

Keys Traveler



Only
in the
Keys
...

Duval Street Loop
Keys Bonefishing
Seven Mile Bridges
Keys Wildlife Refuges

Southernmost Exposure

Photograph by Rob O'Neal



Sun and sand worshippers enjoy the beach at Fort Zachary Taylor State Park in Key West. The natural sand beach is among favorites for residents and visitors alike in the southernmost city in the continental United States.

Keys Traveler
The Magazine

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"Keys Traveler" is published by the Monroe County Tourist Development Council, the official visitor marketing agency for the Florida Keys & Key West.

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fla-keys.co.uk

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1-800-FLA-KEYS

For the free monthly
"Keys Traveler"
electronic newsletter,
subscribe at

www.flakeys.com/keystraveler

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Printed in the U.S.A.
By Print Farm

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Cover photograph of the Seven Mile bridges and Pigeon Key near Marathon by Andy Newman



Only in the Keys

By Carol Shaughnessy

Divers photograph a trumpetfish on Conch Reef off Key Largo in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Florida Keys locals and in-the-know visitors often greet the news of some particularly offbeat happening by grinning, nodding and sagely murmuring, "Only in the Keys."

The phrase also describes an inviting array of environmental, cultural and adventure activities that can't be enjoyed anywhere except in the island chain. To make lasting vacation memories, sample the "only in the Keys" experiences suggested here.

Snorkel or dive on the continental United States' only living coral barrier reef — the third largest in the world — and discover stunning coral formations and brilliantly hued tropical fish. Dive and snorkel operators around the Florida Keys offer excursions led by experts who are passionate about the underwater realm.

BOB CARE
treasured reef, like all Keys waters, is protected within the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.

Channel classic cinema icons in Key Largo by cruising on the restored African Queen. The original vessel from the 1951 film starring Humphrey



Where else but the Florida Keys would you find a paddleboarding chicken? Karly Venezia enjoys a sunset paddle with Loretta.

Bogart and Katharine Hepburn, it looks much like it did on the silver screen. Come aboard for a 90-minute Key Largo canal cruise or even a dinner cruise.

"Hook and cook" in the Sportfishing Capital of the World. Book a skilled charter captain or guide in Islamorada for exhilarating offshore, reef or backcountry fishing. The Keys claim more saltwater fishing world records than anyplace else on the globe. After catching your fish (like yellowtail snapper or tuna), take it to one of many nearby restaurants to have it cooked. There's nothing like savoring perfectly prepared fish that you caught yourself.

Meet "patients" at a pioneering sea turtle hospital. Encounter rescued sea turtles during a behind-the-scenes tour of the planet's first licensed veterinary hospital specializing in these fascinating creatures. A dedicated team at Marathon's Turtle Hospital rescues, rehabilitates and nurtures sick and injured turtles and, whenever possible, releases them back into the ocean. Occasionally it's possible to witness a turtle release — a truly heartwarming experience.

Drive (or run!) across the Seven Mile Bridge. It's a "bucket list" adventure to drive over the landmark Seven Mile Bridge, one of the longest segmental bridges in the world and the centerpiece of the iconic Florida Keys Overseas Highway. The majestic span, which connects Marathon and the Lower Keys, stretches above the blue Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico — giving drivers the sensation that they're floating over water. And each April 1,500 athletes test their stamina on the bridge in the famed Seven Mile Bridge Run.

Discover tiny Key deer. On Big Pine Key, if you're lucky, you can glimpse a real-life "Bambi" that's about the size of a large dog. Tiny Key deer, an endangered

species that live only in the Lower Keys, can be seen grazing typically in the early morning and at dusk. Spotting them isn't always easy, but it's a real treat when you do.

Attend a music festival — underwater. Join several hundred divers and snorkelers at Looe Key Reef during July's Lower Keys Underwater Music Festival. The unique subsea concert spotlights coral reef protection and environmentally responsible diving. Swim among vivid marine life and coral formations while listening to music broadcast by a local radio station and piped underwater. Costumed "mermaids" pretend to play artist-crafted musical instruments.

Explore the homes of former President Harry Truman and literary legend Ernest Hemingway. Key West is home to the Harry S. Truman Little White House Museum, Florida's only presidential museum, where Truman spent approximately six months of his 1945-53 presidency. View items including the original piano and poker table (ask about its unassuming "disguise") used by the former POTUS.

Nearby stands the Ernest Hemingway Home & Museum, where Hemingway lived and wrote masterpieces in the 1930s. Tour his Spanish colonial home, peer into his second-story writing studio and even pet the descendants of his six-toed cat.

Take a "southernmost" selfie. Key West's red, black and yellow Southernmost Point marker isn't terribly picturesque, but hundreds of visitors take their photos beside it every day. Why? Because the ungainly buoy replica marks the



A rescued sea turtle hatchling is cleaned at the Turtle Hospital in Marathon.



Visitors enter the Ernest Hemingway Home & Museum in Key West.

unique and memorable activities can be enjoyed in the Keys.

From eco-adventure "voluntourism" opportunities to special events showcasing the island chain's rich environment, heritage and fun-loving vibe, they offer ample proof that the best vacation experiences can be found "only in the Keys."

ANDY NEWMAN (2)



A footrace over the convergence of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico is only possible during the Seven Mile Bridge Run in the Florida Keys.

National Wildlife Refuges Protect Keys Wonders

Widely known for fishing, snorkeling and diving, the Florida Keys also are acclaimed for residents' commitment to environmental protection. This commitment, launched over a century ago to ensure preservation of the Keys' natural wonders, is reflected in four national wildlife refuges.

The oldest is the Key West National Wildlife Refuge, lying west of Key West and accessible only by boat. It was designated in 1908 to create a safe haven for migratory species. Today it provides nesting, roosting and foraging habitat for 250-plus species of migratory birds and a nesting ground for endangered sea turtles. The refuge covers over 2,000 acres of land and more than 200,000 acres of co-managed state waters.

Established in 1938, the Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge provides safe nesting and breeding areas for great white herons — North America's largest wading bird — and other migratory birds and wildlife. Stretching between Key West and Marathon, it features more than 375 square miles of open water and islands in the Gulf of Mexico. Visitors' primary access is by kayak, canoe or shallow-draft boat.

The National Key Deer Refuge was created in 1957 to protect hundreds of plant and wildlife species — most notably the diminutive Key deer. Today, it shelters species including deer, Lower Keys marsh rabbit, Bartram's hairstreak butterfly, American alligator and migratory and resident birds. The refuge encompasses more than 8,000 acres ranging from Bahia Honda Key to the eastern shores of Sugarloaf Key.

Do not feed Key deer or other animals in the refuges.

The Key Deer Refuge's Blue Hole is an abandoned rock quarry that is filled with mostly freshwater with



A Key deer fawn prowls the grounds of the National Key Deer Refuge.

correlating species including two alligators.

A visitor center and nature trails are located on Big Pine Key and the new Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuge Nature Center is to open on Big Pine Key in the fall.

Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge, a 37-year-old refuge in upper Key Largo, includes habitat and nesting sites favored by the American Crocodile and a habitat restoration program for the endangered Key Largo wood rat. The remote

refuge typically is closed to the public to protect inhabitants, but a community butterfly garden is open.

Visitors can learn more about the refuges at the family-friendly Outdoor Fest each spring, featuring action-packed exploration into the Keys' environment. The festival is hosted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Florida Keys National Wildlife Refuges Complex and the Florida Keys Wildlife Society.

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floridakewswildlifesociety.org

By Carol Shaughnessy



Duval Loop: Free, Frequent and Friendly

What's a convenient way to get around Key West's picturesque Historic Seaport area and downtown Duval Street district — both alive with attractions, shops, restaurants and bars? Via the free hop-on, hop-off Duval Loop bus service.

The recently launched service features colorful buses that travel the seaport's Caroline Street by the Gulf of Mexico, Simonton and Whitehead streets paralleling lively Duval, and United Street near the Atlantic Ocean.

The route includes 16 stops, enabling visitors to get on and off just steps from popular spots like the Key West Butterfly & Nature Conservatory, Ernest Hemingway Home & Museum, Southernmost Point marker and seaport boutiques and eateries.

The Duval Loop is scheduled to operate daily December through April and Thursday to Sunday from May through November. Buses run every 30 minutes from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and every 15 minutes from 10 a.m. until midnight.

As well as being free and frequent, the innovative service means

fewer cars and parking challenges on Key West's scenic streets — benefiting the island's visitors,

residents and treasured natural environment.

carfreekeywest.com/duval-loop

Walking Tour Showcases Island's Literary Richness

Most savvy Key West visitors are aware that the colorful subtropical island was once home and inspiration to world-renowned writers Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams.

Far fewer realize the depth of its literary heritage — or that many other notable writers have been captivated by the island's charm, natural beauty and unconventional characters.

The Old Town Literary Walking Tour, launched by the team behind the acclaimed annual Key West Literary Seminar, now brings that rich history to light.

Scheduled Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, the tour departs from the island's pink-walled public library at 700 Fleming St.



Judy Blume

A knowledgeable and entertaining guide leads the 90-minute ramble, intriguing participants with tidbits and tales about famous (and a few not-so-famous) resident writers and their works.

The contemporary exploration was inspired by a previous walking tour created by the late author and literary seminar founder David Kaufelt. It features the former or current homes and haunts of eccentric author Shel Silverstein, beloved young adult novelist Judy Blume, poets Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Frost, renegade writer Thomas McGuane and many more.

Insightful and well researched, the tour provides an intimate glimpse of the Key West that typical visitors rarely discover — but should.

kwls.org/tour



Bonefishing as Art

Stephen Byrd shows off a nice bonefish caught and released by Sara Stanczyk off Islamorada, world renowned as the "Sportfishing Capital of the World."

RICHARD STANCZYK



By Doug Kelly
Painting by Pasta Pantaleo

"I am prepared to state that I feel almost certain, if I spent another month bonefishing, I would become obsessed and perhaps lose my enthusiasm for other kinds of fish. ... He is the wisest, shyest, wariest, strangest fish I ever studied."

— Zane Grey, from "Tales of Fishes," 1919

It's agonizing, it's tantalizing — but in an oh-so-thrilling way.

That's because you're a bonefish angler, and it matters not if you've just caught your first one or your hundredth.

Bonefishing is addictive because it's a skill that resembles art: a saltwater flat becomes the canvas, a rod the brush, a cast a stroke of paint and the catch and release an ideal frame.

Although it is special to fish in water so shallow you can see a wading bird's knees, the beauty of it is that one doesn't have to be a Rembrandt to enjoy toe-to-fin tussles with the fish known as the grey ghost of the flats.

Even if you can't draw a stick figure, it's simple enough to stand motionless on the bow of a skiff and remain alert.

Knowing that a bonefish tilts diagonally to root the sediment for munchables, keep your peepers peeled for any sign of a telltale tail waving above the surface like a stiletto.

While one can successfully sit in an anchored boat and fish blindly, sight casting is the ultimate buzz. Just stay primed and ready to present a shrimp, crab or other offering in Mr. Bone's path. If fishing with a guide — highly recommended for newbies — he or she will likely spot the fish first and put you in an ideal casting position.

Bonefishing is 50 percent hunting, 50 percent fishing and 100 percent exciting. The learning curve might entail missed casts or pulled hooks, but the payoff is frantic fantasy as a bonefish strikes, jets off and the line rooster tails in its wake.

You're now literally off to the races, and that's the magical moment when you're hooked as firmly as the bonefish. Every bonefish encounter offers the blitzing speed of an aquatic bullet that could outsprint Olympic runner Usain Bolt.

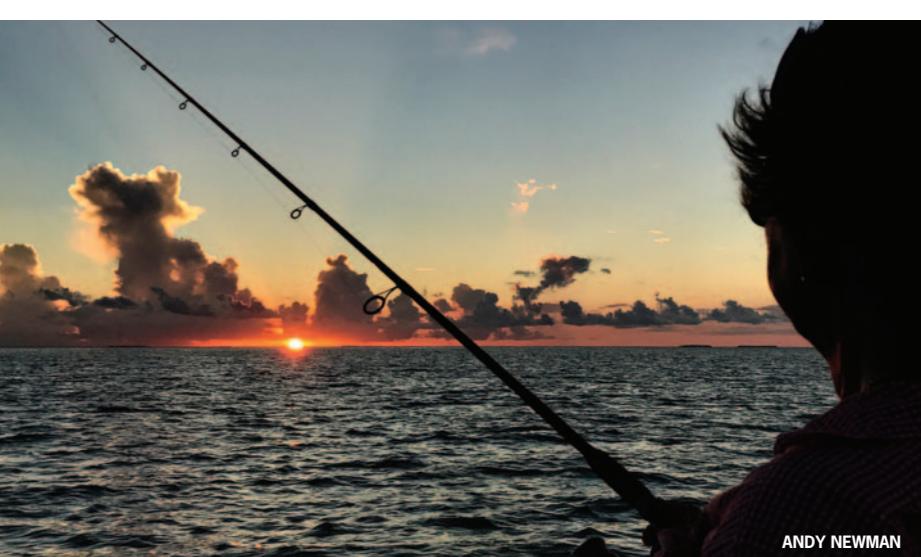
It's at once electric, cataclysmic and utterly contagious.

Just fishing in any shallow water won't do. What Italy's Florence is to art, the Florida Keys are to bonefishing. The flats from Key Largo to Key West boast 22 world records for bonefish, with Islamorada alone accounting for 18 — more than all other destinations in the world combined.

Bonefish, the Florida Keys and you — it's the perfect painting.

About the Art and the Artist

Created by Islamorada artist Roberto "Pasta" Pantaleo, "Bonefish" is one of a series of acrylics on canvas that showcase prized light-tackle gamefish in the Florida Keys. Pantaleo has lived and painted in Islamorada for 15 years, and his work can be viewed at his Signature Gallery. artbypasta.com.



The Florida Keys scenery while bonefishing is always spectacular.

REEF Makes Waves for Marine Conservation

The Key Largo-based nonprofit Reef Environmental Education Foundation, commonly called REEF, is dedicated to conserving marine ecosystems worldwide. REEF inspires and enlists divers to help protect that biodiversity through education and community partnerships.

These volunteer citizen scientists can participate in reef survey and annual fish count projects to help collect and report data on fish populations. Collected using a fun and easy standardized method, the data is utilized by local and national agencies to develop management plans for coral reef resources in the islands of the Florida Keys, the Caribbean, Hawaii and the North Pacific.

Each fall, the organization hosts REEF Fest, a multiday celebration of marine conservation's positive impact on the Florida Keys and around the world. Participating ocean aficionados can experience social events, eco-adventures and presentations by renowned marine experts.

Activities include educational seminars, gatherings, snorkeling, diving, paddling and adventures on the water at America's best fish-filled coral reefs with some of the most prestigious names in marine



A REEF volunteer diver records data on a school of golden grunt off Key Largo.

conservation.

In addition, REEF is widely recognized as a leading authority in lionfish research, removal practices and educational outreach. Alongside the Keys' commercial fishing and restaurant communities, the organization has adopted an "eat them to beat them" mantra to help control the invasive species.

REEF's founder Lad Akins co-authored "The Lionfish Cookbook," which earned prestigious recognition at the 2017

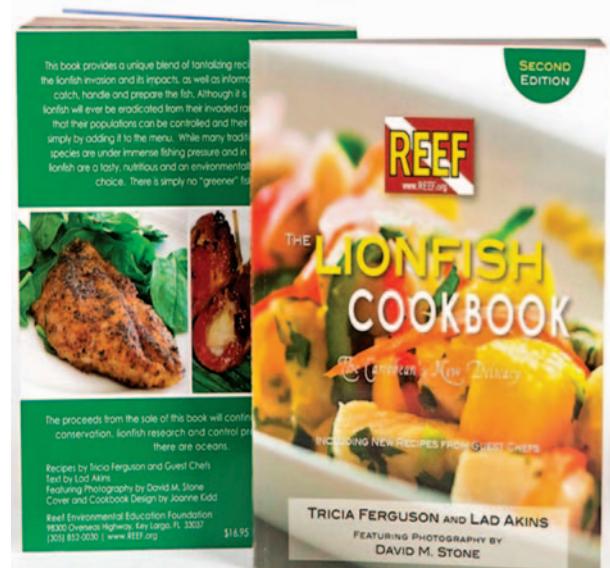
Gourmand World Cookbook Awards held in China.

"Remove lionfish and the reefs are healthier. The key is regular removals, year round," said Akins. "From a culinary standpoint, lionfish are incredible."

"The fish has a mild, white meat and is not overpowering," he said.

An annual Lionfish Derby Series across Florida also is an important part of REEF programs, spearheaded in partnership with the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary and the dive community. Scuba and skin divers can take action and help preserve Keys reefs by competing in a fun, challenging event to capture and remove as many non-native lionfish as possible from Keys waters.

REEF.org



REEF's Lad Akins helped write the book on preparing lionfish.

By Julie Botteri

Taking Stock Island Recalls Old Key West

Stock Island, lying just across Cow Key Channel from Key West, is undergoing a dramatic transition with two recently opened upscale marina-based hotels.

But the island's true identity as the hub of the Florida Keys' commercial fishing industry endures.

The funky, still-unpolished island's main attractions include a walk-about boardwalk, affordable and rustic dining venues, a working waterfront with industrial shipyards, picturesque shrimp boats, colorful "boatels" and hidden artist studios.

"Stock Island is old Key West," said Bobby Mongelli, co-founder of the annual I Love Stock Island Festival and owner of the island's lively Hogfish Bar & Grill.

Stock Island is believed to be named for the livestock kept there by early Key Westers, according to the 1939 Works Progress Administration's Federal Writer's Project. Local lore says the island's Safe Harbor even served as a staging area for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961.

Today, Stock Island is becom-



Al Nelson and Lindsey Rader take a stroll along the dock near the Hogfish Bar & Grill on Stock Island.

ing known for an eclectic culinary scene that features everything from food trucks to a French bakery to fine casual fare. Popular among locals are Hogfish, Roostica Wood-Fire Pizzeria, Rusty Anchor and El Mocho for Cuban dishes.

The two new resorts are helping the island evolve into a distinctive Lower Keys destination.

The 20-acre, 175-unit, dog-friendly Oceans Edge Key West Hotel & Marina offers six pools and spacious suites. Its

boardwalk-style, white clapboard buildings have wooden porches and waterfront walkways. Its on-site marina has 111 wet and 52 dry slips.

The modernist 100-room The Perry Hotel has one of the Florida Keys' largest deep-water marinas. Future plans include an on-site distillery and private charter cruises from the marina.

Casually sophisticated



Stock Island Lobster Co. workers dump a basket of fresh-off-the-boat stone crab claws for final processing.

new hotel dining includes Matt's Stock Island Kitchen & Bar, the Salty Oyster Dockside Bar & Grill at The Perry and the Yellowfin Bar and Grill at Oceans Edge.

Boyd's Key West Campground has been serving RVers and campers for more than 50 years with tent and full hookup RV sites, including those with waterfront views.

Two nearby Stock Island fish houses sell fresh off-the-boat seafood: Stock Island Lobster Co., billed as Florida's largest dockside lobster supplier, and Fishbusterz Key West Seafood Market, Florida's largest wholesale fishery and seafood market.

Meanwhile, Rafael Garcia, the new owner of the Gulf Seafood marina, said he plans to open a retail outlet to sell fish while keeping the facility as a commercial fishing hub.

"Stock Island is finding its identity," Mongelli said. "It's a true working waterfront community — one of the few left in the United States."

— Laura Myers

ILoveStockIsland.org



By Laura Myers
Photograph by Andy Newman

Seven Mile Bridges Endure as Florida Keys Icons

All those traveling the length of the Florida Keys on the famed Overseas Highway cross the Seven Mile Bridge that connects Marathon with the Lower Keys and Key West.

The span, and even its predecessor, are fascinating engineering marvels that quite simply stun the senses.

Rising in an arc toward its center, the 35-year-old Middle Keys bridge offers sweeping panoramic views of a picturesque horizon where turquoise-colored seas meet the azure sky.

The original Seven Mile Bridge, now called the Old Seven Mile Bridge or "Old Seven," runs parallel to the modern structure. It was converted from a railroad bridge to carry automobiles in 1938, and did so for 44 years.

The two salt-sprayed structures — recognized throughout the world as enduring symbols of the Keys — still withstand the test of time, even when lashed by winds and water.

The modern-day bridge, opened to traffic in 1982, is one of the world's longest segmental bridges at 6.79 miles or nearly 36,000 feet long. A 65-foot-high clearance allows boat passage between the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean.

Built from precast concrete sections with 440 spans, it connects Marathon to the Lower Keys.

Each year in April, up to 1,500 athletes test their endurance in the annual Seven Mile Bridge Run, an event

that lures avid runners of all ages.

The Old Seven Mile Bridge, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, was built as part of railroad magnate Henry Morrison Flagler's Florida Keys Oversea Railroad, completed in 1912 and stretching from Florida's southern mainland to Key West.

Construction of Old Seven was grueling. The bridge's four sections consisted of steel-girder spans laid on top of concrete foundation piers. The piers were secured to bedrock up to 28 feet deep below the waterline, and a swinging span allowed boat passage between the Gulf and Atlantic.

In recent years, a 2.2-mile section of Old Seven has been a popular spot for walking, running, biking and fishing — and as the gateway to 5-acre Pigeon Key, the historic railroad work camp where up to 400 workers lived from 1908 to 1912.

Old Seven currently is closed for restoration for pedestrians and cyclists, with completion set for 2021.

For Florida Keys residents returning home, the sight of the two parallel Seven Mile bridges provides a warm, comforting welcome. A glimpse of "Fred," an Australian pine tree growing out of Old Seven's roadbed, typically inspires a smile and a wave.

The two bridges stand resolutely, an enduring legacy to Flagler, the persevering dreamer who envisioned what the Keys would become.

friendsofoldseven.org • 7mbrun.com.com



Participants in the 2017 Papio Kinetic Sculpture and Art Bike Parade reach the lower end of Duval Street.

Zany Parade Salutes Rebel Artist's Legacy

If one man's junk is another man's treasure, then the late Key Largo folk artist Stanley Papio was an unparalleled treasure hunter.

The rebel metal sculptor's legacy is saluted in Key West each May with a people-powered parade of mobile sculptures, all crafted in the spirit of his quirky recycled creations.

Staged by the Key West Art & Historical Society, the Papio Kinetic Sculpture and Art Bike Parade typically features colorful sculptural floats, fantastically decorated bicycles with costumed riders and other mobile masterpieces. Each is propelled by human effort alone.

The zany procession begins at Key West's Custom House Museum, with Papio-inspired artisans powering their kinetic creations on a mile-long route along the island's Duval Street.

Papio, who opened a Key Largo

welding business in 1949, was known for his welded "junkyard art" incorporating elements like recycled car parts, pipes and machine scraps. Blending satirical social commentary and offbeat whimsy, his constructions are an eclectic celebration of found objects.

Today Papio's pieces, acclaimed

for their inventiveness and humor, are recognized as culturally important American artwork. Fans of renegade creativity and craftsmanship can view more than 100 of his sculptures at Key West's Fort East Martello Museum.

— Carol Shaughnessy
papiokineticparade.com



There is no shortage of creativity at the Papio Kinetic Sculpture and Art Bike Parade in Key West.

Keys Embrace 'One Human Family' Philosophy

The Florida Keys are known around the world for residents' inclusive and accepting attitude toward people of all kinds. It took Key West designer J.T. Thompson, however, to initiate formal recognition of that attitude.

In 2000, hoping to emphasize the inherent unity and equality of people everywhere, Thompson began printing bumper stickers that read, "All people are created equal members of ONE HUMAN FAMILY." When he started giving the stickers away, they were immediately snapped up.

In October 2000, the Key West City Commission unanimously adopted One Human Family as the southernmost city's official philosophy. The Keys' Monroe County Commission followed suit, embracing it for the entire island chain.

To date, Thompson and supporters have distributed 2.75 million free One Human Family bumper stickers. The unifying slogan has reached people in 95 countries and places as remote as the South Pole and Africa's Sahara Desert.

One Human Family motto emblazoned on a Key West sidewalk.

According to Thompson, it also has been referenced in speeches and writings by Barack Obama, Pope Francis and the Dalai Lama.

"There is possibly no greater gift we can give to future generations

than a world where all people enjoy equal rights, dignity and respect," said Thompson.

One Human Family stickers are available free worldwide.

onehumanfamily.info



Key Largo Offering Three New Resorts

Key Largo continues a dramatic transformation in the northernmost Florida Keys, with three new properties coming online.

Bungalows Key Largo, a 13-acre, 135-unit property billing itself as "luxury inclusive," is to open in spring 2018 as the first all-inclusive



Photo illustration of a lodging unit at Bungalows Key Largo, set to open in the spring of 2018.

resort in the Keys.

Featuring a "Keys chic" design, rooms will average about 800 square feet, with private outdoor plunge pools or tubs. The property is to offer two larger in-ground pools, multiple restaurants and bars, 1,000 feet of shoreline, several piers for boats up to 40 feet

long and 4,000 square feet of indoor and outdoor event space.

Rates will include lodging, food and premium beverages, hotel amenities, activities and water toys.

The new resort is located at mile marker 99 bayside.

Dolphin Point Villas opened in December 2017 adjacent to Dolphins Plus,

and can host events such as wedding parties and retreats of up to 62 people. Event space can accommodate 100.

Five stand-alone villa homes offer one to three bedrooms. A sixth, the Nautilus House estate, sleeps up to 16 with a large wrap-around porch.

Dolphin Point Villas is located at MM 102 bayside.

In fall 2018, the Hilton Key Largo is to reopen as the 13-acre, 200-room Baker's Cay Resort, a Curio Collection by Hilton. Caribbean-Creole cuisine is to be offered at the property, located at MM 97 bayside.

— Laura Myers

bungalowskeylargo.com
dolphinpointvillas.com
bakerscayresort.com

Traveling Tips to the Florida Keys



The 125-mile-long Florida Keys island chain is linked to mainland Florida by U.S. Highway 1, the Overseas Highway. Visitors can fly into Miami International Airport (MIA) or Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) and from there can reach the Keys by airport shuttle bus or rental car. Travelers can reach Key Largo, the gateway to the Keys, in about an hour from Miami or an hour and 45 minutes from Fort Lauderdale.

Air Service to the Florida Keys

For an up-to-date roster of commercial airlines and on-demand charter operators serving Key West International and Florida Keys Marathon International Airports, go to fla-keys.com/how-to-get-here.

Driving Directions

From Miami International Airport (MIA), take LeJeune Road south to 836 West. Take the Florida Turnpike south toward Key West.

The Turnpike ends at U.S. 1 in Florida City.

Follow U.S. 1 south about 22 miles to Key Largo and you and your travel companions will be in the Florida Keys.

From Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL), exit the airport and follow the signs for I-595 West. Take 595 to the Florida Turnpike and follow the signs for the Florida Keys.

From farther north, take the Florida Turnpike south to just below Fort Lauderdale, where Exit 4 joins the southern portion of the Turnpike that ends at U.S. 1 in Florida City. Follow U.S. 1 south into the Florida Keys.

From Florida's west coast, take I-75 (Alligator Alley) south to the Miami exit, and south to the Turnpike Extension.

Driving Data to Keys/Key Largo

FROM	MILES	KM	HOURS
Miami	50	80	1
Fort Myers	200	320	4
Tampa	300	480	6
Orlando	280	450	5.25

Distance from Miami

REGION	MILES	KM	MILE MARKER
Key Largo	50	80	107-90
Islamorada	76	122	89-66
Marathon	111	178	65-45
Lower Keys	128	205	45-4
Key West	159	254	4-0

Via Bus

Bus/shuttle connections from MIA and FLL to the Florida Keys allow traveling to the Keys without renting a car.

Via Boat

Ferry connections from Fort Myers or Marco Island to Key West are offered via the Key West Express. Voyages take approximately 3.5 hours.

Extensive details on getting to the Florida Keys & Key West are available at:

fla-keys.com/how-to-get-here



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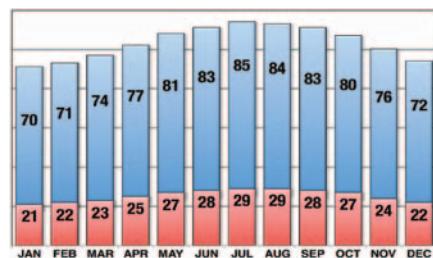
@thefloridakeys

Weather/Climate

Wherever you are right now, chances are the weather is better in the Florida Keys. That's true even on a summer day. The hottest it's ever been in Key West is 97° F (36° C), and that was in 1880. At the peak of summer, the average high air temperature is about 89° F (32° C). The Keys are devoid of superhighways or urban sprawl to absorb and radiate the sun's heat. And the subtropical islands are cooled by sea breezes.

In the winter, the Keys are typically the warmest region in the continental U.S. There has never been a frost in Key West, according to the U.S. Weather Service.

Below are the average monthly air temperatures for the past 30 years, according to the Key West weather office. Temperatures in blue shades are Fahrenheit and those in light red are Celsius.



Help and More Information

If you're traveling in the Keys and need any help, call the toll-free visitors assistance line at 800-771-KEYS. It's staffed 24 hours a day. To contact visitor offices in the Keys, call 800-FLA-KEYS. The Keys website at fla-keys.com has a live chat feature with visitor information specialists available during regular U.S. weekday business hours to aid travelers in vacation planning.