

DAY TRIP: Swim with Manatees, Stumpknockers, and Pier Sunset

Day-trip Snapshot:

Head out first thing in the morning to Crystal River, Florida (approximately 90 minutes north of Tampa and west of Orlando) and check into the manatee tour center. There you'll watch a video on how to snorkel and interact with manatees, then you'll be fitted with a swimsuit, snorkel, mask, and fins. Follow your guide and hop on a pontoon boat that will take you to a designated area. You'll quietly enter cool, spring-fed waters that are so clear that you'll be able to spot manatees in no time. If you're lucky, these friendly and curious creatures will swim right up to you! After your tour, head to downtown Inverness to enjoy a hearty lunch and maybe do a little shopping, then spend the rest of the afternoon at Fort Island Gulf Beach Pier and watch the sunset.

1st Stop: [Swim with Manatee Tour](#)

Locations: Crystal River and Homosassa (tour centers vary by [location](#))

Cost: Varies, but usually around \$60 per person

What to Bring: Just your swimsuit! [Tours](#) usually provide wetsuit, snorkel, mask, fins

Length of Activity: 3 - 4 hours

Best Time to Go: [Manatee tours](#) operate all year round, but you'll spot more manatees in the cooler months when they hang out in the warm 72° spring temps.

2nd Stop: [Stumpknockers on the Square](#)

Location: [110 W. Main Street in Downtown Inverness](#)

Grab a seat outside and enjoy a cool drink with catfish, fries, corn-on-the-cob, slaw, and hush puppies. They also have plenty of seafood, steak, and good ole southern cuisine like fried green tomatoes, frog legs, and gator bites. Check out their menu [here](#).

3rd Stop: [Fort Island Gulf Beach Pier](#)

Location: [16000 W. Fort Island Trail, Crystal River, FL 34429](#)

Enjoy an afternoon stroll along the beach and watch the sunset on the [pier](#).

Other resource links:

[Crystal River Florida Map](#)

[Discover Crystal River Florida](#)

[Plantation on Crystal River Manatee Tours](#)