

Below is the proposed itinerary 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

Arr Tampa. Kayaking instruction and practice

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

Kayak on Homosassa River, visit Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park

We'll spend our first full day on the Homosassa River. Leaving directly from the boat ramp at our resort, we head towards Monkey Island. Monkey Island is the home to several monkeys whose ancestors were left there after a Tarzan movie was filmed on the Homosassa River in 1937. Leaving Monkey Island we'll hug the shoreline and start watching 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

Kayak on the Chassahowitzka River, visit Three Sisters Spring

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 stomp 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

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

Pack up, hike Rook Trail, return to airport

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.