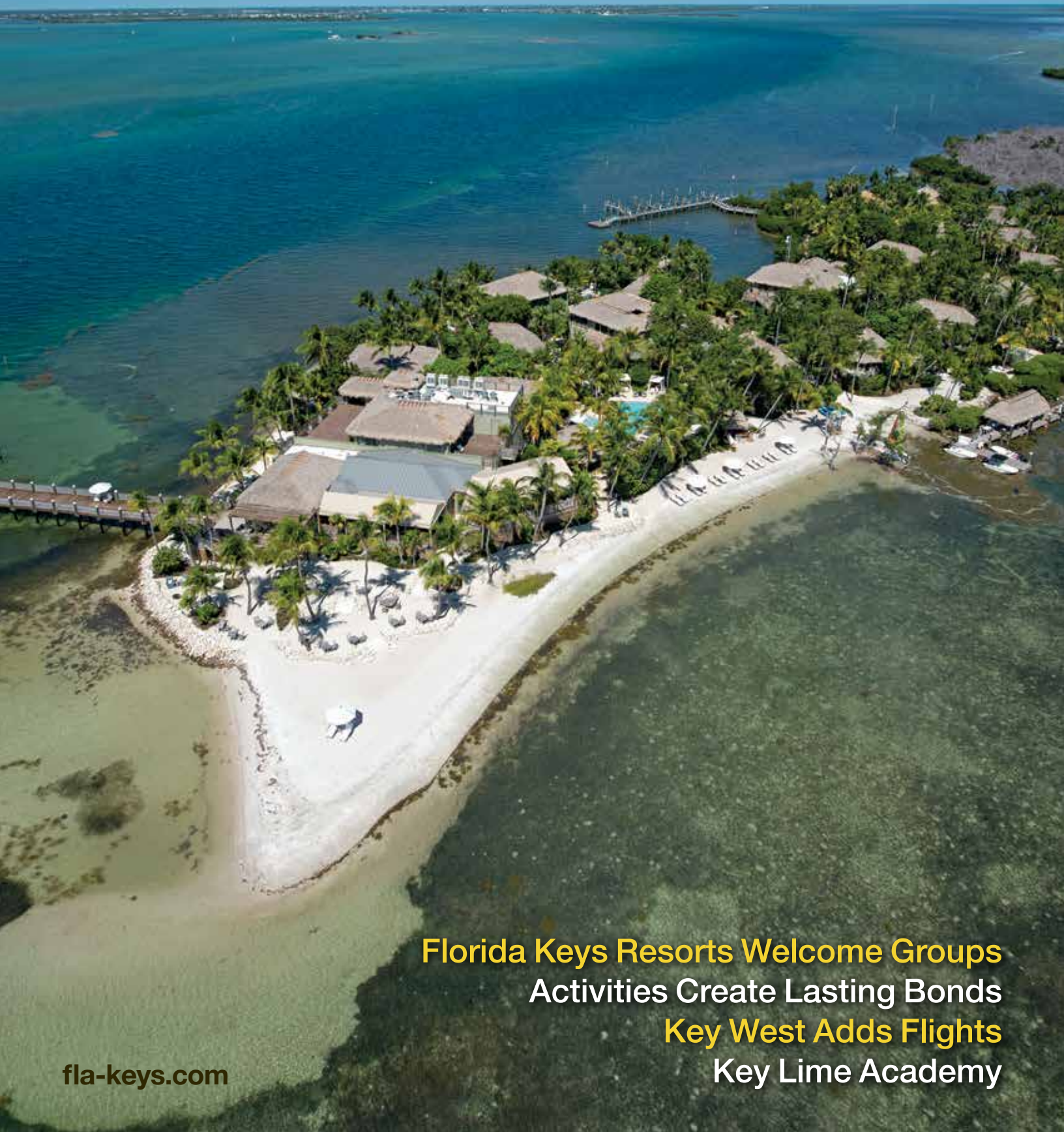


Keys Traveler

MEETINGS + INCENTIVES



Florida Keys Resorts Welcome Groups
Activities Create Lasting Bonds
Key West Adds Flights
Key Lime Academy

fla-keys.com



Florida Keys resorts welcome groups with expanded offerings

Marathon's Isla Bella Beach Resort has more than 20,000 square feet of function space.

Meetings are coming back to the Florida Keys & Key West. The 125-mile-long island chain offers endless outdoor spaces with blue-water activities, seamlessly blending unconventional ways to reconnect with colleagues and friends.

“Our wide-open spaces, with many of them scenic waterfront settings, offer a unique advantage for all types of activities,” said Jack Meier,

group sales manager for the Keys’ tourism council.

“Memorable outdoor settings, with nature as our nurturing and renewing backdrop, help to create unforgettable Keys meetings,” Meier added.

Many Keys resorts offer scenic settings for meetings, typically with 15 to 100 attendees, throughout the island destination.

In northern Key Largo, the private 165-room Ocean Reef Club has a renovated lobby and 30,000 square feet of meeting space including a 7,500-square-foot ballroom and a cooking school.

meetingsatocceanreef.com
Playa Largo Resort & Spa, an Autograph Collection Hotel in Key Largo, offers 40,000 square feet of flexible space for six to 300, including an 8,600-square-foot outdoor event lawn. On-site multibedroom residences, ideal for small corporate

retreats, have private outdoor pools and patios. Groups can enjoy Moroccan-style beach and toes-in-the-ocean dinners. playalargo.com

The 15-acre Baker’s Cay Resort Key Largo, a Curio Collection by Hilton, has 200 pet-friendly rooms and suites, 15,000 square feet of indoor space with two panoramic waterfront ballrooms and 12,000 square feet of outdoor space for team-building adventures and watersports.

bakerscayresort.com
The 214-room, 27-acre ocean-front Cheeca Lodge & Spa in Islamorada, enhanced with a third pool and second open-air Tiki bar, has acquired The Casitas villas at Cheeca Lodge, with butler service, access to resort amenities and one- and two-bedroom units from 750 to 2,100 square feet. Ten villas have large furnished porches and full kitchens. The resort has 4,600 square feet of space, with six venues for up to 110 participants. cheeca.com

The luxury 7.1-acre 30-unit Islands of Islamorada, with vacation rental



Jack Meier

Keys Traveler

Meetings + Incentives

Editor

Andy Newman

Managing Editor

Carol Shaughnessy

Senior Writer

Laura Myers

Copy Editor

Buck Banks

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Cover photo of Little Palm Island Resort & Spa in the Lower Keys by Andy Newman

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villas and oceanfront suite hotel, has 22 three-story waterfront villas, each with four bedrooms, full kitchen and outdoor recreation space for eight to 10 guests. The Ocean House has eight one-bedroom suites. Amenities include oceanfront event spaces, watersports and an on-site concierge. Minimum three-night stays are required. theislandsofislamorada.com

Marathon's 125-unit Faro Blanco Resort, with a historic 1950s lighthouse, is planning an expanded waterpark-pool area with Tiki bar and cabanas. Its adjoining 74-slip marina was acquired by Suntex Marinas of Dallas. faroblancoresort.com

Marathon's newest large resort, the 24-acre, 199-unit Isla Bella Beach Resort, has more than 20,000 square feet of function space, including a 3,800-square-foot Hibiscus Event Center and 16,000 square feet of outdoor space. There's a marina, a 4,000-square-foot spa, five pools and three food and beverage venues. islabellabeachresort.com

The 20-acre Oceans Edge Key West Hotel & Marina, located on Stock Island, has 175 suites and rooms ranging from 382 to 575 square feet. Outdoor event space overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and marina can accommodate up to 100 people. oceansedgekeywest.com

The 219-room Kimpton Key West collection's Ridley House, with 23 king rooms including two suites at 601 Caroline St., and Ella's Cottages, with 22 rooms at 811 Simon St., are ideal for group buyouts. Kimpton's three other boutique properties are the 45-unit Lighthouse Hotel with a historic backdrop for a welcome party, the 44-room Fitch Lodge and the 85-room Winslow's Bungalows. kimptonkeywest.com

The 222-room Marriott Key West Beachside, with 129 one-, two- and three-bedroom suites, offers Key West's largest ballroom at 5,673 square feet, in-house audiovisual



Marathon's Faro Blanco Resort features an iconic lighthouse.

equipment and an outdoor event patio for 140. With 10,000 square feet of meeting space, Beachside incorporates seven breakout rooms. There's also a 16-slip dock and pier. keywestmarriott.com

The legendary 311-room Casa Marina Key West, A Waldorf Astoria Resort, has more than 11,000 square feet of event space including the 3,080-square-foot historic Flagler's Ballroom. Casa Marina boasts one of the island's largest meeting spaces. casamarinaresort.com

The 150-room The Reach Key West, Curio Collection by Hilton, has 18,000 square feet of outdoor and 4,000 square feet of indoor event space. Oceanfront venues include a gazebo jutting over the Atlantic Ocean and the 3,024-square-foot Palms Lawn. reachresort.com

The rebranded 178-room waterfront Opal Key Resort & Marina, part of the Opal Collection Hotels & Resorts and formerly the Margaritaville Key West Resort & Marina, is in downtown Key West near the famed Mallory Square. With 6,000 square feet of indoor and 10,000 square feet of outdoor function space, it's home to a full-service 37-slip marina with watersports. opalkeywest.com

Barbary Beach House Key West is rebranded as the 186-unit, three-story Margaritaville Beach House Key West. The pet- and family-friendly property, located across from Smathers Beach, includes the Tin Cup Chalice & Chill restaurant, new bar concepts and expanded retail space as Key West's only Margaritaville resort. MargaritavilleBeachHouseKeyWest.com



The Marriott Key West Beachside features waterfront and inside event venues.

Island style:



ANDY NEWMAN

Luxury villas, private spaces

By Laura Myers

Three luxury Keys resorts — Hawks Cay Resort on Duck Key, Little Palm Island Resort & Spa off Little Torch Key and Sunset Key Cottages off Key West — offer villa-style accommodations with island-style, wide-open spaces and privacy for groups.

In the Middle Keys, Hawks Cay Resort has 48,760 square feet of indoor and outdoor meeting and banquet space, including multiple outdoor venues for group experiences such as fishing, diving, kayaking and interacting with dolphins. The 60-acre property, promoted as the most expansive resort in the Keys, features two ballrooms and opportunities for events such as team building activities, receptions and pool

parties. The Preferred Hotel Group Lifestyle Collection and AAA Four Diamond Award-rated resort offers 177 hotel guest rooms and 250 two- and three-bedroom townhome-style villas. Six dining outlets include the casual waterfront restaurant Angler and Ale, the fine-dining chop house Sixty-One Prime and Hawks Cay Marketplace. hawkscayresort.com

In the Lower Keys, the ultraluxe Little Palm Island Resort & Spa is located on a secluded private island off Little Torch Key. The exclusive adults-only property offers 2,480 total square feet of oceanview meeting and event space including the 1,080-square-foot Sunset Terrace, 450-square-foot Sunrise Terrace and 950-square-foot Great Room. Venues can be one space or separate. Visitors can arrive by seaplane or the resort's private boat, The Truman. littlepalmisland.com

On the island of Sunset Key, located just 500 yards off Key West, Sunset Key Cottages offers 40 Key West-style individual two-,



ROB O'NEAL

Little Palm Island Resort & Spa is located off Little Torch Key.

three- and four-bedroom cottages, accessible by 24-hour ferry service — a seven-minute cruise — from the dock at sister resort Opal Key Resort & Marina. Guests receive a complimentary breakfast basket with fresh muffins and bakery goodies and are invited to participate in “Up Spirits” daily from 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. for a complimentary white or golden rum. In addition, a “conch cruiser” delivers daily ice cream at 3 p.m.

Meetings can utilize space at Opal Key, with 6,000 square feet of indoor and about 10,000 feet of outdoor function space.

Latitudes Restaurant at Sunset Key offers both al fresco beachfront and indoor dining overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. Groups are bookings of five or more cottages. sunsetkeycottages.com

HAWKS CAY RESORT



Covering 60 acres on Duck Key, Hawks Cay Resort is marketed as the most expansive resort in the Keys.

Only in the Keys:

Activities create lasting bonds

Seeking unique Florida Keys group activities that help forge company bonding and meaningful connections to a memorable island destination? Bucket-list adventures are what the Keys are all about.

A fishing charter, for example, in waters off the Keys is an adventure made especially memorable by targeting species such as sailfish, tarpon or yellowtail snapper.

A group hunt for the best Key lime pie is sure to satisfy all taste buds. Nearly every Keys dining venue serves a creative version of this rich signature dessert.

For active groups, cycling on land and water, paddleboarding, swimming with dolphins and colorful Keys marine life, building giant sand sculptures and other experiential activities can be booked around the Keys.

Key Largo Bike and Adventure Tours has a variety of cycling tours including a Bike and Beer tour with a trek from Tavernier to Islamorada, stops for beer and a van ride back. In Islamorada, another tour visits historic venues, locations from the hit Netflix drama "Bloodline," a Tiki bar and popular craft breweries. keylargobike.com

Serenity Eco Therapy, based in Key Largo and offered throughout the Keys, combines gentle meditation, yoga and Pilates with a guided paddle in a kayak or on a stand-up paddleboard. A 2.5-hour tour promotes well-being. serenityecotherapy.squarespace.com

At Marathon's Dolphin Research Center, programs include the Researcher Experience that lets up to four participants spend four hours with researchers observing sea lions and dolphins, assist with data research and enjoy a Dolphin Encounter swim. Small groups also can

enjoy the Ultimate Trainer for the Day Experience, a full day of interactive adventures. The center is accredited by the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks & Aquariums. dolphins.org

At Florida Keys Aquarium Encounters in Marathon, groups can swim with and feed fish while learning about Keys marine ecosystems. There are four touch tanks and public feedings daily. Private tours and events can be reserved. floridakeysaquariumencounters.com

Crafting sand sculptures in Key West at the Casa Marina or The Reach is a way to build competitive team spirit or bonding. Just Sand and Water offers beach workshops for six to 150 participants. justsandandwater.com

Key West Hydrobikes offers hourly rentals and tours on pedal-powered nonmotorized water bikes. Participants can cycle Key West Harbor to the back side of Wisteria Island. Average cruising speed is about 5 mph. Tours depart from Lagerheads at 0 Simonton St. keywesthydrobikes.com

Key Lime Academy: *Built for travel pros*

An online training program provides travel advisors, tour operators and meeting planners with a self-paced, informative and fun video series to help sell the Florida Keys & Key West.

The Key Lime Academy platform uses seven video-driven modules to educate participants about the island chain's five regions: Key Largo, Islamorada, Marathon, the Lower Keys and Key West. Each module includes an eight- to 10-question quiz in multiple-choice format.

Completion takes about 30 minutes, to be finished during a single or separate learning sessions. After participants finalize the modules with a score of at least 80% on quizzes, a graduation certificate is awarded via email.

Key Lime Academy, featuring 11 themed itineraries, can be found at fla-keys.com/keylimeacademy.

SERENITY ECO THERAPY



Serenity Eco Therapy offers meditation and yoga on a paddleboard.



ANDY NEWMAN

Florida Keys seafood, shown at the Hogfish restaurant, includes stone crab claws, Key West shrimp, snapper and spiny lobster.

Keys feature fresh indigenous seafood

The Florida Keys offer both casually funky and sophisticated dining for groups. Menus are often highlighted by delectable seafood freshly caught from the Atlantic Ocean or scooped from Florida Bay or the Gulf of Mexico.

For example, an event's menu might include yellowtail or mutton snapper, hogfish, grouper or mahi-mahi.

Meeting participants can enjoy a team-building catch-and-cook fishing event, with freshly caught fish served grilled, broiled, blackened, baked or fried.

Keys chefs are known for artfully creative preparations that blend indigenous seafood with local subtropical ingredients. Keys cuisine may be enhanced with lime, mango, avocado, papaya and coconut, while fish gracing

a table was likely caught just hours earlier.

Companies booking a Keys meeting or retreat are likely to focus on social responsibility and sustainability.

Sweet stone crab claws, served with drawn butter or chilled with mustard sauce, are a renewable resource. Fishermen harvest only the claws, returning crabs to the sea where the claws regenerate.

Key West pink shrimp — light, flavorful and generally sweeter than other crustaceans — are bountiful.

Spiny clawless Florida lobsters, served steamed or broiled with drawn butter, are another favorite.

And for dessert, no Florida Keys meal is complete without the island chain's renowned signature Key lime pie, made with the juice of tiny Key limes.

Hemingway experiences complement meetings

Author Ernest Hemingway, one of the Florida Keys' most famous residents, lived and wrote in Key West for most of the 1930s. During his Key West years, he penned literary classics including "To Have and Have Not."

Today, meeting participants and visitors can experience his enduring mystique through unique Hemingway-themed experiences.

Key West's 8,200-square-foot Hemingway Rum Co.

Distillery at 201 Simonton St. has a 2,400-square-foot events center.

"Papa's Cocktail Classes" with a tour, tasting, mixology class and souvenir cocktail glass, can be booked for a maximum of 10 people Tuesday through Sunday evenings. papasplar.com

The Lighthouse Hotel, a Kimpton Key West property across from the Ernest Hemingway Home & Museum, offers "A Hemingway Affair" for private parties of up to 10.

The Hemingway Suite, with a view of the author's former home, can be reserved for a custom culinary experience. kimptonkeywest.com

Key West Food Tours offers a private "Hemingway-themed" Southernmost Food Tasting and Cultural Walking Tour on request for groups of eight to 16. The three-hour walking tour includes a stop at the Hemingway Home & Museum and tasty samplings of Caribbean and Cuban fare. keywestfoodtours.com

Nonstop flights offer easy access to the Keys

Six airlines — American, Delta, JetBlue, Silver, United and Allegiant — operate more than 20 nonstop routes into Key West International Airport (EYW) from cities throughout the United States. The nonstop flights provide convenient access to the Florida Keys for business travelers.

“It’s very exciting to see this much demand for convenient travel to the wonderful destination of the Florida Keys and Key West,” said Richard Strickland, director of airports for the Florida Keys’ Monroe County.

American Airlines currently offers nonstop service from Miami (MIA), Philadelphia (PHL), Charlotte (CLT), Dallas (DFW), Chicago (ORD), New York City (LGA) and Washington, D.C. (DCA).

Delta Airlines provides nonstop flights from Atlanta (ATL) and LGA.

United Airlines currently provides

nonstop flights from Houston (IAH), Newark (EWR), Washington-Dulles (IAD) and ORD.

JetBlue Airways offers nonstop service from Boston (BOS) and New York City (JFK).

Silver Airways offers nonstop service from Florida’s Fort Lauderdale (FLL), Orlando (MCO) and Tampa (TPA).

Allegiant Air is scheduled to add service from Indianapolis (IND), Florida’s St. Petersburg (PIE) and North Carolina’s Asheville (AVL) in late 2021 and currently provides nonstop service from Nashville (BNA), Florida’s Sanford (SFB) and Cincinnati (CVG).

In addition, clients traveling on private jets can fly into Key West International Airport or Florida Keys Marathon International Airport in the Middle Keys.

To accommodate increased demand, Key West airport is set

to add a new \$80 million terminal targeted for completion in October 2024, with a new concourse to include enhanced security, concessions and baggage claim areas; a spacious departure area; and seven glass-enclosed jet bridges that connect planes to the facility. Groundbreaking is scheduled in 2022. eyw.com

Middle Keys airport offers general aviation facilities

Florida Keys Marathon International Airport offers two fixed-base operators for private and charter aircraft.

Marathon Jet Center supports jets and Marathon General Aviation is a separate facility designed for piston-powered planes.

The airport has a 5,008-foot runway with overruns. marathonjetcenter.com marathonga.com

KEY WEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT



An artist's rendering shows the concept for a new \$80 million expansion to be constructed at Key West International Airport.

Traveling Tips to the Florida Keys



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@flkeyskeywest



FloridaKeysTV



keysvoices.com

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 (State Road 91) 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	58	93	1
Fort Myers	200	320	4
Tampa	300	480	6
Orlando	280	450	5.75
Jacksonville	490	780	10

Distance from Miami

REGION	MILES	KM	MILE MARKER
Key Largo	58	93	108-90
Islamorada	76	122	90-63
Marathon	111	178	63-40
Lower Keys	135	217	40-4
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

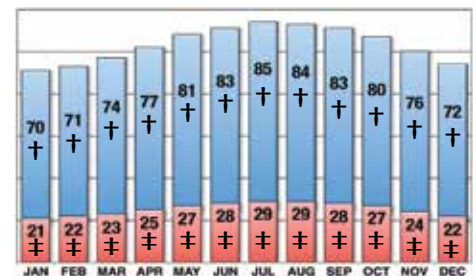
Weather/Climature

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 summer's peak, 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 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 past 30-year monthly air temperatures from the Key West weather office. Temperatures in blue shades are † Fahrenheit and those in red are Celsius. ‡



Help and More Information

If you're traveling in the Keys and need any help, call the toll-free visitor assistance line at 800-771-KEYS. It's staffed 24 hours a day.

To contact visitor offices throughout the Florida Keys, call 800-FLA-KEYS, weekdays during normal business hours. The Florida Keys fact-filled website is at fla-keys.com.



Keys Info