiles.

If you're staying in St. Augustine, you'll be an easy walk to many of the area's historic sites. History buffs will love exploring the [Castillo de San Marcos National Monument](#), the oldest masonry fort in the continental United States, and its Old City Gate. Downtown is also home to the [Lightner Museum](#), which has an incredible collection of American Gilded Age pieces housed in the historic Hotel Alcazar building. Nearby is also the Colonial Quarter, where you can learn about Spanish colonial history, and The González-Álvarez House, which is thought to be the oldest house in the city.







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When the group text starts lighting up with dreams about beach vacations, consider St. Augustine. It's the ideal spot for a girlfriend getaway, and you'll find lots of jewels to discover in and around this historic and happening city on the coast.