

Science & Discovery Tour

Trip Length: 2-3 Days

Florida's capital region provides many opportunities for hands-on activities and out-of-this-world experiences.



From Native Americans and Spanish Conquistadors, to scientists and astronauts, the Tallahassee area has long been a place for exploration and discovery.

Begin your trip heading south on U.S. Highway 61 (Adams Street) towards the coast to the small community of Panacea to hold a prickly Sea Squirt in your hands at the [Gulf Specimen Marine Lab](#) (222 Clark Drive, Panacea; (850) 984-5297; [www.gulfspecimen.org](#)). Plan to spend 1-3 hours at this working laboratory exploring the many touch tanks teeming with sea life and providing hands-on experiences in marine biology. For a taste of local flavor, stop at [Posey's Up the Creek](#) (1506 Coastal Highway, Panacea; 850-984-5243) for a dozen oysters and a grouper sandwich. Nothing fancy or scientific here, just fresh local seafood.

On your way back to Tallahassee, if you are drawn towards the high sciences, a visit to the "Mag Lab" (National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, 1800 E. Paul Dirac Drive; (850) 644-1933; [www.magnet.fsu.edu](#)) is a must-see. The Mag Lab houses the largest and strongest magnet on the planet and has the Guinness Book of World Records Certificate to prove it. The magnet produces a magnetic field 1 million times stronger than the Earth's magnetic field. Interpretive displays help explain the work conducted at this international facility.

In downtown Tallahassee check out "Mission Control" and the Space Station laboratory at [The Challenger Learning Center](#) (200 S. Duval Street; (850) 644-4629; [challengertlh.com](#)). The five-story Planetarium also brings the night sky to life for those who reach for the stars. And for more hands-on fun visit the [Mary Brogan Museum of Art & Science](#) (350 S. Duval Street; (850) 513-0700; [www.thebrogan.org](#)). An affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute, engaging science experiments take over the second floor, while the first and third floors stimulate your senses with visual arts and first-class exhibitions.

For culinary exploration, may we suggest dinner at [Kool Beanz](#) in Midtown (921 Thomasville Road; (850) 224-2466; [koolbeanz-cafe.com](#)). Colorful and casual, this locally-owned restaurant has been serving up eclectic local fare since 1996.



Mag Lab visitors behold the world-record 45 Tesla hybrid magnet.

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Mission San Luis, also known as San Luis de Talimali, was the western anchor of the mission system stretching from the Apalachicola River to St. Augustine in the 1600s.



Start your next day at [Mission San Luis](#) (2100 West Tennessee Street; (850) 245-6406; www.missionsanluis.org) to go back in time to the Tallahassee area in the 17th century. Apalachee Indian heritage and Spanish exploration and settlement history comes alive at the only reconstructed Spanish Mission in Florida. Going back almost 12,000 years, check out the [Mounds at Lake Jackson](#) (3600 Indian Mound Road; (850) 922-6007; floridastateparks.org/lakejackson) to see impressive remains and temple mounds of Paleo-Indian life along Lake Jackson.

And bringing it all together, a visit to the [Museum of Florida History](#) (500 S. Bronough Street; (850) 245-6400; museumoffloridahistory.com) features Herman, a 12,000 to 18,000 year old mastodon skeleton from Wakulla Springs, providing a glimpse of the underwater archaeology and rich geological world in the Tallahassee area.

Stay Another Day to explore another geological wonder, the [Florida Caverns State Park](#), (3345 Caverns Road, Marianna; (850) 482-9598; www.floridastateparks.org/floridacaverns) in nearby Marianna. It is worth the drive to see the stalactites, stalagmites, soda straws, draperies and wedding cake.

