

**Jacksonville and Surrounding Area  
Guide to Venues and Activities  
Southern Sociological Society  
2020 Annual Meeting**

Hyatt Regency Riverfront --- Jacksonville, FL  
April 1 - 4, 2020

Jacksonville, Florida has moved along the same path sociologists are familiar with: flight from a once vibrant downtown and now a revitalization of downtown. And the revitalization is going strong. The SSS conference is in downtown Jacksonville, right on the St. Johns River and close to many great venues and activities. This guide offers a sampling of what you can do if you stay downtown, walk or rideshare to bordering neighborhoods, or drive to the surrounding towns.

**Downtown and the Urban Core** Downtown is part of what locals call the Urban Core-- downtown plus the surrounding neighborhoods of Historic Springfield, San Marco, Riverside/Avondale, and Brooklyn. There is so much to do in the Urban Core that you really don't even need a car. This diverse area has walkable access to many eateries, cultural outlets and activities.

Informational Sites

- <https://downtownjacksonville.org>
- <https://www.thejaxsonmag.com>
- <http://www.visitjacksonville.com>
- <http://www.sparcouncil.org>
- <https://onjacksonville.com>
- <https://thecoastal.com>

Local Transportation

In addition to taxi cabs and Uber and Lyft providing ride sharing service, the City has several mass transit services.

[Super Shuttle](#) -- Airport transportation

[Jacksonville Transportation Authority \(JTA\)](#) -- Operates the extensive city bus system (MyJTA mobile phone app provides routes and ticketing)

[JTA Paratransit](#) -- Provides destination-to-destination rides for people with disabilities

[Parking](#) -- For those who plan to park around downtown Jacksonville, park garages and street parking are available. It's worth noting that some street parking spots only take quarters, so be prepared.

[Skyway](#) -- An elevated monorail that is great way to both get around the Urban Core and have a tour of those neighborhoods, and it's free to ride

[St. Johns River Taxi & Tours](#) -- The water taxi has a stop right outside the conference hotel and is a great way to cross from the Northbank to the Southbank Riverwalks and to tour the river

[St. Johns River Ferry](#) -- A relaxing 1-mile car and passenger ferry trip across the river along the historic A1A, with Mayport Village to the south and Fort George Island to the north

### Urban Core Food and Drink

The Urban Core has well over a 100 restaurants and bars. Here is a small selection (all downtown unless specified).

[Sweet Pete's](#) and [10/Six Grille](#) -- A candy manufacturer and shop, a bar, and a restaurant built around the theme of Alice in Wonderland all rolled into one building

[Burrito Gallery](#) -- Good food for lunch or late night, with an indoor and outdoor bar and strong drinks

[Jenkins Quality Barbecue](#) -- One of the city's many great barbecue places

[Super Food and Brew](#) -- There are still food trucks downtown, but Super Food was so good it became a brick-and-mortar venue and is now one of many tasty and healthy small restaurants downtown

[Magnificat Cafe](#) -- Family-operated French cafe that serves lunch only and is right in the heart of downtown within a block of the museum, bookstore, public library, park, and many historic buildings

[Volstead](#) -- One of several craft cocktail bars in the Urban Core, with live music and 1920s speakeasy set up (you actually have to walk through a faux storefront to get inside)

[Chart House](#) -- At the south base of the Main Street Bridge on the Southbank Riverwalk (and inside the round building), with a pleasant bar and fine dining overlooking the river

[River City Brewing Company](#) -- On the Southbank Riverwalk with a large outdoor deck on the river, two bars, live music, and a full menu

[Uptown Kitchen and Bar](#) (Historic Springfield) -- Good food, drink, and outdoor seating right on Main Street

[Crispy's](#) (Historic Springfield) -- Restaurant and art gallery

[Wafaa 'n Mike's Cafe](#) (Historic Springfield)-- Middle Eastern food and strong coffee at reasonable prices and in a very friendly, cozy setting

[Strings Sports Brewery](#) (Historic Springfield)-- In a historic building with outdoor seating, great beer and food, and many televisions tuned to sports

[Hawkers](#) (Riverside) -- Within the vibrant food scene throughout Riverside and 5-Points is this very popular Asian restaurant

[European Street Cafe](#) (San Marco and Riverside locations) -- Good sandwiches, including raw options, and a great selection of beer and a great happy hour

### Urban Core Rooftop Dining and Drinks

[Intuition Ale Works](#) (Downtown) -- **Well-established microbrewery (among the many great ones in Jax), with live music. Note: Location for Student Mixer and Meet the Candidates**

[Cowford Chophouse](#) (Downtown) -- Fine dining created by a renowned chef and a rooftop bar in a recently renovated historic building

[Burrito Gallery](#) (Brooklyn) -- Fun food and drinks

[River and Post](#) (Riverside) -- 11-story building with a bar on top, and wow, such a great view of the river; restaurant on ground floor

[Hoptinger Bier Garden](#) (Riverside) -- Great spot in 5-points to look over the historic neighborhood while drinking and eating

[Blacksheep](#) (Riverside) -- Modern design and fusion menu

### Urban Core Microbreweries

Jacksonville has about 40 microbreweries all around the city. The ones in the Urban Core that have rooftop bars or restaurants are mentioned above, but here are some that are just straight brew pubs.

[Bold City Brewery](#) (Downtown and Riverside locations) -- An early and successful microbrewery that has two relaxing venues and, well, bold beer

[Hyperion Brewing](#) (Springfield) -- A neighborhood pub with great beer

[Main and Six Brewing Company](#) (Springfield) -- Another neighborhood pub with great beer

[Engine 15](#) (La Villa) -- In a downtown neighborhood with a rich history

[Aardwolf Brewing Company](#) (San Marco) -- Good beer on the railroad tracks, and close to San Marco Square and many restaurants

[Lemonstreet Brewing Company](#) (Brooklyn) -- A new addition to the Urban Core

[Rogue](#) (Riverside) -- Good, straightforward pub on King St. along with a dozen other cool cafes, restaurants, and bars (including [Keg and Coin](#), which has old video games and pinball machines) packed along a four-block stretch of King St.

[Marah Brewing Company](#) (Riverside) -- A clean, relaxed brew pub in 5-points

[Fishweir Brewing](#) (Murray Hill) -- One of several newer microbreweries in a rapidly transforming neighborhood just outside of the Urban Core, near many local restaurants and stores.

[Tabula Rasa](#) (Rail Yard District) -- Great beer in a growing commercial area just west of downtown

### Urban Core Cultural, Educational, and Entertainment Venues

Right outside the conference hotel is the St. Johns River and Riverwalk, as well as the heart-warming smells of the Maxwell Coffee roaster. You can easily walk to many downtown venues that are within several blocks, and the surrounding Urban Core neighborhoods are an attractive hour or less walk or ten minute drive. Below are some of the many entertainment options (in downtown unless specified).

**[Chamblin's Uptown Bookstore](#) -- Giant used bookstore right next to Hemming Park, also has a cafe and good coffee with indoor and outdoor seating**

[Jacksonville Main Public Library](#) -- Books, computers, events, and also great views from its relaxing sitting areas

[Museum of Contemporary Arts \(MOCA\)](#) -- A vibrant museum located in the heart of downtown that partners often with the University of North Florida and has a sprightly ground floor cafe

[Hemming Park](#) -- Surrounded on all four sides by MOCA, the library, government buildings, Chamblin's, Sweet Petes, and many other businesses, has outdoor seating, public art, and lunchtime food trucks; check the link for frequent free concerts and events

[Florida Theater](#) -- Hosts concerts, plays, and matinee movies in one of the oldest and best maintained theaters in the country

[Ritz Theatre and Museum](#) -- A renovated movie house in Jacksonville's historic African-American community of LaVilla, pivotal in preserving black history (including many of the great Blacks with roots in Jacksonville, such as [James Weldon Johnson](#) who co-wrote "Lift Every Voice and Sing" and [A. Philip Randolph](#) who began his civil rights work during WWI and continued up through the 1963 March on Washington) and has a museum, live entertainment, and educational events

[Museum of Science and History \(MOSH\)](#) -- Right on the Southbank Riverwalk at the foot of the Main Street bridge, offers great science exhibits and regular events like the Cosmic Concert and boat tours. April 3 MOSH will be hosting one of their [Cosmic Concerts](#)

[Veterans Memorial Wall](#) -- Second largest wall honoring Jacksonville residents in all six branches of the military who died while serving

[The Elbow entertainment district](#) -- Just a couple blocks from the conference hotel are several blocks running along Bay St. and Ocean St. that have a concentration of music and dance venues, bars, and restaurants

[Breezy Jazz Club](#) -- Bar and live jazz venue, with bands ranging from mellow to hard-driving bebop jazz, some nights are free and others have a cover

[Shantytown](#) (Historic Springfield) -- Dive bar, live music, smoking, right off Main St.

[Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens](#) (Riverside) -- A beautiful museum, breathtaking garden on the river, and a cafe; a wonderful place to visit and close to 5-points, River and Post rooftop bar, and the Saturday Riverside Arts Market

[Karpeles Manuscript Library Museum](#) (Historic Springfield) -- Donation-only museum that also hosts occasional free art shows and concerts

[5-points](#) (Riverside) -- An incredibly vibrant area packed with local stores, a duck pond, and a park, and part of the reason Riverside is regularly listed as one of the best neighborhoods in the country

[Sun-Ray Cinema](#) (Riverside) -- Regularly voted a top indie theater in the country, with microbrews, local wine, local-made pizza, vegan and gluten-free food options, and great movies and concerts

[San Marco Square](#) -- A pleasant commercial area with restaurants, bars, movie theater, performance theater, and dozens of boutiques and surrounded by a beautiful historic neighborhood that runs along the river

[San Marco Books & More](#) -- **Mainstay bookstore in San Marco Square that hosts occasional events including author signings.**

[Theatre Jacksonville](#) (San Marco) -- No major productions are currently scheduled for the evenings during the conference but check the link for pop-up events

## Art, Music, and Entertainment Events

**[Downtown Jacksonville Art Walk](#) -- First Wednesday event with dozens of galleries, office buildings, bars, and restaurants throughout downtown participating and a concentration of artists and live performances at Hemming Park. Note: April 1st theme eARTh Day**

[Riverside Arts Market](#) -- A pleasant stroll along the Northbank Riverwalk ends right at this great local artisan and farmers market under the massive Fuller Warren Bridge, with live music, beer, and food trucks (Saturday, 10 a.m.- 3 p.m., rain or shine)

[Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra](#) (JSO) -- Evening and some afternoon performances

[WJCT and Ari Shapiro](#) -- The local NPR-affiliated public radio station is just a short distance from the conference hotel; Ari Shapiro will be giving a talk on 2 April, 6-8:30 p.m.; check link for other events

[Jax Poetry Fest](#) -- Poetry at various locations throughout town

[Sports Events](#) -- Most of the city's men's and women's pro and semi-pro sports teams--football, soccer, hockey, baseball, basketball, rugby--have their facilities in downtown, so there's a good chance you can catch a game, and golf is all around the city

## Walking, Jogging, and Bicycling

If you want to get outside for exercise or just a relaxing break, you are in a great location. Below are descriptions of some of the outdoor places in and around the Urban Core you can jog, walk, or bicycle, plus a few that are in other areas of the city.

-- The first and easiest option is to head out onto the Riverwalks. The conference hotel is on the north side of the St. Johns River (the north-flowing river bends east in downtown, thus creating north and south banks), and right out the hotel door is the [Northbank Riverwalk](#). You can walk this all the way to Riverside (it ends at the Cummer Museum and Gardens). And you can cross the Main Street Bridge to the [Southbank Riverwalk](#). These riverwalks offer a combined 3 miles for a beautiful stroll, jog, or bike ride (and a chance to spot dolphins!).

-- If you want a good exercise and great views, combine the riverwalks with two bridges. From the hotel, walk, run, or bicycle along the Northbank Riverwalk and cross the blue Main Street Bridge directly to the Southbank Riverwalk. Once on the southside you can stroll the southbank (and stop at the [MOSH](#) or [River City Brewing](#) for a drink) or continue south right into the [San Marco neighborhood](#) and San Marco Square. The Acosta Bridge spans over and doesn't connect directly to the riverwalks, but it can still be readily incorporated into a good, long loop. For instance, you can take the Northbank Riverwalk (and even stop in the open-air free gym at the base of the "Corkscrew" overpass) to Riverside (maybe enjoy a coffee or a [rooftop cocktail](#) while there or pop into the [Cummer Museum](#)), visit 5-Points, walk through [Riverside Park](#) and [Memorial Park](#), and then head back along Riverside Ave. to the [Brooklyn neighborhood](#) (with a pitstop for a [rooftop snack and beer](#)), where you can cross the Acosta Bridge. Then you head down into San Marco (the roads get a little confusing with all the bridges, ramps, railroad

tracks, and large hospital, get over to the MOSH parking lot and you'll find San Marco Ave., and then keep heading south). Head back north on either San Marco Ave. and Hendricks Ave. (both are packed with businesses and cool architecture) and take the Main Street Bridge back home. Walking this two-bridge and four neighborhood route will take about three hours (excluding stops), and it's worth every step. Both bridges have pedestrian and bicycle sidewalks.

-- You can also get some outdoor walking and relaxation right in downtown near the hotel. [Metropolitan Park](#) is several blocks to the east of the conference hotel and hosts concerts but also is a large green space with benches and a great view of the river. [A. Philip Randolph Park](#), dedicated to the towering civil rights leader who was from Jacksonville, is just to the north of Met Park.

-- You can also head right into the heart of downtown for short walks or hours of walking or jogging without going far from the hotel. The City of Jacksonville has worked collaboratively with public artists who started underground to create a [network of public art](#) throughout the Urban Core, but especially in Downtown. Giant and small murals are all over downtown. The [Cathedral District](#), a few blocks north of the hotel, is transforming from a collection of historic churches into a mixed-use neighborhood. And many other historic buildings stand throughout downtown, including several by the famous [architect Henry Klutho](#) (including Florida's first skyscraper, the [Bisbee Building](#)!) and many with ornate terra cotta flourishes. Some of these are being renovated, some have been renovated, and some are waiting for a group with a vision. Just zig-zagging east and west, north and south through downtown is a great path; you'll pass by some empty lots and abandoned buildings that are waiting for development, but you'll also pass by many more great venues and architectural achievements.

-- If you head north out of the conference hotel into downtown, you can keep heading north several more blocks into [Historic Springfield](#), one of three [designated historic neighborhoods](#) in the Urban Core ([Riverside/Avondale](#) and San Marco are the other two). The houses in that neighborhood are astounding, street after street of beautiful Victorian homes. And several of breweries, bars, and restaurants highlighted above are in this neighborhood. Also, there is the free [Springfield Disc Golf Course](#) that runs through the neighborhood. Whether looking at old homes, having a microbrew, or playing disc golf, be sure to turn around and look southward for a clear view of the downtown skyline.

-- If you're seeking an opportunity to get in a 5k race, April 4 is the [San Marco Wine & Chocolate Run](#). This 5k offers a chance to see the lovely San Marco area and enjoy some chocolate from a local chocolatier [Peterbrooke](#) (chocolate covered popcorn is amazing).

-- Outside of the Urban Core many [outdoor opportunities](#) abound. Crossing the northern edge of Historic Springfield is the [S-line Urban Greenway](#), which is part of the [Jacksonville Rails-to-Trails](#) system and will become part of the [Emerald Trail](#), a 30-mile loop of trails and creeks that

is being pieced together through the efforts of private and public organizations. This trail is a great way to be outside in the urban area without being on roads. If you do drive, bicycle, or jog into Historic Springfield you may want to continue a few miles north up Pearl St. or Main St. to [Trout River](#), which can be leisurely watched from [North Shore Park](#). Similarly, you can continue past Riverside into the historic and grand neighborhood of Ortega.

-- You can also visit any number of the many other [city, state, and federal parks and trails](#) outside the Urban Core. Kathryn Abbey [Hanna Park](#) is perhaps the best place to both walk along the ocean and hike in Duval County. It offers a mix of 20 miles of wooded trails and 1.5 miles of white sand beaches; it's great for surfing, biking, kayaking, hiking, and sunrise yoga. [Little Talbot Island](#), part of the seven [Talbot Island State Parks](#), is both breathtaking and calming with its quiet beaches stretching five miles along an undeveloped barrier island and its wooded trails. [Big Talbot Island](#) is a nature preserve that is great for bird watching and relaxing. [Timucuan Ecological and Historic Preserve](#) holds the last unspoiled coastal wetlands on the US Atlantic coast, has a Visitor Center, and offers a glimpse at life in the early days of European settlements at [Kingsley Plantation](#) and [Fort Caroline National Memorial](#). You can take the [Mayport ferry](#) to the Talbot Islands and Timucuan Preserve. [Tree Hill Nature Center](#) offers the calm of being immersed in the woods, and it has an educational center and a facility that raises monarch butterflies for an annual release; and it's not as far a drive as the Talbot Islands or Hanna Park. [Baldwin Rail-to-Trails](#) is a great bike ride or run.

-- [Bethesda Park](#) is a completely accessible and barrier-free park that provides easy access to the outdoors for people with physical disabilities and includes nature trail boardwalks, a 20-acre stocked fishing lake, cabins, a lodge, and picnic facilities.

-- One could also skate board the above routes. And head out to one of several skate parks, [Kona](#) being the largest and [Cuba Hunter](#) having a good set up too. If TSA confiscates your board, you can head right up to Historic Springfield and get a new one at [The Block Skate Supply](#).

-- If you prefer to combine sport with your walking, well, Jacksonville is packed with golf courses. North Florida has around 70 public and private golf courses.

#### Urban Core Tours

[Tuk Tuk](#) -- Electric vehicle tours

[Jax Ale Trail](#) -- Microbrewery tours

[Jax Rides](#) -- Electric bike tours in Urban Core

[Other Tours](#) -- The Visitors Center lists other tours

**The Beaches (Atlantic, Jacksonville and Neptune)** are approximately a 30 minute drive from the Hyatt Regency. These communities offer access to lovely beachfront recreation,

restaurants, and nightlife. These independent cities are on a barrier island stretching from [Hanna Park](#) on the north end, through the beautiful beaches of Duval County, Ponte Vedra, and [Mickler Landing Beach](#), down to [Vilano Beach](#) in St. Augustine.

### Beaches Attractions & Events

The "[Beaches](#)" are teeming with food, drink, and shopping, especially along 3rd St. (A1A) but also along the nearby streets. You can enjoy microbreweries, dine at a wide variety of restaurants, enjoy cocktails while looking across the ocean, and get surf lessons. If you want to get a beach experience and have all those things right there, you can head to what locals call the "Triangle" at the intersection of Atlantic Blvd. and 1st St.; there you'll find a concentration of restaurants, bars, and stores.

### Beaches Food and Drink

[Beaches Town Center](#) -- Collection of restaurants with nightlife in walkable space.

[Casa Marina](#) -- More upscale dining with views of the water and a Sunday brunch.

[Engine 15 Brewing Co.](#) location near the beach (also in La Villa) is a great stop heading towards the ocean.

[Green Room Brewing](#) is a small, casual place to relax

[Taco Lu](#) is a local favorite for tacos and drinks in a unique atmosphere. Located in the same vicinity as Engine 15

### Beaches Attractions, Shopping & Tours

[Atlantic Beach Arts Market](#)-- Featuring work by local artists and vendors.

[Beach Life Rentals](#) -- No need to pack your beach chair or bike. This place has everything that you could need for enjoying the sun and sand.

[Beaches Museum](#) -- Lovely place to stop and learn more about the beaches areas. Has exhibits and archives covering the history and culture of the area.

[Hanna Park](#) -- Just north of Atlantic Beach is a relaxing place to walk, kayak, bike and surf.

[Springing the Blues Festival](#) -- April 3-5 at the Seawalk Pavilion. An annual favorite with a fantastic schedule of Blues artists.

**Amelia Island and Fernandina Beach** North of Jacksonville is the [City of Fernandina](#) on [Amelia Island](#). This is just one of those beautiful, historic, relaxing places that people love to visit. You can walk the beaches and hop in the ocean or visit [Fort Clinch State Park](#) (a very cool fort that is a bit overgrown and dilapidated in some parts), [nature tours](#), and [Timucuan Preserve](#), [Amelia Island Lighthouse](#), or the [historic Fernandina downtown](#). And you can enjoy fun dining and shopping, including [The Book Loft](#) and [Story and Song Bookstore](#).



**St. Augustine** is approximately a 45-minute drive from downtown Jacksonville to the oldest continuously occupied city in the United States. This beautiful coastal town has a rich Spanish history that dates back to 1565, and was a major player in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960's. Here are some dining options, events, and historical sites in case you have time to explore this quaint and unique town.

#### St. Augustine Food and Drink

[Cap's on the Water](#): Waterfront dining overlooking the Matanzas River with local seafood and Old Florida cuisine.

[Columbia Restaurant](#): The Columbia serves award-winning Spanish and Cuban food in a vibrant, Old World setting. (\$\$)

[Crave Food Truck](#): Enjoy fresh and delicious food for lunch from this favorite local spot, on the water downtown. (\$)

[Mango Mango's Caribbean Grill and Bar](#): Beachside grill and bar serving up delicious and creative entrees and cold drinks (\$\$)

[The Floridian](#): Regionally-inspired and fresh from the source, our cuisine is a synthesis of Down-home Southern Comfort Foods, and vibrant and creative dishes--with many vegetarian options. (\$\$)

[Ancient City Brewing](#): Produces craft beer and offers a Tap Room on sight. (\$)

[Bog Brewing Company](#): Local brewery offers beer and wine in a friendly and historic setting. (\$)

#### St. Augustine Attractions & Tours:

[Ancient City Tours](#): Offers a variety of tours, check their website for the schedule.

[Ancient City Walking Tours](#): A new way to experience the history behind the nation's oldest city.

[Castillo de San Marcos](#): Visit the oldest masonry fort in the United States. Built by the Spanish to defend the city over 300 years ago, it is one of the main attractions in St. Augustine.

[Fountain of Youth](#): gives visitors a chance to experience history at this important archaeological site and to drink from the famous springs.

[Lightner Museum](#): Enjoy the atmosphere and artwork of another age at this elegant Museum.

[Lincolnton Museum](#): Features exhibits and displays about St. Augustine's African-American heritage, tracing the history from the beginning and through the Civil War, the struggle for Civil Rights, and the history of these eras in St. Augustine.

[Old Town Trolley Tours](#): A fully narrated tour of St. Augustine as well as a convenient way to get around downtown, with 23 stops along the way.

**Other Nearby Places and Events** [The Clay County Fair](#) overlaps with the conference, and this is a giant country fair.

**Many thanks to the creative & insightful SSS locals who put together this guide:  
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Questions about anything local?

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