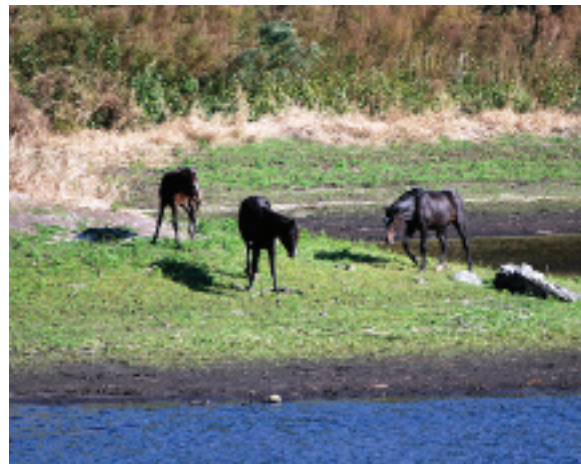




Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park Real Florida Guide

Note: Colored numbers correspond with numbers on the map and represent destinations for each day. **Red** = Day 1, **Green** = Day 2 and **Blue** = Day 3.

Day 1



A true wildlife mecca, [Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park \(1\)](#) became Florida's first state preserve in 1971 and is now designated as a National Natural Landmark. Paynes Prairie is biologically, geologically and historically unique. Noted artist and naturalist William Bartram called it the great [Alachua Savannah](#) when he wrote about his visit to the prairie in 1774.

Full-facility campsites are available for overnight visitors making this an excellent basecamp for exploring the area's natural wonders and exceptional wildlife. More than 20 distinct biological communities provide a rich array of habitats for wildlife and livestock, including alligators, bison, horses and more than 270 species of birds. Paynes Prairies Preserve State Park is a Gateway on the [Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail](#) and designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. Pick up a pair of 'loaner' binoculars at the visitor center to observe wildlife and visit the 50-foot-high observation tower with a panoramic view of the preserve. Ranger programs are available on weekends, November through April.

Eight inviting trails provide opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, and bicycling, including the [Gainesville-Hawthorne State Trail \(2\)](#) which traverses the preserve. This 16-mile paved trail provides a wonderful opportunity to enjoy cycling, walking, roller blading, or horseback riding through a variety of plant communities. Pick up a self-guided tour brochure from one of the kiosks, the Paynes Prairie Visitor Center, or listen to [smart phone tour stops](#).



Enjoy paddling and try your luck fishing on 300-acre Lake Wauburg. A boat ramp on the east side of the lake provides access for canoes, kayaks and boats with electric motors. Gasoline powered boats are not allowed.

Day 2

From Paynes Prairie cruise south on US 441, the [Old Florida Heritage Highway](#), to the charming village of [Micanopy \(3\)](#). Micanopy's historic district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The town's picturesque streets are lined with historic buildings housing unique shops, cafes and well-preserved historic homes and dwellings.

Make your way to Cross Creek, best known for once being the home of author Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. Visit her old Florida homestead, [Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings Historic State Park \(4\)](#), and walk back in time to 1930s farm life. Her cracker style home and farm, where she wrote her Pulitzer prize-winning novel *The Yearling* and other wonderful works of fiction, has been restored and is preserved as it was when she lived there. The park is open every day and visitors may tour the house with a ranger in period costume from October through July, Thursday through Sunday. In 2007, the Marjorie





Kinnan Rawlings house and farm yard was designated as a National Historic Landmark, our nation's highest historic recognition. [Geocaching](#) at Florida's state parks is a popular pursuit and this historic state park has some interesting hidden caches to seek. If time allows stop by the nearby [Yearling Restaurant](#) for classic Florida cuisine.

The day's last stop is [Evinston \(5\)](#) with quaint historic homes and the location of Wood & Swink Post Office (built in 1882), a site on the National Register of Historic Places.

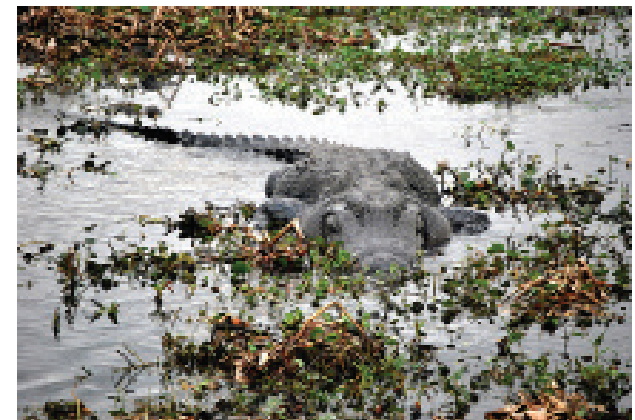
Day 3

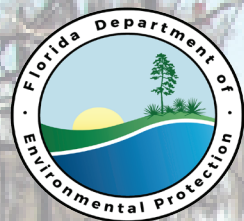
Heading north on I-75 or US 441, cruise to [San Felasco Hammock Preserve State Park \(6\)](#), a rare example of mature Florida hammock woodland and important site on the [Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail](#). Much of the 7350-acre park is designated for hiking, providing quiet solitude for a true wilderness experience. San Felasco is also one of Florida's top mountain biking destinations. This preserve has one of the few remaining mature forests in Florida. The limestone outcrops and extreme changes in elevation provide ideal conditions for many species of hardwood trees, including several champion trees (largest of their species). Bobcats, white-tailed deer, gray foxes, turkeys, and many species of songbirds make their homes in the 18 natural communities found in the preserve. To ensure solitude and quiet for a true wilderness experience, the southern two-thirds of the park is designated for hiking only. The northern third of the park has horse trails, off-road cycling, and hiking.

A popular destination for nature lovers is the [Florida Museum of Natural History \(7\)](#),



home of the [Butterfly Rainforest](#). The Butterfly Rainforest features hundreds of free-flying butterflies and birds from around the world along with an assortment of other animals including turtles and fish. The enclosed lush landscape is planted in tropical trees and colorful flowering plants amid waterfalls and a walking path.





Legend

- Bicycle Trail
- Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail
- Visitor Center
- Hiking Trail
- Canoeing and Kayaking
- Camping
- Fishing
- Equestrian Trail
- Interstate Highway
- US Highway
- State Road
- Other Roads
- Paddling Trails
- Trails
- Conservation Lands

