



Egmont Key State Park and Tampa Bay Real Florida Guide

Note: Colored numbers correspond with numbers on the map. **Red** = Day 1, **Green** = Day 2, and **Blue** = Day 3

Day 1, Fort De Soto Park

Base your adventure at [Fort De Soto Park \(1\)](#), a Pinellas County 1,136-acre park made of five interconnected islands (keys). The park includes a 238-site family camping area with tent and RV facilities. Reserve a campsite [online](#) or by calling (727) 582-2267.

With more than seven miles of waterfront, three miles is beach and named #1 in the 2009 America's Top Beach by "Dr. Beach." This park is home to mangroves, wetlands, hardwood/palm hammocks, mudflats and scores of native plants. The location and variety of natural habitats makes the park one of the most popular bird watching and outdoor recreation locations in Florida. The [Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail](#) reports 325-plus species of birds.

Visitors can enjoy 6.8 miles of paved hiking/biking trails connecting beach areas and the campground, a 2.25-mile paddling trail, two fishing piers, boat launch and the ferry service to Egmont Key. Kayak and bike rentals are available on-site. There are playgrounds, nature trails, the 1.4 mile interpretive [Arrowhead Nature Trail](#), food concessions, a dog park and museum. The historic fort and the Fort De Soto Gun



Batteries are a National Registered Historic Place. Visitors can walk through Battery Laidley, home to the last four surviving carriage-mounted 12-inch seacoast mortars in the continental United States.



Day 2, Egmont Key State Park

[Egmont Key State Park \(2\)](#) is an island located in the mouth of Tampa Bay, southwest of Fort De Soto Park. Egmont is accessible by private boat or local ferry from [Hubbard's Marina](#) at Fort De Soto Park. Ferry reservations are highly recommended. The Hubbard's Marina also offers snorkeling options around the island to explore Fort Dade's sunken ruins and the grass flats.

There are no amenities on the island so pack everything you need for the day – water, sunscreen, beach umbrella, hat, food, towels etc. Once on the island, Egmont offers great shelling, swimming and exploring opportunities. A lighthouse dates back to 1858, and Fort Dade dates back to the 1898 Spanish American War era, the brick roads of which spread out across the island's interior. The Tampa Bay Pilots Association set up operations in 1926 and today, along with Florida State Park staff, manage the island. Egmont is home to a large population of gopher tortoises, a large slow moving land reptile great for photographing. Part of the island is a wildlife reserve and restricted.

Day 3, Skyway Fishing Pier State Park

Before you leave the area make a stop at the [Skyway Fishing Pier State Park \(3\)](#). The pier is part of the old bridge connecting the City of St. Petersburg with the City of





Sarasota. When the Sunshine Skyway Bridge was built in 1987 over Tampa Bay, the old bridge became a fishing pier. Common fish to catch include snook, tarpon, grouper, black sea bass, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, cobia, sheepshead, red snapper, pompano, and many more. Snacks, drinks, bait and fishing supplies are available.

This state park is an excellent place to stop and appreciate sunrises and sunsets as well as to view Tampa Bay's "signature" cable-stayed bridge, the [Bob Graham Sunshine Skyway Bridge](#).



