

Anastasia State Park on Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 8:30am to 8:00pm

It's hard to believe that there is a Florida beach the BBC has not visited in the ten (10) years it's been operating.....but we found one.

Anastasia State Park is about 2 ¼ hours from The Villages on the Atlantic side of the state. This unspoiled, beautiful park sits about one mile off Highway A1A. The beach is deep, tracked at approximately 800-900 steps in width to the water's edge by the folks that previewed this park for us, so please plan accordingly. There is a flat rubber mat trail leading down to the water so those 8-900 steps are not all in fluffy sand. It's not quite as wide as Siesta Key.....but it's close!

The beach is located just minutes from St. Augustine and it is adjacent to the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Maritime Museum. Since it is too far to walk, our bus will drop passengers that want to explore 500 plus years of maritime history in this 1874 black-and-white striped lighthouse. The lighthouse itself is 149 years old. We will embark on a self-guided tour through the museum. You can climb 219 steps to the top of the lighthouse for fabulous views of the nation's oldest city and the Atlantic Ocean. If you do conquer those 219 steps, the BBC will purchase a Certificate of Achievement, signed & dated, just for you. We will allow approximately one hour for you to tour the property and of course, visit their gift shop. We are being given a discounted rate of \$11.00 each. We will pre-purchase the tickets to smooth things along at the lighthouse. The bus will return after an hour to retrieve everyone from the lighthouse and take them to the beach. This is an optional excursion.

<https://store.staugustinelighthouse.org>

Anastasia Beach: Just south of the St. Augustine Lighthouse lies one of the area's most beautiful, untouched beaches inside Anastasia State Park. Mossy trees shelter a cozy campground just off the shore. During walks on the beach at certain times of year, you can find starfish, shells, crabs and other creatures in the tidal waters and sand along the coast. In St. Augustine, Anastasia State Park is a favorite destination for outdoor recreation along the beach. It has 4 miles of beach for strolling, sandbars and shallows for swimming.

As you can see in the map, the 2-mile long Salt Run offers a sheltered spot for kayaking, paddle boarding or canoeing. Whether you are looking for adventure or just relaxing on the water, a journey along the 2 mile Salt Run is filled with native wildlife, iconic sights of St. Augustine, and the sounds of gentle ocean waves. **This beautiful, scenic beach does not have any lifeguards.** Chairs and umbrellas can be rented. However, there is a very limited supply of each available. The website [www.anastasiawatersports.com](http://www.anastasiawatersports.com) will allow you to book a chair/umbrella and. But be aware, you will have to then pick it up

at the concession stand, Island Beach Shop and Grill, cart it to the beach and set it up for yourself. A chair for a ½ day is \$12; full day is \$15. Chair and Umbrella; ½ day is \$25 and a full day is \$30. We were unable to convince the park staff to set chairs/umbrellas up for us.

Lunch: The Island Beach Grill offers a counter service menu. They serve a variety of foods, including sandwiches, snacks, quesadillas, chicken tenders, nachos, fish taco, beer, wine and assorted frozen drinks. You might also want to bring your lunch from home.

Activities available to you in the park:

Biking: Bicycle over four miles of beach and several miles of park roads. Bike lanes are available or you may bike along the shoreline. You may ride your bike up and down the beach for miles. Rentals are at the concession island beach shop. Bikes may be rented for \$12-\$15. Bike rides along the beach and kayaking excursions in Salt Run are favorite activities within this beautiful state park.

Kayaking/Canoeing: You may choose to set your own pace through the ecosystem of Salt Run and rent a kayak or canoe. You will enjoy the views of the lighthouse, beach dunes and narrow waterways. The kayaks rent for \$40-\$60 for a single; kayak doubles are \$50-\$70 per hour; and canoes rent for \$50 per hour. The canoes seat up to three people. Because you sit above the water, you have an excellent view for spotting sea life. Also the stability of a canoe makes it ideal for taking pictures. These rentals are available at the Watersport area. <https://anastasiawatersports.com/>

Birds: Anastasia State Park has 195 identified bird species. There is a wide variety of habitat on the island which explains the large amount of different species. The birds are mostly seen on the sand. The park provides a nesting place for the many birds that travel as much as 1000 miles. The birds are often exhausted and in need of nutrition when they first arrive.

Hiking: There are three potential hikes in this park - including a beach walk and an exploration of the old Spanish coquina quarries -

1. The Ancient Dunes Trail is the official nature trail at the park. It starts at the back of the campground and provides an up-close look at the native habitats that flourish on this windy shore. It is a 0.7 mile long trail that takes twelve minutes and is considered an easy walk. <https://floridahikes.com/anastasia-state-park>
2. Anastasia State Park Marsh Trail: Explore this 0.9 mile out-and back trail. It is generally considered an easy route, it takes an average of 16 min to complete. This trail is great for hiking and walking, and it is unlikely you will encounter many other people while exploring.

3. Spanish Quarry. Head out on this 0.5-mile out-and-back trail. This short walk leads to a spectacular view of the old quarry. The canopy of trees is very pretty and gives visitors a sense of "old Florida." Generally considered an easy route this trail takes an average of 9 min to complete. It is a popular trail for birding, hiking, and walking, but you can still enjoy some solitude during quieter times of the day. The trail is beautiful to visit anytime.

#### LATE AFTERNOON FEAST:

We have rented the Sea Turtle Pavillion which is near the beach. It will seat 130 people. Why do we need a pavillion you ask? Because we've arranged to have dinner delivered to the Park for you by Brisky's BBQ Catering. The folks that previewed the Park also visited Brisky's and sampled their fare. We are in for a treat!

Around 3:00, Briskey's will deliver incredibly tender beef brisket, pulled pork, BBQ beans, coleslaw, potato salad, green beans & rolls. All this for the very reasonable price of \$12 per person.

By 4pm, we'll all be ready to start the drive home. But we will make a stop at Buc-ees on World Commerce Parkway, about 30 minutes away. It's the perfect place to shop for your dessert. Unfortunately, Buc-ees does not have any seating available for diners. If you've not yet been to a Buc-ees, hold onto your hat and get ready to embark on a totally different kind of "travel stop". First of all, there are about 104 fuel pumps.....but they are only for cars. No semi-trucks are allowed. And it only gets more interesting from there.....<https://buc-ees.com/>

If you've never heard of Buc-ees, we recommend this light reading:  
<https://www.mashed.com/1081624/mistakes-people-make-at-buc-ees/>

After an hour of wandering around Buc-ees, we'll reboard our bus and head back home, arriving before 8pm.

#### Tentative timeline:

Depart at 8:30 from Hope Lutheran Church @ Morse Blvd & SR 466.

Arrive at Anastasia Park & The St. Augustine Lighthouse @ 10:45-11AM

3pm – BBQ Feast in the Sea Turtle Pavillion

4pm – Depart Anastasia for Buc-ees

5:30pm – Depart Buc-ees and arrive back at Hope Lutheran @ 8pm.