



ADVENTURES
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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

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Homosassa Springs, FL
Activities:	Paddling
Arrive:	Our trip starts at 10:15am at the Tampa FL Airport (TPA) or 12:30 pm at our lodging
Depart:	Our trip ends at the Tampa airport for departures after 2:30pm

Trip Overview

Who can resist these gentle giants in their winter home of Florida's spring-fed rivers? During the winter months, manatees come to the springs of Crystal River NWR to conserve the energy necessary to survive the cold Gulf waters. Crystal River is the perfect setting to see a large number of protected Florida manatees in one place in their natural habitat. Hopefully, you will see them up close but practice your "manatee manners" - look, don't touch! 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 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:**  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 the 1st day through 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

We meet at the Tampa, FL airport at 10:15am (if you plan to arrive that morning, please make sure your plane arrives by 9:45am). Our drive to the Chassahowitzka Hotel is about 1.5 hours. After settling into our rooms, we will share a welcome 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 will 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. Our paddle will be on the Homosassa River to the back side of the Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park. 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. After our time on the water we'll return to our hotel and our group dining area for a hearty meal and a discussion of our plans for the rest of the trip.

DAY 2

Today we return to our outfitter and instead of heading up the Homosassa River, we'll turn left and head up the Halls River. Paddling on this scenic river will enhance our skills as we spend more time on the water. We may opt for a different destination, depending on conditions and where the manatees have been hanging out. After lunch back at the hotel, we head back to the Homosassa Springs State Park, this time by land. This little gem of a park is a great place to learn more about the manatees and the native other birds and mammals. This is a haven for rescued wildlife that cannot be safely returned to the wild. 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, we'll return to our hotel for some relaxation. 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 enjoy a farewell dinner together.

DAY 4

After a hearty breakfast we'll pack up and leave our riverside resort for our last experience of the area. This time we'll spend about an hour in the woods, hiking the Salt Marsh Trail. This trail and observation tower provide a sweeping view of a vast span of salt marsh. This is a great way to stretch our legs before our departure. After our hike we'll head back to the Tampa airport. You'll be back by 1:00 pm and can fly out after 2:30 pm.

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

Plan to arrive at the Tampa airport (TPA) by **9:45am** to make the 10:15am 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 the hotel the address is 8551 W Miss Maggie Dr. Homosassa, FL 34448

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Exito charges a one-time, non-refundable processing fees of \$35 per passenger.

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 renovated to accommodate groups and individuals alike. It is situated next to a large oak tree which gives it a wonderful nostalgic Florida feel, with a lovely veranda for relaxing and watching the world go by.

The rooms are simple with one or two twin beds. The rooms do not have ensuite bathrooms, but there are plenty of shared bathrooms and showers in the hotel. There are 2 single rooms available at an additional cost.

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. 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 call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. All products listed are underwritten by, Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276.

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.

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