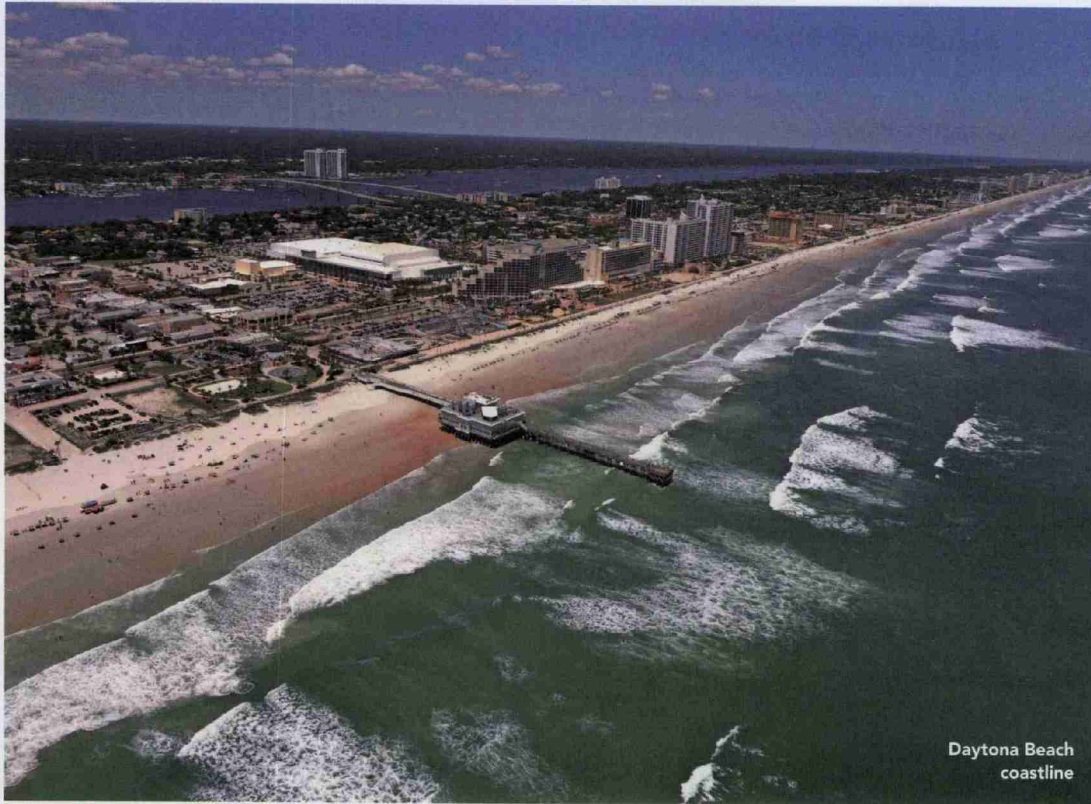


SOUTHEAST FLORIDA



Daytona Beach coastline

Slow Down for Daytona

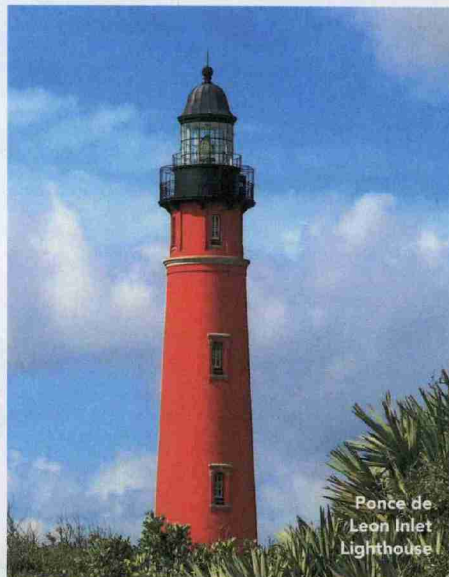
There's more to this beach town than just auto racing

BY FRANCES J. FOLSOM

Daytona Beach is not only about the Daytona International Speedway, even though through the years it's become known as the "World Center of Racing."

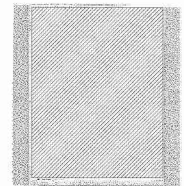
Instead, it is about 23 miles of sugar-sand beach, a vibrant

downtown full of chic shops, art galleries, great restaurants and beautiful museums. "Daytona Beach is the perfect beach base camp," says Kate Holcomb, director of communications for the Daytona Beach Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. "Located on Florida's east central coast, we are only about an hour's >

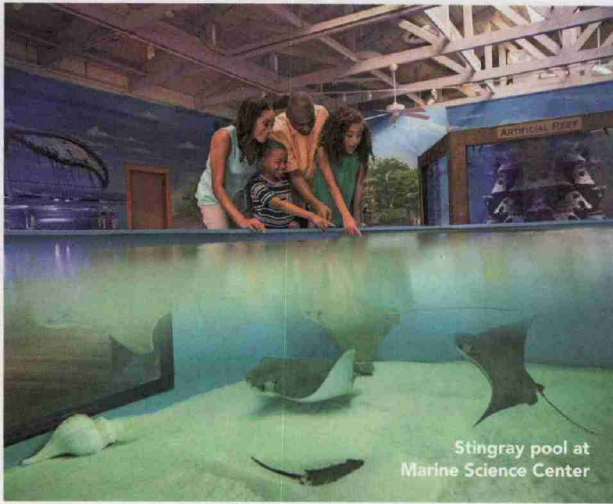


Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse

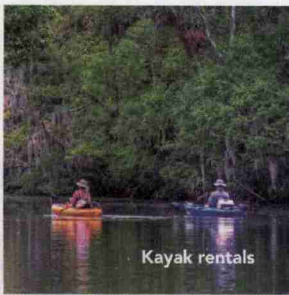
DAYTONA BEACH AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU (2)



SOUTHEAST | FLORIDA



Stingray pool at Marine Science Center



Kayak rentals

drive from St. Augustine and the Kennedy Space Center, great day trips to make during your beach vacation.”

Lay on the beach with a book, rent a kayak from **Cracker Creek rentals** (crackercreek.com) and paddle the Spruce Creek River alongside beautiful flora and fauna. Visit the **Marine Science Center** (marinesciencecenter.com), where you can touch stingrays and peek into the sea turtle rehabilitation unit, or take a walk through the seabird sanctuary.

In **Daytona Beach** and the surrounding towns of New Smyrna Beach and Ormond-by-the-Sea, there are numerous state parks for hiking, biking, fishing and swimming. The best for dolphin watching is Lighthouse Point

Park. At **Smyrna Dunes Park** (volusia.org), you can see marine life from the wooden walkways that stretch over the dunes.

When the sun and sand get too hot, head to the area’s cool museums. The **CiCi and Hyatt Brown Museum of Art** (moas.org) houses distinctive artwork depicting old Florida.

Last but not least, spend time at the **Daytona International Speedway** (daytonainternational Speedway.com) — all spiffed up from a recent \$400 million renovation that includes two new hotels and One Daytona, a center full of upscale shops, restaurants and entertainment.


Get the history and feel of the legendary Speedway on a guided tour (\$18 per adult), during which you’re driven by tram on the tracks’ steepest turns. The All-Access (\$25 per adult) includes a lap around the 2.5-mile track and a ride into the pit stalls, or spring for the VIP (\$52 per person), where you not only get laps on the track, but also a visit to the Archives and Research Center.

All of this and more make Daytona Beach a destination where you can do as little or as much as you want. ■


IF YOU GO

 Many of the rooms at the **Hard Rock Hotel Daytona Beach**, which opened in the spring, have direct oceanfront views. The on-site restaurant, Sessions, offers fine dining and craft cocktails alfresco, and the more casual Wave Terrace serves local beers, craft cocktails and sandwiches. 918 N. Atlantic Ave.; 844-745-1502; hrhdaytonabeach.com

After undergoing a multimillion dollar renovation and restoration, the **Streamline Hotel**, a circa 1940 art deco building, has reopened in grand style. Rooms and suites in the boutique hotel are light-filled and decorated in muted tones of blues, tans and grays. 140 S. Atlantic Ave.; 386-947-7470; streamlinehotel.com

 Vegetarians and carnivores will love the fresh juices, breakfast items, wraps, sandwiches and salads served at the **Dancing Avocado Kitchen**. 110 S. Beach St.; 386-947-2022; dancingavocadokitchen.com

Housed in the basement of a historic house, the **Cellar Restaurant** is fine dining at its best. Chef-owner Sam Moggio makes everything in-house using fresh, local ingredients to create his Italian fare. 220 Magnolia Ave.; 386-258-0011; thecellarrestaurant.com

 See manatees and mangroves while cruising through intercoastal waterways aboard **The Manatee** tour boat. 4884 Front St., Ponce Inlet; 386-267-8205; manateeecruise.com

Your reward for climbing the 203 steps of the **Ponce de Leon Inlet Lighthouse** is sweeping vistas of the coastline. See the original lighthouse keepers’ home and a museum with an impressive collection of 19th-century Fresnel lenses. 4931 S. Peninsula Dr., Ponce Inlet; 386-761-1821; ponceinlet.org

DAYTONA BEACH AREA CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU