

S16 Day Paddles and Overnight Camping Trips – Biscayne Bay

Soldier Key-Fowey Rocks Light Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This is an open water paddle into the Atlantic to the Fowey Rocks Lighthouse. Built in 1878, it sits 130' above the water and serves as the "Eye of Miami". Construction materials were initially stored at Soldier Key (your next stop), then ferried to the ongoing construction site. The light was positioned there to protect ships from hitting the knife edged reef below. The light is still functional, with a modern solar powered light that replaced the original Fresnel light that was made in Paris. After checking out the lighthouse, head west, back into Biscayne Bay to Soldier Key, where you can get out and stretch your legs, and take a break. Soldier Key is the northernmost key of the Florida Keys. It lies on the "Safety Bar" sandbar that separates the Atlantic from Biscayne Bay.

Skill Level: Advanced

Distance/Approximate Time: 15.8Miles/6.5 Hours

Launch Site: Bill Baggs Cape Florida State Park

Special Considerations: Ocean water paddling. This paddle is for experienced sea kayakers only. Winds are generally lighter in the mornings, and tend to pick up in the afternoons, except when cold fronts come through in the cooler months. Always check the local weather reports before departure. State Park entry fees.

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.