

NATURE TOURS | SNORKELING | KAYAKING | SCUBA | FISHING

ECOGUIDE

FLORIDA KEYS



BY RICHARD H. STEWART | COVER BY TOM STACK

www.EcoGuideFloridaKeys.com

ECOGUIDE

FLORIDA KEYS

Eco & Aquatic Adventures | www.EcoGuideFloridaKeys.com

Sustainable EcoTourism. How Does It Benefit You?

Greetings -

You don't have to be an outfitter to benefit - you already do from the thousands of visitors that flock to the Florida Keys for the beautiful waters, beaches, inlets and lagoons - to snorkel, scuba, kayak, fish or - just enjoy the pristine environment and nature.

YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

It's our goal to preserve - to "Respect and Protect" our environment - thus - our livelihood - and we need to bring this message to each and every visitor here or coming to enjoy our eco and aquatic assets.

We all depend on it. After all - we may have great rooms, entertainment and accommodations - but - it is our environment that is the magnet producing millions in sustainable EcoTourism dollars!

WON'T YOU CONSIDER SUPPORTING THIS VERY WORTHY EFFORT?

Sincerely,



Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

INTRODUCING THE ECOGUIDE TO THE FLORIDA KEYS

To Benefit Sustainable EcoTourism in the Florida Keys



The Florida Keys are graced with a pristine eco-environment which fuels our tourism - the beaches, inlets, lagoons and mangroves are our natural assets.

Excellent accommodations, restaurants and entertainment make the Keys all the more enjoyable but – the main attraction is it's nature. Sustainable ecotourism has been and always will be the base of our economy. Without a pristine environment there would be no visitors.

The goal of the *ECOGUIDE* is to promote preservation while providing reliable visitor information on where to go to enjoy our eco and waterside activities.

Reach new arrivals via in-room and lobby distribution.

Reach out-of-state vacationers in search of adventures in nature via nationwide travel and adventure expos - and online via EcoGuideFloridaKeys.com.

Your support, as a display-advertising sponsor, is greatly appreciated.

For display ad insertion call 352.817.5893 or email Richard@EcoGuideFloridaKeys.com.

Aerial Tours

Get a bird's-eye view on an aerial tour and you will see why the Indian River Lagoon is North America's most diverse



estuary system and an estuary of national significance. Here, where salt and fresh water mingle, are more than 4,000 species of plants and animals. Check with the New Smyrna Beach Municipal Airport or Daytona Beach International Airport for current aerial tour operators.

Bicycling

With miles of endless, hard-packed sand from Ponce Inlet to well beyond the 27th street beach ramp, beach biking is not only a great scenic tour of the oceanfront but a great workout as well! If the beach route is not enough then you might want to cruise along North Atlantic Avenue from Flagler Avenue to where the street meets with north Peninsula and on to the Smyrna Dunes Park. The park has a great boardwalk but - bicycling is not permitted

Another great ride starts from Saxon Drive, just behind the beachside Publix, where there is a bike path that runs south to the Indian River Lagoon Preserve Park - or IRLP as it is sometimes referred to locally. IRLP also has a number of hard-packed dirt paths that run under and around majestic oak trees ending at a shaded viewing

deck overlooking the mangrove-lined lagoon waters.

For the hearty rider there's the double-bridge challenge! Starting from Flagler Avenue

head west over the North Causeway bridge and continue until you reach North Riverside Drive turning left at the corner of the NSB Marina. Head two blocks south until you reach Canal Street, then turn right until you reach the traffic signal at Live Oak where you will then turn left and ride until you reach Lytle Avenue - also known as A1A. You are now at the base of the South Causeway bridge and if you approach from the left side there is a sidewalk which runs east all the way back to Peninsula Avenue where you



BICYCLE & KAYAK ADVENTURES

553 Third Avenue
386-423-8123
www.EcoGuideToTheWaterside.com/BicycleKayak.htm

take a left ending up at the start on Flagler Avenue. If this does not give your lungs and legs a workout - nothing will!

If you have not brought



your own bike you can rent from Beach Bicycle and Kayak - just around the corner from A1A and Peninsula.

Board Surfing

If you are not a surfer you might want to try your hand - or your body that is - at body surfing! Also known as boogie boarding, which is actually a brand of body boards, body surfing is easy and fun for all ages and can be accomplished wherever there are breaking waves.

Body surfing requires the use of a small, mini-like surf

board where you basically lay your chest to waist on top of the board as you launch in front of an oncoming wave. Avid body surfers will use short, duck-like fins to aid in steering. Sometimes the

waves break with such gusto, that one is bound and determined to ride that wave. Keep in mind, that when body surfing, you are actually in the

wave, unlike board surfers who ride atop the wave. Therefore when that wave crashes into the hard ocean floor below it, so might you - unless the depth of the water is sufficient to give you enough room to recoil from the crashing wave without crashing into the bottom. We often forget the incredible awesome power of the ocean.

Canoeing

Canoeing can practically be done from any place where there is (public) access to the waterfront. Many of these access points are the same locations used by kayakers (refer to the Kayaking section for locations).

If estuary canoeing does not interest you, you may want to consider a leisure paddle up a creek! Cracker Creek is located on the original 20 acre homestead of Roland "Rollie" F. Johnson, caretaker for the James Gamble Estate. The cabin he lived in along with the home built in 1933 for his wife, Lela E. Miller, and nurse of James Gamble, are located on the property. Canoes can be rented from Bicycle and Kayak Adventures located south side of Third Avenue as you approach beachside from the south causeway.

Eco & Sunset Cruises

Many of the ecotour guests are surprised to learn that the Indian River Lagoon is North America's most diverse estuary system and has been designated as an Estuary of National Significance. Here, where salt and fresh water mingle, are more than 4,000 species of plants and animals, including 35 listed as threat-



ened or endangered.

Mangrove plants line shorelines and provide habitat for many species of animals and invertebrates. Birds such as osprey, pelicans, ibis, herons, roseate spoonbills or even bald eagles are commonly seen. In the estuary, bottlenose dolphins chase pods of bait fish, and manatees charm us with their slow-moving gentle ways as they swim with their newborns. Numerous species of fish live in the Indian River Lagoon, including mullet that leap from the water and the predators that savor them, such as saltwater trout and redfish. Sea turtles traverse the River. Each outing is a new adventure as the estuary reveals its seasonal treasures.

As your Captain skillfully navigates the backwaters of the lagoon, you will experience first-hand the solitude and nat-

ural beauty of this Florida treasure while learning of our efforts to ensure we preserve its uniqueness for generations to come.

Nearly every day of the year you can enjoy one of the following tours on board "Discovery" which enthrall visitors and residents alike. Our vessels are United States Coast Guard inspected.

MARINE DISCOVERY CENTER

162 N. Causeway
386.428.4828
Info@MarineDiscoveryCenter.org
www.MarineDiscoveryCenter.org

Segway Tours

There is a new twist to touring and it is called the Segway. This is a great way to get the



most mileage in the shortest period of time - up to two hours - as you glide onto the beach and float alongside the white sandy shoreline where you can see dolphins, pelicans, turtles and other wildlife. The

adventure then glides through some of the lovely hidden neighborhoods and local parks with winding nature paths, beautiful foliage, giant oak trees and gorgeous views.

SEGWAY OF VOLUSIA

307 Flagler Ave,
Suite 104
386.402.8992
Segway@SegwayOfVolusia.com
www.SegwayOfVolusia.com

Fishing

Anglers at nearby Mosquito Lagoon have set international records with giant redfish catches. Deep-sea charters leave daily, giving offshore fishers an easy way to wet a line in the beautiful Atlantic Ocean. A new fisheries facility is in the planning stage for the repopulation of redfish that are the most popular catch in the lagoon.



Kayaking

The Indian River Lagoon has dozens of kayak areas from south of Port Orange to Oak Hill but the only marked kayak trail is off the IRL Park managed by the Marine Discovery Center.

Mosquito Lagoon is a favorite place for many paddlers and is truly one of Florida's treasures - des-

cribed as "one of the top 10 places to paddle in the U.S."

There are multiple places to launch but most frequented are: the National Seashore Park, the Indian River Lagoon Preserve Park, the third Ave and Peninsula launch, the Marine Discovery Center and the Spruce Creek launch.

Low tides expose mud flats and oyster bars that in fall, winter and spring attract a wide variety of wading birds and shorebirds; American oystercatchers are fairly easy to find. Dolphins and manatees are commonly seen in the deeper waters of the intra-coastal waterway.

Throughout the lagoon you can stop on islands with white, sandy beaches - areas that are protected because of shallow water. Motorboats are unable to negotiate them, leaving them virtually untouched. Numerous wading birds,

including roseate spoonbills and wood storks, shorebirds, ospreys, cormorants, brown pelicans and, in winter, white pelicans should be seen. Bald eagles are a good possibility. Look for a stunningly handsome, black-and-white shorebird with a big reddish-orange bill. Oyster bars in Mosquito Lagoon are likely places to see American oystercatchers.

Look down in the water and you may see horseshoe crabs, redfish, mullet and stingrays

There are many backwater areas where there are few visuals for positioning - thus the potential of getting turned around in a tight mangrove lined waterway that can quickly turn into a maze.

If you are not familiar with the area, it is highly recommended that you contact one of several kayak operators: the Marine Discovery Center, Beach Bike and Kayak, JB's Fish Camp or Sunset Quay.

BICYCLE & KAYAK ADVENTURES

553 Third Avenue
386-423-8123
www.EcoGuideToTheWaterside.com/BicycleKayak.htm

INDIAN RIVER LAGOON PRESERVE PARK

off Saxon Drive on Sandpiper Ave., 386-428-4828
info@IRLPPark.com
www.RLPPark.com

JB's FISH CAMP KAYAKS

859 Pompano Avenue
386-427-5747
info@jbsfishcamp.com
www.jbsfishcamp.com

MARINE DISCOVERY CENTER

162 N. Causeway
386.428.4828
Info@MarineDiscoveryCenter.org
www.MarineDiscoveryCenter.org

Sailing / Boating

Going sailing for a day on the ocean in a catamaran is sure to challenge the most avid thrill seeker. There is almost always a brisk wind off the water to get you cruising

along the waves at a fair speed. You are the "cruise director," so to speak, depending on how you adjust the sails. Be prepared for salt water spray, windblown hair, bands of dolphins and other sea life.

Surfing

It's a well known fact that the strip of ocean off the coast of



New Smyrna is one of the best surfing spots in Florida. Rock ledges 4-5 miles offshore cause excellent wave breaks and protect swimmers from dangerous under tows. Not only can accomplished surfers rip up New Smyrna's waves, but beginners can learn the sport in safe waters. No matter your level of expertise, surfing gives you a rush like no other.

Every summer, the American Professional Surfing Association holds one of its



premier contests here. Rookies and veterans from all over the country compete for the titles being given in several categories. A number of locals have gone on to make names for themselves in the surfing world. South side of the Ponce Inlet is a mecca for locals.

Scuba



Scuba diving is as popular here as in the Keys, but the difference is here, we are at the most northern reach of the coral reef system. There are corals but more so, tons of limestone rock crevices, ledges and holes.

A few decades ago the Ponce Inlet Port Authority began an artificial reef program that today boasts a dozen wrecks - mainly tug boats, barges and other derelict vessels that are located 10-25 miles east of the Ponce

Inlet. There are, however, a few massive structures such as the 400' WW II liberty ship the *Mindanao* and the 217' *Rio Yoma* and the 167' *Antillies Star*.

SEA DOG DIVE CTR.

111 Flagler Ave,
386.424.1644
www.SeaDogDiver.com

Walking Tours

New Smyrna Beach is graced with so many great self-tour walking paths. The Smyras *Duns Park*, located on the North Peninsula, is 73 acres of protected habitat for turtles, birds and reptiles surrounded by an elevated boardwalk.

The newest location is the Indian River Lagoon Preserve Park, located off south Saxon Drive, has both paved paths - handicap accessible - and sand paths that run throughout the pristine giant oaks and sawgrass prairies. The IRLP Park is a favorite location for watching lagoon sunsets.

And for those wanting to experience the majestic Atlantic Ocean venue, the National Seashore Park is home to thousands of plant and hundreds of bird species. It is not uncommon to see the occasional loggerhead, green or leatherback sea turtle clamoring to get onshore to lay their eggs.



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772-781-1721

Richard H. Stewart - Publisher/Editor-in-Chief
Ocean Realm Journal / EcoGuides
PO Box 2388, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32170

Dear Richard:

All of us at the National Geographic Snorkeler are very pleased to support your very worthy efforts in creating the EcoGuides series of ecotourism educational information guides.

Our commitment to participate in ALL of your EcoGuides is the most resounding support we can give your project.

For many of our pristine destinations in the U.S. and around the world, sustainable ecotourism is, in our opinion, the best renewable resource revenue stream that is sure to keep people coming back again and again.

Informing visitors about the state of the environment and the need to "Respect and Protect" is essential to the future well-being of these destinations. Encouraging visitors to learn about and enjoy all that these destinations have to offer in the form of ecotours and aquatic adventures will involve the visitors first hand in helping maintain the pristine environment.

We believe the National Geographic Snorkeler is a perfect fit for the mindset of the EcoGuide reader, what better way of allowing the average swimmer the opportunity to get close to nature than snorkeling?

Our philosophy at National Geographic Snorkeler is take only memories, your guides help us forge that mindset.

Congratulations on the release of the initial EcoGuide - we look forward to supporting subsequent guides as they are developed.

Sincerely,

N.A Palmero VP
National Geographic Snorkeler

Cc: file

ECOGUIDE

FLORIDA KEYS

Five Reasons Tourists Visit

#5 - Value-added vacations.

#4 - Accommodating and comfortable resorts, hotels, motels, condos and B&B's.

#3 - Great food, entertainment and shopping establishments.

#2 - A friendly and welcoming community.

#1 - The incredible environment; pristine eco-system, marine life, lagoons, inlets and beaches -
ALL THINGS WATER RELATED!

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Think about it.**

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In addition, each advertiser will have a resource web page to upload images and text as often as needed - great for changing seasonal promotions!

www.EcoGuideFloridaKeys.com

OCEAN REALM MEDIA. Respecting & Protecting the Oceans Since 1980.

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