

St. Augustine, Florida

Mini Unit of Discovery



<https://www.mvmtblog.com/2018/01/09/15-reasons-to-visit-st-augustine-florida-the-oldest-city-in-us/>

St. Augustine Mini Unit of Discovery

Juan Ponce de Leon

About St. Augustine, FL

The Founding of St. Augustine

14 Fun Facts about St Augustine, FL

Florida State History & Timeline

Juan Ponce de Leon

Juan Ponce de Leon (1460?-1521) was a Spanish explorer and soldier who was the first European to set foot in [Florida](#). He also established the oldest European settlement in



Puerto Rico and discovered the Gulf Stream (a current in the Atlantic Ocean). Ponce de Leon was searching for the legendary fountain of youth and other riches.

Born in Santervas, Spain, in 1460 (the date is uncertain), Ponce de Leon was a soldier fighting Muslims in southern Spain in the early 1490's. Ponce de Leon sailed on [Christopher Columbus'](#) second expedition to the Americas in 1493. Ponce de Leon did not return to Spain with Columbus; he stayed in Santo Domingo (now called the Dominican Republic).

He was appointed governor of the Dominican province of Higüey. He later heard of gold in the neighboring island of Borinquen (now called Puerto Rico) and brutally conquered the island, claiming it for Spain. He was then appointed governor of this island. Due to his extreme brutality to Native Americans, he was removed from office in 1511.

Ponce de Leon was then given the right to find and take the island of Bimini (in the Bahamas); he was searching for riches and the fountain of youth (a legendary spring that gave people eternal life and health). He sailed from Puerto Rico on March 3, 1513, with three ships, the Santa Maria, the Santiago, and the

San Cristobal, and about 200 men. After stops at Grand Turk Island and San Salvador, they reached the east coast of Florida (St. Augustine) in April 1513. Ponce de Leon named the land "Pascua de Florida" (feast of flowers) because they first spotted land on April 2, 1513, Palm Sunday. He then claimed the land for Spain.

They left on April 8, heading south in the warm current now known as the Gulf Stream. This oceanic current would become very important for Spanish trips from Europe to America. On the return trip, a fight broke out between Ponce de Leon's men and Native Americans in southern Florida.

They sailed to Cuba, then headed north, again trying to find Bimini (but instead, finding Andros Island).

After returning to Puerto Rico, Ponce de Leon resumed fighting with the Native Americans (putting down their rebellions against Spanish rule). He returned to Spain and was named a Captain General by the King of Spain on September 27, 1514, and again sailed to Puerto Rico to search for the elusive Bimini.

His last expedition was another search for Bimini in 1521. His force of 200 men landed on the west coast of Florida, but were met by Native American warriors, who wounded many of the men with arrows, including Ponce de Leon. Ponce de Leon later died in Havana, Cuba, from this wound (in July, 1521). He is buried in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/d/deleon.shtml



St. Augustine, Florida

St. Augustine (Spanish: *San Agustín*) is a city in the **Southeastern United States**, on the **Atlantic coast** of northeastern Florida. Founded in 1565 by Spanish explorers, it is the **oldest continuously occupied** European-established settlement within the borders of the **continental United States**.



City Gates



Fountain of Youth



Oldest Wooden Schoolhouse



Oldest General Store

<https://www.travelingmom.com/family-vacation-destinations/southeast-destinations/historic-sights-kids-st-augustine/>

The Founding of St. Augustine

St. Augustine is the oldest continually populated settlement in what is now the United States. It was first organized on September 8, 1565, by Spanish explorer Pedro Menendez de Aviles. The date was significant because it was the feast day of St. Augustine. Menendez named the day after the saint. He was also the first governor of Florida, the colony originally formed by Juan Ponce de Leon, the seeker of the Fountain of Youth.

The enterprising Menendez was in the New World at the direction of the King and Queen of Spain, who were pursuing twin interests of exploring new lands and trying to control colonization by other European powers. French explorers had built a settlement called Fort Caroline in 1564. Menendez and his men were specifically told to eliminate that French settlement, which they did a year after it was built. Also a target of Spanish occupation were the Timucua, a Native American tribe who lived in the area. The principal chief of the Timucua at that time was a man named Seloy. Menendez and his men had little trouble subduing the Timucua and took over Seloy's council house, using it for their first fort.

From that point on, the settlement of St. Augustine was interrupted, being owned by Spanish, then English, then Americans.

http://www.socialstudiesforkids.com/articles/ushistory/staugustine_founding.htm

14 Fun Facts about St. Augustine, Florida

1. St. Augustine was the first city in America. Therefore making it the oldest city in the United States, founded by the Spanish in 1565.



2. The legendary spring, the Fountain of Youth, made famous by explorer Ponce de Leon, is in St. Augustine and located on what is now known as the Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park.

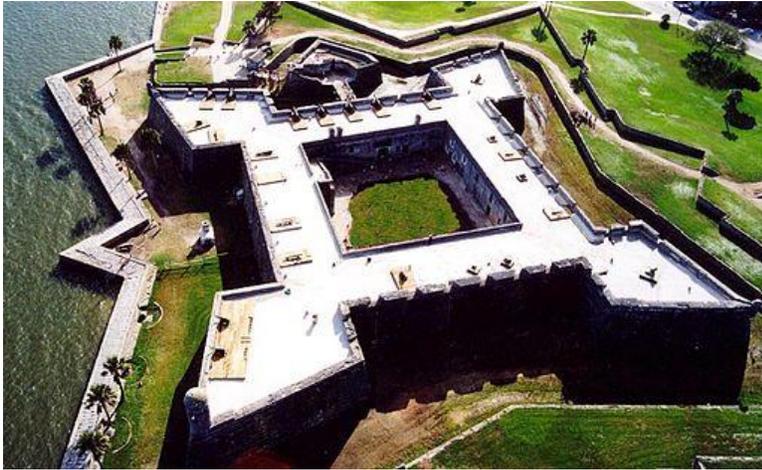
3. Located in St. Johns County, St. Augustine is approximately 9.43 square miles.

4. St. Augustine has its own marvelous white and black striped lighthouse with the **St. Augustine Lighthouse**.

5. Each year at Christmastime, St. Augustine hosts a Night of Lights making it one of the best holiday light displays in the country with almost 2 million lights.

6. St. Augustine has its own Ripley's Believe It or Not Museum with oddities, useless facts and interesting sights.

7. **St. Augustine Alligator Farm and Zoological Park** was founded in St. Augustine in 1893 and is still in operation today.



8. St. Augustine has three forts that guard it. Castillo de San Marcos, Fort Mantanzas, and Fort Mose were all built to protect the city. The Castillo de San Marcos is the oldest masonry fort in the continental United States.

9. The World Golf Hall of Fame calls St. Augustine home.

10. St. Augustine can boast that it has the narrowest street in the U.S. Treasury Street is only 7 feet wide! **Â**

11. St. Augustine is the oldest port in the continental United States.

12. Marineland, a dolphin encounter exhibit, has been in existence for 75 years allowing visitors to swim, feed, and interact with dolphins along the beaches of St. Augustine.

13. More than 13,000 people call St. Augustine home.



14. The oldest wooden schoolhouse is located in St. Augustine built in 1716.

[HTTP://WWW.TRAVELINGWITHTHEJONES.COM/2013/06/27/14-FUN-FACTS-ABOUT-ST-AUGUSTINE-FLORIDA/](http://www.travelingwiththejones.com/2013/06/27/14-fun-facts-about-st-augustine-florida/)

Florida State History

Native Americans

People have inhabited the land of Florida for thousands of years. When Europeans first arrived, Native American tribes lived throughout the land. Some of these tribes included the Apalachee in the Florida panhandle, the Calusa in the south, the Mayaimi who lived around Lake Okeechobee, and the Tocobaga who lived in the middle of the state. Many of these original tribes died out due to diseases brought by the Europeans.

Europeans Arrive

The first European to visit Florida was Spanish explorer [Juan Ponce de Leon](#) who arrived in 1513. He was searching for the legendary Fountain of Youth. He returned again in 1521 with around 200 settlers hoping to establish a colony. However, he was attacked by the local natives and died later from a wound in his leg. Other Spanish explorers followed hoping to discover gold in the region including Panfilo de Narvaez in 1528 and Hernando de Soto in 1539.

Early Settlers

The first European settlement in Florida was established by French Protestants in 1564. They were led by French explorer Rene de Laudonniere and built Fort Caroline near current day Jacksonville. A year later, in 1565, the Spanish built a fort at St. Augustine. St. Augustine is the oldest permanent settlement in the United States. From there, Catholic priests began to build missions throughout Florida.

Britain and Spain

The Spanish ruled Florida up until 1763. After the Spanish lost the Seven Years' War to the British, they gave up control of Florida. The British ruled the land for the next 20 years until the end of the American Revolution in 1783. At that time Spain regained control of Florida as a result of the Treaty of Paris.

Seminole Wars

In the 1800s, the [Seminole](#) Indians of Florida fought a number of wars with the United States Army. The First Seminole War took place in 1817 when [Andrew Jackson](#) led an invasion into Florida against the Seminoles. The invasion was partly in response to the Seminoles helping runaway slaves escape from their owners. After this invasion the United States took control of part of Florida.

The Second Seminole War was fought from 1835 to 1842 and the Third Seminole War from 1855 to 1858. These wars were fought because the Seminole did not want to give up their lands and move to Indian Territory.

Becoming a State

The United States took control of Florida from Spain as part of the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819. In 1821, the Territory of Florida was established and Andrew Jackson became the first governor of Florida. Florida's population grew over the next several years and soon it was large enough to become a state.

However, [slavery](#) was allowed in Florida and many northern states did not want another slave state to join the Union. As part of a compromise, Iowa was admitted as a free state at the same time and, on March 3, 1845, Florida became the 27th state.

Civil War

When Abraham Lincoln became president in 1861, Florida seceded from the Union and joined the Confederacy. During the Civil War, Florida served as a supply route for the Confederate Army. Although there were few major battles in Florida, there were many smaller skirmishes as the Union attempted to blockade the state to prevent supplies from reaching the South. The only major battle was the Battle of Olustee fought in 1864. After losing the Civil War, Florida was readmitted into the Union in 1868.

Timeline

- 1513 - Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon is the first European to visit Florida.
- 1539 - Hernando de Soto explores the region searching for gold.
- 1565 - The city of St. Augustine is established as the oldest permanent settlement in the United States.
- 1763 - The British gain control of Florida as a result of the Seven Years' War.
- 1783 - The Spanish regain Florida as part of the Treaty of Paris.
- 1817 - The First Seminole War occurs.
- 1819 - The United States gains control of Florida through the Adams-Onis Treaty.
- 1821 - The Territory of Florida is established.
- 1835 - The Second Seminole War begins.
- 1845 - Florida becomes the 27th state.
- 1861 - Florida secedes from the Union and joins the Confederacy.
- 1864 - The Battle of Olustee is fought.
- 1868 - Florida is readmitted into the Union.
- 1961 - NASA's first manned spaceflight takes off from Cape Canaveral.
- 1971 - Disney's Magic Kingdom theme park opens in Orlando.
- 1986 - The [Space Shuttle Challenger explodes](#) shortly after take off.
- 1992 - [Hurricane](#) Andrew destroys much of southern Florida.

https://www.ducksters.com/geography/us_states/florida_history.php

MORE TO LEARN:

8 Things You May Not Know About St. Augustine, Florida

<https://www.history.com/news/8-things-you-may-not-know-about-st-augustine-florida>

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