

HISTORY AND NATURE

Key West has a long and rich history. Spanish explorers first surveyed the island in 1513. After the Florida territory was transferred to the United States, the Navy established a small depot here in 1822 to rid the area of pirates. Fishing, salvaging wrecked ships and manufacturing cigars became the driving economic forces behind the island's growth and made Key West the richest city in Florida in the 1890s.

The U.S. Army began construction of Fort Taylor, named for President Zachary Taylor, in 1845. With secession and the beginning of war in 1861, Fort Taylor remained under federal control — one of only three fortresses in Florida to do so. It served as the headquarters for the Navy's East Gulf Coast Blockading Squadron. The fort stayed on active duty status through 1947. Today, the fort is a National Historic Landmark containing the largest cache of Civil War era seacoast cannons in the United States.

The flora and fauna found in the park reflect the subtropical location of Key West. The park's tropical hardwood hammock serves as an important rest area for numerous birds — including many endangered species — that migrate in the spring and fall.

Bird watchers flock to the park to view colorful warblers and the white-crowned pigeons. It's not uncommon to see a great egret hunting for lunch or a flock of ibis along the side of the park drive. The park is home to many butterfly species, regularly seen darting around the beachside garden.



FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR HISTORIC STATE PARK

601 Howard England Way
Key West, FL 33040
305-292-6713

PARK GUIDELINES

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required.
- The collection, destruction or disturbance of plants, animals or park property is prohibited.
- Pets are permitted in the park but not on the beach or in the fort. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than six feet and well-behaved at all times.
- Kayaks may be launched from a designated launch area. Hard-bottomed vessels are prohibited in the swimming area.
- Alcoholic beverages, fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- To volunteer, inquire at the ranger station.
- Please take your trash with you. The park is a carry-in, carry-out park.
- Florida's state parks are committed to providing equal access for all visitors to facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

FloridaStateParks.org

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FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR HISTORIC STATE PARK



Florida's Southernmost State Park



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EXPERIENCES & AMENITIES

Welcome to Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park, home of America's southernmost Civil War fortress. Explore history inside the fort. Enjoy nature in shady hammocks. Spend your day fishing, or create your own fun on our beach and catch a spectacular view of the sunset.

Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park has something for everyone — from beachside activities to an educational walk through history. A sprawling beach of sand and pebbles, and nearby breakwaters teeming with tropical fish, ensure great fun in the sun for both beachcombers and snorkelers. Water shoes are recommended because of the rocky sea bottom.

Visit the huge shady picnic area with convenient tables and grills, where families can enjoy a taste of their own freshly caught fish. Or visit the hut on the beach, which offers a variety of rental equipment, including beach chairs and snorkel gear. Close-by is a small café where visitors can enjoy food and refreshments on an umbrella-shaded deck. There are two nature trails allowing glimpses of birdlife and native trees, shrubs and wildflowers.

Ranger-led activities are held throughout the year, including fort tours, nature walks and other programs. Visitors can learn about the park's history through fort tours and re-enactments.



Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park



Directions

The park is located near the end of U.S. Highway 1. From U.S. 1, turn right onto Whitehead Street, then left on Southard Street to gain access to the park.

