

S15UK Day Paddles - Upper Keys

Indian Key Historic SP Paddle Information Sheet

Description: Indian Key Historic State Park is one of the best paddles in the Keys, not in terms of the paddle which is very short but in the destination. It is the only ghost town in the Keys and the history has been laid out by the park as a self-guided walk along the streets of the former Dade county seat. It is also fun to snorkel along the rocky shoreline where there are lots of tropical fish, conch and soft corals. It is a pleasant place for a picnic either under the tamarind grove with ruins of foundations and cisterns all around you or on the covered dock where it's always breezy. For botanists, it is fascinating to see all the interesting plants brought there by plant collector Dr. Henry Perrine from his travels around the world.

Skill Level: Novice

Distance/Approximate Time: 2.1 Miles/1 Hour

Launch Site: Indian Key Fill Paddle Launch. When the boat launch is busy, it is recommended to launch from the side of the road directly north of Indian Key over the sea wall. This also alleviates paddling under the bridge which can have a strong current.

Special Considerations: There is a wide grass flat between the shore and Indian Key so it is wise to time your departure about an hour before high tide so that you have time to get out to the island, spend a few hours and get back all during high tide. Hiking shoes are a necessary for hiking. There is a fee station on the island so bring some single dollar bills to support the state parks.

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.