



florida
WILL TRAVEL FOR FOOD
keys

*Conch yourself out in the
Florida Keys.*

by Allison Arthur
photos by Brian Upesleja

THE ISLANDER RESORT

FROM ITS COLORFUL CHARM TO THE FRESH SEAFOOD AND UNMATCHABLE SUNRISES AND SUNSETS, THE FLORIDA KEYS ARE FULL OF FUN. TRY YOUR HAND AT FISHING, BIKING OR AN ENDLESS VARIETY OF WATER SPORTS AND WORK UP AN APPETITE FOR FRESHLY CAUGHT RED SHRIMP, STONE CRAB CLAWS AND YELLOWTAIL SNAPPER. COME READY TO CONCH YOURSELF OUT WITH THESE SUGGESTIONS.

dine

THE FISH HOUSE (KEY LARGO)

The award-winning Fish House restaurant and seafood market specializes in fresh, local seafood, including yellowtail snapper, mahi mahi, grouper, Florida lobster and stone crab claws. All dishes are served in a fun, friendly and casual “Keys-style” atmosphere. With so many good menu choices, do yourself and your dining partners a favor and share dishes. “Today’s Catch” can be done several ways, but the house specialty is Matecumbe (topped with fresh tomatoes, shallots, basil, capers, olive oil and lemon juice).

CHEF MICHAEL’S (ISLAMORADA)

Serving an extensive variety of freshly caught fish in Islamorada, Chef Michael’s offers a comfortable menu featuring creatively inspired Florida Keys cuisine in an unpretentious atmosphere. Fresh fish, which often includes sustainable hogfish or lionfish, can be prepared several ways. Our favorite was with mixed nuts and a mango sauce.

TRAVEL TIP: Ditch your rental car when you arrive. A shuttle will drop you off in downtown Key West, or you can rent bikes or scooters to easily get around so you don't have to deal with parking.



THE FISH HOUSE



HALF SHELL RAW BAR

HALF SHELL RAW BAR (KEY WEST)

The casual Half Shell Raw Bar is everything you'd expect in a dockside seafood spot: fruity drinks, picnic tables and seafood towers. The key lime mustard that comes with steamed pink shrimp and crab is a stand-out. Don't miss the garlic Cuban bread!

MATT'S STOCK ISLAND KITCHEN & BAR (STOCK ISLAND)

Located at the Perry Hotel Key West, Matt's serves "American coastal comfort food" with innovative twists — such as iced cold seafood presented in a fisherman's tackle box. Overlooking a colorful marina, the open-air indoor and outdoor ambiances enhance the local cuisine.

KERMIT'S KEY WEST KEY LIME SHOPPE (KEY WEST)

Look for the lime-green and yellow corner restaurant and shop, and belly up outside next to the tranquil koi pond for a little slice of paradise. You can have breakfast or lunch all day, then shop for souvenir key lime products (everything from candy, oils, seasonings and juice to salad dressing, cookies and snacks). There are many variations of a classic key lime pie (an old family recipe of owner Kermit Carpenter), but the most unusual thing on the menu is a pie bar (a slice dipped in chocolate).



THE FISH HOUSE

Extra entertainment: Sit outside so you can listen to the live music from the bar across the street.

FIRST FLIGHT ISLAND RESTAURANT & BREWERY (KEY WEST)

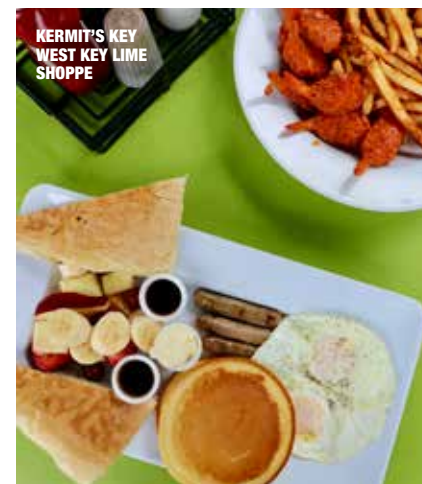
First Flight is located in the heart of downtown Key West. It's well known for being the birthplace of Pan American World Airways since the structure now located at 301 Whitehead Street was the place where Pan Am's first tickets were sold in 1927. A whole fried yellow snapper is a yummy way to enjoy this popular local fish.

dream

ISLANDER RESORT (ISLANORADA)

This charming cottage-style resort is on the waterfront but an easy walk to several local restaurants and bars scattered around the area. Water sports, pools, a hot tub, outdoor games and even a splash pad will ensure you have as much activity and action as you like. You can also watch the perfect sunrise over the water in a lounge chair or hammock just outside your door. The beachside bar makes a mean piña colada, and the restaurant on-site, Elements Lounge, grows fruits and herbs that you will find in your meals for a fresh touch.

Be sure to borrow one of the resort's free bikes to explore the area around the hotel.



KERMIT'S KEY WEST KEY LIME SHOPPE



THE FISH HOUSE

THE PERRY HOTEL KEY WEST (STOCK ISLAND NEXT TO KEY WEST)

Inspired by the industrial nature from which Stock Island has developed, the harborside hotel offers a lively yet secluded spot to kick back. Walk around the marina, where you can ogle the boats, then check out the boutique hotel's pool overlooking the waterfront. Two "boat-to-table" seafood-driven restaurants — Matt's Stock Island Kitchen & Bar and the Salty Oyster Bar & Grill — offer classic Key West comfort food with innovative twists.



KEY IN MIND

IF YOU WANT TO EXPLORE ALL THE KEYS HAVE TO OFFER, FLY INTO MIAMI AND OUT OF KEY WEST. YOU CAN EAT, SIGHTSEE AND STAY ALONG THE WAY TO EXPERIENCE ALL THAT ISLAND HOPPING HAS TO OFFER WITHOUT HAVING TO BACKTRACK.

NO NEED FOR A CAR ONCE YOU GET NEAR KEY WEST. PARKING CAN BE LIMITED, AND BIKES OR SCOOTERS WILL MAKE YOU FIT IN WITH THE LOCALS (HOTEL SHUTTLES CAN FILL IN THE REST).

IF YOU COME WITH A SENSE OF ADVENTURE AND LIKE TO TRY NEW THINGS, THERE IS A NEVER-ENDING LIST OF OPTIONS, BUT IF YOU WANT TO RELAX IN A HAMMOCK, YOU CAN DO SO WHILE TAKING IN INCREDIBLE SUNRISES AND SUNSETS SINCE THE ISLANDS HAVE WATER VIEWS FOR BOTH.



drink

FLORIDA KEYS BREWING CO. (ISLAMORADA)

Taste an impressive variety of creative beer — brewed with local flavors such as key lime, citrus, hibiscus and honey — while you kick back in the lively, colorfully decorated beer garden. Try a tasting flight so you can experience the array of brews, many only available at this craft brewery.

do

WAKEBOARD AT THE LAGOON ON GRASSY KEY (MARATHON)

Adventure lovers can experience the Lagoon on Grassy Key, a 50-acre action-sports eco-park, home to Keys Cable Park, Bongos Botanical Beer Garden and the Lagoon Saloon. Book an hour at the Keys Cable Park to try wakeboarding on the cable system. Newbies at wakeboarding can learn quickly with the experienced guides, and the adventurous can hit the jump. After you have worked up an appetite, enjoy a local beer on tap and some tacos or a salad at Bongos, where much of the meal is grown in the garden on-site.

WALK THE OLD SEVEN MILE BRIDGE (MARATHON)

Walk, cycle or roller-skate at sunrise or sunset along the 2.2-mile section of the famed Old Seven Mile Bridge that parallels the Florida Keys Overseas Highway in the Middle Keys.

Make a pit stop afterward at No Name Pub for a local beer and smoked tuna dip, and on the way, be sure to look out for the miniature deer that inhabit the area.



THE LAGOON ON GRASSY KEY



BONGOS

We learned why there are so many "gypsy chickens" roaming the island (when cock fighting was outlawed, they were all set free), and why so many porch ceilings are painted blue (originally it was to keep the spirits out, but it has the added advantage of repelling insects).



THE PERRY HOTEL
KEY WEST

TAKE A SOUTHERNMOST FOOD TASTING & CULTURAL WALKING TOUR (KEY WEST)

This guided, three-hour walking tour visits six local-owned establishments in historic Old Town. Food tastings showcase ethnic eateries (Cuban and Caribbean) and specialty shops that are unique to the Florida Keys. Between tastings, your local guide will share knowledge and recommendations of architectural gems, tropical flora and some history.

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SUNSET SAIL WITH FURY WATER ADVENTURES (KEY WEST)

Choose from a glass-bottom boat, a peaceful Champagne cruise or "commotion on the ocean," which features a live band. All sunset tours include drinks and unobstructed views of the sun setting over the water.

DIP AND SIP WITH SUNSET WATERSPORTS (KEY WEST)

Sail out to the world's third-largest reef and explore the colorful fish in clear water just four miles offshore. On the way back you can sip on a selection of drinks. Don't miss the Hurricanes!

THE KEY WEST BUTTERFLY & NATURE CONSERVATORY (KEY WEST)

Discover an impressive collection of flowering plants, colorful birds, trees and cascading waterfalls. In the learning center, explore butterfly anatomy and physiology, life cycles, feeding, and the migratory world.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY HOME AND MUSEUM (KEY WEST)

Ernest Hemingway lived and wrote in Key West for nearly 10 years. Step back in time and visit the rooms and gardens where the Nobel Prize winner spent the most prolific period of his writing career.



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