KIM AND LYN’S GUIDE TO SIGHTSEEING IN THE TALLAHASSEE AREA

(Note: Updated by Lyn Kittle Fall 2013..thanks to the unknown “Kim” for starting this guide)

Whether you're a nature nut, a shopper, or a history buff, there are lots of choices. The heat (and sometimes the tropical rains) can be brutal during July, August, and September, so some outdoor activities are best enjoyed during the other three seasons. Let your own temperament -- as well as the temperature -- be your guide!

*Be sure to call to check the accuracy of information below about hours and admission fees.*

**TALLAHASSEE**

Tallahassee was founded in 1824 as the capital of the Territory of Florida.

**Calhoun Street historic district** -- drive or walk, pretty houses to look at. Calhoun Street was once called "Gold Dust Street" because of the congregation of homes owned by the wealthy. Criteria for selection in the Social Register, comprised of about 50 white families, included "antebellum residence, post-war affluence, traditionally genteel behavior, and reverence for tradition." Look for the Bowen House (1841), Gov. Bloxham House (1844), and the Randall-Lewis House (1843-44).

The “new one” (built in the1950’s) is modeled after "The Hermitage" (Andrew Jackson's Tennessee mansion) and is furnished with 18th and 19th century antiques; the mural room is especially interesting. Located at 700 N. Adams St., it is open for free public tours (call 850-488-4661 for info).

The bronze sculpture in the front of the mansion is by local artist **Sandy Proctor** and was commissioned by the late Gov. Lawton Chiles. Proctor is the creator of many sculptures on the FSU campus, including the three large figures at the center of campus commemorating the integration of the university. [http://www.proctorbronzes.com/gallery_commissions.php](http://www.proctorbronzes.com/gallery_commissions.php)

Said to be Florida’s finest example of Greek Revival architecture, built in 1825 -- barely visible at the north end of Adams Street. It was home to territorial governor Richard Keith Call and later became the home of Civil Rights-era Governor LeRoy Collins. His wife is part of the Call family; the home is privately owned by the Call-Collins family and is not open to the public.

**Park Avenue** is a 10-block city park, established in the 1880s, with two one-way streets framing a grassy, landscaped park that runs east-west through the center of town. Lovely old homes line it, especially on the east end, all the way to Magnolia. It was once called “200-Foot Street,” the width of the dirt clearing that was reportedly to help protect residents from Indian attacks. [http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM403V_Park_Avenue_Historic_District_Tallahassee_FL](http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM403V_Park_Avenue_Historic_District_Tallahassee_FL)

Park Avenue is the site of many city events and festivals, including:
• **Springtime Tallahassee** is major arts & crafts festival with parade, held in April. [http://www.tallahasseeedowntown.com/events3.shtml](http://www.tallahasseeedowntown.com/events3.shtml)

• **LeMoyne Chain of Parks Art Festival** in April [http://www.chainofparks.org/](http://www.chainofparks.org/)

• **Experience Asia Festival** in October [http://www.asianth.org/](http://www.asianth.org/)

• **Celebration of Lights** is in December with Jingle Bell 5K Run, parade, music, food, and other fun stuff.

• **Downtown Marketplace -- Farmers' Market and Jazz in the Park** -- fresh produce, flowers, plants, baked goods, and crafts. Saturdays 9am-2pm from March through November. Live Jazz and other music played generally between 10am-1pm. Local authors usually on hand to sell and sign books. Ponce de Leon Park (Park Avenue and Monroe Street). 297-3945 or [http://www.tallahasseeedowntown.com/events2.shtml](http://www.tallahasseeedowntown.com/events2.shtml)

• **Downtown Getdowns** The Friday night before an FSU home football game in the fall, Downtown Tallahassee turns into a gigantic street party. Seminole fans of all ages come out to enjoy live music, food, crafts and camaraderie. Due to its popularity, Downtown Get Downs are expanding to spring and summer as a way to highlight other local traditions such as Mardi Gras, Springtime and 4th of July. From 6 – 10 pm; no admission fee.

Knott House Museum -- [http://www.museumoffloridahistory.com/about/sites/](http://www.museumoffloridahistory.com/about/sites/)
"The House that Rhymes" so named because of the whimsical poems written by Luella Knott about the many mirrors and furnishings in the house. The house was built in 1843, by George Proctor, one of Tallahassee’s few free blacks before the Civil War. Now restored to its 1923 appearance, with original antiques, and part of the Museum of Florida History, it hosts frequent events throughout the year. 301 E. Park Avenue, Guided tours, 850-922-2459

Walker Library – at 209 Park Ave., named for David Walker, the founder of Tallahassee’s first library and Governor from 1865-1868; the earliest public library in Tallahassee it was a functioning library until 1976 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; now privately owned by the Springtime Tallahassee Festival Board, which raised funds for its restoration. Open for tours M-F, call 850-224-5012 to schedule a tour.

The Columns – The one-time home of William “Money” Williams (President of the Bank of Florida) and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, The Columns is the oldest surviving building in the city, built in 1835 at a different location and moved to the corner of Park Ave. and Duval St. in 1971. (A local myth says that Williams baked a nickel into every brick of the building.) Currently home of the James Madison Institute; Call to request a tour: 850-386-3131

The oldest church building in Tallahassee was built in 1838 at 110 N. Adams St. Built in the Greek revival style, the sanctuary is the only church still standing from the Territorial days.
During the Second Seminole War townspeople sought refuge in the church during raids in 1838 and 1839. 850-222-4504

Old U.S. Courthouse – during the 1950’s and 60’s, it was also the U.S. Post Office, the only one in town. It has several huge WPA murals from the 1930’s by Hungarian artist Eduard Buk. 224-2500

St. James CME Church Building – With pointed lancet windows that reflect its Gothic Revival influence, this office building (Florida Tax Watch) started out in 1899 as the St. James Colored (later Christian) Methodist Episcopal church. Its earliest members were freed slaves.

Old City Cemetery and Episcopal Cemetery -- at the west end of Park Avenue, established in 1829, graves of Union and Confederate soldiers, slaves, Prince Achille Murat (nephew of Napoleon) and his wife, the Princess Catherine Murat, two Florida governors. There’s a self-guided tour brochure at the entrance kiosk, at Park Ave and MLKing Blvd.

St. Johns Episcopal Church -- http://www.saint-john.org/
The 1888 church built on the corner of Call St. and Monroe St. on the site of original 1829 wooden building destroyed by fire in 1879. Unusual truss support of roof, granite sills from Andrew Jackson’s arsenal at Chattahoochee, stained glass windows, altar and reredos are hand-carved from 7 different kinds of wood. Quiet garden behind the church; bell tower whose 12 chimes are played manually by members of the Bellringers Guild. Brochure for a self-guided walking tour of the church and grounds: http://www.saint-john.org/discover/walking_tour.pdf 850-222-2636

LeMoyne Art Gallery -- http://www.lemoyne.org/
Located at 125 N. Gadsden St. in the Meginniss-Munroe House, built 1854. Tallahassee’s first fine art gallery established in 1963. Has rotating art shows, including juried shows, and offers a variety of art classes. There is a sculpture garden and fountain in back, special events, nice gift shop. Annual Christmas ornament display and sale with thousands of unique ornaments decorating numerous Christmas trees. The garden is lit with thousands of tiny lightbulbs. LeMoyne hosts a major art festival on the Park Avenue Chain of Parks each April http://www.chainofparks.org/ Gallery and garden are open to the public. Tuesday-Saturday 10-5. 850-222-8800.

John G. Riley House Museum -- http://rileymuseum.org/site/
The only historic renovation of a black person's residence in Tallahassee. The 2-story frame home at 419 East Jefferson St, was built in 1885. Riley was described as “a slender wisp of a man”, born a slave in Woodville, became principal of Tallahassee’s school for black students, the original Lincoln High School. He held deeds to seven major pieces of downtown real estate, and died in 1954. Various exhibits. Open M-Th 10-4, Fri and Sat. 10-2, $2 admission fee. 850-681-7881

Union Bank Building -- across from the Capitol, restored 1841 structure was the first major bank in Florida and the oldest surviving bank building. One of the few remaining examples of Federal commercial architecture in Florida. The bank features blue stucco walls, scored to imitate stone. Its first customers were area planters, and after the Civil War, it served as the
Freedman’s Saving Bank for emancipated slaves. It’s now a part of the Black Archives, operated by FAMU and the State of Florida. Call for a tour. 850-561-2603

**Florida Vietnam Era Veterans’ Memorial** -- across from the Capitol.

**Florida Korean War Veterans’ Memorial** – in Cascades Park.


The New Capitol building is open M-F 8:00-5:00; nice 360 degree panoramic glassed viewing area on 22nd floor with art works on rotating display. On an exceptionally clear day you might even be able to see the coast. Free admission. 850-488-6167.

**Museum of Florida History** – [http://www.museumoffloridahistory.com/](http://www.museumoffloridahistory.com/) on 500 South Bronough St. Extensive collection of early Indian artifacts, loot from sunken Spanish galleons, mastodon skeleton from Wakulla Springs, dugout canoe, early tourist camper from early 1900's, cracker kitchen, grandma's attic, almost full-size steamboat to walk through, other special exhibits, small but good gift shop (find your Florida souvenir or gift here). Hosts an annual Quilt Show that runs from August – November, with artistic and historic quilts on display. Open M-F 9-4:30, Sat. 10 – 4:30, Sun. noon – 4:30; free admission, but donations gratefully accepted. 850-245-6400.

**Adams Street Commons** -- one-block serpentine brick and landscaped public area that includes restaurants, shops. The County Courthouse and City Hall are new structures facing each other, from Adams to Monroe. Festivals and Football season “Downtown Get-Downs” take over this area, usually lining it with food vendors and music.

**Lively’s Corner** – 1875, a showcase commercial building whose most popular tenant probably was the Leon Bar, open from 1892 until 1904, when the City Council banned alcohol sales. Those of us who grew up here remember it as Bennett’s Drugstore, SW corner of Park and Monroe. It is now home to the Florida Association of Realtors.

**Challenger Learning Center and IMAX Theatre** [http://www.challengertlh.com/](http://www.challengertlh.com/)
The Challenger Learning Center features a Space Mission Simulator, 20 foot Dome Planetarium and IMAX theatre. It is located at 200 South Duval Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32301, in Kleman Plaza. Phone: 850-645-782

**Fisher's Green** – City park just southeast of the Civic Center. At the turn of the century, it was very popular, near the railroad station, served as the site of John Robinson's Circus and where Booker T. Washington spoke in 1912 to an audience of both black and whites. Named after pioneer Jewish settler Andrew Jackson Fish, the landowner.

**FSU** – [www.fsu.edu](http://www.fsu.edu) beautiful fountain near the main gate, the campus is very scenic, with lovely landscaping. **Westcott Building** is built on the site of Gallows Hill, where public hangings drew
big crowds from 1830-1854, when FSU was created and took over the hill. **FSU Gallery and Museum in the Fine Arts Building,** touring exhibits and permanent collection. Open daily, 644-1299. **Planetarium,** shows available, 644-6836 (check phone numbers)

**Railroad Square** -- [http://railroadsquare.us/](http://railroadsquare.us/) formerly warehouses near the railroad depot, now a collection of working artists' studios, outdoor sculpture garden, coffee house, club with live music, and other funky commercial businesses. In the evening on the “First Friday” of the month lots of people gather here for music, food trucks, galleries are open. The 621 Gallery [http://www.621gallery.org/](http://www.621gallery.org/) has periodic openings and shows, 850-224-6163.

**FAMU** - [http://www.famu.edu/](http://www.famu.edu/) historically black university, Foster Tanner Fine Arts Gallery with works by black artists, M-F 9-5, 599-3161 or 599-3334; Black Archives Research Center and Museum housed in one of Tallahassee's oldest buildings, contains artifacts, books, and exhibits on black culture and history, M-F, 9-4, 850-599-3020

**Lake Ella** – on North Monroe near Tharpe St...small lake with fountain, landscaped area, paved trail popular with walkers and joggers. Kids also love to feed the ducks, who have figured out a good thing. Bordered by the American Legion Hall, where there is usually live music on the weekends and big band-era dances are held on a regular basis. Black Dog Café on the lake is a nice place to sit on the deck and have coffee. Cute cottages on the west side of the lake have been converted into shops and restaurants.

**Goodwood Museum and Gardens** -- antebellum house restored to its 1925 appearance plus gardens with only heirloom plants and roses available N. Fla at the turn of the 20th century. Located in Tallahassee city limits near the hospital. Music events sometimes held on the grounds. Guided tours available. Visiting the gardens is free, small charge to enter the restored house/museum. 850-877-4202. [http://www.goodwoodmuseum.org/](http://www.goodwoodmuseum.org/)

**Myers Park** -- hilly, shady city park with creek and nature trail, tennis courts. Has public swimming pool (Wade Wehunt Pool 850-891-3985) that is heated in the winter and popular with lap swimmers.

**Old Fort Park and Fort Houstoun**—a series of fortifications built to protect Tallahassee during the Civil War. Built by a thousand enslaved African-Americans from surrounding plantations, the fortifications are still visible on Old Fort Dr. near Myers Park. They served as a last barrier to the Union Forces and played a part in keeping Tallahassee the only southern capital that did not fall.

**Lafayette Park** -- another hilly, shady city park with creek and nature trail, swings and seesaws, tennis courts and a baseball field.

**Cascades Park**—[http://www.cascadepark.org/](http://www.cascadepark.org/) Tallahassee’s newest park, with amphitheater, trail and bike paths, interactive water play plaza.

**Maclay Gardens** --- [http://www.floridastateparks.org/maclaygardens/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/maclaygardens/) on the north side of town, near the Killearn neighborhood at 3540 Thomasville Rd. Originally the winter retreat of wealthy New York financier Alfred B. Maclay, now a state park. Extensive gardens, 1909 home open to
the public from January through April. Grounds open daily year round 9-5. On Lake Hall, picnic tables, swimming area, nature trail. 850-487-4556

Lichgate [http://www.lichgate.com/](http://www.lichgate.com/)  This cottage was built by FSU professor of English, Dr. Laura Jepsen in the 1940s. Located at 1401 High Rd. it features a huge, ancient and majestic live oak tree that dominates the property and a Tudor style fairy-tale cottage and gardens. In 2006 it was added to the US National Register of Historic Places. Nearly torn down for development in 1995, the property was saved by a group of former students, friends and colleagues and is now frequently the site of weddings and small parties.

Mission San Luis  [http://www.missionsanluis.org/](http://www.missionsanluis.org/)  Archaeological and Historic Site out West Tennessee St. -- Site of Apalachee Indian town (1656) and later Spanish mission (1690). Exhibits of artifacts and ongoing archaeological excavation. Guided tours of Spanish colonial and Indian periods. Check their schedule for when they have costumed interpretations from the Spanish colonial period. 850-487-3711 Highly recommended.


Tallahassee Museum of History and Natural Science [http://tallahasseemuseum.org/](http://tallahasseemuseum.org/)  (formerly known as the Junior Museum and still called that by locals) -- 55 acres of outdoor museum, natural habitat zoo of native Florida animals, nature trails, an 1880s working Florida farm, indoor museum exhibits and gift shop. Special exhibits and festivals during the year. Open Monday-Sunday. 850-575-8684 (576-1636 for recorded message)

Lake Jackson Indian Mounds  [http://floridastateparks.org/lakejackson/](http://floridastateparks.org/lakejackson/)  on the northwest side of town (not far from the Maddox Estate). Pre-historic Indian burial mounds. Small, peaceful, open areas for kids to run around, only a few historic-information plaques. Good for picnicking or a quick walk -- small nature trail. Open 8:00 am--sunset year round. 850-922-6007

Tallahassee Antique Car Museum – [http://tacm.com/](http://tacm.com/)  More than 80 rare and antique cars, including the original Batcycle that Adam West drove. Also includes antique toys, golf and sports memorabilia, motorcycles, much more. Open M-F 8 – 5, Sat. 10 -5, Sun Noon – 5, Admission $16 or $13.50 for 2 adults. Children’s tickets less. Located east of town at 6800 Mahan Dr. 850-942-0137

**EASY DRIVES FOR DAY-TRIPS**


**Canopy Roads**  -- Five roads radiating from town: Old St. Augustine, Miccosukee, Meridian, Old Bainbridge, Centerville. Live oaks meeting above winding country roads.
Built in 1927, the store retains its original style and rustic simplicity, located 12 miles out Centerville Road (a beautiful drive on a canopy road), renowned for homemade sausage. Big country fair-type event once a year held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Open M-F 8:30 – 6, Sat. 8:30 - 5 and Sun. 12:30 - 4:30 850-893-1647


Fort San Marcos de Apalachee -- [http://www.visitwakulla.com/Historical-Places/san-marcos-de-apalache.html](http://www.visitwakulla.com/Historical-Places/san-marcos-de-apalache.html) just west of St. Marks Wildlife Refuge, where the St. Marks River empties into Apalachee Bay, 15 miles due south of Tallahassee. Pretty grounds, artifacts and museum. Small, usually quiet with few visitors. 850-925-6216 If you go here, you might plan to stop at the Riverside Café for food and drink.

Riverside Café -- [http://www.riversidebay.com/](http://www.riversidebay.com/) in the town of St. Marks, near the Fort, 15 miles due south of Tallahassee. Restaurant is situated overlooking the St. Marks River. Plenty of local color, serves oysters, smoked mullet, steamed shrimp, and burgers. Stop here for lunch after checking out the Wildlife Refuge and the Fort. Has a back deck where you can feed saltines to the pelicans.

St. Marks Rail-to-Trail -- on the site of old railroad from Tallahassee to St. Marks, popular with bicyclists. Wonderful paved route through the woods, but paralleling the highway, 16 miles due south. Rentals for bikes, skates, and restrooms at trail head. Ride your bike and then stop for refreshments at the Riverside Café. [http://www.floridastateparks.org/tallahasseestmarks/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/tallahasseestmarks/)

Gulf Specimen Marine Lab -- [http://www.gulfspecimen.org/](http://www.gulfspecimen.org/) Open for tours of their live-specimen salt-water facility. Located in Panacea; Certain tubs are shallow and designed for touching (ask permission first!). Jack Rudloe in Panacea. His wife, Ann, is recently deceased. Both are prolific writers about the ecology of this area.

Wakulla Springs State Park -- [http://www.floridastateparks.org/wakullasprings/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/wakullasprings/) Like a time capsule, maintained as it was for 50 years. Old hotel, “Old Joe” a very large alligator mysteriously killed in 1966 is on display, shady grounds, swimming in the icy spring, "jungle" cruises down the river. About 15 miles south of town, State Road 61 to State Road 267. 850-561-7217 You will almost always see alligators on the “Jungle Boat” cruises, and frequently there are manatees in the river. Lots of bird life. This is must-see for visitors. Most locals have been on the Jungle Boat ride many times as they always take their out-of-town company to Wakulla Springs. The Springs has an average discharge of 250 million gallons of water per day.

Springs and Rivers -- [http://www.floridasprings.org/learn/](http://www.floridasprings.org/learn/) hundreds scattered throughout the county. Cherokee and Blue Sink are near Wakulla Springs; Big Dismal is a few miles away. Some are great for swimming and grooving on nature, others are trashed and crowded with
noisy locals, some are too dangerous for swimming but beautiful to look at. Aucilla Sinks are on the Florida Trail, require hiking several miles. Wacissa Springs are about 20 miles east of town, with small boat landing, diving platform, great place to canoe on a scenic slow-moving river -- cypress trees, egrets, ospreys.

**Lake Talquin** -- [http://www.floridastateparks.org/laketalquin/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/laketalquin/) About a half hour's drive from town. Huge lake created from damming the Ochlocknee River. Shallow area by the dock is a good place for kids to catch minnows and splash around, and good swimmers can dive off the end and swim out into the inlet toward the open lake. Favorite of bass fisherman (Lyn once caught an 8½ pound bass in Lake Talquin 😊)

**Apalachicola** -- [http://www.cityofapalachicola.com/](http://www.cityofapalachicola.com/) about 2 hours drive from Tallahassee, a fishing village and former major port on the Gulf Coast. The Gibson Inn is a restored turn-of-the-century hotel and lovely place to stay. Check out the lobby even if you don't stay. There are arts and antique shops, restaurants, docks, museum about the discoverer of air conditioning (really!—visit the museum to learn more about John Gorrie [http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/gorriemuseum.html](http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/gorriemuseum.html)), beautiful Episcopal church, and annual Seafood Festival [http://www.floridaseafoodfestival.com/](http://www.floridaseafoodfestival.com/), held in November each year.

**St. George Island** -- [http://www.floridastateparks.org/stgeorgeisland/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/stgeorgeisland/) Just across the bridge from Apalachiola State park at west end of island, which connects by bridge to the mainland just west of Eastpoint. Really outstanding white sand beaches which have made the Top 10 Beaches in the US list. State park with restrooms and showers is at the east end of the island. Public beaches with playground, restaurants, homes and rentals also available. Check out [http://www.saltyflorida.com/](http://www.saltyflorida.com/) for information on the area in Franklin County.

**Little St. George Island** -- Only accessible by boat. The uninhabited, undeveloped island was created when the Corps of Engineers cut a passage (Bob Sikes Cut) to allow boats in Apalachiola Bay to get to the gulf more quickly. The old lighthouse washed out in a storm and the remnants were moved to St. George Island and rebuilt.

**Pebble Hill** -- [http://www.pebblehill.com/](http://www.pebblehill.com/) a country home/plantation just south of Thomasville, about 20 miles north of Tallahassee. Beautiful mansion with many original paintings (including original Audubons), collections and furnishings. It was originally an antebellum cotton plantation, restored and used by rich Northerners as a hunting lodge until it was opened up for visitors in the early 1980’s. The grounds are delightful, with Williamsburg-style stables, plantation laundry, schoolhouse, dog hospital, pool, cemetery, cutting garden, etc. Check website for admission fees. There's a lot to see, so a good plan is to go in the morning, do the house tour, then go on up to Thomasville for lunch, then stop on the way back to Tallahassee to walk around the grounds. The same admission fee lets you back in all day with no additional charge. (912) 226-2344

**Thomasville, Georgia** -- [http://www.thomasville.org/Content/Default/10/62/0/city-of-thomasville/home.html](http://www.thomasville.org/Content/Default/10/62/0/city-of-thomasville/home.html) small Southern town, 30 miles north of Tallahassee. All Saints Episcopal Church, Hardy-Bryan House, Hume Galleries, Lapham-Patterson House, Thomas County Historical Society and Museum, Thomasville Cultural Center, Thomasville Rose Test Garden, train depot (now shops and restaurant), main street and lots of beautiful homes to drive by. Well regarded Rose Festival is held in April each year.
Some good restaurants here, too.

**Torreya State Park** -- [http://www.floridastateparks.org/torreya/](http://www.floridastateparks.org/torreya/) an hour (plus) drive to the west of Tallahassee. Torreya is on the Chattahoochee River, with towering bluffs, really spectacular view from the old home there, remains of a grist mill, great hiking trails, etc. Ranger-guided tours of the Gregory House, a fully furnished plantation home built in 1849, are given at 10 am on weekdays and 10, 2 and 4 on weekends. (850) 643-2674

Located 3 miles north of Marianna to the west of Tallahassee. Tours, stalagmites, stalactites, colored lights, the whole works. Walking trails available. Also swimming at

**Blue Hole or Blue Springs** [http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/jacksonbluespring.html](http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/jacksonbluespring.html) and [http://www.jacksoncountyfl.net/parks-and-recycling/blue-springs](http://www.jacksoncountyfl.net/parks-and-recycling/blue-springs) 850-482-2114 If the season is right, a stop for swimming in this a second magnitude spring is highly recommended on your trip to Marianna Caverns. Tubes available for rental. Opens sometime in May and closes by Labor Day.

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