

9th Storyworth B: Salt Water Wading FINALLY! ;-)

When I first joined Dawn in Florida in December 2019, we stayed with her sister Diane while we looked for a place of our own. We found that place in January 2020, and by a month later we were in lockdown because of Covid. With both of us being well past 65 at the time, it made no sense whatsoever to push our luck with ANY public interactions we could avoid. So we were restricted to shopping almost exclusively, even though we had gone to the movie theater here a few times before the lockdown.

However, since we are under 40 miles from the left coast of Florida here, I have wanted to dip my toes into the Gulf of Mexico and its salt water all that time. Last year I had the added discomfort of my bad left hip, but since that was replaced this past summer I have been eager to get back here. And since we were finally able to get our first Covid Vaccine shots in January 2021, and the second shots (Moderna) on 2/22/21, we thought we would take advantage of the combination of factors to try for the gulf yesterday, 2/27/21.

When I researched beaches in Citrus County, where we live in Inverness, we had seen the pictures and opinions, and thought it a worthy day trip. And with the temperature expected to be in the '80's and sunny, especially as it was still below freezing back in CNY, yesterday looked like a good bet. We had forgotten that it was a Saturday, so when we got there we were FAR from alone. In fact, it would have been impossible to hope for six foot spacing between people, and we were saddened to see fewer than 10% of the people with ANY masks. So Dawn, Diane and I followed our protocol of using double masks as advised by my daughter Jess.

The beach pictures were gorgeous, but as we approached the place we seriously doubted our ability to actually get anywhere NEAR it. Cars were lining both sides of the two lane road which runs about 6 miles from the populated route we had turned from to get here, across pretty barren swampland and sawblade grass, but with lots of evidence of wild habitat. However, the beach did not disappoint once we actually drove up to it.

And we were VERY happy to see a guy leaving a handicap spot right in front of the brick bathroom as we arrived, which was only 20 feet from the water's edge. We had stopped along the way to get sub sandwiches for a "picnic", but we were clearly not getting anywhere near a table. So we ate in the car before we stopped at the bathrooms (not very clean, despite evidence SOMEBODY at least tried – blame the mob scene ;-)) prior our heading for the water. The beach was amazingly clean, and the waves were no more than about a half inch high. So despite my cane, which thankfully has a wide bottom which prevented sinking into the sand, we were able to walk directly into the water. My two concessions to reality were that I did not remove my socks, but Dawn carried my shoes, which I left off until we returned home. Where I promptly dumped about half a beach worth of sand in the house, to say nothing of all over the car interior. Dawn was pissed ;-)) Sorry, love ;-))

The water, at about 70 degrees, was cool at first, but we readily acclimated, and we spent about 20 minutes "frolicking", although Dawn insisted I not walk more than two feet into the water, which never even reached my ankles ;-)) But we decided we'll go back on a weekday when we hope it will be a LOT less crowded, especially during the Covid period it still is. And I can FINALLY say that I got some salt water on my feet down here. It's about time ;-))

Joe Holzer 2/28/2021