



Nestled around the Homosassa River—a spring-fed waterway leading to the Gulf through some of the region’s most stunning scenery—is Homosassa. Like no other place in the Sunshine State, Homosassa captures the feel of an Old Florida fishing community where life moves at the lazy pace of a gently drifting river and natural adventures await around every bend. You could easily spend a week or more exploring all that Homosassa has to offer, but a three-day getaway such as the sample itinerary described here offers a wonderful opportunity to sample many of the area’s highlights.

DAY 1: A WILDLIFE ADVENTURE

A great way to begin your Homosassa exploration is with one of the area’s best-known attractions: The Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park. Open every day, Homosassa Springs Wildlife State Park showcases Florida fauna —from key deer to red wolves, reptiles, birds and more—in a natural setting along a 1.2-mile boardwalk. Several manatees call the park home and can be viewed in the underwater observatory, known as The Fishbowl, along with teeming schools of fish. While not a native Floridian, park resident Lu the Hippo was made an honorary citizen of the state by Gov. Lawton Chiles. Fascinating educational programs are offered daily on manatees, snakes and alligators, and the Children’s Education Center will entertain the little ones.

After a fun day at the wildlife park, head over to Wallace’s Greenhouse, also located along US 19, for a gourmet bite to eat paired with the perfect glass of wine. This riverside scratch kitchen sits right along the headsprings of the Halls River, making it the perfect spot to enjoy a world class dining experience.

After lunch, you can learn more about the history of Homosassa at the Yulee Sugar Mill ruins. Once the site of a 5,100-acre sugar plantation, the remnants of the processing mill is all that is left of this early 19th century settlement. Underneath the shade of ancient oak trees, visitors can learn about the complex history of the mill, and its tumultuous role in the area's civil war history.

DAY 2: A WATER ADVENTURE

The second day of your stay presents an ideal opportunity to enjoy the aquatic adventures that make this The Water Lover’s Florida. Old Homosassa is a hub of on-water activity with many guide services and rentals available.

Take a boating tour on the Homosassa or Chassahowitzka Rivers from one of several local tour companies. You will have the chance to take in some remarkable scenery, learn about the teeming ecosystems and rich history of the Nature Coast, all while having fun along the way. Fishing guides are available to take you to the best fishing spots—both inshore and out into the gulf. From big mouth bass to trophy tarpon, Florida sport fishing is at its best in Homosassa and neighboring Crystal River.

You can also rent a boat and do some exploring or fishing on your own, or dive in and swim in our beautiful springs. Boat-up dining is all the rage along the Homosassa River, with delicious, one-of-a-kind restaurants/bars such as Crumps Landing and The Shed at MacRae's offering boat slips for customers to cruise in and enjoy a good meal and a cold drink.

Canoe and kayak rentals are another way to get out and experience the area's waterways firsthand. Use the resources here on our kayaking page to find places to put in and plan a kayaking experience you won't soon forget.

Monkey Island in Homosassa is a must see, and no mention of the area's aquatic activities would be complete without it. Located in the middle of the Homosassa River in front of The Florida Cracker Riverside Resort, this whimsical island is home to monkeys frolicking around a miniature lighthouse and playing in their "monkey condo." You can view the island via kayak, boat, or while hanging out at the Monkey Bar!

DAY 3: AUTHENTIC FLORIDA EXPERIENCE

Homosassa is wonderful all year, but things become especially exciting with the area's special seasonal activities. If the timing is right, spend the third day of your visit with a once-in-a-lifetime manatee or scalloping experience.

Manatee tours operate all year round, although the very best time to meet a manatee is in the cooler months, November through March. As the water temperature in the ocean drops, hundreds of manatees make their way into the comparatively warm springs and spring-fed rivers of Citrus County, creating North America's largest manatee gathering every year. These guided trips often depart early in the morning, carrying you to ideal grounds for sea-cow encounter in the crisp morning air. Tour operators typically supply a snorkel and fins; just don't forget a swimsuit—and your sense of wonder.

If you are planning your trip for the summer sunshine, then scalloping is a must-do activity! Book your charter with an experienced captain who will cruise you out into the Gulf of Mexico to the clear, shallow waters of the scalloping grounds. Most captains will provide you with everything you need to collect these delicious little mollusks. Many local restaurants will cook your catch if you bring in the cleaned scallops, guaranteeing a tasty dinner!

FREE PLANNING ASSISTANCE

Be sure to stop by and say hello at the Visitors Center on US 19 in Crystal River. For more information on any of these fantastic activities, contact the Citrus County Visitors & Convention Bureau at 352-794-5506 for free assistance. We look forward to helping you discover all that The Water Lover's Florida has to offer!