

240308 BRA Camping Everglades National Park

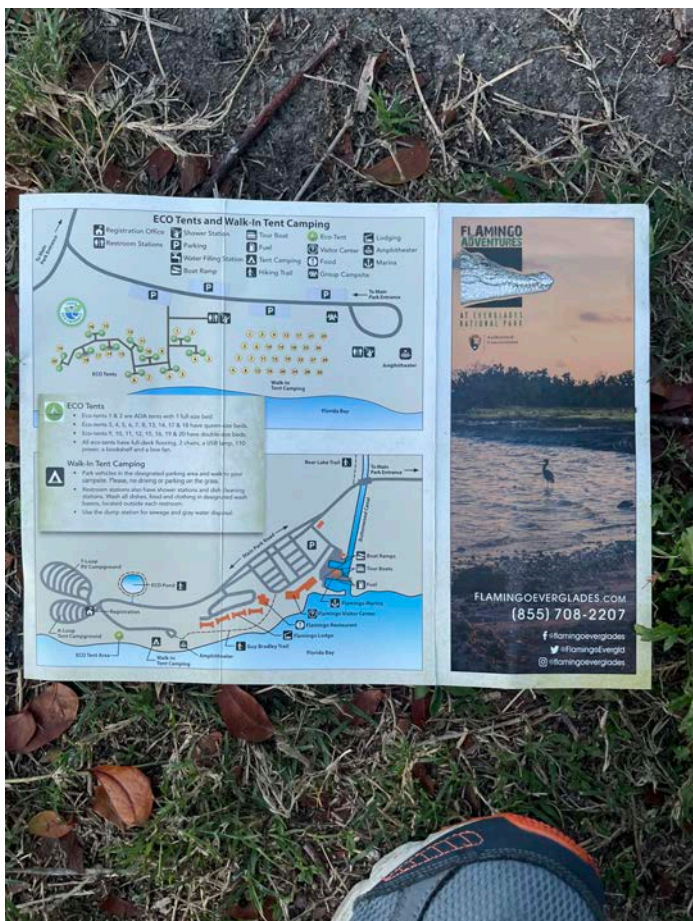
Everglades national park is located at the terminus of Route 9332, approximately 50 miles south west of Homestead Florida.



The expanse of grass wetland area at the upper end of the park is the enormous. It's like a ocean which extends in every direction. The road is just as straight as an arrow for miles, and it takes a full hour with a safe speed to reach the end of the road where the Flamingo camp is located.



Reservations are available online and the campsite spot is assigned for you before you arrive. There's a check in booth at the end of the road. They'll have your name when you arrive and will give you an access pass for the days that you will be on site.



There are two campsites in the national park, Long Pine and Flamingo. Long pine is located near the entrance of the national park and flamingo is at the dead end of route 9332.



I've looked at both of the campsites, and definitely do not stay at the Longpine facility. It's very rustic. The facilities are pretty basic and there's absolutely nothing to do unless you count insects. I would not stay here unless you just have no other option.



From the park entrance if you drive the speed limit it's a full 45 or 50 minutes to arrive; allow up to one hour because you're gonna have bicyclist that will slow you down plus some people don't drive even 55 miles an hour on this road. You can't go much further south in the state of Florida unless you go to Key West. You're at the end of the road here.



The campgrounds are well laid out and properly maintained. There's a bathroom facility on alternate entrances that serve the different campgrounds. Although the water is heated by solar energy, there's plenty of hot water for a shower as well.



Each campground comes with a picnic table and a fire pit. You can bring firewood and have a decent fire as well inside the ring.



One thing that needs to be mentioned is that you are venturing out into the Everglades. There are a lot of insects here. This is one thing you should expect.



If you bring a tent and do not bring a

screened in pop up then you are going to be surrounded by insects. You can try to light a fire, but that is going to only be partially effective. Bugs really come out heavily at night. Be prepared. PS bug spray doesn't work on the dreaded 'no see-ums!' These are tiny little biting flies that are almost small enough to fit through a screen, but when they bite you noticed them. The only thing that is ever worked on this as a Floridian will tell you is Avon's skins, so soft, which I did not bring.



Services are limited, and there is a marina general store. The general store carries some supplies including soap. It also has firewood and ice both and 7 and 14 pound bags. You can get fuel at the general store as well.



The park website does say that there is cell phone service at the campground. This is partially correct. If you have AT&T as your

carrier, you will have cell phone service. If not, then you will spend the night camping here without any communication. The glories of the good old days return in full bloom. Of course your teenage daughter is not gonna think this is such a great leap forward.



There's a Wi-Fi located at the marina and a restaurant. It's really strange as you have to stand outside the marina gift shop to use it and connectivity is sporadic. One of our phones connected and the other phone would not connect. The overall comment here is do not expect to come to this campsite and have any kind of connectivity or connection to the outside world. Enjoy.



But for me and my daughter it was a great experience. She has gone camping with me only once before as a Cub Scout in PANAMA when I was working there. This is the first time that we've gone out to camp in the USA and we thought we'd give it a try.



There is a restaurant located near the park lodges which are hotel type accommodations. You can rent them with a view of the beach. The restaurant is casual and has soup, salads, sandwiches, and fried finger food. All basic food. Surprise was the garden salad which was excellent and well priced. There are no other facilities here so if you want to have a hot meal, this is the only place. Reasonably priced.



Overall, if you are expecting the Everglades of film or imagination, you won't find it here. This is a long expanse of dry grassland. At the end of the road is a campground that if you took a picture of could be placed just about anywhere, and would have no evidence that you were in the Everglades. I would not come back here to camp; it's nondescript, isolated with few services and not much to do.



Now, If I had a boat and I was an avid fisherman, this could be a paradise. The waters off of this campground are absolutely pristine and it's likely that no matter which way you turn you'll find yourself completely alone with absolutely nobody else around. I'm not an expert fisherman, but this should be an ideal combination which will give you an excellent fishing experience.



I also object to being charged almost \$40 per night to camp, \$35 for an entrance fee and then you get to a location where there is no cell service. This is the modern age and someone like the federal government in the national campground should have cell service available to all. They certainly should make it clear on their website that cell service is only available for one carrier which doesn't make any sense. And as noted above even the common areas that

are supposed to have Wi-Fi don't work for every user. Again, not a memorable thing for me And further alienates my desire to return and camp here. Otherwise...



But no matter what and regardless of where you camp, you can't beat the night skies. In a pristine campsite location such as this, it's beautiful and reminds you that nature really is just a stones throw away. All you have to do is look up and enjoy.



Be happy!