

Leisure Travel Itinerary

Located on the southern border of Georgia and bisected by Interstate 75 and Interstate 10, Lake City, Florida's Springlands is easy to get to and even easier to get along with. The area has often been called the "Gateway to Florida," welcoming visitors with southern hospitality and natural beauty since 1832. The heart of the county lies in Lake City, the perfect stop-over for short-term guests who are on the move. With eclectic dining, boutique shopping, historical sites and itinerary jewels, visitors will find themselves wanting to stop, stay, and dive into the realm of adventure that North Central Florida has to offer.

Where to Stay

- A downtown landmark and central hub of hospitality for over 100 years, [The Blanche](#) is a 14-room historic boutique hotel that also houses retail, office, co-working and event space as well as two dozen one and two-bedroom apartments. Built in 1902 by architect Frank Pierce Milburn, this was once the most luxurious place to stay in town. Commonly referred to as "the pride of Lake City," The Blanche has hosted plenty of famous guests, from Johnny Cash to Al Capone when they passed through the "gateway to Florida" on their travels. Today, visitors can stay in the same posh accommodations while they explore Columbia County. With no front desk and easy online check-in, this hotel is perfect for visitors looking to get in and out with ease.



The Blanche

Where to Eat

- If authentic country dining is what you're looking for, you'll be sure to find it at [Shirley's Restaurant](#), located near downtown Lake City. Pop in for breakfast or lunch at this family-friendly local diner and fill up with a hearty meal, with popular menu offerings including fried green tomatoes, fresh vegetables, fried chicken, country-fried steak, cornbread and homemade desserts.



Shirley's Restaurant

- Another popular local spot in downtown Lake City is [Marion Street Bistro and Brewhouse](#). Locally inspired and fiercely independent, this gastro-pub and outdoor eatery features rich history and delectable cuisine. Open for lunch and dinner Tuesday through Saturday, you'll find a wide variety of options, from the Marion house-smoked wings to farm-raised elk chops from New Zealand, as well as a selection of homemade desserts. Marion Street also features live entertainment Wednesday through Saturday and offers craft beers and cocktails at their casual chic bar.



Marion Street Bistro and Brewhouse

- [Halpatter Brewing](#), Lake City's first craft brewery, offers a variety of specialty beer. With an outside second floor deck, a beer garden with cozy fire pits, massive TVs for watching games at the outdoor bar, and a spacious indoor bar and seating area, there's plenty of room and options for you to enjoy a drink at this pet-friendly "must visit" spot. Make sure to try the O'Leno Cream Ale and grab your furry friend a homemade dog bone created from leftover malt, wheat and barley during the brewing process!



Halpatter Brewing

Where to Get a Dose of the Outdoors

- For years, [Lake Desoto](#) in the heart of downtown Lake City has served as a gathering place for locals and visitors alike. Take a stroll or ride your bike around the lake, try your hand at fishing, or have a picnic, but be sure to keep your eye out for a variety of different birds, waterfowl, fish and other wildlife.



Lake Desoto

- Also centrally located in Florida's Springlands are the 1,000 acres of greenland and wet space that make up [Alligator Lake Park](#). Here, visitors will find a taste of unspoiled, untamed Florida with a beautiful waterfront spot in the underappreciated metropolis of Lake City. A variety of fish can be found in the lake for fishing, including bream/bluegill, redear sunfish, catfish, crappie and largemouth bass. The park also offers 12 miles of hiking and biking trails, canoe trails and launch, picnic pavilions and plenty of opportunities for nature watching.



Alligator Lake Park

- Another unique destination is [Falling Creek Falls](#), which is located just a short 10 minute drive north of Lake City. Wander along the boardwalk to find yourself at a magnificent, roaring 10-foot waterfall, which you will hear well before you arrive at the observation deck. Along the way, you'll see beautiful forests of magnolias, sweetgums, and bald cypresses as well as wildlife exploring the peaceful tranquility of the area. The park also offers a playground and picnic area, making it a great place to lose yourself in nature.



Falling Creek Falls

- Located about 20 minutes north of downtown Lake City is a center that honors the memory of American composer Stephen Foster, who wrote "Old Folks at Home," the song that made the Suwannee River famous. Perched on the banks of the river, [Stephen Foster Folk Culture State Park](#) takes visitors back in time, with genuine artifacts from Foster's life and musical legacy, miles of trails for cyclists and hikers and a 97-bell carillon, playing more than 200 Stephen Foster melodies.



Stephen Foster State Park

Where to Shop

- [Blue Goose Studio](#) features antiques, repurposed furniture, artwork and so much more, all created by artist Janet Moses. If you're looking for a unique souvenir or a one of a kind gift from your stop in Columbia County, you'll be sure to find it at this eclectic shop.
- If you're shopping for a gift from the heart or your next cute outfit, be sure to stop in and see the lovely ladies at [Southern Sisters Boutique](#). This special shop offers a large selection of apparel, accessories, & gifts as well as many personalized and embroidered items.



- [Furnishings on Marion](#) is a charming and chic store that features a unique mix of old and new home furnishings. Peruse through antique furniture, hand crafted signs and decor, artisan made dining room suites, handmade jewelry, and so much more at this one-stop shop for home goods.
- Locals and visitors alike will find authentic and fresh Florida produce at [KC's Produce](#). In addition to farm-to-table produce, they also offer fresh jams and jellies, locally produced honey and so much more.
- [Fifth Generation Farms](#), is a fresh foods market, offering farm-to-table meat and produce. The mission is to provide an authentic taste of North Florida and encourage a love for sustainability and responsible farming for future generations. Here, local makers' products are available for sale, encouraging creative cuisine featuring responsibly-sourced products from right down the road. As a bonus, the market also features a family-owned cafe, where you can grab a quick bite for lunch!