



St. Francis Inn chef Janice Leary with the nightly dessert preparation



Cathedral Basilica

# New Hospitality and Culture in America's Oldest City

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHY RUKSANA HUSSAIN

Florida has always been a favorite getaway destination for Atlantans, and St. Augustine should surely be on top of that list. A half day's drive will find you in America's oldest city, celebrating its 450th birthday next year. If you decide to stay at the St. Francis Inn, you will be sleeping in the oldest inn in the oldest city. This charming little bed and breakfast has history that dates back to the 1700s. The rooms are delightfully cozy, retaining their old world charm yet providing every comfort you can imagine. Breakfasts, refreshments throughout the day, a happy hour in the evening and nightly desserts are offered from Chef Janice Leary. Owners Joe and Margaret Finnegan have done a fantastic job of maintaining the inn that is on the National Register of Historic Places and providing an oasis of comfort in true Floridian style.

St. Augustine is a great destination, whether you are a history geek or nature lover, party person or foodie. You can relax and enjoy the beach, or head out to discover and explore. St. Augustine is pedestrian friendly, especially in the historic district where most monuments and museums are located. Those alone can take you a day or more depending on how much local history and culture you want to absorb. The city was, after all, the oldest continuously occupied European-established settlement and port in the continental United States and still serves as the headquarters for the Florida National Guard. Be sure to visit the Castillo de San Marcos, Lighthouse, Flagler College, Lightner Museum, Cathedral Basilica and County Jail - all notable characters in the city's long history.

## OUT AND ABOUT

**ECO TOUR ON THE WATER:** Walk over to the marina for an eco-adventure with Zach McKenna of St. Augustine Eco Tours. His team takes you by boat into the waters to discover local marine life such as dolphins, birds, manatees and, on a good day, even jelly fish and crabs. They offer kayaking and sailing excursions as well. [StAugustineEcoTours.com](http://StAugustineEcoTours.com)

**TASTING TOUR:** An old-fashioned horse-drawn carriage is your mode of transport as you meander through the streets in true southern comfort, tasting and sipping at St. Augustine's historic district's award-winning restaurants. Tour options cover everything from beer and wine to food, and even a private lovers' tour. [TheTastingTours.com](http://TheTastingTours.com)

**COLONIAL QUARTER:** A breathtaking revitalized 2-acre signature attraction in the heart of the city with living history demonstrations, graphical stories and interactive activities bring authentic British and Spanish characters to life. The tour guides here are a hoot! Also you may lunch at "La Taverna del Caballo". [ColonialQuarter.com](http://ColonialQuarter.com)

## WHEN HUNGER STRIKES

**HOT SHOT BAKERY:** Luscious sweet potato waffles with homemade caramel sauce and bananas make the perfect start to the day. Chef/Owner Sherry Stoppelbein is the creator of Datil B Good hot sauces and her café is comfort food all the way. Try one of the peppers dipped in chocolate for a place on the wall of f(l)ame! [DatilBGood.com](http://DatilBGood.com), [HotShotBakery.com](http://HotShotBakery.com)