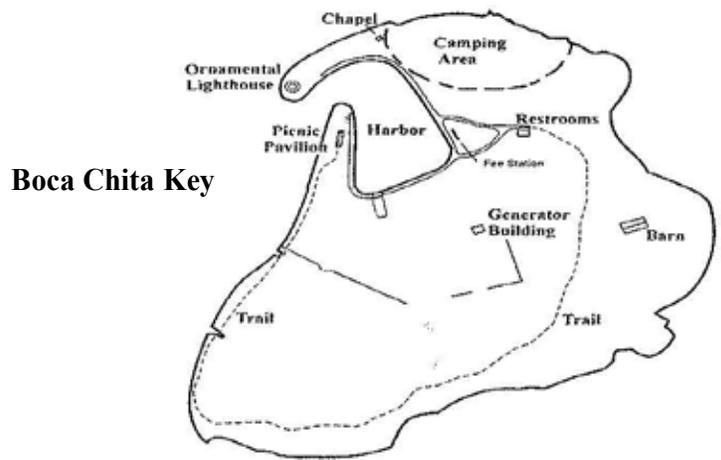
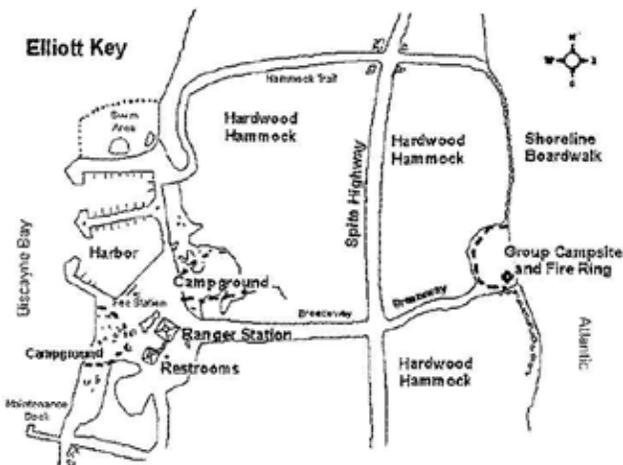




Camping Guide to Biscayne National Park



Tent camping is permitted in designated areas on Elliott and Boca Chita Keys. These islands are accessible by boat only. Camping is limited to fourteen (14) consecutive days or no more than thirty (30) days within a calendar year. Reservations are not accepted. The sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis. No services are available on the islands.

Facilities

Elliott Key: Freshwater toilets, cold water showers, and drinking water are available.

Boca Chita Key: Saltwater toilets are available. Sinks, showers and drinking water are NOT available.

Fees

There is a \$15 per night per campsite camping fee. The fee includes a standard campsite (up to 6 people and 2 tents).

If docking a boat overnight, there is a \$20 fee that includes one night camping. Group campsites (30 people and 5 tents) are \$30 per night on Elliott Key. Group campsite is available by reservation only (305) 230-1144 x 008. Holders of the Interagency Senior or Access passes receive a 50% discount on camping and marina use fees. The fee is paid at the self-service fee station on each island. It is your responsibility to make sure that your fees are paid. NPS rangers will verify payment compliance.

Camping/marina use fees must be paid PRIOR to 5 p.m. daily. Anyone who arrives after 5 p.m. must pay camping/marina use fees immediately upon arrival. Any vessel in the harbor after 5 p.m. is considered an overnight stay and is required to pay the camping/marina use fee.

Obtain Charts

Nautical charts are necessary for navigating your boat through the shallow bay and coral reef areas. NOAA nautical chart #11451 "Miami to Marathon and Florida Bay" includes all of Biscayne National Park. Charts may be purchased at the Dante Fascell Visitor Center and local bait and marine supply stores.

Transportation to the Islands

Personal powerboats and sailboats may be used to get to Boca Chita and Elliott Keys. Elliott Key is approximately 7 miles from Convoy Point, and Boca Chita Key is approximately 9 miles from Convoy Point. Consult tide charts before going out. Large draft vessels may have difficulty getting into the harbors during low tide.

Biscayne National Underwater Park, Inc., the park's concession operator, provides seasonal camping transportation service to Elliott Key. This service is by prior arrangement only. Call (305) 230-1100 for rates, information and reservations.

Insects

Though biting insects including mosquitoes and "no-see-ums" are most common in summer, their numbers fluctuate greatly at any time of the year depending on the weather, so be prepared year-round.

For Your Safety

Important Supplies

Carry fresh water (1 gallon/person/day), compass, nautical charts, anchor, sunscreen, sunglasses, rain gear, insect repellent, and tent (with insect netting).

If You Are In Trouble

Stay with your vessel near a navigational marker or on the island. Try to attract attention of nearby boaters or campers. Contact the U.S. Coast Guard by radio on Marine Channel #16 or call #NPS, OR 1(800) 788-0511 OR (305) 242-7740.

Winds and Weather

Thunderstorms occur frequently in summer. Hurricane season is June through November. Prepare for sudden wind and weather changes at any time.

Rules to Remember

Camping

Camping is permitted only in designated sites. Campsites are designated by the presence of a grill post. All tents must be in the vicinity of the grill. Please do not move picnic tables.

Protected Resources

All plants, animals, and artifacts are protected; do not collect or disturb them. Do not cut mangroves or other vegetation in any manner. Do not hang things from, tie things to or otherwise attach anything to trees, shrubs or structures. Coconuts may only be collected from the ground.

Pets

Pets are not allowed anywhere on Boca Chita Key. They are also not allowed on vessels in the harbor or on vessels otherwise attached to the island. On **Elliott Key**, pets must be on an attended leash that is no longer than six (6) feet. Pets are not allowed in buildings or in the swim area.

Fires

Ground fires are not permitted except at the fire ring on the ocean side of Elliott Key. Fires must be in grills and are permitted only in the developed areas (campground/picnic areas). Government provided grills may not be moved. Personal grills may not be placed on the boardwalk, dock, picnic tables, under structures, or any location where their heat will cause damage to structures or natural features. Dead and downed wood may be collected only within the immediate vicinity of the Elliott and Boca Chita Key campgrounds.

Trash

Carry out all your trash; do not bury it, leave it on the ground or dispose of it in toilets. Use toilets for human waste only. International laws prohibit the dumping of trash at sea.

Quiet Hours

Quiet hours are from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. During quiet hours all noise must be kept to a minimum. Generators and other machinery must be turned off. At all other times, noise or music must be at a reasonable level and not infringe on other visitors.

Swimming

On **Elliott Key**, an unguarded swim area is provided north of the harbor. Swimming is not permitted within the harbor or the “no wake” zone. On **Boca Chita Key**, swimming is not permitted within the harbor, the “no wake” zone or in designated turtle/bird nesting zones.

Fishing Regulations

Fishing regulations are available at the Dante Fascell Visitor Center or from any park ranger. Do not dispose of fish remains in the harbor or within 200 feet of the “no wake” zone. Florida State salt water fishing licenses are required. Biscayne Bay is a lobster sanctuary and lobstering is not permitted there. On **Elliott Key**, fishing is allowed from the maintenance work dock. Fishing is not allowed in the harbor, swimming area, or “no wake” zone. On **Boca Chita Key**, fishing is allowed, but not in the harbor, the “no wake” zone, creek leading into the wetlands, or the western bulkhead of the island.

Wildlife

Effective May 1 - August 15, annually, **Soldier Key**, **Ragged Key 1** and the sand beaches of **Boca Chita Key** will be closed for sea turtle and shorebird nesting. Native animals know how to feed themselves. Your food can harm them. To protect you, your food, and equipment from animals, store all food and garbage aboard a vessel or inside a closed, latched, hard-sided cooler, (not foam).

Camper's Checklist

Permits and Regulations

- Vehicle registration if parking overnight at Convoy Point
- Camping regulations
- Fishing license and regulations
- Weather forecast

Shelter

- Tent with no-see-um netting
- Sleeping bag
- Sleeping pad

Water and Food

- Water - 1 gallon/person/day
- Food - extra day supply
- Raccoon-proof storage container (not foam) for food and water

Cooking

- Portable stove or grill
- Fuel for stove
- Waterproof matches and lighter
- Cooking gear and utensils
- Biodegradable soap

Clothing

- Rain gear
- Cold and warm weather clothing
- Lightweight long-sleeve shirt and pants for sun and bug protection
- Wide-brimmed hat

Personal Equipment

- First aid kit
- Knife
- Flashlight and spare batteries
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen
- Insect repellent
- Weather radio for weather forecasts
- Personal items

**All vessels must conform to U.S. Coast Guard regulations.

Personal watercraft (Jet skis) are prohibited**

Powerboater's and Sailboater's Checklist

- Safety equipment - must conform to U.S. Coast Guard requirements VHF radio - monitor weather and Channel 16
- Fuel - 1/3 to get there, 1/3 to get back, 1/3 for reserve
- Tool kit - with spare parts
- Drinking water
- NOAA Nautical Chart #11451 “Miami to Marathon-Florida Bay”

Paddler's Checklist

- Life vests - U.S. Coast Guard approved
- Paddles and a spare
- Anchor
- Bailer
- Bow and stern lines
- Waterproof bags for gear
- Flares
- 360° light for operating at night
- Drinking water