

231018 BRA New US FL23 Bypass Highway Travel

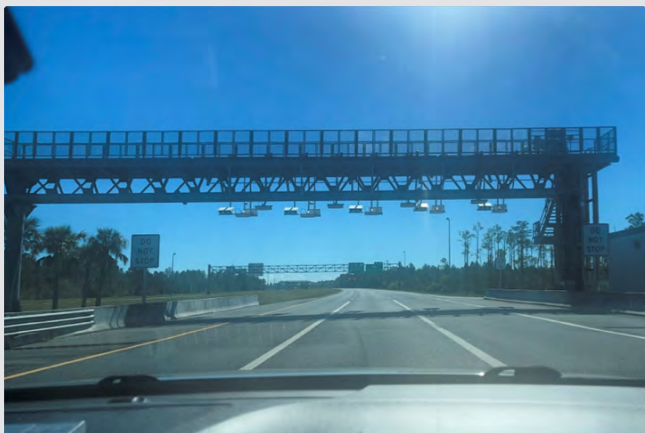
Located just west of Jacksonville and departing from interstate 10 W. you can catch US Florida 23. This is a divided highway with tolls. The highway starts off with a \$.49 toll.

But the tolls are charged at each exit and we found a total of three (ranging from \$.67-\$.95), all less than a dollar, we're charged between the interstate 10 and a Florida 21 where we exited Florida

Blanding Blvd



Electronic Toll Booth, Florida 23



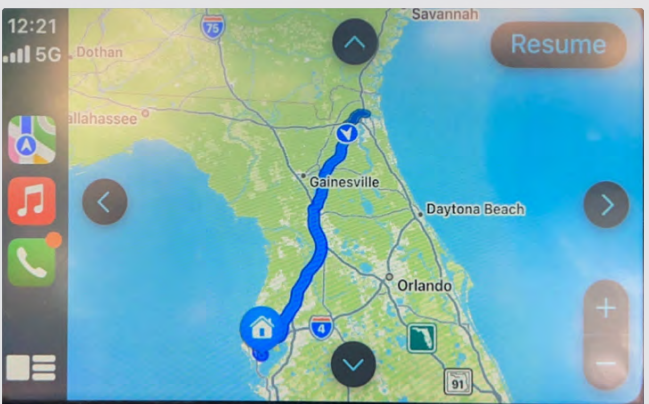
The highway appears to be noon. It cuts at an angle of 45° from Jacksonville through the Central Florida area toward Tampa intersecting to 95 just north of the city. This is the first time that we've taken this highway.

New divided four-lane



This highway actually replaces the old route taken from Jacksonville, which was 301. It's cut across starting from Jacksonville via US301 and then continues on directly to Tampa. Once it was plugged into the GPS it saved us 30 minutes of driving.

New Bypass



FL23 in fact is not completed. It ends at the Blanding exit where are you must take Florida 21 for 33 miles. Florida 21 also appears to be a new divided, highway with a full median, and initially six lanes. There are traffic lights on this road and the speed limit can vary from 45 miles an hour up to

highway speed.

2 Lane Reduced



But 5 miles south of Blanding, the first city that you encounter, it will turn into a two-lane road. Here you will find heavy truck traffic that will keep you at or near the speed limit. But going the speed limit is recommended as you will get a traffic ticket for sure. This is how the small towns make their budgets work at the city level.

This is Central Florida and in this part of the state there is very little as far as population is concerned. Just south of Blanding is the Blanding national guard training center.



Image: dmna.ny.gov

Camp Blanding Joint Training Center is the primary military reservation and training base for the Florida National Guard, both the Florida Army National Guard and certain nonflying activities of the Florida Air National Guard. The installation is located in Clay County, Florida, near the city of Starke.

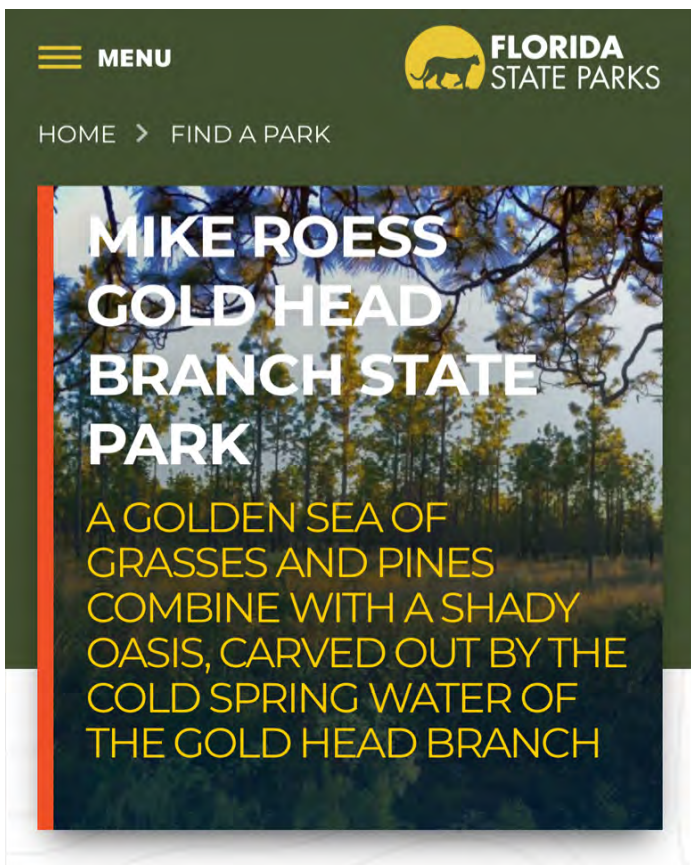
Built: 1940

Controlled by: [Florida National Guard](#)

In use: 1940–present

There are southern pine wood forest that

grow on each side of the road. You will also see farms and farm homes along the travel. Between the small towns, there is very little other commercial activity.



Gold Head branch state park is located along Florida 21. It is a surprise to see this park in the middle of nowhere. You are always surprised when you visit any state park. They are always very well-maintained and placed there for a reason. We did not have time to stop, but it would be of interest to go in there if time allowed.

Keystone Florida is a small town that you will enter. It is a Center for the YMCA camp for Florida.

Scanned Documents



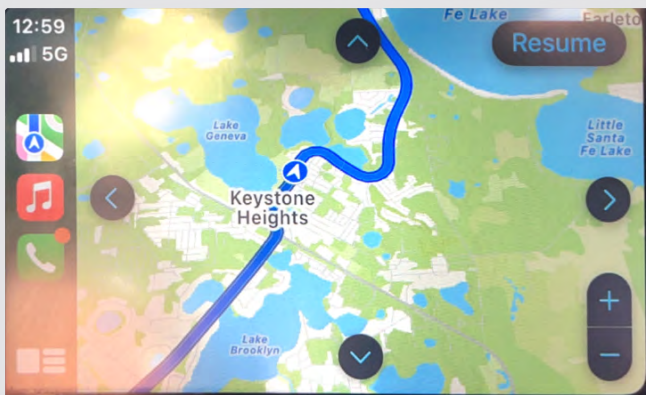
Don't go too fast or you will miss the downtown area. This is a very small town that seems to be here because of the leak. The leak seems to be well developed and appears to be a popular recreation area.

Downtown Keystone



It's surprising to see the area. There are middle income approaching upper income homes. The lakes in this area are extensive and the waterfront property is desirable. The winding roads are lined with old oak and the hanging Spanish moss make for a nice atmosphere. I'm sure the pace of life here is very slow.

Fe Lake



At the town of Melrose, you will turn right and go west on State Road 26. This is the start of the historic district Florida heritage trail. Continue through the town to N. East County Rd., 219 an and turn left or south.

Local gas station



6 1/2 miles later going south you will turn due south on US 301. That will place you back on the original road that was traveled between Jacksonville and Tampa when we lived there during my tour in the US Army. This was a pleasant change from the usual travel route that we have always taken and that it was welcome because we discovered Keystone Florida and a new state park.

US301 divided highway



END