

Daytona Beach - sand, sun, sea, science and some serious speed: 11 reasons this should be your next holiday destination

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- Daytona Beach is the home of the electrifying NASCAR motorsport
- Other attractions include Florida's tallest lighthouse and Tomoka State Park
- The mercury rarely drops below 20C between May and October

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Stuck on where to go on holiday next? Let us steer you towards Daytona Beach in Florida.

It's the home of the electrifying NASCAR motorsport and the world's most famous beach, and so much more, from jaw-dropping nature reserves to epic water parks.

Scroll down for 11 reasons why Daytona Beach is a bucket list essential.

The weather

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Water temperatures are extremely enticing – on average between 25 and 29C between May and October

Florida - it's not called the Sunshine State for nothing.

The weather in Daytona Beach is balmy for huge chunks of the year, with the mercury rarely dropping below 20C between May and October and frequently hitting the low 30s between June and September.

Atlantic Ocean breezes, meanwhile, have a lovely cooling effect in the summer months.

The yearly average high is 26.8C.

Water temperatures, too, are extremely enticing – on average between 25 and 29C between May and October.

The advice? Pack for the beach!

The sand

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Driving on The World's Most Famous Beach is allowed - as long as drivers don't exceed 10mph

Welcome to the most famous beach in the world, driven into the history books by speed trials and races held on its hard-packed sand from the beginning of the 20th century.

NASCAR was born here in 1947 and had a residency on the beach until it moved to the newly constructed Daytona International Speedway in 1959.

Driving on the beach is still allowed today, in cars and on ATVs - but at no more than 10mph. After all, it's a popular spot with sunseekers.

They're lured by the huge array of activities on offer, including beach volleyball, cycling and water sports - from paddle boarding to parasailing – and the chance to simply soak up the sun on an epic 23-mile strip of sensational sand.

The speed

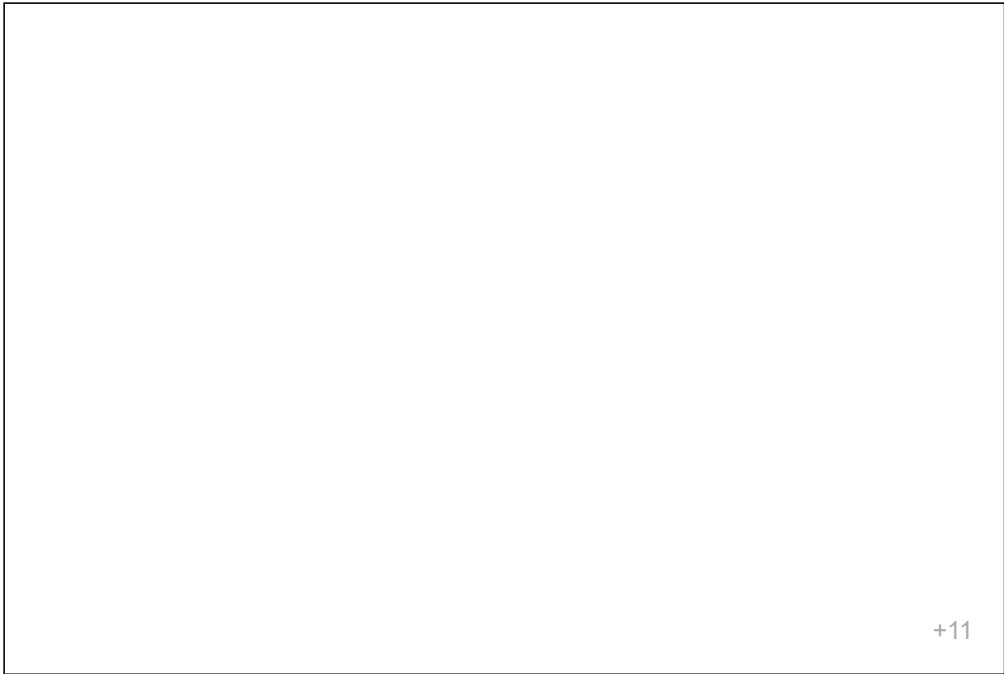
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A family break that's top of the league: Whether it's footie, synchronised swimming, fencing - or just a week horizontal in the sun - this sporty



The top event at Daytona International Speedway is February’s Daytona 500 when 170,000 spectators watch in awe as the cars lap the track at up to 200mph

Rev up the excitement with a trip to the Daytona International Speedway, the home of NASCAR, which puts on year-round entertainment.

The top event in the calendar is February’s Daytona 500 when 170,000 spectators watch in awe as the cars lap the track at up to 200mph. July’s Coke Zero Sugar 400 is also an exhilarating event.

There are also all-access tours, passenger-ride experiences and the chance to drive an actual NASCAR race car around the track for 30 laps. Plus, there’s the fascinating Motorsports Hall of Fame of America which has displays honoring all forms of motorsports including Stock Cars, Sports Cars, Open-Wheel, Motorcycles and more.

The boardwalk and pier

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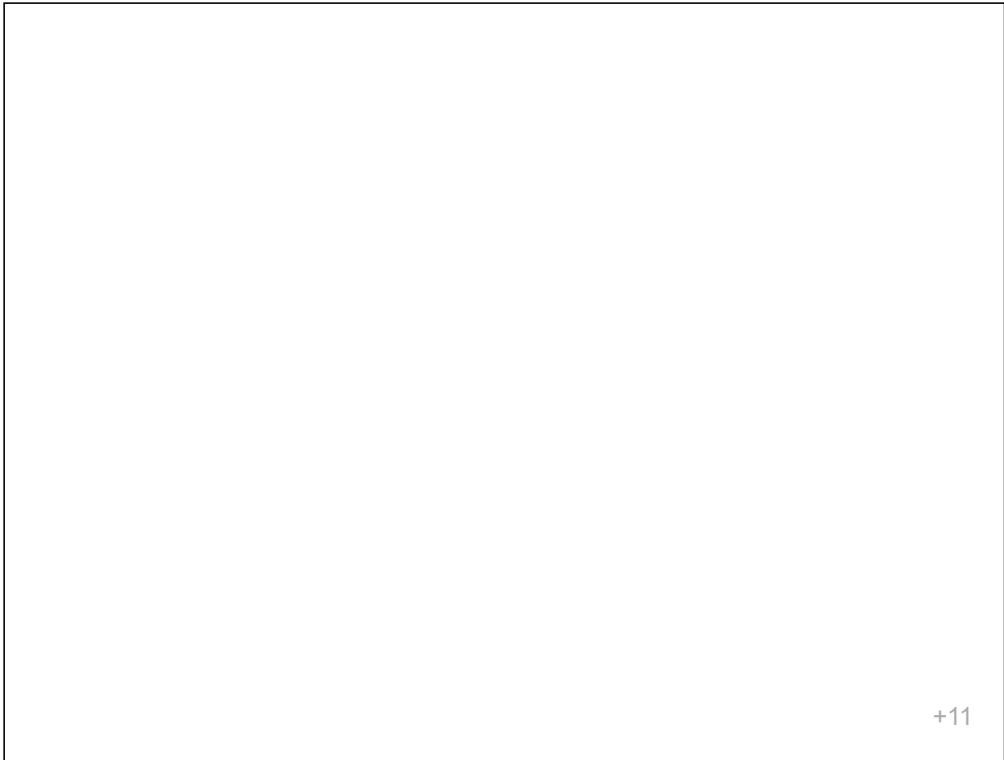
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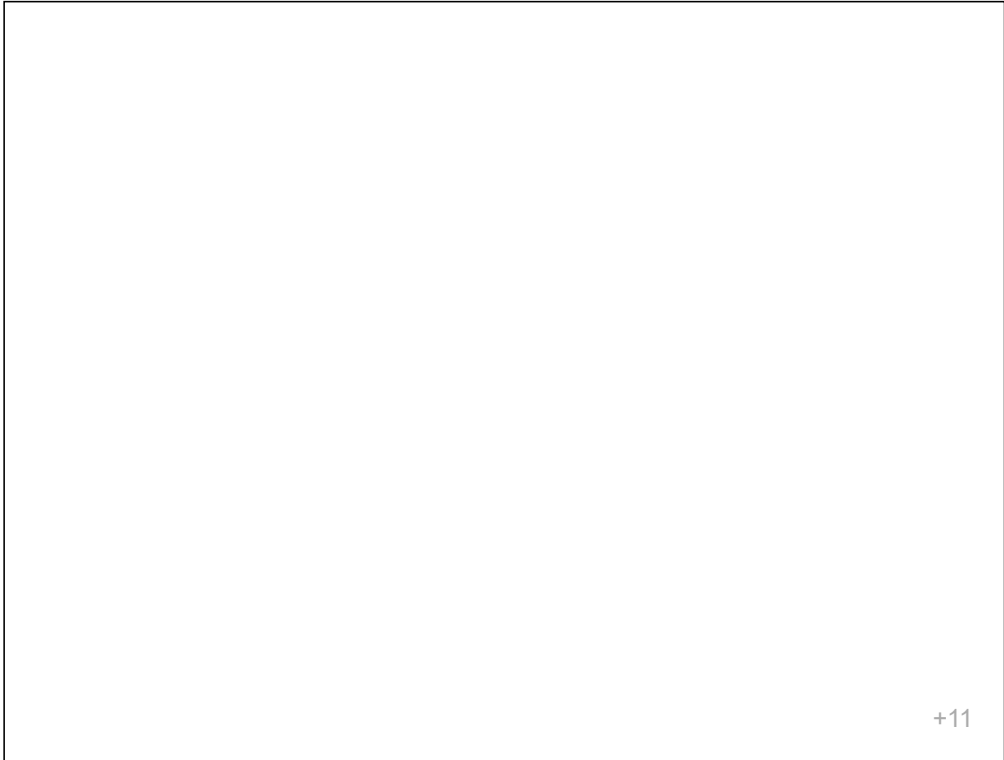
The Boardwalk is home to the unmissable pier, built in 1925 and fully restored in 2012

Classic arcades, ice cream parlours, clothes shops, snack bars and restaurants – they're all present and correct on Daytona Beach's iconic palm-lined Boardwalk.

And between May and September, you can catch live concerts and be wowed by firework displays.

The Boardwalk is also home to the unmissable pier, built in 1925 and fully restored in 2012. It extends 1,000ft into the Atlantic.

The science



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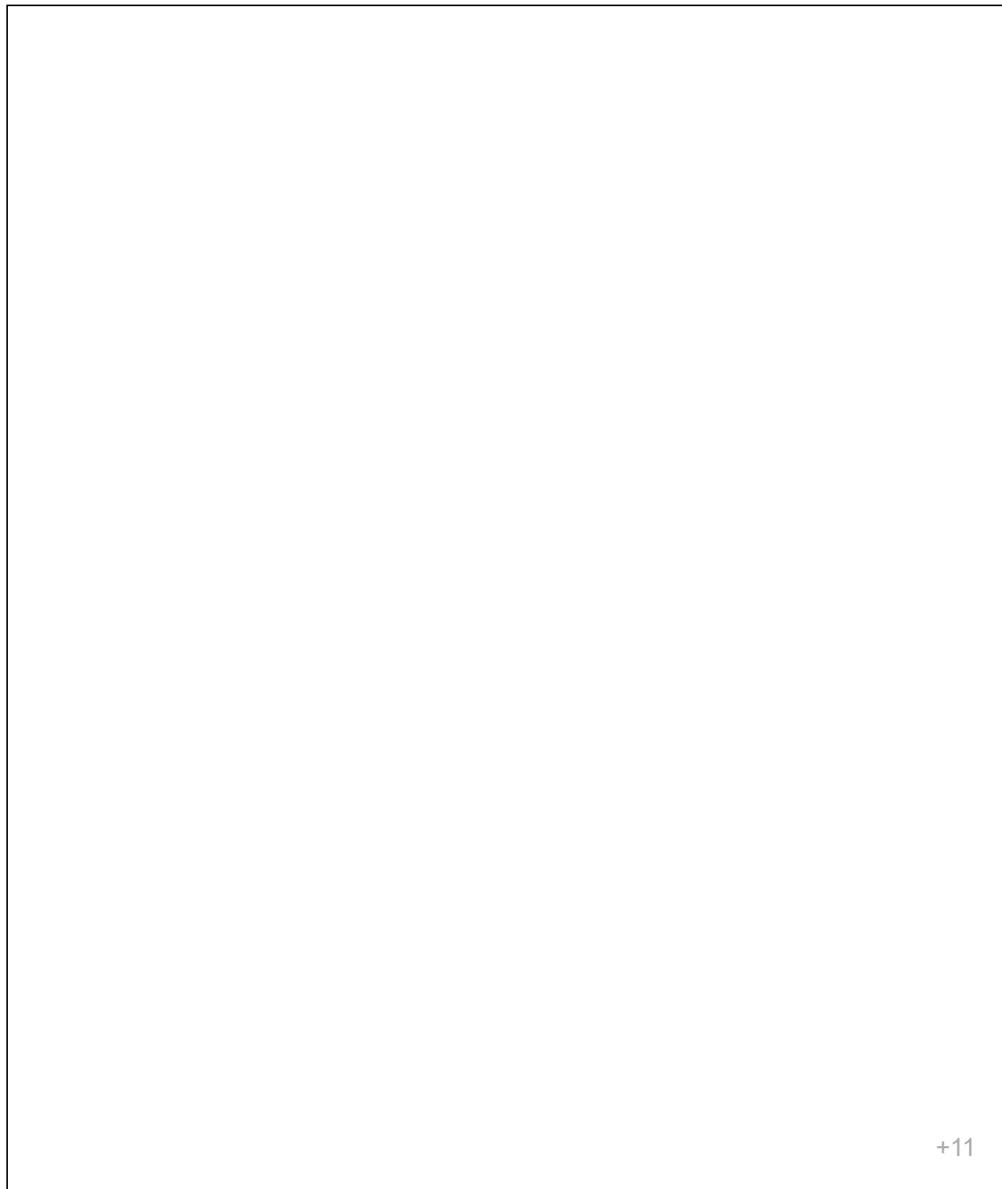
The Museum of Arts & Sciences has an out-of-this-world digital planetarium with a 40-foot dome onto which jaw-dropping films and images are projected

Daytona Beach is home to two fascinating science-themed attractions – the Marine Science Center and the Museum of Arts & Sciences.

The former features a 5,000-gallon artificial reef aquarium, a stingray touch pool that's home to cownose rays, a sea turtle rehabilitation centre and a bird-observation tower where you can scan the skies for bald eagles, osprey, and peregrine falcons.

The Museum of Arts & Sciences, meanwhile, has an out-of-this-world digital planetarium with a 40-foot dome onto which jaw-dropping films and images are projected and one of the largest Coca-Cola memorabilia collections in the world, plus Indy Series race cars and train cars.

The views



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Lofty Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, six miles south of The World's Most Famous Beach, stands 175 feet tall and visitors can ascend to a gallery deck at the top

Magnificent views of Daytona Beach can be enjoyed courtesy of the tallest lighthouse in Florida.

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Lofty Ponce Inlet Lighthouse, six miles south of The World's Most Famous Beach, stands 175 feet tall (53m) and visitors can ascend to a gallery deck at the top via 203 steps. It's a long way up, but the panorama on offer makes the climb well worth the effort.

The structure was built in 1887 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998.

The site also harbours an intriguing museum, which features exhibits on the histories of the United States Lighthouse Service, Daytona Beach and Florida.

The *really* crazy golf



Daytona Beach boasts over 20 top-class golf courses, including some that have been created by world-renowned golfing architects such as Rees Jones and Donald Ross

There's crazy golf – and there's Congo River Golf.

This Daytona Beach adventure course, located two miles south of the Pier, features giant waterfalls, rainforests – and 25 live alligators you can feed along the way.

Of course, for those looking for more conventional fairways, Daytona Beach comes up trumps.

It boasts over 20 top-class golf courses, including some that have been created by world-renowned golfing architects such as Rees Jones and Donald Ross.

The nature

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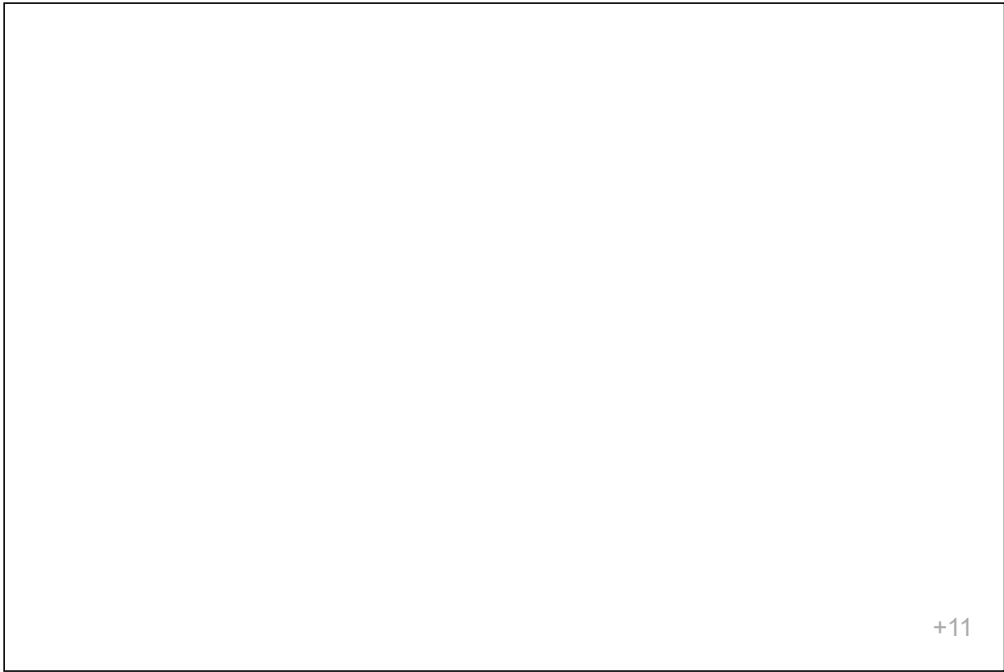
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Tomoka State Park is home to over 160 species of bird, 90 species of fish, gopher tortoise, bobcats, alligators and manatees

Just a 20-minute drive from downtown Daytona Beach is Tomoka State Park, a 900-acre peninsula that has serene hiking trails and superb kayaking opportunities.

The site has a rich history – it used to be occupied by Timucuan Indians who lived off fish-filled lagoons.

It's home to over 160 species of bird, 90 species of fish, gopher tortoise, bobcats, alligators and manatees.

There are excellent camping facilities for those who want to get back to nature but not go too wild - picnic tables, grills and electricity hook-ups are all provided, and space for RVs.

The free chocolate

Angell & Phelps Chocolate Factory in downtown Daytona has been making candies and chocolates since 1925.

And sweet-toothed visitors can bag a free sample of their delicious produce if they take the 20-minute tour of the production area.



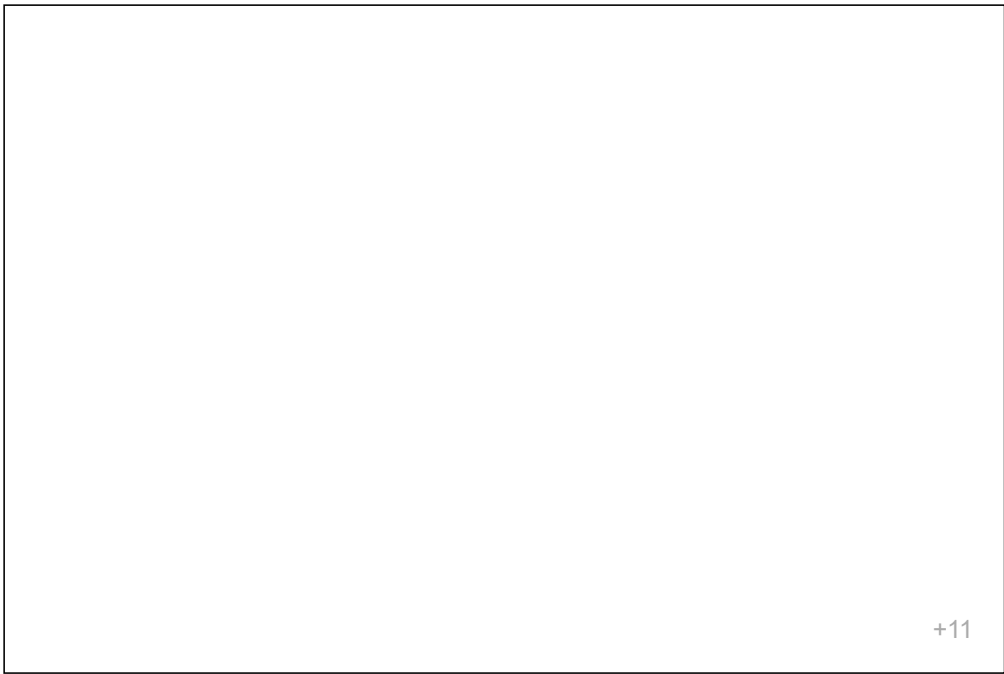
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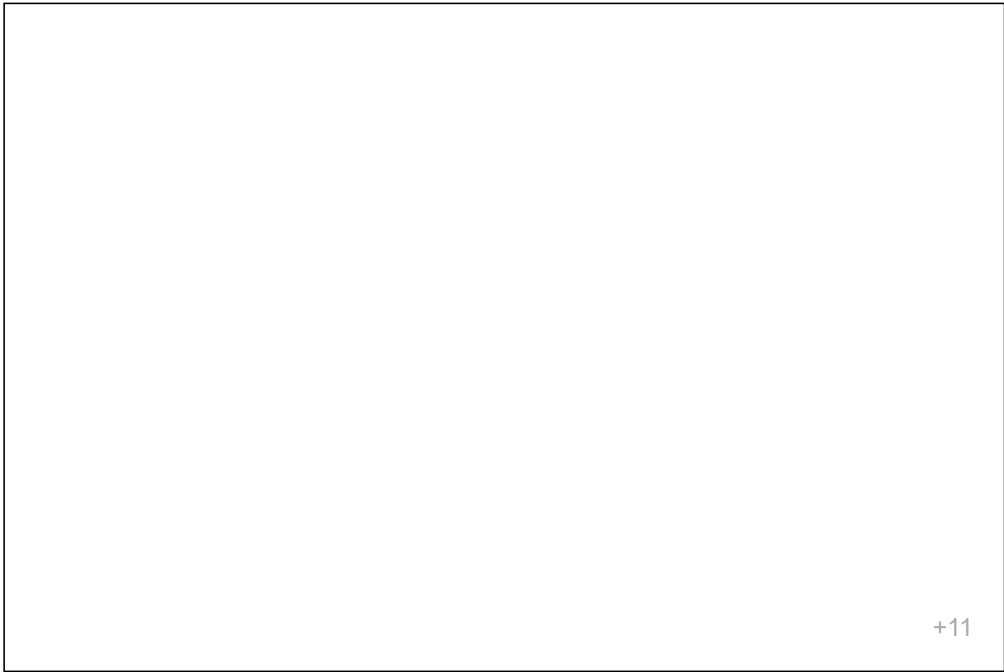
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Angell & Phelps Chocolate Factory in Daytona Beach has been making chocolates since 1925

As Angell & Phelps says, ‘you’ll view experienced candy makers doing things the old-fashioned way’.

Their mouth-watering treats include specialities such as chocolate-covered bacon, chocolate Oreo's, milk-chocolate Gummy Bears and chocolate-covered potato chips.

The fascinating history



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Fort Matanzas National Monument stands on land that's part of a barrier island ecosystem

Dating back to the 18th-century colonial wars, Fort Matanzas National Monument, on Rattlesnake Island just to the north of Daytona Beach, makes for a fascinating excursion – and there’s a free 35-person ferry visitors can catch to it.

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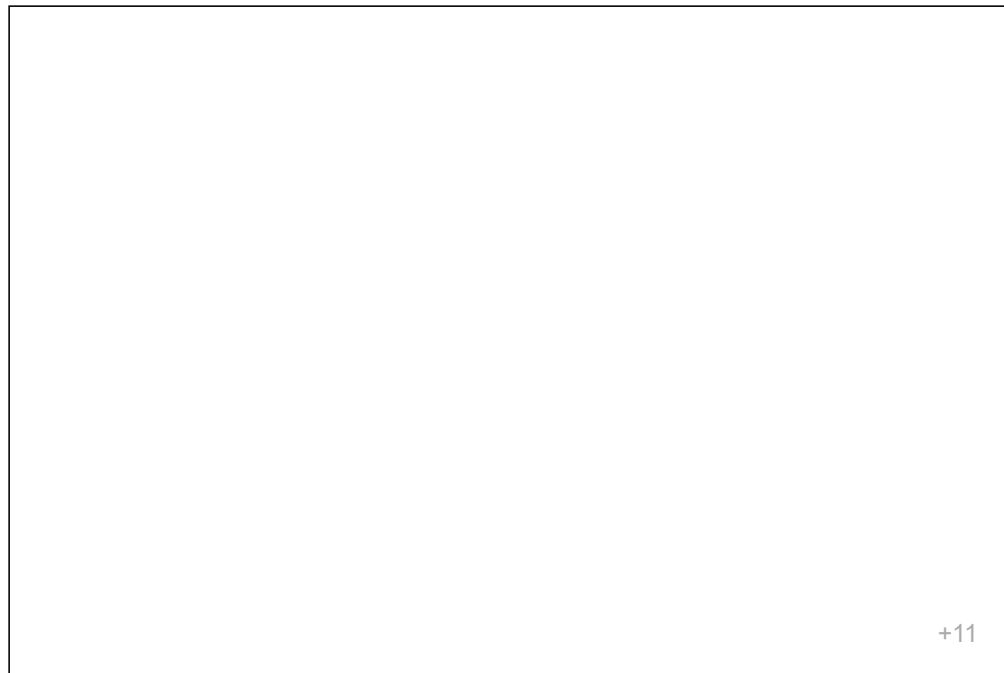
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The fort was built by the Spanish to guard St. Augustine's southern river approach against the British.

The 300 acres of land it's on, now owned by the National Park Service, is part of a barrier island ecosystem that's home to a wide variety of wildlife, including great horned owls, white-tailed deer, sea turtles, ghost crabs and beach mice.

The wonderful water park



Daytona Lagoon is packed with attractions, including the four-lane mat-racer Kraken's Revenge

Beachside water park Daytona Lagoon has made a big splash with tourists thanks to its thrilling family friendly attractions.

The line-up includes the epic 54ft-tall four-lane mat-racer Kraken's Revenge, the Shaka Halfpipe 'pendulum slide', the thrilling fully enclosed Blackbeard's Revenge raft slide, the twin-flume Adventure Mountain and the more sedate Pelican's Drift, where visitors float on a lazy river that flows throughout the park.

There's also a giant 'Treasure Lagoon' wave pool, a 70ft zip-line, state-of-the-art laser tag, multi-level go-kart racing, an indoor 'Sky Maze' obstacle course and 18-hole miniature golf. Phew!

Ten pumps make sure the fun keeps flowing, pushing 8.6 million gallons of water through the pools and rides every hour.

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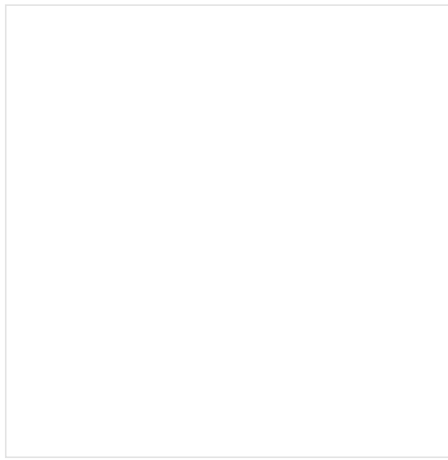
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► Pictured: Airbus A330 is towed out to sea and sunk to become a diving attraction and artificial reef

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