

S12EB Day Paddles - Estero Bay

Northeast Estero Bay Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Head NNW across Estero Bay to Trail Marker 19 behind Black Key, then NNE to Markers 20, 21, and 27A, where you turn in to the Estero River. Go to Marker 27 where the current should change because you're now going out of the Estero River and stay left to go back out to the bay. The current can get strong. You'll hit the Bay at Marker 28 and Marker 28A is a short distance straight ahead. Turn NNW toward Rocky Bay and go to 26° 27' 06"N and turn east into a cove that winds its way north and narrows and comes back out at 26° 27' 50"N. Turn south and head almost straight back south 4.5 miles to the launch, skirting Mound Key and Charlie Key and a bunch of small mangrove islands.

Skill Level: Advanced

Distance/Time: 12.8 Miles/6 Hours

Launch Site: Lovers Key SP Estero Blvd Ramp across from the main entrance. There's a rest room and a store at the public boat launch. If the bay is too rough, consider going west into Lovers Key for a nice quiet paddle with the manatees.

Special Considerations: Estero Bay itself has plenty of surrounding landmarks and there is boat traffic (fishing) for asking directions, but a GPS, map and compass is recommended. The bay has a long fetch, so waves can get pretty high. There are large shallow areas south of the Estero River outfall and in Rocky Bay at low tide.

Skill Level Definitions

Beginner: New to paddling and may need tips and or instructions about paddling strokes, safety procedures, and entering/exiting kayaks. Comfortable on short trips of 1 to 3 miles on protected waters, when wind does not exceed 5 mph.

Novice: Paddlers acquainted with basic paddle strokes and can manage kayak handling independently in winds not exceeding 10 mph on protected waters. Comfortable on trips up to 6 miles.

Intermediate: Paddlers with experience in basic strokes and some experience on different venues, including some open water. Comfortable on trip distances of 6 to 10 miles, winds not exceeding 15 mph.

Advanced: Seasoned paddlers who possess skills and experience to paddle all venues and conditions. Experienced in self-rescues. Should be comfortable paddling more than 10 miles in a day.

NOTE: Great care has been taken to ensure this guides accuracy, but weather, tides, and water conditions can change rapidly and create hazardous conditions. These maps are for visual reference only, please consult NOAA Charts for navigation. Paddlers should have all proper safety equipment and check conditions before departure. All paddlers should always wear PFDs while on the water, and leave a float plan. There are inherent dangers in any paddle sport. There are special hazards along the Florida coast due to shifting tides, changing wind and weather, shallow waters, and treacherous bottoms with soft mud, rocks, and oyster bars. It is up to each paddler to be aware of these dangers, to accept and be prepared for the risks involved, and to be certain they have the skills to safely paddle in these conditions.