Castillo de San Marcos

Official Map and Guide

Castillo de San Marcos National Monument
Florida

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

San Agustin Bastion

San Carlos Bastion

San Pedro Bastion

San Pablo Bastion

Ravelin

Shot Furnace

Guard Rooms

Well

Powder Magazine

Storage Rooms

Chapel

British Room

Moat

Covered Way

Glacis

Cubo and Rosario Lines
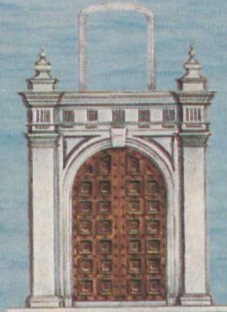
Use this exploded birds-eye view to help you find your way as you explore more than 300 years of Florida history. The layout that Spanish engineer Ignacio Daza created for the Castillo de San Marcos is simple and straightforward. This fortress is a hollow square with diamond-shaped bastions at each corner, with only one way in or out. In the bombproof storerooms that surround the central Plaza de armas you will find museums highlighting various chapters of the fort's long history. A good place to start is the corner rooms next to the well. Restrooms are located under the arched stairway leading to the gundeck. After you finish exploring the rooms below, make your way up the stairs and gaze out upon the waters of Matanzas Bay. From this commanding position, a garrison of Spanish troops safeguarded St. Augustine during the turbulent colonial era. Later English and then American troops also saw service here. All stood watch faithfully over the land Juan Ponce de León named, "La Florida."

For Your Safety
As you explore these ancient rooms, please watch your step. Be careful of irregular steps and loose, uneven surfaces.

For the Fort's Safety
Although the Castillo is more than 300 years old, most of the damage to it has resulted not from past battles or sieges but from thousands of people each year. The fort is constructed of a unique sedimentary rock called Coquina, which, despite its obvious strength, is very fragile and susceptible to wear. Please do not climb on the walls or sit on the stone surfaces. Also do not climb or sit on the cannon.

For more information
Write: Superintendent, Castillo de San Marcos National Monument, 1 South Castillo Drive, St. Augustine, FL 32084. On the Internet, you can find us at www.nps.gov/casa.

A Guide to the Castillo

Shot Furnace
The U.S. Army filled in the east side of the moat in 1842-44 and mounted sea coast artillery pieces along the seawall. The shot furnace heated cannonballs until red hot. This "hot shot" was then fired at an enemy's wooden ships to set them afire.

Powder Magazine, 1675-87
This was the only vaulted chamber completed when the Castillo was built (the rest were added during "modernization"). Its thick coquina walls were buried in the earth fill of San Carlos Bastion to protect the fort's gunpowder from fire or enemy shot. Lack of ventilation, however, created such a high level of dampness inside the small room that it proved unsuitable for storing the powder. When larger, better vaults were built, the powder was moved and this room was used for other things.

Chapel
Religion was an important part of daily Spanish life and this chapel allowed a priest to conduct mass for the soldiers. With the introduction of Christianity to the Indians in this area, various missions were established north and west of St. Augustine. The mission system of Florida was established by the Spanish more than 100 years before they introduced it into our western states.

British Room, 1763-84
British troops moved to St. Augustine after Spain ceded Florida to Great Britain in exchange for the fortified harbor and city of La Habana, Cuba, in 1763. Wooden second floors, such as the one reconstructed in this casemate, were built in the high Spanish vaults to provide more space for quarters and supplies in case of need. British rule lasted for 21 years. Florida was returned to Spain at the close of the American Revolution in 1783.

Storage Rooms
Despite their prison-like appearance, the rooms around the Plaza de armas, or central courtyard, were actually storage areas. During Spanish times, most of the rooms would have been stockpiled with gunpowder, ammunition, weapons, lumber, tools, and food such as dried beans, rice, flour, and corn. Since St. Augustine was not self-sufficient, such stockpiles of food and ammunition were an important part of the town's defense during a siege.

Guard Rooms
St. Augustine was a garrison town or presidio and no one lived inside the Castillo. The soldiers lived in town with their families and came to the fort to stand a rotating guard duty (usually 24 hours). At such times, they slept and prepared their meals in these rooms. The large fireplaces offered warmth on chilly days and provided an area for cooking. The platforms attached to the walls served as beds for the soldiers.

Ravelin
This triangular outer work shielded the fort's only entrance from enemy fire. It was never finished as planned. If completed, the outer wall would have been five feet higher, with embrasures for cannon and a powder magazine. The drawbridge here and the main drawbridge are both working reconstructions. The ravelin bridge would have been secured each night at sunset; the main bridge was secured only when the fort was under attack.
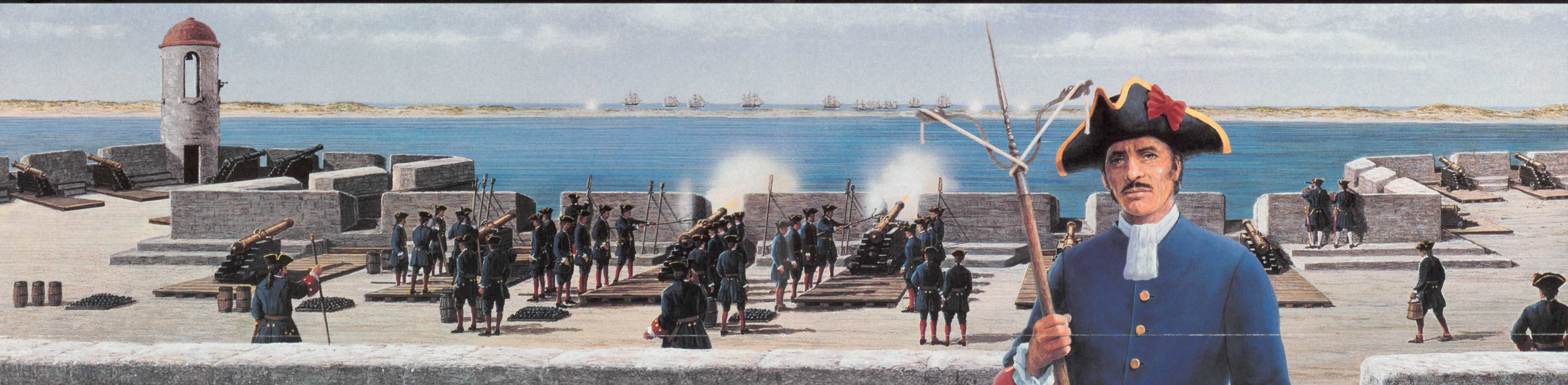
Moat/Glacis/Covered Way
The Spanish kept the moat dry and, during sieges, used it as a pen for domestic animals. Whenever the fort was under land attack, the moat could be filled with sea water by opening flood gates on the seawall. Around the outside of the fort is a man-made slope called a glacis. This embankment shielded and protected the lower fort walls from enemy cannon fire. The area between the glacis and the moat is called the covered (covert) way. This allowed soldiers to leave the fort and still be covered or protected by this wall.

Bastions
Each of the four corners of the fort is protected by a diamond-shaped bastion. Cannons in one bastion were positioned so as to create a deadly crossfire with those in two other bastions. The bastions' thick stone walls were packed solid with rubble and sand to support the immense weight of the cannon.

Cubo and Rosario Lines
After the British burned St. Augustine during the siege of 1702, the Spanish constructed a wall of earth and palm logs with a wide shallow moat around the town. The only entrance was from the north through City Gate. A portion of this wall, the Cubo Line, has been recovered on the park grounds.

Well
Three shallow wells in the Plaza de armas provided water for the garrison. One of the wells still exists. Fresh water lies six to eight feet below the surface.

Outpost of Empire

When the British attacked St. Augustine in the summer of 1740, they expected a quick and easy victory. But they underestimated the strength of the Castillo de San Marcos and the courage of its Spanish defenders, some of whom are shown here responding to enemy artillery fire from across Matanzas Bay. After besieging the town for 38 days the British gave up and returned to Georgia.

Illustrations by L. Kenneth Townsend

Rammer (Atracador)

Worm (Saca Trapos)

Sponge (Lanada)

Ladle (Cuchara)

Castillo de San Marcos was for many years the northernmost outpost of Spain's vast New World empire. It is the oldest masonry fort and the best-preserved example of a Spanish colonial fortification in the continental United States.

It anchored East Florida's defenses, which extended northward to the St. Marys River, westward to the St. Johns, and southward to Fort Matanzas. It protected St. Augustine from pirate raids and from Spain's major rival, Great Britain, during a time when the Florida-Georgia-Carolina coastline was an explosive international battleground.

The roots of the Castillo's history reach back to the years just after Christopher Columbus's final transatlantic voyage, when *conquistadores* carved out a vast and wealthy overseas empire for Spain, first in the Caribbean and then on the mainlands of Mexico, Central America, Colombia, Venezuela, and Peru. Products of these tropical and mountainous territories brought high prices on the Continent, and Spanish galleons sailed home laden with exotic dyes, sugar, tobacco, chocolate, pearls, hardwoods, and silver and gold. These so-called "treasure fleets" made Spain the most powerful and envied nation in Renaissance Europe.

Thanks to the travels of Ponce de León in 1513, Spanish navigators knew that the best return route from Spain's rich Caribbean possessions was along the Gulf Stream, through the Bahama Channel, and past the shores of Florida. The Spanish knew they must defend this peninsula to prevent enemies from using its harbors as havens from which to raid the passing treasure fleets.

Spain claimed Florida through discovery by Ponce de León, but France gained the first foothold there by establishing Fort Caroline on the St. Johns River in 1564. Seeing this as both a challenge to Spain's claims and a menace to the treasure fleets, King Philip II sent an expedition under Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés to eliminate the French threat and establish settlements in Florida. It arrived at the mouth of the St. Johns River in September 1565.

After attempting unsuccessfully to board the French ships anchored there, Menéndez sailed to a harbor farther south and established St. Augustine as a base for further operations. Almost immediately a French fleet sailed south to attack. But the ships were driven southward and wrecked by a violent storm and the mission failed. Realizing that Fort Caroline would be lightly guarded, the Spaniards marched north, captured the fort, and executed most of the inhabitants. The same fate befell survivors from the French fleet, whom the Spaniards captured and killed at an inlet 14 miles south of St. Augustine. The episode gave a name to the area: *Matanzas,* Spanish for "slaughters."

England became Spain's next contender for Florida. The Spanish had watched the English warily ever since Sir Francis Drake attacked and burned St. Augustine in 1586. They became even more watchful after Englishmen settled Jamestown in 1607. British pirates sacked St. Augustine again in 1668, and this hit-and-run attack, followed by the English settlement of Charleston in 1670, caused Spain to build the Castillo de San Marcos.

Begun in 1672 and completed by 1695, the Castillo replaced nine successive wooden fortifications that had protected St. Augustine since its founding. The fort's commanding location on the west bank of Matanzas Bay allowed its guns to protect not only the harbor entrance but the ground to the north against a land attack.
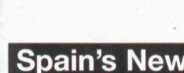
The Castillo's baptism of fire came in 1702 during the War of the Spanish Succession, when the English occupied St. Augustine and unsuccessfully besieged the fort for 50 days. The English burned the town before they left, but the Castillo emerged unscathed, thereby making it a symbolic link between the old St. Augustine of 1565 and the new city that rose from the ashes.

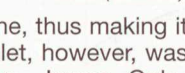To strengthen the defenses, the Spanish erected new earthwork lines on the north and

Spain's New World Sea Routes

NORTH AMERICA

To Spain

GULF STREAM

Fort Frederica
Fort Caroline
St. Augustine

STRAITS OF FLORIDA

GULF OF MEXICO

ATLANTIC OCEAN

La Habana

Veracruz

Santo Domingo

San Juan

Acapulco

From Spain

PACIFIC OCEAN

Portobello
Panama

Cartagena

SOUTH AMERICA

Like a menacing dagger, the Florida peninsula thrusts toward the heart of Spain's New World wealth. Richly laden Spanish galleons, sailing in convoy for protection against freebooters, enemy warships, and privateers, followed wind and current in a great circle route from Spain westward to Caribbean ports, then northward from La Habana past Florida and eastward to home. To the Spanish, the French colony of Fort Caroline on the St. Johns River was a nest of pirates and a threat to the treasure fleets. In 1565 they destroyed it and established their own colony—St. Augustine—thus making Florida a haven rather than a menace.

Artilleryman,
Castillo de San Marcos,
1740 garrison

Linstock (Botafuego)

west sides of St. Augustine, thus making it a walled city. Matanzas Inlet, however, was still unfortified when Gen. James Oglethorpe's British troops from Fort Frederica in Georgia attacked St. Augustine in 1740. Again the Castillo was besieged and Matanzas Inlet blockaded. But the Spanish did not waver during the 27-day British bombardment. The attack also taught the Spanish the strategic value of Matanzas Inlet and the need for a strong outpost there. Consequently, in 1742, they completed the present coquina tower.

In 1763, as an outcome of the Seven Years' (French and Indian) War, Spain ceded Florida to Great Britain in return for La Habana, Cuba. The British garrisoned Matanzas and strengthened the Castillo, holding the two forts through the American Revolution. The Treaty of Paris of 1783, which ended the war, returned Florida to Spain.

Spain held Florida until 1821, when serious Spanish-American tensions led to its cession to the United States. The Americans renamed the Castillo Fort Marion and used it to house Indian prisoners during the Seminole War of 1835-42. Confederate troops occupied it briefly during the Civil War and Indians captured in Western military campaigns were held there later on. It was last used during the Spanish-American War as a military prison.

Castillo Timeline

The key dates at right, arranged by century, are important to the story of the development of the Castillo de San Marcos, whose coquina walls are silent reminders of Spain's contributions to Florida and U. S. history.

| 16th Century	17th Century	18th Century	19th Century	20th Century
1513 Sailing from Puerto Rico, Spanish discover Florida.	**1672** Ground is broken on October 2 for Castillo de San Marcos.	**1702** War of the Spanish Succession pits Spain and France against Austria, Great Britain, and others.	**1821** Spain cedes Florida to the United States.	**1924** Fort Marion and Fort Matanzas are proclaimed national monuments.
1565 Spanish found St. Augustine and destroy French at Fort Caroline and Matanzas Inlet.	**1695** Castillo de San Marcos (curtain walls, bastions, living quarters, moat, ravelin, and seawall) is finished in August.	Coastal Georgia missions are destroyed by Carolinians enroute to St. Augustine.	**1825** Castillo de San Marcos renamed Fort Marion.	**1933** Fort Marion and Fort Matanzas are transferred by the War Department to the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.
		Carolinians occupy and burn St. Augustine but the Castillo successfully resists their siege.		
		1738 Spanish governor at St. Augustine grants freedom to runaway British slaves. Black families settle at new town called Fort Mose.		**1935** National Park Service begins exclusive administration of both national monuments.
		1740 St. Augustine successfully endures siege by British, Georgian, and South Carolinian forces.		**1942** Original name, Castillo de San Marcos, is restored.
		1756-62 Fort Mose rebuilt in masonry. Earthworks at Mose extended to complete northernmost defense.		
		1740-42 Fort Matanzas is built to block southern approach to St. Augustine.		
		1763 Peace of Paris gives Florida to Great Britain in exchange for La Habana.		
		1783 Peace of Paris recognizes independence of the United States and returns Florida to Spain.		

St. Augustine

Established in 1565 by Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, St. Augustine is the oldest permanent European settlement in the continental United States. For 235 years it was the political, military, and religious capital of the Province of Florida from which Spain exercised jurisdiction over a vast geographical region. The town's principal value, however, was as a military base for the protection of Spain's colonial trade and commerce.
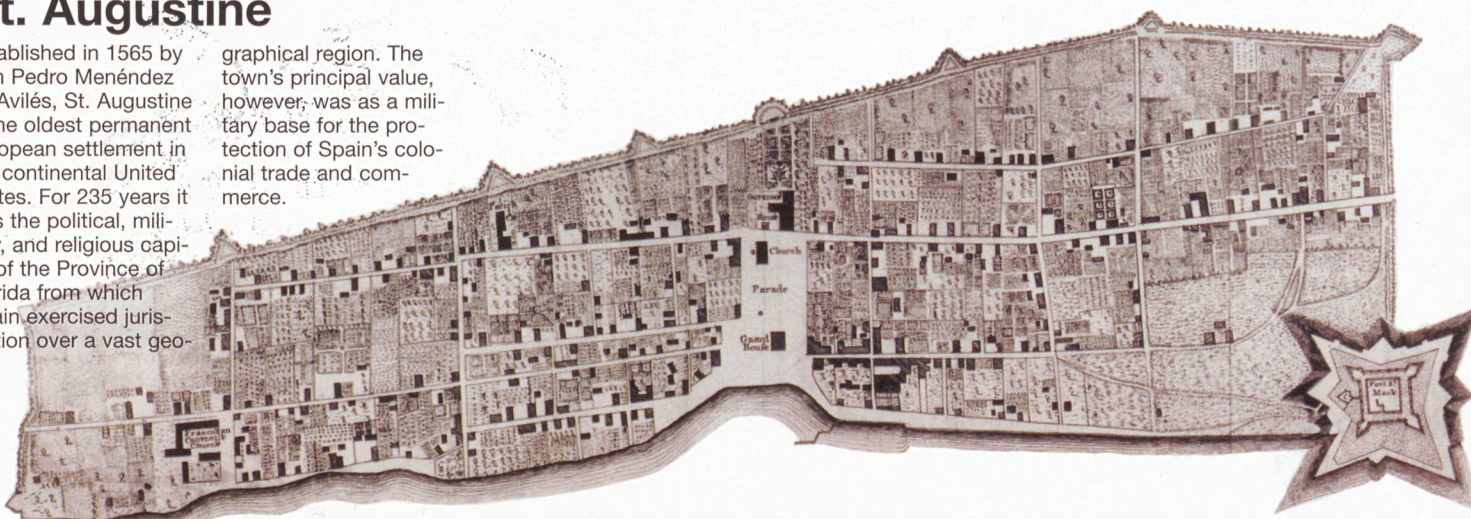
This map, drawn in 1764, shows St. Augustine the year after Great Britain took control of Florida. It is based upon the surveys of Juan de Solis, a longtime resident of the town. Right: *St. Augustine's founder, Don Pedro Menéndez de Avilés.*
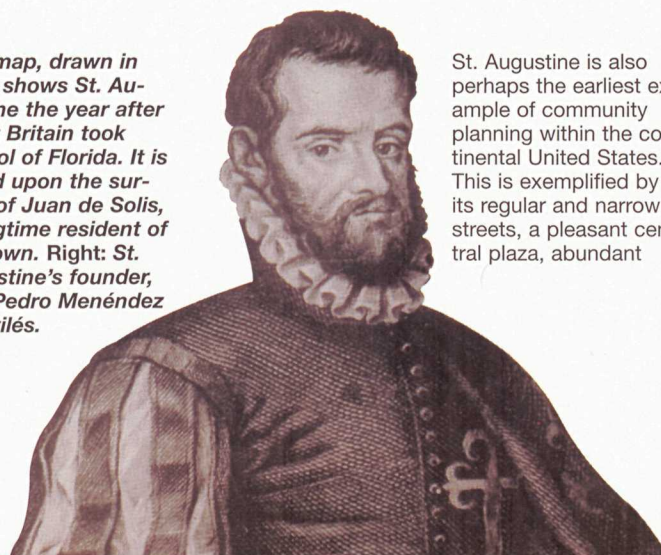
St. Augustine is also perhaps the earliest example of community planning within the continental United States. This is exemplified by its regular and narrow streets, a pleasant central plaza, abundant open spaces, beautiful patios and gardens, impressive government and religious buildings, and comfortable homes —all suggesting an emphasis on the development of an orderly, dignified, healthy, and pleasant environment. The character of the city still reflects its vibrant Spanish heritage. **Right:** The oldest house in St. Augustine, dating from Spanish colonial days.

Florida Department of Commerce