



PADDLING WITH MANATEES

TRIP SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS

- Watching manatees in the crystal-clear waters of the Homosassa & Chassahowitzka Rivers from kayaks
- Learning/reviewing basic kayak strokes & becoming confident paddlers
- Viewing an outstanding array of shorebirds such as the Great Ibis, Snowy Ibis, Great Blue Heron, Anhinga, Cormorant, Wood stork
- Paddling kayaks in pristine and unspoiled beauty
- Visiting Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park to learn more about the manatees & wildlife

TRIP AT A GLANCE

- Location:** Homosassa Springs, FL
Activities: Kayaking and rafting
Arrive: Our trip starts at 10:00am at the Tampa FL Airport (TPA) or 12:30pm at our lodging
Depart: Our trip ends at the Tampa (TPA) airport for departures after 2:30pm

TRIP OVERVIEW

Who can resist these gentle giants in their winter home of Florida's spring-fed rivers?? On this trip we experience the manatees up close and personal in their natural habitat, viewing them through crystal clear waters as we sit above and among them in our kayaks. This is an ideal trip both for women who know they love paddling and for those who want to give kayaking a try: you'll learn basic kayak strokes on calm waters and by the end of the weekend you will be a competent and confident paddler. Even if you discover you don't like kayaking (which we doubt), the thrill of these wondrous creatures sticking their snouts out of the water beside your kayak, as if to be petted, is simply an amazing experience.

We've chosen two very different rivers to experience on this trip, the Homosassa and the Chassahowitzka. The Homosassa, wider and more developed, offers an excellent opportunity to see the manatees as they move in from the cooler ocean temperatures to the warmer waters of this spring fed river. The Chaz is a more primitive river with virtually no development along its shores. It has over 30 springs tucked away on her tiny tributaries and feeder streams. We'll explore just a few of these hidden gems in search of the manatees that hang there for the warmth of the springs. We'll also explore nooks and crannies to see the outstanding array of shorebirds wading, feeding and drying their wings: Great Ibis, Snowy Ibis, Great Blue Heron, Anhinga, Cormorant, and Wood storks all call this area home.

RATING

We have rated this trip a 2 because, since it is both an instructional trip and full of opportunities to watch wildlife, the pace is slower. It is appropriate for active women in basic good health with sufficient mobility to get in and out of the kayak when necessary. **Rating:** 1 [2](#) 3 4 5

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Experienced guides (minimum of 1 guide for 6 participants)
- Three nights double occupancy lodging
- All meals from lunch on 1st day though breakfast on the last day
- Round trip transportation from the Tampa, FL airport
- Kayak rental and instruction
- Entrance fees

Not included: Transportation to and from Tampa, alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities and travel insurance.

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

As is true on any adventure trip, this itinerary may be modified based on weather, tides, changes in conditions, group desires etc. While we cannot guarantee that you will see wild manatees, it is extremely likely based on previous experience.

We meet at the Tampa, FL airport at 10:00am (if you plan to arrive that morning, please make sure your plane arrives by 9:30am). Our drive to the Chassahowitzka Hotel is about 1.5 hours. After settling into our rooms, we will share a welcome picnic lunch and then head to the water for a couple of hours of instruction in our kayaks. Contrary to popular myth, kayaking does not require significant upper body strength; we'll teach you how to paddle safely, effectively, and efficiently so that you are not totally exhausted at the end of the day. This practice time will also help you get to know your boat and how to get it to go where you want it to. By the end of this session, you'll be ready to paddle with the manatees and enjoy your trip! After our time on the water we'll return to our rooms and our group dining area for a hearty meal and a discussion of our plans for the rest of the trip.

DAY 2

We'll spend our first full day on the Homosassa River. We will leave from a nearby boat launch. Our exact paddle will depend on tides and winds. We could paddle by Monkey Island home to several monkeys whose ancestors were left there after a Tarzan movie was filmed on the Homosassa River in 1937. We will hug the shoreline and watch for manatees. We'll learn to spot them by the soft exhalation of air as they stick their snout above the water to breathe and by their form just below the surface of this clear water. If they are curious, they may come right up to us! Despite weighing multiple tons, manatees are very gentle and slow moving, so they pose no danger to us.

We'll continue exploring the Homosassa to its end at the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park. After lunch back at the resort, we head back to the Park, this time by land. This little gem of a park is a great place to learn more about the manatees and the other birds and mammals in the area. We'll be able to see the recovering manatees and a variety of fish through the underwater viewing station. After spending a couple of hours in the park walking among the other animals and birds that also live in this area, we'll return to our rooms for some relaxation and showers. You might opt to hang out on the porch. Whatever you decide to do, we'll end the day with a fabulous meal in our group dining area.

DAY 3

Today we'll explore another spring fed river, the Chassahowitzka or 'the Chaz'. The Chaz is very primitive and feels ancient. You'll find yourself wondering if a T-Rex is going to stick its head over the Spanish moss draped palm trees or if a brontosaurus will be munching on the marsh grasses, we paddle through. The Chaz has over 30 springs, some of which are well hidden and hard to reach. We'll pick a few and paddle to them in our kayaks in search of the manatees that like to gather in the spring's warm water. The Chaz's waters are crystal clear, abundant with colorful fish as you look towards the bottom. The springs are turquoise blue and beautiful to behold, with or without manatees. As we explore the Chaz we'll also watch for shore birds feeding in the waters. If we're lucky, we may even see a Yellow Crested Night Heron.

After our day of paddling we'll return to our resort to shower and change before going to Three Sisters Spring, where we can walk out on a boardwalk to three different springs where manatees hang out. Tonight, we'll go out for our farewell dinner.

DAY 4

After a hearty breakfast we'll pack up and leave our riverside resort for one last experience of the area. This time we'll spend about 2 hours in the woods, hiking Rook Trail in the Withcaloochee State Forest. This 2.7 mile trail is a beautiful hike away from any sign of human development and a peaceful end to our trip, as well as get a chance to stretch our legs before our flights home. We'll be walking on a mix of upland sandhill habitat with hardwood swamp, pine forest and open meadow. After our hike and a few last words, we'll head back to the Tampa airport. You'll be back by 1:30pm and can fly out after 2:30 PM.

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

GETTING THERE

Plan to arrive at the Tampa airport (TPA) by **10am** to make the 10:30am meeting.

If you are driving to Tampa and taking our transportation from there, you can park your car in long-term parking at the airport.

If you are driving to Homosassa Riverside Lodge to meet the group there, program your GPS device with this address: 5297 S Cherokee Way Homosassa, FL 34448

If you would like help with any travel plans we recommend contacting our travel agency, Exito Travel. Start by submitting the form you can find here: https://pay2.exitotravel.com/referral_form?affiliate_id=1090&client=1. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

ACCOMMODATIONS

We spend all three nights at the [Chassahowitzka Hotel](#), which we will have to ourselves. Our hotel is a classic 'sportsman' hotel that has been owned by the same family on and off since 1910. It has recently been renovated to accommodate groups and individuals alike. It is situated next to a large oak tree which gives it a wonderful nostalgic Florida feel. The hotel has a lovely veranda for relaxing and watching the world go by. The rooms are simple with one or two double beds. The rooms do not have ensuite bathrooms. But there are plenty of shared bathrooms and showers in the hotel.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

WE RECOMMEND TRIP CANCELLATION/TRIP INTERRUPTION INSURANCE, WHICH CAN HELP COVER YOUR COSTS IF YOU NEED TO CANCEL OR INTERRUPT YOUR TRIP. Travel protection plans can also include coverage for Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. Adventures in Good Company will send you information about travel insurance with your registration information, or you may purchase coverage through your own insurance company. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 20-0016. The product descriptions provided here are only brief summaries. The full coverage terms and details, including limitations and exclusions, are contained in the insurance policy. Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276. 11.17 83l

CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation charges reflect the many expenses Adventures in Good Company cannot recover if you cancel, even if you must do so due to illness, injury, or personal emergencies. These fees are not meant to be punitive. The charges made reflect the expenses Adventures in Good Company has incurred in administering your reservation and planning for your participation. We recognize that the majority of those who cancel their reservations do so out of necessity. Please note that we do not make any refunds for any unused portion of your trip, not arriving, arriving late, or leaving the trip early.

To qualify for any refunds, we must receive notification in writing, by fax, email or mail to: Adventures in Good Company, 5913 Brackenridge Ave, Baltimore, MD 21212, Fax: 410-435-3084. Cancellation date is the date the notice is received by Adventures in Good Company in writing, either by fax, email or letter.

In the unfortunate event that you must cancel your trip, your refund will be determined by the following formula:

Days Prior to Trip		
International	Domestic	Refund
120 + days	90+ days	All but \$50
120 - 60 days	90 - 45 days	50% of trip fee
59 days or less	44 days or less	No refund

If you have paid in full, we have a waiting list, and we can fill your spot from that list, everything but your deposit will be transferred to another trip of your choosing for which you register in the next 365 days. Trip fees may be transferred from one person to another if, in the opinion of the Adventures in Good Company staff, it is determined that the other person is in the proper physical condition to participate in the trip activity.

Adventures in Good Company reserves the right to cancel or alter a trip due to unforeseen weather, unsafe conditions, low registrations or other circumstances. On the rare occasion when Adventures in Good Company must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be refunded, including the non-refundable portion of your deposit.

Adventures in Good Company is not responsible for expenses incurred in preparation for any canceled trips, including airplane tickets.