

Urca de Lima
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During the summer of 1715, two Spanish convoys collecting goods from across Central and South America converged in Havana, Cuba and set sail for Spain. Within days of leaving Cuba these eleven vessels were struck by a fierce hurricane sending many inshore to wreck along the shallows of the Florida coastline. *Urca de Lima*, originally called Santísima Trinidad, obtained its nickname because it was a store ship for *Urca* and was owned by Don Miguel de Lima. She was a 305 ton Dutch-built vessel which grounded near present day Fort Pierce during a storm, but at the time was left relatively intact. The *Urca* provided survivors from the other wrecked ships with provisions from her stores until supplies finally arrived from Havana 31 days later. She was the first of the fleet wrecks to be salvaged by Spanish crews from Havana but was then burned to the waterline to conceal her position from English freebooters who also began to arrive at the scene.

Urca de Lima remained forgotten and covered by sand until 1928 when the city of Fort Pierce funded a search to relocate the fleet and at that time sixteen cannons and four anchors were raised from the site and put on display around the city. In 1932 the first salvage permit was issued to search for and recover Spanish treasure. Unfortunately for the salvors *Urca de Lima* did not carry the royal treasure they so hoped to find, only private silver in sacks and chests. As a result salvage efforts were only marginally successful. After many years of searching the last permittee abandoned the site for bigger treasures. In 1985 *Urca de Lima's* surviving hull structure was carefully mapped and recorded by state archaeologists at the request of the Saint Lucie county historical commission, who wanted to have an underwater park. Two years later, in 1987, Florida's Underwater Archaeological Preserve System was born. *Urca de Lima* became the first preserve and in 2001 was listed on the national register of historical places.