

S12MP Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips—Matlacha Pass

Picnic Island Primitive Camp Trip Information Sheet

Description: Head south after leaving the launch site and follow the eastern shore of Pine Island. If it is windy, you can take the inside passage through the islands almost all the way to St James City. Picnic Island is almost due east of the southern tip of Pine Island. There are several nice beaches to land around the island. Return is to the same launch site at Tropical Point.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Time: 4.7 Miles each way/ 3 Hours each way

Launch Site: Tropical Point Paddle Launch - South on Stringfellow Rd and east on Tropical Point Dr.

Special Considerations: Matlacha Pass is at it's widest at this point and can get rough on windy days. There are no facilities on Picnic Island, and the camping is primitive. Practice "Leave no Trace" principles. Be careful crossing the channel on the north side of the island due to heavy boat traffic. It can be very busy on weekends with power boaters and picnickers, especially on the northeast side.

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.