Radio Manners

Please always remember that channels 9 and 16 are the "hailing" channels. This means, when your party replies, there should be an immediate suggestion of what "working" channel you will use. A backup can be named in case the first choice is busy.

After you get to your working channel, keep the traffic to a minimum, especially on weekends or other heavy use times.

The hailing formula should always be used: the name of the vessel you're calling repeated three times, then your vessel's name and call sign.

There's one "must". When a mayday call comes in, let the Coast Guard handle it and do not broadcast. Stand by in case you're in a position to act as a relay station, and render aid to a stricken vessel (if you can do so without endangering your own vessel or crew). When the Coast Guard switches the stricken vessel to a working channel, 16 is again free for other traffic.
Minimum Approach Depth: 13 ft.  
Depth in Anchorage: 7-9 ft.

Lat 26°50.7'N / Lon 82°17.2'W  
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation

Off mile 35.8 on the ICW: 8.3 statute miles from Boca Grande/Grande Bayou,  
5.7 statute miles to Stump Pass.

At marker 30 on the Intracoastal Waterway, a large cove indents the northeastern banks.
It features 7 foot minimum depths and enough swing room for boats up to 48 feet. It is well sheltered from virtually all breezes, but the dredged bottom can present holding problems.
The shore is lined with residential development, but is not unattractive. Best behavior is essential. Shoreside neighbors are in close proximity. The cove eventually leads to a small canal lined with private docks, but there are no facilities and no room to anchor along this stream.

Shoreside Homes

Shoreside home owners are not usually pleased to have boaters anchor off the sea walls near their homes, try to bring dinghies to their docks, or walk across their property to get to stores, facilities, etc. Instead, look for public parks or boat ramps, or ask permission of neighboring marinas. In public areas it might be best to lock your dink to something or see that it is attended.
There are two anchorages, east and west. The east anchorage is between Thornton Key and an unnamed mangrove island to the north. The west anchorage lies at the southeast end of the channel between Peterson Island and Manasota Key.

As we go to press, Stump Pass has been dredged but not marked. Be forewarned: historically, the channel tends to wander and depths to change. The anchorage areas, however, have altered little over the years.

The east (#1) is the preferred anchorage. To enter it, leave the Intracoastal Waterway just south of marker 17A on the well marked channel to the west. From green marker 5, veer south on the course line between the final pair of marks until the dock on Thornton Key is almost abeam to port. Swing in to the east, but don’t turn too soon; a shoal is building out from the unnamed island to the north. Keep Thornton Key about 125 feet to starboard, then line up on the microwave tower on the mainland to the east.

Anchor within 100 feet of Thornton Key. Depths shoal to 3 feet closer to the unnamed island. A Bahamian moor is advised, as strong tidal currents are the rule. Although there is less protection, good depths persist in a narrow curve toward green marker 17 back on the ICW.
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation

Off mile 40.6 on the ICW: 5.7 statute miles from Cape Haze, 3.3 statute miles to Englewood Beach.

#2 Stump Pass / West
Minimum Approach Depth: 6 ft.
Depth in Anchorage: 7 ft.
Lat 26°54.1'N / Lon 82°20.7'W

Sea grass beds and shallows lie to port and starboard. Shelter is good from northeast through northwest breezes, depending on where the hook goes down. Thornton Key offers great beach walking and a good dinghy beach on its northeast point.

The west (#2) anchorage can be entered to starboard when the length of the cut is visible. Depths are about 6 feet up to a sign on the port shore designating the Port Charlotte Recreation Area. Beyond the sign, depths decrease to 3 feet. This place is known as Skier's Alley, for the large number of water-skiers who come here, especially on weekends and holidays. Protection is excellent, but unless it is a weekday or the weather is heavy, this site is best visited by dinghy. When using this anchorage, consider anchoring bow and stern to make room for the skiers.

Vegetation at these anchorages is lush. The shores are undeveloped and lined with mangroves and Australian pines; bird life abounds. There is a county park on Manasota Key and the beaches of Knight Island border Stump Pass to the south.

Northeast of marker 17A on the ICW is a marina with a well-protected harbor, offering every amenity including pump-out facilities.
Englewood Beach

Off mile 43.2 on the ICW: 3.3 statute miles from Stump Pass, 2.5 statute miles to Lemon Bay.

Southwest of marker 22 on the Intracoastal Waterway, a broad ribbon of deep water stretches to the south and leads to Englewood Beach. An anchorage, a small marina and several restaurants lie along its length.

The channel starts about halfway between marker 22 and the Englewood Bridge. It is well marked but flanked by shoals and sea grass beds, so caution is advised. It carries 6 foot minimum depths, but not as far the charts indicate.

Part way in, a side cut in the channel runs west just as the main passage swings southeast. Minimum 6 foot

Reading the Tide Without the Tables

You should always have up-to-date tide tables with you, but sometimes... well, you know. A glance at mangroves or dayboard pilings will serve as a good hint as to the state of the tide, and also tell you what sort of currents are apt to be affecting your vessel.
Minimum Approach Depth: 6 ft.
Depth in Anchorage: 8 ft.

Lat 26°55.2'N / Lon 82°21.3'W
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation

depths on the southern side of this cut lead to a small resort and marina, which accepts transients for overnight or temporary dockage with water and power connections and showers. Just around the corner are three restaurants.

A commercial fishing boat uses this short channel to go down to the ICW at the bridge, so it is best to anchor further on to the southeast in the deep, straight stretch along the Englewood Beach shoreline. The anchorage is in charted 8 foot waters at the beginning of a no wake zone. This is a day and night channel, so be sure to show an anchor light and use a Bahamian moor to minimize swing.

This spot has excellent protection courtesy of the adjoining southwestern banks of Englewood Beach and the charted shallows and islands to the northeast and east.

The small islands and shoals are undeveloped and surrounded by seagrasses in their shallow waters, so stay clear. Pleasant neighborhoods occupy the beachside banks.

To leave this anchorage, retrace the way in. Do not try to exit following the channel to the southeast. Depths run out faster on the water than on the chart.

See "photomap" on Page 111 for additional information.
Bridges

Because of the frequency, complexity and changes in timed bridge openings, we have elected not to attempt a list. However, to aid you in calling the bridge you’re approaching, each bridge’s name and location is identified in the four section maps. All bridges post their opening times on the span, but sometimes it’s much safer and more convenient to call the bridge tender and ask. They generally monitor both 16 and 13 (but not for all bridges, unfortunately).

Thoughtful mariners will try to go through under power and in company with other vessels. This causes less delay of vehicular traffic and makes the bridge tender’s job a little easier. Just be sure to satisfy yourself that there’s plenty of room for maneuvering, and be aware of how the current and wind might set you down on the span.
Minimum Approach Depth: 6 ft.
Depth in Anchorage: 6 ft.

Lat 26°56.8'N / Lon 82°21.6'W
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation

Off mile 44.5 on the ICW: 2.5 statute miles from Englewood Beach, 13.6 statute miles to Venice/Higel Park.

Northeast of the Intracoastal Waterway, between markers 25 and 26, a wide pool with 6 foot charted depths spreads to within 100-150 yards of shore.

This anchorage runs southeast all the way back to the old Englewood Marina channel which cuts northeast from the ICW at marker 24.

On the eastern shore, northeast of marker 28, is a public boat ramp, docks and a park accessible by dinghy from the anchorage. Further northwest along the ICW, at marker 30, a private channel leads to a marina and repair yard.
Off mile 58 on the ICW: 13.6 statute miles from Lemon Bay, 12.8 statute miles to Roberts Bay.

From the Intracoastal Waterway, a well-marked channel breaks off to the west between green marker 13 and red marker 14 leading to the Venice Yacht Club and the city-owned Higel Park.

It's also possible to come in along the shore from green marker 1 to the south. As we go to press, this channel is unmarked, but Venice is in the process of setting up a managed harbor here, to include marking this channel. It may fill the harbor with permanent moorings. Provisions will be made for transient vessels, since this is the only harbor of refuge for miles. Check at the Higel Park dock.

Anchorage 1, north of Higel Park, carries 7-10 feet of water. If anchoring is still available, stay close to the shoal on a Bahamian moor; there is much traffic in the unmarked (at this writing) channel close to shore.

Anchorage 2 is off the point of Higel Park, beside the entrance to Pelican Cove with its heavy boat population. Additional marks are planned at this writing. If they have not yet been installed, be sure to leave plenty of access to the narrow entrance to the cove. Most of this area provides four feet of depth or less. Even so, a Bahamian moor is recommended.

Further on, in Higel Park, the city of Venice has constructed a wooden pier alongside a paved ramp. Side tie stays of up to 18 hours (once each ten days) are permitted. Ashore at Higel Park is a shelter house providing heads and trash facilities. Telephones are nearby. It is a short walk to restaurants and stores.

Fuel and other necessities can be had at the marina just inside the Venice jetties. Be alert entering, leaving or docking near the jetties. Strong tidal currents run constantly through Venice Pass.

See "photomap" on Page 112 for additional information.
Minimum Approach Depth: 10 ft.
Depth in Anchorage #1: 7-10 ft.
Depth in Anchorage #2: 4-6 ft.

Lat 27°06.6’N / Lon 82°27.6’W
Use Chart 11425 for Navigation

Breaking Out the Anchor

Most times, as you bring in the anchor rode while motoring slowly up to your anchor, a snubbed line will break the anchor out with just the momentum of the boat when the anchor line is vertical. Sometimes, however, the Gods frown on you, and, short of a winch, powering the hook out seems the only solution.

But there’s another way, and it has some advantages: it’s the buoyed trip line. A deeply set anchor will often come out with a gentle pull when the trip line is used, and it also shows other boaters where your anchors are. Look it up in Chapman and add the information to your knowledge of seamanship. What? You don’t have a copy of Chapman? Get one. It’s called “Piloting, Seamanship and Small Boat Handling”, and may be the best money you’ll ever spend.