



ADVENTURES
in good company



ON THE SUWANNEE RIVER

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Learning about the natural history & the equally fascinating human history of this area
- Paddling among huge old cypress trees that have lived there for hundreds of years
- Experiencing both a blackwater river and a spring-fed crystal-clear river
- Stopping often to take pictures and watch wildlife
- Enjoying quiet cabins and hearty meals after active days (and of course, singing "Old Folks at Home")

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	White Springs, FL
Activities:	Paddling
Arrive:	Meet at the Jacksonville airport at 10:00 AM or the State Park at 12:00 PM
Depart:	You will be back at the Jacksonville airport in time for flights out after 4 PM or, if you're driving, you can leave the State Park at 1:00 PM

Trip Overview

Some people refer to this area as Old Florida, some call it the Real Florida. Many years ago, it was a popular tourist destination because of its unique clear springs (some with reputed health benefits) and unsurpassed wild beauty. But as Florida tourism moved to the beaches and theme parks, this part became less known, leaving remnants of a more prosperous past. Which is a shame because it is an amazing place: the dark and ever-changing Suwannee River, the crystal-clear springs of the Ichetucknee River, old cypress swamps rich in wildlife - all will leave you enchanted and feeling like you've stumbled on an amazing secret. Maximum group size: 13

Rating

We have rated this trip a 2 because all activities are 3 to 4 hours in length, with the option to not join a half-day if you choose. It is appropriate for active women in basic good health with sufficient mobility to get in and out of canoes and kayaks. No previous paddling or hiking experience is required. This trip is rated 2. Prior to beginning the trip, participants should be walking regularly at a **brisk** pace 3 to 4 days a week for 35 - 45 minutes. **Rating:** 1 **[2]** 3 4 5.

What's Included

- 1 - 2 experienced AGC guides based on group size and a local expert naturalist (male)
- Three nights lodging
- All meals from lunch on the first day though lunch on the last
- Round-trip transportation from the Jacksonville (JAX) airport
- Canoe and kayak rental and instruction
- Entrance fees

Not included: airfare to Jacksonville, alcoholic beverages, guide gratuities and trip 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

Our trip starts at the Jacksonville airport (JAX) at 10:00 AM when your guides pick you up. We'll drive about 90 minutes west, where we'll encounter a landscape of clear springs, old forests, and winding rivers. At Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Park cabins, we'll meet our local expert naturalist guide who will be with us for much of the trip and whose expertise in biology and geology adds immeasurably to our understanding and enjoyment of the area. After a picnic lunch at the cabins, we'll start our exploration with a hike in Big Shoals State Park on the Bell Springs Trail. We'll hike up to Big Shoals, Florida's only class III whitewater, known for its small waterfall. The trail, a section of the much longer Florida Trail, follows the Suwannee River and is an out-and-back; if you don't feel like hiking all the way to the Shoals, you can sit and gaze at the river. The Hawthorne formation which caps our limestone and protects the Floridan aquifer is exposed along the way.

After our hike, we will settle in tonight, letting the feel of the area start to seep into our bones.

DAY 2

Today, after a relaxing breakfast, we turn to canoes for a completely different view of the Suwannee River. The Suwannee River is a blackwater river, so called because of the tannins that leach from the decaying vegetation of the surrounding forested swamps or wetlands, creating an acidic darkly stained water. The river is largely protected, and we'll paddle a section from State Road 6 to Cone Bridge, about 5 hours, including time for paddling instruction and stopping to enjoy a picnic lunch on a beautiful sandbar. This stretch still retains some of the characteristics of the Deep Swamps and floodplains that leave the Okefenokee Swamp, with towering cypress, pines, and the oddly beautiful Ogeechee tupelo. We'll take our time on this stretch, so we have to get out on sandbars, go swimming, and drink in the natural world.

DAY 3

This morning we drive about 45 minutes south to Ichetucknee Springs State Park. This park is particularly noted for the crystal-clear Headspring, which feeds the Ichetucknee River. In contrast to the blackwater of the Suwannee, the water here is a clear aquamarine, making it possible to see the river bottom's fish and plants as we float on top. After first visiting the headspring, we return once more to kayaks and paddle for about two hours, past springs and tons of egrets, herons, and turtles. We'll pull out and enjoy lunch before hopping back in the van.

We leave the rest of the afternoon open so we'll have time to pursue any interest we may have developed, hike along the Suwannee or bike in Stephen Foster State Park, visit the local craftsmen who display their skills in the park, or simply sit on the front porch swing and take some well-deserved R&R. Tonight we'll share a final farewell dinner and toast our newfound appreciation of Florida.

DAY 4

We'll spend the morning back on the river in canoes or kayaks, paddling downstream from our put in point back to our cabins in Stephen Foster Folk Cultural Park. In contrast to the relatively wide river of Tuesday, the Suwannee is quite different here, much narrower, and more twisty. This stretch of limestone bluffs has cut into the limestone of the Floridan aquifer and is the start of the world's highest concentrations of springs. We will stop at Suwannee Springs, a turn of the 19th and 20th century health resort built around the sulphur spring water. After a final picnic lunch, we'll have you back at the Jacksonville Airport by 2:30 PM, you can plan to fly out any time after 4:00 PM.

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

If you are flying, we'll meet at the Jacksonville Airport (JAX) at 10:00am and drive to our cabins at the Stephen Foster State Park. [Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center Park](#). If you are driving, the state park is approximately 3 hours from Tampa and 90 minutes from Jacksonville, located on U.S. 41 in White Springs.

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: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

Accommodations

We will be staying in spacious 2 bedroom cabins at the [Stephen Foster Folk Culture Center Park](#). Each cabin has one bedroom with a double bed and another bedroom with a bunk bed. The bunk bed configuration is such that the lower bunk is a double bed and the upper is a single. There are ladders to get to the top bunk. All top bunk beds are offered at a 15% discount. The cabins share a bathroom, as well as living room and kitchenette, heating and cooling, a gas fireplace, and screened porch. A limited number of single supplements are available if you would like to ensure you have a single bedroom. Please note, you will still be sharing a bathroom. Options for accommodations can be selected at registration. Cabins are equipped with linens and kitchen utensils. Picnic tables and grills are located outside each cabin. The cabins do not provide soap, shampoo, conditioner, or items of that nature, you should plan to bring your own.

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.

[Click here for our Cancellation & Payment Policies and Booking Terms & Conditions.](#)