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c) Klaus Vedfelt, eating a clean and active life, will buy us a longer and healthier lifestyle. But there is an important third dimension that is often ignored. It turns out the key to living longer is the feeling that your life has purpose and meaning. A recent study in the Lancet shows that people who felt more worthwhile or positive about their state of life were 30 percent less likely to die. We firmly believe in the power of positive thinking in an overarching way, and the figures seem to support having more of these good vibes. Here are the points you need to think about. Give. Volunteering your time and energy - more times than giving money, in some cases - is the ultimate show of support. It can be a power drive, a construction project or give your own talents for the benefit of those who are disadvantaged- Check out these 12 ways to volunteer your time! Choose a meaningful career path. How much of our lives are spent on work, commuting to and from work, or thinking about work? The whole hell is a lot. Especially to choose a career that can be helpful, challenges you, or can help you grow. ___Travel. Seeing the world (or even the rest of your country) and interacting with a culture that is very different from your own can be an incredibly challenging and learning experience you never get at home. It can be humiliating to put your own life in perspective for others. Grow your relationship. Of all things, relationships are easy to take for granted, but it is necessary for us to thrive. Caring for others and learning to let friends love you back - it's all crucial to feeling worth it and building a connected life. RELATED: The key to happiness can be found in this simple EquationImage Credit: Klaus Vedfelt Go to the contents of a Welcome to Florida vacation key dreams of your family's lime: snorkeling, kayaking, hammock naps, and, yes, a good pie. Our expert 14-year-old guide, Lily, leads the way to three idyllic resorts just online: more information on the best keys! See page 4. To experience the Florida Keys in all their splendor, you must take decisive action. Turn off the MP3 player. Put your game boy down. Forget the DVD. Tune in to virtual reality. And follow me. I'm Lily Erlinger, 14. My family was adopted by a Miami melting pot nine years ago. My mother is Australian, my father, photographer, German (he took photos here) and I was born in Germany, as are my twin nine-year-old sisters, Ivy and May. Miami is a patchwork of different races, religions and languages. But if there's one thing all Miami have in common is the desire to head south on the U.S. 1, overseas highway. Direction: a chain of islands that permeated the warm waters Gulf and The Atlantic to the southernmost points of the United States. The sun-drenched two-lane strip cuts through the ocean like a mirage. It's This. residential islands, uninhabited atolls and simple shards of sand, sometimes bursting into amazing bridges - only 43; one of them is almost seven miles long! The first key, Key Largo, is an hour's drive from Miami. The furthest of, The Keys West, is 159 miles southwest of the city and just 90 miles north of Havana. Related: The best places to visit are in the Florida Keys, but we don't make it that far. My family's three favorite holiday destinations are much closer, in the Upper and Middle Keys. It's an hour and a half drive from The Wharf and Cheeca Lodge, and another half hour to Kay Hawk. On the way to our first stop, we always brake for a home breakfast at Harriette's Restaurant (Mile Marker 95.7 Bayside; 305/852-8689), at Ki Largo. The keys are known for their quirky people and this is a good introduction to them. Take the 86-year-old avid scuba diver who sat next to me the last time I was at the counter. Or waitress Anne Marie, who has been cooking fried eggs, cookies and Harriett sauce for 16 years. Her 12-year-old son, Ryan, eats breakfast while he waits for the school bus. Outside is a sign that says RYAN'S BUS STOP. When we finally arrive at our hotel, we are full and relaxed, and more than ready to get into the water! Moorings Village Magnificent Island Islamorada is home to piers, my favorite place in the world to retreat. Pastel circling the resort's houses, with tin roofs and large porches, give an idea of the old keys. Wooden walkways wind past the pool and tennis courts on

the pale golden beach and showers of upturned watering cans. Overhead, check bananas, papayas and oranges. For us, urban children, berths mean freedom. We can roam the territory that was once a coconut plantation. Sometimes we are accompanied by Arthur, the owner's dog in Newfoundland, whose paws are larger than my sisters' hands. It's a cold time. Read your book in a hammock. Wade in the water and searching for crabs. Lie on the pier and give bread to the fish. Collect the coconuts, and ask the gardeners to punch holes in them for the taste of sweet milk. If that makes you hungry for snacks, dash back to your home - it's only five steps away. Ask my family where we would like to stay and Dad will tell Sifca, a cottage tucked away in pine trees, that it is very personal. Mom chooses a plantation: three bedrooms right on the beach. The twins want a two-story Russell because they love racing up and down the stairs. As for me, well, I would try all 18 of them before deciding. Every morning, after slathering us with sunscreen, Mom lets us go solo to the pool, I'm a lifeguard, but she can hear us from our porch. Water is always the perfect temperature. Later, Dad takes us paddling in kayaks that sit scattered across the sand. Next, we'll master windsurfing. At night we go down to the beach to lie in hammocks strung between palm trees, desire at the stars, listen to the waves, and play charades. It's a good place to bring dessert: either a Florida best lime key pie, bought a short time on the way to The Cuban restaurant Manny and Isa's, or a mom's ice cream sandwich - the advantage of staying in the house. She makes them with a chocolate-piece of cookies, heat from the oven, and scoops of vanilla ice cream. When Mom isn't cooking, we head to the nearby Morada Bay Cafe, the perfect place to bring a bucket and a shovel. There are cocktails and live soft music for parents, beach and glowing sticks (mooched of cocktails) for us kids. The food is great: yellow-tailed perch curry, fried Asian vegetables, burgers. After the meal, we watch the sunset and give requests for folksinger: Cat Stevens, John Lennon, and of course Jimmy Buffett. Entertainment keeps fussy adults busy while we steal a bit of time for us. My sisters and I ditch our sandals under the tables and run up and down the soft, palm-lined sand, illuminated by twinkling torches. Back on the piers there may be a bonfire blazing in the barbecue area. It's just the kind of unexpected detail that makes the resort so great. Look for a little Buddha resting in a hollow of a banyan tree, a shell carefully hidden under a jasmine bush, and a random crab that wanders out of the water. Next to each house there is a grass garden. An old-fashioned wooden swing hangs on another Banyan tree. And the most desirable shelter is under the thatched palm roof at the end of the dock. I call it the first. Cheeca Lodge and Spa When my sisters get restless (all that relaxation can wear on the baby), it's time to change the tempo a bit. So my family checks out the piers, piles in the car, and checks back to the neighbors next door- at Cheeca Lodge. Cheeca is famous for its action-packed list of events and activities (attention, golfers and bonefishermen!). It's President George H.W. Bush's favorite retreat of a giant bathtub and decorated with autographed photos and other tokens from his visits. We never stayed in it; instead we get a one bedroom with our own kitchen and balcony overlooking the sea. Cheeca hosts fishing tournaments, wine tastings, a monthly Moonrise Pier Party, an annual Earth Day festival and many other celebrations. Twins join the children's club, Camp Cheeca; In truth, if I could pass for a 4-12-year-old, I would too, especially for excursions (every Thursday) to places like the Theater of the Sea, natural lagoons where children watch dolphins and sea lions shows, and the Dolphin Research Center. With the twins out of our hair, Dad heads with his cameras and Mom and I relax in hammocks on the beach. Teenagers need sleep, so I manage to work in a few naps a day. Some half day we all join the Cheeca motorboat exit on the lighthouse, five miles offshore, for snorkeling. It's often a wild and bumpy ride because of the wind, and I won't mention what happened to the stomach in May thanks to a particular bump. But when we finally anchor, snorkeling is more than worth the trip. Once the water closes above our heads, we are in a different world, with fish of any color and shape collected in mass, swinging in sync with the waves. There are so many fish, it feels almost as if we were looking at one huge creature, 20, maybe 30 times my size. May once spotted a nurse shark and decided it was time to leave. She prefers Hickey's lagoon. You can also take a three-hour family tour to John Pennecamp's Coral Reef State Park, an amazing underwater reserve on Key Largo. If you are too scared or too young to snorkel there, you can sit safe and sound in a glass-bottomed boat and see the same beautiful fish and coral without getting wet. Cheeca is known for luxury, but it's also great at environmental programs, and so is my mother who loves the resort's focus on protecting the key ecosystem. The golf course, kept lush with recycled shower water, is a sanctuary for the schaus swallow butterfly. Water skis are banned because they destroy sea grass and fish grounds. During the sea turtle nesting season, from May to August, the lights dim at the resort's beach. Children learn all about the natural habitat of the keys through the Cheeca camp. They go on tours. And- I'm not sure how eco-friendly it is-they race Cheeca into pet hermit crabs. Last time we were there, our own Hermi won. Hawk's Cay Resort Ok, time to raise the energy ratio, and travel further down the keys, to a cluster of five islands called Duck Key. Here you'll find Hawk's Cay, a resort with 269 villas with clappboard (plus 177 rooms and 85 boat receipts), a swimming lagoon, five pools, a dolphin center, in other words, tons of things for families to do. Almost all of the guest blocks are on the water. They have two or three bedrooms and bathrooms, a full kitchen, a living room: enough room for me to invite my best friend, Ben, to come along! Even teenagers can't but enjoy being in Hawk's Cay with their families. The twins join the kids club for a selection of activities such as pottery painting and beading, leaving time for dads to take them to the mini golf course and pirate ship water. And while Ben is reading, my mom and I are going to the spa. There is a section for children between the ages of 8 and 16 that offers manicures, massages and facials. I opt for the latter because I love the head massage that comes with it. In the exciting afternoon hours we all on the resort's parasailing boat. His captains, Moose and JP, stitched us up before we left the dock. Ivy and I will be the first to go. Sail to release from the back of the boat. We start to slide up, kicking our feet Nervously. My teeth are chattering through a huge snful. When we're about 550 feet tall, the world is incredible. Soft in the cocoon of the wind, we swing gently. Right in front of it is nothing but blue. Below we can see the shadows of the reef as a few spasms of laughter float from the boat. I'd be hard to say what is more exciting: parasailing or going to see bottlenose dolphins in Kay Hawke's lagoon, run by Dolphin Connection. You start in a prep room where the coach talks about the history of animals, their behavior, and how to treat them. Then you share into small groups to enter the water on the platforms and watch the workout. This part is amazing - dolphins swim right to you and you can hug and pet them and trainer them to do tricks. The twins are too young to be in the lagoon, but they can feed and hold hands with dolphins from the dock. These animals, by the way, are treated with great care. Everyone spends only two hours a day interacting with people, and no more than four at a time. You really have to bring your whole team here. And if you see someone with blond hair and pesky twin sisters who look like she wanted this place to belong, it's going to be me. We choose the smallest, most living creatures in the store. Can you guess what they are? Hermit crabs! You can find them in every shell store in the keys. These creatures drink fresh water (give them a small dish so they do not drown) and eat scraps (lettuce, apples, cooked meat, bread). They are sociable and will crawl on your hands and stomach. If they attach themselves to something, don't pull them by the shell; You can break your legs, which must be gently released one by one. We always install our pets for free before we find out, but you can keep them. They live an average of three years. Another thing is, try not to put them in your hair; Trust me! For more tips, visit www.hermitcrabs.com. Robbie's Rent-a-Boat (MM 77.5 Bayside, Lower Matecumbe Key; 877/664-8498 or 305/664-9814; www.robbies.com) is a rickety hut and pier where fishermen come to rent motor boats. Robbie's also offers children-only fishing. But the fun right here is the sucking bait-tethered herring, a \$2 bucket-to-prehistoric-looking tarpon that gathers around the dock in a feeding frenzy. Try to throw the bait as far as you can, and watch a great fish race for it, or dangle herring over water, of course the tarpon will pop out and snap at it. Be careful, though: there have been stories about tarpon eating more than just fish. ISLAMORADAMoorings Village 123 Beach Rd. (MM 81.5 Oceanside); www.themooringsvillage.com; Cottages from \$225.Cheeca Lodge and Spa MM 82 Oceanside; 800/327-2888 or 305/664-4651; 305/664-4651; doubles from \$129. Manny and Isa in MM 81.6 Oceanside; 305/664-5019; Key slices of lime pie \$3.50.Morada Bay Cafe 81600 Overseas Hwy.; 305/664-0604; dinner for four \$80. DUCK KEYHawk's Cay Resort 61 Hawk's Cay Blvd. (MM 61 Oceanside); 800/432-2242 or 305/743-7000; www.hawkscay.com; doubles from \$210, villas from \$375. Parasailing, aged eight and older, from \$45. Dolphin Connections, dock, aged five and older, from \$55; Interactive (participants must be at least four feet six), from \$100. The ride down the Keys on U.S. 1 is littered with fancy signs, eccentric motels, and... unusual mailboxes. I bet you can't find our nine favorites, pictured. Here are some incentives: Send proof-shots that you've noticed them all. The first 10 entries that we get with all nine correctly will each win the TL Family Child-sized beach hat, and one lucky person, selected in a random drawing of all the full entries, will receive a \$100 American Express Gift Check. Hint: All mailboxes are on U.S. 1, between Key Largo and Duck Key, except for number 6, which is in a public place at one of the best resorts. 1. Grey manatee with baby2. Blue garbage truck3. Beacon4. Tiger-striped fish5. Pelican6. Replica of Moorings Village7 plantation house. Sailors at sunset8. Green Turtle9. Multi-finned Fish Mailbox Hunt Rules and Rules: Send original photos of each of the mailboxes taken by the entrant, with your name, address and phone number, to: Hunt's Mailbox, Travel and Recreation Family, 1120 Ave., New York, NY 10036. There is no need to buy. The competition is open to legal residents of the United States. Limit one entrance per family to one house. All entries must be posted by 30 April 2004 and received by 7 May 2004. It is not responsible for incomplete, lost or misdirected records. All entries become the property of travel and family recreation. The void where it's forbidden. Web Only: More information on the best of the keys, including outfitters, restaurants, beaches worthy of detours, and 13 more places to stay Related: Best of the Florida Keys THE LANDThe 113-mile line of islands is divided into three areas. The upper keys stretch from Key Largo to around Leighton, and cover dive shops, country clubs, weekend refuge villas from Miami, and Islamorada, the sporting capital of the world. The Middle Keys, with some of the most beautiful stretches of the islands, is dominated by a marathon, a small, hometown. The lower Keys are green and quiet until you reach the relative metropolis of Key West. Most keys are connected by one road that does not require a name (although it is officially known as the U.S. 1 and Overseas Highway). A descendant of Henry Flagler's Florida East Coast Railroad, it's by the only land route through the Florida Keys. This makes it ideal for the easily disoriented-all you need to know is the nearest closest marker (MM) - but it can be a traffic nightmare. To facilitate monotony, there are gorgeous waterfront views on both sides and signs advertising BIG-ASS PRIME RIB and FISH SO FRESH IT SHOULD BE SLAPPED. WHAT DOThe point, in fact, is to spend as little time on the road as possible and stay on the water, under water, or on a hammock with water splashing just below. DIVING The only living coral reef in the continental United States (and the third longest in the world) is located near Ki-Largo. The John Pennecamp Coral Reef State Park and Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is an extraordinary underwater universe: canyons and mountains of living rock, schools of fish moving in synchronized Technicolor, shipwrecks, and oddities like Christ the Abyss, an 11-foot bronze statue. A wealth of outfitters want to take you diving or snorkeling. Most respected include the Tavernier Dive Center (MM 90.7 Oceanside, Tavernier; 305/852-4007; www.tavernierdivecenter.com); Diving Services (MM 103.5 Bayside, Key Largo; 305/451-2440; www.keylargo diving.com); and despite the bad pun, Amy Slate at Amoray Dive Resort (MM 104.2 Bayside, Ki Largo; 305/451-3595; www.amoray.com). N.b. There are no age restrictions for these excursions, but anyone who plans to scuba dive must be certified. FISHING There's no place where you can't fish in keys, but Islamorada, Marathon, and Key West, where charter boats are conglomerate. There's a boat for your family, whether you want to tackle tuna in the Gulf Stream, troll riffs for a grouper, or a stalk flat in Florida Bay (backcountry) for a tarpon. For information on charters, boat rentals and licensing, contact one of the temples of this regional religion: Holiday Isle Beach Resort and Marina (MM 84 Oceanside, Islamorada; 305/664-2321; www.holidayisle.com); Bud n' Mary's Fishing Marina (MM 79.8 Oceanside, Islamorada; 305/664-2461; www.budnmarys.com); or world-class fisherman (5050 Overseas Hwy., Marathon; 305/743-6139; www.worldclassangler.com). Half-day marine fisheries will employ about \$600 to six people. KAYAKING Bill Keogh, owner of Big Pine Kayak Adventures (Big Pine Key; 305/872-7474; www.keyskayaktours.com), is a gentle nature photographer and amateur marine biologist who guides you through the apartments and backcountry islets around Big Pine and No Name Keys. As you glide across the pond like water, you will see nurses sharks, turtles, rays, sponges and barracudas. Paddling up a creek through a mangrove forest, using moist, gnarled roots to pull themselves past tree trunks covered with hundreds of tiny crabs as entering the unpaved universe. CRABBING Ever wondered where Joe Stone Crab in Miami Beach gets the audacity to charge about \$50 per serving of claws? The answer, sort of, comes from the Keys Market and Marina (end of 35th St., St., 305/743-4353; www.keysfisheries.com), the cleaning branch of the famous restaurant. You will go out on a commercial boat to see how laborious the job is. A typical 12-hour run (your going to be much shorter) involves pulling 600 traps, each giving a pound of claws on a good day. The business is extremely competitive, and complicated by a short season, theft, and strict environmental regulations. Crabs themselves are strong fighters: they can break their fingers with claws. However, it is a pleasant and educational excursion. Best of all, you get to take home (or devour on the spot) that you catch. DESTINATION RESORTS: Another 13 places to stayThe term resort is applied loosely in the keys: many of the places thus labeled consist mainly of tiki huts, picnic tables, hammock strung between two palms, and a cement-block building that needs a fresh coat of pink paint. However, there are a few exceptions. UPPER KEYS Kona Kai Resort - A gallery owned by a couple who quit their job in New York to unpack in a Keys-familiar storyline here-Kona Kai is small and unpretentious. 11 rooms, in four low-slung tin roofs of buildings, furnished simply, but thoughtfully (rattan footrests, ceramic tiled floors, sheets of 340-threads). The Guava room and pineapple suite can be connected to a family of four. The hotel is set around orchid gardens, palm trees and gumbo limbo, as well as a mosaic pool surrounded by hydrangea and hibiscus. 97802 Overseas Hwy., Ki-Largo; 800/365-7829 or 305/852-7200; www.konakairesort.com; Doubles from \$247, children \$65. LOWER KEYS Little Palm Island Theme of this resort may be Gilligan Island set in Raj. Caveat: Only children aged 16 and over are allowed. There are 30 duplex units on just six acres, so privacy, while respected, is secondary to the feeling of isolation. After all, only a select few are willing to spend upwards of \$895 a night in keys, meals are excluded. What do you get for all this? Enthusiasm and hard service. A joint suite under a thatched roof, overlooking the ocean. And thoughtful touches like your name in wooden blocks above the door. 28500 Overseas Hwy. (MM 29 Oceanside), Little Torch Key; 800/343-8567 or 305/872-2524; www.littlepalmisland.com; doubles from \$895. KEY WEST HOTELSThe question of where to stay in key west mirrors, in a sense, the city's own existential dilemma. Guest houses represent the past - eccentric, architecturally peculiar. Resorts mean the evolution of Key West to its main destination. On the one hand, hotel campy enough to make the liberace look like Charlton Heston; on the other hand, properties are just like any other place in America. Between the two poles, however, are places of character and comfort listed here. There are a few среднi больших свойств острова. 311-комнатный курорт Wyndham Casa Marina (1500 Reynolds St.; St.; or 305/296-3535; www.wyndham.com; Doubles from \$359, Kids Free), built by Henry Flagler in 1920, recalls other Florida land boom hotels. Beautiful grounds slope down to the big beach. There is an established children's program for children aged 5-12 years, but all guests can parasail, scooter on mopeds all over the area, or play ping pong at sea. Nearby sister property, pink concrete Wyndham Beach Resort (1435 Simonton St.; 800/626-0777 or 305/296-5000; www.wyndham.com; doubles from \$329, kids free), has a smaller beach and similar resort amenities; All 150 rooms have balconies. Hilton Key West Resort - Marina (245 Front St.; 888/477-7786 or 305/294-4000; www.hilton.com; doubles from \$299) is located on the Old Town waterfront and is a short walk from shops, restaurants and galleries. Spend a day (or a week) at Sunset Key, the resort's ace in the hole: a semi-private island 10 minutes away from launch, with a beach, restaurant, bar and 37 bungalows. The 120-room Hyatt Key West Resort and Marina (601 Front St.; 800/554-9288 or 305/296-9900; www.hyatt.com; doubles from \$325) is one of the smallest major resorts, and has a low-key feel. Bicycle and scooter rentals are available. Smaller is Ocean Kai Resort (No. 0 Duval St.; 800/328-9815 or 305/296-7701; www.oceankey.com; doubles from \$399, children under 18 for free), founded by the owners of Little Palm Island, who bought a non-crazy building at the foot of Duval Street and sank \$5.5 million. Island City House Hotel This 24-room complex includes an 1880s mansion in front of the street, whose 12 salon suites are decorated with Victorian antiques- somewhat dark for clues. The gingerbread finish of Arch House, above the old carriage entrance, has brighter interiors, but simpler furniture; The rooms at the old cigar factory are bigger, each with a hammock overlooking the pool. This is one of the few small hotels in Kee West that allows children of all ages. The one-bedroom apartment at Island City House and Cigar House have sleeping sofas in the living room and are ideal for families. There is a large pool, and cribs, chairs and strollers are available for free. 411 William St.; 800/634-8230 or 305/294-5702; www.islandcityhouse.com; Suites from \$210, children under 12 free. Marquesa Hotel When it opened in 1988, Marquez raised the bar among the Hotels of Ki West. The original building, a 1884 Greek Revival boarding house, was bought by two local men who specialize in restoring the architectural gems of Ki West. They furnished 27 rooms with four iron posters, pine sleigh beds from Indonesia, English armoires and chairs from the Caribbean. Marquez's courtyard is two small pools surrounded by plantings - exquisite. Exquisite. This courtesy is defined: a glass of white wine when you arrive, the receptionist who remembers your name when you call six months later. Hands down, the best place to stay in The West. Families (children must be 12 years of age or older) book junior suites at the resort, which also has a tennis court and golf course. The hotel offers snorkeling, a glass boat and moped rentals. 600 Fleming Street; 800/869-4631 or 305/292-1919; www.marquesa.com; Junior suites from \$410. Artist House This fabulous purple Victorian mansion has seven rooms and decorations to spare. The traditional southern elements prevail: chairs with a wing, beds with four posters, acres of swag-enough to make you want to put on hoopskirt and bustle. Although it is primarily a romantic getaway, this hotel offers its two-bedroom villas for families with children aged 13 and over. 534 Eaton St.; 800/582-7882 or 305/296-3977; www.artisthousekeywest.com; doubles from \$139, teens \$20. Gardens Hotel Peggy Mills bought this 1870s house in the 1930s and set about creating a show botanical garden. She brought from Cuba 87,000 pavers, a Moorish fountain and four tinajon, huge jars of earthenware from Cuba, each weighing a ton. After her death, the site became a hotel with 17 rooms scattered between five buildings. Breakfast - croissants, key lime beets - are served in tanning beds. But you'll spend more time lolling in the pool, smelling jasmine, and drinking toast for Miss Peggy. Children 10 years and older welcomed. 526 Angela St.; 800/526-2664 or 305/294-2661; www.gardenshotel.com; Doubles from \$265, extra bed \$20. Heron House features artistic touches such as stained glass windows, intricate brick patio and a collection of rare orchids. 23 rooms are large, with private decks and high ceilings; Wall teak or cedar marquetry add heat. Children should be 16 or older. 512 Simonton St.; 800/294-1644 or 305/294-9227; www.heronhouse.com; doubles from \$189, teens \$25. Lightbourn Inn A 1903 queen Anne's house on a busy street hides an amazing display of compulsive baubles: autographed photos of movie stars; Antique furniture, lamps and objets from all over the world; and a whole wall of teddy bears. Breakfast is served by the pool at Fiestaware, of course. Children 12 years and older are allowed. 907 Truman Ave.; 800/352-6011 or 305/296-5152; www.lightbourn.com; doubles from \$178, kids \$25. RESTAURANTSA Florida Keys Diet is bound to be abundant in omega-3s and other fish nutrients, but you get points for breeding and roasting. Fortunately, restaurants warm the healthy cuisine of the New World - tropical fruits and tubers, Latin American and Caribbean flavors - it's ubiquitous in Miami and points north. In other words, shrimp may be fried, but it will come with mango poppies Sauce. In a country of laid-back, formal formal glad to see the children, and only the dress code of shirts and shoes. Seriously: a jacket is never required; ties laughed. UPPER KEYS Fish House Line is long, ending with pepper chowder, and the catch of the day is made in eight ways (try Matecumbe-style: tomatoes, capers, shallots, basil and lemon juice). And sea trinkets lining the walls and strung on the ceiling are endlessly funny. 102401 Overseas Hwy., Ki-Largo; 305/451-4665; four to ten0 dollars. Snapper's Waterfront Seafood Restaurant On a mangrove-ringed inlet in Ki-Largo, Snapper's brings locals with rum-killer drinks and good snacks: cracked zayace, blackened fingers. All deep-fried items by hand, thank god. MM 94.5 Oceanside, Kee Largo; 305/852-5956; dinner for four \$140. MIDDLE KEYS ChikiTiki Bar and Grille, hidden in the Marathon marina, ChikiTiki serves larvae with Mexican touches such as green chilli cheeseburger and spicy French fries. In most other ways, however, it is the archetype of its genre: the smell of sea air; a bar full of salts of all types. And, yes, it's a mousetrap holding your account. 1200 Oceanview Ave., Marathon; 305/743-9204; dinner for four \$40. LOWER KEYS No Name Pub This pub was founded in 1935, which may be the last time it received a thorough clean-up. At least dollar bills covering every square inch of wall and rafters seem to have been there forever, as do the characters wearing beards and truckers' hats and eating spicy smoked flat fish and perch sandwiches with paper plates. It's about being happy with yourself for finding a place. N. Watson Boulevard, Big Pine Key; 305/872-9115; dinner for four \$70. KEY WEST Alice at La Te Da Go for a pool table among the palms at the La Te Da guest house. Then go to the yellow-tailed perch in Key lime beurre blanc, a magic meat loaf, or rack of Australian lamb. First of all, go to meet Alice Weingarten, an island legend who visits every table wearing floppy and cat-eye glasses- an unbeatable Ki West hostess. 1125 Duval St.; 305/296-6706; dinner for four \$140. Blue Heaven Restaurant In the former bordello supposedly frequent Ernest Hemingway-unlikely unique requirement in key west blue skies is huge among locals for a lively bar and breakfast in the backyard, complete with picnic tables and clucking chickens. It may seem unworthy to eat eggs in such a company, but omelets should not be missed. 729 Thomas St.; 305/296-8666; breakfast for four 40 dollars. Louis Van Aken made his reputation here before being anointed the king of New World cuisine. But Louis retains his status as an institution and is still a favorite among residents, despite the crush of tourists feasting on the innovative Caribbean food influence: lobster stews in truffle oil; Grilled tuna served with sweet soy, Salad. The backyard is actually the Atlantic Ocean. 700 Waddell Ave., Kee West; 305/294-1061; dinner for four \$150. STANDOUT BEACHES, protected by a coral reef, a 113-mile stretch from Key Largo to Key West is not lined with juicy white sand. But there are a few beaches to mention. Anne's Beach, just a spot on the Lower Matecumbe key, has picnic tables, boardwalks, and enough sand to keep your hands happy. At Big Pine Key, Bahia Honda was almost wiped out by Hurricane George in 1999. Since being restored, it is again a beautiful crescent of sand with good swimming and views of the remains of the old Flagler Railway Bridge. The marathon-oriented Sombrero Beach family is perhaps best about an otherwise ugly city. The beaches on Kee West can get as hectic as Mallory Square at sunset. Hit the crowds by driving to Fort Zakari Taylor Historical State Park, which has clean, deep water and a perfect - and completely unknown -- place to watch the sun go down. SHOPPING In a place where plastic chamomile on flip-flops is considered a stylistic flourish, don't expect to find exceptional retail opportunities. There are several specialty stores to mention (all are in Key West). T-shirt shops have taken over Duval Street, Key West's main drag, as a kudzu; For standing gifts, try Fast Buck Freddie (500 Duval St.; 305/294-2007), an old department store. The local response to Kiehl's, Key West Aloe (524 Front St.; 305/294-5592) is full of lab assistants wanting to manage your sunburn. They can't fly home, but the colorful, noisily patterned shirts and dresses on the Kee West Handprint fabric and fashion (201 Simonton St.; 305/294-9535) are largely urban in shape. Kee West claims to have been the home of 11 Pulitzer Winners; Best Bookstore Of Kee West Island Books (513 Fleming St.; 305/294-2904). If you should have one of these manati-shaped mailboxes you've seen lining U.S. 1, Pelican Poup (314 Simonton St.; 305/296-3887) is the place to buy it. Shops in Treasure Village (MM 86.7 Oceanside, Islamorada; 305/852-0511) are skippable, but a giant, anigmously correct lobster is worth checking out, like the April Fool, at 71 inches the smallest sailboat ever to cross the Atlantic. Lignumvitae Key Botanical State Park (305/664-2540) is a 280-acre pristine forest- one of the few places in the world to see old growth gumbo-limbo, mahogany, lignum vitace, and fig trees. Cliche worth making (once) SUNSET AT MALLORY SQUARE Key West in the legendary show freak-acrobat, fire juggler, artist escape-must be seen once. Rouse-ified square edges with pink face and intoxication, but it's a tradition to maintain. CONCH FRITTERS The local end is endangered, that fried bits on your plate (or chewing bits in chowder) probably came from Turks and Caicos. In any case, conch is a local version of escargot: escargot: Just a beast of burden for more outstanding accompaniments, whether it's a cocktail sauce or jelly with hot peppers and wasabi served in Luis' backyard. Hemingway'S KEYS Papa is unsympathetic here, especially in Key West, where he lived for nine years. The museum in his former home and writing studio (907 Whitehead St., Key West; 305/294-1136; www.hemingwayhome.com) is an exercise in the imagination stretching: here Hemingway sat, here he wrote, here he swam, here he argued with his wife. But to repeat Hemingway's life, you need to go to another place like the bar at Sloppy Joe's, or fishing in the sea where he was happy. Much of this story was taken from Best of the Florida Keys, an article by Peter Frank that appeared in Travel and Recreation in March 2003. The article was accurate at the time of its publication, but we invite you to confirm all the details and prices directly with the service establishments before making travel plans. © copyright. All rights are reserved. Printed with a link to an external site that may or may not comply with the accessibility guidelines. Guidelines. mixed tenses exercises intermediate pdf with key

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