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From Fort Pulaski to the Tybee Island Lighthouse, Tybee Island Boasts a Rich History

TYBEE ISLAND, Ga. – Named after a Native American word for “salt,” Tybee Island has been a popular vacation spot for more than a century, offering miles of public beaches, a popular fishing pier and abundant wildlife.

This relaxed oceanfront community, located just 15 miles east of Savannah’s National Landmark Historic District, has a rich and fascinating history all its own. Over the years, a number of different flags have flown over Tybee Island, claiming this coastal paradise for Spain, England, France, the Confederacy and even bands of pirates.

“Tybee Island has a fascinating past,” said Cullen Chambers, executive director of the Tybee Island Historical Society. “There's so much more to Tybee's history than meets the eye, from Native American history to 19th and early 20th century military influence to unique barrier island architecture, especially what is known as the historic Tybee ‘Raised Cottages.’”

Fort Pulaski National Monument, a historic 1847 fort located just west of Tybee Island, played a key role during the Civil War, when Union troops bombarded this Confederate fortification with rifled canons. Tour this brick fort for insight into our nation’s history.

History buffs will want to check out the **Tybee Island Lighthouse**, which has the distinction of being one of the nation’s oldest and tallest lighthouses, originally built in 1773. Climb its 178 steps to enjoy one of the most breathtaking views in Georgia. Don’t miss the **Tybee Island Museum**, located in an 1898 coastal Georgia artillery battery at Fort Screven, for impressive artifacts and enlightening exhibits about the island’s rich history.

Also near the lighthouse and museum is a fully restored 1920's Tybee Raised Cottage, which represents the island’s defining historic architectural style. Raised cottages are thought by many local historians to be unique to Tybee Island.

(more)

Tybee Island History

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Known as “Savannah’s Beach,” Tybee Island first became a popular vacation destination in the 1800’s, when ocean breezes were recommended as all-natural remedies for a host of ailments. Early visitors arrived on Tybee Island via steamship in the years following the Civil War. However, the Central of Georgia Railroad built a train line from Savannah to Tybee Island in 1887, making the beach more accessible.

By the 1920’s, the road now known as Hwy. 80 connected Tybee Island with the mainland, making auto transportation the preferred method of travel for daytrippers and vacationers. With its spacious dance floor, the popular Tybrisa Pavilion on the strand served as a frequent stop for decades for popular musicians ranging from Duke Ellington to Cab Calloway.

Although the original Tybrisa Pavilion burned in a fire in 1967, the Tybee Pier and Pavilion opened to the public in 1996. Today, Tybee Island welcomes visitors from near and far to enjoy the laid-back charm of this coastal haven.

HISTORIC ATTRACTIONS:

Fort Pulaski National Monument

U.S. Hwy. 80 East

912.786.5787

www.nps.gov/fopu

Tour a 19th-century military fort, which played a key role in the Civil War, and explore nature trails at this 5,700-acre national park.

Tybee Island Lighthouse and Museum

30 Meddin Drive

912.786.5801

www.tybeelighthouse.org

Visit Georgia’s oldest and tallest lighthouse, plus learn about four centuries of Tybee history at the adjacent Tybee Museum.

ABOUT TYBEE ISLAND:

Tybee Island, Georgia, a historic island located just 20 minutes east of historic downtown Savannah, is an ideal year-round coastal destination for couples, families, meetings and more. Steeped in tradition and natural beauty, Tybee Island is home to several notable forts, informative museums, a historic lighthouse complex and miles of pristine beaches. Rich in relaxed style, Tybee Island also features a blend of eclectic art galleries, charming shops and exceptional restaurants. For more information about Tybee Island, please visit www.tybeevisit.com online or call 912.786.5444.

Tybee Island's Most Recent Accolades:

- “Best Beaches for Families” – *Parents Magazine*
- Top 10 Vacation Rental Hotspots for 2010 - TripAdvisor
- Top 10 City Beaches in America - AOL
- #1 Healthiest Beach in America - *Health Magazine*
- “Readers' Choice Best Beach” - *Georgia Magazine*
- “Best One Tank Trip” - *Atlanta Journal Constitution*
- “Best Beach Retreat” - *Creative Loafing Atlanta*
- Bicycle Friendly Community – League of American Bicyclists

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