



AT BAKER'S CAY RESORT, LOUNGE ON YOUR BALCONY, SIP COCKTAILS AT A TIKI BAR, OR UNWIND ON ONE OF TWO BEACHES. FOR A TASTE OF THE FLORIDA KEYS, DINE INDOORS OR ON THE WATERFRONT PATIO AT DRY ROCKS.



QUICK TRIPS

CHIC Retreat

Relax in style—sans jet lag—at Baker's Cay Resort, KEY LARGO

By Paul Rubio

With many of us rethinking international travel at the moment, the Florida Keys feel more relevant than ever as an exotic escape close to home. Lucky for us, the largest and most accessible key in the island chain, Key Largo, has been busy debuting one high-end oasis after another, transforming the iconic no-frills destination into one spiked with unfussy luxury.

A highlight of this Upper Keys redux is Baker's Cay Resort, Key Largo, a thoughtfully designed, 200-room property cast over 13 acres of tropical groves and two white-sand

beaches. Opened in 2019 as part of the Curio Collection by Hilton, the resort embraces a tasteful, modernist beach house feel with understated, whitewashed accommodations countered by colorful common areas. Nautical-inspired rooms and suites soothe with wood furniture and coastal elements. Floor-to-ceiling windows and private terraces doling out dreamy views of the Florida Bay or the surrounding flora. Lobby pillars double as shelves for a lending library, with hundreds of books stacked among teak furnishings and rattan chandeliers.

On the culinary side, Calusa combines Creole and Caribbean flavors on a seafood-forward menu in a sleek, agave-speckled space overlooking the bay. Meanwhile, the wildly popular Dry Rocks fulfills tequila and taco fantasies of all proportions in a whimsical setting of barstools, beachfront swings, and pillow-strewn couches (floating above the sands by way of wooden platforms, no less).

Baker's Cay flaunts two beautiful beaches: bustling Coconut Beach, equipped with

loungers aplenty, a tiki bar, and kayaks and paddleboards for rent, and quieter Hammock Beach, an unofficial adults-only swath where loungers lie half-submerged in the water under a canopy of hardwood hammock. There is a duo of heated swimming pools, too, and a pool bar to enhance the fun-in-the-sun experience.

For those wanting to hit the Keys' jewel-toned waters, the resort offers activities like scuba diving, parasailing, sunset sailing, backcountry fishing, and a signature Dock to Dish program. In this half-day excursion, guests head out with famed Keys fisherman Captain Casey Scott to score the best in local catch, which is then used to create a multicourse feast.

Overall, Baker's Cay underscores the Upper Keys' real-time revival with its stylish decor, unbeatable waterfront setting, and personality-driven spaces. It's at once exciting, unpretentious, and intoxicating—the promise of a faraway island that's only a few hours' drive south. (bakerscay.com; hilton.com) ◀◀

