

Siesta Key Cycling

The usual tourist information packs don't make much of cycling around the island, which is a bit of a mystery since it is so much fun. Every road carrying significant traffic has separate bike lanes for cyclists, and drivers are mostly very respectful of both cyclists and pedestrians. We have biked on nearly every inch of road on the island and never found anywhere we didn't consider safe.

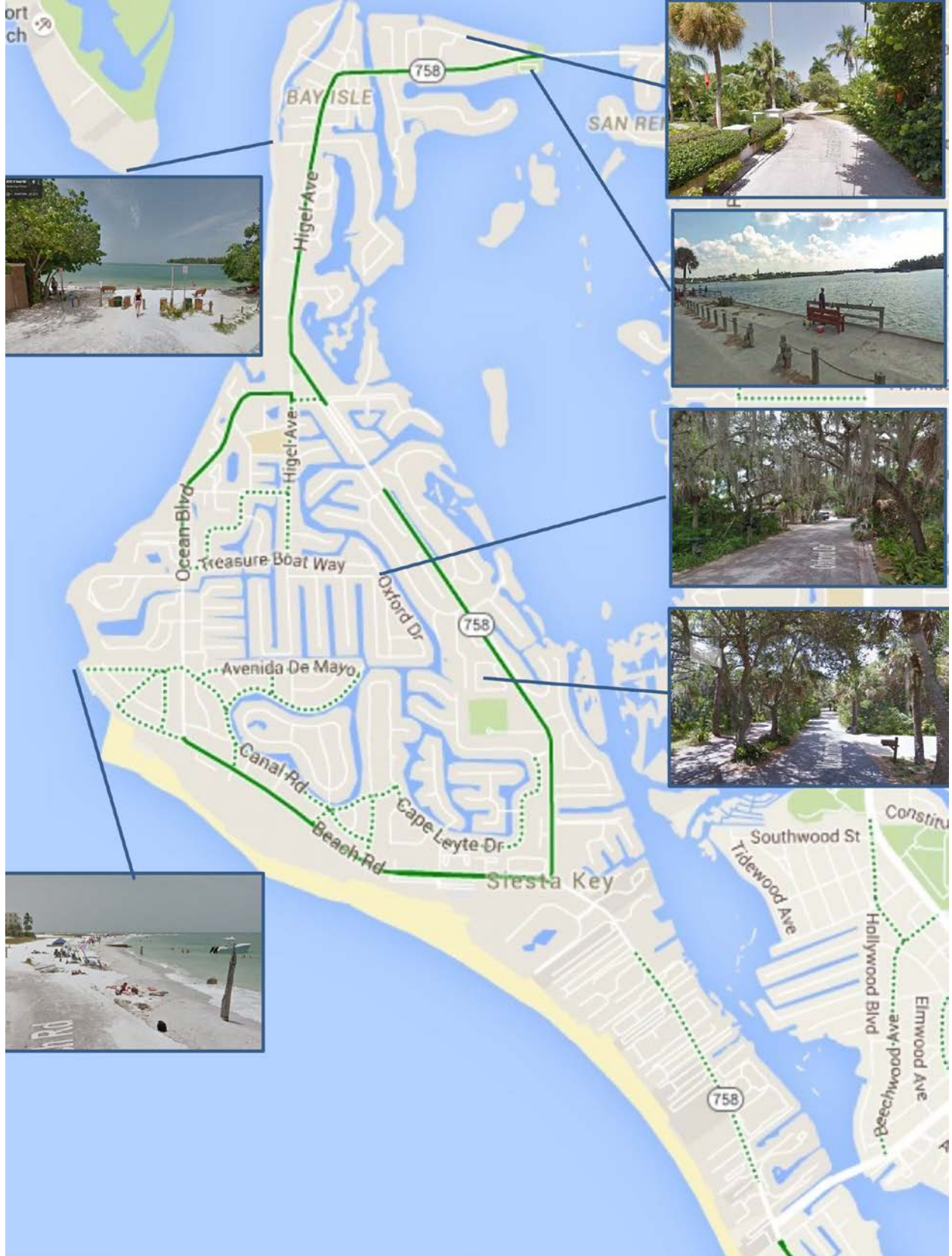
Siesta Key North

The north side of the island has more roads and more variety of places to go and things to see. Here I describe a route that shows you the main highlights but it is better enjoyed on separate trips. Mark this on a good map to take with you.

Leave Midnight Cove and turn right heading north. Keep left on Beach Road after the traffic lights but to avoid the traffic queuing to get to the public beach turn right onto Beach Way drive and then left on Cape Leyte Drive. Follow this until you can turn left into Canal Road and follow Canal Road all the way to Ocean Boulevard. Cross the Boulevard onto Avenida Messina and follow it to Beach Road (picture). This is the very northern tip of Crescent beach. Turn back and then turn left on Ocean Blvd until you can turn right off it onto Treasure Boat Way. Keep on this road, crossing Higel Ave until you reach Oxford Drive. Both Oxford Drive and St Albens Rd are beautiful canopy roads (picture). Return to Higel and follow it south past the traffic light to the very tip of the island. On the right there is a small park (picture) with bay views and fishing possibilities. Follow the little path that goes under the bridge and joins a similar little park on the gulf side with great views across to Sarasota. Exit the park onto Norsota way (picture), a lovely road with great sub-tropical gardens belonging to the houses lining the road. Rejoin Siesta Drive, cross the little bridge then at the bend leave the main road to the right and immediate left to keep on Siesta Drive leading to Bayou Louise Lane. Turn left and enjoy the bayou views. You have to return the same way and rejoin Higel going south until N. Shell Rd (It is Opposite Roberts Point Rd which is also worth exploring) Down at the end of N. Shell Rd is a little known beach area (picture) with views across to South Lido.

Returning to Higel keep going south and then fork left onto Midnight Pass Rd and keep going straight. There are many roads to your left worth exploring later but keep going until the right turn into Commonwealth which you join just to break the monotony of Midnight Pass. After you rejoin Midnight Pass the second on the right takes you on a small loop around Winding Way (picture). It is worth the short detour. From here it is just a short ride back to Midnight Cove.

Note that you can also walk your bikes across the bridge at the north of the island where there are even more bike friendly roads to explore.



Siesta Key South

I don't know why Google maps doesn't rate this part of Midnight Pass road as bike friendly since there are bike lanes on either side and a footpath on one side (picture) the whole length of this southern section. There are many side roads into separate subdivisions that don't offer access to the bay or the beach but are always worth exploring if you like to see the island lifestyle in all its forms.

There is not quite so much variety heading south but I have picked out the main ones shown in the next picture.

Cycling south of the Stickney point traffic lights go past Sarasea Circle and then turn right into Point of Rocks Road which has some lovely stretches of canopy road (picture) in addition to admiring the larger houses lush gardens. You have to come back out the same way and exit via Crescent Street back onto Midnight Pass Rd. Pass Sanderling (it is gated so we never explored there)

Heading south keep going until you can turn right into Turtle Beach road. This leads to a large car park that has access to Turtle Beach on one side (picture) and a boat and kayak launching on the other (picture). Turtle Beach is quite different from Crescent beach and much less crowded. Watch out for jumping fish and herons in the waters beyond the launching area.

On the way back there are not many opportunities for a bay view but if you keep exploring the larger complexes or developments you can always find a few, for example Sharswood lane if it isn't yet gated (picture), Point Crisp Road, and Tree Bay Lane.

