

Nature Adventure Itinerary

A wildlife haven and staple in outdoor recreation, Lake City, Florida's Springlands has been known as the "Springs Capital of the United States" for decades. This unique central North Florida destination is a subtropical paradise of lush tall pine forest and crystal blue natural springs, with plenty to offer visitors who are looking for outdoor adventure. From camping along the Sante Fe River to cave diving through underwater passages, you'll find yourself face-to-face with indigenous wildlife and truly immersed in the splendor of nature by checking out the following Lake City, Florida's Springlands activities.

Where to Stay

Camping

- Spend the night near the Sante Fe River at [O'Leno State Park](#), one of Florida's first parks, developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. You'll find sinkholes, hardwood hammocks, river swamps and sandhills in and around the Sante Fe River, a tributary of the Suwannee River. As the river courses through the park, it disappears underground and reemerges over three miles away in River Rise Preserve State Park. After a day of hiking, biking, and canoeing in the park, pitch a tent at the shady, full-facility campground which offers 60 family campsites, three primitive camping areas for youth groups, 10 backpack camping sites at Sweetwater Lake and primitive camping at the horse barn area. Amenities include water, electric, in-ground grill, picnic table and a centrally located restroom.



O'Leno State Park

Glamping + RVing

- For those seeking elevated outdoor adventure, you'll be sure to find it amidst the rustic elegance at [Moonshine Acres RV Park](#) in Columbia County, Fla. There are currently six pristine glamping tents at Moonshine Acres, complete with full electrical capabilities, making camping in Florida a breeze (which you won't need, since these have air conditioning and electrical outlets!) In addition to the glamping tents, Moonshine Acres offers 13 pull-through RV sites and 28 back-in sites, which are pet friendly. The property was once owned by a prominent local moonshiner and his spirit of discovery is kept alive across the park today. With a log cabin clubhouse and an old fashioned general store on property, you'll feel transported back in time while still enjoying the conveniences of modern luxury.

Where to Explore the Springs

Amateur Explorers

- Head to [Ichetucknee Springs State Park](#) for a fun-filled day exploring the eight major crystal-clear springs which join together to make up the six-mile Ichetucknee River. You can choose from several different options to explore this refreshing oasis, including swimming, tubing, paddling or scuba diving. [Paddling Adventures](#), located at the South entrance, offers tube, canoe, kayak and stand up paddleboard rentals, allowing you to experience the splendor of nature and come face-to-face with birds, manatees and other local wildlife.



Ichetucknee Springs State Park

- A quick and easy lunch stop after a day on the water is [Ichetucknee Springs General Store Grill](#), located conveniently in the park. Enjoy freshly-prepared hot and cold menu selections such as hamburgers, fries, sandwiches, wraps, crisp salads and hand-dipped ice cream as you dine outdoors at tree-shaded picnic tables located throughout the park.

Experienced Divers

- In a secluded retreat off the Suwannee River, experienced divers will find [Wes Skiles Peacock Springs State Park](#), a world-famous spot for cave diving that attracts visitors from all across the globe. With over 33,000 feet of underwater passages to explore, it's one the longest underwater cave systems in the continental U.S. Proof of scuba certification is required to enter the caverns, but above ground, there is an interpretive nature trail that follows the cave system below your feet. The award-winning trail showcases four major plant communities and educates hikers along the way.

Where to Relax on a Lake

- If you're looking to cast your fishing rod, check out [Alligator Lake Park](#), a beautiful waterfront spot in the underappreciated metropolis of Lake City, FL. A variety of fish can be found in the lake, including bream/bluegill, redear sunfish, catfish, crappie and largemouth bass. The 1,000 acre green space and wetlands park also offers 12 miles of hiking and biking trails, canoe trails and launch, picnic pavilions and plenty of opportunities for nature watching.

Where to Explore the Forest

- A lesser known spot, [River Rise Preserve State Park](#) sits alongside O'Leno State Park, following the Santa Fe River Route after it runs underground. 35 miles of trails wind through these quiet woods with massive trees, ideal conditions for hikers, equestrians and fat-tire cyclists. The park offers equestrian primitive camping, with a 20-stall horse barn and space for up to 40 rigs. Part of the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail, bird enthusiasts and wildlife lovers will find ample opportunities to observe nature at River Rise.
- The [Osceola National Forest](#) is a North Florida gem of forested woodlands and prehistoric swamps that offers camping, hiking, swimming, fishing, hunting, riding horse trails, wildlife viewing and so much more. Stop in at the historic Olustee Depot, which serves as the welcome center, before paddling among the towering cypress trees in a tranquil environment or launching a boat and spending the day waterskiing on a lake. The restored passenger and freight station is open Friday-Sunday and offers interpretive displays about the industrial heritage of the region.