
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Overview

Introduction

Getting around Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is half the fun on a vacation: One of Fort Lauderdale's main draws is a river (the New River, to be specific), so visitors to Fort Lauderdale can hop on a water taxi and take in the sights.



This South Florida city's extensive system of waterways and reputation for gracious living have made Fort Lauderdale one of the country's largest yachting centers. Fort Lauderdale restaurants and bars overlook the canals and are accessible by water or from land by taxis and, believe it or not, from rickshaws. Several of Fort Lauderdale's special events—including a winter holiday boat parade that draws local, national and international celebrities—revolve around boating and the water.

Redevelopment in the 1990s left Fort Lauderdale awash in museums, art galleries, restaurants, hotels and chic sidewalk cafes, all appealing to visitors. The Broward Center for the Performing Arts houses two theaters, which provide separate venues for the Symphony of the Americas, Florida Grand Opera, Miami City Ballet, Broadway road shows and top-name performers. An elegant beachfront promenade attracts upscale vacationers from all over the world, including the spring-break college crowd. Fort Lauderdale was popularized by and is still often remembered for the 1960s beach movie *Where the Boys Are*.

More sedate than it used to be (but livelier than Palm Beach, its northern neighbor), Fort Lauderdale has more to offer visitors than most beach towns. The passage of a casino gambling law revitalized this resort town, and the former Hollywood Dog Racing Track, Isle Casino Pompano Park and Gulfstream Race Track have built multimillion-dollar casinos and entertainment venues attracting more tourists and businesses to the area.

Fort Lauderdale is also gay-friendly, with more than 150 gay-owned businesses in the city. Wilton Manors, a suburb of Fort Lauderdale, is the hub of activity for the gay community. There are several gay bars and restaurants in that area.

Highlights

Sights—Las Olas Boulevard, with its designer shops, cafes and beautiful people; Stranahan House and Bonnet House, historic, art-filled estates; Everglades National Park; a sunrise over palm-fringed beaches.

Museums—The major collection of CoBrA artwork at the NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale; African-American Research Library and Cultural Center; the International Swimming Hall of Fame Museum; the International Game Fish Association Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum; the Museum of Discovery and Science; the Young at Art Children's Museum.

Memorable Meals—Waterfront dining at Kaluz and Blue Moon Fish Company; imaginative "Floribbean" cuisine at Cafe Maxx and 3030 Ocean; great steaks at Shula's on the Beach; gourmet vegetarian fare at Sublime.

Late Night—The lively beachfront Elbo Room; a colorful cocktail at Blue Martini; the popular Bahia Cabana Bar, with its nightly music and view of the yacht harbor; people-watching at Shooters; no-cover Saturday nights at Chase; the Seminole Paradise and Hard Rock complex of restaurants, nightlife and casino.

Walks—The Broadwalk at Hollywood Beach, filled with characters, cafes and shops; beautiful Fort Lauderdale Beach; quiet nature trails through Hugh Taylor Birch State Park, Anne Kolb Nature Center at West Lake Park or John U. Lloyd State Park; the Riverwalk, a promenade that meanders past some of the city's earliest buildings and along the New River; a sea turtle walk.

Especially for Kids—Free-flying aviaries at Butterfly World; Discovery Center at the Museum of Discovery and Science; Young at Art Children's Museum in Davie; the former pioneer homestead Tradewinds Park; airboat tours at Everglades Holiday Park; Splash Adventure at Quiet Waters Park; Boomers Amusement Park.

Geography

Fort Lauderdale sits in the middle of the burgeoning megalopolis known as South Florida, which hugs the Atlantic coast from Miami (a 40-minute drive south) to Palm Beach (a 45-minute drive north). It is the principal city in huge Broward County, two-thirds of which is Everglades swampland. What isn't swampy includes 23 mi/37 km of wide white-sand beaches and 30 other municipalities.

Several nearby coastal communities make up Greater Fort Lauderdale. To the north are Pompano Beach (where sportfishing is a favored pastime), Lauderdale-by-the-Sea (a small seaside oasis) and Deerfield Beach (one of South Florida's best-kept secrets).

To the south are Port Everglades (the country's third-busiest port, frequented by top cruise lines), Dania Beach (known for its antiques), Hallandale Beach (a seaside community popular with retirees, younger folks and Eastern European immigrants) and

Hollywood (its bicycle-, skateboard- and pedestrian-friendly Broadwalk parallels the ocean). Western suburbs include Davie, Plantation, Lauderhill, Sunrise and Weston.

If this sounds like a patchwork of towns, it is—making a car a necessity for almost any traveler.

History

South Florida was the ancestral home of the Seminoles and more than a dozen other Native American tribes, but that began to change in the 1830s when U.S. Army soldiers started clearing trails into the area. The city's namesake, Maj. William Lauderdale, built an outpost at the mouth of the New River. Around the same time, runaway slaves sought refuge in the Everglades, where they banded together with the Seminoles to battle white settlers.

It wasn't until the arrival of a railroad in the 1890s that the area began to grow significantly. Frank Stranahan, one of the city's founding fathers, migrated from Ohio in the early 1900s and established a trading post, ferry system and post office. (He eventually married a native Floridian named Ivy Cromartie, and their home—two stories of Florida vernacular architecture—is now a museum in the historic district downtown.)

Meanwhile Charles Rodes, an ambitious land developer from West Virginia, followed the lead of Venice, Italy, and increased the amount of waterfront property by dredging waterways through dense mangrove swamps, forming peninsulas and a network of canals that still exist.

Like other resort areas in Florida, Fort Lauderdale boomed following World War II. By the 1960s it was a famed spring-break destination, whose population of raucous partygoers peaked at 400,000 in 1985. Eventually the city government cracked down and forced the annual spring bacchanalia to go elsewhere. The city invested millions of dollars to clean up its crime-ridden quarters in the early 1990s, transforming Fort Lauderdale into a more refined, family-friendly destination known for tourism and business, though it still thrives on the seasonal college crowd.

Along with the rest of South Florida, Fort Lauderdale then experienced a real-estate boom, especially for condominiums. A younger crowd started to fill the city, lowering the age demographic and making the nightlife scene less stodgy and suburban.

The area's Latin community has also mushroomed in the past 20 years, many moving north from Miami to join a mixture of Spanish-speaking people in Broward County.

Port Information

Location

Port Everglades is a 2,190-acre/887-hectare seaport located within the cities of Hollywood, Fort Lauderdale and Dania Beach. Each year more than 4 million cruise passengers board more than 40 ships from 10 cruise lines at its 12 terminals, putting it among the world's busiest cruise-ship facilities. The city predicts 7 million cruise passengers yearly by 2020.

A highlight of Port Everglades Cruise Terminal 18 is the massive work of art that artist Michele Oka Doner created for the center of the entrance hall. Terminal 18 has several built-in features for waiting cruise passengers such as acoustic panels to keep sound levels down, plasma-screen TVs where passengers can watch news and sports, Wi-Fi and a children's play area.

The port, which is about 3 mi/5 km southeast of downtown Fort Lauderdale and even closer to the beaches, is at the southern end of the 17th Street Causeway. Port Everglades is less than 2 mi/3 km from the Fort Lauderdale Hollywood International Airport, but allow about an hour to make the transfer from the airport to the port. I-595 goes directly into Port Everglades.

In December 2014, the port's Cruise Terminal Four will reopen following a US\$24-million renovation that includes a high-efficiency air-conditioning system, 50 check-in counters, and two new loading bridges to speed passenger check-in.

Secured parking lots are adjacent to the port terminals (parking is US\$15 per day). Parking is available at both the Northport and Midport Parking Garages (2,500 spaces in each garage) and the 410-space surface parking lot between Terminals 18 and 19. Complimentary shuttle-bus service is provided between the garages and Cruise Terminals 18 and 29. Wheelchair-accessible parking is available.

Free Internet access is available at all cruise terminals. There is a cell phone lot where people can wait for passengers to give them a call when the ship is ready for disembarkation. Digital signage provides ship names and cruise terminals on a rotating basis, making it easier for passengers to locate their ship's terminal.

All cruise passengers departing from Port Everglades enter the port through a security checkpoint and must show a government-issued photo ID for all people in the vehicle, as well as travel documents for departing passengers. Additional information can be found in the Cruise Passenger Information Section at <http://www.porteverglades.net>.

A taxi ride to and from Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport costs about US\$25-\$30. This rate depends on the traffic to and from the port and airport. Limousine and van services are also available for parties of five or more. Most car rental firms are licensed to do business at Port Everglades, and when ships are in port, they may provide courtesy-shuttle service between the cruise terminals and their off-site locations. Confirm shuttle availability with your car rental company.

Fort Lauderdale Shuttle offers service to and from the airport to Port Everglades from US\$26 per person, or for groups of four from US\$11 per person. Phone 954-773-2794.

The Quay shopping center, which has shops and restaurants (including the popular Bimini Boatyard restaurant), is a short cab ride away. Visitor information is available at kiosks around the terminals.

Because of the growth of the cruising industry and Port Everglades, shopping centers now surround the port on 17th Street. The Harbor Shops, less than 1 mi/1.6 km away, includes a bank, as well as such stores as Bluewater Books and Charts, a bookstore focused on nautical books and charts; the Prissy Hen, a consignment shop; Ace Hardware; and Total Wine and More.

If you have time for lunch, try Chef's Palette Restaurant at the Art Institute of Fort Lauderdale. Its culinary students prepare delicious meals and serve them to patrons for bargain prices. You can sneak a peek of these future chefs at work through a wall of windows. The Art Institute is a short cab ride from the port. 1650 S.E. 17th St. Phone 954-760-7957.

Potpourri

The city of Fort Lauderdale, the self-proclaimed "Venice of America," has 165 mi/266 km of navigable waterways and a reported 40,000 boats, earning its title as "Yachting Capital of the World."

Fort Lauderdale has more than 85 public parks and beaches, including nearby Haulover Beach, one of the nation's largest and most popular naturist beaches.

Besides *Where the Boys Are*, other movies shot in Fort Lauderdale include *Cape Fear* with Robert DeNiro; *Married to the Mob*, starring Michelle Pfeiffer, who also did *Up Close and Personal* there; and *Porky's*. *In Her Shoes*, with Cameron Diaz and Shirley MacLaine, filmed in Deerfield Beach; and scenes from *The Hours*, with Julianne Moore, took place in nearby Hollywood.

The Seminole Indians have a reservation in the heart of Hollywood, but if you didn't know better you'd think you were in a typical suburb. For a glimpse into the more traditional lives of Seminoles, visit Big Cypress Reservation, about 45 mi/72 km west of Fort Lauderdale. There you'll hear the people speaking their native language and see gator wrestling and authentic palm-thatched *chickee* houses.

In the neighboring city of Vero Beach, skeletal remains as old as 10,000 years have been discovered. More recent history dating from the late 1890s suggests that renowned "barefoot mailmen" walked along the beach from Hypoluxo to Miami to deliver mail before there were roads in the area.

What's so new about the New River? Legend says it came into being overnight. Maps from the 1630s called it Rio Nuevo; the name stuck.

Fort Lauderdale is considered the westernmost point of the Bermuda Triangle.

Greater Fort Lauderdale has 40 choices for golf, including courses designed by Greg Norman, Raymond Floyd, Robert Trent Jones, and Tom and George Fazio.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Start your tour at the Riverwalk, a 2-mi/3-km promenade on the north bank of the New River. It borders the Arts and Entertainment District, a historic area with restaurants, bars, galleries, marinas and street life.

Las Olas Boulevard, which follows the New River as it flows toward the Atlantic Ocean, is Fort Lauderdale's upscale shopping and dining district. If you're a history buff, the restored Victorian home of city founder Frank Stranahan, now a museum, can easily be included in a boulevard stroll.

Getting around Fort Lauderdale is part of the sightseeing experience: Water taxis ferry passengers among hotels, restaurants, theaters and nightclubs until midnight. At night, the twinkling lights along the canals make the rides quite romantic.

Historic Sites

Bonnet House

900 N. Birch Road
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304

Phone: 954-563-5393

<http://www.bonnethouse.org>

One of the few remaining estates on the ocean, the Bonnet mansion was built in 1920 by wealthy Chicago painter Frederick Clay Bartlett, who filled it with unusual contemporary artwork. Monkeys swing from the banyan trees, swans swim circles in a pond, parrots chatter from the aviary, and orchids bloom throughout the grounds. Guided tours available.

Open October-August daily except Monday 9 am-4 pm. US\$20 adults, US\$18 seniors, US\$16 children, free for children younger than 6, US\$10 for the gardens only.

Stranahan House

335 S.E. Sixth Ave.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Phone: 954-524-4736

<http://stranahanhouse.org>

The oldest building in Fort Lauderdale and the former home of pioneer businessman and city founder Frank Stranahan, this riverside home remained the residence of

Stranahan's wife until her death in 1971. Local historians have restored the home to its original 1913 charm. One-hour tours are given every half hour.

Open daily 1-3 pm. River ghost tours Sunday at 7:30 pm. US\$12 adults, US\$7 children. River ghost tour US\$25 adults (includes house tour).

Museums

African-American Research Library and Cultural Center

2650 Sistrunk Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-357-6282

<http://www.broward.org/Library/LocationsHours/Branches/Pages/AA.aspx>

This place is equal parts museum and library, with a prominent African-American literary collection, a 5,000-sq-ft/465-sq-m art gallery, a business resource center and a 300-seat theater that hosts live performances, performance art exhibits, lectures and children's programs.

Monday and Wednesday noon-8 pm, Tuesday and Thursday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. Admission to the museum and library is free; performance fees vary.

Young at Art Children's Museum

751 S.W. 121st Ave.
Davie, FL

Phone: 954-424-0085

<http://www.youngatartmuseum.org>

Children can visit an African village, go on an archaeological dig in Israel, learn the ancient art of origami in a Japanese house, explore a Mayan pyramid and more—all in the Global Village exhibit. Other permanent exhibits include *Earthworks*, a hands-on activity that teaches children about recycling, and the surrealistic *Kenny Scharf's Closet*. The state-of-the-art, modern museum features a 55,000-sq-ft/5,110-sq-m facility built on 11 acres/4.5 hectares that includes a children's reading center run by the county library system.

Open Monday-Thursday 10 am-5 pm, Friday and Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11 am-6 pm. US\$13 adults, US\$12 children age 1 and older.

IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum

300 Gulf Stream Way (about 5 mi/8 km south of Fort Lauderdale)
Dania Beach, FL 33004

Phone: 954-922-4212

<http://www.igfa.org>

Run by the International Game Fish Association, this museum showcases the art and history of big-game fishing. Famous anglers, tackle and creatures of the deep are honored through exhibits and artifacts. Try the Catch Gallery for interactive, simulated

fishing: You'll never mistake it for the real thing, but you're guaranteed to hook something. There is a seafood restaurant adjacent and a sports-oriented shop on-site, as well.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. US\$10 adults, US\$5 children ages 3-16.

Museum of Discovery and Science

401 S.W. Second St.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33312

Phone: 954-467-6637

<http://www.mods.org>

This museum—one of the city's most striking attractions—appeals to adults and children alike. Among its outstanding exhibits are a simulated ride to the moon, a 52-ft-/16-m-tall gravity clock and a hands-on ecosystem exhibit with hundreds of plants and animals. There's also a five-story, 3-D IMAX theater and a children-only Discovery Center.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm. General admission US\$14 adults, US\$12 children ages 2-12.

NSU Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale

1 E. Las Olas Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Phone: 954-525-5500

<http://www.moafll.org>

Designed by noted museum architect Edward Larrabee Barnes, this museum houses one of the country's largest collections of postwar abstract artwork from the CoBrA (Copenhagen, Brussels, Amsterdam) movement. There also are notable works by impressionist William Glackens and Picasso ceramics, as well as a range of other 20th-century European and American art. It attracts major international exhibits.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-5 pm (till 7 pm Thursday), Sunday noon-5 pm. Exhibit admission fees are US\$14 adults, US\$7 children ages 5-17.

Parks & Gardens

Butterfly World

Tradewinds Park, 3600 W. Sample Road (about a 30-minute drive northwest of Fort Lauderdale)

Coconut Creek, FL 33073

Phone: 954-977-4400

<http://www.butterflyworld.com>

A world of natural pleasures, these screen-enclosed, walk-through aviaries contain 150 species of butterflies fluttering through a rain forest and the surrounding 3-acre/1.2-hectare Tradewinds Park. Aviaries for hummingbirds and lorikeets, too.

Open Monday-Saturday 9 am-5 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm. US\$26.95 adults, US\$21.95 children ages 3-11.

West Lake Park and Anne Kolb Nature Center and Marina

751 Sheridan St. (about a 20-minute drive south of Fort Lauderdale)
Hollywood, FL 33019

Phone: 954-357-5161

<http://www.broward.org/parks>

This tropical coastal ecosystem encompasses more than 1,500 acres/600 hectares of mangrove wetlands and forest habitat for ibis and heron. Named for a crusading environmentalist, the nature center is less than a mile/kilometer from the beach. You can climb a five-story observation tower and bicycle, hike, canoe or kayak through the wild. There's also a fishing pier on the Intracoastal Waterway.

Daily October-March 8 am-6 pm, April-September 8 am-7:30 pm. Exhibit hall open 9 am-5 pm. Admission to West Lake Park is US\$1.50; admission to Anne Kolb Nature Center is free, and the exhibit hall costs US\$2.

Quiet Waters Park

401 S. Powerline Road
Deerfield Beach, FL 33442

Phone: 954-357-5100

<http://www.broward.org/parks>

West of Deerfield Beach, this 430-acre/174-hectare park has a freshwater swimming beach, cable waterskiing, in-line skating, freshwater fishing and a variety of boats for rent. Also on-site is Splash Adventure, a water playground.

Open daily November-April 8 am-6 pm, May-October 8:30 am-7 pm. US\$1.50 park admission fee Saturday, Sunday and holidays. Admission to Splash Adventure is US\$5.

Flamingo Gardens

3750 S. Flamingo Road (about a 40-minute drive southeast of Fort Lauderdale)
Davie, FL 33330

Phone: 954-473-2955

<http://www.flamingogardens.org>

A vestige of Old Florida, this large citrus grove has lush botanical gardens; a wildlife sanctuary for such Everglades species as eagles, otters, flamingos and alligators; a free-flight aviary; and an arboretum containing some of the country's largest tropical trees, including a 200-year-old live oak. The highlight is a 30-minute tram ride through marshes and wetlands.

Daily 9:30 am-5 pm (closed Monday June-September). US\$18 adults, US\$10 children ages 4-11, free for children age 3 and younger. Tram tour is US\$4 adults, US\$3 children.

Everglades Holiday Park

21940 Griffin Road (take Interstate 595 West to I-75 and go south to Griffin Road West)
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-434-8111

<http://www.evergladesholidaypark.com>

If you want to see the Everglades but are short on time, take a one-hour tour aboard an airboat. The boats are loud (you wear ear protection) but thrilling—when you hit high speeds, the sensation is a lot like flying. Tour also includes an alligator show.

Open daily. Airboats leave every 20 minutes 9 am-5 pm (last boat leaves at 4:20 pm).
US\$25 adults, US\$12.50 children.

Shopping

Broward County, which includes Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, Dania Beach and a host of smaller cities, can satisfy any shopaholic. High-end and offbeat shops abound along Florida's Gold Coast, although you may have to drive a bit to reach them.

Fort Lauderdale has an eclectic mix: Las Olas Boulevard, best known for its relaxed alfresco shopping and Spanish colonial-style buildings, is lined with designer fashion stores and several notable art galleries. (The shopping district on Las Olas runs from Southeast Third Avenue to Southeast 15th Avenue.) You'll need a taxi or car to get to the rest. (The bus is slow, and the routes are circuitous.)

At the Galleria Mall on Sunrise Boulevard, just west of the Intracoastal Waterway, Neiman Marcus and Macy's set the retail tone.

There also are less traditional shopping areas frequented mostly by locals. Antiques buffs may want to head to Dania Beach's Antique Row, where dozens of shops occupy a few blocks along Highway 1. Bargain shoppers will enjoy visiting Pompano Beach's Festival Flea Market—more than 500 vendors, an arcade and a farmers market—and the Swap Shop, the state's largest indoor-outdoor flea market.

Shopping Hours: Most downtown shops and specialty stores are open Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm (some till 11 pm). Malls are usually open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm and Sunday 11 am-6 pm. Shops along Las Olas Boulevard are open till at least 10 pm.

Factory Outlets

Sawgrass Mills

12801 W. Sunrise Blvd. (a 30-minute drive from the Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport)
Sunrise, FL

Phone: 954-846-2300. Toll-free 800-356-4557

<http://www.simon.com/mall/sawgrass-mills>

This sprawling outlet mall is about 30 mi/48 km north of Miami in Broward County. Its more than 350 name-brand stores and outlets include Last Call from Neiman Marcus, Off 5th Saks Fifth Avenue Outlet, the Calvin Klein Co. store and the J. Crew factory store. The Colonnade Outlets at Sawgrass Mills features deep discounts at premium outlet stores such as Burberry, Hugo Boss, Ralph Lauren, Coach and more.

Open Monday-Saturday 10 am-9:30 pm, Sunday 11 am-8 pm.

Shopping Areas

Galleria Mall

2414 E. Sunrise Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33304

Phone: 954-564-1015

<http://www.galleriamall-fl.com>

Just blocks from the beach, this conveniently located mall has 150 mostly high-end stores, including Neiman Marcus, Macy's, Coach and Pottery Barn, as well as an upscale food court and restaurants, including two steak houses and Blue Martini Bar.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm.

The Gallery at Beach Place

17 S. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

Phone: 954-760-9309

<http://www.galleryatbeachplace.com>

This three-story emporium across the road from the beach is home to several shops and restaurants. Some of the region's most popular watering holes are there, too, including Lulu's Bait Shack and Fat Tuesday.

Open Sunday-Thursday 11 am-10 pm, Friday and Saturday 11 am-midnight.

Dining

Dining Overview

Fort Lauderdale has more than 4,000 restaurants, ranging from waterfront dining spots that you can reach by boat or water taxi to ethnic eateries and top-notch steak houses. Locals claim that it would take about seven years to eat at all of Fort Lauderdale's restaurants, and even then you might miss some places because new dining spots spring up every year.

Fort Lauderdale's restaurants range from formal to funky. Many of the city's best choices are clustered along the principal shopping artery, Las Olas Boulevard, and in the Arts and Entertainment District. Other fine restaurants are located in the western

part of the city, north in Pompano and Deerfield Beach, and south in Dania Beach and Hollywood.

Try stone-crab claws (in season mid-October to mid-May), key lime pie or a style of cooking dubbed "Floribbean," a blend of Florida and Caribbean fare, which typically mixes fresh lobster, shrimp, swordfish, pompano and other sea treats with locally grown citrus and tropical fruits.

General dining times are 7-10 am for breakfast, noon-2 pm for lunch and 7-9 pm for dinner. Early-bird specials, usually offered before 6 pm, are a good value.

Most restaurants don't enforce a dress code, but men often need a collared shirt and sometimes a jacket in upscale places. Ties are rarely required.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$15; \$\$ = US\$15-\$25; \$\$\$ = US\$26-\$50; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Local & Regional

Beauty and the Feast

601 N. Fort Lauderdale Beach Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-567-8070

<http://www.atlantichotel.com>

Located across from the ocean in the Atlantic Hotel, this newly created American menu of local and regional cuisine features pizza and paella, burgers, bone-in steaks, craft beers and cocktails. Enjoy the view and the food as you sit in comfy white booths.

Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Sunday for brunch also. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Complimentary valet parking. Most major credit cards.

Fork and Balls

1301 E. Las Olas
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-771-2257

<http://www.forkandballs.com>

This casual, modern eatery is meatball-focused. You can build your own sandwiches or salads with your choice of balls, from lamb to veggies and fish. Try the tomato, onion, chickpea and olive balls with house vinaigrette, and add blue cheese. Beer and wine are on tap.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$. Most major credit cards.

Market 17

1850 S.E. 17th St. (in the Portside Yachting Center)
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-835-5507

<http://www.market17.net>

Chef Lauren DeShields is a big proponent of the farm-to-table movement: She buys fish from local fisherfolk, and meat and produce from local farms. The result? Unbelievably fresh food, and a constantly changing menu. The duck confit salad with fried rice balls (arancini) is a standout.

Nightly for dinner (closed Monday during the summer). Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seasons 52

2428 E. Sunrise Blvd. (in the Galleria Mall)
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-537-1052

<http://www.seasons52.com>

Seasonally inspired dishes with fewer than 475 calories each have made this health-conscious restaurant a favorite among locals and a hit with visitors. The menu changes seasonally, and the atmosphere is upscale and casually sophisticated. The flatbreads, especially the ripe plum tomato and the classic Reuben, are favorite starters.

Vegetarians are pleased with the crisp, fresh veggie dishes, which are served with a minimum of sauces, so the natural flavors can be savored.

Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Truluck's

2584-A E. Sunrise Blvd. (at The Galleria)
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-396-5656

<http://trulucks.com>

You're in for a treat if stone crabs are in season. The restaurant works with a fishery in Naples to ensure a fresh catch every day. Other sea fare includes grouper, sea bass, scallops, tuna and trout. Even the meat is served with a seaward bent: Try the Steak Ponchartrain, with crawfish, blue crab and shrimp in a tasty cream sauce. Servers suggest wines to pair with dinner—the wine flights pitting Spain versus Italy are fun.

Monday-Saturday for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Cuisines

American

Bimini Boatyard

1555 S.E. 17th St. Causeway
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-525-7400

<http://www.biminiboatyard.com>

This casual waterfront restaurant offers the requisite American menu—salads, seafood, chicken and steak—and also offers up-close views of huge boats docked next door. The Diane salad and roast chicken are spectacular, and the Bimini bread is outstanding.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Gilbert's 17th Street Grill

1821 Cordova Road
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-768-8990

<http://gilberts17thstgrill.com>

Possibly the best burger in South Florida: eight ounces of certified Angus beef with your choice of toppings—we liked the Brie burger with bacon and fried onions.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Tap 42

1411 S. Andrews Ave.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-463-4900

<http://tap42.com>

This lively gastropub serves up tasty burgers and vegetarian items, too. Great selection of craft beer and bourbon.

Open daily for lunch and dinner until late.

YOLO

333 E. Las Olas Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-523-1000

<http://yolorestaurant.com>

You only live once, and YOLO is a contemporary restaurant that helps folks live it up. This popular eatery is frequented by locals who gather there after work for dinner and drinks. Menu items vary from salads and sliders to coriander-crusting seaweed tuna and steaks.

Daily for lunch and dinner, Sunday for brunch also. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Fusion

Cafe Maxx

2601 E. Atlantic Blvd.
Pompano Beach, FL 33062

Phone: 954-782-0606

<http://www.cafemaxx.com>

The menu features sophisticated nouvelle cuisine with a "Floribbean" touch. Favorites include three-peppercorn filet mignon with au gratin potatoes, Manchego and sweet onion crusted rack of lamb, and Thai chili-crusted tuna.

Nightly for dinner. Reservations required. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Canyon Southwest Cafe

1818 E. Sunrise Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-765-1950

<http://www.canyonfl.com>

Prickly pear margarita? This Southwestern restaurant has been earning raves for its creative menu that blends Asian, Southwest and Native American flavors. Try the smoked salmon tostada with scotch bonnet tartar sauce, and the Florida grouper with chili peppers and Serrano ham.

Nightly for dinner. Reservations not accepted. Most major credit cards.

Italian

Anthony's Runway 84

330 State Road 84
Fort Lauderdale, FL

This local favorite has delicious, hearty servings of Italian entrees and has been around for nearly 30 years. The restaurant has an airport motif with cutouts of airplanes and flight decor. Make reservations ahead of time, or you will have a long wait.

Tuesday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Sorrisi

5550 N.W. 40th St.
Coconut Creek, FL

Phone: 954-283-2812

<http://seminolecoconutcreekcasino.com>

Exceptional Italian cuisine is as pleasing to the eye as it is to the taste buds. Located in the Seminole Casino Coconut Creek, this restaurant is worth a try even if you are not a gambler. The warm Roman artichoke with oreganata crumbs and Parmigiano Reggiano appetizer is a standout. For entrees, try the *pollo Scarpariello* (chicken breast), with fennel sausage, peppers, mushrooms and shallots. The braised short ribs or porcini-encrusted lamb rack are savory sensations for meat lovers. Everything is made in-house, even the desserts. The chocolate semifreddo with creme Anglaise is a sweet finish.

Daily except Monday for dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Casa D'Angelo

1201 N. Federal Highway
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-564-1234

<http://www.casa-d-angelo.com>

This Italian gem is hidden in a strip mall, but don't let that deter you. Chef and owner Angelo Elia carefully selects each day's menu with mouth-watering results. We liked the spaghetti with house-made sausage and broccoli rabe. The veal scaloppine is another must-try. Extensive wine list and excellent service from an Italian-speaking waitstaff.

Nightly for dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Latin American

Cafe Seville

2768 E. Oakland Park Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-565-1148

<http://www.cafeseville.com>

For a touch of Spain in Florida, this is the perfect spot for tasty tapas and all sorts of meat and seafood dishes. Try the giant paella, big enough for two.

Tuesday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Monday and Saturday for dinner only. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Havana's Cuban Cuisine

8600 Griffin Road
Cooper City, FL

Phone: 954-530-1400

<https://www.facebook.com/HavanasCubanCuisine>

This casual Cuban dining spot mixes sangria at your table, stirring up delicious fruits and wine with a wooden stick. The portions are large and include two side dishes. In addition to the typical rice and beans try the *tostones* (green plantains) and *yucca con mojo* (yucca with a *mojo* sauce). The Cuban classic *ropa vieja* is a favorite as is the

bistec del palomilla (Cuban-style thin sirloin steak). Moderately priced and family oriented.

Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$.

Padrinos

801 S. University Drive
Plantation, FL 33324

Phone: 954-476-5777

<http://www.padrinos.com>

The *bistec pollo* and *ropa vieja* are favorites, and the rice and black beans are *muy bueno*. Fried plantains are served with everything.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seafood

Calypso

460 S. Cypress Road
Pompano Beach, FL

Phone: 954-942-1633

<http://www.calypsorestaurant.com>

As one of South Florida's best-kept secrets, this place may serve the most delicious Caribbean food you can get without hopping on a boat or plane. Jerk chicken and shrimp, fish cakes, scorched conch and spicy dolphinfish.

Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

15th Street Fisheries

1900 S.E. 15th St.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316

Phone: 954-763-2777

<http://www.15streetfisheries.com>

The daily selection of fresh fish and home-style bread make this place special. A downstairs lounge has a less-expensive menu; the upstairs restaurant is more formal.

Upstairs nightly for dinner, downstairs daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended for upstairs. Collared shirts required for men in the upstairs room. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

3030 Ocean

3030 Holiday Drive (in the Harbor Beach Marriott Resort)
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-765-3030

<http://www.3030ocean.com>

The menu is seasonal at this quintessential Florida seafood restaurant, where chef Dean Max's cooking style combines the light and flavorful sensibility of California cuisine with local produce in a relaxed, beachfront setting. Florida pompano and snapper are usually available, and a raw bar includes seiche, littleneck clams and stone crabs in season. The key lime and coconut cream tart is matched with summer strawberries.

Open nightly for dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Blue Moon Fish Company

4405 W. Tradewinds Ave.
Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, FL

Phone: 954-267-9888

<http://www.bluemoonfishco.com>

This picturesque Intracoastal Waterway restaurant has cuisine that matches the view. Try the lump crab and corn-roasted grouper with asparagus risotto and red-wine butter, or the sauteed yellowtail snapper and goat-cheese mashed potatoes. Fresh fish reigns supreme, but the New Zealand rack of lamb is also a favorite. The Sunday brunch is spectacular, with such favorites as applewood-bacon-wrapped stuffed breast of chicken, omelettes and salmon strudel.

Open daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations required. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Lobster Bar Sea Grille

450 E. Las Olas Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-772-2675

<http://buckheadrestaurants.com/lobster-bar-sea-grille>

Elegant and refined, this classy Las Olas restaurant serves seafood from around the world and is perfect for special occasions. Small plates and sharing menu items are encouraged. Greek and Mediterranean sauces predominate. Steaks are grilled to perfection in an open kitchen. The specialty is Mediterranean octopus, char-grilled with pickled red onion and capers. We recommend the Maryland crab cake with lemon-mustard emulsion or the cold-water lobster tail thinly crisped and flash-fried. The large bar is a gathering place for locals.

Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Sea Watch

6002 N. Ocean Blvd.
Fort Lauderdale, FL

Phone: 954-781-2200

<http://www.seawatchontheocean.com>

This beachhouse on the shoreline is known for its consistently good seafood dishes—bouillabaisse, oysters Rockefeller, gulf shrimp, Bahamian conch fritters, and the Sea Watch medley of crab, oysters, clams and shrimp. A special "Dinner at Dusk" menu is just US\$20.95 between 5 and 6 pm.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Security

Personal Safety

Exercise the same precautions you would during a visit to any major U.S. city: Don't carry large amounts of cash or wear conspicuous, pricey jewelry. Use a safe or hotel vault for valuables—extra cash, traveler's checks, credit cards, passports and plane tickets. Remember: Pickpockets enjoy the South Florida climate as much as travelers do.

Request advice and clear travel directions before venturing into unfamiliar areas. Stay in well-lighted, well-populated areas at night. Keep car doors locked when stopping at red lights at intersections.

Don't use ATMs on deserted, dark or isolated locations, and try not to go alone. If people are loitering nearby or looking over your shoulder, don't use that ATM. Always shield the keypad when entering your PIN and don't write your PIN on anything you carry with your cards.

Ask your hotel's concierge or the front desk for advice about any area you may wish to visit.

Health

Dehydration and sunburn are two of the most common preventable ailments experienced by South Florida visitors. Make sure to stay hydrated and use at least an SPF-15 sunscreen several times a day. During the summer, mosquitoes are at their peak, so it's a good idea to use bug repellent, especially at night and near the water.

Several hospitals offer 24-hour emergency medical care. Holy Cross Hospital is at 4725 N. Federal Highway (phone 954-771-8000). Other facilities include Broward General Medical Center at 1600 S. Andrews Ave. (phone 954-355-4400) and Imperial Point Medical Center at 6401 N. Federal Highway (phone 954-776-8920).

In case of emergency, dial 911.

Disabled Advisory

Most attractions and transportation services—including water taxis—can accommodate those with special needs. The visitors bureau provides communication aids or services upon request for people with disabilities. For more information, contact the bureau at 954-765-4466.

Additional information for people with disabilities is available at <http://www.adrcbroward.org>.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do rent a convertible if you need a vehicle: The costs are usually only a little higher, and a drive through Fort Lauderdale with the top down is the best way to take in the wide skies and palm trees.

Do try Cuban coffee—it's an ideal afternoon pick-me-up. Ask for *cafe con leche* (coffee with steamed milk) or a *cordadita* (espresso sweetened with sugar while brewing).

Do rise early and head to the beach to see shorebirds feeding on creatures left by the tide. Sunrise over the ocean is an awe-inspiring sight.

Don't get caught on the wrong side of the 17th Street Causeway drawbridge if you're in a hurry to get to the airport or Port Everglades to catch a cruise ship. The bridge rises every half-hour—and can stay up for more than five minutes while drivers sit and stew on the roadway. The traffic jam barely clears before the bridge goes up again. In fact, leave a little time for all bridge crossings in Fort Lauderdale, which has so many canals and waterways that it calls itself the "Venice of America."

Do take advantage of early-bird specials (some offered as early as 3 pm) at area restaurants. The food is typically the same as on the regular menu, and coffee and dessert are included.

Don't disturb turtle nesting areas. They are usually roped off and designated.

Do not drive in bicycle lanes. You will get a ticket. Florida has many cyclists on city streets and highways. There are separate, marked-off lanes for bicyclists.

Don't float where you can't swim. Nonswimmers often use flotation devices and can drown if they float out to deep waters and can't swim.

Do understand beach warning flags. They fly from lifeguard towers and represent hazards and surf conditions.

Don't swim alone. Always swim with a companion.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 172,400.

Languages: English, some Spanish.

Predominant Religions: Christianity (Protestant, Roman Catholic) and Judaism.

Time Zone: 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-5 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the second Sunday in March until the first Sunday in November.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 954, area code;

Money

Currency Exchange

Banks are found throughout Fort Lauderdale and the surrounding communities, and most have 24-hour ATMs. Lobby hours are generally Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. Some banks have limited Saturday morning hours. Publix supermarkets and major gas stations also have ATMs. You can change money at Sawgrass Mills Mall, Aventura Mall and at most airports.

Taxes

The sales tax is 6% in Broward County, which includes Fort Lauderdale, Dania Beach, Davie, Hollywood, Plantation, Pompano Beach and Port Everglades. In general, products and services exempt from sales tax are unprepared food, professional services—medical, dental and legal—and labor-only services related to real estate. There is a hotel tax of 5% in Fort Lauderdale.

Tipping

Tip 15%-20% in restaurants, depending on service. Wine stewards and dining-room captains merit consideration—US\$5 should be a minimum, and double that when given a really good table. Be sure to check your bill, because many restaurants in tourist areas automatically add a 15% gratuity, especially for parties larger than five people.

US\$2 is appropriate for a parking valet. Luggage tips should be US\$1 per bag for airport baggage handlers and bellhops. Plan on US\$1.50 per day per guest for the hotel housekeeping staff (leave more if you ask for extra services).

Weather

Fort Lauderdale's winter temperatures, averaging 60-76 F/16-24 C, attract visitors from northern reaches (known locally as snowbirds) November-April. In winter, cold fronts do occasionally sweep down from chillier climes, which can cause temperatures to drop abruptly.

Summers are hot and humid (average temperatures are in the low 90s F/32-37 C, and humidity is often 98%), with frequent, brief afternoon thundershowers. A high-SPF sunscreen is a must. A hat will help, and an umbrella comes in handy to protect against rain and sun. Hurricane season is June-November.

What to Wear

You'll be most comfortable in cotton and linen casual clothing when visiting Fort Lauderdale. Locals wear shorts almost everywhere, especially places around the beach. Always pack a lightweight sweater for air-conditioning (just about every establishment is air-conditioned). A heavier sweater or jacket is a good idea in winter.

Evening attire can be dressy at some restaurants and nightclubs, but it's always adapted to the warm climate. Men rarely need a tie or jacket at any restaurant in Fort Lauderdale. If meetings are on your agenda, pack typical business wear, including a tie for men.

Transportation

If you will be spending more than a day in the Fort Lauderdale area, we recommend a rental car. A scenic way to get around while you're sightseeing, however, is by water taxi. Water Taxi of Fort Lauderdale operates a fleet of boats that travel the Intracoastal Waterway between Port Everglades and Commercial Boulevard and travel up the New River to downtown Fort Lauderdale. They stop within walking distance of many attractions and restaurants. An all-day pass is US\$16 adults.

<http://www.broward.org/bct>.

Car

Rental cars are available at the airport and in many outlying areas of the city, as well as downtown. There are advantages to booking with a major rental car company such as Avis, Dollar, Enterprise or Hertz, as these agencies have the ability to repair and exchange vehicles quickly, often in less than an hour. The use of cell phones has expedited past problems. However, smaller companies such as Advantage and American lack the resources and abundant locations needed to quickly repair or exchange a vehicle in the event of an accident or serious mechanical malfunction.

Major credit cards are accepted at all key rental car companies, and debit cards have become popular, though large temporary withdrawals are common practice when using a debit card.

The legal age to drive in Florida is 16, but most rental car companies require all drivers to be 25 years of age or older to rent a vehicle. There is, of course, an industry-wide loop hole; by paying an additional US\$15-\$25 per day, the minimum age requirement drops to 20. Plan on paying US\$20-\$100 per day, depending on the vehicle (rates are typically higher November-May). Driving in Broward County is fairly easy. Signs on the main roads direct drivers to major attractions. Cell phone use while driving is still legal.

Interstates 95 and 595 are the main arteries through Fort Lauderdale. Along the ocean, the main road is State Road A1A. In the western suburbs the main drag is University Drive. Heed speed limits. Traffic is heavy during morning and evening rush hours, but off-peak hours aren't too bad. Parking is difficult in downtown Fort Lauderdale. A parking garage is your best bet.

Classic Car Rentals

For a fun day in Fort Lauderdale, this car rental agency has an inventory of classic cars from a 1972 Chevelle convertible to a 1961 Rolls Royce. Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday and Sunday by appointment. US\$250 per day. For longer periods, the per-day price goes down. 2848 Stirling Road, Suite G. Fort Lauderdale, FL. Toll-free 855-790-4903. <http://www.classicdreamrides.com>.

Public Transportation

The water taxi is a good way to get around, if your destination is close to the water routes. You can catch a free street trolley to travel between attractions in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

There's also the Sun Trolley service with routes along the beach, downtown, the Riverfront Complex and Las Olas, and to the Coral Ridge Mall: Just flag down the yellow-and-red trolleys. Fares range US\$0.25-\$0.50. Phone 954-761-3543. <http://www.suntrolley.com>.

County buses that run along the streets are slow and have little room for luggage. There are 40 routes. One-way bus fare is US\$1.75. All-day pass is US\$4. Phone 954-357-8400. See the website for bus schedules and route maps. <http://www.broward.org/BCT/VisitorInfo>.

Broward B-Cycle

This bike-sharing system allows people to check out a bicycle at a public bike station for a small fee and return it to another station when done. Fort Lauderdale, FL. Phone 754-200-5672. <https://broward.bcycle.com>.

Water Taxi of Fort Lauderdale

Escape traffic, and take a boat instead. Canopied water buses crisscross miles/kilometers of the Intracoastal Waterway and canals in and around downtown Fort Lauderdale and between 17th Street to the south and Oakland Park Boulevard to the north. Eleven pickup points include waterfront restaurants, marinas, beaches, shopping malls and the Arts and Entertainment District. The service can be used in conjunction with county buses, though it's best just for sightseeing. Daily 10:30 am-midnight. US\$22 adults, US\$11 children (all-day pass). Family passes, evening rates and multiday passes also are available. 651 Seabreeze Blvd.. Fort Lauderdale, FL 33316. Phone 954-467-6677. <http://www.watertaxi.com>.

Taxi

Friendly Checker Cab

Operates 24 hours daily. Phone 954-923-9999. Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Yellow Cab

Yellow Cab accepts major credits cards. Reservations are available. Phone 954-565-5400. Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Overview

Introduction

Key West, Florida, is a haven for the famous, the nonfamous and for those looking to get a little lost. Everyone seems to enjoy Key West's relaxed pace, storybook architecture, colorful history, live-and-let-live local attitude and end-of-the-world feel.



The natural surroundings in Key West are just as pleasant: Hibiscus, bougainvillea, palm trees and other flora and fauna give the island a tropical feel and smell.

And when the sun begins to set each day, there's cause for celebration in Key West as street performers, arts-and-crafts vendors and other characters participate in the waterfront activities at Mallory Square.

Venture off the island for snorkeling, diving or fishing. Or you can just walk around Old Town and soak up the mix of flavors, including hints of Cuba and Old Florida.

But no matter how you spend your time in Key West, expect to be part of a crowd, because *Cayo Hueso*, as the Cuban locals call it, draws droves of visitors, many of

whom wish they could become locals, if not genuine conchs (that's Key West-talk for island natives).

Note: Key West sustained serious damage during Hurricane Irma in September 2017. Recovery efforts will take months or even years. Travelers should investigate current conditions prior to planning a visit.

Highlights

Sights—Spectacular sunsets and the street performers at Mallory Square; Key West's Historic Harborwalk.

Museums—Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum; Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society Treasure Museum; Harry S. Truman's Little White House Museum.

Memorable Meals—Eating alongside chickens and roosters in the courtyard at Blue Heaven; fish tacos outside at Garbo's Grill; seafood along the harbor at Alonzo's Oyster Bar.

Late Night—The Green Parrot, one of Key West's oldest bars; Sloppy Joe's, Hemingway's favorite hangout, followed by a second round at the bar's original location, now Captain Tony's Saloon; the Key West Pub Crawl; a handcrafted libation at Caroline's Other Side when you tire of the "scene."

Walks—Strolling through Key West Cemetery and reading the sometimes off-the-wall crypt inscriptions; seeing the city on foot; the Southernmost Point in the U.S.; doing the Duval Crawl.

Especially for Kids—Key West Aquarium; the Key West Butterfly and Nature Conservatory.

Geography

The tiny island (2 mi/3 km wide by 4 mi/6 km long) is one of about 1,000 coral islets in the Florida Keys, an archipelago that stretches 126 mi/203 km southward from the tip of mainland Florida. U.S. Highway 1, also known as the Overseas Highway (it spans the East Coast and straddles the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean in the Keys), links Key West to the rest of the state. The roadway ribbons its way across 34 of the islands that form the Florida Keys and over 43 connecting bridges, including one that's a spectacular 7 mi/11 km long.

Because Key West is small and a snap to navigate, you can easily explore most of it on foot (or, better yet, on bicycle). The main sights are concentrated in Old Town, on the western side of the island. Duval Street is the main thoroughfare, packed with bars, souvenir shops and bed-and-breakfasts. Off Duval, Old Town's streets are lined with picket fences and Victorian-era frame houses decorated with gingerbread trim.

History

The U.S. government acquired Key West from Spain in 1819 as part of the Florida Purchase, and back in those days, pirates were active in the area. After the U.S. Navy put the pirates out of business, most of the isolated islanders made lucrative livings as wreckers, salvaging the booty from ships that wrecked on the coral reefs offshore. In fact, between 1828 and the 1850s, Key West was considered the richest city, per capita, in the United States.

That business waned in the mid-1800s after the government built lighthouses, so the islanders turned to shrimping, fishing, sponging and cigar making—with the help of Cuban dissidents who had fled their island and Spanish rule. John James Audubon visited Key West and the Dry Tortugas in 1832, but for the most part, the islands were unknown to outsiders. During the Spanish-American War and World War I, major military installations were built on Key West, but much of the local economic base began to fade in the 1920s as the military left and the cigar industry moved northward to Tampa.

After the Depression, the city began to bill itself as a tourist destination, advertising its weather, architecture and lifestyle. Artists and writers flocked there; notable 20th-century visitors included writers Tennessee Williams, Elizabeth Bishop and Ernest Hemingway, as well as U.S. President Harry S. Truman.

In 1982, Key West residents declared it tongue-in-cheek as the Conch Republic, as a means of attracting attention to local concerns they felt the Florida legislature was ignoring, and—quite intentionally—brilliantly used the attention to showcase Key West as a quirky tourist destination .

Today, tourism remains the mainstay of the local economy—each year this city of slightly more than 25,000 permanent residents draws hundreds of thousands of visitors, who arrive by plane, car and cruise ship.

Port Information

Location

Cruise ships drop anchor offshore or tie up at either Mallory Square, Pier B at the Westin Hotel (a private dock) or the Truman Annex on Thomas Street (also known as the Outer Mole). All three docking areas are on the west end of the island and are within walking distance of Old Town—the concentration of streets with most of the restaurants, shops, bars and sights.

The Chamber of Commerce office is a short walk from Mallory Square and has brochures for self-guided walking and biking tours that focus on a variety of subjects, including Key West's famous writers, architecture and museums, as well as half-day boating excursions. Phone 305-294-2587. <http://www.keywestchamber.org>.

Potpourri

The gumbo limbo, a common South Florida shade tree that grows abundantly in Key West, is also known as the "tourist tree" because its bark is always red and peeling.

What exactly is a conch (pronounced *konk*)? First, it's a marine mollusk that is served as seafood, especially in the form of Key West favorites: conch fritters, conch chowder and cold conch seviche. Anybody born on the island is also called a conch, and nonnatives who live there for at least seven years are known as freshwater conchs. You'll no doubt become familiar with Key West's nickname—the Conch Republic.

One of the early Spanish names for Key West was Cayo Hueso ("island of bones")—a reference to the scattered bones early explorers discovered on the island. Their original name was a bit more gruesome: The first sailors saw the twisted, thick mangroves resembling tortured figures and named Key West and its adjacent islands Los Martires (the martyrs).

Except for rain, Key West has no natural source of freshwater, so the island's water is piped more than 100 mi/160 km through an aqueduct from Homestead, Florida.

Parrotheads, as loyal devotees of singer Jimmy Buffett are known, gather in Key West annually. Locals know that Buffett himself is known to show up at these conventions and even to host an unannounced concert in the streets of Key West, much to the delight of the Parrotheads.

Travelers along the Overseas Highway will see mile markers on the right shoulder or on the median strip. These small green signs bearing white numbers begin with number and mile 126, just south of Florida City. Mile markers decrease from Florida City to Key West, ending with the zero marker at the corner of Fleming and Whitehead streets in Key West. Keys residents often give these markers when giving addresses.

Although Florida joined the Confederacy during the Civil War, Key West was considered to be on the Union Side. It was the only southern city to remain in Union hands.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Key West is small enough that you'll need little more than a comfortable pair of walking shoes (or perhaps a bike) to take in most everything the city has to offer. To start, you may want to get the lay of the land by hopping on the Conch Tour Train or the Old Town Trolley—both will take you past virtually every point of interest on the island. (The Conch Train is nonstop, and the Trolley has 13 hop-on/hop-off points.)

Most of the sights are located in Old Town, where you'll find charming bed-and-breakfasts and Victorian houses with gingerbread trim mingling with packed bars and countless souvenir shops. The main drag, Duval Street, is crammed with restaurants,

bars, galleries and shops. The Duval Crawl is a popular phrase used to describe evening explorations up and down the island's main street to sample many taverns and entertainment venues. Duval is a good landmark to use for figuring out where you are and where you're going. The southeastern end of Duval is near the Southernmost Point in the continental U.S. (a requisite photo op for all visitors).

From there, you can stroll north on Whitehead Street, passing several popular attractions. These include the Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum and the Key West Lighthouse. Farther north are the historic Audubon House and Tropical Gardens, Harry Truman's Little White House Museum, and the Mel Fisher Museum (filled with gold artifacts recovered by the underwater treasure hunter).

Head a few blocks east of Duval to explore the Key West Cemetery; the often-irreverent inscriptions on this must-see collection of aboveground graves capture the island's quirky character. At the far-northern end of Whitehead, you'll find Mallory Square, home of the not-to-be-missed nightly Sunset Celebration. Or, for a less-hecktic sunset experience, order a cold, fruity drink and relax at an outdoor bar at waterside. Nearby White Street features an array of art galleries.

Historic Sites

African Cemetery

1000 Atlantic Blvd.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-4633

<http://www.africanburialgroundathiggsbeach.org>

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this once-lost burial ground on Higgs Beach is a memorial to victims of the Transatlantic slave trade. The cemetery was rediscovered by a team of archaeologists from the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society in 2002, and you can find historical and archaeological details of the cemetery on exhibit at the Mel Fisher Museum.

Daily sunrise-11 pm.

Casa Antigua

314 Simonton St.
Key West, FL

http://www.keywesthistoricmarkertour.org/Markers_Detail.php?ProductID=6

Ernest Hemingway's first Key West residence was an apartment above an auto dealership, and there he wrote *A Farewell to Arms*. His one-time digs are now a private residence.

US\$2.

Curry Mansion

511 Caroline St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-5349. Toll-free 800-253-3466

<http://currymansion.com>

Nestled among the historic homes of Caroline Street, this superb example of Queen Anne-style architecture was once the home of Florida's first millionaire. These days, the mansion is an antiques-filled inn that visitors can tour. There's no gift shop, but if you want to buy a T-shirt or other Curry Mansion souvenirs, ask at the front desk.

Daily 10 am-5 pm. US\$5 adults.

Historic Gato Factory

1100 Simonton St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-295-4369

http://www.keywesthistoricmarkertour.org/Markers_Detail.php?ProductID=432

A public exhibit on cigar manufacturer Eduardo Hidalgo Gato and the influence of the cigar industry on Key West sits in the former building of the E.H. Gato Cigar Factory, which now houses the Florida Keys Council of the Arts.

Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm.

Historic Seaport at Key West Bight

Key West, FL

<http://www.keywestseaport.com>

A stroll along the Harbor Walk, the crown jewel of Key West's historic seaport, offers a taste of the rich history of the city when this working seaport was the heart of the island and fishing the seas its lifeblood. Commercial fishing is still present there, and it's now home to a 150-slip state-of-the-art marina, but you can book your own fishing charter if you like, or go with a guide. If you prefer to stay on land, there are five waterfront restaurants along the Harbor Walk. There's also immediate access to every imaginable ocean experience and watersport, from diving on the reef to deep-sea fishing and parasailing. Depending on the season, the Seaport is home to tall ships and schooners offering sailing tours.

Open daily year-round.

Key West Cemetery

Margaret Street at Passover Lane
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-8177

[http://www.keywesthistoricmarkertour.org/Cemetery.php?Search=1&ProductCategoryID\[\]=23](http://www.keywesthistoricmarkertour.org/Cemetery.php?Search=1&ProductCategoryID[]=23)

Consider the Key West Cemetery a must-do—to miss this quirky peek at Key West's history would be a grave mistake. Wander around on your own, or take one of the tours offered by staff of the serene, if somewhat run-down cemetery (make reservations in advance). Graves sit aboveground in stone-encased caskets (the island's geology can't accept anything buried 6 ft/1.2 km underground). On one headstone, a grieving widow has written of her departed spouse, "At least I know where he's sleeping tonight." But the most famous inscription remains "I told you I was sick." A fenced area memorializes the 1898 sinking of the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbor.

Daily 7 am-6 pm. Free.

Key West Lighthouse & Keeper's Quarters Museum

938 Whitehead St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-0012

<http://www.kwahs.org/visit/lighthouse-keepers-quarters>

Built in 1826, Key West's lighthouse was operational until 1972. To get the big picture of the town, you can climb the 88 steps to the top. Inside, you'll find the Fresnel lens, historic photos, navigational charts and vintage nautical memorabilia.

Daily 9:30 am-4:30 pm. US\$10 adults.

Mallory Square

400 Wall St. (between Duval and Whitehead, a block north of Front Street)
Key West, FL

<http://www.mallorysquare.com>

Best known as the site of one of Key West's peculiar traditions—the famous Sunset Celebration—Mallory Square is the place to be each evening at dusk. As the sun dips into the sea, a crowd gathers to watch—and is likely to applaud once the sun disappears below the horizon (<http://www.sunsetcelebration.org>). Of course, honoring the setting sun is not the only thing going on in the square. Before and after sunset, artisans peddle handcrafted wares and performers put on busker shows with entertainment ranging from jugglers to mimes to tightrope-walking cats.

The square also encompasses the Waterfront Playhouse, Cayo Hueso y Habana Museum, Memorial Sculpture Garden, Key West Aquarium, Shipwreck Historeum and a slew of souvenir shops.

Southernmost Point

Whitehead and South streets
Key West, FL

<http://www.southernmostpointwebcam.com>

One of the island's most visited sights, the Southernmost Point marks Key West's geographic position as the most southerly landmass in the continental U.S. Far from solemn, it's marked by a giant striped buoy emblazoned with the words "90 Miles to Cuba." Take a picture: That's about all there is to do there. When the seas get rough, large waves can wash over the Southernmost Point and sometimes leave water standing in the road. Watch out for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, since this tourist highlight can get congested.

Museums

Audubon House and Tropical Gardens

205 Whitehead St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-2116

<http://www.audubonhouse.com>

This house, originally the Geiger Mansion, was renamed for naturalist John James Audubon, who visited Key West (but not the Mansion) in the early 1800s. The three-story dwelling is classic Key West architecture—built by a shipwright, the entire wooden structure is held together with wooden pegs. Inside are some of Audubon's original etchings and lithographs, as well as period furnishings. The structure's original owner, Capt. John Geiger, was a harbor captain, a wrecker and one of Key West's wealthiest citizens. Adjacent to the house are tropical gardens (the gardens are available to rent for weddings and corporate events), and a gallery and gift shop are on the premises.

Daily 9:30 am-4:15 pm. US\$12 adults.

East Martello Fort and Museum

3501 S. Roosevelt Blvd.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-3913

<http://www.kwahs.org/visit/fort-east-martello>

Far from Old Town, this museum is at the northern end of the island, adjacent to the airport. But it's the best museum dedicated to the history of Key West, and it's housed in a Civil War-era fort featuring vaulted ceilings, curved walls and a central lookout tower offering grand views of the Atlantic Ocean. The exhibits, including a haunted doll named Robert, illustrate the island's history of shipwrecks, pirates and cigar making. The gallery also showcases local artists.

Daily 9:30 am-4:30 pm. US\$10 adults.

Ernest Hemingway Home and Museum

907 Whitehead St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-1136

<http://www.hemingwayhome.com>

In the 1930s, the famed author lived in this charming Spanish-colonial home, where he wrote *To Have or Have Not* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Today, it's probably Key West's most famous attraction and a National Historic Landmark, bringing in crowds who walk through the house and gardens (there are guides or you can do it by yourself). Out back is the swimming pool, which was the first one built for a private residence in Key West. You're allowed to peek into Hemingway's roped-off writing studio, but visitors are no longer allowed to go inside. His cats (or at least their offspring)—inbred six-toed cats for the most part, about 50 of them—roam the grounds freely.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. US\$13 adults. Cash only.

Flagler Station

901 Caroline St. (on the corner of Margaret and Caroline streets)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-293-8716

<http://www.flaglerstation.net>

Henry Flagler, a partner with John D. Rockefeller in the Standard Oil Co., was one of the richest men in the U.S. in the early 1900s. In 1905, he decided to build a railroad from Miami to Key West. It cost US\$30 million and was considered to be an engineering marvel until it was destroyed in the Labor Day hurricane of 1935. This historeum features video footage from the early 1900s, an actual railroad car that ran on the Key West Extension line and a reconstructed section of the old Flagler station house.

Daily 9 am-3:45 pm. US\$3 adults.

Fort Zachary Taylor Historic State Park

601 Howard England Way (at the foot of Southard Street)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-6713

<http://www.floridastateparks.org/forttaylor>

This onetime Union fort is now home to a museum of Civil War weapons and memorabilia—including the largest collection of Civil War cannons in the U.S. There's also a small beach near the fort that offers some of the island's best swimming, and good snorkeling on some days.

Daily 8 am-sunset, with tours at 11 am. US\$6 per vehicle, US\$2.50 per pedestrian or cyclist.

Harry S. Truman's Little White House Museum

111 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-9911

<http://www.trumanlittlewhitehouse.com>

Members of the Washington power elite went to Truman's Little White House to unwind during his presidential term. "I've a notion to move the Capitol to Key West and just stay," Truman wrote to his wife, Bess. Earlier, inventor Thomas Edison also lived in the home. Nowadays, the Truman Annex is a residential development that also holds the Little White House Museum.

Daily 9 am-4:30 pm; guided tours are offered every 20 minutes. US\$16.13 adults.

Key West Museum of Art & History at the Custom House

281 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-295-6616

<http://www.kwahs.org/visit/custom-house>

The building that holds this museum was completed in 1891 as a Custom House. It was there that the Court of Inquiry held proceedings after the 1898 sinking of the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbor, the incident that triggered the Spanish-American War, and the museum now houses a permanent exhibit on it. On a lighter note, art lovers will be entertained by colorful folk paintings of old Key West, as well as portraits of locally famous faces. The museum also features rotating exhibits.

Daily 9:30 am-4:30 pm. US\$10 adults.

Key West Shipwreck Treasure Museum

1 Whitehead St. (at the intersection of Whitehead and Front streets)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-8990

<http://www.keywestshipwreck.com>

Actors re-enact what happened during a shipwreck—not on board the ship, but rather, what went on at shore. Wreckers would spot a capsizing vessel and then clamor over to save lives, ostensibly, but also to plunder cargo. Of the 700 ships that passed by Key West every week, on average at least one would wreck. Aside from the dramatic presentation, this little museum offers a self-guided tour, artifacts salvaged from the *Isaac Allerton*, said to be the richest wreck in Key West history, a bell tower you can climb and a short video.

Daily 9:40 am-6 pm, with presentations every 20 minutes starting at the top of the hour. US\$15.03 adults.

Key West Turtle Cannery Museum

200 Margaret St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-0209

<http://www.keywestturtlemuseum.org>

Sea turtles, once a popular dining delicacy and now an endangered species, are the educational focus of this museum and gift shop set on the site of a former turtle cannery.

Tuesday-Saturday noon-4 pm. Free, but donations are welcome.

Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society Treasure Museum

200 Greene St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-2633

<http://www.melfisher.org>

This five-story, brick museum pays tribute to the late treasure hunter who made his fame and fortune in 1985 by finding the Spanish galleon *Nuestra Senora de Atocha*, which sank off the Keys in a storm in 1622. The discovery yielded US\$400 million in gold and silver objects. You can watch a short film about Fisher's work and view several exhibits that provide background on the *Atocha* and other Spanish treasure fleets of the 1600s, as well as the slave ship *Henrietta Marie*, which sank off the Keys in 1700. The real treat: seeing some of the booty that Fisher brought up from the sea floor, including gold chains and jewelry. You even get to heft a gold bar. The museum features rotating exhibits and a gift shop.

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5 pm, Saturday and Sunday 9:30 am-5 pm. US\$15 adults.

San Carlos Institute

516 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-3887

<http://www.institutosancarlos.org>

Founded in 1871 by Cuban exiles, this beautiful building is considered the home of Cuba's independence movement from Spain. Inside is a small museum celebrating Cuban revolutionary Jose Marti, an art gallery and a school.

Sunday-Wednesday 11 am-5 pm, Thursday-Saturday 11 am-9 pm. Donations suggested.

The Oldest House Museum

322 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-9501

<http://oirf.org/page.php?p=museum>

Located smack in the middle of the Duval Street action is the oldest house in Key West. Built in 1829, the home also boasts the only detached cookhouse remaining in South Florida. The museum contains artifacts from the days when salvaging shipwrecks was big business in Key West.

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday-Saturday 10 am-4 pm. No fee to enter, donations encouraged.

Nature

Key West is really a tropical garden. As you stroll around, you'll notice palm trees shading peaceful verandas, large rubber trees and Norfolk Island pines, banyan trees with their dramatic aerial roots, and red mangroves, whose odd roots reach out into the ocean. You'll find streets vivid with royal poinciana and fragrant from frangipani. Fruit trees—papaya, avocado, banana and, of course, key lime—adorn yards everywhere. Check the mahogany trees to see if orchids have attached themselves.

Key West Butterfly and Nature Conservatory

1316 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-2988

<http://www.keywestbutterfly.com>

Some 50-60 species of butterflies flutter freely among tropical plants and waterfalls, and visitors can view exhibits as well as a documentary about the winged creatures. It's said that if a butterfly lands on you, you'll have good luck. A gift shop is on the premises.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. US\$12 adults, US\$9 seniors, US\$8.50 children ages 4-12, free for children younger than 3.

Key West Garden Club at the West Martello Tower

1100 Atlantic Blvd.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-3210

<http://www.keywestgardenclub.com>

Take a relaxing stroll through this tropical oasis, nestled in the ruins of a Civil War-era fort, as ocean breezes blow through the leaves. Native and exotic flora and fauna, including colorful orchids and bromeliads, are artfully tucked between the crumbling red brick walls and arches. Benches are spread out in shady spots with stunning views of the water. Don't miss the tunnel under the roots of a massive banyan tree. At the

entrance, a volunteer provides a brief history and a map of the garden. The plants are all labeled for self-guided tours.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. Free.

Little Hamaca Park

Government Road at Flagler Avenue
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-809-3700

<http://www.keywestcity.com/egov/apps/locations/facilities.egov?view=detail&id=14>

Bird-watchers revel in Key West, where almost 200 species live or visit annually. Heron, bis and other birds gather in Little Hamaca Park—a wildlife sanctuary rescued from condo developers in 1991—and a salt pond adjacent to Smathers Beach. At the turn of the last century, residents used the shallow pond to evaporate seawater and collect salt.

Nancy Forrester's Secret Garden

518 Elizabeth St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-0015

<http://nancyforrester.com>

At this delightful spot only a few minutes from Duval Street, Nancy grows rain-forest species and other exotic tropical plants, including 150 palm species, aroids, elephant ears, philodendrons, hanging orchids and breadfruit.

Daily 10 am-3 pm. US\$10.

Reef Relief Environmental Center

631 Greene St. (on the boardwalk of the Historic Seaport at the foot of William Street)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-3100

<http://www.reefrelief.org>

The Reef Relief Environmental Center educates the public about endangered species and coral reefs, through interactive exhibits and film. The third-longest barrier reef in the world, which lines the Florida Keys, is also the only living barrier reef in North America. A gift shop is around the corner.

Monday-Friday 10 am-4 pm. Free. Donations accepted.

Zoos & Wildlife

Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center

35 E. Quay Road (in Truman Annex, across from Fort Zachary Taylor State Park)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-809-4750

http://www.floridakeys.noaa.gov/eco_discovery.html

The Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center features more than 6,000 sq ft/557 sq m of interactive and dynamic exhibits including a mock-up of Aquarius, the world's only underwater ocean laboratory.

Tuesday-Saturday 9 am-4 pm. Admission is free.

Key West Aquarium

1 Whitehead St. (facing Mallory Square)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-2051. Toll-free 888-544-5927

<http://www.keywestaquarium.com>

Key West has one of the nation's oldest open-air aquariums. Built as an Emergency Relief Administration project in 1935, the aquarium was the island's first tourist attraction. You can admire hundreds of varieties of brightly colored tropical fish, tarpon and sharks, and you can touch starfish, crabs and conchs.

Daily 9 am-6 pm. US\$15.04 adults.

Key West Marine Park

Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-3100

<http://reefrelieffounders.com/marine-park.html>

Snorkeling or swimming off South, Dog and Higgs beaches affords the opportunity to view live spur-and-groove coral formations planted by the nonprofit environmental group Reef Relief and the city of Key West. The park starts at the foot of Duval Street, stretching up to White Street.

Recreation

Recreation on Key West—for that matter, on any of the keys—revolves almost entirely around the water. But within this single sector there is huge opportunity for diversity, ranging from boating to diving, from fishing to parasailing, from snorkeling to swimming, and of course, simply lolling about the beaches (or on a boat) for hours on end. In fact, about the only aquatic activity you won't find in Key West is surfing, owing to the fact that there are no waves to speak of. The beaches, although they're not as remarkable specimens as those found elsewhere in Florida, are where you'll find most of the group activities, as well, from competitive frisbee and running to volleyball and water polo.

If you're determined to try something away from the water, the downtown area does have a modest collection of gyms and bicycles for rent. The Key West Recreation Department maintains a few baseball diamonds, jogging tracks and tennis courts, but you'll have to make up your own teams, as the city is too small to host leagues. As small as the island is, there's also golf and pick-up soccer available.

Beaches

Key West is surrounded by clear, azure waters, but its beaches are unremarkable on the Florida Beach-O-Meter (a fate shared by Keys beaches as a whole). Because the reef prevents waves from crashing ashore and forming sand, the natural shoreline is relatively rough and spotted with chunks of coral. Some beaches have been "renourished" with sand imported from the Bahamas. But in most cases, the sand is dingy beige, and seaweed laces the shoreline. Beneath the water, sea grasses, though harmless, make the water appear less than crystal clear. A good pair of sandals or water shoes can save your feet when you enter the water.

Dog Beach

Waddell Avenue at Vernon Street
Key West, FL

Pooches are permitted on this spit of sand next to Louie's Backyard Restaurant. It's the only dog-friendly beach in town.

Fort Zachary Taylor State Historic Site Beach

601 Howard England Way (at the foot of Southard Street)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-6713

<http://www.floridastateparks.org/forttaylor>

This small beach is in a stand of pines at the former fort. If you have snorkel gear, this is really the only beach on the island where you can have good snorkeling days.

Daily 8 am-5 pm. US\$2.50 for pedestrians and bicyclists, US\$6.50 for drivers and US\$2.50 for anyone else in the vehicle).

Higgs Beach

Atlantic Boulevard (between White Street and Reynolds Road)
Key West, FL

Families prefer Higgs Beach, which is on the Atlantic side and close to Old Town. It offers watersport rentals, picnic areas and tennis courts. A stand of Australian pines provides some shade. Prepare for crowds—especially on weekends.

Rest Beach

White Street at Atlantic Boulevard
Key West, FL

This beach on the Atlantic Ocean features picnic tables, a pier and the city's AIDS Memorial.

Smathers Beach

South Roosevelt Boulevard (just west of the airport)
Key West, FL

This small, city-owned stretch of sand on the Atlantic side has decent swimming, but be wary of the rocky bottom. A variety of water toys (windsurfers, sailboats) and activities (parasailing and Jet-Skiing) are available. Crowds gather, especially on weekends. Street parking is metered.

South Beach

Duval and South streets
Key West, FL

This shallow-water beach at the end of Duval Street on the Atlantic Ocean is a favorite with locals and features a concrete pier.

Bicycling

There is no shortage of places to rent bicycles and scooters, and many hotels and guesthouses maintain their own bike fleets.

Adventure Rentals

617 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-293-8883

<http://www.keywest-scooter.com/home>

Rents bicycles and scooters from multiple locations in town.

Daily 8:30 am-5 pm. A bike with basket and lock costs US\$15 per day. Scooters start at US\$50 for 24 hours for a one-person scooter, US\$75 for a two-person scooter.

Eaton Bikes

830 Eaton St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-8188

<http://www.eatonbikes.com>

What better way to see the island than from the banana seat of a two-wheeler? They're safer than mopeds and less expensive to rent. Offers models for men and women, tricycles, tandems and mountain bikes. Daily and weekly specials. It will even deliver your bike to your hotel.

Daily 8 am-6 pm.

Moped Hospital

601 Truman Ave.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-3344

<http://www.mopedhospital.com>

Established in 1979, the island's oldest rental company offers bikes and mopeds.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-7 pm, Sunday 10 am-7 pm.

Boating & Sailing

Key Westers love to watch—and tell visitors about—the fabulous sunsets, and sunset cruises are a memorable way to view the island and the surrounding waters. There is a lot of competition, and prices are usually comparable. Decide what type of boat you'd prefer—catamarans may be a bit more stable if seasickness is a factor. Keep an eye out for combinations (daytime snorkel trip and sunset cruise) to capture discounts.

Appledore

205 Elizabeth St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-809-8839. Toll-free 800-507-9955

<http://www.appledore2.com>

The *Appledore*, an 86-ft/26-m windjammer (technically, a gaff-rigged topsail schooner), offers sunset cruises, as well as snorkel excursions to the coral reefs. In the summer months, she's homeported in Camden, Maine.

Daily 8 am-5 pm in winter, 8 am-6:30 pm in summer. US\$50 per person (includes beer, wine and soft drinks) for the sunset sails. Call for pricing on the snorkel sails.

Barefoot Billy's

1500 Reynolds St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-900-3088

<http://www.barefootbillys.com>

This watersports and activities hub on the beach behind the Casa Marina Resort caters to hotel guests and others who want to go parasailing or rent paddleboards, kayaks, Jet Skis and more.

Blue Ice Sailing

201 William St. (Slip A-6)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-5856

<http://www.blueicesailing.com>

This 47-ft/14.5-m sailboat takes passengers out for a two-hour chartered sunset cruise daily, with beer and champagne included in the price. *Blue Ice* also makes four-hour snorkeling trips to the coral reef.

Sunset cruise US\$350 for up to six people. Half-day snorkeling cruise US\$500 for six guests, including gear.

Danger Charters

245 Westin St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-304-7999

<http://www.dangercharters.com>

This company offers half-day sailing, snorkeling and kayaking trips on a 65-ft/20-m wrecking-schooner replica, as well as full-day beachcombing, kayaking, snorkeling and picnicking.

Half-day trips US\$80-\$85; full-day trips US\$110.

Floridays

601 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-744-8335

<http://www.floridays.org>

Snorkeling, kayaking, champagne sunset cruises and more are available to the public at the Key West Hyatt Resort Hotel on a 60-ft/18-m sailboat.

The sunset cruise costs US\$55 per person; snorkel excursions are US\$65 per person. All excursions include beer, wine, soda and snacks.

Fury Water Adventures

Westin Key West Resort and Marina
Key West, FL

Phone: 888-976-0899

<http://www.furycat.com>

This company offers nightly sunset champagne cruises, as well as daily snorkeling trips and parasailing. Fury also has trips featuring live music.

US\$39.95 adults for sunset cruise; snorkeling starting at US\$40.95.

Lazy Dog Island Outfitters

5114 Overseas Highway
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-295-9898

<http://lazydog.com>

One of the best ways to see the island is at water level aboard a sea kayak or paddleboard for a backcountry tour, where you may get up-close views of nesting herons and ibis, spotted eagle rays, conch and spiny sea urchins in just a few feet/meters of water. The Gulf of Mexico waters are generally calm and easily navigable.

Tour schedule varies seasonally; call for information. Prices start at US\$40.

Sunset Water Sports

201 William St.

Key West, FL

Phone: 855-378-6386

<http://www.sunsetwatersportskeywest.com>

This watersport adventure company focuses on 13 activities including waverunners, banana boat rides, kayaking, snorkeling, water skiing, giant inflatable slide, a smaller slide, sailing, paddle board and knee board. All activities come with a grilled lunch and beer on the return trip.

Daily 10 am-4 pm.

Wild Dolphin Adventures

Historic Seaport at Key West Bight (between Margaret and William streets)

Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-3737

<http://www.wilddolphinadventures.com>

The captain of the *Coral Reefer* offers a guarantee that visitors will see dolphins. If you're lucky and the conditions are right, you might even have an opportunity to swim with them. Morning and afternoon trips daily; private trips are also available.

Dolphin-watching and snorkeling boat tour US\$95.

Fishing

The waters around Key West and the Dry Tortugas teem with bonefish, tarpon, mangrove snapper, wahoo, dolphin fish, and yellowfin and blackfin tuna. Cobia, amberjack and large black grouper also lurk over wreck sites in the Gulf and Atlantic.

To do battle with big, water-thrashing trophy marlin and sailfish, boats head out into the Gulf Stream. Fishing boats, from light tackle to trolling to party boats and flats fishing to near-shore and offshore boats, are available for hire at all marinas. At the end of a private charter, ask the mate to fillet your catch and take your prize to a local restaurant for dinner.

Almost There! Sportfishing Charters

6000 Peninsula Ave. (Key West Harbor on Stock Island)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-295-9444

<http://www.almostthere.net>

Located at Cowkey Marina, this group has 12 boats for a variety of fishing experiences. Four-, six-, eight- and 10-hour charters are available.

Four-hour trips range US\$500-US\$700. Call for pricing.

Gulfstream Fishing

1801 N. Roosevelt Blvd.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-8494

<http://www.gulfstreamkeywest.com>

Located in Charter Boat Row at the Key West City Marina, this 60-ft/18-m party boat takes passengers to the reef to bottom fish for grouper, snapper and much more. This fishing excursion is designed for families, experienced anglers and beginners.

Daily trips run 10 am-4 pm and 7 pm-12:30 am. US\$65 adults, includes rod, reel, bait, tackle and license. Also available for private charter, weddings and parties.

Key West Pro Guides

G-31 Miriam St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-6602. Toll-free 866-259-4205

<http://www.keywestproguides.com>

This outfit specializes in flats, backcountry, reef, wrecks and offshore private charters for anglers.

Linda D.

1801 N. Roosevelt Blvd. (at Palm Avenue; Docks 19 and 20, Amberjack Pier,
Charterboat Row at City Marina)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-304-8102. Toll-free 800-299-9798

<http://www.charterboatlindad.com>

Two 40-ft/12-m vessels venture daily to the reef, local wrecks and offshore. Half-, three-quarter- and full-day charters are available. Target species include dolphin, wahoo, grouper and sailfish.

Lucky Fleet

Historic Seaport at Key West Bight
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-304-8065

<http://www.bestkeywestfishing.com>

Charters aboard the 41-ft/12-m private charter *Lucky Charm* venture to the reef, backcountry and offshore.

Call for rates.

Venus Charters

711 Eisenhower Drive (City Marina at Garrison Bight)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-304-1181

<http://www.venuscharters.com>

For light-tackle sportfishing with a focus on women-only charters, try Capt. Karen Luknis' Venus Charters, described as a gay-friendly/lesbian cruise. Capt. Luknis creates a personalized half-day or full-day charter aboard her 25-ft/8-m Wellcraft, with an emphasis on low-impact fishing and other activities such as snorkeling and birding.

US\$500 for four hours.

Golf

Key West Golf Club

6450 E. College Road
Stock Island, FL

Phone: 305-294-5232

<http://www.keywestgolf.com>

On Stock Island, immediately preceding Key West on the Overseas Highway, golfers are welcome to play the public Key West Golf Club, a par-70 course designed by Rees Jones. Lush tropical landscape includes a picture-worthy 16th hole.

Scuba & Snorkeling

With a reef fronting the Keys on the Atlantic side, Key West makes a good base for snorkeling or diving excursions. You'll need to take a boat trip to see anything worthwhile, however: The reef is 7 mi/11 km out. Conditions can vary a great deal off the Keys, especially in winter, but when the seas are calm, visibility is good—up to 100 ft/30 m. In addition to stingrays, lobster, nurse sharks, yellowtail, moray eels, huge brain corals, sea turtles and all kinds of other sea life, there are several shipwrecks in the area.

In 2009, the *General Hoyt S. Vandenberg*, a 522-ft/162-m retired U.S. Air Force ship, was scuttled to create an artificial reef and relieve some of the tourist pressure from the nearby natural reef. It only took three minutes for the massive ship to sink. It's now popular with both divers and curious fish.

The best dive sites near Key West are Sand Key, Rock Key, Dry Rock and Sambos. Many hotels have activity centers for watersports that rent equipment and organize tours. Boat companies have kiosks all over town for easy sign-up, and most hotels will also arrange this for guests.

Snorkeling requires no special instruction, but to go scuba diving, you must be a certified diver and present your C card to rent equipment—unless you're taking an instruction course. One-day introductory courses are often available for beginners.

Captain's Corner Dive Center

125 Ann St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-8865

<http://www.captainscorner.com>

This center offers scuba and snorkeling excursions.

Dive Key West

3128 N. Roosevelt Blvd.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-3823. Toll-free 800-426-0707

<http://www.divekeywest.com>

Snorkel trips are US\$69; dive trips begin at US\$95 (wet suit not included). Scuba instruction is available.

Easy Day Charters

711 Palm Ave.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-3095

<http://www.easydaycharters.com>

Snorkelers can venture out with Easy Days to explore the coral reefs and shallow wrecks around Key West. The company also offers fishing charters and dolphin tours.

Daily 1:30-5:30 pm.

Lost Reef Adventures

261 Margaret St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-9737. Toll-free 800-952-2749

<http://www.lostreefadventures.com>

Daily 9 am-6 pm. US\$45 for a snorkel trip; US\$110 for a scuba trip, including all gear rentals and two dives.

Shopping

Key West's streets are full of stores selling everything from T-shirts to cat memorabilia (it's the Hemingway influence) to original artwork.

Old Town—especially Duval Street—is the main shopping area, home to both funky and pricey boutiques, as well as such mainstream retailers as Coach and Express, who have arrived in recent years. There is no shortage of souvenir shops, funny T-shirt stores and cigar kiosks. But if you've got your eye on tropical prints and beachware, this is the place to be.

The southern end of Duval Street is where you'll find a number of quality galleries.

Shopping Hours: Generally 10 am-5:30 or 6 pm, though many gift shops remain open until 9 or 10 pm.

Galleries

Alan S. Maltz Gallery/Studio A

1210 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-0005

<http://www.alanmaltz.com>

The state of Florida's official wildlife photographer, this gallery features nature, fine art and wildlife photography.

Open daily 10 am-6 pm.

Cocco and Salem Gallery

1111 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-0072

<http://www.coccoandsalem.com>

This quaint gallery exhibits some of Key West's most respected painters, including Jim Salem, Marylene Proner and Stanley Zabar. It also showcases nationally and internationally known artists such as Mia Tavonatti, famed for her stained glass mosaics.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 11 am-5 pm.

Gallery on Greene

606 Greene St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-1669

<http://www.galleryongreene.com>

One of Key West's best-known galleries, Gallery on Greene showcases the works of local and Cuban artists. Owner Nance Frank has long been a vocal proponent of local artists.

Daily 10 am-6 pm.

Gingerbread Square Gallery

1207 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-8900

<http://www.gingerbreadsquaregallery.com>

Even if you don't buy, you can absorb many artistic interpretations of the area at this gallery showcasing Keys artists and a lot of glass works. Established in 1974, it is dubbed Key West's premier and oldest art gallery. Gingerbread Square features paintings, art glass, original graphics, sculpture and art jewelry.

Daily 10 am-6 pm.

Harrison Gallery

825 White St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-0609

<http://www.harrison-gallery.com>

Singer-author Ben Harrison and sculptor Helen Harrison have owned this charming studio-gallery for three decades. The gallery features Helen's three-dimensional art and houses watercolors, oils and other works of local artisans, including metal artist Ann Burroughs, craftsman Christian Burchard and painters Melinka K. Hall and Cindy Kulp.

Monday-Friday noon-5 pm or by appointment.

Lucky Street Gallery

1204 White St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-3973

<http://www.luckystreetgallery.com>

Key West's top contemporary art gallery has been there for 30 years and counting.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm.

The Studios of Key West

533 Eaton St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-0458

<http://www.tskw.org>

Artists from around the world stay in this complex, which comprises a historic armory, studios and artist cottages. The public can tour the artist studios, view works for sale in several galleries and an outdoor garden, take art classes and participate in a year-round lecture series.

Tuesday-Saturday 10 am-4 pm.

Shopping Areas

Bahama Village

Bahama Villiage (between Whitehead and Fort streets)
Key West, FL

This shopping area in the Old Town contains shops, galleries and a few restaurants. Use caution in this area at night.

Clinton Square Market

291 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-6825

<http://www.clintonsquaremarket.com>

Located between the Custom House and Key West Aquarium, this indoor mall is full of one-of-a-kind shops, including the Sweets of Paradise candy shop, Butterfly and Nature Boutique, Sweet Mango clothing and several jewelry stores. A great spot to pick up a few souvenirs.

Daily 9 am-9 pm.

Specialty Stores

Besame Mucho

315 Petronia St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-1928

<http://www.besamemucho.net>

Located in Bahama Village, this shop carries a small but diverse selection of great gifts from around the world: hand-cut soaps from Europe, hand-painted boxes and ornaments from Mexico, and lots of other little treasures.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 10 am-4 pm.

Fast Bucks at Home

726 Caroline St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-1304

<http://fastbucksathome.com>

The iconic gift store Fast Buck Freddie's is no more, but its home emporium—featuring tropical designs and home furnishings—remains open. There's a second location on Flager Avenue.

Daily 10 am-5 pm.

Fausto's Food Palace

522 Fleming St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-5663

<http://www.faustos.com>

Immortalized in a Jimmy Buffett song, Fausto's is a great little grocery store to shop at if you're going on a picnic or have a fridge to stock. Check out its brand of marmalades—it carries every flavor from mango to, of course, key lime pie. There's a second location at 1105 White Street.

Monday-Saturday 7:30 am-8 pm, Sunday 7:30 am-7 pm.

Green Pineapple

1130 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-509-7378

<http://www.greenpineapplekeywest.com>

This boutique carries eco-chic fashions with a focus on fair trade, organic fabrics and upcycled accessories. It also showcases jewelry from around the globe, hand-made kitchen ware and breezy tropical clothing. In the back, Date & Thyme Organic Cafe sells fresh juices and smoothies.

Monday-Thursday and Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Friday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-4 pm.

Key West Aloe

1075 Duval St., Unit C-9
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-517-6365. Toll-free 800-445-2563

<http://keywestaloe.com>

For men's and women's skin- and hair-care products that are rich in aloe, drop by this shop; it's in a revamped showroom at the original factory site.

Daily 9:30 am-10 pm.

Key West Winery

103 Simonton St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-916-5343

<http://thekeywestwinery.com>

Don't look for grapes when entering Key West Winery. All its wines consist of fruits, berries and citrus (think key lime, mango, passion fruit, pink grapefruit, tangelo, watermelon and the like). Ask about the orange wine aged with coffee beans or the tomato and jalapeno wine. Jams, jellies and more add to shelf intrigue.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-5 pm.

Kino Sandals

107 Fitzpatrick St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-5044

<http://www.kinosandals.com>

Smell the leather, watch sandal makers at work and get a Key West best buy: Most Kino footwear, which is known for maintaining its shape no matter how much abuse you heap on, is priced at US\$15 or less. All original designs and all handmade.

Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 9 am-5:30 pm, Sunday 10 am-3 pm.

Montage

704 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-295-9101

<http://montagekeywest.com>

You can pick up a sign from your favorite Key West restaurant, or even one of the famous epitaph, "I told you I was sick." There are fishing signs, restroom signs, mile marker signs, signs about Cuba and even signs you can personalize.

Open daily 10 am-10 pm.

Peppers of Key West

602 Greene St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-295-9333. Toll-free 800-597-2823

<http://www.peppersofkeywest.com>

You can sample any and every variety of hot sauce in the store—if you can handle the heat, that is. More than 600 brands, from barbecue sauces to rubs, Bloody Mary mixes, hot sauces, hot jellies and smoky sauces. (There's even a Hot Sauce of the Month

Club.) At the very least, try the best-selling Key West Asian Marinade, made with soy sauce and cayenne.

Daily 10 am-8 pm.

The Saltwater Angler

243 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-0700. Toll-free 800-223-1629

<http://www.saltwaterangler.com>

You don't have to be an avid angler to dip into your wallet for the rods, reels, knives, outerwear, jewelry and artwork that fill this shop. Ask about its guide services.

Daily 9 am-8 pm.

Wanderlust of Key West

310 Petronia St. (across from Blue Heaven)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-509-7065

<http://www.wanderlustkw.com>

Its collection of colorful sundresses, breezy scarves, bags and jewelry make the perfect wardrobe for your Key West stay.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm, Sunday 10 am-4 pm.

Dining

Dining Overview

For such a small island, Key West has more than its fair share of quality restaurants. Foodies can delight in the choices, while those who just don't care will be very happy with the easy options.

Seafood, not surprisingly, is the mainstay in Key West, and much of it is fresh from nearby waters. Florida lobster and stone crabs are good choices, as is conch, a chewy shellfish best served in soups or in fritters (deep-fried in a spicy batter). Many of the restaurants have been influenced by flavors from Cuba and other parts of the Caribbean and serve what is known as Floribbean-style cuisine. For dessert, try—what else?—key lime pie, which has a tart yellow (not green) custard filling and a graham-cracker crust.

General dining times are 6:30-10:30 am for breakfast, 11 am-2 pm for lunch and 6-10 pm for dinner. Many bars and restaurants in Old Town serve food until the wee hours of the morning.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$15; \$\$ = \$15-\$25; \$\$\$ = US\$26-\$40; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$40.

Local & Regional

Blue Heaven

729 Thomas St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-8666

<http://blueheavenkw.com>

This restaurant's Caribbean-colored building was once a bordello, and it's said that Hemingway refereed boxing matches there. Today, it's an interesting mix of upscale cuisine and down-to-earth surroundings. Most of the tables sit outside in the landscaped courtyard, where chickens peck through the dirt as you eat. The menu leans toward Caribbean cuisine: seafood, jerk dishes and the famous key lime pie. The cornbread is also excellent. If you go for breakfast or the locally renowned brunch, try the lobster eggs Benedict or omelettes. Parking is a challenge, so try to walk or bike there.

Daily 8 am-10:30 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$.

BobaLu's Southern Cafe

301 Overseas Highway
Big Coppitt Key, FL

Phone: 305-296-1664. Toll-free 888-325-1389

<http://www.bobalussoutherncafe.net>

A local jewel located 10 mi/16 km north on U.S. Highway 1, this restaurant is usually jammed with locals from nearby keys. Casual decor and diners (flip-flops OK) round out the down-home feel. Specialties include cooking fresh fish that diners take with them, and the menu offers a good variety from fresh fish to pork chops and fried okra to pizza.

Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-9:30 pm; also open Sunday November-March 11 am-8 pm. \$-\$\$\$. Cash only.

Cafe Marquesa

600 Fleming St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-1244

<http://www.marquesa.com/cafe-marquesa.htm>

Housed in one of Key West's more artfully restored buildings, this restaurant offers consistently good service and food—usually combinations of fresh seafood and Caribbean sauces (for instance, Florida lobster and grilled Key West pink shrimp with a Thai butter sauce). Muted and sophisticated decor calls for more than shorts and T-shirts.

Daily for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Firefly

223 Petronia St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-849-0104

<http://www.fireflykeywest.com>

This down-home chic restaurant in Bahama Village serves up Southern fare for foodies. The sleekly renovated two-story house has indoor and outdoor seating with a lovely upstairs porch. Expect generous portions of dishes such as bacon-crab beignets, homemade biscuits and shrimp and grits for brunch. At night choose from entrees such as bacon-wrapped meatloaf, braised bison short rib and pan-seared pork belly. Finish with the key lime cake.

Monday-Friday 10 am-10 pm, Saturday and Sunday 9 am-10 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Garbo's Grill

409 Caroline St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-304-3004

<http://garbosgrillkw.com>

There aren't too many food trucks in Key West, probably because any real estate—even parking lots—comes at a premium. Unlike other mobile food vendors, Garbo's sets up shop at the same location every day. The mahimahi tacos, made with mango, red cabbage, jalapeno, cilantro, onion and a secret "Caribbean sauce," are delicious. Other upscale finger foods include umami burgers, a hot dog wrapped in bacon and served with mango, and ginger glazed shrimp.

Monday-Saturday 11 am-9 pm. Get there early as it often runs out. \$.

Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville Cafe

500 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-1435

<http://www.margaritavillekeywest.com>

The singer, songwriter and tropical party guy who launched his career from Key West sang about his cheeseburgers in paradise long before he opened this restaurant on Duval Street. Burgers, salads and fresh seafood are popular, as is the conch chowder. At night, rock 'n' roll bands transform the place into a music hall.

Daily 11 am-midnight. \$\$.

Mangoes

700 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-8002

<http://www.mangoeskeywest.com>

Set in the heart of Duval Street and serving tantalizing island-style cuisine, Mangoes is an ideal spot to sate the appetite while people-watching. It's tough to resist dinner starters such as a wild-mushroom martini, but leave room for creative-to-classic island entrees, including the signature yellowtail snapper with a passion fruit *buerre blanc*, and jerk pork with fried plantains.

Daily noon-11 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Rooftop Cafe

308 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-2042

<http://www.rooftopcafekeywest.com>

Located in the heart of Mallory Square, the Rooftop Cafe has great views of the historic buildings lining the waterfront. The restaurant serves mainstream cuisine laced with regional influences and often has live music to dine by. Specialties include a shrimp and crab cake, and wild mushroom risotto. The key lime pie is excellent.

Daily 11 am-10 pm. Reservations recommended for dinner. \$\$\$.

Cuisines

American

Camille's

1202 Simonton St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-4811

<http://www.camilleskeywest.com>

Inexpensive and a favorite with locals, Camille's serves gourmet home-style meals. The crab Benedict has won awards, and the creamy lobster ravioli is a must-try.

Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$.

Sarabeth's

530 Simonton St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-293-8181

<http://www.sarabethskeywest.com>

The tropical outpost of New York City's beloved purveyor of jams, cookies and comfort foods, this restaurant is located in a charming Victorian home and makes the perfect setting to take a break from the crowds. It serves classics with a twist, such as macaroni and cheese with poblano chilis and gruyere cheese and super-light pancakes made with lemon and ricotta

Wednesday-Sunday for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Fusion

Louie's Backyard

700 Waddell Ave.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-1061

<http://www.louiesbackyard.com>

A top-shelf restaurant with excellent food, Louie's also has possibly the most romantic location of all the Key West eateries (the rear deck is built out over the water and serves as the bar)—an impeccably restored old conch house with a tin roof, high ceilings and awesome views. (The small bit of sand next to Louie's is known as Dog Beach, and at 5 pm it's loaded with canine lovers and their coconut-retrieving pets.) The cuisine is a melange of Caribbean, Asian and Latin American. The menu changes frequently, with the exception of a few die-hard dishes such as the local pink shrimp with grits, mushrooms and bacon.

Daily 11:30 am-10:30 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Turtle Kraals Restaurant & Bar

231 Margaret St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-2640

<http://www.turtlekraals.com>

Set on the site of the island's first turtle cannery on the Historic Harborwalk, Turtle Kraals specializes in southwestern offerings and seafood prepared with an island flair. Menu items include everything from grilled and broiled seafood dishes to mango crab cakes, barbecue brisket and enchiladas. Even some breakfast items are nestled in tortillas. Turtle races are held on-site regularly.

Daily 11 am-10 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Italian

Antonia's

615 Duval St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-6565

<http://www.antoniaskeywest.com>

This popular northern Italian trattoria serves luscious fettuccine and lasagna, as well as fresh fish and fine veal. If you're lucky, the catch of the day will be snapper baked with white wine and fennel. The creamy panna cotta makes a memorable finale.

Thursday-Tuesday 11 am-10 pm. Dinner reservations required. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Duetto Ice Cream & Pizza

540 Greene St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-848-4981

<http://www.pizzaandgelato.it>

You'd think an island that celebrates easy living would have more pizza shops, but perhaps it's a matter of quality over quantity. Duetto's thin crust pies are celebrated by locals and tourists alike. Try the Caprese or the prosciutto focaccia. Owners Leonardo, Silvia and Giancarlo Basta are Italian immigrants who make their own gelato in-house (so save room!).

Daily 9 am-10 pm. \$.

Latin American

El Meson de Pepe

410 Wall St., Mallory Square (behind Mallory Square)
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-295-2620

<http://www.elmesondepepe.com>

This family-owned Cuban eatery opened in 1984 and is in the brick-facade Cayo Hueso y Habana structure at popular Mallory Square. In addition to Cuban staples, such as *ropa vieja* (shredded beef), roast pork and *palomilla* steak, chef Pepe Diaz offers such mouthwatering house specialties as grilled sirloin with a mushroom brandy sauce.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

El Siboney

900 Catherine St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-4184

<http://www.elsiboneyrestaurant.com>

Difficult to find but worth seeking out, El Siboney makes up in flavor what it lacks in decor. The family-owned restaurant has long satisfied locals with its modest prices and robust, home-style Cuban flavors. Favorites include roast pork and, hands-down, the best Cuban sandwich anywhere.

Daily 11 am-9:30 pm. \$-\$\$.

Kelly's Caribbean Bar Grill & Brewery

301 Whitehead St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-293-8484

<http://www.kellyskeywest.com>

Occupying the original home of Pan American Airways, Kelly's lets you dine inside or out. Notable entrees include yellowtail snapper and *pescado negra* (local fish). By the way, its name refers to owner Kelly McGillis, who was Tom Cruise's love interest in *Top Gun*.

Daily 11 am-4 pm and 5-10 pm. Reservations recommended. \$-\$\$.

Mediterranean

Azur

425 Grinnell St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-2987

<http://www.azurkeywest.com>

This little Mediterranean restaurant scores big points for its brunch. From its carbonara breakfast—angel hair pasta with pancetta, onions, mushrooms, cream, Parmesan cheese and two poached eggs—to its key lime stuffed French toast. It's also known for tapas and seafood.

Monday-Friday 8 am-10 pm, Saturday 9-11 am and 5:30-10 pm, Sunday 9 am-3 pm and 5:30-10 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Santiago's Bodega

207 Petronia St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-296-7691

<https://www.facebook.com/SantiagosBodega>

A tapas bar with indoor and alfresco dining. The prosciutto-wrapped dates stuffed with goat cheese are fabulous, as is the wedge of Camembert sauteed with garlic, onions, almonds, apricots and red bell peppers.

Daily 11 am-10 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$.

Mexican

Bad Boy Burrito

1128 Simonton St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-292-2697

<http://www.badboyburrito.com>

Good, cheap Mexican food. Kobe beef burritos with verde sauce, fish tacos on homemade corn tortillas, even duck—all for less than US\$12. There's also a juice bar that serves coconut water and *agua fresca*.

Monday-Saturday 11 am-10 pm. \$.

Seafood

Alonzo's Oyster Bar

700 Front St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-5880

<http://www.alonzosoysterbar.com>

Locals and visitors alike share a love for Alonzo's, set along the Historic Harborwalk overlooking A&B Marina. Clams on the half-shell steamed in a garlic-sherry broth are among the raw-bar offerings. The chef gets creative with a white clam chili and combines entrees with New England, Cajun and island-style bents.

Daily 11 am-11 pm. \$\$\$.

B.O.'s Fish Wagon

801 Caroline St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-9272

<http://bosfishwagon.com>

Buoys dangle from the ceiling at this funky local favorite known for cheap eats and a fine fish sandwich. A reminder of old Key West.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$.

Conch Republic Seafood Co.

631 Greene St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-4403

<http://www.conchrepublicseafood.com>

This expansive, open-air eatery sits on the site of a former sponge dock on the Historic Harborwalk. Accented by exposed-pipe ceilings and a large saltwater aquarium, the warehouse-chic environment is upstaged only by the food, much of which has a Floribbean flair. Island-style live entertainment is staged regularly on premises. Seafood dishes—Key West pink shrimp and Bahamian-cracked conch with key lime mustard, for example—are the emphasis, but Conch Republic also satisfies landlubbers with aged Black Angus beef offerings as well as chicken and pork alternatives.

Daily 11:30 am-10 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Half Shell Raw Bar

231 Margaret St.
Key West, FL

Phone: 305-294-7496

<http://www.halfshellrawbar.com>

A casual fish house on the site of a former shrimp-packing business, Half Shell is known for its "Eat it Raw" slogan, license-plate wall decor and reasonably priced, simply prepared seafood dishes. You'll find most shell and scale fish on the menu, a fisherman's platter, and broiled, fried and garlic seafood combos that allow for sampling several species. Outdoor dining available

Monday-Thursday 11 am-10 pm, Friday and Saturday 11 am-11 pm, Sunday noon-10 pm. \$-\$\$.

Security

Personal Safety

Crime is not a major concern in this Florida Keys city, but use common sense: Watch out for pickpockets and purse snatchers, don't wear lots of expensive jewelry, don't leave valuables such as cameras unattended and don't leave tempting items in plain sight in parked vehicles. And if you rent a bike, make sure you lock it every time you leave it—even for just a moment.

Don't leave doors unlocked when staying in even the nicest of hotels or resorts, and lock valuables in the hotel safe when you leave the premises. It's tempting to leave balcony or veranda doors open at night to drink in tropical breezes but doing so can be an invitation to burglars.

Take extra care when traveling around by bike, scooter or electric car. Traffic gets heavy during high season.

Boating safety is very important, whether you are renting a wave runner, Sunfish or small powerboat. More Florida Keys safety information is available at <http://www.flakeys.com/safetyinfo.cfm>.

Health

Good medical care is available in Key West. Sunburn is the biggest concern for visitors, so apply plenty of sunscreen and wear an audacious sombrero. Quality sunglasses are recommended as well. Dehydration is also a potential problem—be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Watch out for poison ivy and poison oak.

As a result of the Zika virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have issued an advisory for pregnant women to avoid traveling to South Florida. Men and women visiting Zika-affected areas should consult a doctor before trying to conceive.

Lower Keys Medical Center, 5900 College Road, Stock Island. Phone 305-294-5531. <http://www.lkmc.com>.

Truman Medical Walk-In Clinic is open Monday-saturday 9 am-4:30 pm. 540 Truman Ave., Key West. Phone 305-296-4399.

Monroe County Health Department, Gato Building, 1100 Simonton St., Key West. Phone 305-293-7500. Call only for medical information or advice; medical care is not provided on-site.

In an emergency, dial 911.

Disabled Advisory

Key West may be a little behind the times in meeting ADA requirements, but many hotels in town do have handicapped-accessible rooms. This might be more of a challenge at the small bed-and-breakfasts and historic buildings, but appropriate places can be found. For sightseeing, it is best to call ahead to confirm that historic sites are wheelchair-accessible and that the boating activities can accommodate you and provide any assistance that may be necessary.

The city buses are wheelchair-accessible, and most taxi services will accommodate wheelchairs. The sidewalk system throughout the city is improving.

For more information, see <http://www.keywestcity.com>

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do beware of visitors on scooters. Many of them drive as if they've never been on one before, and they seem to run in packs.

Don't plan to camp on the beach in Key West. The city doesn't allow it.

Do expect crowds in the winter months, particularly on weekends. High season runs from Christmas through Easter. Major holidays throughout the year also see many visitors filling all available hotel rooms. Plan ahead or plan to sleep in your car.

Don't speed over the Overseas Highway, also called U.S. 1. It has a speed limit of 50 mi/80 km per hour, slowing to 35-45 mph/56-72 kph near many communities. Keep within speed limits to avoid traffic tickets that may spoil your holiday.

Don't plan on a quick drive between Key West and Miami. Much of the road is just two lanes, and you often have to wait for designated passing areas. Plus, the roads get very clogged during peak travel times, especially holidays.

Do wear sunscreen every day, all the time. Even if the weather is overcast, you can still get a sunburn.

Don't be so distracted by the breathtakingly blue waters along the Overseas Highway that you fail to keep a safe distance from vehicles ahead. Also be aware that on Pine Key, around Mile Marker 32, key deer sometimes dart out onto the road looking for handouts.

Don't anchor on a reef. Reefs are alive.

Don't disturb the bird nests or nesting turtles.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 25,704.

Languages: English, Spanish.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Protestant, Roman Catholic) and Jewish.

Time Zone: 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-5 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the second Sunday in March to the first Sunday in November.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 305, area code;

Money

Taxes

Florida sales tax is 7.5%. In addition, a local-option bed tariff brings the total tax on accommodations to 12.5%.

Tipping

The standard tip is 15%-20%, more if the service is exemplary. After a day of fishing or boating, it is customary to tip the mate.

Weather

The winter temperatures (highs in the 70s F/21-26 C, lows in the mid-60s F/18-19 C) sound idyllic, but the wind-chill factor can make it feel a lot colder—the island is way out in the ocean, after all. It also can be extremely muggy and humid in the summer, with highs in the 90s F/mid-30s C and lows in the upper 70s F/mid-20s C, even though steady trade winds blow off the water.

What to Wear

There are very few reasons for formal clothes on Key West. Dressy often means a clean T-shirt. Cotton, linen and rayon clothes work best in the frequently humid, tropical climate. Long sleeves or a lightweight sweater help cut the evening breezes, but a wind-resistant jacket is probably the best bet—especially if you plan to get out onto the water. Comfortable shoes or sandals, decent sunglasses, a bathing suit and a hat are essential.

Business dress is typically not much more than a tropical shirt and slacks for men and a skirt and shirt for women. Sandals are the norm.

Transportation

Walking and bicycling are the best ways to explore Key West—the tiny island is pancake flat. You'll find bike shops all along Duval Street. Prices start around US\$20 a day, including a lock. Some shops will even deliver the bike to you.

Public Transportation

Public buses make two loops around the island, one clockwise and one counterclockwise (with a terminal at Mallory Square). The fare is US\$2 (exact change required). Buses run about every 15 minutes.

Taxi

You can flag a taxi on the street—a common practice—or find one outside one of the larger hotels, such as the Westin or the Pier House. Or you can call for a pickup, and your cab will usually arrive within about 10 minutes.

You'll see taxis in various colors, from the yellow cabs of The Friendly Cab Co. (phone 305-292-3333) to the flamingo-pink cabs of the Five 6's Taxi (phone 305-296-6666). Taxis are metered, and fares are regulated.

Costa Maya, Mexico

Overview

Introductio

Though Cancun and the Riviera Maya get the most attention from visitors to Mexico's Caribbean coast, interest in Costa Maya (or Grand Costa Maya) has been growing. The area, which starts a four- to five-hour drive south of Cancun, stretches from Punta Allen south to the border with Belize. It's more than 100 mi/160 km south of Tulum in the Riviera Maya.



Although many travelers opt to drive from Cancun (where rental cars are plentiful) to the Costa Maya, it's also possible to take a bus from Cancun or Playa del Carmen into Chetumal, which is near the border with Belize and a starting point for trips into Guatemala and Belize.

Costa Maya has lovely beaches, small seaside towns and traditional architecture. Unfortunately, newfound attention to this once-secluded paradise is bringing with it a lot of hasty and often unsightly construction, although the government has promised that no new hotel will be taller than a palm tree (a regulation immediately ignored).

Costa Maya is also close to the Mayan ruins at Kohunlich, which are tucked deep in the forest about 40 mi/64 km from Chetumal. Groups can tour three plazas, a ball court and an imposing temple. Scientists believe more than 500 burial mounds in the area have yet to be uncovered. More large Mayan sites are opening north of Kohunlich. To learn more about the history of the ruins, you can visit the excellent Museum of Maya Culture in Chetumal.

Costa Maya also offers visitors plenty of ecotourism opportunities. Bacalar, which is 23 mi/37 km north of Chetumal, is a good base for sailing, fishing and bird-watching—more than 300 feathered species have been identified in the nearby jungles and wetlands. Scuba divers can also take a two-hour boat trip to Banco Chinchorro, which is part of the largest coral atoll in the Americas. Dotted with shipwrecks, the reef is a favorite with experienced divers.

For more information, visit <http://www.costamaya-mexico.com>.

Port Information

Location

Costa Maya has become a popular stop for cruise ships sailing the Western Caribbean. A terminal re-opened in late 2008 (after being ravaged by Hurricane Dean) at the sleepy town of Mahahual, a quaint fishing village with powdery-sand, palm-lined beaches. A boardwalk is lined by beach houses, small hotels and restaurants.

The privately run port is clean and attractive with a lot to do: There is a beach, bars and restaurants, jewelry stores and duty-free galore. Just outside the gates cruisers find familiar chain restaurants such as the Hard Rock Cafe and Senor Frog's.

The port boasts a few nods to the Mayan culture beyond its gates, and the people who work there are locals, but the area has about as much to do with Mexico as the Venetian in Las Vegas has to do with Italy. That makes some sense in Vegas, because Italy is thousands of miles/kilometers away. It makes little sense in Costa Maya, where the real Mexico is just five minutes away.

Cruisers who stop there should take advantage of being able to visit a part of Mexico that is not otherwise easy to get to.

Majahual is less than 10 minutes from Costa Maya by taxi. Passengers can see the town's lighthouse from the cruise ship pier.

ozumel, Mexico

Overview

Introduction

Cozumel, Mexico, should not be compared to Cancun, the splashy resort just 40 mi/65 km to the north and one of its nearest neighbors. In the past, Cozumel had a laid-back, sedate atmosphere, and its superior fishing, snorkeling and diving gave it a definite edge.

Today, Cozumel retains its unique vibe and remains a better choice for those who don't like planned resorts, but the island is no longer an escapist's paradise. The



Tourists relax in Cozumel

snorkeling, diving and fishing are still great, but no one would mistake present-day Cozumel for the sleepy backwater it once was.

One reason is cruise ships. Cozumel is the most popular cruise stop in Mexico and can host as many as four large ships simultaneously. When more than one ship looms on the horizon, Cozumel's restaurants, bars and shops fill with day-trippers. Everyone, from shopkeepers to bartenders, gets a bit stressed by the crowds.

Still, Cozumel can be fun, especially for travelers interested in exploring its coral reefs on scuba and snorkeling outings. The island's only town, San Miguel, has retained much of its pleasant, small-town atmosphere. Those with enough time for a day trip will find the Mayan ruins of Tulum and Chichen Itza, on the Yucatan mainland, within striking distance.

Highlights

Sights—Deserted beaches on Cozumel's rugged east coast; sea and jungle vistas in the Faro Celarain Eco Park; the Maya ruins at San Gervasio.

Museums—The Museo de la Isla de Cozumel with its haunting Maya sculptures; the Navigational Museum with its unique navigational exhibits; the San Miguel Pax Music Museum with its collection of almost 1,000 different musical instruments from around the world.

Memorable Meals—Cajun gumbo at the French Quarter with Zydeco music on the side; pasta with fresh seafood in Guido's romantic courtyard.

Late Night—Frolic and fun at Senor Frog's and Carlos'n Charlie's; break a sweat dancing at Dubai; street festivities during Carnival.

Walks—The *malecon*, San Miguel's pretty seaside promenade; the botanical gardens in Parque Nacional Chankanaab; the seaside trails and views of Mayan ruins in Faro Celarain Eco Park.

Especially for Kids—Dolphin encounters at Parque Nacional Chankanaab; underwater tours with Atlantis Adventures submarines.

Geography

Cozumel is Mexico's largest island—33 mi/53 km long and 8 mi/13 km wide. The island is very flat. From the mainland, the tall hotel buildings appear to float on the horizon. Shops, restaurants and nightlife are concentrated in San Miguel, the only town, which is on the west coast of the island.

Cozumel has two highways. One makes a half-circle around the southern end of the island. Heading south out of San Miguel, it's a four-lane road for about 5 mi/8 km before narrowing to two lanes. The other highway is the Carretera Transversal (the cross-island highway), which is a well-maintained road that cuts straight through the jungle-covered center of the island and connects the east and west coasts.

It's hard to get lost in downtown San Miguel if you know the layout: *Avenidas* (avenues) run north-south, and *calles* (streets) run east-west. Except for the large thoroughfares, such as Avenida Melgar (also known as the *Malecon* or waterfront), Calle 11 and the island highways, most roads are one way.

History

The oldest Maya ruin on Cozumel dates from AD 300. The Maya believed that Cozumel was the spiritual home of Ixchel, the goddess of fertility and love. Maya women and men were said to make a pilgrimage to the island at least once in their lifetimes to ensure the healthy birth of their children.

The name Cozumel comes from the Mayan word *Cuzamil-Peten*, which means "Land of the Swallows." (Ixchel was often depicted with swallows at her feet.)

Cozumel was a quiet place until the early 1960s, when it was first visited by Jacques Cousteau, the well-known underwater explorer and documentary filmmaker. He put the island on the map as one of the great diving destinations in the world.

In recent decades, Cozumel has experienced the tourism boom that has transformed the northern Yucatan, and it has become an increasingly popular destination for cruise ships.

Port Information

Location

Cruise ships visiting Cozumel dock at the International Pier, Punta Langosta or Puerta Maya (the most developed; <http://www.puertamaya.com>), all of which have been reconstructed to withstand a Category 5 hurricane. For more information on each facility, see <http://www.cozumelmycozumel.com/Pages/CozumelCruisesBasics.htm>.

During peak times, some ships anchor offshore there and tender passengers to land. These are marked on cruise ship itineraries as *fundeos*.

Punta Langosta pier is a 10-minute walk, and the International Pier is a short taxi ride or a 2-mi/3-km walk along the waterfront to San Miguel. Puerta Maya's 9-acre/4-hectare

cruise center has a transportation hub that can accommodate dozens of taxis and tour buses. The three piers have shopping malls, Internet access, taxis and tour stands.

A tourist-information office on the municipal pier and a booth in the nearby park are open daily 8 am-4 pm. The island's main tourism office is on the second floor of the Plaza del Sol shopping center on the east side of the town plaza, half a block from the municipal pier. It's open Monday-Friday 8 am-3 pm. Phone 987-869-0212. <http://www.islacozumel.com.mx>.

Potpourri

The El Cedral Festival was started about 150 years ago by Casimiro Cardenas. He survived an attack during the War of the Castes by clutching a small wooden cross and started the festival to honor its power.

Hernan Cortes, the Spanish conqueror of the Aztec Empire in the 16th century, made his first landfall from Cuba at Cozumel. Soon after the Maya population was decimated by smallpox carried by the Spaniards.

Cozumel was a sacred island according to its first settlers, the Maya. They dedicated the island to the moon goddess Ixchel and built many temples in her honor.

Cozumel was a favorite lair for some of the most notorious pirates along the Spanish Main. Henry Morgan, the most famous of them, went on to become the British governor of Jamaica as Sir Henry Morgan.

A large population that is descended from the ancient Maya lives in Cozumel—you'll know them by their Mayan dialect, round faces, dark almond-shaped eyes, coal-black hair and short stature. The women wear traditional embroidered *huipil* dresses, which look like sacks and help keep them cool in the heat of the day.

Black coral used to be harvested by native divers who plunged more than 100 ft/31 m beneath the surface of the ocean without the use of air tanks. Now the coral is on the endangered list, and its sale is prohibited by international law.

The island's airport was used as a U.S. Navy base during World War II.

See & Do

Sightseeing

San Miguel, the only town on the island, is a lively place. Although the typical traveler-oriented attractions are centered on the Plaza del Sol and Avenida Rafael Melgar (the 9-mi/14-km waterfront road also known as the *malecon*), be sure to take a stroll through

some of the streets farther inland. You'll see the houses of the town's residents and nontourist businesses with colorful, hand-painted signs. Shop windows overflow with shoes and everyday necessities.

Another slice of Cozumel life takes place in the plaza, just off the *malecon*, on Sunday evenings, when the town residents (and a fair number of visitors) turn out for live concerts. Many of the locals are decked out in their finery—this is where those brightly colored shoes get put through their paces. There's dancing, flirting and general merriment. It's also a great opportunity to sample homemade foods, such as tamales, that are sold by local women to raise money for their churches.

As far as formal attractions go, the most popular is Parque Nacional Chankanaab, south of San Miguel, which includes botanical gardens, a fish-filled lagoon, a beach, good snorkeling waters and activities such as swimming with dolphins. At the far southern end of the island is Faro Celarain Eco Park, formerly Punta Sur Ecological Park, a nature preserve where visitors board open-air trucks to see the sights.

There are some Maya ruins on the island. They're small in comparison with those at Tulum or Chichen Itza, but they're worth a visit nonetheless, especially if archaeology is an interest, or if you're up for a jungle adventure. The best-preserved ruins are at San Gervasio, in the middle of the island, and El Cedral on the southern part of the island. There are also others, less visited, at Faro Celarain Eco Park.

Historic Sites

El Cedral

This small set of ruins on the southern end of the island is visited by fewer people than San Gervasio, so you may have the place to yourself. The ancient Maya built structures there, and it later became the first Spanish settlement on the island. It's where the conquistadors, led by Cortes, supposedly celebrated the first Catholic Mass in Mexico (though Veracruz claims this honor, as well). A one-room cinderblock church commemorates the first Mass.

Most of the Maya buildings that once stood at El Cedral were torn down by the Spanish, and the ruins were further damaged when the U.S. Army built an airstrip on the site during World War II. Of the Maya ruins, one small arch is all that's easily visible today. Smaller remnants are scattered in the bush around the site, but you'll need a guide and a horse to find them, both of which can be acquired near the arch.

Admission to the site is free, but you'll have to pay if you want to take a tour on horseback. An ATV tour, also for a fee, takes you to a nearby cenote for a cool dip in the smooth waters. El Cedral is located off the coastal road on the southern part of the island.

Punta Molas Faro

This isolated lighthouse on the north shore of the island is rarely visited, making its beach a wonderful getaway for those who like solitude and a magnificent view of the ocean. Although it's a great spot for birding, getting there by car is daunting, and you'll have to walk part of the way. The best bet is to go by boat or on a guided tour. Located at the northernmost tip of the island.

San Gervasio

The best-preserved ruins on the island, this site is small and compact, and the temples are barely one story high. A spiritual center for the Maya, where men and women came by canoe to pay homage to the goddess Ixchel, there are *stela*e, plazas and six structures to visit. The temple nearest the entrance once contained a steam bath used for purification rituals. A few hundred feet/meters away are smaller buildings where researchers believe priests would gather with pilgrims to interpret their dreams. Don't miss the temple with red handprints on the walls. It's thought that all of the buildings were once connected by roads made of limestone. Knowledgeable guides wait at the entrance to the site and will give you a tour for a fee.

Daily 8 am-4 pm. Admission is US\$9. San Gervasio lies about 7 mi/11 km northeast of San Miguel. Get there by taking a small, paved side road off the Carretera Transversal (the cross-island highway).

Parks & Gardens

Discover Mexico

Carretera Sur Km. 5.5
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: Toll-free 866-464-6205

<http://www.discovermexico.org>

If you don't have time to visit the entire country, the country comes to you at this park in an amazing two-hour tour. Artful displays of Mexico's monuments and cultures take in tequila- and handicraft-making, miniatures of ancient ruins, monasteries and convents, volcanoes, and Mexico City's famous Zocalo square with a film on Mexico as an

introduction. A cafe gives you a taste of Mexico's best java, and a gift shop has the highest-quality crafts on the island.

Open Monday-Saturday 8 am-4 pm. Entrance fee US\$21 adults, US\$14 children. Tickets can also be purchased in combination with a visit to Parque Nacional Chankanaab starting at US\$34 per person.

Faro Celarain Eco Park

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0914

<http://www.cozumelparks.com>

This national preserve at the southern tip of the island (formerly Punta Sur Ecological Park) contains 247 acres/100 hectares of jungle, wetlands, lagoons and beaches. Before the park was established, this was one of the most isolated places on Cozumel, known primarily for the lighthouse there. Today, it still offers plenty of solitude, and cars are prohibited from entering the grounds. Instead, trucks with two-story decks are used to transport visitors through the park to view the birds and jungle vegetation and to spend time at the preserve's nice beach with hammocks. Electric bikes can also be rented for US\$6 per hour if you wish to explore the park on your own, and there are kayaks and snorkeling equipment for rent.

During the winter months, catamaran tours are available to nearby Colombia Lagoon, where you can do some more bird-watching and view crocodiles. (There's good bonefishing on the flats of the lagoon.) The lighthouse has been turned into a navigation museum chronicling the region's maritime history from the time of the Maya to the present and has a spectacular view from the top.

Park open daily 9 am-4 pm. Park admission is US\$12 adults, US\$8 children ages 3-11; price includes a general tour of the park, plus access to the lighthouse and associated museum. The catamaran tour is included. The park is off Carretera Sur (the southern coastal highway) Km. 27. .

Parque Nacional Chankanaab

Carretera Sur Km. 9 (6 mi/9 km south of San Miguel)

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 998-193-3360. Toll-free 866-393-5158 from the U.S. for Dolphin Discovery

<http://www.cozumelparks.com>

This park is Cozumel's prime sightseeing and activity center, and it gives a lot of bang for the buck. It was built around a saltwater lagoon where you can observe sea life

(swimming in the lagoon is not allowed), and it also has a large stretch of oceanfront property consisting of sand leading up to rock ledges along the water. Once there, you can dive and snorkel in the ocean to see the underwater reefs, statues and a fair number of fish, or you can swim with dolphins at Dolphin Discovery for an extra fee (<http://www.dolphindiscovery.com>). Scuba diving (including certification courses), sea trek and snuba excursions can also be booked. If you're traveling with small children, take them to swim in the specially protected children's lagoon where small fish are let in from the open sea.

Away from the water, there's a botanical garden with hundreds of native tropical plants that have been labeled. You can also visit Maya Zone, a replica of a Maya village with an orientation on farming and building in ancient times. Bird-watchers will find frigate birds, tanagers, woodpeckers and swallows. Keep an eye out for the park's golden iguanas—some are as long as 3 ft/1 m. Two restaurants and changing areas are located on the beach.

We recommend getting to the park early to stake out a good spot near the water.

Open daily 9 am-4 pm. Park admission is US\$21 adults, US\$14 children ages 3-11. Snorkeling equipment rental is US\$10. Swimming with the dolphins (which includes park entrance) is US\$139 adults; children's rates start at US\$79. Dolphin Discovery also has a swimming pool, beach club and snack bar. A massage runs around US\$50. Wheelchairs that operate on the beach are available.

Recreation

Nearly all recreation on the island centers around the picturesque beachfront, with snorkeling, scuba diving, sportfishing and kayaking, windsurfing and sailing the most popular activities. Golf, tennis and horseback riding are also common.

Groups can also sign up for Jeep tours and other off-the-road adventures.

Beaches

There are three types of beaches on Cozumel. First, there are some stretches of white sand on the west side of the island, where most of the resorts and attractions are located. These beaches front mostly calm, turquoise-colored water sheltered by the Yucatan mainland, making it good for swimming and snorkeling. The best of the sandy beaches are Playa Azul, Playa Pila and Playa San Juan to the north; and Playa San Francisco, Playa Mia Grand Beach Park, Mr. Sancho's, Nachi Cocom and Playa Palancar to the south.

Also on the west side of the island, you'll find "beaches" made of brown limestone, a phenomenon known as "iron shore." To get into the water, you'll usually have to use a set of steps or a ladder from the shore or from a pier. Although iron shore isn't as picturesque as the white beaches, such areas are usually better for snorkeling. The waterfront at Parque Nacional Chankanaab is iron shore, but some sand has been trucked in to create a more pleasant sunning area.

On the east side of the island, facing the open waters of the Caribbean Sea, there are pristine beaches of white sand that are largely deserted. They're beautiful, but the water there can be dangerous, plagued by rough surf and dangerous undertows (which is why so few people frequent the beaches). These shores can be good for lounging, but we recommend that you stay out of the water. You should also keep in mind that the east side is mostly uninhabited save for a few ramshackle but charming restaurants and beach bars.

Mr. Sancho's

Carretera Sur Km. 13
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-871-9174

<http://www.mrsanchos.com>

"Loco on the beach" is the slogan of this place, where you'll find the most complete assortment of activities in Cozumel. Lounge under a *palapa* on the beach, enjoy the seafood restaurant, swing on the benches in Chichi's bar, relax in the 30-person whirlpool, or participate in a brief seminar on tequila and mescal. Rent a speedboat, go parasailing, go horseback riding, or take an ATV or motorcycle tour of the jungle. A shopping area re-creates the ambience of a colorful Mexican town, complete with locally made crafts.

Daily 9 am-5 pm.

Nachi Cocom Beach Club

Carretera Sur Km. 16.5
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-857-1157

<http://www.cozumelnachicocom.net>

If you want to combine sunning on a wide, white-sand beach with a good lunch and lots of activities, Nachi Cocom is the right place. Visitors can rent WaveRunners, go parasailing, kayaking, snorkeling, fishing or simply lounge on the beach or by the pool followed by a session of massage or hair braiding.

Daily 9 am-4 pm. All-inclusive pricing is US\$55 adults, US\$35 children ages 12-17, US\$17 children ages 4-11. Attendance is limited to 100 guests per day, so reservations are encouraged, especially during the busy season and holidays.

Palancar

Carretera Sur Km. 18
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This wide beach lies in front of the most famous reef in Cozumel. There, local businesses offer such water activities as kayaking, Jet-Skiing, sailing, snorkeling and scuba diving for beginners. A *palapa*-style restaurant in the middle of a great jungle setting serves typical Yucatan dishes and seafood.

Daily 10 am-4 pm. No admission fee.

Playa Mia Grand Beach Park

Carretera Sur Km. 15.5
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-9030

<http://www.playamiacozumel.com>

Formerly Playa Sol, this is a lovely beach area that's ideal for swimming and snorkeling. There are underwater replicas of Maya statues to look at if you get tired of the fish. You can also rent a kayak or sailboat, scale a floating climbing wall, go parasailing, have lunch at one of the restaurants and visit a small zoo. On the down side, loud music is often blasting at the beach, and there are a lot of in-your-face souvenir vendors.

Daily 9 am-6 pm. US\$30 admission.

Playa San Francisco

Carretera Sur Km. 15
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

One of the oldest beaches in Cozumel and shared by several hotels, Playa San Francisco has up-to-date facilities. Maya structures rim the wide, safe beach. The on-site restaurant offers seafood and Mexican cuisine, and there are plenty of watersports and beach activities, as well as a large area for sunbathing.

Daily 9 am-5 pm.

Boating & Sailing

Most beachfront hotels rent sailboarding equipment. Expect to pay US\$50-\$60 for up to two hours. Parasailing is also possible.

Cozumel Sailing

Carretera Norte Km. 3 (at Puerto Abrigo Marina North)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-2312 or 987-869-1777

<http://www.cozumelsailing.com>

Charter a sailboat (a 35-ft/11-m trimaran or a 22-ft/7-m sloop), with or without crew, for a variety of excursions: sunset sails, all-day adventure sails or deep-sea fishing.

Reservations required. Rates start at US\$90 adults, US\$45 children. Sailing lessons offered.

Fishing

Although no fishing is allowed near Cozumel's protected reefs, the waters around the island have some of the best fishing in the Caribbean, particularly at the drop-off near Playa del Carmen. Catch includes swordfish, blue and black marlin (catch-and-release only), shark, wahoo and barracuda, depending upon the time of the year. On the flats you can catch bonefish.

For a private charter, prices start around US\$400 for the boat for a half-day excursion, and up to US\$700 for a full day. Make plans in advance, or go to the marina, Puerto Abrigo at Carretera Norte Km. 3, and deal directly with the boat captains there.

Albatros Charters

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-7904. Toll-free 888-333-4643 from the U.S

<http://www.albatroscharters.com>

Offers private sportfishing charters. Rates range US\$445-\$675 for four to eight hours, depending on the size of the boat. Boats hold a minimum of six people. Individuals can join a group starting at US\$200.

Cozumel Fishing Charters

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-8560. Toll-free 877-288-7765 from the U.S

<http://www.fishingcozumel.net>

Offers deep-sea outings, bottom fishing, fly-fishing tours and combination outings with a variety of local suppliers.

Golf

Cozumel Country Club

Carretera Costera Norte Km. 6.5

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-9570

<http://www.clubcorp.com/Clubs/Cozumel-Country-Club>

The island moved one step up the tourism hierarchy when this course opened. The 18-hole, par-72 layout was designed by Jack Nicklaus.

Greens fees for nonmembers run US\$129 before 12:30 pm and include a shared cart; US\$84 after 12:30 pm. (Guests at some luxury hotels get reduced fees of US\$129 for morning play, US\$85 for afternoon play.) Package prices start at US\$159 if booked online and include 18 holes with a shared cart, Nike club rental, two sleeves of golf balls, range balls and a course souvenir.

Horseback Riding

Rancho Buenavista

Avenida Rafael Melgar (at Calle 11 Sur)

Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Scenic setting for guided horseback rides through rugged tropical landscape. Can accommodate individuals or groups.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-3 pm.

Scuba & Snorkeling

Jacques Cousteau introduced the world to the underwater life of Cozumel in the 1960s, and despite some damage from overuse and hurricanes, the reefs that ring the island remain wonderful places to snorkel and scuba dive—some are close enough that you can swim to them from shore. Famous around the world, this Great Mayan Reef marks the beginning of a 600-mi-/965-km-long reef system that stretches south to Central America. Dive shops are plentiful—the Cozumel Association of Dive Operators includes more than 100 certified dive shops, many of which operate out of the resorts. Cozumel also has several decompression chambers—it was the first Mexican resort area to do so—which earns the island kudos for safety.

Divers generally can expect visibility of 100 ft/30 m, but it's even better than that at Palancar Reef, at the southern end of the island. Expect to see coral of every color of the rainbow. The rest of the marine life is colorful, too: anemones, starfish, octopuses, lobster, crabs and, on a larger scale, graceful rays and dolphins. San Francisco Reef is popular for its plentiful fish, and the Santa Rosa Wall and the Colombia Pinnacles rate high for sheer excitement as well as for bountiful sea life.

Because of strong currents, Cozumel dive operators practice a style of diving known as "drift diving." Divers relax and float with the 5- to 6-knot Guiana Current, and dive-boat captains follow behind and pick up their groups at the end of the dive.

With so many fine dive operations on the island, it's a buyer's market. If you happen to be visiting in the off-season (May-early December), you can shop around once you get there. During high season, it's best to reserve in advance. You must be a certified diver and present your certification card to go diving, although some shops offer an introductory course for beginners (check locally).

Expect to pay around US\$75 for a two-tank dive with boat trip, water and soft drinks included.

The most accessible place to snorkel is the Parque Nacional Chankanaab, about 6 mi/10 km south of San Miguel. Another possibility is Airplane Flats in front of the El Cid La Ceiba Beach Hotel, where a plane was sunk in shallow water for the filming of a movie. Snorkeling gear rents for about US\$5 a day. Another option to consider is one of the island's many snorkel tours to Palancar Gardens and Colombia Shallow Reef. Prices range US\$50-\$65 for a guided group snorkeling trip with boat.

Note: Always be careful when snorkeling in Cozumel. Currents along the west side of the island can be swift, and even though most are located away from the shoreline, that's not always the case. On the east coast, the water is much rougher, with stronger currents and undertows. Never go snorkeling or diving alone.

Aqua Safari

Ave. Rafael Melgar No. 429 (between calles 5 and 7 Sur)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0101

<http://www.aquasafari.com>

Perfect for those who are new to diving, Aqua Safari has received many accolades for safety and expertise in working with novice divers. Also offers more than 20 intermediate and advanced courses geared for open water, dive masters and underwater photography.

Expect to pay US\$75-\$85 for a two-tank dive, not including equipment rental and a small park fee; add US\$15 for a third tank dive on the same trip. Night dives are US\$45, and a one-tank afternoon dive is US\$35.

Deep Blue

Ave. Rosado Salas No. 200
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-5653

<http://www.deepbluecozumel.com>

This company offers several levels of certification (PADI, TDI, IANTD). Its divers know the best reefs and use advanced equipment to find the perfect spots to dive. Rental equipment is available, too.

Expect to pay US\$75 for a two-tank dive, including equipment. Promotes packages with several local hotels. You can also charter your own boat with a dive master for five or fewer divers.

Dive Cozumel/Yellow Rose

Ave. Rosado Salas No. 85 (between avenidas Rafael Melgar and 5)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-4567. Toll-free 866-319-2649 from the U.S

<http://www.divecozumel.net>

If you want to live the high life, sign on for one of the trips aboard the *Yellow Rose*, a 48-ft/15-m craft. A gourmet catered lunch is included.

A three-tank dive departs daily at 8:30 am and returns at 4 pm. It costs US\$115. A two-tank afternoon/night dive departs at 4:30 pm and returns at 9 pm for US\$80.

Dive Paradise

Ave. Rafael Melgar No. 602
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-0503 or 987-872-1007

<http://www.diveparadise.com>

This company offers dive training at all levels and a variety of dive trips by day or night, either singly or in packages. The company has six locations around Cozumel; you can rent or buy equipment at its main store on Avenida Melgar and at the Costa Club Resort.

Two-tank dive trips start at US\$74, and one-tank trips are offered 3-5 pm, starting at US\$35. An exclusive "Cock-A-Doodle-Dive" is offered 6 am-1 pm, allowing divers to visit the reefs before other boats have even left the shore—three tanks for US\$98 for a minimum of three divers.

Snuba and Sea Trek

Carreterra Sur Km. 9
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

These below-the-waves adventures are available at Chankanaab Park, upping the array of activities already on tap. Snuba has participants connected to air hoses as they goggle their way past fish and coral to depths of 20 ft/6 m. Sea Trekkers don spacelike white helmets with their own air supply—they don't even get their eyelashes wet as they walk on sand 25 ft/8 m under the water. No swimming skills needed.

Tours leave every hour 9 am-3 pm next to Dolphin Discovery at the park. Price is US\$65 per person.

Shopping

A favorite pastime of nearly every visitor to Cozumel is shopping, and for good reason. Although prices for most crafts are quite high compared to other parts of Mexico, you'll find good buys on a wide variety of regional items: woven hammocks, leather purses and sandals, cotton clothing, ceramics, silver and gold jewelry, onyx and liquor. You can also find bargains on other Mexican handicrafts such as brightly colored baskets, papier-mache figures and wood carvings.

The main shopping district surrounds the plaza and spreads out north and south along Avenida Melgar—the *malecon*—and the flea market is located at Calle 1 Sur, near the main plaza. Hawkers selling inexpensive trinkets and sometimes dubious-quality jewelry now line the street from the main plaza to the cruise-ship malls. Walk on the seaside sidewalk to avoid them. Buy silver, gold and semiprecious gemstone jewelry from reputable merchants, and be sure to look for the .925 stamp on silver, which verifies that it is .925 parts pure sterling. Don't be fooled by "German" silver, which isn't stamped, and is made of nickel. And don't forget to explore the side streets leading off the plaza where you can often find lower prices and unusual crafts.

The cruise-ship piers at Punta Langosta, International Pier and Puerta Maya have malls with high-end boutiques and specialty shops, which vary with each pier's shopping experience. You'll find high-fashion clothing, crafts, cosmetics, electronics, jewelry (especially diamonds) and more casual name-brand wear. They are worth checking out even if you are only window shopping.

Almost all stores accept U.S. dollars as well as pesos. Often you'll find prices marked in both currencies—and sometimes only in U.S. dollars. Most major credit cards are readily accepted. (You often can get a better price if you offer cash—U.S. dollars or pesos—instead of credit cards.)

Do be prepared to bargain. In fact, it's expected in most markets and street stalls (though not in upscale boutiques) and can be entertaining for both buyer and seller—Cozumelenos are good-humored about the whole process. A good way to start is to offer half of what is asked. Then both negotiators work toward the middle. But don't bargain for something unless you really want it: It's considered rude not to buy after your price has been accepted.

Although you may see shops selling black coral jewelry, be aware that it's on the endangered list of international trade and will be confiscated at U.S. customs and other countries when returning home, even if the seller provides a certificate.

Shopping Hours: Generally Monday-Saturday 9 am-9:30 pm with reduced hours on Sunday. Some stores away from the main tourist areas close for two hours during the midafternoon siesta.

Dining

Dining Overview

Most restaurants in Cozumel are informal—"comfortably casual"—and jackets are almost never required. There is a wide range of prices. Seafood and authentic Yucatecan cuisine are specialties of the region and are hard to find in places such as Playa del Carmen and Cancun. Be careful of the habanero-pepper sauce, which is served on the side—it's made from one of the hottest peppers in the world.

Prices in Cozumel's restaurants tend to be higher than those in Playa del Carmen on the mainland.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$15; \$\$ = US\$15-\$25; \$\$\$ = US\$26-\$50; and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50.

Local & Regional

Del Museo

Waterfront and Calle 6
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This open-air restaurant is great for enjoying sea breezes and people-watching. It's on the top floor of the local museum. The food is good—not great—but the view makes it all worthwhile. You can see all the way across the Yucatan Channel to Playa del Carmen.

Daily for breakfast and lunch. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards.

La Choza

Calle Rosado Salas 198 at Avenida 10
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This cheerful and casual Mexican restaurant draped with *papel picado* (typical paper cutouts) has a long history of pleasing locals as well as tourists with its wide selection of regional dishes such as tacos, fajitas, stuffed peppers and chicken in mole sauce.

Daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Mission Downtown

Avenida Rosado Salas (between Calle 5 and the waterfront)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-6340

<http://www.lamissioncozumel.com>

This place offers traditional Mexican dishes as well as seafood in a tropical garden setting. Its slogan is, "If you don't like it, you don't pay."

Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Palmeras

Waterfront (at Avenida Juarez)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0532

<http://www.restaurantepalmeras.com>

The oldest restaurant in Cozumel is located a few steps from the main pier, overlooking the ocean and adjacent to the main plaza of Cozumel. Decorated with the palm trees of its name, it's lost a lot of its local vibe but is a favorite with cruise ship passengers who pack it when the ships come in. It's a good place for a relaxed lunch, a cup of coffee or a cold beer.

Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Parrilla Mission

(between calles 50 and 55)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-869-2463

<http://www.parrillamission.com>

This place specializes in tacos, but it also offers Yucatecan chicken, pork and seafood dishes.

\$-\$\$\$. No credit cards.

Sonora Grill

Avenida Benito Juarez (at Calle 15 Norte)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

This well-established restaurant has been catering to islanders and especially divers for years. The open-air restaurant with the pretty flower boxes in front specializes in seafood such as the conch-shrimp-octopus-lobster tail platter as well as beef dishes from northern Mexico and such light fare as burgers and fajitas. Salsas are kitchen fresh, and food portions are generous.

Monday-Saturday for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards.

Cuisines

American

Margaritaville Cafe

(on the waterfront)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0256

<http://www.margaritaville.com.mx>

Part restaurant, part beach bar, this outlet of Jimmy Buffett's famous cafes is right on the water, making it a picturesque spot for fried fish, grilled tacos and burgers.

Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner till 2 am. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Italian

Guido's

Waterfront (between calles 6 and 8)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

Phone: 987-872-0946

<http://www.guidoscozumel.com>

This cozy restaurant is the best place on Cozumel for wood-oven pizza and pasta. Try the caprese salad and fettuccine alfredo with shrimp and mushrooms. The tree-shaded patio is especially pleasant.

Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seafood

El Sazon del Camaron

Avenida 65 (at Calle 2, about 10 blocks from the *malecon*)
Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico

It's all about shrimp (*camaron*) tacos at this modest eatery, and locals pack in for breakfast and lunch. Watch the Jimenez family work behind the counter turning out the breaded crustacean from scratch, served with a drop of black beans, pickled red onions and sour cream.

Open Monday-Saturday 8 am-3 pm. \$. No credit cards.

Security

Personal Safety

Cozumel is among the safer islands in the Caribbean, but you should still use commonsense precautions. Don't leave your belongings unattended at the beach or visible in a parked rental car, and don't walk along deserted beaches in the evening. This is especially true on the less-populated east side of the island. (There are sometimes military patrols in the area watching for drug smugglers.) There are police patrols along the *malecon* and at the beaches.

Tourists are not typically the target of crime, and driving around the city is generally safe. However, it is a good idea to take a taxi to your hotel at night. If you rent a car, it's best not to leave it parked on the street overnight.

The U.S. consulate is open 10 am-noon Monday-Friday. Avenida Juarez, Second Floor, between Waterfront and Avenida 5. Phone 987-872-4574.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

It's a good idea to avoid food from street vendors or raw food and to stick with the clean-looking restaurants that draw a lot of customers. Ask your doctor about hepatitis vaccinations before your trip.

If you get sick, medicines are available from several pharmacies, especially the big one in the new megastore near the Punta Langosta Mall along the *malecon*. Some painkillers and other medicines, such as prescription sleeping pills, tranquilizers and antibiotics, will require a prescription from a local doctor, written in Spanish. Some

pharmacies get around this by referring tourists to a island doctor, who will write the prescription for a fee. In an emergency, go straight to the hospital.

Medica San Miguel—a modern, privately run hospital—offers diagnostic and emergency services, as well as a decompression chamber. As the hospital's primary business is medical tourism, surgical and cosmetic services are also offered, and medical staff is bilingual. Land and air ambulance service is available. Always open. Calle 6 N. No. 132 between avenidas 5 and 10. Emergency phone 987-872-6194. Hospital phone 987-872-0103. <http://www.medicasanmiguel.com.mx>.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Disabled Advisory

Sidewalks with ramps can be found downtown in the main shopping areas along the *malecon* and main plaza. Entrances to some of the bigger shops and some restaurants also have ramps. Beyond this, it's rough going.

Newer hotels have special rooms for people with disabilities, but currently there is no public transportation equipped for wheelchairs. Chankanaab Park offers wheelchairs that operate on the sand.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do greet everyone with a *buenos días* (good day), *buenas tardes* (good afternoon) or *buenas noches* (good evening). Mexicans value this practice and will always extend a greeting, even to strangers, before getting down to business.

Do know that prices may be quoted in pesos and/or U.S. dollars. (Pesos are marked M\$, MX\$ or MXP\$.) Although U.S. dollars are almost always accepted on Cozumel, you can't always be certain. In general, you'll get the best rate if you pay in pesos. If traveling off the island to visit inland ruins, take pesos. U.S. dollars are less prevalent inland.

Don't walk out of a bar or cantina with a bottle of beer. Most beer bottles have deposits paid for by the establishment, so the staff keeps a close eye on them. If you want to take the beverage with you, ask for a plastic cup. (Be aware that walking along a street with a container of beer or mixed drink is only tolerated in the tourist zone along the waterfront. Elsewhere in the town, you may get fined.)

Do get away from the tourist areas and explore San Miguel's funky back streets with their colorful houses and typical Mexican street life.

Don't enter churches wearing shorts or beach clothing, especially if you're a woman.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Australian and U.K. citizens need passports. The Mexican government charges a tourism tax of about US\$22 for all visitors except cruise-ship passengers and a departure tax of US\$40, though both are usually included in the price of your airline ticket. A yellow-fever certificate is required if you're arriving from an infected area (contact health authorities for the latest information).

All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 100,000.

Languages: Spanish is the main language, but English is widely spoken. A few people speak Maya.

Predominant Religions: Christian (Roman Catholic).

Time Zone: 6 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-6 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the first Sunday in April until the last Sunday in October.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 52, country code for Mexico; 987, area code for Cozumel;

Money

Taxes

The government of Mexico charges a value-added sales tax of 11% on virtually all transactions in the state of Quintana Roo. In most cases, it's included in the price quoted. Visitors cannot obtain refunds on any taxes.

Tipping

A tip of 10%-15% is expected at most restaurants. Housekeepers at hotels normally receive US\$1-\$2 a day, and sky caps at airports and bellhops at hotels receive US\$2 a bag. Taxi drivers usually don't expect a tip, but you may tip if they provide extra service.

Weather

Expect daytime high temperatures in the 80s F/20s C almost year-round on the Yucatan Peninsula. The humidity will be higher in the summer months, but breezes off the sea will help to keep you cool. Hurricane season is June-November, which is when rain is most likely.

What to Wear

Casual summer clothing is appropriate year-round, but swimsuits are worn only on the beaches or at hotel swimming pools. Men are rarely, if ever, required to wear jackets. Shorts and sandals are acceptable for fast-food places, but they are not considered appropriate for the nicer restaurants. Street wear is resort casual, and residents generally choose comfort over chic.

Culturally speaking, neat, dressy-casual resort wear is appropriate for business meetings. Women can wear a lightweight suit or dress, whereas men can get away with the traditional guayabera shirt and pants.

No matter what you wear, always use plenty of sunscreen and a hat with the extra precaution of long pants and sleeves to protect against mosquitoes if journeying into a jungle area or the Maya ruins. During the winter months, a light jacket for men and a sweater or shawl for ladies is recommended because of cooler evenings.

Communication

Telephone

The standard public Telmex phones are being phased out—even if you find a working phone, it will be hard to find a shop selling the old phone cards. The phone company is slowly installing new public phones in hotels, which will accept 50-peso, 100-peso and 200-peso (approximately US\$4-\$16) phone cards, but the process is slow and the mainland is being serviced first.

The best option for long-distance calls is at small shops around the main plaza advertising international calls, which charge about US\$0.25 a minute and more if it's a call to a cell phone. International calls can be made and faxes sent from the Calling Station on Avenida Rafael Melgar at Calle 3 Sur. Long-distance direct service and fax services are available at some hotels, but expect to pay a lot to use them.

Cell phone coverage varies in quality throughout the island from excellent to nonexistent.

Although using a cell phone with a roaming agreement is the most convenient way to call, bear in mind that the charges are exorbitant unless you make arrangements with

your carrier prior to your departure. For extended stays, consider buying a rechargeable local phone from Telcel or Movistar.

Internet Access

Internet access is becoming more widely available at both large and small hotels, which sometimes charge for the service. Wi-Fi is also available at City Hall, the ferry and the airport. Several dozen shops in downtown San Miguel offer Internet access, and the government is slowly installing Wi-Fi all along the waterfront to include public parks.

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Overview

Introduction

When visitors first set eyes on Grand Cayman Island, they see a flat stretch of land that barely rises out of the water. But despite what its appearance may suggest, Grand Cayman is not lacking in awe-inspiring geographical features. To see them, visitors just have to look down.



Grand Cayman Island Aerial View

Just offshore, coral reefs and walls plunge dramatically into the abyss, creating superb conditions for visitors to Grand Cayman to go scuba diving and snorkeling. These underwater "mountainsides" (the peak being the island itself) never fail to leave Grand Cayman divers and snorkelers awestruck.

Grand Cayman is a largely stress-free place to vacation. Beaches are wide, sandy and fringed with palm trees, so beach-lovers have no shortage of coastline to enjoy. Crime is relatively rare; islanders are friendly, speak English and enjoy the highest standard of living in the Caribbean. Duty-free shopping in George Town is also a big attraction.

Grand Cayman also serves as the base of operations for just about anyone heading to the islands. Even those traveling ultimately to Little Cayman or Cayman Brac—which are even more laid-back and minimalist than the "big island"—will find that time on Grand Cayman is well-spent and a welcome break from the almost imperceptible pace of life elsewhere. For diversity in restaurants and shopping, and for sailing and diving options, it's also by far the best place to start. And in many cases it also serves a

valuable utilitarian purpose: A visitor to the other islands will need to go there just to get anything beyond essential supplies.

Highlights

Sights—Dive down to see the *Oro Verde*; snorkel Eden Rock; explore the underwater reefs in a submarine; send someone back home a postcard from Hell; lounge by the clear waters at Rum Point.

Museums—The Cayman Motor Museum; the Cayman Islands National Museum.

Memorable Meals—Nosh on local delicacies at Champion House; fresh fish at The Reef Grill; the famous *mise en places* conch fritters from Gino's Pizzeria.

Late Night—Sipping cocktails beachside while listening to a DJ at the Royal Palms Beach Club; the Full Moon Party at Calico Jack's; dancing the night away at The O Bar; live music with the Barefoot Man at The Reef.

Walks—Shop, eat and shell-scavenge your way along Seven Mile Beach; hike and nature-watch along the Mastic Trail; take a walking tour of George Town; stroll through the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park.

Especially for Kids—Visit Black Pearl Skate Park; view sea turtles at Cayman Turtle Farm; swim and snorkel with the stingrays at Stingray City; wander through the Pirate Caves at Bodden Town.

Geography

Situated in the western Caribbean Sea, Grand Cayman is the largest of the three coral islands that compose the Caymans. Mainly flat, it stretches 76 sq mi/197 sq km with a maximum elevation of 60 ft/19 m at East End. Almost half of the island is wetland.

Separated from its easterly sister islands, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac, by an 80-mi-/129-km-wide channel, Grand Cayman is 480 mi/773 km south of Miami and 180 mi/290 km northwest of Jamaica.

Cayman Trough is a massive subterranean ridge that rises 8,000 ft/2,400 m from the sea floor and is the deepest part of the Caribbean. To the south lies Bartlett Deep, where depths of more than 18,000 ft/5,580 m have been recorded. Submerged during the Ice Age, this trench is an extension of the Cuban Sierra Maestra range. Abundant coral reefs create ideal conditions for diving and sportfishing.

Interesting geographical points include the shallow, 35-sq-mi/91-sq-km reef-protected lagoon called the North Sound.

History

In 1503 during his fourth voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus discovered Grand Cayman's two sister islands, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. He baptized the islets "Las Tortugas" because of their dense population of sea turtles. Sir Francis Drake changed the islands' names to "Caymanas" in 1586, after the Carib term *caiman* for the resident crocodiles.

Spain ceded the islands to the British under the Treaty of Madrid in 1670. The crown-appointed governor resided in Jamaica, watching over the affairs of both colonies.

During the 1730s, pirates, shipwrecked sailors and deserters from Oliver Cromwell's army in nearby Jamaica began to permanently settle the island. This small population of European settlers was augmented by the influx of African slaves who were used for farming until the British outlawed slavery in 1834.

In 1832, the citizenry gathered at St. James Castle—now known as Pedro St. James, the birthplace of democracy in Cayman—and voted to create a legislature of representatives. Eight Justices of the Peace were appointed by the Governor of Jamaica. The islands were formally annexed to Jamaica in 1863. However, upon realizing the difficulty of ruling over two colonies, Jamaica appointed a commissioner in the Cayman Islands to oversee the affairs of the country.

The Cayman Islands got their first constitution in 1959, which provided for 12 elected members, along with a couple of nominated members and official members. There was also an Executive Council. The Commissioner was replaced by an Administrator who oversaw the Legislature and Executive Council.

The Cayman Islands and Jamaica were governed as a single colony until 1962, when Jamaica declared its independence from Britain. The Cayman Islands remained a British Overseas Territory. The islands pride themselves on their own constitution and government. The Cayman Islands Order, also known as the Constitution, was created in 1972 and was revised in 1994.

Port Information

Location

Of the three islands that make up the Caymans, Grand Cayman is the only one with the capacity to host cruise ships. Some ships still anchor outside the harbor west of George Town, but a CI\$14.2 million port facility—just 1,312 ft/400 m north of the old Port Authority dock—with a 200-ft/60-m pier, has the capacity to dock one or two cruise ships.

Most passengers filter through Royal Watler, a self-contained facility with immigration, tourist information, shops, restaurants and a taxi dispatch center in the center of George Town. Some passengers arrive at the town's less-equipped South or North terminals one block from the Royal Watler.

George Town is awash with shops and restaurants, all within short walking distances of the terminals. Discussions about building another pier are under way, since on any given day there can be up to six cruise ships in the harbor, and some passengers still need to be tendered to the terminal. There is also talk of augmenting the cruise terminal so that the super-sized cruise ships can berth.

In rough weather, ships may anchor off the island's southern coast and tender passengers to Spotts, which lies about 4 mi/6 km from George Town. Taxis or buses then transport passengers to George Town for shopping and to the various attractions.

There is a tourist information booth at the Royal Watler terminal. Phone 345-949-0623. <http://www.caymanislands.ky>.

Potpourri

Visitors to Grand Cayman can choose to explore some 160 unique dive sites.

Although this may change soon, currently, with no direct taxation, the Cayman Islands are a mecca for banking, with about 500 registered banks and trust companies, including more than 40 of the world's largest banks.

The famous Seven Mile Beach has experienced significant hurricane damage, and as a result, it's now only 6 miles long.

Unspoiled beaches, duty-free shopping, scuba diving, deep-sea fishing and a virtually nonexistent crime rate lure nearly a million visitors each year.

The Turtle Farm is the world's only commercial green sea-turtle farm, housing more than 16,000 endangered sea turtles.

In 2004, Hurricane Ivan devastated the Caymans more than any other island group in the Caribbean, destroying some 85% of all structures. Fortunately, the majority have since been rebuilt.

Although the islands are a British Overseas Territory, Spanish is widely spoken in the Caymans because of their proximity to Columbia, Venezuela and Central America.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Explore the island by hiking its numerous trails, bird-watching at a nearby sanctuary or passing the time away at Rum Point.

Stingray City is another not-to-be-missed highlight where you can get up-close and personal with the long-tailed sea animals. Be sure to visit the island's historic landmarks, as well.

A tour of the capital, George Town, is certainly in order and in the West Bay section of the island, there is horseback riding along the beach and the sunken USS *Kittiwake* to explore.

For those who just want to get away from it all, the secluded beach at Rum Point is just the thing.

Historic Sites

Camana Bay Observation Tower

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-640-4000

<http://www.camanabay.com/the-town/play/observation-tower>

Climb the staircases inside this 75-ft/23-m structure to admire the colorful undersea glass mosaic that decorates the walls, or take an elevator straight to the top for 360-degree views of the island, including Camana Bay, Seven Mile Beach and George Town.

Open daily sunrise-10 pm, weather permitting. Free. .

Mission House

63 Gun Square, Bodden Town

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-749-1132

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.ky>

A recreation of this historic home where three families once lived takes you back to a simpler time during Grand Cayman's history. Costumed interpreters lead the guided tour.

Open Monday-Friday 9 am-5:30 pm. CI\$6 adults, CI\$3 children.

Pedro St. James National Historic Site

Located 5 mi/9 km east of George Town, in Savannah
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-947-3329

<http://www.pedrostjames.ky>

Built in 1780 and the home of democracy in the Cayman Islands, Pedro Castle offers a fascinating walk back into the past on tours sometimes led by descendants of the original family, whose lineage and tales span nine generations. A CI\$6 million renovation created one of the most beautiful locations in the Cayman Islands. This 8-acre/3-hectare site on Pedro Bluff features a three-story, early-19th-century house, outbuildings, palm-lined walkways, manicured lawns, sea views and a state-of-the-art multimedia theater.

Daily 9 am-5 pm. Multimedia shows on the hour 10 am-4 pm. CI\$8 adults, free for children age 12 and younger when accompanied by a parent.

Neighborhoods & Districts

Bodden Town

Bodden Town, the former capital of the Cayman Islands and now its second-largest town, has managed to avoid much of the development that has markedly changed most of the west end of Grand Cayman. Bright and colorful houses feature fretwork verandas and pretty gardens. The town has a fascinating history involving pirate raids and the ruins of a historic guard house, which, although it never saw use, is nonetheless considered the islands' chief claim to military fame.

Camana Bay

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

<http://www.camanabay.com>

This contemporary residential and business community, stretching from the North Sound to Seven Mile Beach, is filled with long-term residents, high-end shops, and great cafes and restaurants. It is also home to a six-screen, 900-seat cinema. It is a pleasant place to stroll, and there is a weekly farmers market.

Deep-water canals connect the Shopping Plaza with the North Sound, allowing visitors to dock at the small island in front of the main plaza for an afternoon of shopping or an

evening of casual fine dining and live music. Camana Bay is slowly becoming the island's main destination for large gatherings.

The Taste of Cayman Food and Wine Festival and the Jazz Festival are held in Camana Bay. The observation tower is a great spot to take in 360-degree views of Grand Cayman.

East End

Found (not surprisingly) at the east end of Grand Cayman, East End has several spectacular blowholes—great geysers of seawater erupting from the rocks. They can be seen between Ironshore Point and East Point, along the southeastern coast.

At Gun Bay, the Wreck of the Ten Sails Historic Park has a panoramic view of the site where 10 ships wrecked in 1794. The park honors the Caymanians who saved the lives of every single British sailor onboard these ships, including—so the story goes—a royal prince. The legend continues, saying that when King George heard of this gallantry, he decreed that the people of the Cayman Islands should forever be free from war subscription and taxes. However, no documented evidence exists that this decree ever took place. The real reason Cayman is a tax-free jurisdiction is rather more prosaic. Until the 1960s, Caymanians, numbering fewer than 8,000, survived from subsistence farming, fishing, turtling and thatch-rope making.

George Town

Grand Cayman's largest town pulls off the awkward combination of modern financial center and Caribbean tourist mecca rather well. Though it has more than 500 banks and thousands of registered companies, this miniature Switzerland operates mostly out of sight, in the air-conditioned offices of the height-restricted, seven-story buildings.

More apparent are the modern and historical tourist attractions that vie for the attention of visitors, especially the thousands of cruise-ship passengers that go ashore daily. The ships are in port usually every day of the week, with the exception of some Sundays. When two or more ships are in harbor, expect congestion in central George Town.

You can walk around most of this town of 14,000 in two hours, even with time out for a little shopping.

Hell

The unique attraction of Hell in the heart of West Bay on Grand Cayman has a patch of black, razor-sharp rock called "ironshore." It looks out of place there, away from the ocean, and that's probably how Hell got its name. Of course, the town is popular as the place where you can mail postcards from Hell. Gift shops sell a variety of souvenirs including T-shirts saying "I'd rather be in Hell than" If you're on the northwestern part of the island, Hell is worth a stop.

Parks & Gardens

Blowholes

Frank Sound Road
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

On the road winding toward Grand Cayman's East End is an amazing natural water show when the weather conditions are right. Water travels through tunnels in the rocky shore and exits through holes like a geyser.

Dart Family Park

South Church Street, George Town
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Located on the seafront just east of George Town, this picturesque playground is popular with local children. The park is also home to the National Trust, which organizes tours and other activities around the Cayman Islands.

Open daily 9 am-5 pm.

Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park

Frank Sound Road (about a 45-minute drive from George Town)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-947-9462

<http://www.botanic-park.ky>

This 65-acre/26-hectare site features woodland walking trails, eight color gardens, an undisturbed lake for wildlife, floral gardens, a visitor center, a plant nursery and an exhibit dedicated to the highly endangered Cayman Blue Iguana. At the park, you will

see butterflies, birds, snakes, turtles, iguanas and a huge array of native plants and trees, including orchids. An annual Orchid Show takes place in March.

Open daily 9 am-5:30 pm (last admission at 4:30 pm). CI\$8 adults, free for children age 12 and younger when accompanied by a parent.

The Pirate Caves

Bodden Town
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-947-3122

<http://www.piratescaves.ky>

A series of caves, once used by pirates to stash their treasure, wind beneath landscaped gardens. There is also a short self-guided nature trail and a small petting zoo.

Open daily 10 am-6 pm. CI\$8 adults, CI\$5 children younger than 12.

Wreck of the Ten Sails Historic Park

Just off the East End Highway
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

This 65-acre/26-hectare park is a memorial to the historic wreck of the ship *Cordelia*, whose crew was saved by East Enders in 1794. The story is commonly known as the "Wreck of the Ten Sails." The bicentennial plaque at the center of the park was placed there by Queen Elizabeth and Prince Philip while on an official visit to the Caymans in 1994.

Recreation

Grand Cayman is a scuba-diving mecca as well as a hotbed for those who like to loll away the hours relaxing on the beach or participating in low-key land- and water-based adventures.

The prevailing winds on Grand Cayman's East End and North Sound provide near-perfect conditions for a variety of watersports, including parasailing, kayaking and windsurfing. Or take a ride on a catamaran, glass-bottomed boat, luxury yacht or with a submarine or sportfishing tour operator.

Beaches

All beaches in the Cayman Islands are open to the public, so you can cut between the resorts and walk along Seven Mile Beach. (Some hotels charge a small fee to use their facilities.) Most of the resorts have pools and restaurants where you can dine on Caribbean cuisine alfresco.

Less-visited beaches on Grand Cayman include Rum Point and Cayman Kai (at the Cayman Kai Beach Resort) on the north shore of the island, about an hour's drive from George Town. Though they're somewhat off the beaten track, you certainly won't have to do without nearby food, drink or watersports options, although both are highly regarded for not having commercial activities on the beaches themselves.

Seven Mile Beach

Seven Mile Beach is the main resort area on Grand Cayman. It is now less than the original 7 miles thanks to erosion from tourists and the occasional hurricane. It measures approximately 5.5 mi/8.9 km, but is still the focal point of activity on Grand Cayman. It's considered one of the best beaches in the Caribbean, with a crescent of soft, white sand fringed by clear turquoise water. Beginning snorkelers can walk right in from the beach. Don't expect to enjoy the scenery in solitude, though: This stretch of shore is the most built-up section of the island, indeed of all the Caymans, and is the one strip that is lined with hotels and condos, and crowded (as much as the Caymans can get crowded anyway) during the high season. You can walk to the southern end of Seven Mile Beach from George Town or take a cab (CI\$8-\$16 one-way, depending on how far you go) or a bus (about CI\$2.50) to the northern end at West Bay.

Smith Cove

South of George Town off South Church Street and near the Grand Old House restaurant, this beach offers no amenities and is a favorite of those who prefer privacy. Those prepared to explore will find several other beaches nearby.

Spotts Public Beach

This beach is a short walk from Spotts Landing (where cruise ships drop off passengers in rough weather). Sparse on facilities, it's a delightful hideaway for those who want to get away from the crowds.

Boating & Sailing

Small sailboats, catamarans, water bikes and canoes are available on Seven Mile Beach. If you want to see the underwater world without getting wet, take a ride in one of the submarines or semisubmarines that operate there. The view of fish and coral is not quite as good as if you were actually in the water, but it is the next best thing.

For windsurfing, the east end has the most consistent wind, and the operator of choice is Morritt's Tortuga Club (phone 345-947-7449; <http://www.morritts.com>). It's also possible to windsurf off Seven Mile Beach.

Cayman Islands Submarines

130 S. Church St., George Town
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-949-7700. Toll-free 866-546-7820

<https://www.caymanislandssubmarines.com>

This company runs a large sub that can carry 40 passengers (make sure you get a window seat). The sub dives to a maximum depth of 100 ft/30 m to view purple sea fans, coral and fish. Reservations are recommended.

CI\$84 (CI\$68 online) adults, CI\$54 children ages 4-12 (children younger than 4 not admitted).

Cayman Kayaks

SafeHaven Drive, Seven Mile Beach
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-926-4467

<http://www.caymankayaks.com>

The adventurous can paddle sit-on-top kayaks and explore bays, coves and canals by day and by night. When evening conditions permit, a bioluminescence tour is offered at Rum Point Beach on the north side of Grand Cayman.

Tours are offered 15 evenings per month. Reservations required.

Morritt's Tortuga Club

2289 QueenÆs Highway Colliers
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-947-7449

<http://www.morritts.com>

This is a good place to go for windsurfing.

Nautilus

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-945-1355

<http://nautiluscayman.com>

For a semisubmersible excursion, try the *Nautilus*. This semisubmarine never completely submerges, but visitors can see marine life from the underwater observation portion. Six different tours are available.

CI\$32 regular tour, CI\$36 tour and snorkeling. .

Red Sail Sports

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-623-5965

<http://www.redsailcayman.com>

Red Sail has four catamarans and also offers windsurfing.

Sail Cayman

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-916-4333

<http://www.sailcayman.com>

For a more intimate experience, charter a half- or full-day excursion aboard a 45-ft/14-m yacht or 30-ft/9-m powerboat. Set and custom itineraries are available.

Fishing

Fishing is popular in the Cayman Islands, and any of about 30 boats on Grand Cayman can accommodate you for light tackle, fly-fishing or offshore outings where the big fish lurk. You'll angle for sailfish, dolphin (the fish, not the mammal), barracuda, wahoo, yellowfin tuna, and blue and white marlin. Full- or half-day trips are available. Expect to pay about CI\$445 per boatload for a half-day of fishing on a large offshore cruiser.

Captain Marvin's

28 N. Church St., George Town (in the Waterfront Centre)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Captain Marvin's has been in business since the 1950s and leads reef and deep-sea fishing charters.

Cayman Islands Angling Club

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-945-3131

<http://www.fishcayman.com>

This group can provide more information about fishing in the Caymans.

Chip-Chip Charters

Spinnaker Square, Red Bay (in the Melody Marine Centre)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

This operator offers tours as well as deep-sea fishing excursions aboard the 31-ft/10-m *Tiara Express*.

Golf

Britannia Golf and Beach Club

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-745-4653

<http://www.britannia-golf.com>

This Jack Nicklaus-designed course can be played with the special Cayman ball, which flies half the distance of a regulation golf ball. The course, reminiscent of such legendary courses as Royal Troon and Turnberry, also can be played as a regular 18-hole course.

Daily 8 am-5 pm. Greens fees run CI\$57.40-\$123 and include a cart. Club rental is additional. .

North Sound Club

Safehaven Drive (just off West Bay Road)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-947-4653

<http://www.northsoundclub.com>

This Roy Case-designed, 18-hole championship golf course (the only one in the Cayman Islands) looks to the island's North Sound. It has a reputation for being challenging and for offering players a quick respite as native birds fly overhead and iguanas dart across the green.

Rates are seasonal but generally run CI\$38-\$144.

Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman Resort

Seven Mile Beach
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-815-6500

<http://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/Properties/GrandCayman/Golf/Default.htm>

This Greg Norman-designed, nine-hole golf course offers some of the island's nicest links at this luxury property on the swanky Seven Mile Beach strip. Expect five long par-fours, and eight of the nine holes are on water. The private course is perfect for novices and pros alike, but nonresidents must be accompanied by a resident.

Greens fees run about CI\$177 for an 18-hole game, plus caddy fee and gratuity. Children age 15 and younger play free for certain tee times after 3 pm if accompanied by an adult.

Horseback Riding

Spirit of the West

Conch Point Road
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-916-6488

<http://seahorses.ky>

Explore Grand Cayman's trails and beaches on horseback. Rides depart in the morning, afternoon and evening. Guests select from standard rides, private and group rides, and a ride-and-swim. Customized tours can also be arranged.

Prices range CI\$62-\$130.

Scuba & Snorkeling

Steep walls, incredibly clear water and good fish life have made the Cayman Islands one of the top dive and snorkeling spots in the Caribbean. Although all of the islands offer great conditions, Grand Cayman sees more divers and snorkelers than the smaller islands, largely because it has more visitors. Expect plenty of company in the water.

You can snorkel and dive from the beaches on Grand Cayman (there are even two shipwrecks in George Town Harbour—the *Balboa* and the *Cali*—that can be reached from shore). The USS *Kittiwake* is at a dive site on the northern end of Seven Mile Beach. But the best scenery requires a boat. Because the waters around the islands are a protected marine park, there are special moorings for dive boats to prevent reef damage.

There are a lot of dive sites to choose from off Grand Cayman. The most convenient are on the west (leeward) side of the island, near George Town and Seven Mile Beach. One of the most popular sites is Eden Rock, south of George Town. Shore diving is popular a few more blocks south at Sunset House where divers can rent everything from tanks to weight belts.

Another good site is the *Oro Verde*, a ship that was purposely sunk off Seven Mile Beach to support sea life—and attract divers. There's plenty of coral off Seven Mile Beach, but the quality of the reef there is declining. This is largely because of the tremendous number of divers and snorkelers who visit the area: More traffic inevitably leads to more damage, despite the protective measures put in place.

More experienced divers will want to try the North Wall or East End, which most dive masters think have the best dive sites on Grand Cayman. They attract more large pelagic animals such as sharks, eagle rays and turtles. Be aware that these areas generally have rougher sea conditions, however, and are more suited to those with some dive experience. They also require a longer boat ride.

Make reservations to snorkel or dive at one of the island dive shops, and do so in advance, if possible. Many excursions leave in the morning to take advantage of light winds early in the day. We recommend using one of the smaller, more personalized dive operators rather than the larger "cattle boat" companies. With fewer people around, you'll have a better chance of enjoying the scenery. Take your underwater camera or rent one with the rest of your gear.

Joining a small group is an especially good idea if you're taking instruction in diving. Most operators offer a resort course for beginners: an hour or so of classroom and pool work followed by a shallow dive with an instructor. Although this course does not lead to

certification, it's a good introduction to diving. PADI certification courses are offered around the island. To ensure lots of time in the water and not behind a computer, do the required online work before your trip.

In our experience, the dive operators in Grand Cayman, large and small, are very professional and very safe (the islands have one of the best underwater dive safety records in the world). If you're arriving on a cruise, check with your ship's activity director to see if beginner classes are offered onboard. Anyone not taking instruction must be certified as a diver and must present a C card to rent equipment and go diving.

One-tank dive packages cost around CI\$40. All operators offer snorkel trips as well, some with lunch included. They run about CI\$20-\$60. Snorkel gear rents for CI\$12-\$16 per day and is available at many outlets along Seven Mile Beach.

Grand Cayman is blessed with several top-rate dive shops, several of which boast international reputations and know the island's waters in such a way that they can guide any level of diver to what promises to be the ideal experience for his or her level.

In the event of a diving emergency, the Divers Alert Network (DAN) will provide treatment advice and, if necessary, arrange for evacuation (phone 919-684-9111 or 919-684-4326—both lines accept collect calls). DAN also can answer questions about diving medicine in a nonemergency situation. For more information, contact DAN's headquarters in the U.S. Phone 919-684-2948. Toll-free (in the U.S. and Canada) 800-446-2671.

Deep Blue Divers

245 N. Church St.
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-916-1293

<http://www.deepbluediverscayman.com>

This is one of the best-known dive shops. They have gear for all levels and have frequently been voted the "Best Dive Shop" on the island, no small feat, given the competition.

Devil's Grotto

Northwest Point Road, West Bay
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Near the Cayman Turtle Farm, this is perhaps the best snorkeling spot anywhere off the island. Although underwater rocks present a hazard to high divers, for snorkelers,

swimmers and cave divers, this place is paradise. Shoals of tropical fish dart in and out of countless grottoes, and visibility is excellent. There is usually parking nearby, although the site itself is unregulated.

Divers Down

69 N. Church St.
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-945-1611

<https://www.diversdown.net>

This operator specializes in small group (eight or fewer) and customized tours. There's a second location at the Holiday Inn Resort on Creighton Drive in Crystal Harbour

Divetech

571 NW Point Road
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-946-5658

<http://www.divetech.com>

This dive operator is highly recommended. It is known for its dive and lodging packages and ecofriendly marine-life outings

Shopping

Shopping is good on Grand Cayman, but prices are high. There's no shortage of duty-free shops stocked with a wide variety of jewelry, watches, crystal, china, perfume, clothing, woolens, linens, liquor and other items. We suggest that you know the going price at home before you buy: Just because something is duty-free doesn't mean it's a bargain.

Shopping Hours: Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5 pm, Saturday 8:30 am-12:30 pm. Most George Town businesses lock up tight after noon on Saturday. Some shops stay open until 9 pm on weeknights. All businesses are closed on Sunday, except restaurants and dive shops. Hours vary depending on whether a cruise ship is in port.

Dining

Dining Overview

Grand Cayman's lineup of restaurants is one of the best in the Caribbean. Most are located along Seven Mile Beach or in George Town. They range from North American chain restaurants to crusty beach bars to elegant dining rooms with tables covered in white linen. But whether you're munching fish-and-chips or savoring lobster ravioli, you'll probably have a view of the water. (Even the Burger King in George Town has a wonderful patio overlooking the cruise-ship harbor.)

Most places have fresh fish on the menu, so you'll rarely go wrong ordering the catch of the day.

Expect to pay within these guidelines for a single meal, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than CI\$10; \$\$ = CI\$10-\$20; \$\$\$ = CI\$21-\$50; and \$\$\$\$ = more than CI\$50.

Local & Regional

Champion House Restaurant II

43 Eastern Ave.

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-949-7882

<http://www.championhouse.ky>

A popular place with locals, tourists and expats alike. You won't write home about the decor and location, but for true local cooking and genuinely friendly service, you can't top it. It serves everything from turtle and conch to cowfoot and jerk chicken.

Open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Cimboco-A Caribbean Cafe

Marquee Plaza (just off West Bay Road on Seven Mile Beach and beside the cinema)

Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-947-2782

<http://www.cimboco.com>

Named after a famous, locally built motorized sailing ship, Cimboco is a fun, hip and flavorful restaurant, though its location in a shopping mall somewhat detracts from the atmosphere. Dishes include Caribbean fire-roasted shrimp, caramelized sea scallops,

firecracker pasta, and pesto, pine nut and eggplant pizza. The Full Moon chocolate fudge pecan pie also receives lots of rave reviews.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations required for parties of six or more. \$-\$\$.

Over the Edge

Old Man Bay, Northside
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-947-9568

<http://www.overtheedgecayman.com>

Right on the water (the deck actually juts over the water) in Old Man Bay, this little gem is well worth the drive, especially for lunch. Stop in for Cayman-style lobster or shrimp in garlic butter and herbs. All dishes are served with rice and beans, callaloo (a local version of spinach), breadfruit and fried plantains. The decor is pretty basic and the service quite slow, but the food is outstanding and a phenomenally good value.

Daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seymour's Jerk Centre

Shedden Road (in the parking lot of Roy's Boutique)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

For something authentically Caribbean, you have to try jerk. Seymour's has a secret recipe handed down more than 30 years ago. After marinating for more than 24 hours, chicken, pork and fish get liberally seasoned again and smoked on the outside grill. The setting is rustic, but it's where the locals go for jerk.

Monday-Saturday for lunch, dinner and late night. No credit cards.

Cuisines

Fusion

The Brasserie

171 Elgin Ave., Cricket Square
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-945-1815

<http://www.brasseriecayman.com>

This restaurant offers a stylish colonial plantation ambience with ceiling fans paddling the air. Some favorite dishes include roasted duck breast with Japanese soba noodles, pineapple chutney, ginger-soy emulsion and pistachio oil, or sesame-crusting seared scallops with braised bok choy, five-spice whipped potatoes, basil and toasted sesame vinaigrette. There is also a nightly five-course tasting menu for CI\$70 per person, CI\$100 with wine. You can eat in the beautiful dining room or sit at the bar. It also has a very good wine list and more wines by the glass than any other restaurant on Grand Cayman.

Open Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for private parties only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Italian

Casanova

65 N. Church St., George Town
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-949-7633

<http://www.casanova.ky>

A spectacular Italian restaurant on the George Town Harbor waterfront with a warm atmosphere and excellent views from two floors. This is a great place to take the family or to celebrate an anniversary. Choose from popular dishes such as spaghetti with house-made meatballs as well as the chef's daily lobster creation or an herb and honey-mustard crusted rack of lamb. There is also a children's menu and an ample wine list to complement any meal.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Edoardo's Restaurant

Coconut Place (across the road from the Ritz-Carlton)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-945-4408

<http://www.edoardos.ky>

Although this restaurant is located in a shopping center, diners shouldn't be put off. Once inside, especially at night, it has a buzz and feel that is romantic and fun at the same time. Authentic Italian dishes include *zuppa di pesce* (fisherman's stew), *linguine frutte di mare* (seafood pasta) and fillet *cambozola*. This is a popular place with the local expat community.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Gino's Pizzeria

West Bay Road (in Regency Court)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-943-3663

<http://www.ginos.ky>

Undoubtedly one of the best places on Grand Cayman to order pizza. Run by the local catering service Mise en Places, it also serves such favorites as made-to-order conch fritters, a great Caesar salad, hot and cold subs, chicken wings with house-made blue cheese or ranch dressing, and pizza by the slice. Island-wide delivery available (free along Seven Mile Beach).

Open daily for lunch and dinner (Friday till 3:30 am, Saturday till 1 am). \$-\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Ragazzi Ristorante and Pizzeria

Buckingham Square, West Bay Road (across the street from Grand Cayman Beach Suites)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-945-3484

<http://www.ragazzi.ky>

With its vibrant colors, authentic wood-burning stove, good food, award-winning wine list and great service, Ragazzi is one of the most popular restaurants in Grand Cayman, even though it's not on the beach. (For beachside dining, try its sister restaurant, Luca, in the Caribbean Club Boutique Hotel.) Fresh seafood and shellfish, pastas, pizzas and delicious salads make this more than simply an Italian restaurant.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Continental

Grand Old House

648 S. Church St.
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-949-9333

<http://www.grandoldhouse.com>

Located in a former plantation house on the south shores of George Town, the Grand Old House specializes in Continental cuisine. The food is good but perhaps a bit overrated. The seaside setting is truly lovely, especially at night with the stars shining above you. Ask to sit out on the dock. Live piano music nightly, including sunset jazz on Thursday.

Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Seafood

Calypso Grill

Morgan's Harbour
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-949-3948

<http://www.calypsogrillcayman.com>

This delightful restaurant overlooking Morgan's Harbour has outstanding food and atmosphere. Diners can sit outside in the breeze or enjoy the inside, with its burnt-orange and blue walls and plantation-shuttered windows. Favorite dishes include peppered tuna carpaccio, crispy mango shrimp and sticky toffee pudding.

Daily except Monday for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$.

Guy Harvey's Island Grill

55 S. Church St., George Town (next to the Guy Harvey Gallery)
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-946-9000

<http://www.guyharveysgrill.com>

A bit more refined than some of the other waterfront locales, this casual second-floor restaurant offers an extensive menu and nightly specials. Fish takes center stage at the eatery—snapper, mahimahi, tuna and salmon are prepared with your choice of a mango salsa, Cayman style or on a Greek salad, among several other possibilities.

Open daily for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

The Lobster Pot Restaurant and Wine Bar

245 N. Church St.
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-949-2736

<http://www.lobsterpot.ky>

Established in 1965 and operated by the same family ever since, the Lobster Pot is a landmark on Grand Cayman. It's perched high above the water in George Town, and every seat has a view of the sea. Local favorites include sesame-seared yellowfin tuna, red snapper with almonds and sauteed bananas, wahoo, mahimahi and, of course, lots of lobster.

Monday-Friday for lunch and dinner, Saturday and Sunday for dinner only. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

The Reef Grill

537 West Bay Road
Grand Cayman Island, Cayman Islands

Phone: 345-945-6358

<http://royalpalmscayman.com>

Located right on the water on Seven Mile Beach, this popular restaurant has an indoor dining room and a patio overlooking the water. The menu is inventive, including such specialties as honey-glazed sea bass with Asian slaw and red Thai curry, and the Asian-inspired tuna spring rolls with wakame, *ponzu* dipping sauce and wasabi.

Open Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner, Sunday for lunch only. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Security

Personal Safety

Grand Cayman is one of the safest destinations in the Caribbean, but some petty crime does exist. Don't tempt thieves by leaving valuables unattended on the beach, on your patio or in an unlocked car.

Some residents hitchhike along the main road between West Bay and George Town, especially at night after the local buses stop running. It's generally safe, but we don't recommend it.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

Sanitation standards in all restaurants are good, so feel free to eat anywhere on the island. The dive industry is well prepared for underwater emergencies. Most travelers encounter nothing more serious than sunburns, the occasional jellyfish sting, or mosquito or no-see-um bites when it rains or the breeze dies down.

There are good medical facilities on Grand Cayman. Probably the best choice for any emergency, George Town Hospital (phone 345-949-8600) lies only a short distance from town. The facility has a 24-hour hyperbaric decompression chamber for divers. There are also a number of private facilities offering medical services: Try the Chrissie Tomlinson Memorial Hospital, Walkers Road, George Town. Phone 345-949-6066. <http://www.chrissietomlinson.com>.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Disabled Advisory

Limited resources for the disabled exist in Grand Cayman because laws are not in place to guide compliance. One local operator that provides accessible island tours is Elite Limousine Services in George Town (phone 345-949-5963). You might also try contacting The Ministry of Health and Human Services, Third Floor, Government Administration Building, George Town (phone 345-244-2318); or The Planning Department for buildings and roads, which can be reached Monday-Friday 8:30 am-5 pm. Phone 345-769-7526.

As a general rule, hotels in Grand Cayman are not designed with disabled access in mind. But many hotels are single-story structures on flat terrain. Islanders are friendly and helpful to a fault, and usually can be counted on to assist in a moment's notice.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Don't litter. You'll get a CI\$500 fine.

Do try a Mudslide, as this is Grand Cayman's national drink, along with the ubiquitous Heineken.

Do buy Tortuga or Blackbeard rums and rum cakes. They're delicious.

Do drive on the left, and pay close attention when crossing the street if you're not used to traffic approaching from the right.

Do exchange greetings and pleasantries. Caymanians are respectful and will say "good morning" and address you as "Miss" and "Mister."

Don't buy turtle products. The U.S., Canada and the U.K. have signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and it is illegal to import such items.

Don't expect things to be done in any great hurry (unless you emphasize the importance of doing so); as in other Caribbean locations, time on the Caymans passes more slowly than it does elsewhere.

Do ask to sample the chef's special of the day at smaller restaurants. There is no better way to ingratiate yourself with the cook.

Do not bother renting a car unless you plan on covering every inch of the island. There's no need, as plenty of taxis and buses can cover the distance for you.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America, and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda. Reconfirm travel-document requirements with your carrier prior to departure.

Population: 56,729.

Languages: English, and many islanders speak Spanish as well.

Predominant Religions: Christian.

Time Zone: 5 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-5 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

Voltage Requirements: 110 volts.

Telephone Codes: 345, country code;

Money

Taxes

There is no local sales tax, but visitors must pay a 13% Tourism Accommodation Tax where applicable. A CI\$25 departure tax is also included in the cost of the flight.

Tipping

Tip 15% in hotels and restaurants if a service charge has not been added to the bill. Most hotels and many restaurants automatically add a service charge of 10%-15%—if you're not sure, ask. Do tip your dive master or dive instructor—they're in the service industry. About 10% is standard.

Weather

Grand Cayman has a warm tropical climate throughout the year. The average temperatures range from the mid-70s to mid-80s F/23-30 C, but can climb into the mid-90s F/mid-30s C during summer months. Thankfully, the breezes from the Cayman trade winds help offset this heat. The rainy season is May-October. Hurricane season occurs June-November.

What to Wear

Modest dress is expected in the business district of Grand Cayman—which means no swimwear in town. Aside from this restriction, casual summer clothing is recommended year-round, day and night. Pack lightweight cotton, linen or silk clothing, which will provide more comfort in the tropical heat. Most restaurants will require you to put on shoes and a T-shirt if you are going in off the beach.

During the winter months (especially January-March) take a light sweater with you. Some restaurants are quite smart, and you will want to dress up a little for them. If you're spending time on a boat, a waterproof Windbreaker will come in handy if the sea turns choppy. Wear a hat with a brim or a bill if you're going out on the water.

Transportation

Taxis are not hailed on the street, but always phoned in advance or picked up at one of the larger hotels. Rates are fixed.

Some taxi companies will provide tours around the island. Expect to pay about CI\$12 per person, per hour for four people on a short tour. Longer excursions in larger vehicles may be CI\$25 per person, per hour. The average cost of a taxi tour per hour is CI\$33 for three people.