

Island-hop the Florida Keys by seaplane

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Imagine no traffic, no crowds and no noise—except the soft buzzing of a propeller and untamed gusts of wind. Wild blue waters rise and fall with each breath the Gulf of Mexico takes. You're soaring about 500 feet above the Florida Keys island chain. Various forms of sea life bob and weave through the waves: hammerheads, giant sea turtles, roly-poly manatees and tiny, silver-crested fish. Well, they look tiny from your perch inside a seaplane, but they're actually five-foot long tarpon.



That's just another day in the life of pilots Julie Ann Floyd and Nikali Pontecorvo, co-owners of Key West Seaplanes. "Every single day I soak it in," says Julie. "It's a daily escape from the ground below. So peaceful and quiet. Just the water, wind and the seaplane."



You've done the South Beach party scene and you've completed the ultimate road trip down to the Keys. Now it's time for a new vantage point, one you can't see from the highway.

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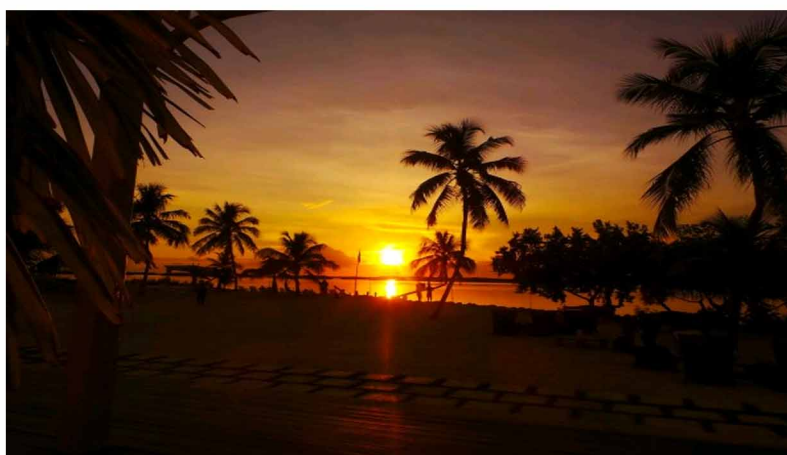
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Islamorada

While most seaplane adventures will likely include a stop in Key Largo (and we definitely recommend doing so!), we're focusing on Islamorada because it's currently undergoing a creative renaissance. The sleepy fishing village is blossoming into a thriving community driven by a group of local entrepreneurs. And it's the picture-perfect backdrop for the hit Netflix show, *Bloodline*.

Where to Stay: The brand new Amara Cay Resort is an upscale boutique property located directly on the water in Islamorada. It was formerly a budget-friendly Hampton Inn, but the new owners hired the talented Malcolm Berg and his architecture firm, EoA, to execute an impressive multi-million dollar renovation. Or check out the new and improved Postcard Inn Beach Resort & Marina at Holiday Isle. Both properties are sporting excellent new face lifts.

Where to Dine: Oltremare Ristorante at Amara Cay is the perfect spot for a romantic Italian dinner. Other new, must-try restaurants in the area include oo-tray (a whiskey bar and gastropub), Bad Boy Burrito (originally a Key West outpost) and Chef Michael's (owned by Executive Chef Michael Ledwith).

Where to Play: Reenact your favorite scenes from *Bloodline* at Anne's Beach or Long Key State Park — both locations appeared on the TV series. And head over to the colorful tasting room at the brand new Florida Keys Brewing Co. for a tasty local beer and live music.

Seaplane Pick-up/Drop Off Point: Once you've adequately re-introduced yourself to the new and improved village of Islamorada, hitch a ride with Julie and Nikali at the dock at the Lorelei Restaurant and Cabana Bar.