



CRYSTAL RIVER



Crystal River, in the heart of Citrus County, is said to be the soul of Florida. The small town takes its name from the 11-km long clear river flowing through it. It is the perfect place to watch the manatees that live in the waters of Kings Bay and Three Sisters. These friendly giants have been protected in the State of Florida since the 19th century, so you can be sure that your experience will be both authentic and ethical. In addition to manatee watching, the area offers many other aquatic activities such as sport fishing, kayaking, diving, and boat cruises.

MANATEES IN CRYSTAL RIVER

WHAT TO DO

SWIM WITH THE MANATEES ★★

Crystal River is the **only place in the word where swimming with the manatees is regulated and carefully supervised**. All year round, it is possible to enjoy impressive face-to-face encounters with these large endangered mammals! **Snorkeling is the best way to watch them**, making the interaction as silent as possible. You will feel like you're part of the group! **Passive observation** is required. Bear in mind that **you are in their territory and that swimming with them is a privilege. Remain calm and avoid sudden movements**; let the manatees come to you. They are curious animals and won't hesitate to come close.

A mask, snorkel and wetsuit are generally included in the tour price. Photos and videos of your experience are sometimes available, depending on the company. As this activity is extremely popular, it is **best to book ahead of time**. The **best time of day for manatee watching is early in the morning**, and the best time of year is between **November and March**. Children are allowed, but they must remain calm and wear a wetsuit (minimum size 6).
9301, W. FORT ISLAND TRAIL,
CRYSTAL RIVER
352-795-4211
WWW.PLANTATIONONCRYSTALRIVER.COM/MANATEE-TOURS.HTM

CRYSTAL RIVER ARCHAEOLOGICAL STATE PARK

This **61-acre archeological site** is one of the **longest continuously occupied sites** in Florida. For **more than 1,600 years**, the area served as a **ceremonial center for Native Americans**. People living on the surrounding islands traveled to the mainland to conduct trade and bury their dead. The park is located on the edge of a vast marsh that is very popular with fishermen and frequented by a wide variety of birds. It has a small museum and several discovery trails.
3400, N. MUSEUM POINT ROAD,
CRYSTAL RIVER
352-795-3817
WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/PARK/CRYSTAL-RIVER-ARCHAEOLOGICAL

CRYSTAL RIVER PRESERVE STATE PARK

This park stretches **30 km along the Gulf of Mexico coast** and offers **nature activities** such as hiking, biking, kayaking, fishing and nature observation. It also boasts **many public trails** including Crystal Cove Trail (Mullet Hole), Seven Mile Loop, Eco-Walk Trail, Churchhouse Hammock and the 3 Dixie Shores trails (Loop Lake Trail, Marsh End Trail, Redfish Hole). **Admission to the park is free.**
3266, N. SAILBOAT AVENUE,
CRYSTAL RIVER
352-795-3817
WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/PARK/CRYSTAL-RIVER-PRESERVE

THE FRAGILE GENTLE GIANT OF CRYSTAL RIVER

The **North American manatee** or "sea cow" is a **unique mammal** known for its gentle behaviour and friendly appearance. A distant cousin of the elephant, it is herbivorous and eats up to 50 kg of aquatic plants daily. Adult manatees are about 3 metres long and weigh around 450 kg.

They live in warm water (20 degrees Celsius or more), which is why they spend their winters in Florida. Manatees have been an **endangered species** since 1973. They have no natural predators, but the destruction of their habitat has forced them to live in areas frequented by boats, and they are too often injured in boating accidents. Humans are unfortunately their worst enemy...



CRYSTAL RIVER PRESERVE STATE PARK

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MANATEE

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NEARBY

ELLIE SCHILLER HOMOSASSA SPRINGS WILDLIFE STATE PARK ★

This large park contains a **natural spring 134 metres deep** which serves as a **refuge for manatees injured** in boating accidents. A team treats their injuries and releases many of them back into the wild. The most seriously injured remain in the park. An underwater observatory offers close-up glimpses of these gentle creatures as they paddle languidly through schools of

fish. The **park is also a refuge for other animals unable to survive in the wild on their own** such as bobcats, turtles, black bears, otters, alligators, crocodiles and birds of prey. The tour includes an **exhibit on the history of the park** and a **boat cruise** along the canals. Allow 3 to 4 hours for the visit.

4150, S. SUNCOAST BOULEVARD
(US 19), HOMOSASSA
352-628-5343
[WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/
PARK/HOMOSASSA-SPRINGS](http://WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/PARK/HOMOSASSA-SPRINGS)



ELLIE SCHILLER HOMOSASSA SPRINGS WILDLIFE STATE PARK

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MANATEES AT ELLIE SCHILLER HOMOSASSA SPRINGS WILDLIFE STATE PARK

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WHERE TO EAT

SEAFOOD SELLER & CAFE (\$\$-\$\$\$)

This popular Cajun restaurant specializes in seafood. It is easy to see why it's a favourite with the locals! The fish is fresh daily, straight off their own boats and prepared to perfection. You will enjoy a warm welcome and a friendly atmosphere.

300, S.E. US HWY 19, CRYSTAL RIVER
352-228-4936

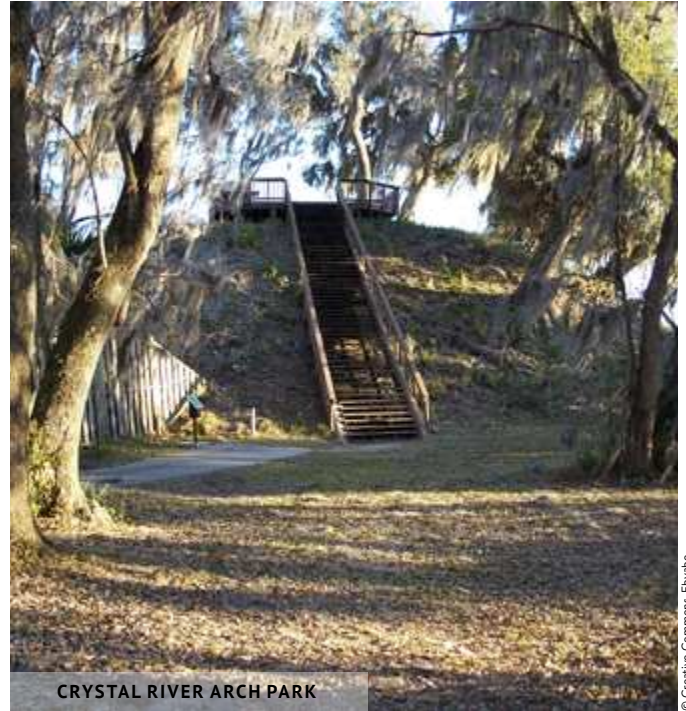
WWW.SEAFOODSELLERANDCAFE.NET

VINTAGE ON 5TH (\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$)

Vintage on 5th is an eclectic restaurant in the historic downtown area of Crystal River, housed in a renovated 1940 church. It's a winning recipe: excellent service, unique atmosphere, creative cuisine, fresh ingredients and an excellent selection of wines. The menu features fresh fish, hand-cut steaks, seafood dishes, and regional Southern favorites. Children's menu available. Reservations necessary.

114, N.E. 5TH STREET, CRYSTAL RIVER
352-794-0004

WWW.VINTAGEON5TH.COM



CRYSTAL RIVER ARCH PARK

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GROUP OF SWIMMERS WITH THE MANATEES

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