



Glades County, Florida Real Florida Guide

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

Choose from the options below to plan your own day-long adventure or for a longer stay in the South Central Florida region. Savor the slow roads of five counties by taking the [Big Water Heritage Trail](#), a scenic auto tour route which links the assets around the great Lake Okeechobee, or choose from the options below to plan your adventures in Glades County, Florida.

Day 1

Lake Okeechobee, the second largest freshwater lake in the country, provides a unique combination of historic attractions, fishing opportunities, natural areas and wildlife, and agriculture and rural ranchlands. Walk, hike, rollerblade, or bicycle the [Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail \(LOST\)](#).



Designated as part of the [Florida National Scenic Trail \(FNST\)](#), LOST is a 110 mile trail encircling the lake on the 35 foot high Herbert Hoover Dike. More than half the trail is paved. The LOST is the perfect place for bird lovers to observe American bald eagles, ospreys, egrets, ibis, gulls, terns, and skimmers. Access can be gained from many recreation areas located around the lake.

To long-distance hikers, [Okeechobee West](#) is 56.5 miles of the LOST trail starting at



the City of Okeechobee, south through the towns of Lakeport and Moore Haven in Glades County, to the town of Clewiston in Hendry County. This mileage is divided into five segments, with panoramic views of prairie, marshland, cattle ranches, and sugar cane fields, and there are magnificent views of sunrises and sunsets over Lake Okeechobee. The trail section from Lakeport south to Moore Haven is 9.5 miles, paved and unpaved, and the section from Moore Haven south to Clewiston is 11.9 miles of paved trail. This section of the FNST begins at [Alvin Ward Park \(1\)](#).

Where's the best view of Lake Okeechobee? Drive to the [Margret Van de Velde Park/ Harney Pond Canal Recreation Area \(2\)](#) in Lakeport, and enjoy the long boardwalk up to the observation area to an amazing view of Indian Prairie and the marshlands around Fisheating Creek.

Other options in the area: Other activities to choose from on Lake Okeechobee include world class large-mouth bass, crappie, and bluegill fishing. Choose from many [guides](#) from around the lake.

Day 2



Stay the night in Lakeport (3) or arrange ahead for camping at the [Fisheating Creek Outpost \(4\)](#) approximately a 27 minute drive southwest to the town of Palmdale. The Outpost provides canoe and kayak rentals, or bring your own, with options for a shuttle for an eight-mile or more canoe or kayak trip on the pristine Fisheating Creek. First, check [water levels](#) on the Outpost's website, as you need at least one and a half



feet of water to kayak and two feet for a canoe. The stream flows 40 miles through the [Fisheating Creek Wildlife Management Area \(WMA\)](#) preserved for conservation of many species including the Florida black bear and Florida panther, into Lake Okeechobee. It is the only free-flowing water course feeding into the lake. The creek through the WMA is a designated site on the [Great Florida Birding & Wildlife Trail](#).

If you want to experience the beauty of Fisheating Creek but are not a paddler, the 1.7 mile [Knobby Knee Trail](#) is an easy way to enjoy a sampling of the waterway and its beautiful cypresses. January through May are the best times to hike this trail so that your feet remain dry. The trailhead is located in the Fisheating Creek Outpost campground and traverses the floodplains of the creek.



Another activity to choose from in the Fisheating Creek WMA, is fishing, hiking, and biking. Enjoy the 3.6 mile [Paradise Lake Trail \(5\)](#). The trailhead is located on north State Road 29/US 27 intersection in Palmdale.

Other options in the area: While in Palmdale, visit [Gatorama \(6\)](#). This is one of the few remaining roadside attractions that proliferated in the 1950's and 1960's. The attraction is home to hundreds of alligators as well as six species of crocodile. A thousand foot walkway winds through a pristine native Florida hammock, allowing for an uninterrupted view of the reptiles.

Day 3



From Palmdale, it is a short drive south to the [Ortona Indian Mound Park \(7\)](#), a state historical site. This Glades County park represents the remains of an important village of the extinct [Caloosahatchee Native American tribes](#). While a short .8 miles long, this walk in the ranchlands and woods takes you back in time more than 3,000 years. The Calusa built canals, and here near Turkey Creek, this settlement had an extensive canal system and a large number of mounds, including the highest point in the county at 22 feet above sea level. Only a portion of the original complex is left today, but this interpretive trail leads you through the hammocks and scrub to see these ancient mounds and canals.

While in Ortona visit the [Ortona Locks \(8\)](#) located on Ortona Lock Road and the Caloosahatchee River. The [Caloosahatchee River](#) is 67 miles long running from Lake Okeechobee to the City of Fort Myers, and is a vital part of Florida's Intracoastal Waterway.

East of Ortona, drive approximately 18 minutes to the City of [Moore Haven \(9\)](#), situated along the banks of the Caloosahatchee River. The downtown area of Moore Haven is a [National Downtown Historic District](#). Visit the [Glades County Courthouse](#) (U.S. 27 between 5th Street and 6th Street). The brick court house with its three-story central portico is an impressive Classical Revival design built in 1926, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The [Lone Cypress Tree \(10\)](#) located at Avenue J and the Caloosahatchee River, also called the 'Sentinel Cypress,' has served more than 100 years as a navigational aid for sailors on Lake Okeechobee. The tree has its own historic marker.

Visit the [Moore Haven Residential Historic District](#), a U.S. historic district of 40 buildings. The district is bounded by Avenue J to Avenue M and 1st to 5th Streets.



Other options in the area: While visiting Glades County, colorful [festivals](#) and celebrations bring together family, friends, and neighbors for events like the Buckhead Ridge Catfish Festival (January), [Brighton Reservation Field Day & Rodeo](#) (February), Ortona Cane Grinding Festival (February), the Sour Orange Festival (February), and the [Chalo Nitka Festival & Rodeo](#) (March).

[Geocaching](#) is a popular sport/game in many areas of Florida, including the area around Lake Okeechobee and in Glades County. Hidden treasures are sought by participants using handheld GPS receivers. See the website www.geocaching.com for locations of local treasures all over the world, and for more information on the sport.



