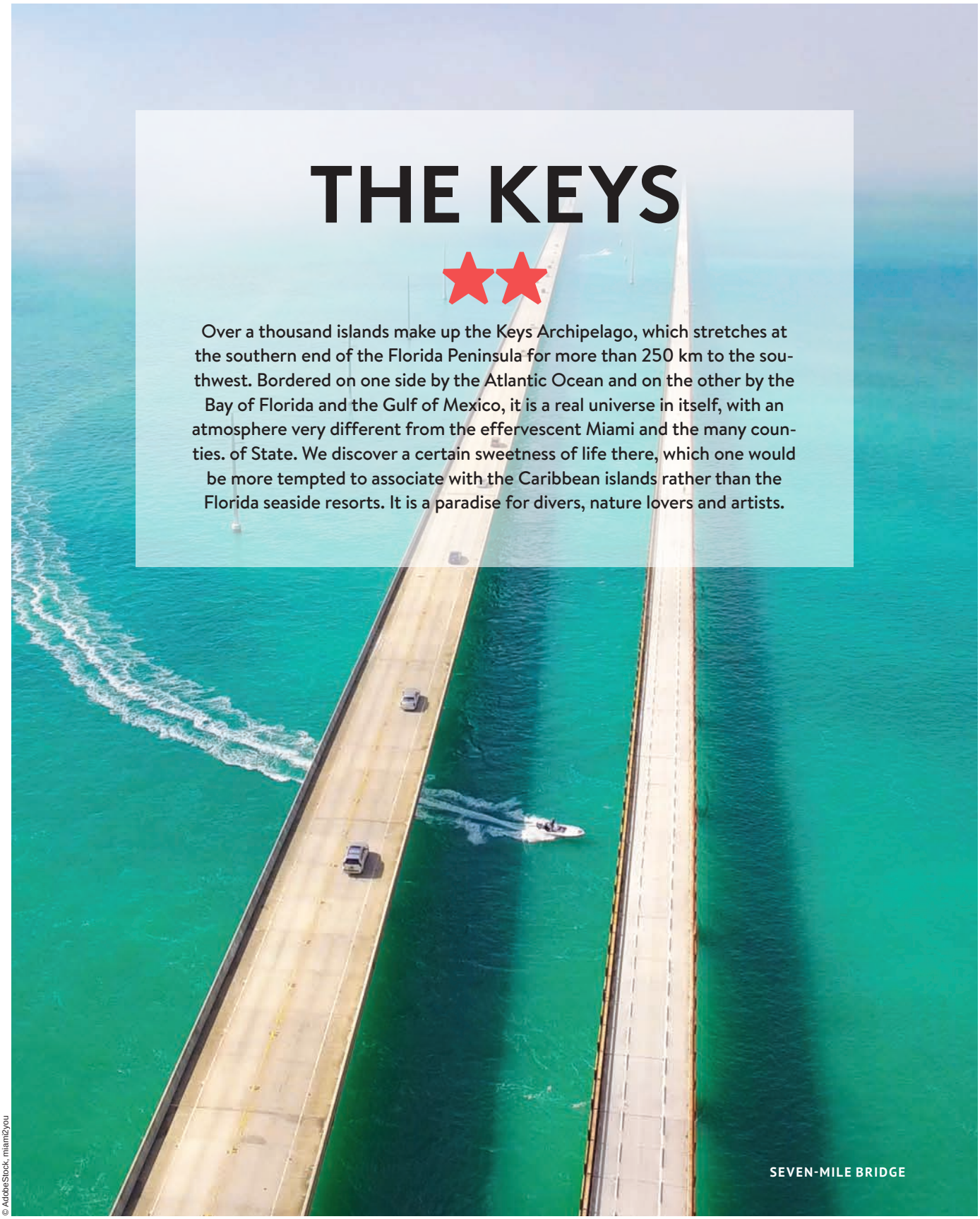
THE KEYS

★★

Over a thousand islands make up the Keys Archipelago, which stretches at the southern end of the Florida Peninsula for more than 250 km to the southwest. Bordered on one side by the Atlantic Ocean and on the other by the Bay of Florida and the Gulf of Mexico, it is a real universe in itself, with an atmosphere very different from the effervescent Miami and the many counties. of State. We discover a certain sweetness of life there, which one would be more tempted to associate with the Caribbean islands rather than the Florida seaside resorts. It is a paradise for divers, nature lovers and artists.



SEVEN-MILE BRIDGE

© AdobeStock, miami2you

WHAT TO DO

THE «HIGHWAY THAT GOES TO SEA»...

The **Overseas Highway** is a unique route that connects the Keys to mainland Florida. The **Upper Keys**, which include **Key Largo**, are a very popular destination for weekend tourists from the Miami region. The road gets narrower as it continues south through the **Middle Keys** and then the **Lower Keys**, ending in the famous town of **Key West**.

Completed in 1938, the Overseas Highway is **more than 180 kilometres long** and has **42 bridges**, including the famous **Seven-Mile Bridge**, which rises to a 20-metre-high arch and is almost 11 km long... a true architectural masterpiece!

With no traffic (which is rather rare!), it will take you **almost 3 hours** to drive from **Homestead** (south of Miami) to **Key West**. There are green and white mile markers along the side of the road all along the Overseas Highway. **Mile Marker 0** is located at the **southernmost point of Key West** and the markers progress north until **Mile Marker 127 in Florida City on the mainland**. Street addresses along the Overseas Highway are based on mile markers. For example, the address 92220 Overseas Highway corresponds to Mile Marker 92.2.

KEY LARGO ★

Also known as Cayo Largo, this destination is **extremely popular with divers**, as its magnificent coral reefs offer exceptional diving opportunities. If you prefer to stay above the water, you will be delighted to know that Key Largo's **proximity to the Everglades** makes it a premier destination for kayaking, offering beautiful natural scenery and calm clear waters for paddling on.

UNUSUAL ENCOUNTER

© AdobeStock, kuridive

JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK ★★

This was the **first undersea park in the United States**, home to more than **40 types of coral and almost 600 species of fish**! Open to the public **for more than 50 years**, the park was named for the late John D. Pennekamp, a Miami newspaper editor, whose efforts contributed to the **preservation of this unique 70 square km area** of coral reefs, tropical vegetation and marine life, and to the establishment of Everglades National Park.

The park is a true **paradise for divers**, even inexperienced ones. And there are **many ways** to enjoy the park without fins, mask and snorkel depending on your desires, needs and interests.

Here are the different **options**:

- **Guided snorkeling tours:** maximum of 6 snorkelers per guide. Tours last 2½ hours including 1 hour to 1½ hours water time. Equipment rental is available.
- **Scuba diving tours for certified divers:** two-location dives, with departures daily at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Maximum 6 divers per guide, variable duration. Equipment rental is available.
- **Glass-bottom boat tour aboard a high-speed catamaran:** maximum capacity of 130 passengers, with departures at 9:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. Tours last 2½ hours.
- **Kayak, canoe and paddleboard (SUP) rental** to explore the park's 50 miles of natural mangrove wilderness trails.
- Short **walking trails**, with **picnic** areas and **beach access**.

Reservations are strongly recommended, online or by phone, for the snorkeling, diving, glass-bottom boat tours and even boat rental. Please note that **children under the age of 15** can go snorkeling but must be **accompanied by an adult**. Food and souvenirs can be purchased at the park's equipment rental centre.
MILE MARKER 102.5, OVERSEAS HIGHWAY, KEY LARGO / 305-451-6300
WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/PARKS-AND-TRAILS/JOHN-PENNEKAMP-CORAL-REEF-STATE-PARK

JOHN PENNEKAMP CORAL REEF STATE PARK ★★

Season: Open daily from 8 a.m. until sunset.

Visitor Center: Usually open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
The centre features natural history exhibits on coral reef ecosystems, a 30,000-gallon saltwater aquarium, and a theater where visitors can watch nature videos.

Entry fee: $8/vehicle/day (up to 8 people), plus 50 cents per person.

CORAL REEF

© WikiCommons, National Park Services

ISLAMORADA AND THE MIDDLE KEYS

This area of the Keys is extremely popular with **deep-sea sport fishing enthusiasts**. **Marathon** is the **administrative and cultural centre** of the "Middle Keys".

THEATER OF THE SEA ★

This **marine mammal park** features lagoons and lush, tropical gardens that are home to **fish, sharks, stingrays, sea turtles, alligators, sea lions, dolphins and birds**. The park was founded in 1946 by the McKenney family, whose mission was to **protect and care for animals**. Over the years, many animals have been rescued, rehabilitated, and still live at Theatre of the Sea because they could not be returned to the wild. Each rescued animal serves an important role in **educating the public about the many natural and human-imposed threats** to their wild counterparts.

General admission provides access to **dolphin, sea lion, and parrot shows**, a **bottomless boat ride**, a l**agoon-side beach**, as well as a **fish and reptile tour** with tropical fish, sharks, sea turtles, stingrays, alligators, and crocodiles. If you wish, you can also **book one of the many unique experiences** below:

- Swim with the dolphin
- Meet the dolphin
- Wade with the dolphin
- Paint with the dolphins
- Meet the sea lion
- Swim with the sea lion
- Paint with the sea lion
- Swim with the rays
- Meet the sea turtles
- Swim with the sharks
- Meet the alligator
- Adventure cruise and snorkeling
- Sunset eco-cruise

The park also has a gift shop and a restaurant, Nicky's Grill. The park is open every day from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

84721, OVERSEAS HIGHWAY, ISLAMORADA
305-664-2431
THEATEROFTHESEA.COM

DOLPHIN RESEARCH CENTER ★

Although **dolphin watching** is possible all over Florida, this research site allows you to watch and interact with these incredible mammals in a way that **doesn't disturb their living environment**. Enjoy an ethical, responsible experience! You will also get to meet the family of **California sea lions**. You can **talk with staff and volunteers** to learn more about the centre's animals and their way of life. You will also be able to attend the **daily show** and cool off in the water games available for visitors of all ages. General admission provides access to the site, but you can also **swim with the dolphins for an additional fee**. Ask at the park reception. Open daily from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Closed on December 25, Memorial Day (4th Monday in May), Labor Day (1st Monday in September) and Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday in November).

58901, OVERSEAS HIGHWAY, GRASSY KEY
305-289-1121 / DOLPHINS.ORG

SEVEN-MILE BRIDGE ★★

Built in 1982, the Seven-Mile Bridge **connects Knight Key (Middle Keys) to Little Duck Key (Lower Keys)** and offers **breathtaking views** ★★ of the surrounding turquoise sea. Rising to a **20-metre-high arch** and **almost 11,000 metres long**, it can be considered a masterpiece of engineering and architecture.

MILE MARKER 47 TO 40, OVERSEAS HIGHWAY

LOWER KEYS ★

BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK ★★

This Florida state park is said to have the **most beautiful natural beaches on the archipelago**! The shallow waters and white sand make it a beautiful and safe place for families with young children.

Calusa Beach is on the northwest side, near the marina, the picnic area and the Concession Building. It is one of the **most photographed beaches**, as it has the **Old Bahia Honda Bridge** in the background. **Loggerhead Beach** is right across from Calusa Beach, on the southwest side of the park. The longest beach, **Sandspur**, is on the southeast of the island, and looks like the Caribbean with its palm trees and turquoise waters.

The **500-hectare** park also offers **some of the best snorkeling sites**, including **Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary**, a reef teeming with ocean life about 20 km from the park. Daily **90-minute snorkeling trips** depart from the park at 9:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and/or 4:45 p.m., and depths vary from 5 feet to 15 feet. Children are allowed as long as they are good swimmers. It is possible to rent snorkeling gear (mask, flippers, snorkel) and wetsuits if necessary. Reservations are required at 305-872-3210.

The following **activities can also be enjoyed in the park** if you have the necessary equipment: kayaking, canoeing, biking, fishing, swimming and hiking.

36850, OVERSEAS HIGHWAY, BIG PINE KEY
305-872-2353
WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/PARKS-AND-TRAILS/BAHIA-HONDA-STATE-PARK

BAHIA HONDA STATE PARK ★★

Season: Open daily from 8 a.m. until sunset.

Visitor Center : Usually open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Houses an exhibit on the different ecosystems. The **Concession Building** is usually open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and houses a snack bar, a gift shop, kayak rentals and snorkeling trips to Looe Key National Marine Sanctuary.

Admission: $8/vehicle/day (up to 8 people), plus 50 cents per person.

***Please note: the park was damaged by hurricane Irma and some areas may still be closed.

OLD BAHIA HONDA BRIDGE

© WikiCommons, Viktorvills

KEY WEST ★★★

Key West is the highlight for anyone visiting the Keys. Located in the Gulf of Mexico, only 140 kilometers from Cuba, it is a small and very well-developed island that is actually closer to Havana, Cuba than to Miami! It is without a doubt the southernmost destination in the United States. Did you know that this part of Florida is also great for a USA RV road trip? Even today, many authors, poets and painters seek inspiration here in the middle of winter, lulled by the sea and the sunny landscapes. Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams were among the first to come here to reconnect with their art.

A WALK ON THE BEACH

© AdobeStock, Natalia Bratslavsky

OLD TOWN ★★

This historic district has the greatest number of attractions to visit. Here are a few suggestions:

DUVAL STREET

The city's main thoroughfare is always **very lively** with its **many restaurants and cafes, attractions and shops**. In the evenings, the music from the bars lining the street give it a festive atmosphere.

OLD TOWN, DUVAL STREET

© AdobeStock, jovannig

SAN CARLOS INSTITUTE

The San Carlos Institute was **founded by Cuban exiles in 1871** as an **educational**, civic, and **patriotic center**. The magnificent **Baroque-style building dates from 1924**, built after the preceding buildings were destroyed by fire (1886) and a hurricane (1919). The institute was closed for almost two decades and the building was condemned before being completely restored in the late 1980s. **Since 1992**, this **dynamic centre** houses a school, a theatre, a library, an art gallery and a museum. **Admission is free** and you can see **exhibits on Cuba's history** and the history of the **Cuban-American community** in Florida. Open daily from noon to 5 p.m.

516, DUVAL STREET, KEY WEST
305-294-3887
WWW.INSTITUTOSANCARLOS.ORG

US 1 MILE MARKER 0

501 Whitehead Street is the starting point for **US Highway 1**, which **runs along the entire eastern seaboard of the United States to Maine**, right to the border with Canada. Many people come here to take a **photo** in front of the iconic US1 mile marker zero sign.

501, WHITEHEAD STREET (COIN FLEMING) KEY WEST

ST-PAUL EPISCOPAL CHURCH

This magnificent Spanish colonial style Episcopal church was **built in 1919**. Go in to enjoy a quiet moment and admire the superb ocean-themed **stained-glass windows**, which contrast with the whiteness of the walls and rich wooden ceiling. Open every day from 7:30 a.m. until sunset.

401, DUVAL STREET, KEY WEST
305-296-5142
WWW.STPAULSKEYWEST.ORG

THE OLDEST HOUSE MUSEUM

This is the **oldest house on the island, built in 1829**. It was the home of the **wrecker Captain Francis B. Watlington**, his wife and nine daughters. Like many buildings in Key West, it had to be moved 7 years after its construction from Whitehead Street to its present location on Duval Street. You can **visit the house** (which has a splendid **collection of model ships**), the **cookhouse** (the oldest surviving cookhouse in South Florida) and the **exhibition pavilion** overlooking the garden featuring, among other things, wood sculptures by local artist Mario Sanchez. Open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

322, DUVAL STREET, KEY WEST
305-294-9501
WWW.OLDESTHOUSEMUSEUM.COM

HARRY S. TRUMAN LITTLE WHITE HOUSE ★★

This house was originally constructed in 1890 as **naval officers housing** and was used during the First and Second World Wars. It is best known as the **winter White House of former American president Harry S. Truman**, 33rd president of the United States, who spent 175 days of his presidency there from 1945 to 1953. The house was also used by other important figures including former presidents Jimmy Carter and John F. Kennedy. It is now a **museum** where you can learn about the **history of the Little White House** and T**ruman's life and presidency** and see **items that belonged to him**.
Tickets can be purchased online at a discount. The price includes a guided tour lasting about 30 minutes. Open every day from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

111, FRONT STREET, KEY WEST
305-294-9911
WWW.TRUMANLITTLEWHITEHOUSE.COM

AUDUBON HOUSE & TROPICAL GARDENS ★

Audubon House was built in the **1840s** for wrecker Captain **John Huling Geiger and his family**, who **lived there for more than a century**. It was saved from demolition in 1958 by the **Mitchell Wolfson Family Foundation** and **completely restored**. This restoration sparked the preservation and restoration movement in Key West. After two years of work, the house was dedicated as a public **museum commemorating the famed naturalist John James Audubon's visit** to Key West in 1832 to study and sketch the birds of the Florida Keys for his «Birds of America» folio. Furnished with antiques and objects that belonged to the Geiger family, the museum proudly exhibits numerous original Audubon engravings. One of the highlights of the visit is wandering the paved walkways of the property's **lush tropical gardens**. The gardens contain a fascinating **replica** of the 1850s **cookhouse**, built in 2012 based on photographs of the original. The cookhouse is **completely furnished with antiques of the period** and even has a **herb garden**. Open every day from 9:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. (the gift shop closes at 5 p.m.).

205, WHITEHEAD STREET, KEY WEST
305-294-2116
AUDUBONHOUSE.ORG

MEL FISHER MARITIME MUSEUM

Mel Fisher was a great **scuba diving enthusiast** and spent **years searching for the Nuestra Señora de Atocha**, a Spanish galleon that sank in Florida waters in 1622 **carrying a mountain of treasure**. After finally discovering the wreck in 1985, he opened several museums and donated 20% of the found treasure to the state. This museum houses exhibits on **shipwreck salvage operations** and artifact conservation, with displays of the **equipment** used to carry out this dangerous work as well as f**abulous treasures**. The **collection contains some 100,000 artifacts** such as gold and silver coins and ingots, ceramics, glassware, jewelry, navigation instruments, personal and trade items, chests, weapons, and much more. Open Tuesday-Sunday from 10 a.m. Last entry at 4 p.m.

200, GREENE STREET, KEY WEST
305-294-2633
WWW.MELFISHER.ORG

MALLORY SQUARE

This waterfront plaza is in the northwest of the island facing the Gulf of Mexico. It has an interesting array of **shops and restaurants**, as well as the **Key West Aquarium** and the **Key West Shipwreck Museum**. Mallory Square also boasts the **most beautiful sunsets**, and is the location of the **Sunset Celebration**, a daily **celebration** that **starts two hours before sunset** and has been attracting crowds since 1960. Visitors from around the world join the magicians, jugglers, clowns, psychics, local musicians, artists, and food vendors who come together for a moment of beauty and an incredible cultural experience.

400, WALL STREET, KEY WEST
WWW.MALLORYSQUARE.COM

KEY WEST SHIPWRECK MUSEUM

This museum tells the 400-year history of the wreckers who made their living by salvaging shipwrecks off the coast. They literally watched and waited for ships to run aground on the reef, then claimed salvage rights, retrieved everything that was good on board and sold it at auction. As the operation was extremely perilous, the seller was able to charge a considerable profit, to his great advantage! Be sure to climb to the top of the lookout tower for a stunning view of Key West. Open every day from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

1, WHITEHEAD STREET, KEY WEST
305-292-8990
WWW.KEYWESTSHIPWRECK.COM

KEY WEST AQUARIUM

Since 1934, the Aquarium has been teaching visitors about the **rich marine life of the Florida Keys** and **exotic creatures** from other parts of the world. You will see American **alligators, sharks, jellyfish, sea turtles, stingrays, giant isopods** and much more. Open every day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

1, WHITEHEAD STREET, KEY WEST
305-296-2051
WWW.KEYWESTAQUARIUM.COM

GETTING AROUND IN KEY WEST

This is a city that can be **easily explored on foot**, but here are some more options:

- **Rent a bicycle**, for example at **We Cycle** *(305-292-3336 / wecyclekw.com)* or **Bike Man Bike Rentals** *(305-587-1783 / www.bikemanbikerentalkeywest.com)*.
- Take a **Conch Train Tour**. In service since 1958, the Conch Train offers 75-minute guided tours of Old Town, **starting at the Front Street Depot** (303 Front Street) and **ending at Mallory Square** (400 Wall Street). There are two other places where you can board the train if there are places available. The train runs every 30 minutes, every day from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. *www.conchtourtrain.com*
- Use the **Old Town Trolley**. The trolley is different from the Conch Train in that the trolley **goes all around the island**, it has **13 stops**, you can get **on and off as many times as you like**. Some options available. *www.trolleytours.com*

© WikiCommons, Radomiann

SOUTHERNMOST POINT

ELSEWHERE IN KEY WEST...

THE ERNEST HEMINGWAY HOME & MUSEUM ★★

Hemingway and his then-wife, Pauline, ended up in Key West somewhat by chance in April 1928, when a new Ford Roaster that Pauline's uncle had generously purchased for the newlywed couple was delayed in transit. During their 3-week wait, Ernest and Pauline **got to know the town and its inhabitants, forged new friendships**, and **became quite attached to the place**. They **moved into** the Whitehead Street house in **1931** and stayed there for almost ten years. Hemingway remained the house's owner and continued to visit until his death. **He wrote several novels there** and became one of the most respected authors in the country. This magnificent home, which was designated a **National Historic Landmark in 1968**, is filled with the famous writer's **furniture and possessions**. The house and its grounds are also inhabited by **40-50 cats**, many of which are **polydactyl** (6-toed). Legend has it that the cats are descendants of a 6-toed cat given to Hemingway. Open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. If you would like to walk in Hemingway's footsteps, pay a visit to **Sloppy Joe's Bar** (201 Duval Street), where he was a regular, and **Captain Tony's Saloon** (428 Greene Street).

907, WHITEHEAD STREET, KEY WEST
305-294-1136
WWW.HEMINGWAYHOME.COM

KEY WEST LIGHTHOUSE & KEEPER'S QUARTERS MUSEUM

When it was inaugurated in **1848** to **assure the safety** of both military and commercial vessels navigating the shallow, reef-laden waters off the Florida Keys, the lighthouse had a woman as its keeper, which was nearly unheard of during the 19th century. The U.S. Coast Guard **decommissioned the Key West Lighthouse in 1969**, since there was no longer a need for a full-time keeper due to technological advancements. It later became a lovely museum dedicated to **Key West's maritime heritage** and to **the men and women who bravely kept the light burning**. You can **climb the 88 steps** to the top of the light as well as explore the belongings, photographs, and words of the lighthouse keepers and their families who lived a now obsolete, yet never forgotten, way of life. Open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

938, WHITEHEAD STREET, KEY WEST
305-294-0012
WWW.KWAHS.ORG/MUSEUMS/LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPERS-QUARTERS/VISIT

THE ERNEST HEMINGWAY HOME & MUSEUM

© Wiki Média, Acroterion

THE KEY WEST BUTTERFLY & NATURE CONSERVATORY ★★

Take a **stroll through a tropical paradise** in this **huge climate-controlled greenhouse** filled with more than **50 species of butterflies** from around the world, **flowers** and **colorful exotic birds**: it's a one-of-a-kind experience! You can also learn all about the physiology, anatomy, diet, life cycle and migration of the majestic **monarch butterfly**. Open every day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (admission until 4:30 p.m.; hours may vary on holidays).

1316, DUVAL STREET, KEY WEST
305-296-2988
WWW.KEYWESTBUTTERFLY.COM

SOUTHERNMOST POINT

Visit the southernmost point in the continental United States and have your picture taken next to the giant buoy that officially marks the spot. You may have to be patient, because the site is visited by more than 1 million people each year! Nearby, at 1400 Duval Street, you can see the superb Southernmost House, built in 1899 by Judge J. Vining Harris, which is now a hotel. Corner of Whitehead Street and South Street, Key West

CORNER OF WHITEHEAD STREET AND SOUTH STREET, KEY WEST

ECO DISCOVERY CENTER ★
This discovery centre in the heart of Key West offers a journey into the world of the native plants and animals of the Keys, both on land and underwater. It features 6,000 square feet of interactive exhibits, a replica of a unique underwater laboratory, and a short film on the ecosystem of the Keys. Admission is free. Usually open Tuesday-Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Currently closed, visit the website for updates in 2022.
35, EAST QUAY ROAD, KEY WEST
305-809-4750
FLORIDAKEYS.NOAA.GOV/ECO_DISCOVERY.HTML

FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR HISTORIC STATE PARK
This Florida state park is a **National Historic Monument** housing the largest cache of Civil War armament in the world. Built to guard the harbor of Key West, Fort Zachary Taylor played an **important role in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and the First and Second World Wars**. **Brochures** and **interpretive panels** explain the history of the fort and how the soldiers lived as they defended the nation's southeastern coastline. You can **walk the red-brick corridors** of the fort, past cannon and gun **ports, and** visit the small museum and **collection of seacoast guns**. **Guided tours** are offered every day at 11 a.m. The park is also a magnificent place to have a picnic, birdwatch, relax on one of the **most beautiful beaches in Key West**, swim and snorkel. You can buy food and refreshments at **Cayo Hueso Café** (every day from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.), souvenirs and items such as sunscreen at the **small gift shop**, and **rent** snorkeling gear, bicycles, chairs and more (every day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

601, HOWARD ENGLAND WAY, KEY WEST
305-292-6713
WWW.FLORIDASTATEPARKS.ORG/PARKS-AND-TRAILS/FORT-ZACHARY-TAYLOR-HISTORIC-STATE-PARK

FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR HISTORIC STATE PARK

Season: Open daily from 8 a.m. until sunset. The fort closes at 5 p.m.

Admission: $6/vehicle/day (up to 8 people), plus 50 cents per person. For walk-in visitors, the admission fee is $2.50 per person.

© Evelyn Proimos

BEACH OF FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR STATE PARK

KEY WEST LIGHTHOUSE & KEEPER'S QUARTERS MUSEUM

© AdobeStock, f11photo

DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK

© AdobeStock, Varina Patel

NEARBY

DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK ★

Dry Tortugas National Park is about **112 kilometres west of Key West** and can only be reached by boat or seaplane. It is made up of **seven small sandy islands** that are home to a large population of **giant sea turtles**, hence the name «Tortugas». **"Dry"** reflects the fact that no fresh water is available on the islands. The main attraction of Dry Tortugas National Park is **Fort Jefferson**, the l**argest maritime fortification in North America**, built in 1846 by the U.S. Army on Garden Key Island and designated a National Monument in 1935. In addition to visiting the fort, you can go **swimming** and **snorkeling** in the crystal-clear waters and along the fort's coral-encrusted walls as well as birdwatching. Note that it is best to **book your ferry or seaplane tickets ahead of time** to avoid being disappointed, as a limited number of visitors are admitted each day. The ferry ride aboard the **Catamaran Yankee Freedom III** takes about 2 1/4 hours and leaves from the Key West **ferry terminal** at 100 Grinnell Street (1-800-634-0939).

305-242-7700

WWW.NPS.GOV/DRTO/INDEX.HTM

DRY TORTUGAS NATIONAL PARK ★

Season: Fort Jefferson, on Garden Key, is open year-round from sunrise to sunset.

Visitor Center: There is a visitor centre at Fort Jefferson, but if you would like to learn more about the site before visiting, you have two options:

- **Bight Visitor Center:** Located in Key West's historic seaport, this centre features exhibits on Fort Jefferson, the history of the bay, and sea turtles. Admission is free.
  240, Margaret Street, Key West / 305-294-7009

- **Eco Discovery Center ★:** This discovery centre in the heart of Key West offers a journey into the world of the native plants and animals of the Keys, both on land and underwater. It features 6,000 square feet of interactive exhibits, a replica of a unique underwater laboratory, and a short film on the ecosystem of the Keys. Admission is free. Usually open Tuesday-Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
  35, East Quay Road, Key West / 305-809-4750 / floridakeys.noaa.gov/eco_discovery.html

Entry fee: $15/person, valid for 7 days. Admission is free for youth aged 16 and under. Purchase the America the Beautiful Pass for $80 if you plan to visit 2-3 parks during your trip.

***Warning:** If you are planning a trip to the national park, be aware that **you must be *completely self-sufficient* for the entire day** in terms of **water, food and any other necessary items**, as the park offers very limited services. Once you reach the park, there is **no cell phone service, no public telephone, no Internet, no bathrooms** (except at 10:30 a.m. when the bathrooms on board the Yankee Freedom ferry can be used), **no water, no food, no garbage cans** or other basic services.

© AdobeStock, steve

AERIAL VIEW OF KEY WEST

WHERE TO EAT

KEY LARGO & SURROUNDING AREA

HOBO'S CAFE ($$)

Established in 1991, Hobo's Cafe is an «authentic Keys eatery» and one of the most popular restaurants in Key Largo. It serves simple creative cuisine inspired by seasonal ingredients and the wide array of fresh seafood available from local markets and fishermen. The menu features burgers, sandwiches, salads, seafood and meat dishes: something for everyone! As an appetizer, be sure to try the ceviche, a house specialty, prepared with conch marinated in lime juice, onions, tomatoes and cilantro, served with tortilla chips. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

101691, OVERSEAS HWY, KEY LARGO

305-451-5888

WWW.HOBOSCAFE.NET

THE FISH HOUSE ($$$)

Another Key Largo dining tradition, since 1982. The Fish House buys directly from local commercial fishermen, and fillets and smokes all fish on the premises. They even make a smoked fish dip, which you can taste at the restaurant or purchase in their market! The menu includes grouper, mahi-mahi, yellow snapper, stone crab and Florida lobster, seafood plates, pasta, soups and salads, meat options, and sandwiches (lunchtime only). Open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.

102401, OVERSEAS HWY, KEY LARGO

305-451-4665

WWW.FISHHOUSE.COM

BLOND GIRAFFE KEY LIME PIE FACTORY ($)

The Blond Giraffe wants to make people happy, and they do it by making one of the best

Key lime pies in the Keys! The pies are made fresh every day using top quality ingredients. For a decadent treat, try the frozen Key lime pie dipped in chocolate!!! Also offers other lime-flavoured items such as cookies, candy and cakes, as well as gifts, souvenirs and a full espresso bar. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.
92220, OVERSEAS HWY, TAVERNIER
305-922-2400
WWW.BLONDGIRAFFE.COM

ISLAMORADA

TWISTED SHRIMP ($$)
This local favourite serves fast, fresh, affordable fare with a short but interesting menu. As you may have guessed, shrimp is their specialty, and they serve it up in many ways: fried, blackened, Cajun, tacos, skewers, salad, and Po'Boy sandwich (a Louisiana specialty). You can even order fried shrimp by the pound or a bucket of fried chicken if you're with a group. Interesting options include Good Ole Jambalaya, crab cakes and jerk chicken. Open Wednesday-Monday from noon to 8 p.m. Closed on Tuesdays.
87745, OVERSEAS HWY, ISLAMORADA
305-453-6377
WWW.TWISTEDSHRIMP.COM

LAZY DAYS SOUTH ($$-$$$)
With its ideal oceanfront location and tables right on the beach, Lazy Days South has a real holiday vibe! The menu offers an array of options including fish and seafood, certified Angus beef, chicken, salads, pasta (including vegetarian options), and sandwiches. You can also try alligator if you're curious, or taste conch prepared in a variety of ways. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.
79867, OVERSEAS HWY, ISLAMORADA
305-664-5256
WWW.LAZYDAYSISLAMORADA.COM

MARATHON ET LOWER KEY

KEYS FISHERIES ($-$$)
Keys Fisheries is not only a restaurant, but also a seafood market and marina. In addition to sampling house specialties such as lobster bisque, grilled mahi-mahi, seafood paella, jumbo stone crab claws, stuffed lobster and much more in a casual seaside atmosphere, you can also leave with some of the ultra-fresh delicacies for which they are famous. Open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
3502, GULFVIEW AVENUE, MARATHON
305-743-4353
WWW.KEYSFISHERIES.COM

SQUARE GROUPER ($$-$$$)
Located on Cudjoe Key, in the Lower Keys between Marathon and Key West, Square Grouper is masterfully run by owner/chef Lynn Bell and her team. The exterior of the restaurant may not make a good impression, but step inside and treat yourself to one of the numerous choices on the menu. Square Grouper is considered by many to be a must-visit restaurant for its large selection of innovative small plates and ever-changing specials. If you're in the mood for a cocktail and some delicious tapas, make your way upstairs to the My New Joint lounge for an enjoyable experience. Open Tuesday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.
22658, OVERSEAS HWY, CUDJOE KEY
305-745-8880
WWW.SQUAREGROUPERBARANDGRILL.COM

KEY WEST

KERMIT'S KEY WEST KEY LIME SHOPPE ($)
Kermit's has been making rich and creamy lime pie on a classic graham cracker crust for over 20 years. They also make a wide range of Key lime flavoured products such as candies, cookies, sauces, jams, teas, body products and much more. You can also taste the famous Key Lime Pie Bar—a frozen slice of Key lime pie dipped in Belgian dark chocolate—and, right next door, you can have a bite to eat at **Kermit's Kitchen Café**, which serves breakfast all day long as well as salads, sandwiches and a few house specialties. Open daily from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. The shop is open Monday-Thursday from 10 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. and Friday-Sunday from 9 a.m.
200, ELIZABETH STREET, KEY WEST
305-296-0806
WWW.KEYLIMESHOP.COM

BIEN ($-$$)
If you'd like to escape the crowds, this small low-profile Caribbean and Latin food restaurant is well worth a visit! You place your order inside and eat at one of the tables outside, or take it to go. The sandwiches are the stars of the menu, served on toasted baguette with aioli, jalapenos, caramelized onions, lettuce and coriander and stuffed with a choice of juicy meats. Don't miss the grilled corn and the seafood in red sauce, served with jasmine rice, garlic tapenade and coriander. Vegetarian options available. Usually open Tuesday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.
1000, EATON STREET, KEY WEST
305-517-6740
WWW.BIENKEYWEST.COM

BLUE HEAVEN ($$)
Welcome to this surprising bit of heaven created by Suanne and Richard in 1992. The colourful tropical decor is as eclectic and funky as anyone could wish for, and cats and chickens roam freely. The restaurant features canopies of tropical foliage, improvised art, and even has a rooster graveyard. The menu features American and vegetarian cuisine with a Caribbean twist, and there is live music daily for lunch and dinner. Usually open daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Reservations required for dinner.
729, THOMAS STREET, KEY WEST
305-296-8666
WWW.BLUEHEAVENKW.COM

LITTLE PEARL ($$-$$$)
This small neighborhood restaurant is the perfect place for an intimate dinner away from the bustling downtown streets. Guests love the warm ambiance and the creative gourmet cuisine, prepared with the highest quality ingredients. The menu features a fine selection of wines, as well as exquisite fish and seafood dishes. When available, the Bangkok octopus starter is always a hit. Reservations are required. Currently open Monday-Saturday for dinner at 5, 7 or 9 p.m.
632, OLIVIA STREET, KEY WEST
305-204-4762
LITTLEPEARLKEYWEST.COM

PRIME STEAKHOUSE KEY WEST ($$$$)
If you're in the mood for a good piece of prime beef and impeccable service, you have come to the right place! Prime does not skimp on providing its guests with the best possible experience in a warm setting. The beef is cooked to perfection in ovens nearing 1,000 degrees, and the menu also includes lobster tails, daily fresh fish specials, a nightly pasta special, and more. The most popular appetizers include filet mignon carpaccio, garlic butter escargots, and crab cakes. Reservations recommended. Open daily from 5:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.
951, CAROLINE STREET, KEY WEST
305-296-4000
WWW.PRIMEKEYWEST.COM

***** Hours may vary *****