

S10 Day Paddles - Tampa Bay

Bishop Harbor Paddle Information Sheet

Description: This paddle includes a scenic paddle through Bishop Harbor and out into Tampa Bay. Once in Tampa Bay, scenic views of the Skyway contribute to the pleasure of this trip. This paddle starts at the Bishop Harbor State Park boat ramp. After paddling down the canal into Bishop Harbor, turn left and paddle approximately 1.5 miles to the mouth of Bishop Harbor and into Tampa Bay. Paddle northeast toward Port Manatee, and around the spoil island just outside the mouth of Port Manatee's harbor, then paddle southwest toward the southern approach to the Skyway and circumnavigate Joe Key, just offshore of the Skyway causeway.

Skill Level: Advanced

Distance/Approximate Time: 12.8 Miles/5 Hours

Launch Site: Terra Ceia Preserve State Park. Bishop Harbor Paddle Launch

Special Considerations: This paddle can be done at all water levels, but is best done at medium to high tide. At lower water levels, it may be necessary to paddle around sandbars and areas of shallow water. In general, the shallow water on the south side of Tampa Bay extends about a half mile from shore. This route can be paddled in either direction.

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.