

History & Nature

For four thousand or more years before the arrival of Europeans in Florida, a succession of Native American fishing cultures lived and worked in the Charlotte Harbor area. Several of their shell mounds are located on Cayo Costa.

Cayo Costa, which means “Key by the Coast” or barrier island, was the name given to the island by early Spanish traders.

In the early 1800s, Spanish fishermen from Cuba established “fishing ranchos” on islands along Florida’s west coast. Fish were caught, dried and then transported to Cuban markets. In 1879, the Smithsonian Institution conducted a survey of Charlotte Harbor and found four fishing ranchos, two on Cayo Costa (then called La Costa Island).

A quarantine station was established on the northern end of Cayo Costa for immigrants entering the country through Boca Grande Pass in the late 1800s.

Approximately 20 fishing families lived on Cayo Costa in the early 1900s, where they established a school, a post office and a grocery store. Fishing continues to be a prominent activity here. Boca Grande Pass, to the north, is particularly well known for its tarpon fishing.



Florida State Parks

Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Division of Recreation and Parks

Cayo Costa State Park

Located 4 nautical miles west off the coastline of Pine Island, FL 33922
P.O. Box 1150 , Boca Grande, FL 33921
(941) 964-0375

FloridaStateParks.org

Park Guidelines

- Hours are 8 a.m. until sunset, 365 days a year.
- An entrance fee is required. Additional user fees may apply.
- All plants, animals and park property are protected.
- Pets are permitted in designated areas only. Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 6 feet and well behaved at all times.
- Fishing, boating, swimming and fires are allowed in designated areas only. A Florida fishing license may be required.
- Fireworks and hunting are prohibited.
- Alcoholic beverage consumption is allowed in designated areas only.
- Become a volunteer. Inquire at the ranger station.
- To join the Barrier Island Parks Society, Inc., call (941) 964-0060.
- Florida’s state parks are committed to providing equal access to all facilities and programs. Should you need assistance to enable your participation, please contact the ranger station.

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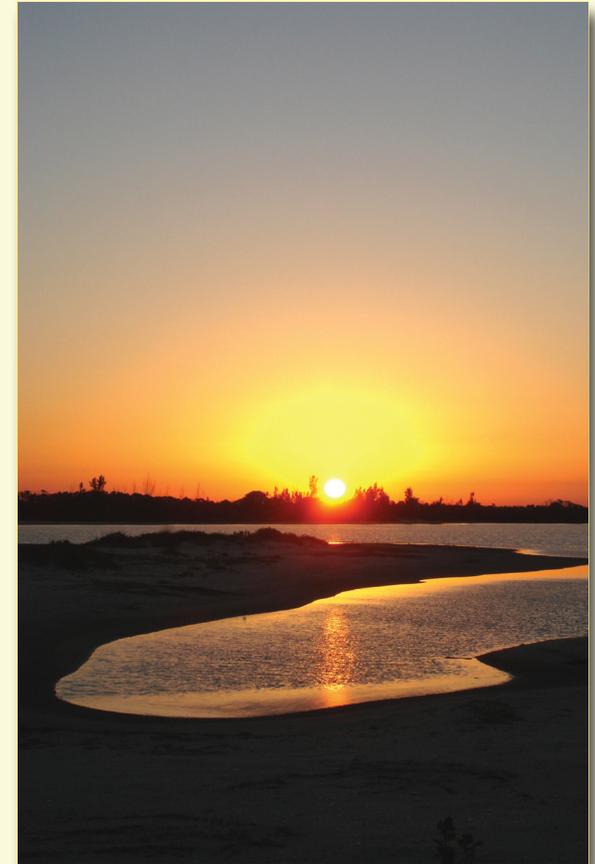


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Cayo Costa State Park

A Gulf Coast island paradise



...the Real FloridaSM



National Gold Medal Winner

Florida State Parks - “America’s First Three-Time Winner”

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The park encompasses 2,420 acres on one of Florida's largest unspoiled barrier islands. The southern portion of North Captiva Island, which lies off the coast of North Fort Myers, is also included in the park. Away from the hustle and bustle of the mainland, visitors will find beautiful white-sand beaches, hiking trails, primitive campsites and rustic cabins.

Fishing is excellent in Charlotte Harbor, especially at Boca Grande Pass. Limited bayside docking is available for day visitors and overnight **campers**. A free **tram** transports visitors from the bayside docks to the gulf side of the island during normal operating hours. No electric or water hook-ups are available at the docks.

Other beach activities include **swimming** and **shelling**, but you may not remove live shells (i.e. hermit crabs or sand dollars). Several **hiking** trails crisscross the island. Tables, grills and two picnic pavilions are available on the gulf side of the island.

Twelve rustic **cabins** and 30 tent sites are available. For cabin reservation information, contact Reserve America at (800) 326-3521 or (866) I CAMP FL or TDD (888) 433-0287 or visit ReserveAmerica.com. Other state parks in the area include Gasparilla Island, Don Pedro Island and Stump Pass Beach.



BOCA GRANDE PASS



Directions

The island lies 2 miles south of Boca Grande, and is accessible only by boat. Take I-75 to exit 143. Turn west on State Road 78 (Pine Island Road), then north on Stringfellow Road to Pineland. Contact the park's office at (941) 964-0375 for ferry service information.