

escape to amelia island

A tiny Florida treasure that's big on relaxation BY ROSALIND CUMMINGS YEATES

Nestled along Florida's northeast coast, Amelia Island—just a 30-minute drive from Jacksonville—may not be the Sunshine State's biggest or flashiest vacation spot, but this charming little isle, filled with more than 12 miles of beaches, salt marshes and natural beauty, is the perfect place for low-key fun.

WHAT TO DO

- Go horseback riding along the pearly white shores of Fernandina Beach—a great outing for the whole family. **Amelia Horseback Riding** (ameliahorsebackriding.com) offers gentle, expertly trained horses matched to your riding ability. (\$80 per hour)

- Take a horse-drawn carriage ride through the Fernandina Beach historic district, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. You'll see beautiful Victorian architecture and learn about various landmarks like the Florida House Inn, where Ulysses S. Grant once spoke from the balcony. **Old Towne Carriage Company** (ameliacarriagetours.com) offers 30-minute and one-hour tours.

WHERE TO EAT

- Get a taste of Amelia Island's famed seafood (especially the shrimp) at **The Crab Trap Restaurant** (crabtrapamelia.com), a family-friendly place festooned with shrimp

nets—the tables even include holes for tossing out shells into the trash bins underneath. Try tasty local favorites like crab legs, coconut shrimp, fried alligator tail and roasted oysters.

WHERE TO STAY

- The **Elizabeth Pointe Lodge** (elizabethpointelodge.com), a 25-room bed-and-breakfast, boasts a casual, beachy decor, a chair-lined porch tailor-made for relaxing, a tranquil oceanside setting, and a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception every evening. ■

For more information, visit ameliaisland.com.