

THE MOTHER'S ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CRAB ISLAND



WELCOME TO DESTIN, FL!

Destin is one of the most beautiful places in the world, famous for its crystal clear, emerald green waters, and white sandy beaches.

Destin is a favorite vacation spot for families thanks to the wide variety of activities for every age. Among the most popular? A day spent out at Crab Island, soaking up the sun and enjoying the water together.

It's a can't-miss day for families vacationing in Destin—so having a local's perspective can make all the difference when visiting with kids. That's why we created this guide to help you experience Crab Island like a seasoned mom who knows the ropes, the tides, and all the little details that make the day smoother and more fun for everyone.



FIRST THINGS FIRST...

WHAT IS CRAB ISLAND?

Crab Island is located north of the Destin Bridge near the Destin Pass. It's very easy to get to from anywhere in the bay, but it's accessible only by boat.

Although it's not technically an "island" anymore, Crab Island is one of the most popular boating destinations in Destin.



The island, originally shaped like a crab, was washed away by a hurricane many years ago. What remains is a giant sandbar covered with beautiful, waist-deep water you see on postcards and websites.

On a busy day, hundreds of boats will be at Crab Island, enjoying its emerald blue waters and all that fun the island has to offer. It is a must-do vacation activity for any visitor to Destin who loves the water!

GETTING TO CRAB ISLAND

Because of the shallow waters, many visitors think you can walk to Crab Island. However, that's not the case due to boat traffic and water currents. That means you need a boat!

You have three boating choices to reach Crab Island:

1. A privately-owned boat
2. Become a member of a Boating Club
3. Rent a pontoon boat!

We'll talk more about your boating options later in this guide, but first let's talk about what to pack.



WHAT TO PACK FOR CRAB ISLAND? 🦀

- 1** Limit the items you take (ex: one towel per person, cover-up, & flip-flops).
- 2** Zip lock or waterproof bags are a must! Use them to protect your cell phone, I.D., credit cards, and cash.
- 3** Sunscreen, sunscreen, sunscreen! When out on the water it's important to protect your family's skin. You will get more exposure to the sun's rays than normal!



- 4** Floats are a must. Not everybody wants to stay on the boat or in the water the entire time!

*PRO TIP: Bring a 20' rope to tie to the float. This way the kids won't float away from the boat with the tide.

- 5** Bring along a cooler with water, other favorite drinks, and snacks for the whole family to enjoy!

- 6** Pack light! Crab Island has several floating restaurants and other activities to choose from. Mom, you don't always have to prepare the food for the family... after all, you're on vacation too!

UNDERSTANDING THE TIDES

Crab Island is generally safe and wonderful for kids. However, you should be aware of the tides. Typically Crab Island will have two tidal changes a day. High tide is the best time on Crab Island. That's when all the clear water from the Gulf of Mexico has entered the pass, the water is still, and you will want your cameras ready!

Crab Island is spectacular at high tide with the beautiful clear emerald green water. The water typically remains at high tide for 45 minutes to an hour.

However, ~90 minutes before & after high tide, the water flows in or out quickly, and it can become like a river.

Always ensure young children wear a life vest, particularly when the flow of water is at its strongest. To remain closer to the weakest current, anchor your pontoon on the northwest side of Crab Island near the Coast Guard station.

PRO TIP: Download an app called "Windfinder" that will show you the times of the local tides each day.



BOATING TO CRAB ISLAND

Where to park?

When arriving at Crab Island, a great place to park your boat is on the northwest side of the island, close to the Coast Guard station where the current is the calmest.

How to select a good spot for the day?

When selecting a spot for the day, pay attention to the depth of water. A good rule of thumb is to look at the people who are already standing in the water. If they are standing waist-deep, then the level should be roughly 3 to 4 feet, which is a good depth for a family with kids.

What to do as you approach shallow waters?

When approaching this level of water, use caution, and always turn off the boat and walk it towards the shallow water. Never try to drive the boat into your chosen spot at this shallow depth. This is a very costly & avoidable mistake!

How do you set anchor?

After walking your boat in, set the anchor and *make sure you are not too close to another boat*. You want 20 or 30 feet of line as well as the anchor chain in the water to hold the boat. A good trick is to tie a life jacket to the line, which visually informs other boaters where your anchor is located to prevent them from running it over.



MAKING MEMORIES AT 🦀 CRAB ISLAND 🦀

Good news! At this point you've made it to Crab Island! Here are a few tips for staying safe and making the best memories:

- Place a flag on your boat to make it easy to locate (it's easier than you think to get lost on Crab Island!)
- Assign a check-in or leave time for everyone to return to your pontoon
- Crab Island is very kid-friendly, so go explore!
- Take cash for exploring the island (*Most places on the island are cash only)

The best thing about Crab Island is the memories you will make floating, exploring, snorkeling, enjoying great food, and soaking up the sun on the water. You'll also meet other families and enjoy treasured time with your crew!



RESTAURANTS ON CRAB ISLAND



Reef Burger

Reef Burger is an established classic and has great burgers! However, consider yourself forewarned that they are big enough to share.



Other Restaurants

Other restaurants include Jimmy's Ice Cream, Crab Island Grill, Wild Fruit Sales, A Bit of Paradise, and more!

Many of these restaurants also offer float rentals, t-shirt sales, and are surrounded by fun activities like a floating volleyball court!

**Please note that vendors are independently owned and operated businesses, so there is no way to know exactly which ones will be open and at Crab Island on a given day.*



BOAT RENTAL OPTIONS

Boat Club Rentals

Since Destin is one of the biggest boating markets in the country, boat clubs, such as Legacy Boating Club, have rapidly grown in popularity over the past 10 years. If you live in the Destin area and don't own a boat, then a membership at a boat club is a great idea.

Boat clubs are designed for people who want to go boating on top-quality boats, yet prefer not to own a boat. Members pay a one-time initiation fee and monthly club dues to have unlimited access to a fleet of boats.

Types of Boats Available:

- Center console offshore fishing boats
- Tritoons
- Deck boats
- Waverunners
- Bay boats
- Double Decker Pontoon Boats



BOAT RENTAL OPTIONS

Pontoon Rentals

If you don't live in the Destin area, then renting a pontoon boat is your best option. Luckily, Destin is fortunate to have many reputable pontoon rental companies. The double-decker pontoons, like those available at Double Fun Pontoon Rentals, have two decks, two waterslides, lounge seating in the sun & shade, Bluetooth radio & even come with a FREE floating Lily Pad!

That's right, two decks and two waterslides! You can hear your kid's laughing and splashing already!



3 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN RENTING A PONTOON

Single or Double Decker

The first thing to consider is whether you want a traditional pontoon or the popular double-decker pontoon.

Traditional pontoons typically accommodate around 12 passengers. The double-deckers accommodate up to 14 passengers.

There is an upper deck area on the double-decker for those in the family who want to work on their tans or slide down one of the waterslides. The covered lower deck area is ideal for those who prefer shade or younger kids who may need a break from the sun. Remember, double-deckers also include a FREE Lily Pad for playing and sunbathing.



3 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN RENTING A PONTOON

New or Used

The second big consideration is deciding if you want to rent a newer, high-quality pontoon or save money and opt for what locals call a Junker. You can save some money with a Junker, but you run the risk of mechanical failure and ruining the entire day. Be sure to inquire about the age and condition of the pontoon before you rent.

PRO TIP: If the rental rate is substantially less, then you can bet there is a reason why and it's probably not a very good reason either. Stay away from Junkers!



Full or Half Day Rental

Once you have decided which boat rental company to use, now is the time to decide how long to spend on the water. So, you need to decide whether to rent the pontoon for a full day or half-day. Most rental companies offer full-day or half-day rental options!

CALLING IT A DAY

You've had an amazing day, but sadly it's time to go back. If you own a boat or if you are in a boat club, you can come and go anytime. But, be mindful that the rental fleet is generally due back between 5:00 - 5:30 p.m.

If you are renting a pontoon for a half-day, you will probably want to get as much time as you can on Crab Island and push it to the limit. However, if you opted for a full-day rental, you may want to depart approximately an hour to an hour-and-a-half before your rental time is up.

Why leave early?

Remember, everyone else renting their pontoons are trying to use all of their rental time. They will be leaving at the end of their rental time, causing significant water traffic, and you'll want to avoid heavy water traffic because not everyone practices safe boating. Also, make sure to have your belongings packed up and ready to go when arriving at the dock to make for a quick departure.

Last thing - remember to tip the dockhands. Tips are a big part of their income and are much appreciated!

Taking a trip to Crab Island means you've made a great memory on the water for your family. Just be ready for your kids to ask, "Can we go to Crab Island again next year?!"



REACH OUT TO OUR TEAM

Double the Fun... Slide Your Buns!



(850) 316-4224



www.doublefunwatersports.com



5 Locations in: Destin | Fort Walton Beach | Panama City Beach



Monday-Sunday, 9am - 6pm



Reserve a double-decker
pontoon boat today.

