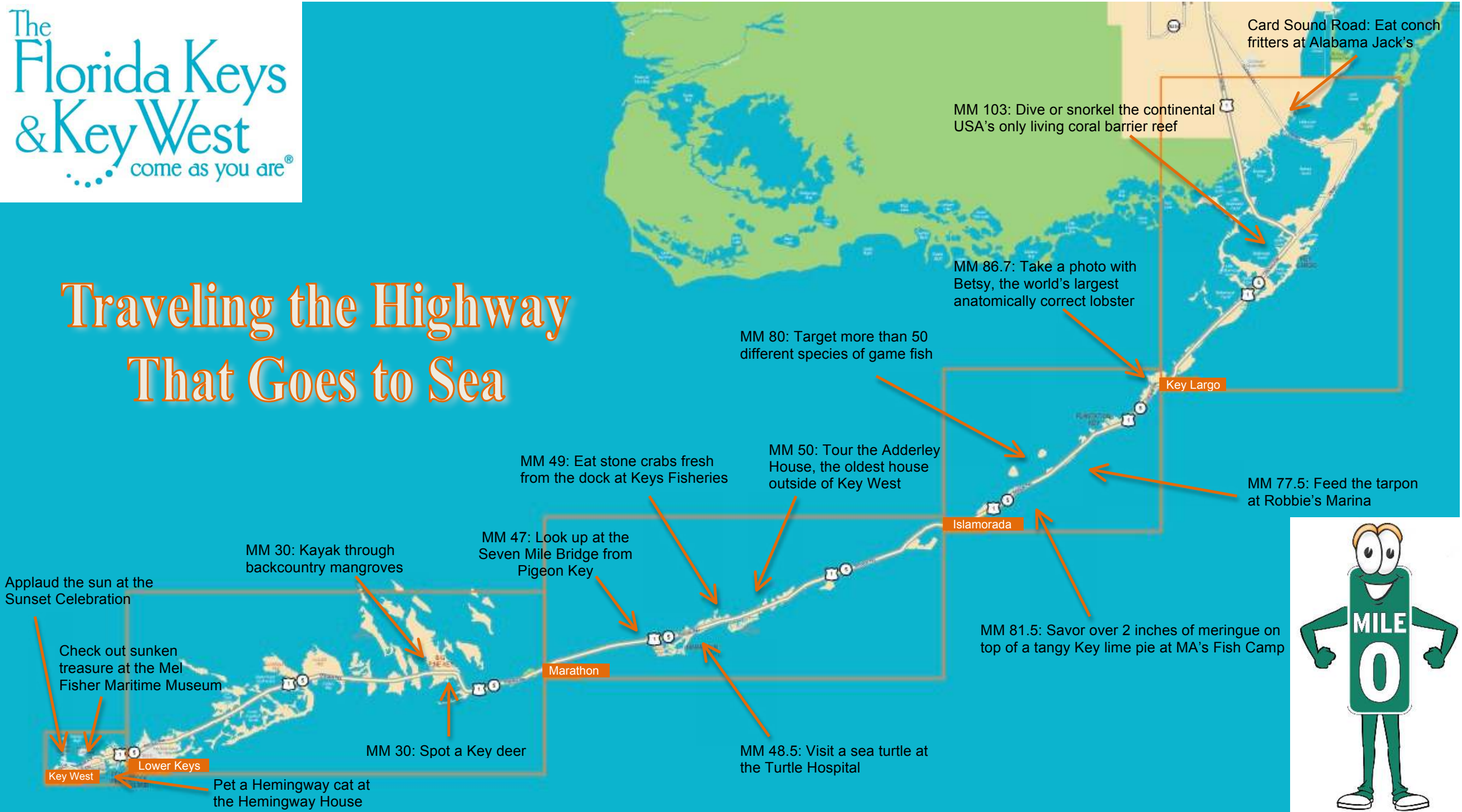


# Traveling the Highway That Goes to Sea



Card Sound Road: Eat conch fritters at Alabama Jack's

MM 103: Dive or snorkel the continental USA's only living coral barrier reef

MM 86.7: Take a photo with Betsy, the world's largest anatomically correct lobster

MM 80: Target more than 50 different species of game fish

Key Largo

MM 77.5: Feed the tarpon at Robbie's Marina

MM 50: Tour the Adderley House, the oldest house outside of Key West

MM 49: Eat stone crabs fresh from the dock at Keys Fisheries

Islamorada

MM 81.5: Savor over 2 inches of meringue on top of a tangy Key lime pie at MA's Fish Camp

MM 47: Look up at the Seven Mile Bridge from Pigeon Key

MM 30: Kayak through backcountry mangroves

Marathon

MM 48.5: Visit a sea turtle at the Turtle Hospital

MM 30: Spot a Key deer

Applaud the sun at the Sunset Celebration

Check out sunken treasure at the Mel Fisher Maritime Museum

Key West

Lower Keys

Pet a Hemingway cat at the Hemingway House





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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Traveling the Highway That Goes to Sea

**FLORIDA KEYS** — The Overseas Highway, the southernmost leg of U.S. Highway 1 that's sometimes called the Highway that Goes to Sea, is a modern wonder. In 2009, the roadway was named an All-American Road, the highest recognition possible under the National Scenic Byways program administered by the Federal Highway Administration.

The road follows a trail originally blazed in 1912 when railroad baron Henry Flagler completed the extension of his Florida East Coast Railroad from Miami to Key West. The railway ceased operation after severe damage to its infrastructure in a 1935 hurricane and was converted into a highway in the late 1930's.

The Overseas Highway represents a remarkable engineering feat, 113 miles of roadway and 42 bridges. The Atlantic Ocean lies on one side of the highway, with Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico on the other — providing drivers breathtaking vistas of open sea and sky.

Travelers along the Overseas Highway will see mile markers on the right shoulder or median strip, small green signs bearing white mile numbers beginning just south of Florida City at mile marker 127 and ending with zero in the heart of Old Town Key West.

**Key Largo**, mile marker 118 through 90.7, is bordered on the west by Florida Bay and the Everglades National Park backcountry, and to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, home to the clear waters of the Gulf Stream. Visitors can enjoy Key Largo's ties to the sea including scuba diving, snorkeling, an underwater hotel, sport fishing, eco-tours, beaches and dolphin encounter programs.

The fisherman's paradise known as **Islamorada**, mile marker 90.7 through 63, is said to be named by Spanish explorers who, seeing the purple sky at sunset and the purple bougainvillea, used the words "isla" and "morado" or purple island. Known as the Sport-Fishing Capital of the World, Islamorada is where backcountry sport fishing and saltwater fly fishing were pioneered. Perhaps the world's highest density of professional offshore charter boats with tournament-grade captains can be found in Islamorada.

Called the boating destination of the Keys, **Marathon**, mile marker 63 through 47, got its name from workers constructing the monumental Over-Sea Railroad from mainland Florida throughout the Keys in the early 1900s. Working night and day to meet the grueling construction schedule, crews reputedly said, "This is getting to be a real Marathon." Throughout the region, environmental attractions provide visitors opportunities to swim with dolphins, explore hardwood hammock and rainforest areas, stroll white sand beaches and enjoy an abundance of water sports.

For more than 60 years, the region of **Big Pine Key and the Lower Keys**, mile marker 47 through four, has advocated the responsible use and preservation of the vast natural wonders found there, earning the region the title of the Natural Keys. The Lower Keys are home to two national wildlife refuges and a state park, and are surrounded by a marine environment filled with abundant terrestrial and marine wildlife.

Located closer to Cuba than to Miami, **Key West**, mile marker four through zero, is Florida's independent and irreverent southernmost subtropical paradise. A unique confluence of history, climate, natural beauty, cultural diversity, architecture and unabashed romantic appeal make the island a destination far removed from the everyday world. Ernest Hemingway, Tennessee Williams, Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Frost and Jimmy Buffett are just a few of the famous who discovered solace and inspiration in the island city.

It is, of course, possible to leave Miami and travel the entire length of the Overseas Highway, through all the Keys to Key West, in less than four hours. But veteran Keys travelers know a hurried approach is not the way to experience this laidback destination. Take it easy. Experience the true flavor of each region of the Florida Keys. Take pleasure in the ever-changing land- and seascapes to be viewed from the Highway that Goes to Sea.