

Pine Island Florida

Pine Island Florida is in a unique location. To get there you drive across two islands and three bridges, or come by boat. It's separated from the Gulf of Mexico by Pine Island Sound and barrier islands. It's the largest island off the Southwestern coast of Florida. It's not on the coast, and it's not on the mainland. It's sandwiched in between.

There aren't many reasons to visit Pine Island. Once through Matlacha, it's wise to pull into Sandy Hook restaurant's parking lot, turn around, and head back.



Little Pine Island

Before reaching Pine Island you'll drive through Little Pine Island. It's an uninhabited wetland reserve. There are trails open to the public, but they're not worth walking. The island was once covered with invasive melaleuca. The trees have been removed, but the island's nutrients went with them. As a result, what should be a lush island appears strangely barren. It's recovering, and will recover eventually, but for now, there's little to see.



What's on Pine Island, and What's not

You'll come to the four way stop that's the busiest intersection on the 18 mile long Island. It's the busiest because it's the only road on and off the island. Make a right and you're driving to Bokeelia. Turn left, and you're heading to St. James City. Either way you'll end up by the water.

There is one place of interest. The Calusa Heritage Trail. It's an archaeological site that includes ridiculously large shell mounds created by the Indians that once lived here. This civilized tribe mysteriously disappeared shortly after Europeans arrived. If you're on the island, it's a beautiful location worth seeing, even if you're not into the archaeology.

There are no real beaches on Pine Island. Most of its coast is mangroves. As the crow flies, beaches are close, and they're not much farther by boat. But, it's at least an hour drive to a real beach.



The drive time varies greatly, depending on the season. In summer there's no traffic. During season it clogs up in Matlacha. All of Pine Island Road becomes stop and go through Matlacha

and the two mile width of Little Pine Island. It happens again on the eastern side of Matlacha when returning.

It may take a long time to drive off the island, and there's not much on the island. This contributes to the isolated feel of the place. Between the northern and southern ends, it looks like rural, inland Florida, instead of a sub tropical island. There's a lot of agriculture, nurseries, fruit trees and a few cattle.

The frost free climate is great for growing tropical plants. It's also great for growing mosquitoes and no-see-ums. Spraying controls the mosquitoes most of the time. Not much can be done about the no-see-ums. In many parts of the island, people don't venture out at dawn or dusk without some form of protection from biting insects.



Information on Matlacha Resorts

Living on Pine Island

Pine Island FL is an address the people living there are proud to have. It's a close knit community with good people willing to help each other. They share a love of the simple pleasures of life and a laid back lifestyle. It works for them.

What to Do on Pine Island

If you don't just want to "kick back," activities abound and there is something for everyone. Here are just some of the location attractions

Fishing: Fish right off our dock. Rent one of our kayaks or let us put you in contact with local fishing guides. Fish are abundant and include snook, redfish, tarpon, trout, snapper, sheepshead, and mullet. Walk to the "Fishingest Bridge" in the world.

Golfing There are many golf courses in our area. An 18 hole course open to public is right on pine Island in Bokeelia as well as a 27 hole course right off of Pine Island Road.

Nature: Matlacha and Pine Island have an abundance of wildlife and sea life everywhere. You will see many water birds such as herons, egrets, ospreys, gulls and pelicans and hopefully a roseate spoonbill or two. Also, you may observe bald eagles nesting or soaring. Manatee and dolphins are also plentiful. Sit by the dock and watch or take one of the guided tour boats that are available. These are also great for shelling and swimming on the beaches of the nearby outer islands. Pine Island is proud of the many preserved areas and walking tours are guaranteed to provide fascinating discoveries.

Historical Information: The area was once inhabited by the Calusa Indians. There is ample evidence of their presence especially in the Pineland area where their mounds made of shells are still visible. The University of Florida Randall Research Center is still actively involved in archeological digs there and a tour can be scheduled. For more information visit:

www.flmnh.ufl.edu/rrc. Be sure to also visit the Museum of the Island to view and obtain information about the early settlers.

Biking: Pine Island offers a bike path that spans most of the island, which is approximately 18 miles long.



MANGOS

Tropical Trees and Vegetation: We are blessed with a tropical climate which means lots of wonderful fruits to see and try (mango, mychees, papaya, jack fruit and more). Many different flowering trees and plants can be observed throughout the area.

Oleander, Hibiscus, bougainvillea, Orchids, Royal Poinciana,

Plumeria and many more can be seen on the islands.



MYCHEES

Galleries Numerous art galleries are scattered throughout the island with the largest concentration right in Matlacha. You will find unique pieces in every medium. There are paintings, ceramics, pottery, furniture, furnishings, jewelry and more and the majority are produced by local artists.



JACK FRUIT

Entertainment and Food: Lots to choose from here with a variety of menus and lots of great local fish and seafood. Most of the restaurants offer outdoor dining, many on the water with

fantastic views and live entertainment.



PAPAYAS

MANGOMANIA... MANGO-PAPAYA FESTIVAL: Held in May at German American Club grounds... which includes Lychee, Carambola, Longan, *Papaya*, and Mango... www.MangoMania.com Every year in July at the peak of mango season, the island celebrates with a two day festival. Join us then and get a free admission to enjoy the food, music and more.

CALUSA BLUEWAY PADDLING FESTIVAL: Held annually at the end of October through the first of November, this "signature event" celebrates Southwest Florida's 190 mile marked paddling trail. **The Great Calusa Blueway**, which meanders from its southern tip at Bonita Springs to its northernmost pints around Pine Island sound and up the Caloosahatchee River. A great event for kayakers and nature lovers <http://www.floridarambler.com>



OCTOBERFEST: Held every October at the German American Club grounds. October 20 – 22 and October 27 – 29 <http://www.capecoraloktoberfest.com/>

