

John's Pass Park at Madeira Beach

Monday April 15, 2024

8:30am - 8:30pm

Please join us for a return visit to the lovely John's Pass Park at Madeira Beach, located on a chain of barrier islands that run along the Gulf Coast of the Tampa Bay area. Madeira Beach and John's Pass have long been a BBC favorite. [insert John Pass Park]

Madeira Beach has a total of 3.3 square miles, 1.0 square mile of land and 2.2 square miles of water. The City's slogan is "Two Miles Long and a Smile Wide." Let's add our smiles to that measure!

It is a little hike from the parking lot where our buses will perch in the parking lot next to the beach. Unfortunately we have not located a vendor who offers beach gear rentals. The trek is well worth the effort. There are restrooms nearby, but they are a 4-minute walk from the water. Procrastinators take heed! There are no lifeguards at Madeira Beach and rip currents are not uncommon. We'll check the tide reports closer to the trip to keep you informed. We'll arrive about 11am after a restroom stop on the way. You'll have the entire day to enjoy the beach, the marina & the boardwalk.

Discover John's Pass Village & Boardwalk

Beyond John's Pass Park, just a short walk under the bridge we drove in on, is John's Pass Historic Fishing Village & Boardwalk, at one time, a quaint turn-of-the-century fishing village. Today, John's Pass has over 100 merchants offering unique retail shopping and a good variety of restaurants. Once you have had enough fun in the sun, you may walk across the road (actually, under the bridge we came in on) to enjoy all this village has to offer. Johnspass.com The variety of restaurants would allow you to enjoy lunch & dinner at John's Pass, or you can bring your lunch and then splurge on dinner.

You can drop your beach gear off at your bus on the way to John's Pass Village.

How did the little slice of heaven known as John's Pass become such a wonderful village? The following is some unique history of how this village began.

As escaped Southern slaves found refuge with the displaced Native Americans in the South, they formed a band of people known as the Seminoles. The South and the Seminoles fought and the Seminoles lost, which gave the south more land to farm in Florida. Two 'pioneers' who took advantage of more land to farm, Joseph Silva and John LeViques, set out on a conquest to discover more property. The two were caught in a hurricane which struck the area in September of 1848. They were washed ashore on an unfamiliar and untouched northerly opening. The hurricane cut a pass between Treasure Island and Madeira Beach. John LeViques was the first to navigate through it. In honor of the discovery this piece of land was named John's Pass.

John's Pass offers many activities. There is something for everyone.

All of the activities below are accessed on Hubbard's Marina.

Hubbard's Marina: 170 Boardwalk PI E, Phone 727-393-1947

This historic marina offers local fishing, deep sea fishing, a dolphin cruise, parasailing, and jet skiing for all of you brave souls.

Local Fishing

Hubbard's Marina is the place for local fishing from shore. Below is a link to all you need to know.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJCnGEAwFM0>

Deep Sea Fishing

Deep Sea 5 hour ½ day charter from Hubbard's Marina. See details and a link for reserving your trip: \$76.46 for seniors. Seems like a great bargain.

hubbardsmarina.com/half-day-fishing-trip/

Dolphin Cruise

The Dolphin cruise begins at 1 pm and 3 pm. The Dolphin Cruise will travel through the picturesque waters of Boca Ciega Bay. A top-notch 40-foot U.S. Coast Guard inspected, and certified sightseeing tour boat is the best way to explore the intercoastal waters.

The dolphin cruise is 90 minutes and the cost for seniors is \$26.50. To learn more about this adventure please click on the link below. hubbardsmarina.com/dolphin-watching-cruises/

Flying High Adventures: Parasailing and Jet Skiing: both offered at John's Pass Village and Boardwalk: Starting at \$75 an hour. **NOTE:** "Loading and unloading takes place at the safety of our dock so you do not have to enter the water and climb into our

parasailing boat.” fly-n-high.com/parasailing/ (Let your bus leader know if you plan to do either of these so we can have the EMTs on standby.)

How Hubbard’s Marina came to be:

Wilson Hubbard from Memphis, came to the Florida coast and settled at Pass-A-Grille. At 17 he bought five rowboats and 40 cane poles from a concessionaire for \$150. After the war he bought his first charter boat and in 1954 he established the first gulf coast half-day fishing party boat. Party boaters could also enjoy eating their own “catch of the day” cooked at the Friendly Fisherman Restaurant, (owned by Hubbard) for only \$4.95 including “all the fixin’s”.

Hubbard was instrumental in the building of John’s Pass Village and Boardwalk. In 2004 Hubbard’s son Mark took ownership of the marina. Mark established Hubbard’s Sea Adventures, specifically the dolphin cruise operation that offers narrated tours of local environments, wildlife, and history. Many Pinellas County school children visit Hubbard’s floating classroom, Environmental Explorer, which allows students to observe native wildlife in its natural habitat, explore and understand wetland environments, and discuss current environmental issues with the ship’s naturalist.

More to taste and see...

You might also enjoy a visit to the **Florida Winery** at 12945 Village Boulevard in John’s Pass where magic happens! All of their wines are made right there in-house. Only steps from the beach you will find the most unique winery on earth. Beach real estate is not cheap so they squeeze a lot of wine out of a small space-about 900 square feet. It is not a lot of room but, it is enough for them to create the most amazing libations known to man. They use three 2000-liter jacket fermentation tanks and nine 2000-liter racking and aging tanks. All of the bottling is done by hand right in the front window. With 20 varieties being produced and about 50 awards won in their first 4 years it is obvious they make great use of the limited space they have. Their reviews tout the **wine slushies** as the best around! Thefloridawinery.com

Restaurants nearby:

Bamboo Beach Bar: 13025 Village Blvd; (727) 398-5401 \$. American spot featuring fish tacos and frozen drinks. A tiki-style patio & live music.

bamboobeachbarandgrill.com/menus

The Boardwalk Grill: 204 John's Pass Boardwalk; (727) 391-8947 \$. lobster rolls, grouper sandwiches, burger & beer served on the patio with gulf views.

<https://theboardwalkgrill.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/BOARDWALK-GRILL-2023-Fall-Winter-Menu.pdf>

Bubba Gump Shrimp Co: 185 Boardwalk PI W (727) 397-4867 \$\$\$. seafood and American. bubbagump.com

Caddy's: 190 Boardwalk PI E. (727) 290-1455 This bar & grill serves burgers and American eats. <https://caddys.com/menus/>

Crabby's On The Pass: 12754 Kingfish Dr. (727) 300-0191 \$\$\$. Serving seafood while listening to live music. crabbysonthepass.com

Delosa's Pizza: 12800 Village Blvd. (727) 398-4657 \$\$\$. delosaspizza.com

Friendly Fisherman: 150 Boardwalk PI E W (727) 391-6025 \$\$\$. serving seafood. <https://www.gofriendlyfisherman.com/menus/>

Hooter's: 192 John's Pass, Boardwalk PI W (727) 797-4668 \$\$\$. A sports bar & grill famous for chicken wings. hooters.com

Mad Beach Cantina: 13205 Gulf Ln. (727) 284-3990 \$\$\$. Mexican. madbeachcantina.com **MAKE YOUR OWN MARGARITA!**

Mad Beach Craft Brewing Company: 12945 Village Blvd. (727) 362-0008; \$\$\$. A venue for house-brewed beer & globally inspired American fare. madbeachbrewing.com

Pirates Pub & Grub: Boardwalk PI E (727) 319-6285; \$\$\$. serving seafood, outdoor seating. No website available. Great reviews!

Sculley's Seafood: 190 Boardwalk PI E (727) 290 1463; \$\$ seafood & cocktails. sculleysrestaurant.com

We'll board our buses for the drive home around 6pm and, most likely, will sleep all the way back.