

S15LK Day Paddles and Overnight Trips - Lower Keys

Molasses Key Primitive Camp Trip Paddle Information Sheet

Description: The Molasses Keys are only a little over 2 miles from the south end of the Seven Mile Bridge. Take a break at Money Key about halfway there. Look for Bahama Sea Stars on the way out. There is a lot of other sea life to look for like stingrays and sharks. Many bird species inhabit the islands, the rare white-crowned pigeons nest there, and during spring and fall, migrating warblers and other birds can be seen passing thru.

Skill Level: Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 2.7 Miles Each Way/1.5 Hours each way

Launch Site: Little Duck Key - Wayside Park Ramp

Special Considerations: As you paddle towards the Molasses Keys, you might be pushed out if the tide is receding or drawn toward the bridges if the tide is rising. There is a section of choppy water between Money and the Molasses Keys. Just stay calm, keep your eyes on the islands and keep paddling! The Molasses Keys are privately owned islands that locals and tourists have been visiting for years. Please respect these pristine keys that the owners keep trash free. Do not take anything and do not leave anything, especially trash but also do not post any signs or structures. Hurricane Irma in September 2017 destroyed the islands with major loss of trees and even extensive loss of land (particularly the beach on the little key). **Permission is required for camping.** Contact Frank & Monica by messaging from the Facebook page, Friends of the Molasses Keys or calling Monica at 305-394-9252. Open water paddling.

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.