

Mobile Bay

ALABAMA



Fast Facts 2008

Founded in 1702 Mobile is rich in history, culture, and tradition. The Mobile Bay area has always prospered because of its strategic location. A deep bay and harbor area offered a perfect shipping port. The barrier islands of Gulf Shores and Dauphin Island were ideal for military strategists. There they built strong forts to assure that only welcome guests ventured into the bay. Today these historic forts offer visitors a glimpse into the past.

The international trade sustained by Mobile throughout her 300-year history has provided even the earliest settlers with the finer things from Europe, England, the Mediterranean, and the Orient. Mobile Bay's six historic house-museums are open to the public year-round and display artifacts native to this land and treasures brought from far away.

Magnificent architecture and grand homes, each with its own distinctive charm, reflect the builders' and owners' taste and the heritage and history of the area. Mobile is a modern and progressive city with a tremendous respect for its past.

Interesting Facts

Mobile is known as the city of six flags having flown under the French, Spanish, British, Republic of Alabama, Confederacy, and the USA flags.

Mobile Bay is also known as the Azalea City, thanks to Fifise Langlois who first brought the bright pink blossoms here from his father's garden in Toulouse, France in 1754. When in bloom, Mobile is blanketed with more than 50 varieties in colors from paper white to pink, red and translucent lavender.

Mobile Bay is home to the original Mardi Gras in this country, instituted in 1703, years before New Orleans adopted the celebration. Mobile's Mardi Gras is very family friendly.

Mobile Bay was the first body of water in the New World to be accurately charted. This was done by Pineda in 1519.

Modern Mobile Bay derives more than half its annual wealth from industries dependent upon and directly allied with waterborne commerce.

The correct pronunciation of the city is mo-beel, given the soft emphasis on the second syllable by its French founders.

Mobile is home to such national events as the GMAC Bowl and Senior Bowl (January), the Azalea Trail Run and Festival of Flowers (March.) As well as Bay Fest (October), Greek Fest (November) and Magic Christmas in Lights (Nov/Dec.)

Mobile Bay holds the second largest natural gas reserve in the world.

Mobile Bay is homeport to Carnival Cruise Line's Fun Ship the HOLIDAY. With over 70 cruises departing from the downtown waterfront area each year.

In 2008, Forbes magazine named Mobile as the fastest growing metro area in the country. The economy is projected to increase 34% between the years 2007 to 2012.

The Delta

The Delta offers a variety of opportunities to enjoy the flora and fauna of this unique part of Alabama and the world. Whether it is a morning excursion by boat simply to enjoy the sights and sounds, an afternoon spent capturing memories with a camera or enjoying a fishing or hunting trip, the Delta has something to offer everyone.

Humans have lived in and around the Delta for many centuries, dating back to at least 1500 BC. A most spectacular evidence of prehistoric human existence is found deep within the Delta at a site known as the Bottle Creek Indian Mounds. Archaeologists believe that leaders of a Mississippian Period Indian culture lived atop these mounds during their cultural dominance around 700 years ago. Around the time of Columbus, these prehistoric societies had largely faded, replaced by new tribes such as the Alabamians, Mobilians, and Tensa, from whom key place names (Alabama, Mobile, and Tensaw) were derived as the Delta became an avenue of exploration for wanderers to the new world.

In 1559 explorer Tristan de Luna waded ashore in Mobile Bay to attempt one of the first European settlements in the New World. Like other Spanish adventurers – Pantilo de Narva'ez, Alvarez de Pineda, and Hernando de Soto – de Luna found this part of coastal America to be especially appealing. The Spanish called the Mobile River "Rio del Espirita Santo," River of the Holy Spirit.

Mobile and the surrounding areas are of no exception to this trend. In 2002, the Coastal Alabama Birding Trail opened with tremendous success. Bird watching is a growing sport with thousands of birdwatchers coming to this area to see the various species that inhabit this area.

The Delta offers visitors a different perspective of life on Mobile Bay. Mobile's newest waterfront attraction is Five Rivers: Delta Resource Center. Here you can kayak into the Delta for half a day or half a week. Floating camping platforms are provided for the adventurous. You can check out the alligators on a safari boat ride through the Delta, learn about Delta wildlife in the exhibit hall, watch a film in the Delta in a state-of-the-art digital theater and much more at Five Rivers.

Foodie Fun

- Operating in the same location for over 80 years **Three Georges Candy Shop** is the ultimate in sweets including the hand dipped chocolates and especially the gourmet sugar eggs for Easter.
- **Dew Drop** - Famous for their Upside Down Dog - where the dog rests atop condiments such as chili, kraut, relish, mustard and more.
- **Wintzell's Oyster House** has been serving off-the-boat fresh Gulf Coast seafood since 1938.
- **Bailey's Restaurant** - the delicacy known as West Indies Salad was first developed by Mr. Bailey in this Fowl River Restaurant.
- **The Visitation Monastery** on Springhill Avenue- the nun's of this cloistered monastery make a sinful Heavenly Hash sold in their gift shop every year.
- **Coconut Creme Pie** from the **Tiny Diny Restaurant** features a meringue that is at least five inches high!

Cuisine of Sea

With the bounty of the sea at Mobile Bay's front door, we are known for the ability to please any type of connoisseur with our tempting fare. From the delicious Gulf shrimp prepared how you like it - barbecued, fried, boiled, or steamed; to oysters on the half-shell and the flaky white fish of the Gulf of Mexico, there is enough variety to satisfy everyone's tastebuds. Mobile Bay is long known for capturing the best of the sea and this reputation is represented in restaurants located throughout the area. Many of the legendary hangouts of Mobile are still operating today. Located within walking distance of the Arthur R. Outlaw-Mobile Convention & Visitors are a variety of establishments featuring Southern delicacies. While in the Mobile Bay area, we invite you to sample traditional Gulf Coast cuisine. If seafood is not your thing, there is plenty of other unique and delicious fare influenced by our many cultures and served "Mobile-style."

The History of Mobile Bay

1519 Alonso Alvarez de Pineda, with four ships, sails from Jamaica to explore the northern Gulf Coast.

1558 In advance of the colonial expedition of Tristan de Luna, Guido de las Bazaes explores the northern Gulf Coast. He reports favorably of "Bahia Filipina", which has been presumed to be Mobile Bay.

1559 The expedition of Tristan de Luna arrives at Bahia Filipina (Mobile Bay) but rejects the place as a suitable base of operations. Traveling on to Ochuse (Pensacola Bay), a hurricane destroys his convoy. The expedition is then conveyed to Nanipacna on the Alabama River. The route taken is apparently through Mobile Bay, ascending the Tensaw River.

1701-1711 Mobile at 27-Mile Bluff is the capital of French Louisiana. The principal harbor is established in Pelican Bay on the south side of Dauphin Island.

1717-1731 The capital of Louisiana is transferred from Mobile to New Biloxi in 1720, thence to New Orleans in 1722, reducing Mobile's influence and importance.

1763-1780 Mobile is transferred to British dominion at the Treaty of Paris. Mobile harbor is reopened to seagoing trade, employing the anchorage in the lower Bay.

1780 Bernardo de Galvez besieges and captures Mobile. Four ships of his Spanish convoy are lost in Mobile Bay.

1814 Mobile is captured by the American General Wilkinson.

1815-1861 Mobile enjoys a half-century of prosperity as the second largest international seaport on the Gulf Coast. Progress is based upon the ascendancy of cotton as an export commodity. The Mobile and Ohio railroad is completed.

1861-1865 The city, fortified by the Confederates, is blockaded during the Civil War by Farragut's "West Gulf Blockading Squadron". The Battle of Mobile Bay, fought in August 1864.