

S6 Day Paddles - Cedar Key Area

Atsena Otie Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Originally settled by native Americans more than 2,000 years ago, Atsena Otie (Muskogean for Cedar Island) was the first settlement in the Cedar Key area. The first modern settlement was a army headquarters during the Second Seminole War in the 1820s. By 1860 the population was more than 200 strong and included a pencil factory. After several hurricanes, the island was eventually abandoned by the early 1900s for what is now present day Cedar Key. There is a cemetery on the island, and it is accessible by kayak on the backside of the island. There is a great beach on the north side of the island which is visible from the approach to the island. If you decide to hike the trail near the pier to the cemetery bring plenty of bug repellent!

Skill Level: Intermediate, due to open water paddling

Distance/Approximate Time: 3 Miles/2 Hours

Launch Site: City Park Beach

Special Considerations: Can get quite rough on windy days, especially in the channel. Paddle through the inside of the island on medium to high tides only, otherwise, circumnavigate the entire key. Be mindful of commercial and recreation powerboats at the ramp and when crossing the channel. Kayak rentals are available at the City Park Beach.

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.