



# VISITOR'S GUIDE

[EXPLORECLAY.COM](https://exploreclay.com)

2022





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# WELCOME TO CLAY COUNTY

## SMALL TOWNS. BIG PASSIONS.

That's what you'll find in Clay County, Florida.

When you're talking about Northeast Florida small towns—like Green Cove Springs, Keystone Heights, Orange Park, Penney Farms, Fleming Island, Middleburg and Oakleaf—you have to talk about each one's distinct personality.

You'll discover treehouses to camp in overnight, racecars to drive, a spring-fed swimming pool, the training grounds of WWII soldiers and the stories they left behind. Relax and enjoy the breathtaking view of the St. Johns River from Club Continental and the historic Palmolive (yes, the dishwashing liquid) Estate. The dining scene covers everything from BBQ and Hawaiian Southern Fusion, to Puerto Rican and Caribbean cuisine, to great Italian, Mexican and Mediterranean favorites. And if you need a caffeine fix, you'll love visiting our eight independently owned coffeehouses along our Coffeehouse Trail.

Clay County hosts many events throughout the year, including the Annual North Florida Scottish Highland Games, the Military Vehicle Preservation Association Rally with live tank battle demonstrations and much more.

And, did we mention we are the home of Southern Rock? Legends Lynyrd Skynyrd wrote many of their hit songs along the banks of Peters Creek in Green Cove Springs in what was known as the Hell House. The Van Zant brothers—Johnny of Lynyrd Skynyrd and Donnie of 38 Special—both continue to call Clay County home.

### Why Clay County?

- Small town charm and personality
- Convenient location
- Affordable destination with both familiar brands and great independently owned small businesses

Discover what makes Clay County unique, from local businesses to outdoor adventures and everything in between. Get all the details at [ExploreClay.com](https://www.exploreclay.com).

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### SHARE YOUR CLAY COUNTY EXPERIENCES

#EXPLORECLAY #COVELIFE (GREEN COVE SPRINGS) #OPPARKLIFE (ORANGE PARK) #KEYSTONEHEIGHTS #LOVEFL



# GETTING THERE

Located just Southwest of Jacksonville, along the mighty St. Johns River in Northeast Florida, Clay County welcomes you to experience local dining, outdoor adventures and plenty of friendly hospitality while in our area.



## BY CAR

Conveniently accessible via major interstates and highways, Clay County offers a central location connecting visitors via Interstate 295 with I-95 and I-10.

Traveling north to south through Clay County, Highway 17, also known as Park Avenue and Highway 21 and more commonly known as Blanding Boulevard, take visitors through the municipalities and neighborhoods of the county.

**Ready to explore our area on your own, but need transportation?** Choose from one of the many convenient rental car locations in the area.



## BY AIR

With nonstop service between 41 cities, the award-winning Jacksonville International Airport (JAX) is a short, 35-minute drive away from the unique experiences found here in Clay County.

For private aircraft, corporate jets and take-off and landing site, Clay County's Keystone Heights airport features a 5,044-foot asphalt runway along with onsite FBO air services.





# GETTING THERE

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## BY BOAT

Ready to explore Clay County by boat? You'll have no shortage of fun along our 39 miles of waterways. Make use of our many marinas and boat ramps and set sail along the creeks, tributaries and the mighty St. Johns River for a unique view of our area.

In Green Cove Springs, the Governor's Creek Boat Ramp, just east of Highway 17, features two lanes and a fishing pier.

Just south of Fleming Island, Knight's Marina and Boat Ramp provides three lanes at the mouth of Black Creek and the St. Johns River on Highway 17. The marina offers 40 wet slips, a bait shop, fuel sales, a vessel pump station, a fishing pier, covered picnic areas and restroom facilities. In Fleming Island, the Lake Shore Boat Ramp offers two ramp lanes for access to Doctors Lake. A fishing pier, a loading/unloading area and restrooms are available for boaters. For those boating in Middleburg, the Main Street Boat Ramp offers access to Black Creek. With 30 paved parking spots and restrooms, the ramp is easily accessible for boaters to explore the North Forks of Black Creek.

Further along Black Creek, the Old Ferry Boat Ramp is bounded on the east and west sides with residential properties and paved parking. For private boat ramps and marinas, the Doctors Lake Marina on Highway 17 at the Doctors Inlet Bridge provides access to the lake and also the St. Johns River.

Before you set sail, grab a bite to eat at Whitey's Fish Camp Boat Ramp at Swimming Pen Creek along Doctors Lake on State Road 220.







# BIRDING





The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail is a network of 510 premier wildlife viewing sites across the state. Clay County is home to three sites along the Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail. So grab your binoculars and enjoy exploring.

## CAMP CHOWENWAW

Birding enthusiasts at Camp Chowenwaw may encounter orange-crowned warbler and yellow-bellied sapsucker in winter and eastern wood-pewee, yellow-throated vireo, veery, yellow warbler and summer tanager in spring/fall. If you enjoy some time along the shores of Black Creek, Peters Creek or the St. Johns River, you may see yellow-crowned night heron, osprey and barred owl. In this ideal spot for families and beginners, you will also have the chance to explore hiking trails, a swimming pool, meeting venues, and camping in cabins, primitive camping or at Treehouse Point.

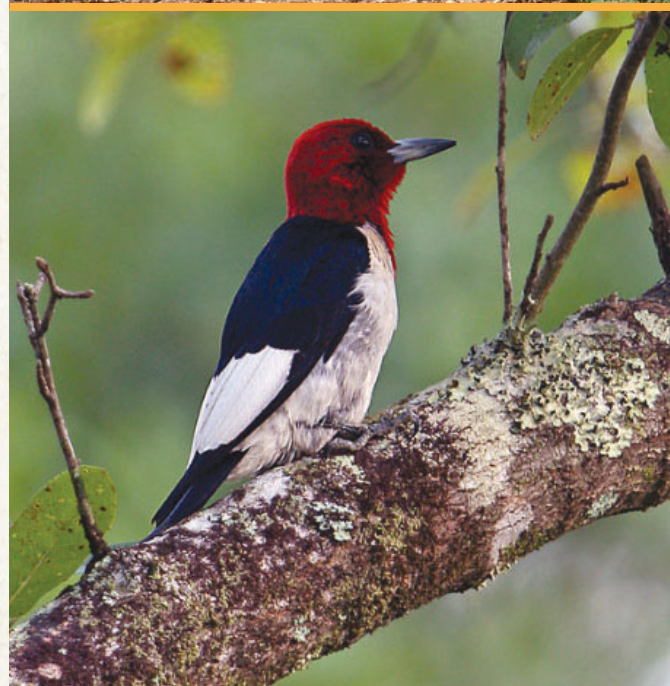
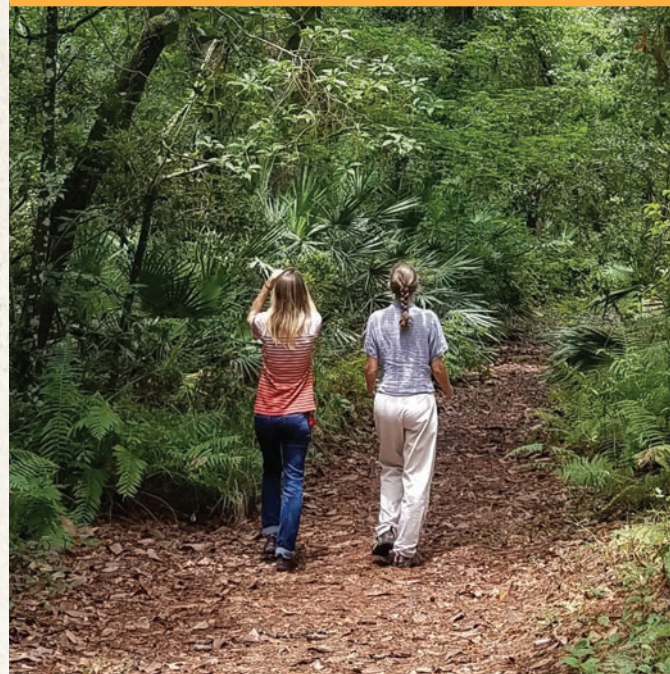
## JENNINGS STATE FOREST

Jennings State Forest, located in the northwest area of Clay County near Middleburg, stretches across more than 25,000 acres. This property provides resource-based recreational opportunities including hiking, equestrian and cycling trails, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, primitive camping, and canoeing. You will likely see Bachman's sparrow, brown-headed nuthatch, northern bobwhite, American kestrel and red-headed woodpecker in the spring and summer. Nighthawks, great crested flycatchers and northern parula woodpeckers are likely to be seen along the North Fork Black Creek Loop. Wintering and migratory songbirds like to hide out in the ravines on the back side of Dunn's Farm Trail. Various species of butterflies are active from late February to early April.

## MIKE ROESS GOLD HEAD BRANCH STATE PARK

The Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park offers many birding opportunities in a variety of habitats. During the spring and fall migrations, the lush hardwood forest of the ravine attracts many migrating warblers, thrushes, and other songbirds. You can start at the ravine stairway and take the Fern Loop Trail or you can start at the mill site parking lot and take the Loblolly Loop Trail. Take the Florida National Scenic Trail through the longleaf pine forest which features Bachman's sparrow, which can be heard singing all summer long. In the winter, many other sparrows are visible. If you drive slowly along the main park road, you might see wild turkey, bobwhite quail, or raptors like the American kestrel throughout the year. Around the park's many lakes you might see wading birds, as well as the bald eagle, which has nested in the park every year for many years. Other birds soaring around the lakes and marsh include raptors such as the northern harrier and the swallow-tailed kite. In the winter, many ducks frequent Little Lake Johnson. If you're camping in the park at night, listen for the eerie call of the eastern screech owl, or the hoot of the great horned owl. On summer nights, the chuck-will's-widow's distinctive call can be heard.

*This information is from the Great Birding Trail and parks sites.*







# HUNTING & FISHING



## Fishing Adventures in Clay County

Located in Northeast Florida, Clay County offers 39 square miles of waterways—perfect for reeling in ‘the big one’ at one of the area’s many fishing spots. From Black Creek to Swimming Pen Creek and the mighty St. Johns River, fishing is a popular outdoor activity in the region with many accessible boat ramps and fishing piers available to those ready to make memories on the water. Let’s take a look at everything you need to know about fishing in Clay County:

## Where to Go and What to Catch in Clay County

Popular with the locals, most fisherman spend their time in Clay County along Black Creek, Doctors Lake and the adjacent St. Johns River. The vegetative Black Creek is deep and known for black crappie year-round and all riverine panfish like redfish and bluegill in the spring, summer and fall months. Typically, during the summer months striped bass take advantage of the creek’s cooler temperatures. In Doctors Lake, boaters have been catching mullets, blue catfish and channel catfish with its brackish water and warm temperatures.

The St. Johns River flows north through 12 counties in Florida eventually making its way to the Atlantic Ocean. With that, this river is known to be home to both saltwater and freshwater fish offering a variety of fishing opportunities. From largemouth bass to crappie, catfish and blue gills, the river is also an extremely popular area for catching shrimp too. Many shrimping boats can be found just south of the Buckman Bridge on the St. Johns River.

No matter whether you decide to fish on the shore or on the water, there are plenty of [piers, boat ramps and kayak launches in Clay County](#).

## Can I Rent a Boat for Fishing?

Don’t have a boat or didn’t bring your boat with you? No worries, you can rent a boat during your visit.

Located on Swimming Pen Creek connected to Doctors Lake, you can grab a bite to eat at [Whitey’s Fish Camp](#) and rent boats and kayaks from the adjacent bait and tackle shop. Fourteen-foot boats with and without motors are available for half-day and full-day rentals. Boat rentals are available on a first-come, first-serve basis—reservations are not accepted. Single and tandem kayaks, along with standup paddleboards are also available for rent. For those interested in putting their personal vessel in at Whitey’s boat ramp, there is a \$5.00 fee on weekdays and \$10.00 fee on Friday, Saturdays and Sundays.

For those in need of a relaxing day out on the water combined with fishing, locally-owned [Boat Florida](#) offers half-day and full-day rentals at the Doctors Lake Marina. Their Bennington 21 SSRC Pontoon boats, with a capacity for eight people, allow boaters to enjoy a leisurely day out along with fishing too. Other boat rentals include the Stingray 201DC—a good match for boaters looking to explore the sights of Clay County’s waterways or even tubing and boogie boarding off the back of the boat.

## Let’s Go Fishing!

So, gather your fishing supplies and get ready to reel in the ‘big one’ on the waterways of Clay County. Whether you choose to fish from one of the area’s many docks or cruise one of our popular fishing spots, we hope you make memories and enjoy your time fishing in Clay County.



# 5 WAYS TO GET OUT ON THE WATER

With over 30 miles of navigable waterways, Clay County is the perfect destination to get out and enjoy the sunshine by boat, kayak, or other watercraft.

## 1. EXPLORE BY BOAT

From Fleming Island to Green Cove Springs, explore every corner of Clay County's waterways aboard a sailboat, fishing boat or your vessel of choice. Whether you go for a leisurely cruise or a day of tubing and wakeboarding, there's something for everyone to enjoy.



## 2. STAND UP PADDLEBOARD RENTALS AT WHITEY'S FISH CAMP

Spend a day exploring Doctors Inlet and Swimming Pen Creek before returning for a delicious meal at Whitey's Fish Camp. Single and tandem kayaks, as well as motor boats, are also available for rent.



## 3. MAKE THE CATCH OF THE DAY

Clay County's fishing spots make for a morning, afternoon or full day of angling excitement with plenty of bites to go around. For fishing license information, visit [MyFWC.com/license](http://MyFWC.com/license).



## 4. CANOE LITTLE LAKE JOHNSON AT MIKE ROESS GOLD HEAD BRANCH STATE PARK

Experience the quiet calm of gliding across Little Lake Johnson at the Historic Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park before exploring the park's ravine and trails.



## 5. TAKE YOUR KAYAK OUT AT OUR PUBLIC KAYAK LAUNCHES

Clay County's public kayak launches are a free way to get your craft on the water and spend a day exploring. Locations include Camp Chowenwaw Park, Doctors Lake Park, Williams Park, and Spring Park.











# BLAZING NEW TRAILS



Since its opening as a Girl Scout Camp in 1933, **Camp Chowenwaw** has provided immersive natural experiences, including Treehouse Point and other overnight accommodations to make for an unforgettable camping excursion. Today, Camp Chowenwaw's Jungle Trail renovation is open for guests to enjoy a stroll along the banks of Black Creek.

The park has also installed a new kayak launch to access Black Creek. The launch was constructed in two phases. Phase one involved installing a concrete slab for two new handicapped parking spaces, signage, striping and a concrete sidewalk providing wheelchair access down to the launch. Phase two included the installation of a wooden bulkhead and an erosion-controlled launch ramp.

Clay County's **Black Creek Trail and Park** also opened the Mountain Bike Trail that makes you forget you're in Florida with the various elevation changes. Phase one began the 5-mile course, while phase 2 extended the trail another 3 miles. The loops cover various terrains, obstacles and beautiful scenery along the way. This trail is great for hiking or cycling and is great for beginners and experienced cyclists alike.

**Old Jennings Forest**, one of Florida's state forests, boasts the 4.9-linear-mile long Pioneer Trail that connects three Black Creek landings (Indian Ford, Knights Landing and Ellis Ford). The trail includes three bridges, five elevated walkways, four sitting benches, an overlook and two remote camp sites with fire rings and a picnic table. The overlook between Knights and Ellis gives a grand elevated (about 50 foot) view of Black Creek. Historic remains of homesteads, farms and roadways are reminders of the turpentine industry that was prevalent in Northeast Florida. Wildlife sightings are also common along the trail. The volunteer builder, Dennis Chapman, said this about the trail, "Yes, Clay County has a real hiking trail with the ability to give you a good cardio workout, camping opportunities and spark your interest in local history."

**Bayard Conservation Area** offers great bank fishing, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, wildlife viewing and seasonal hunting. The Hammock Campground and Riverside campsite provide fabulous waterfront views. Recent updates to the equestrian trail entice the horses to enjoy the trail even more.







## DISCOVER FAMILY FUN IN CLAY COUNTY

Discover your family's passions in our small towns when you spend time in Clay County. From exploring the outdoors and waterways to celebrating the arts at one of our area's theaters and making memories at one of the many annual festivals, there's plenty of family fun on the horizon during your visit. Here's a look at the adventures that await your family, right here in Clay County.

### EXPLORE THE OUTDOORS

As home to three sites along the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail—Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park, Jennings State Forest and Camp Chowenwaw County Park—there's no shortage of wildlife sightings and trails to discover in our area.

Known as one of Florida's First State Parks, Mike Roess Gold Head Branch State Park in Keystone Heights is home to 2,000 acres with 5.44 miles of trails along the Florida National Scenic Trail. Go fishing or go for a swim in Little Lake Johnson. And if you'd like to explore the area by water, canoe rentals are available too. As a full-facility campground with 73 camp sites, overnight accommodations are available for RVs, tents and cabin rentals.

Dating back to 1933, Green Cove Springs' Camp Chowenwaw County Park was once Florida's first Girl Scout Camp. Today, the public park offers 150 acres, a swimming pool, numerous trails for exploring, and pristine conditions for overnight camping.

From one of the many onsite cabins to accommodations in one of the nine treehouses that sleep four people, families can sleep under the stars in this historic campground.

Go for a hike on the Jungle Trail and make your way to the observation deck on Black Creek. Open on the third Saturday of each month, the Camp Chowenwaw Park History Museum tells the stories and history of the Girl Scouts that once used this same property.

### SEE A SHOW

Support the local arts scene and enjoy a night out seeing a one-of-a-kind production. In Fleming Island, The Island Theater features a variety of shows throughout the year along with acting workshops and summer camps.

For more community theater, Orange Park Community Theatre highlights shows ranging from musicals to dramas with season ticket packages available.

From national touring shows to Broadway productions, you'll see it all at Orange Park's Thrasher-Horne Center for the Arts and Conference Center. Nationally-known comedians and performers make Clay County a stop for tour dates, offering residents and visitors an exciting concert experience with a small-town atmosphere.





## EXPERIENCE OUR FESTIVALS

Make memories as a family at one of our many annual festivals – from the county fair to weekly markets and those paying tribute to heritage and history.

Each February, experience the excitement of the Scottish Games & Festival and in the early spring the award-winning Clay County Agricultural Fair brings livestock, live entertainment, rides and plenty of fair food.

Independence Day is not taken lightly in Clay County. The Orange Park Mall brings their annual Freedom Fest begins the county's celebration of the 4th of July with live bands, military demonstrations, a bike decorating parade and more. Wear your patriotic colors and celebrate American Pride and 4th of July with the residents of Moosehaven along the St. Johns River. Everyone loves a parade, so don't miss Keystone Heights' Our Country Day Street Dance, Festival and Parade which includes fireworks over Lake Geneva.

Celebrating the military is the lifeblood of Clay County. Experience the Green Cove Springs Memorial Day River Fest, the many Veterans Day Ceremonies throughout the county, or running races that take you on a course through Historic Lee Field, where WWII heroes trained.

Kick off the beginning of summer at the Orange Park KidFest, hosted by the Town of Orange Park. This two-day event features an inflatable zone with plenty of bounce houses, an Imagination Station for getting creative and plenty of interactive shows and demonstrations.

No matter the time of year, music, food, family, and friends go great together. The Concert on the Green, Food Truck Friday, CalaVida and Moosehaven's Chili Cook-off and Corn Hole Championship are just a few of the festivals that bring joy to your ears and to your taste buds.

The Orange Park Fall Festival, held each October, is a local favorite and listed as one of the Top 25 Events in the Southeast by Southeast Tourism Society.

The holidays bring visits from Santa Clause, Green Cove Springs' Parade of Trees and small-town Christmas parades to help you get in the holiday spirit.

## BE ACTIVE

Rent a boat and stand-up paddleboards for a day of fun on Black Creek or Doctors Lake and test your skills wakeboarding or water skiing. With 39 square miles of waterways in the area, there's no better way to explore than on the water.

Squeeze in some biking along the 4.4 mile Doctors Lake Trail on Doctors Lake Road or travel the State Road 21 Bike Path, a paved 5.5 mile path in Keystone Heights.

In Fleming Island, stop by Moccasin Slough Park for a jog or bike ride on their paved trails and stop along the way at the permanent exercise stations located along the route. Kids can enjoy the park's large playground and covered patio area perfect for a picnic lunch.

Ready for a dip in the pool? Cool off in one of the state's oldest spring-fed swimming pools at Spring Park in Green Cove Springs.

Get your thrills when you climb behind the wheel at the Rally Race Car Course, FIRM located in Keystone Heights. With high speeds and tight turns, fulfill your need for speed at 'Open Track Day' events held monthly at the park.



**Ready to plan your visit to Clay County?**  
**The opportunities are endless for family fun**  
**in our small towns—no matter your passion!**



# ◀ UNIQUELY LOCAL IN CLAY COUNTY ▶

## "SMALL TOWNS. BIG PASSIONS."

Isn't just our county's tagline, it's our way of life. There is no shortage of passion-fueled businesses and attractions for residents and visitors alike to discover within our county's limits.

Whether you're visiting for the week or a long-time local, there are new things to experience constantly popping up. From locally brewed beer to restaurants servings up flavor fusions, the county's eateries, coffee shops and bars serve up dishes and drinks renowned for their bold, unique flavors.

And when it comes to unique and homegrown experiences, Clay County tops the charts. For a bit of arts and culture, be sure to check out our shopping hotspots and historic sites, as well as live music venues. For those with a more playful side, pay a visit to our escape room, skate park, arcades and more.

So, what are you waiting for? Get out and explore the people and places that make up Clay County. And who knows, you might discover a new passion of your own, too.

**CHECK OUT MORE AT [EXPLORECLAY.COM](https://www.exploreclay.com)**





# LYNYRD SKYNYRD ITINERARY

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The roots of Southern Rock music run deep in Clay County. From rock band Molly Hatchet to the storied Van Zant family and the legendary band Lynyrd Skynyrd, many people and places around our county have their own connections. As members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, many of the band's beginnings happened right here in our communities. Here's a look at some notable spots around Clay County with links to Lynyrd Skynyrd.



## HELL HOUSE

In the early days of Lynyrd Skynyrd, long before the release of their first album, band members would gather at an early “rehearsal studio,” lovingly named by the band as “Hell House” due to the small space and warm temperatures. Located on a farm near Green Cove Springs, the band wrote most of their first two albums on the property and rehearsed there for many years before outgrowing the space.

Located along Peters Creek, Hell House was destroyed by a fire and the original property is now part of a gated community not accessible to the public. (The approximate location along Peters Creek is -81.721359, 30.035242) However the Clay County Archives has a piece of the original slab foundation on display in Green Cove Springs.



Experienced boaters can explore the nearby waterways of Black Creek and the adjacent Peters Creek, both known to be popular spots for Ronnie Van Zant and band members to fish and enjoy the outdoors. Set out on a boat, canoe or kayak and see what you can discover.



# LYNYRD SKYNYRD ITINERARY

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## BRICKYARD ROAD

Located off of College Drive in Middleburg, Clay County's Brickyard Road is historic for a few different reasons—the most notable being it is known to be Ronnie Van Zant's last place of residence. Along with his family, he lived here at the time of the tragic plane crash in 1977.

Released as a single in 1990, Johnny Van Zant wrote the song, "Brickyard Road" as a tribute to his brother, remembering the memories they made along this street. This street was the last place he saw his brother alive and the music video for this song was filmed on Brickyard Road.

While you are in the area, stop by YUM—A Southern Market for a cupcake or slice of pie. With outdoor seating available, take a break and enjoy the scenery.

## RONNIE VAN ZANT MEMORIAL PARK

Enjoy the outdoors at the Ronnie Van Zant Memorial Park, located at 2760 Sandridge Road in the Lake Asbury area of Clay County. The Freebird Foundation and family members donated the land for this 90-acre park featuring a fishing pond and pier, a frisbee golf course, covered picnic areas, a playground, tennis and volleyball courts and a soccer field.

Since its official opening in 1996, the park has also added a nature walk through wooded areas and wetlands along with a children's fitness course making this a great place to enjoy time with family and explore Clay County's scenic areas.





# LYNYRD SKYNYRD ITINERARY

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## WHITEY'S FISH CAMP RESTAURANT

Known to be Ronnie Van Zant's favorite restaurant, Whitey's Fish Camp, open since 1963, is a local favorite in Clay County with great views along Swimming Pen Creek. Located on County Road 220, stop in for a cocktail or a bite to eat with dishes ranging from gator tail (yes, it tastes like chicken), fried shrimp and catfish to fish tacos and a variety of seafood platters. Whitey's bait and tackle shop is a popular favorite and also welcomes diners arriving by boat and those using their private boat launch area too.



## JACKSONVILLE MEMORIAL GARDENS CEMETERY

As the original resting place for Ronnie Van Zant and band members Cassie and Steve Gaines, Jacksonville Memorial Gardens Cemetery, on Blanding Blvd. near the Orange Park Mall, now serves as a memorial to those band members that left us in 1977.

In June 2000, the graves were vandalized and the remains were moved to an undisclosed location in Jacksonville. Today, visitors can still visit the old graves and pause for a moment of silence on an adjacent bench with an inscribed poem by musician Charlie Daniels donated as a tribute to his musical friends.

No matter what part of Lynyrd Skynyrd history you decide to explore during your time in Clay County, we hope you enjoy learning about this legendary band—in our small towns filled with big passions.





# NEIGHBORHOODS



Located southwest of Jacksonville along the St. Johns River, we invite you to explore the small towns of Clay County, each with its own distinct personality. Unplug from the hectic daily pace of life, seek outdoor adventures, savor local eats and discover stories of courage from long ago during your time in our area.

From new adventures to memorable moments, discover your own passions in our small towns. Here's a look at what you'll find right here in Clay County.



## FLEMING ISLAND

Awaken your passions in Fleming Island with plenty of activities for history lovers, foodies, shoppers and outdoor enthusiasts. Located on Highway 17 along the St. Johns River, Fleming Island is home to historic places, great eats and family values.

Get some exercise and let the kids play at **Moccasin Slough Park** and go the distance on a bike ride along **Black Creek Trail**, including the new mountain bike trail.

For a bit of local history, visit **St. Margaret's Episcopal Church and Cemetery**, known to be one of the oldest wooden churches in Florida. With its first service held on April 6, 1878, this landmark church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## GREEN COVE SPRINGS

As the quaint, small city that serves as the county seat, Green Cove Springs has always been a gathering place. From the 1870s around the spring pool or today enjoying a festival in **Spring Park**, here are just a few reasons why people still enjoy relaxing and exploring in this friendly community.

Take a step back in time when you visit **Spring Park**, home to the Green Cove Springs spring pool, one of the oldest in the country dating back to 1871 when Dr. Joseph Applegate made it accessible to the public for medicinal purposes. Today, the spring is part of the park, providing residents and visitors with waterfront access to the St. Johns River, pavilions, gazebos and numerous playgrounds. The spring pool stays at a consistent 77-degree temperature throughout the year.

**Camp Chownewaw** calls you to explore the outdoors with birding, fishing, hiking trails and camping beneath the stars. Dating back to 1933, Camp Chownewaw County Park was once Florida's first Girl Scout Camp. Today, the public park offers 150 acres for sightseeing along popular Black Creek. At the **Bayard Conservation Area**, discover the outdoors within this resource-based park encompassing 10,371 acres.

Awaken your passion for history when you visit the **Military Museum of North Florida**. Once home to Lee Field during World War II, the area served as an airfield and port, the museum continues to keep those stories alive with a hellcat engine, a Blackhawk simulator and more on display for visitors. At the County's Historic Triangle near the **Old Jail and Courthouse**, stop to pay your respect to the 62 Clay County veterans who lost their lives during combat dating back to the 1800s.

Unleash your passion for the arts in Green Cove Springs shopping for antiques along Walnut Street, celebrate Augusta Savage, the African-American art trailblazer during the Harlem Renaissance, when you visit the Green Cove Springs Library.





## KEYSTONE HEIGHTS

Home to Clay County's only airport, Keystone Heights Airport serves as a take-off and landing site for private aircrafts and corporate jets.

Take in the area's rich military history at the **Camp Blanding Museum** home to memorabilia and first-hand stories from veterans and volunteers that are a part of our proud military WWII heritage.



After strolling through history, test your skills on the **Rally Race Car Course—The FIRM**, also located at the **Keystone Heights Airport**. From defensive driving classes to training how to drive rally cars or bring your own car for open course day, it is about racing for your bragging rights.

Spend time with nature at the **Belmore State Forest**, just north of Keystone Heights and home to gopher tortoise, Sherman's fox squirrel, Florida black bears, American alligators and more. At **Gold Head Branch State Park**, hike down ravines and stay overnight at the park's primitive camp sites or bring your own RV. With hiking and cycling trails and canoe and kayaking launch sites, this makes the park a wonderful place to enjoy the outdoors. For family fun, **Keystone Beach** offers an expansive playground encompassed by canopy oak trees and a large picnic area.

Keystone Heights, with its unique experiences and natural beauty matched with friendly faces, will have you wanting to return again and again.

## MIDDLEBURG

Whether you're seeking adventure, shopping the latest fashion and antiques, discovering some food fusions or enjoying wide open spaces, Middleburg tickles that fun-loving spirit of childhood.

**Black Creek**, one of the St. Johns Rivers' major tributaries, welcomes visitors for plenty of waterway adventures. Enjoy a family picnic, fish from one of the many piers or set out on the waterways at the **Main Street Park and Boat Ramp** in the heart of historic Middleburg. The famous **Black Creek Swing**, which is only accessible by boat, is a must on your Middleburg bucket list. Additional boat ramps along Black Creek include the **Black Creek Ravines** and **Old Ferry Boat Ramp**.

The Florida Forest Service manages more than 25,000 acres of **Jennings State Forest**, perfect for hunting, fishing, or spending time on a canoe or kayak. Hiking, biking and equestrian trails are also popular activities. Birding fans can enjoy designated viewing areas for seeing a wide array of birds no matter the season.

Reflecting on times gone by also awakens the kid in us. Middleburg features several historic treasures on the National Register of Historic Places.



## OAKLEAF

From friendly neighborhoods to local, dining hotspots and outdoor adventures, there's plenty to discover in Oakleaf on the Northwest region of Clay County.

On the outer borders of Oakleaf, explore the more than 25,000 acres of **Jennings State Forest**. Home to 15 different biological communities including flatwoods, slope forest and more, this area is rich with wildlife and open daily for hiking, biking, horseback riding and more. There are three hiking trails, ranging from 1.7 miles to five-mile loops taking visitors along area waterways and primitive areas in the forest. For those interested in overnight camping, primitive campsites are available at the Hammock Campground.

The **First Coast Expressway**, serving as Jacksonville's future outer beltway, runs directly through the Oakleaf community connecting Interstate 10 with Clay County and beyond.



## ORANGE PARK

As a National Arbor Day Foundation, Tree City USA nestled between the banks of the **St. Johns River** and **Doctors Lake**, Orange Park offers big-city access with a small-town feel. A full-service municipality with 8,600 residents, the community takes pride in low crime rates, quick response times and caring personal service. From walking tree-lined drives and welcoming family and friends to the area, Orange Park provides a sense of home to visitors.

The town's roots stretch back to farming days when William and Rebecca Pengree and Zephaniah and Anna Jai Kingsley established agricultural footholds here. Their endeavors here lead to the area being accessible to steamboat service from Jacksonville to a dock at the end of what is now Kingsley Avenue. Eventually, a rail line and roads brought visitors to the area making it a destination within itself.

## PENNEY FARMS

History buffs will enjoy a slower pace when visiting Penney Farms, just west of Green Cove Springs on State Road 16. As part of the **J.C. Penney Memorial Highway**, this community is over 100 years old and canopied with oak and magnolia trees creating breathtaking paths for driving and biking.

As supplier for the land of Penney Farms and the Penney Retirement Community, J.C. Penney is best known as the founder of the retail store that bears his name. The Penney Farms area was his way of honoring his minister parents by providing missionaries a place to retire.

For the history buff, explore the Penney Farms Museum's collection of artifacts and photographs, along with samples of old farm implements and so much more. Moving along, there are many points of interest to see, including the French Norman architecture of the Penney Retirement Community, two interesting churches reflecting different times and cultures, an old restored tenant farmer cottage, archives, a model railway exhibit, the 1920s post office, and a bronze statue of J.C. Penney.

**Are you ready to explore the neighborhoods of Clay County? Let us help you discover new passions—right here in our small towns.**







# LANDMARKS & MUSEUMS



## Clarke House Park

1047 Kingsley Avenue, Orange Park

Carrie Clarke was a philanthropist who took great interest in the Clay County community all of her life. Carrie's husband, William Clarke, built the house in the early 1900s. In 1998, the house was placed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places. The home serves as a meeting place for the Orange Park Historical Society. Park facilities include a large playground, sand volleyball court, nature trails, gardens, lake and pavilions with grills.

## Clay County Historic Courthouse

915 Walnut Street, Green Cove Springs

Built in 1890, this distinguished structure housed the entire operation of Clay County's government until 1973. In 1975, the "old" courthouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Sites.

### Hours:

Monday and Tuesday: 9am – 2pm

Wednesday and Thursday: 12pm – 5pm

Please call the Archives Specialist at 904-371-0027 to schedule any special appointment times or arrange group tours of historic buildings.

## Clay County's Historic Triangle

For more than eight decades, the triangle of land in Green Cove Springs, formed by Ferris Street, Gratio Place and Walnut Street was the center of government and law enforcement activities in Clay County and is the location of the Historic Courthouse, "Old" Jailhouse and Historical Society Museum.

### Hours:

Monday and Tuesday: 9am – 2pm

Wednesday and Thursday: 12pm – 5pm

Please call the Archives Specialist at 904-371-0027 to schedule any special appointment times or arrange group tours of historic buildings.

## Clay County Jailhouse

21 Gratio Place, Green Cove Springs

Built in 1894, the jail was originally red brick. The front portion of the structure provided living space for jailers and their families in addition to law enforcement operations. Jail cells were located in the rear of the building. Today, the jailer's residence houses the Clay County Archives.

### Hours:

Monday and Tuesday: 9am – 2pm

Wednesday and Thursday: 12pm – 5pm

Please call the Archives Specialist at 904-371-0027 to schedule any special appointment times or arrange group tours of historic buildings.

## Club Continental

2143 Astor Street, Orange Park

Originally built as the winter home of Caleb Johnson, founder of the Palmolive Soap Company, now serves as a 22-room inn sitting on 27-acres on the St. Johns River. Many weddings, special events, meetings and social affairs take place here.







## Mineral Spring at Spring Park

**106 St. Johns Avenue, Green Cove Springs**

Still producing 3,000 gallons of water per minute, “the spring” maintains a constant temperature of 77 degrees Fahrenheit year-round and has a visible depth of 28 feet. It flows out the spring, through the municipal spring-fed swimming pool and finally into Spring Run as it journeys to the St. Johns River about 200 feet away.



## River Park Inn

**103 Magnolia Ave., Green Cove Springs**

Originally a part of the sprawling Victorian-era Clarendon Hotel, Clay County’s only bed and breakfast inn is located adjacent to Spring Park and the mineral spring. As a contributing site on the National Register of Historic Places, the Inn’s restored 1880s accommodations are tastefully decorated throughout with antiques.



## Black Heritage Museum

**Longmire Avenue at Hunter-Douglas Park, Middleburg**

The Museum is housed in a one-room school dating from the late 1880s. Visits/tours are done by appointment only and include an oral history discussion, photographs and artifacts including homemade toys. Please call 904-282-4618 to schedule a tour.



## Camp Blanding Military Museum & Memorial Park

**5629 State Road 16 W, Camp Blanding**

The Camp Blanding Military Museum & Memorial Park is owned and operated by Camp Blanding. Exhibits focus on Camp Blanding’s role during WWII. Weapons collections, photo exhibits and other artifacts are part of the museum experience. Memorial Park contains monuments honoring nine Army infantry divisions and all who trained at Camp Blanding. Other monuments honor recipients of the Medal of Honor, Purple Heart and former Prisoners of War.



## Middleburg Historical Museum

**3916 Main Street, Middleburg**

This museum depicts an earlier lifestyle of our region as well as American Indian and historical artifacts.

Open Sunday from 2pm – 4pm.

For further information, call 904-282-5924.



## Military Museum of North Florida

**1 Bunker Avenue & State Road 16, Green Cove Springs**

The Museum, housed on the grounds of WWII’s Lee Field, features exhibits, displays, artifacts and military vehicles from all branches of service and major conflicts from the Spanish American War to present day. The museum also celebrates Clay County’s and Green Cove Springs’ support of the WWII effort with the airfield and the Moth Ball fleet.

### Hours:

Thursday – Saturday: 10am – 3pm

Sunday: 12pm – 4pm









# EATING HERE





From fresh, local seafood to award-winning barbecue and plenty of International flavors, there's no shortage of great, local restaurants here in Clay County.

Start your day off with a cup of locally roasted coffee at one of our many hometown coffee shops, each complete with a cozy, welcoming atmosphere. Oh, and don't forget to grab some fresh pastries or light fare for breakfast.

When lunchtime rolls around, barbecue is the name of the game. There's no better place for barbecue than the South and in Clay County, we've got options for you!

For dinner, don't miss the seafood offerings available in the county, including local favorites that have been around for decades. If you're a fan of international flavors, you'll find the robust spices of Indian and Thai cuisine, rich Italian food, a taste of the islands and so much more throughout the county.

Round out your day with dessert—choose from donuts, cinnamon rolls and cakes galore—or a pint of local beer at one of our breweries.

**Let us help you create a dining experience that's perfect for your taste buds. Have a look at some of the hot spots for dining in Clay County at [ExploreClay.com](https://www.exploreclay.com).**



## COFFEEHOUSE ITINERARY

The best way to get to the heart of a community? Spend time with the locals at a neighborhood coffee shop. Meet the residents and enjoy a cup of locally brewed coffee or try a housemade pastry while listening to live music. Whatever your needs, support local businesses during your time in Clay County and let us help you find the perfect cup of joe.

Here's a look at some of Clay County's top coffee shops.



### Spring Park Coffee

328 Ferris Street, Green Cove Springs  
(904) 531-9391

[www.springparkcoffee.com](http://www.springparkcoffee.com)

As a nod to the days of the turn of the century, the cozy Spring Park Coffee in Green Cove Springs is a short walk from Spring Park along the St. Johns River. This locally owned shop features freshly roasted coffee from their sister company, Brass Tacks Coffee Co.

Since opening in 2011, this friendly coffee shop also features bagels and breakfast sandwiches—including their popular breakfast biscuits, made in-house each day. In the afternoon and evening, pair your coffee with a fresh cookie or pastry. Choose from specialty drinks like their version of Butterbeer, made with espresso, toffee nut, caramel and butterscotch, a peppermint mocha or sip on a classic hot cocoa while catching up with friends. And be sure to check out the 'Name of the Day' board outside the shop, if your first name is there, you'll receive free coffee!



As a great souvenir of your time in Clay County, take home a 32oz. growler of Double Strength Cold Brew coffee—blended by the knowledgeable team at Brass Tacks Coffee Co. and Spring Park Coffee.

Snuggle up on one of the shop's cozy couches with a book from the book swap area, enjoy live music on the first Friday of every month or grab a board game and challenge your family—whatever you decide, Spring Park Coffee welcomes visitors to relax and indulge.



### The Urban Bean Coffeehouse Café

2023 Park Avenue, Orange Park  
(904) 541-4938

[www.theurbanbeancoffeehouse.com](http://www.theurbanbeancoffeehouse.com)

Locally owned and operated in the heart of Orange Park, The Urban Bean Coffeehouse Café is a popular favorite with residents throughout the day. Featuring specialty and hand brewed coffees, organic teas, a menu featuring all-day breakfast items, salads and signature deli sandwiches, don't miss trying one of their gourmet donuts baked in-house daily.

From the pine tables, coffee bar and window seats made from the same 130-foot tree to the use of local and organic supplies as much as possible, owners DuWayne and Pam Hegal pride themselves on creating a sense of neighborhood with their customers. When night falls at The Urban Bean Coffeehouse Café, choose from a selection of wines and local, craft beer with your meal.





## Present Tense Coffee and Books

2851 Henley Road, Suite #103, Green Cove Springs

At Present Tense Coffee and Books, you can enjoy a classic combination any day of the week with homemade artisan coffee and new and used books. Since opening in the summer of 2019, they display their love of artistic detail with their 9-minute roasted coffee beans that are aged for 30 days before being ground. Other delicious concoctions include their signature drink the PLN, a black tea and lavender beverage that's perfect for cozying up with a good read or tackling the day. While you're there, be sure to pick up a delicious cinnamon roll, vegan banana muffin, or a homemade scone.

Interested in a read? Present Tense offers an amazing selection of books from various national and local authors as well as a great trade-in deal! Be sure to check in for their weekly events, including dollar bin book days, book club meetings, child's story time, and more.

Perfect for a quiet, relaxing cup or for getting things done, Present Tense is a true local gem with a delicious assortment of hand-crafted drinks to satisfy any craving. Drink like a local and enjoy a good read today.

## Royal Moose Coffee Company

2441 Blanding Boulevard, Middleburg

(904) 406-0661

[www.royalmoosecoffeeco.net](http://www.royalmoosecoffeeco.net)

Take a trip through Middleburg to visit the Royal Moose Coffee Company—you'll know you're there when you see the moose statue welcoming you outside the building!

Enjoy breakfast all day with cinnamon rolls, muffins, croissants sandwiches paired with fresh coffee and specialty drinks. From traditional cappuccinos to chai lattes or their signature Moose Mocha made with chocolate, caramel and whipped cream or just sit back with a hot cup of coffee—Royal Moose Coffee Company welcomes you to enjoy your favorites amidst their friendly community.





## FirePower Coffee

322 SE State Road 100, Suite D, Keystone Heights  
(352) 478-8174

[www.firepower.coffee](http://www.firepower.coffee)

Experience freshly roasted whole beans and ground specialty coffees with the knowledgeable team at FirePower Coffee Roasters in Keystone Heights. Truly a family business, the Beck family welcomes you to enjoy a selection of brewed coffees from the daily, rotating menu featuring coffees from around the world. Interested in taking coffee home as a souvenir? Choose from their selection of whole or roasted beans packaged in both convenience packs and larger sizes.

While you're enjoying time in the shop, you may be able to see some of the roasting process, ask questions and learn about the process, and enjoy the bold aromas making their way through the shop. As you make your way through the retail shop, check out the education slides and information scrolling through the monitors to learn about the processes and coffees available for your enjoyment.



Together, owners William and Carol Beck hold over ten certifications in coffee and tea educational programs and food safety. They have each completed additional course work related to coffee processing and preparation, making them 'go to' experts when it comes to the brewing process and finding the perfect cup of coffee.

Tea drinkers also be sure to speak with Carol—she's a certified tea sommelier! Sample specialty and organic teas from Two Leaves and a Bud right in the shop and choose from a variety of sizes of packages to enjoy tea-time at home. Carol can help you select teas based on your preferences.

## Ellianos Coffee

301 Blanding Blvd., Orange Park  
(904) 541-4983

[www.ellianos.com](http://www.ellianos.com)

"Italian quality at America's Pace" is the motto of Ellianos, and that's exactly what you can expect. With drive-thru windows on both sides of the building, you can experience high quality espresso beverages, latte freezers, smoothies, coffee, and breakfast sandwiches in a flash. Pick some up today or grab a bag of whole, ground, and toddy grind beans to make at home.





## Basketique Custom Theme Baskets & Gifts & Over the Second Cup Tea Room

727 Kingsley Avenue, Orange Park  
(904) 264-8844

[www.basketique-gifts.com](http://www.basketique-gifts.com)

With the elegance of Europe and the charm of an English cottage, enjoy teatime at Basketique Custom Theme Baskets & Gifts & Over the Second Cup Tea Room in Orange Park. Make new friends or reminisce over a pot of tea, try a variety of tea sandwiches and condiments and treat yourself to chocolate and desserts. The folks at Over the Second Cup Tea Room believe teatime is a ceremonial occasion with servings taking place with crystal servings, linens and fine China.

Perfect for small groups or individuals, owner Patricia Sessions is a certified tea sommelier and is available to help you find the perfect tea for your needs and preferences. Enjoy a step back in time with a fresh pot of tea while you are in Clay County.



## JOIN US FOR A CUP OF COFFEE

Along with being Clay County residents, these small business owners are passionate for coffee and supporting our community. Whether you're a coffee lover, interested in local eats or hoping to connect with the residents of Clay County, we hope you enjoy exploring our small towns filled with big passions...and great coffee too.





# 19TH HOLE—FROM GREENS TO GOOD EATS IN CLAY COUNTY

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Golfing in Northeast Florida is more popular than ever. With sunny days and mild weather year round, Clay County is a golfer's paradise, and the perks extend off the greens as well.

Our manicured golf courses are ideal for new and experienced players, and everyone in between. Whether you're looking for a challenge, to practice your swing or just to have some fun, the county's courses offer a solid range. And nothing is better after a day on the green than sitting around a fire pit with a glass of wine or beer, enjoying a good meal and even better company.

**From your first tee-off to your last pint, Clay County is home to some of Northeast Florida's favorite all-in-one destinations. Discover your next golf destination at [ExploreClay.com](https://www.exploreclay.com).**







CONTACT US  
OR FOLLOW  
ALONG AND  
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Visit [ExploreClay.com](http://ExploreClay.com)  
477 Houston Street, Green Cove Springs, FL 32043