

S15UK Day Paddles - Upper Keys

Lignum Vitae Botanical SP Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This is a nice paddle across numerous tidal channels where many species can be spotted travelling between the ocean and bay - stingrays, turtles, tarpon and sharks are likely. Circumnavigating the island is fun with some small passages through the mangroves on the south side to explore.

Skill Level: Novice/Intermediate

Distance/Approximate Time: 4.9 Miles/2.5 Hours

Launch Site: Indian Key Fill Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: This island is very buggy so be prepared with bug spray or extra clothing. The rangers don't allow anyone to use the trails without being accompanied by a ranger so if you don't arrive in time for one of the 2 daily ranger guided hikes, plan to just explore the Matheson house and take a lunch break on the dock. Another option is to circumnavigate the island. The park is closed on Tuesdays & Wednesdays so it is not permissible to land on these days. This is a fee area so have some dollars ready to pay the rangers. 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.