

# Self-Guided Walking Tour

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Castillo de San Marcos  
National Monument  
St. Augustine, Florida

## Room Legend



Eastern National Bookstore  
Get your Passport Stamp here!



Second Spanish Period



Orientation  
Junior Ranger Station



Religion at the Castillo



Construction and Design



American Occupation



Contest of Nations



Artillery Complex



First Spanish Period



Preservation



British Period



The Soldiers' Life



First Aid is available in the Sally Port and at the ticket booth.

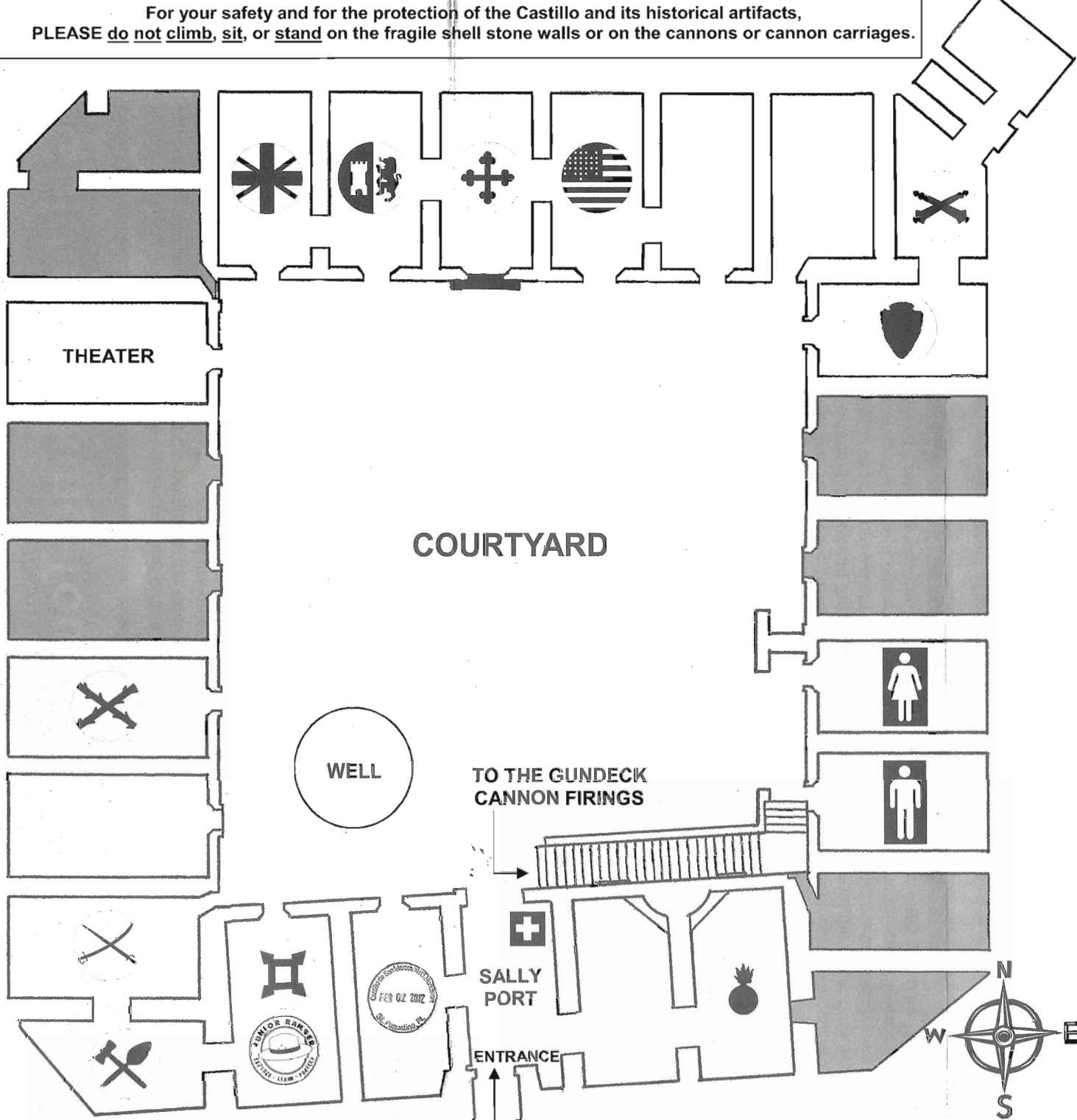
## Welcome!

Each room marked on the map with a circular icon contains an exhibit panel also marked with the same icon. These panels, as well as the other displays in each room, will help tell you the story of Castillo de San Marcos National Monument. The rooms shaded in grey are currently closed to the public. On the back of this page, you will find more information about the individual rooms and other parts of the fort.

You have entered one of the most extraordinary places in the United States, incorporating over 335 years of history and culture. Construction of the Castillo de San Marcos began in 1672, making it one of the oldest standing structures in North America. The fort has undergone many renovations and changes over the years but appears today much as it would have looked at its final completion in 1756.

The Castillo was initially built by the Spanish to protect their vast empire in the Americas. Engineer Ignacio Daza designed a fortress using a *bastion* system. The star-like outline of the Castillo is formed by diamond shaped projections, called bastions, on each corner of the fort. This design eliminates blind spots for the guards in the *garitas*, or sentry boxes, at each bastion point and increases the fort's firepower by allowing multiple cannons to fire on the same target, creating a crossfire effect. For an aerial view of the Castillo, please see the full-color park brochure.

For your safety and for the protection of the Castillo and its historical artifacts,  
PLEASE do not climb, sit, or stand on the fragile shell stone walls or on the cannons or cannon carriages.





# Self-Guided Walking Tour



Your tour begins in the **Sally Port**, the entrance of the fortress. This was the only way in or out of the Castillo. Here you can see the large drawbridge and the *portcullis*, the heavy sliding door. Between these two wooden barriers, the strength of the Castillo is apparent. The thickness of the outer walls varies from 14 to 19 feet thick at the base and tapers to 9 feet towards the top. Note the blocks of coquina stone that make up these walls and how they were set together. There are over 400,000 blocks of stone in the Castillo, all of it cut and set by hand.

There are several rooms that are accessible only through the Sally Port. To the right are the Spanish guard rooms and a locked room that served as the town jail. During Spanish occupation, soldiers did not live inside the Castillo. They walked to work from their homes in town. The soldiers detailed to be on overnight guard duty would have used these rooms to rest, cook food, and spend free time socializing and playing games. The room to the left, currently our bookstore, was once part of the officers' quarters.



These rooms hold several exhibits which introduce you to the fort's history, design, and construction. The flags in the first room represent the different nations the Castillo has served: Hapsburg and Bourbon Spain, Great Britain, and the United States. Though the fort has changed hands between countries many times, every transfer was negotiated through treaty and agreement, not battle. One of the major contributing factors to the Castillo's success is *coquina*, the stone from which the fortress is constructed. Because the stone is porous, it compresses under the impact of cannon fire rather than shattering, making the Castillo practically indestructible.



In this room, you will notice some unusual features. The raised platform at the back is believed to be the original mortar mixing pit used during the Castillo's construction. Looking up towards the window, there is a ledge that marks the original height of the Castillo's walls: 22 feet at their initial completion in 1695.



The Castillo was originally built to act not only as a refuge for the townspeople but also as a military warehouse. The Spanish used the western casemates for food storage, and they would have looked much like the locked supply room. Other casemates were filled with military supplies such as gunpowder, hardware, ship repair materials, and as many as 20,000 cannonballs.



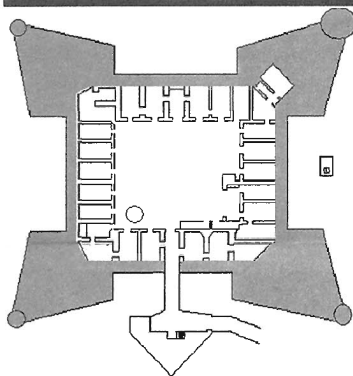
All of the stone casemates were constructed between 1738 and 1756, a time of almost constant warfare between Spain and England in the New World. The walls were raised to 35 feet during this remodeling, and these curved ceilings were constructed. Vaulted casemates disperse the weight of the structure throughout the supporting walls and foundation, so they are able to hold much more weight than a simple squared roof. This made these rooms "bomb proof" and allowed the Spanish to place more cannon on the gun deck above. When the casemates were finished, the Castillo was able to defend itself, the city, and all approaches to the city out to three and a half miles, the maximum range of the 16-, 18-, and 24-pounder cannon mounted along the fort's walls.



This room shows you how the British remodeled eight of the casemates during their occupation of Florida from 1763 to 1784. Divided into East and West, Florida became the 14th and 15th British colonies in North America and remained loyal to Great Britain during the American Revolution. During the war, as many as 500 British soldiers were housed inside the Castillo. Many more were placed in the homes of local citizens.



The first room in this northeast corner was the artillery quarters during the Second Spanish Period (1784 to 1821). The next casemate was the ordinance supply room where tools and materials for serving the cannons were kept and issued. The small narrow room once housed a staircase to the gundeck to make transporting gunpowder quicker. The tiny doorway you see here is the entrance to the original gunpowder magazine. The Spanish realized soon after construction that the little room was too humid to store powder, so they used it as a trash pit during the 51 days of the 1702 Siege. Eventually, a new magazine was built in the northwest corner. The old magazine and the staircase room were sealed, not to be discovered again until 1832 when a cannon fell through the gundeck.



The central courtyard of the Castillo, which originally had a dirt floor, served a double purpose. During peacetime, soldiers would assemble here to drill with their muskets. As the common soldier of the 18th century was illiterate, musket and cannon procedures had to be learned by repetitive drilling, not by reading instruction manuals. Once the men had their drills committed to muscle memory, they would not forget them during the heat of battle. It was also here that the citizens of St. Augustine would take refuge when the town was under siege. In this sense, the Castillo was a true castle, built to protect the entire community in times of war. In 1702, the city was attacked by the English, and about 1,500 soldiers and civilians were packed into the Castillo for 51 days!

As you climb the stairs from the courtyard, you will come upon the most important part of the Castillo. By 1740, this gun deck and the surrounding city wall mounted over 70 cannons of varying size. The largest of these guns had a range of three and a half miles. With the clear view from

these high walls, it is easy to see how the Castillo could defend the town from any attack by either land or sea. The large tower once housed a platform for a lookout and a bell that was rung to warn the town of attack or danger.

The design of the fort consists of four diamond-shaped *bastions* and four connecting walls known as *curtains*. Cannon were mounted in the *embrasures*, the cut-outs in the *parapet* walls. These walls protected the cannon and their crews from incoming fire. The east curtain, facing the water, originally had a parapet wall and embrasures like the other curtains. However, anticipating that most attacks would come from the ocean, the Spanish lowered the wall so that more cannon could be mounted there without limitation. As you look down from the east wall, you will see the water battery installed by the U.S. Army in the 1840s. The moat originally encircled the entire fort, but the east side was filled in to make room for large cannon. The small oven-like structure is a hot shot furnace, used to heat cannonballs red-hot to be fired at wooden ships.

Visible from the west wall are the original city gates and a replica of the Cubo Line, one of the walls that encompassed the city. The wall was fronted by a shallow moat and topped with a yucca known as Spanish Bayonet, so named for its long, sharp leaves. The original Cubo Line and the north-to-south Rosario Line have deteriorated over time and are no longer standing.