

Episode 10 –Ft. Pierce to Boca Chita

The next section of the Intracoastal, we covered more than once. We have a very good friend in West Palm Beach that we wanted to see, but it took two tries to make it happen. Due to health issues she couldn't make it happen the first time, but we had a great cruise anyway. We left Ft. Pierce on Mar 31 and again on April 28 and headed south. We really understand why they call this section the Treasure Coast. There was one huge house after a gigantic house after another monster. I did not know when to stop taking pictures. I will have a whole album to post of ostentatious houses. It was a beautiful cruise down to Hobe Sound where we anchored for the night. On the first trip, the next day we followed our cruising guide to a great anchorage in North Lake Worth. It was well protected and we had a very calm night. The next day, we circled around under the Blue Heron Bridge to the Sail Fish Marina for lunch, even though Susan couldn't come. They let us pull up to the dock and even take a shower before lunch. We liked the anchorage at Lake Worth so much, we went back there for the night, and then back to Ft. Pierce the next day. We did not stop at Hobe Sound going back because the wind was picking up and we wanted to be in a safe harbor for the night.

On the second trip down, we again anchored at Hobe Sound the first night, but the next day we only went as far as the PGA Bridge (West Palm Beach) and stopped at the Waterside Café. Again we tied up at the restaurant and this one was easier to get on and off the boat so that Susan could get on if she needed to rest. Since she has a disease where she cannot hold up or turn her head, she cannot drive. Her friend Mary Lou drove her out to meet us. We had a great lunch and the people at the restaurant let us keep the boat tied up there for a few hours while we visited. That allowed Susan take off her neck brace, recline on our boat and have a nice visit.

After our visit with Susan, we headed on down to Lake Worth and anchored again where we had been before. The next day it was off to new territory. Now we entered the land of many bascule bridges, meaning we had to ask for them to open. Most of the bridges only opened on the hour and half hour or $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ hour. Some opened on demand, but very few were tall enough for us to pass under without an opening. This meant we had to wait for them to open. We found the lady bridge tenders to be far more courteous than the men. One of the men said we weren't close enough and wouldn't even open the bridge for another half hour. There were 13 bridges that day before we reached a good anchorage in Lake Boca Raton.

The next day and another 11 bridges brought us to Hollywood City Marina. We found this one on Active Captain and highly recommend it, even if we did put on a good show trying to dock there. One of our engines would not cooperate and caused us to bump the piling. The Harbormaster was very helpful. Both engines had overheated at some point in the last couple of miles. The current under one of the last two bridges had really made it hard to get through. The Harbormaster informed us that he had had the same kind of challenges when his sailboat had gotten too much build up on the bottom. He told us that in the warm waters of southern Florida that it is not unusual to need to scrape the bottom of your boat once a month. That is much different than on the lake. He made some calls for us and had someone out there the next morning to clean the bottom. The diver showed us before and after pictures. It was quite a difference. As soon as we were ship shape, we were off to meet the challenge of 12 more bridges. We did not have any more overheating challenges.

We made it to Dinner Key Marina just in time to take a very quick shower and meet Doug's son Courtney and his fiancée Allie for dinner at Scotty's. The food was good, but the band was too loud for us to talk. After dinner they walked back to the boat with us for a visit. It was good to get to catch up. We stayed that night in the marina (\$106) after just (\$46) the night before. We chose to get a mooring ball outside the marina the next night (only \$ 22.50) and they provided a shuttle boat to bring us in for a shower before departing.

Brett and Sue had recommended that we make a stop at Boca Chita Key on our way south, so we gave it a try. It was just a short trip across Biscayne Bay. We were even able to put out both our sails for the first time since we left Lake Lanier. The dredged channel of much of the Intracoastal is too narrow to really sail, so we have done a lot of motoring.



We spotted the lighthouse that indicated the entrance to the harbor and we were impressed. There was a beautiful little harbor with people in motor boats around for a Sunday afternoon picnics. We found a good place to tie up and soak in the beauty. Soon most of the picnickers left and there was only one boat left besides us for the night.



When they left the next day, we had the whole island to ourselves. We walked around the whole island and found great beaches with crystal clear water on the other side. We had our own personal paradise taken care of by the National Park Service. Admittedly, there is no running water, no electricity, no internet, no showers, and only saltwater toilets, but with a view like this, who cares????



We can't stop taking pictures, particularly of sunsets. We had only planned to spend one night, but we are having a hard time leaving. One recommendation if you come at this time of year, bring mosquito repellent for the evenings.

We added another creature to our collection for the trip. There is a huge cream colored sea turtle in the harbor.

There were too many big houses to choose from, so I am only sending shots from Biscayne National Park Boca Chita Key.

To follow our adventures, please go to www.Windsongsail.com, click on "Our Stories" and select our names from the list of "Cruisers".

Love to all,
Capt. Doug and First Mate Joyce

