

10 Best Resorts in the Florida Keys



By [Cynthia J Drake](#) | July 20, 2022



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CREDIT: DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN

Life in the Florida Keys has long captured the hearts of travelers. Novelist Ernest Hemingway, rhapsodizing about the flowers, tamarind trees, guava trees, and coconut palms of his adoptive home of Key West, once called this destination "the best place I've ever been anytime, anywhere."

Forming the southernmost portion of the continental U.S., the Keys comprise five principal island stops: Key Largo, Islamorada, Marathon, Big Pine Key and the Lower Keys, and Key West,

all accessible by bridge via U.S. Route 1 from Miami.

Each of the Florida Keys draws devoted fans with its own unique flavors and hospitality. Here are some resorts that make ideal home bases from which to explore the Keys and find your own favorites.

1 of 10

Reefhouse Resort & Marina, Key Largo

Guests staying at [Reefhouse Resort](#) on Key Largo enjoy sunset views while staying on the 17-acre oceanfront property. Amenities include a spacious pool and hot tubs, a full-service spa, casual dining at Gus' Grill and drinks at Breezer's Tiki Bar (both offering waterfront views), plus an on-site marina and dive shop offering excursions to swim with dolphins, deep-sea fishing,

snorkeling, diving, or paddleboarding. This resort is also pet-friendly, and the concierge is happy to recommend area pet-friendly dining spots for those traveling with pups.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF REEFHOUSE RESORT & MARINA, KEY LARGO

Hawks Cay, Duck Key

Located in Florida's Middle Keys, the small island of Duck Key charms visitors with its Caribbean-style architecture and natural surroundings. [Hawks Cay](#) offers private tropical villas with full kitchens and private lanais overlooking the lagoon or the ocean or more traditional resort rooms.

Enjoy treatments at the on-site spa customized to your stay here (there's even a skin rescue treatment to help soothe sunburned skin) or take an oceanside yoga or pickleball class. The resort has two main restaurants, [Sixty-One Prime](#) and [Angler & Ale](#) (offering a hook-and-cook option for anglers to enjoy their fresh catches), a [Hawks Cay Marketplace](#) for grab-and-go meals, boxed lunch options, and even grocery delivery. For families, kids' activities and educational programming are also available.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF HAWKS CAY, DUCK KEY

Margaritaville Beach House Key West, Key West

Rumoredly inspired by the rise of tourism in 1970s Key West, Jimmy Buffett's "Margaritaville" has become a classic anthem for those who prefer a shortened to-do list to the hustle and bustle of daily life (Priority No. 1: find that salt shaker). Experience the world of wasting away and your own slice of paradise here at

[Margaritaville Beach House](#), which was renovated and rebranded in late 2021, and guest rooms feature subtle homages to Buffet and that quintessential Key West experience. Resort activities include rum tastings, weekly sip and paint classes for adults, and nightly s'mores by the campfire, and an on-site restaurant, [Tin Cup Chalice Bar & Chill](#), serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, including rum runners.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF MARGARITAVILLE KEY WEST

3 of 10 | [View All](#)

[NEXT SLIDE](#) →

Parrot Key Hotel & Villas, Key West

Guest rooms with simple, clean design put the focus on the blue ocean sparkling right outside the window here at [Parrot Key](#), featuring private guest balconies, hammocks and lush foliage throughout the five-acre property—a restful escape from the Key West reverie. The on-site restaurant, [The Grove Kitchen & Bar](#), offers happy hour, plus island cuisine such as ceviche, breakfast tacos, and mimosas. Free shuttles are available to Duval Street and Smathers Beach. You'll have your pick of four pools, including a family pool and one just for adults. There are also daily dolphin tours on a two-decker catamaran to experience a signature Florida Keys adventure.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF PARROT KEY

4 of 10 | [View All](#)

[NEXT SLIDE](#) →

Baker's Cay Resort, Key Largo

With breathtaking architectural details, this southern [Key Largo resort](#) that was once a pineapple plantation provides a visual treat as well as a respite for your Florida Keys getaway. The resort was fully renovated in 2019 and emphasizes reusing and recycling efforts as part of its eco-friendly mission. Guests can enjoy two waterfall pools, and included in the resort fee are use of beach chairs, umbrellas, and hammocks, bicycles, and fishing equipment (including bait). There are two on-site restaurants: Calusa for a Creole-Caribbean menu and Dry Rocks cove bar for live music, fire pits, and beach dining.

5 of 10 | [View All](#)

[NEXT SLIDE](#) →



CREDIT: COURTESY OF BAKER'S CAY RESORT

Marlin Bay Resort & Marina, Marathon Key

Enjoy the comforts of a luxurious three- or four-bedroom vacation home rental at [Marlin Bay](#), which combines resort amenities with seclusion. Some of the homes include your own private plunge pool or rooftop deck overlooking the ocean. The resort offers a heated outdoor pool and hot tub, kayak and paddleboard rentals, outdoor fish cleaning stations to prepare your fresh catch for dinner, plus a game room stocked with ping pong, foosball, and outdoor pool tables.

6 of 10 | [View All](#)

[NEXT SLIDE](#) →



CREDIT: COURTESY OF MARLIN BAY RESORT & MARINA

Little Palm Island Resort & Spa, Little Torch Key

Billed as "America's only private island resort," [Little Palm Island](#) is an adults-only resort situated on four acres that is only accessible by seaplane or via the resort's boat. The emphasis is on unplugging from TVs and phones and relaxing and reconnecting. With a maximum of 60 guests, this exclusive resort offers private luxury bungalow suites designed in a West Indian motif, some appointed with outdoor copper tubs, indoor/outdoor showers, private decks, vaulted ceilings, and beautiful ocean views. The Dining Room serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, or arrange for a romantic oceanfront dinner on the beach. The spa offers an array of massage treatments using macadamia oil infused with organic vanilla.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF LITTLE PALM ISLAND RESORT & SPA

7 of 10 | [View All](#)

[NEXT SLIDE](#) →

Islander Resort, Islamorada

Located on 24 acres of oceanfront property on Islamorada, [Islander Resort](#) features a coral sand beach, saltwater and freshwater pools, and private cabanas. Bonus: it's also pet friendly. Included with your resort fee is daily bicycle, kayak, and paddleboard rental, as well as pier fishing. The resort offers complimentary transportation to local destinations and attractions. There is also a butterfly garden and local history museum located on site, the Florida Keys History & Discovery Center.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF ISLANDER RESORT

8 of 10 [View All](#)

[NEXT SLIDE](#) →

Isla Bella Beach Resort, Marathon Key

Located on a mile of sandy beachfront property on Marathon Key, rooms at [Isla Bella](#) include one- and two-bedroom guest rooms and suites, decorated with crisp white linens and royal blue tropical tile accents. Choose from five oceanfront pools, a marina where you can charter fishing trips or other water tours and activities, and an on-site spa and fitness center. Mahina is the on-site restaurant that serves Polynesian-inspired cuisine, from conch chowder to Huli-Huli chicken flatbread to lobster-crusted Mahi-Mahi. There's a more casual, grab-and-go style Marketplace Cafe, as well.



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9 of 10 [View All](#)

[NEXT SLIDE](#) →

10 of 10

Cheeca Lodge & Spa, Islamorada

With new oceanfront suites planned for fall 2022, [Cheeca Lodge & Spa](#) captures the beauty of Keys living in Islamorada. Choose from suites with a variety of views (resort, lagoon, and oceanfront) as well as private one- and two-bedroom casitas. Camp Cheeca for kids 5 to 12, offers full and half-day organized activities, from scavenger hunts, fishing, and coconut bowling. Explore Cheeca's three restaurants depending on what you crave: Atlantic's Edge for seafood; Mia Cucina for Italian; and Nikai Sushi Bar & Restaurant for Asian-inspired favorites. Try sunrise yoga, water activities and dolphin excursions or treat yourself to a treatment at the spa, such as the three-algae facial.



CREDIT: COURTESY OF CHEECA LODGE