



## Sea Kayaking Cumberland Island

### TRIP AT-A-GLANCE

Dates: March 2 – March 6, 2011

Location: Cumberland Island National Seashore, GA

Cost: \$ \*765

Rating: 3

Activities: kayaking and camping

Meeting

Place: Jacksonville Airport (JAX)

Arrive: by 12:30pm JAX

Depart: 5 pm at JAX (flights after 6:00 pm)

\* Deduct 5% if you are one of the first 5 to register (by 12/2/10) and 3% of the entire trip fee when the balance is paid by check.

#### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- experienced guides
- one night at a hotel, 3 nights camping
- all meals from dinner on Wednesday to lunch on Saturday
- round-trip transportation from the Jacksonville, FL airport
- one- or two-person kayaks, PFDs, paddles, spray skirts
- all camping equipment including sleeping bags, tents, sleeping pads, cooking equipment

#### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Transportation from home to Jacksonville
- Guide gratuities
- Alcoholic beverages

### Trip Highlights

- Sea kayaking down Crooked River, across the Intracoastal Waterway, and up the salt marsh coast of Cumberland Island
- Camping under majestic oaks at Brickhill Bluff
- Hiking to the pristine beaches of the Atlantic Coast side
- Visiting some of the historic structures that attest to the Island's long human history
- Watching for some of the threatened and endangered shore birds such as American Oystercatchers, Least Terns, and Wilson's Plovers

### Trip Overview

Cumberland Island is the most accessible of Georgia's "wild" barrier islands and wild it still is. Cumberland Island was established as a national seashore in 1973 to preserve the island's scenic, natural and historic qualities. There is limited motorized transportation on the island and no developed tourist facilities (although this unfortunately is slated to change) so the island is currently visited by those who love the outdoors. We will kayak to the more remote and quieter northern part and spend two days exploring the island on foot. During our trip we'll explore a mixture of island environments including a saltwater marsh, a maritime forest, and beaches along the Atlantic coast of the island. And if we're lucky, we'll get a glimpse of the Island's feral horses, left over from earlier historic times.

### Our Itinerary

**Wednesday:** If you are coming just for this trip, we'll pick you up at the Jacksonville Airport at 12:30 pm. We'll drive over to the historic town of St Mary's, a small coastal village right on the St Mary's River that is full of beauty and natural history. St. Marys has been an Indian village, a colonial settlement, and more recently, a U.S. Naval Base: The Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, home of the Trident nuclear submarine fleet. We'll start with a visit to the Cumberland Island National Seashore Visitor's Center for an orientation to the natural and human history of the place we'll be

## CANCELLATION POLICY

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

Days Prior to Trip	Refund
90 + days	All but \$50
90 – 61 days	50% of deposit
60 – 30 days	50% of trip fee
29 days or less	No refund

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.

## TIPPING GUIDELINES

Tipping at the end of the trip is optional. If you feel your guide(s) did an outstanding job and would like to reward them for their efforts, a suggested rule of thumb is US \$5 to \$10 per person, per day.

Oftentimes, trip members organize a group envelope (this makes it anonymous) and present it at the last shared meal.

## Our Itinerary Continued

visiting the next few days, and you will then have some time to shop, visit museums, or go for a marsh walk near Waterfront Park before meeting for dinner. The St. Marys National Historic District has more than 30 buildings and an old cemetery. History lovers will enjoy the nineteenth and early twentieth century homes and churches located in this area.

**Thursday:** The tides are with us today (sea kayaking over to Cumberland Island is not something you want to do against the tides) as we depart in the morning for our launching at Crooked River State Park. We'll paddle down Crooked River enjoying the marshlands and watery grasses around us. We'll look across the river in the distance to see what Navy ships are parked at the Kings Bay Naval submarine base and we'll watch the skies for terns, falcons, great blue herons and other aquatic birds. Crooked River is wide and calm and the tides carry you towards the Intracoastal Waterway and Cumberland Island. Crooked River flows into the Intracoastal (also called Cumberland Sound) and we'll cross here over to Cumberland Island at Plum Orchard, located at about the midpoint of the Island. The Intracoastal is very narrow here and it will only take us a few minutes to cross it. Our total paddling time to Plum Orchard will be about 2 hours.

Plum Orchard is a good place to get out and stretch our legs. Plum Orchard is also the location of a 1898 Georgian Revival mansion built by Andrew Carnegie for his son George and wife Margaret Thaw. It was donated in 1971 by Carnegie members to the National Park Foundation. This mansion, surrounding by ancient oak trees draped with Spanish moss is a beautiful and intriguing location for our break from paddling. The tides, however, will keep us from dawdling as we set out again and follow the inland (western) side of Cumberland's marshy coastline north up to our campsite at Brickhill Bluff (about 3 hours). This marshy area we paddle through is the first of the 3 main environments on Cumberland, the western salt marsh. These marshlands appear to be flat and nondescript but are actually a key environment for the island's health. They decay to provide nutrients to the food cycle and they trap river sediments and act as a protective nursery for much wildlife. These marshlands support shellfish, fish, plants and birds. We are likely to see rails, great blue herons, sandpipers and other wading birds, crabs scurrying across the mud, and perhaps even bottlenosed dolphins.

Brickhill Bluff is the most remote camping spot on the island, situated under large live oaks spreading into a wide, Spanish Moss covered canopy. It provides a great base for exploring the northern part of the island, away from crowds, and with access to both the beach and several historic structures. Brickhill Bluff also faces West, so if we're lucky we'll see some fabulous sunsets as the sun drops below the

## Our Itinerary Continued

water and marsh grasses outside our campsite.

**Friday-Saturday:** We will spend both of these days exploring the island on foot to experience the Island's history, wildlife, and other 2 environments, the maritime forest and the Atlantic Beach. There are over 17 miles of hiking trails on the island and exactly where we go will depend to some extent on the weather and our interests. We will definitely follow the trail that hugs the western most side of the island up to Terrapin Point and the Cumberland Wharf ruins. This north end of the island is somewhat elevated above the Intracoastal and provides some stunning views across the Intracoastal as well as over the marshy lands that separate Cumberland from its smaller northern neighbor, Little Cumberland Island. From here we'll continue on the trail that takes us by the First African Baptist Church. Established in 1893 and then rebuilt in the 1930's, this church was the site of the September 1996 wedding of John F. Kennedy, Jr. and Carolyn Bessette. The trail is flat and shaded and we'll watch for armadillos, raccoons, squirrels and deer as we walk. The saw palmettos, with their fan-shaped leaves growing in the understory of this forest give it an exotic tropical feel. We'll watch the tree canopy for a variety of birds including several warblers, pileated woodpeckers, Carolina wrens and cardinals. Continuing our hike we now head east across the narrow northern tip of the island to the beach on the Atlantic side of the island. Here we will break from the protective shade of the forest into the bright sun of the beach and the Atlantic Ocean. The beach is protected by several layers of dunes that we will walk through, again observing a variety of wading birds and songbirds. We might also encounter the feral horses as we break from the woods into the dunes and onto the beach.

Additional walks, based on interest, could take us to the inland freshwater lakes, or into the interior portions of the island. Regardless of where we go, we'll notice one of the most striking aspects of the live oak forest we're walking through: its silence. Even the air seems to move through the canopy soundlessly and the ferns cradled in the branches tend to offer a sound dampening effect. Each night we'll gather for hearty meals, sunsets over the marshlands, and tales of the incredible history and wildlife of this unique island. (Unfortunately campfires are not allowed)

**Sunday:** This morning we leave with the tides to return the way we have come, back down the western marshy coast of the island, across the Inland Waterway, and up Crooked River. We plan to arrive back at our cars not later than 3pm. We'll pack up and head back to the airport, and you can plan to fly out anytime after 6 pm.

## Packing List

Please pay attention to the allowable size of personal trip gear bags as space in the kayaks is limited. Extra luggage and clothing can be stored in our van. You need to pack everything you take kayaking in dry bags, or at minimum large trash bags.

### FOOTWEAR

- 1 pair shoes for kayaking (will get wet). For winter, neoprene paddling booties/shoes are ideal. However, you can also wear: Solomon or Keen water shoes, Teva/Chaco sandals or aqua socks.
- 1 pair athletic shoes or lightweight hiking shoes/boots for hiking on Cumberland Island and for camp.
- 2 pairs hiking socks (these should fit comfortably in your hiking and paddling shoes, you may need to wear them if the weather is cold)
- 1 pair neoprene socks (optional, but nice to wear with sandals if the weather is cold)

### CLOTHING

- 1 pair comfortable, lightweight pants (light wool or Supplex/nylon material). Zip offs work well.
- 1 pair of shorts (optional)
- 2 T-shirts or short-sleeved shirts, preferably synthetic or lightweight wool
- 1 long-sleeved, lightweight shirt for protection from sun and bugs – button up is ideal
- 1 pair lightweight long underwear top and bottoms: silk, wool or synthetic equivalent (Capilene, Thermastat, MTS, or polypropylene)
- 1 medium-weight top layer: wool shirt/pull-over or synthetic equivalent. A fleece or wool vest can work for this layer.
- 1 midweight fleece jacket
- 1 pair fleece pants (like sweatpants, but not cotton)
- 1 rain parka and rain pants: coated nylon or a **waterproof**/breathable fabric like Gore-tex. Some people like a rain hat as a substitute for wearing their hood while paddling.
- Underwear/nightwear
- 1 wide-brimmed hat for sun and high fashion!
- 1 pair waterproof or neoprene paddling gloves (will be good if the weather is cold)
- one lightweight pair of wool/fleece gloves and a hat
- change of clothing for the trip home (left in our van)

### TOILETRIES (small everything)

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, biodegradable soap, contact lens paraphernalia, and sanitary supplies
- Sunscreen and lip protection with sunblock of at least SPF 15
- 1 small to medium size PakTowl
- personal "patch kit": Band-Aids, 1 safety pin, moleskin, , cloth athletic tape, ibuprofen, personal medications, if any. **Individuals allergic to insect bites must bring an anaphylactic kit.** Please consult your pharmacist.

### ESSENTIALS

- Sunglasses (100% UV protection) w/ retention strap
- bug head net (it can be buggy)
- 1 one-quart water bottles or hydration system
- headlamp (recommended for camping) or flashlight with fresh batteries
- 1 daypack (lined with a garbage bag) or medium sized dry bag - large enough to hold your supplies for the day (water, snacks, raingear, extra layer, etc.)
- two small** size river bags (10-15L can rent/buy form our outfitter) or 2 small zip-duffel bags lined with trash bags
- 2-3 garbage bags (for wrapping gear that does not fit in dry bags, like hiking shoes, Crazy Creek, etc.)
- Insect repellent
- Bandana(s)
- Binoculars (highly recommended)

### OPTIONAL

- Book, notebook, journal, pencil/pen
- wristwatch with an alarm or travel clock
- Playing cards
- Your favorite snack (we will also provide snacks during the day)
- waterproof bag/box for camera
- Crazy Creek/camp chair
- Ear plugs (for a good night's sleep!)
- Camera (extra battery) and film/memory card

## Notes on the Packing List

**CLOTHING:** Layering is the most practical and efficient method of insulating the body. Several layers of varied weight materials provide better insulation than one thick layer of clothing. Also, adding or subtracting layers allows you to adjust to the temperature at your particular level of activity. The layering procedure begins with a **BASE LAYER** of silk or “lightweight” synthetic long underwear and liner socks.

These materials draw moisture away from the skin (this is called “wicking”) and help keep you dry and therefore warmer. Some synthetic materials that we find work well include Capilene, Thermastat, polypropylene, Driclime, Helly Hansen, and Ultrawick. Over the base layer wear a second, **MEDIUM-WEIGHT** layer on your upper body such as “expedition-weight” Capilene or Polartec, and wool pants or a synthetic equivalent such as Polartec or Capilene fleece. The third and final layer is called the **OUTER LAYER**. This layer is for protection from wind and rain. Put it on over your layers, can you still move your arms for paddling? Lastly, the rain pants. They should also be comfortable, allow enough room for your layers, and permit free movement of your legs (for example, can you crouch comfortably?).

**FABRIC NAMES:** There are many other patented brand names used by different manufacturers, which can make it all seem even more complicated. Basically, they all have one thing in common: The synthetics do not absorb much water compared to cotton—thus, they continue to provide warmth when wet. The specific fabric name is not as important as having material with these qualities and having a variety of weights available to you as your layering system. They really *are* miracle fabrics. Wool is also a very good choice, especially some of the new clothing made by Ibex or Smartwool. It is 100% merino wool, keeps you warm and dry and is not itchy. It

also doesn't absorb the odors the way many synthetic materials do. You can also buy less expensive wool clothes at a second hand or Army/Navy store Cotton is not! **Wet cotton (even heavyweight sweats) will rob you of your body heat faster than if you were wearing no clothing at all.**

**RAIN GEAR:** This could be your most treasured clothing. We recommend a **two-piece rain suit**. Vinyl, coated nylon, or a waterproof/breathable fabric (such as Gore-Tex, HellyTech, Ultrex, E-vent, etc.) will do fine for this kayak trip. The advantage to having a waterproof/breathable rain suit is that as you paddle and work up a sweat, your body's moisture is able to escape through the fabric to the outside. This will keep you much drier than a non-breathable rain suit (vinyl, nylon). We do not recommend a poncho because it flies about in the wind and lets water run down your paddling arms. Before making this important purchase, be sure that it fits you properly. It should be large enough to fit over all your layers. In particular, the hood needs to be effective. It should shield your face from the rain and turn with your head. Partial or full-length leg zippers are useful for easily putting your rain pants on over your boots.

**SHOES/BOOTS:** Bring paddling shoes, sandals or other lite weight shoes that can get wet for paddling. Also bring athletic shoes or lightweight hiking boots for our island hikes. If you prefer to hike the island in sandals we recommend ones that can protect your toes when we hike, such as Solomon or Keen water shoes. Teva/Chaco sandals are also an option (though it may be cool weather, so bring socks).

**WATERPROOF BAGS:** We recommend a water-proof dry bag for your personal day gear – water, sunscreen, snack, hat, sunglasses, camera, a layer of clothing - several companies make vinyl bags with good closures (Phoenix, Outdoor Research, Cascade Designs). Wide-mouthed plastic jars are good for film, first aid supplies, and the like. Ziplock bags are handy for many uses. Waterproof bags for your clothing and other personal items (not needed for a day paddle) must be small enough to fit into the small hatches of the kayak. A number of smaller, well compressed bags, is better than one large bag. We recommend 10-15L size for your trip gear. If you can't find or don't want to go to the expense of purchasing waterproof drybags you can also make your own with plastic bags, rubberbands, and nylon stuff sacks (a sleeping bag stuff sack works well for this purpose). To create your dry bag - you first put the garbage bag in your stuff sack, then stuff your items in the garbage bag inside the stuff sack. Compress the air out of the garbage bag/stuff sack combo and twist the garbage bag opening many times to create the closure. Bend the twisted portion over and wrap with a rubber band.

Items on your packing list can be purchased through a number of outdoor outfitters including:

Recreational Equip. Inc (REI)  
800-426-4840  
www.rei.com

Eastern Mountain Sports (EMS)  
603-924-7231  
www.ems.com

Sierra Trading Post  
800-713-4534  
www.SierraTradingPost.com

Also check out the websites on the Affiliate page of our website (under Resources)

## Additional Trip Preparations

### HELPFUL WEBSITES

National Park Service Site. Has a nice island map.

<http://www.nps.gov/cuis/index.htm>

This one gives some history:

<http://www.outdoorplaces.com/Destination/USNP/gacumis/>

and another good one:

[http://www.sherpaguides.com/georgia/coast/southern\\_coast/cumberland\\_isl\\_and\\_national\\_seashore.html](http://www.sherpaguides.com/georgia/coast/southern_coast/cumberland_isl_and_national_seashore.html)

### WEATHER

The weather in the area at this time of year is typically lovely winter weather. Highs are usually in the 60s during the day, with lows in the 40s. Rain is less common at this time of year, however, occasional cold fronts move in with high winds and can cause the temperatures to drop into the 20s and it could snow. Bringing the proper clothing will add greatly to your enjoyment and your safety.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

We will be staying at the Riverview Hotel in St. Mary's the first night of the trip: 912-882-3242

After that, you will be camping on Cumberland Island. It is best to leave the Adventures in Good Company office number (877/439-4042) and we will do our best to get in touch with you. Cell phone reception is spotty once you leave Jacksonville.

### CONDITIONING

Additional aerobic conditioning is unnecessary for anyone who already exercises regularly. If you don't, you will probably find that you have more energy during the trip if you start a moderate exercise program a couple of months before your trip. For example, you might start walking 3 or 4 times a week for half an hour, at a pace that is brisk enough to make you breathe deeply. Hills are good for this. Other options are working out at a health club on a stairmaster or treadmill, aerobics classes, cross country skiing or any activity that makes you breathe deeply.

This trip does include significant paddling mileage, and you will also need some shoulder and arm strength. Weight training with lightweights will be useful. Focus on building endurance rather than strength, meaning that more repetitions with light weights is preferable to fewer with heavy weights. Yoga can also be an added benefit for overall strength and stamina. Give us a call if you need more specific guidance.

### RECOMMENDED PRE-TRIP READING

**Longstreet Highroad Guide to the Georgia Coast & Okefenokee** by Richard J. Lenz. Although this book describes a variety of locations along the coast, there is a great chapter on Cumberland Island and it also has a few pages about St. Mary's, GA - the seaside town we'll be staying in the first night. The very first chapter of the book also describes the Natural History of the Georgia Coast.

**Cumberland Island: Strong Women, Wild Horses** by Charles Seabrook. Charles Seabrook uses his talent as an award-winning environmental writer to describe the island's natural bounty and to tell its long and intriguing history.

**Cumberland Island, A History** by Mary Bullard. Bullard draws on more than twenty years of research and travels about the island to describe how water, wind, and the cycles of nature continue to shape it and also how humans have imprinted themselves on the face of Cumberland across time. Bullard is a descendant of the Carnegie family, Cumberland's last owners before it was acquired by the federal government in 1972 and designated a National Seashore.

**Palindrome** by Stuart Woods. This exciting novel pulls the reader in with a fast-paced story that includes murder, mystery, and love on Cumberland Island.

## Getting There

### OUR TRAVEL AGENT

If you need assistance with making your travel plans, call Sara Schuitemaker at Scan East West Travel. Her toll-free number is 800-727-2157 and her email is [sara@scaneastwest.com](mailto:sara@scaneastwest.com).

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend travel insurance. We know that women never want to cancel their trips, and the reasons for doing so are always excellent. Occasionally it's a sudden illness; even more frequently it's the illness of someone they care about. Trip insurance at least minimizes the disappointment and expense during what is often a difficult time. In addition insurance covers the cost of lost baggage; medical expenses during your trip, including emergencies, repatriation, and evacuation; and trip delay. If you decide to purchase insurance, you can secure a policy through your own insurance company or enroll with the company we use, Travelex Insurance. Call 1-800-228-9792 or visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com). The location code is 20-0016.

### TRAVEL

Jacksonville Airport (JAX) is served by many of the major airlines, including Continental, United, American, and Delta Airlines. Depending on where you are traveling from, low cost competitors you might consider include Air Tran Airways (800/247-8726), JetBlue (800/538-2583), Song (800/221-1212), and Southwest (1-800-435-9792).

In order to make the meeting time at 12:30pm on the 2nd, your flight needs to arrive no later than 12 pm. You can fly out anytime after 6 pm on March 6.

### LODGING

Depending on your connections, you may be able to fly into JAX the morning of the trip. If not, here are some possible lodging options. Prices were current at the time, but may have changed, and do not include taxes. AAA rates may be lower. Let us know if you're interested in finding someone on the trip to share a room with and we'll try to hook you up.

If you have a gambling spirit, the cheapest way to find a hotel room is to go through Priceline ([www.priceline.com](http://www.priceline.com)). When you have a choice of area, choose the airport area. All, or almost all, of the hotels in this area offer an airport shuttle. Our guides have stayed at very nice places for \$25 or \$30 a night, a bit more with service fees and taxes but still a bargain).

If you prefer to know what you're getting into, the following are a sample of the possibilities:

#### **Hampton Inn and Suites Airport (904/ 741-4001)**

13551 Airport Court

Avg Price: \$84-\$99

Amenities include: free airport shuttle, complimentary breakfast, pool, fitness facilities.

#### **Microtel Inn & Suites Jacksonville Airport (904/741-4911)**

13200 Intl Airport Blvd

Avg Price: \$55 - \$85

Amenities include: free airport shuttle, complimentary breakfast, pool, fitness facilities

#### **Springhill Suites Jacksonville Airport (904/ 741-8002)**

13550 Airport Circle

Avg Price: \$89-\$109

Amenities include: free airport shuttle, complimentary breakfast, pool, fitness facilities, and free wifi..

## Getting There Continued

### WHAT TO DO

#### 1. Jacksonville Historical Center

100-B Warfside Way, Southbank Riverwalk, Jacksonville, FL 32207 · 904-398-4301

The captivating hands-on exhibits provided by this museum afford children and adults alike numerous opportunities to learn about their city's history. Displays begin with the time of Timucuan Indians and move forward through time, chronicling important events that have taken place in the Jacksonville area.

#### 2. Jacksonville Zoo

8605 Zoo Pkwy, Jacksonville, FL 32218 · 904-757-4462

An exciting and educational place to visit, this zoo features over 800 birds in the enchanting aviary and over 160 animals representing approximately 20 species of reptiles and mammals. Enjoy the company of great apes, silverback gorillas, bonobos, chimpanzees, and siamangs. If the kids are with you, be sure to head for the petting zoo where a pinewood trail leads you to a variety of friendly animals. Before you leave, ride the Okavango Railroad and visit the gift shops.

#### 3. Metropolitan Park

4110 Gator Bowl Dr., Jacksonville, FL 32202 · 904-630-0837

While hosting the Jacksonville Jazz Festival every year, this riverfront park turns into a hopping venue alive with live jazz. Other music concerts are held throughout the year as well. Guests enjoy the public docking space, playground, picnic areas, landscaped gardens and riverfront walk that this charming plot of nature offers. Located near ALLTEL Stadium.

#### 4. Jacksonville Maritime Museum

1015 Museum Cir, Unit 2, Jacksonville, FL 32207 · 904-398-9011

Situated along the Southbank River Walk, this museum offers excellent displays publicizing the maritime history of Jacksonville and North Florida. In addition to an extensive collection of paintings, photos and artifacts, popular highlights include models of naval ships and an award-winning to-scale replica of the Titanic. The museum, licensed as a non-profit organization, first opened its doors to the public in 1985.

#### 5. Museum of Science and History

1025 Museum Cir, Jacksonville, FL 32207 · 904-396-7062

Found on Jacksonville's Riverwalk, this museum provides numerous hands-on exhibits that encourage adults and children to actively learn about many different aspects of science and history. A planetarium featuring over 8,000 stars, a series "Kidspace" exhibits, and a display that illustrates life during the pre-Columbian era are among the informative exhibits offered.

#### 6. Museum of Southern History

4304 Herschel St, Jacksonville, FL 32210 · 904-388-3574

The Antebellum South is commemorated here via memorabilia and artifacts relating to politics, medicine, local history, weapons and fashion, as well as artifacts from the Civil War. Don't miss the phenomenal 3,000-volume research library, which includes genealogical research assistance at no charge.