

Boat Tours

Tarpon Springs to Cabbage Key May 2024

Use of a shallow draft outboard boat opens up about 30 new local places you may have never explored by boat. The following is a list of some of these locations. Get a chart and check them out before venturing out. There are short tours (one to two hours), longer tours (3 to 4 hours) which usually include short tours, and also overnight two and three-day tours. All tours include waterfront homes, waterfront restaurants, gas docks and a few overnight anchorage locations for larger boats. All restaurants include free dockage. All canals are dead ends and require tight pivot turns to get out. Unless otherwise noted, all trips are for shallow draft (3 ft.) outboard boats. You do have a stainless steel prop, right? Aluminum props do not last six months in these shallow waters. You will need a paper chart, an electronic chart plotter would be nice, and most definitely a depth sounder. And best of all, you can take any of these tours on your cellphone, laptop, or home computer using Google Earth.

Chart plotters, tablets, and smartphones with chart potter apps and free NOAA charts can be loaded with all these recorded tracks and routes so you can play and track your boat's progress. Do you have a smartphone or tablet? Android or Apple? If you have an Apple, does it have a built-in GPS? Some do, some do not. If you have an Android, I can give you the chart plotter apps and all the GPX files for the following routes and tracks. If you have an Apple, you can download and install the free Navionics chart plotter. An excellent app showing locations and ratings for marinas, restaurants, boat yards, and fuel docks is Active Captain for Android and Apple.

These tours are along the shorelines and canals where there is protected calm water. Nice comfortable dry rides. No wet, rough, pounding open water rides in the middle of the bay. Anywhere you see homes along the shoreline; you can usually find an unmarked channel next to the shoreline. The developers used to bulldoze the mangroves and dredge out the bay bottom to get the fill on which to build the houses, leaving an unmarked channel along the shoreline. You should be at all the restaurants by 11:30 AM when they open if you hope to get dock space or a table.

I have divided and grouped the local tours into Anna Maria, Manatee River, Terra Ceia Bay, Palma Sola, Cortez, Emerald Harbor, North Longboat Key, South Longboat Key, Bird Key, Siesta Key, and Sarasota. There are multiple tours within each of these groups. What is not included? Several offshore reefs, Tampa Bay, downtown Tampa, Hillsborough River, and John Ringling's home (no dock).

Recommendations. Take a safe boating course, learn how to read a chart and use it. Buy boat-towing insurance. Use the following information at your own risk. Okay, let us get started.

Going North, West Side.

North Anna Maria — Make a hard left turn immediately after going under the Anna Maria (Manatee) Bridge. There is a well-marked alternate shoreline tour to Holmes Beach, Bimini Bay and Galati's Marina. A very nice but pricey restaurant (closed?) and gas dock are at each location. There is one-foot shallow water areas along the shoreline north of Holmes Beach. Therefore, you must follow the

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markers out into the bay, go north and then follow the markers into Bimini Bay and Galotti's Marina. A chart is recommended.

Bimini Bay – North Anna Maria Island. Inside protected tour of nice homes. Over 40 short canals (20 on each side of Bimini Bay) to explore. Stay in the middle and follow the markers. Low 9 ft. bridge at the south exit. The north entrance requires starting from the ICW and following the dogleg channel and markers into the entrance to avoid the numerous sandbars in the bay and the entrance.

Going North, East Side

Palma Sola Bay — Difficult but excellent navigation training due to the many intersecting channels. Definitely need a chart or chart plotter. Good sandbar with lots of sand dollars just inside the entrance on the south side. Many friendly active dolphins at the entrance. Two well-marked deep water (10 ft.) canals with many luxury homes and a small private marina on the south side about a quarter mile inside the Palma Sola Bay entrance. No restaurants or gas docks

Safe Harbor Marina and Compass Hotel-Make a hard right turn after passing under the Anna Maria (Manatee) Bridge. Follow the markers into the marina, gas dock, Compass Hotel, and Floridays Restaurant. This is your last pit stop and gas dock opportunity going north.

Manatee River- from the Anna Maria Island ICW you have to follow the markers out into Tampa Bay to pick up the entrance markers to the Manatee River. There is shallow water if you try to take a shortcut. There is a museum and nice overnight anchorage on the south side at Desoto Point just inside the entrance are interesting Indian shell mounds and a museum across the river on the north side. The river is now well-marked all the way to Ft. Hammer.

Ft. Hammer is a new large new development on the upper Manatee River. Within Ft. Hammer is a long 5 ft. deep canal that gives you a nice home tour. There is only one canal entrance/exit so you must retrace your route. Three bridges with 30+ ft. clearances.

Braden River - The Braden River branches off the right side of the Manatee River before the I-75 bridge. There are three 9 ft. bridges. Depth varies up and down from 2 ft. To 8 ft. Most places are 4 ft. All the white and orange regulatory speed signs are on the shallow right side of the river. Stay close to the left side of the river with the houses and high banks. About 1/3 of the way up the river is a dam blocking further boat travel. There is a dirt access road to the dam with a small parking lot and a place to launch kayaks. The rest of the river is very narrow and overgrown. Looks like a great kayaking river.. Stop at the interesting Linger Lodge by kayak or car for lunch. Just before the dam and the third bridge on highway 70, on the left side is a short half-circle dead-end canal with a large excellent Mexican restaurant on the right side. There is no dock. You tie your boat to the bank and climb a 4 ft. embankment to the parking lot. If you have the Active Captain chart add-on, it is marked on your chart by its former name of Grandma Yoder's Restaurant. Check out the river on Google Earth and go exploring.

Pier 22 - Downtown Bradenton on the south side of the river just before the first bridge. Very nice marina and excellent restaurant. Limited docking inside the seawall on the west side of the restaurant for about three small boats but dock is usually vacant.

Palmetto-Across the river on the north side at Regatta Point in Palmetto just before the bridge are two nice restaurants (**River House and the Riverside Café**) and a gas dock. Limited deep-water restaurant and docking for about three boats near the gas pump.

The Riviera Dunes Marina -On the north side of the Manatee River just after the third bridge. Excellent restaurant (Blu Mangrove), floating docks, and gas. The large motor yachts dock at the Dunes. Sailboats dock at Pier 22 because they cannot get under the bridge. On par with the 5-star Moorings Marina on LBK. You need to call ahead to the dock master and restaurant for reservations.

Caddy's Restaurant-Directly across the river on the south side. Open-air restaurant and tiki bar. Dock space for three small boats. Avoid the two floating docks next to the seawall. They roll 45 degrees due to the back chop from passing boat wakes.

Woody's River Roo (Manatee River) outdoor restaurant on the east side of 1-75. Hamburgers, beer and motorcycles. Everyone behaves dances, has fun, and brings their kids.

Headwaters of the Manatee River-About 5 miles east of the River Roo restaurant. Many scenic undeveloped tidal areas. The river is well-marked all the way to Ft. Hammer. Beyond Ft. Hammer, the river is not charted with 2 ft. depth outside the uncharted channel. You will need someone's local route map and/or a live guide. There are no charts or water depths beyond the River Roo Restaurant.

Terra Ceia Bay -Take the Snead Island cut on the north side of the Manatee River at the Bradenton Yacht Club and Marlow Yachts and go under the low bridge into Terra Ceia Bay. Small boat gas dock in the inlet to your far right but no restaurants. There are two alternate exits through the islands back out to the marked channels to Tampa Bay and back to Anna Maria. Check your chart.

Egmont Key -To get there, you must travel out into the open Tampa Bay so pick a calm day with no afternoon thunderstorms. Follow the ICW markers out to red marker "2" and then head for the north end of Egmont Key (5.0 nm, true course 229). Everything west of the ICW is shallow sandbars. The south end of the island is a bird sanctuary and has many sandbars. Go around the island to the west side. There are no docks and no parking your boat on the beach. You must anchor close to shore and wade or swim in to the beach. There are two very interesting areas to explore. One is the gun mount remains of the old fort and the other is the remains of the old offshore pier which is an interesting snorkeling area.

Passage Key-Passage Key is located about a half mile south of Egmont Key. The south end of the island is a bird sanctuary. Anchor on either side of the island. Beautiful clear shallow water with white sand bottom. Occasional skin tone non-bathing suits.

South Anna Maria Island -Alternate northbound shoreline route from Jewfish Key around the west end of the sandbar and along the east side of the bridge. You can stay along the side of the bridge and continue past the marine patrol building (deep-water anchorage), around the island and to the Coquina

Beach boat ramp area. There is an unmarked short, narrow, shallow (5ft.) channel going north from the boat ramp. The channel to the condominium boat dock is 45-degree. Continue from the dock along the shoreline. Stay 15 feet or less from the shoreline, docks and boats. Shallow water (2 ft.) to your near right. Continue to the **Bradenton Beach anchorage, restaurants, marina and gas dock**. Stay out from the Bridge Tender Inn dock due to shallow water. You can dock at the town docks adjacent to the Bridge Tender Inn Restaurant or the floating docks adjacent to the long pier and tour Bridge Street. The **Anna Maria Oyster Bar Restaurant** is on the pier. From here, you can go by boat along the long pier out the entrance channel and cross over to Cortez and Palma Sola Bay. Stay out from the long dock to avoid the fishing lines.

Cortez North Side-See Palma Sola homes above. Gated community luxury homes accessible by boat. Ignore the "No Trespassing" sign; they do not own the canals and want to discourage the public tour boats.

Cortez Middle-The Seafood Shack has limited deep-water dockage for several deep draft boats. Docks can be high at low tide. Enter the interesting canal on the south side of the Seafood Shack Restaurant. Pass under the low 9 ft. clearance bridge. The first canal takes you to the large, high, dry boat storage facility and trailer park on Cortez Avenue. The canals have a 5 ft. depth.

Cortez South -Very interesting history and boat tour of the old Cortez waterfront fishing village and fishing boats, Coast Guard station, four excellent restaurants, two boat yards, commercial fishing boats, and two fish packing plants. Short two-block walk to the small maritime museum.

Tide Table Restaurant One large deep-water dock, plus other inside docks. Very popular restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating.

Starfish Restaurant One dock space for a boat at the end of the floating dock. The two sides of the floating dock, even if vacant, are reserved for the two pontoon tour boats.

Swordfish Grill Restaurant-Lots of low dock space, inside, and outside seating space.

Mt. Vernon -You need a chart to find and get to the marked channel, which is on the east side of Jewfish Key and NE of Tidy Island. This channel takes you into Mt. Vernon, which branches off into several other dead-end canals. Very nice waterfront villas. If you continue to the east end of the entrance channel, you pass into another group of branching canals and the Coral Shores development. If you continue going east through a narrow opening, you come to another small hidden condominium with docks.

Sister Islands- These are two small island preserves at marker 31 just northeast of the Spanish Main Yacht Club. There is a large shallow lagoon at the south end. The 2 ft. deep lagoon and creek can only be accessed at high tide and you may still have to tilt the outboard motor. The lagoon has a small narrow 2 ft. deep mangrove canal on the east side of the lagoon that cuts through the island to the east side.

Deep Water Channel-There is a very wide (quarter mile) deep water channel (10 ft) that runs from the south end of Jewfish Key, around the east side of the Sister Islands, and up the middle between the Sister Islands and the mainland to the Longbar Sandbar. Before you get to the Longbar Sandbar, you must turn west and cross over to the ICW. You cannot get across the Longbar Sandbar even at high tide. The Longbar Sandbar is a bay blocking barrier sandbar clear across the bay from the east side almost to the west side. Also, be careful of shallow water in the middle of the bay directly east of Spanish Main.

Longboat Pass Jungle Cruise (my name)-Link [Urban Jungle River Cruise on Vimeo](#), 2 ft. depth at the entrance, enter only at high tide. This is a short (several hundred yards) jungle cruise canal into the Villages. The hidden entrance is on the north end of Longboat Key several hundred yards east of Beer Can Island. Look for a concrete seawall on the west side of the entrance and a faded red boat on a lift on the east side of the entrance. Stay close to the docks and red boat and then cut over to the deeper (2ft) west side at the entrance. You may have to tilt the motor to get past the shallow entrance. Five ft. depth thereafter. Tight pivot turn is required at the dead-end canal.

Free overnight anchorage and two restaurants, **Mar Vista and the Shore Restaurant**, around the bend north of the Longboat Pass sandbar. Mar Vista's docks are high and crowded. Outdoor garden seating area. The newer Shore Restaurant has lots of dock space.

Whitney Bay Shopping Plaza- Follow the shoreline south past the Mar Vista Restaurant all the way into Whitney Bay. Do not worry about the markers. There is deep water (5 ft.) on both sides of all the markers. Once you pass the entrance into the Whitney Bay condos, stay close to the mangroves on the east side of the lagoon. Continue along the mangroves until you come to a narrow short canal which takes you into the Whitney Shopping Plaza. Stay close to the seawall on the west side. The middle of the lagoon is shallow (2 ft.). You can tie up to the dock cleats at the **Longbeach Café** for breakfast or lunch. Very nice outdoor patio area in the winter when it is cool. The restaurant is a great way to go to breakfast or lunch by boat. Also available is the Capri Restaurant. This canal used to join the Jungle Cruise Canal (see above) before they built the Broadway road into the Villages. When you leave the restaurants and pass back through the narrow canal, turn right and follow the shoreline along the Whitney Bay Condo docks to avoid the 2 ft. shallow water in the middle of the lagoon. Move back to the middle of the lagoon at the end of the Whitney Bay Condos before you get to the large home on your right to avoid a shallow shoreline area.

Cannons Marina- From marker 32 on the ICW, follow the markers west into Emerald Harbor. Follow the gas dock signs; turn right at the first canal to get to the Cannons Marina and gas dock. Manatee are often present during the summer at the end of the canal to your left. Several canals provide a nice tour of the Emerald Harbor waterfront homes.

Going South.

Buttonwood Harbor to New Pass- There is a slow (no wake), hidden, little-known, protected mangrove canal that goes from Buttonwood Harbor almost all the way to New Pass. No need to follow the ICW down the middle to the bay on a rough day unless you are in a hurry. At red marker 20, leave the ICW, turn right, and follow a true course of 157 degrees for .5 miles to a red/white safe water marker

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marking the entrance to Buttonwood Harbor. Follow the red and green markers into Buttonwood Harbor. Turn left at the dead-end junction. After you pass the trailer park on your right, turn left at the green marker and head for the narrow canal entrance and markers directly ahead of you. Inside the entrance are three canals to interesting home tours. They are all interesting. You want to take the uncharted left canal to continue to New Pass. This canal will take you to the Mooring Marina and continue on to New Pass. Eventually, this mangrove canal will exit back out into the bay. Continue along the seawall. You will pass many short canals on your right. They all dead-end in about two blocks at Gulf of Mexico Drive.

Eventually, you will come to the end of the seawall. Turn right and continue along the seawall. Eventually, you will come to the excellent Dry Docks Restaurant. High docks and space is limited to three slips. Tidal current can be strong causing very difficult docking. Trick — have your dock lines ready and tell your passengers what you are going to do. Slowly approach the dock slip going up-current and very close (3 ft.) to the boats and docks. Stop your boat so that you place the midsection of your boat against the piling and then apply just enough power and rudder to pivot your boat around the piling and into the slip. After lunch, continue down the channel and around the tip of the island to the New Pass channel. Go almost all the way to the bridge before crossing over to the channel. Be careful to avoid the visible light green sandbars. You can return home by reversing the shortcut route to New Pass listed below.

Salty Dog Restaurant at New Pass- Lots of outside seawall restaurant dock space at the Max Sea Marina and gas dock. Docks can be high at low tide. There is a private floating dock inside the seawall on the west side to load and unload passengers but no docking. Nearby walking distance is Mote Marine. Another small outdoor hamburger restaurant and bait shop with dock space is several hundred yards to the west.

The Chart House- Excellent restaurant with a great view and a good salad bar. Turn right after you pass under the New Pass bridge. Stay halfway between the east end of the sandbar and the highway. Two foot depth until you are inside the sandbar. Restaurant docks are high but always have available space. Reservations are suggested.

Shortcut to New Pass-Again, no need to take the long way down the bay following the ICW on a rough day to get to New Pass. At red marker 18 on the ICW, leave the ICW, turn right, follow a true course of 152 degrees for 4.5 miles, and then follow the markers and channel into the New Pass channel and the three restaurants. You can also use the watercolors to see the channels. Avoid the light and brown 2 ft. shallow water. From here, you can go around the east end of City Island, through the sailboat mooring area to the south side of City Island by the ski show area. From here, you will see channel markers that take you through a channel across the flats to the Ringling Causeway.

Bird Key and St. Armand's Circle-If you turn right at the Ringling Causeway, you will come to a low bridge (9 ft.). If you pass under the bridge, on your left is Bird Key and its waterfront homes and multiple canals. Five ft. deep canals, two 9 ft. bridges, and one 8 ft. bridge. Many large beautiful waterfront homes.

On your right is St. Armand's Circle, canals and more expensive waterfront homes. Approach the 9 ft. bridges slowly to ensure you have adequate clearance.

Sarasota-After crossing the above flat, turn left when you reach the Ringling Causeway and you have a short protected route along the Ringling Causeway to the high Ringling Causeway Bridge. Stay on the north side of the bridge, follow the shoreline and you come to the entrance channel markers to the **Hyatt Hotel** marina and limited restaurant docking.

Pass under the Ringling Bridge and you cross the short open Little Sarasota Bay passage to the channel markers into the **Marina Jack's Restaurant**, marina and fuel dock. Limited restaurant docking to the right of the gas pump.

Sarasota Pass-Popular sandbar near the entrance to Sarasota Pass. Channel to your north takes you around the island, to the north side of the Ringling Causeway, the high-rise Plymouth Condos and back to the ICW.

East Side of Sarasota Bay-Shelby Gardens to Siesta Key. This is probably the best home tour in the area due to the variety of homes. **Shelby Gardens Canal** – Follow the two red and green markers into the canal. Two low (9 ft.) bridges. Five-foot depth to the second bridge, two-foot depth after the second bridge. Exit the canal, turn left (south), and follow the 5-foot-deep unmarked channel along the seawall to the next inlet (**Bay Point**). Magnificent home at the entrance to the second inlet. Continue south exploring the several inlets, canals, and homes along the east shoreline to the Siesta Key Bridge (North Bridge)..

Siesta Key-Lots of large, interesting homes, canals, and inlets. All canal bridges are low (9ft.) and 5 ft. deep canals. Small public dock, park, and outhouse (bad) at the northwest corner of the Siesta Key Bridge. Continue north along the ICW for ½ mile. You will come to three areas to explore. The first area is Robert's Bay. This small bay has several small mangrove islands and canals that wind around several very nice homes. Next is Skiers' Island. Behind the island is a canal entrance that leads into a series of branching canals that go for miles (no joke). Use your chart plotter tracker. You can get lost trying to find your way out. These are all nice one-story homes on canals.

Philippe Creek- Turn left at marker 72 and enter Philippe Creek. Low 9 ft. bridge at Highway 41. Philippe Creed Oyster Bar restaurant is on your left after you pass under the bridge. Lots of shallow (2 ft.) low docks. The restaurant is expensive. Most meals are \$25 to \$30. You can travel up the creek to Bee Ridge Road. Go slow, several shallow (2 ft.) submerged trees during the last third of the trip. Kayaks and canoes can pass under the very low bridge and continue up the creek.

West Side of Sarasota Bay

Sara Bay- Entrance is one mile due north of ICW red marker #16. Entrance takes you to the Sara Bay Marina, and adjacent hotel and outdoor restaurant. Follow the green markers near the island on your right from the 4x8 white entrance advertising sign. Rock ledge on your far port side. Lots of dock space at

all locations. The third canal on your left takes you to Bowlees Creek, a gas dock (cheapest gas on the bay), a low 9 ft. bridge, Tracker Marine, and an excellent independent fiberglass repair shop adjacent to the dock at Tracker Marine. You can continue up the 2-3 ft. shallow creek for a home tour. Follow the white PVC pipes marking the channel.

At ½ mile north of the Sara Bay entrance is the long well well-marked channel into **Bay Gardens and Trailer Estates**, each with several dead-end branching canals.

Overnight Trips.

Going North.

Little Harbor is located on the east side of Tampa Bay above Port Manatee. The trip is dependent on the wind. You will be traveling NE up Tampa Bay. If the wind is 10 to 15 mph, the boat trip is still a go but you may occasionally get wet from wave spray. If winds are greater than 15 mph, it will be a very wet and rough boat ride, and the boat trip should be canceled. You can also go by car. If you go by boat, leave at 9:30 AM. A thirty-minute pit stop and gas stop going and coming at the Safe Harbor (Compass Hotel) marina at the east end of the Anna Maria Bridge (Manatee Ave.). There is no place to stop between there and Little Harbor. Arrive at the Little Harbor Hotel at about 11:30 AM in time to dock the boat and meet for lunch at 12:00. Check in to the hotel after lunch. Leave Little Harbor the following day (Thursday) at about 1:00 PM after lunch. The hotel does not have a restaurant nor do they serve breakfast. There are two nearby restaurants about one block walking distance.

Little Manatee River. Optional, take a one to two hour trip up the **Little Manatee River** which is located about a half mile south of the resort. No markers, 1-2 ft. shallow water, follow the crab pot markers to stay in the 5 ft. channel. Have lunch at one of the above restaurants and return to Sarasota at about 5:00 PM.

Tampa, St. Petersburg, Clearwater, and Madera Beach offer a long list of restaurants, marinas, museums and theaters. Go by car or by boat. A starting point is the downtown Tampa Convention Center. Docks may be available at the Convention Center. Adjacent hotels, restaurants, and paid parking are available. I have no information on marinas and transit overnight docking. From the Convention Center, you can ride the trolley to the very interesting Ybor City main street. Or from the Convention Center you can purchase an all day excursion ticket on the water taxi service which allows you to use the water taxis as a tour boat. You can exit, sightsee, and reboard the next taxi as often as you like. St. Petersburg has a very large marina and a walking tour around the marina.

Tarpon Springs-The Turtle Dove Marina is a gated 4 or 5-star marina and is located about two blocks from Main Street. The Marina has a small ship's store, an unmanned tiki bar with a BBQ grill, and a nice private

party room for the boaters' use. Each slip has a pump-out station and there is a gas dock. Most in town overnight

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rooms are in bed and breakfast homes. Hotel and motel rooms are out of town on the bypass highway and you will need a rental car. Definitely avoid the municipal marina on Main Street. Docks are narrow and rickety with vagrants sleeping in the restrooms. An interesting side trip is the two or three-mile trip up the shallow, undeveloped, and uncharted Anclote River. Good shell collecting on the Anclote sandbar opposite the river's entrance.

Crystal River- Several freshwater springs, an underwater viewing pavilion, boat tours, swimming with the Manatees, and collecting and eating buckets of scallops. Large boating area to explore and a large resort. It's a long trip by boat. Go by car

Homosassa Springs- Similar to Crystal River but small and less commercialized. Long ride, go by car.

Suwanee River- Lodge and overnight rental houseboats. Many alligators, no swimming. Upper Suwannee River gets very shallow. No local knowledge. Long ride, go by car.

Going South.

Snook Haven -Located on the River Road east of Venice. Old Florida outdoor restaurant, canoe rentals, and kayak launch area. Dock space for two to three boats. The tour boat is no longer available. Go by car on I-75 and take the River Road exit or go by boat. You can go by boat from the mouth of the **Myakka River** to Snook Haven, I-75, and beyond. Depth is 5-6 feet. Distance is 25 miles one-way. There is a small marina, Gulf Coast Marina, on the south side of the El Jobean bridge with non-ethanol boat gas. This is the **only** available gas stop on the river. You will need one day to get to Punta Gorda by boat where you can spend the night. There are two marinas in Punta Gorda with nearby hotels. You will need reservations for both. The next day, take the 25-mile all-day trip up the Myakka River to Snook Haven and return to the hotel for the night. You can spend another day exploring the **Peace River**. The West Marine store in Punta Gorda sells a chart showing the Myakka River on one side and the Peace River on the other side. Return to Sarasota the next day.

South Seas Plantation-Large very nice marina and resort. There are very nice rental time-shares at the small marina south of the main marina. Regular shuttle bus service to restaurants, marinas, bars, pools, and small boutique stores.

Cabbage Key- Small Island getaway south of Punta Gorda. Stay on your boat, in the cabins, or rooms in the small lodge with a bar and excellent restaurant. Scheduled boat ferry service to and from the Pine Island mainland marina if you want to go by car. The Inn usually offers a two-night, third-night free, special during the September off-season. Four-hour boat ride from Sarasota including a one-hour lunch stop at the **Crow's Nest** in Venice. Several nearby parks and unique restaurants (**Bubble Room**) in nearby Captiva. Gas

docks along the way including the Crow's Nest and a large marina about a mile south of the inlet. South is the Boca Grande inlet which is famous for tarpon fishing.

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Tarpon Lodge. Across the bay east of Cabbage Key is the Tarpon Lodge and Pineland Marina on Pine Island. As you approach you will see a large white three-story house. This is a private home, not the lodge. To the left you will see several smaller white buildings which are the Tarpon Lodge. It includes a separate, very nice dining room and bar building and another separate building with rooms for rent. The dock has room for several boats and one large boat at the end of the T-dock. The Tarpon Lodge is owned by the same people that own Cabbage Key.

Pineland Marina is located to the left of the Tarpon Lodge. There is a gas dock, provisions for overnight paid parking for cars and trailers, a small ship's store, and scheduled ferryboat service to and from Cabbage Key and other nearby island resorts. Thus you can get to Cabbage Key by car (if you take the ferry) or boat.

An interesting all-day car trip is to take I-75 down to the River Road exit east of Venice, stop at Snook Haven, take the one-hour boat tour, continue to Pine Island, and explore the north and south ends of the island. This will take you through several small fishing and boating villages: Bokeelia, St. James City, Pine Island Center, and Matacha. Return home on US-41 and explore the Burnt Store marina. Cut back over to the coast to Casey Key and Siesta Key and return home.

Any questions or suggestions? Any places I missed? 😊

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