

## Florida East

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## Florida East

Here are photos from a short tour of Florida's south-east coast.

This trip starts with a flight to Orlando. My rental car takes me to the Cocoa Beach / Cape Canaveral area for a two-day visit to the Kennedy Space Center. Fascinating for me because I remember all this happening, so there are a lot of pictures in this part. You can skip ahead quickly if you wish.

My driving route then goes south, with overnight stops and little side tours in Fort Lauderdale and Key Largo. My Florida Keys drive ends where the road ends, in Key West.

Some little boating tours there, and one bigger one to Dry Tortugas.

Then back up to Miami Beach for some sightseeing and Art Deco District architectural appreciation, and home from Miami.

- Bruce McKay



## **Florida East**

Direct flight from Toronto to Orlando airport.

Across to the Atlantic coast to Cocoa Beach, Cape Canaveral, and the Kennedy Space Center.

Down Route A1A on the Florida East Coast Barrier Islands to Fort Lauderdale.

Then down to Key Largo at the top of the Florida Keys.

All the way down the Keys to Key West.

A boat trip to one of the Dry Tortugas islands.

Back north to Miami Beach.

Flight home from Miami.



Cocoa Beach Cocoa Beach is a friendly seaside residential community just south of Cape Canaveral.



Cocoa Beach The Cocoa Beach Pier is the town's major social centre.



Cocoa Beach The Mai Tiki Bar at the end of the pier is a great spot to relax.



Cocoa Beach Lots of people on the beach today ...



Cocoa Beach

... but not many surfers for these small waves.



Cocoa Beach The most formal thing in town is the Ron Jon Surf Shop, the world's largest surf board and sunglasses shop.



The Kennedy Space Center north of Cocoa Beach is one of the main destinations on this trip. Two days here.



The Visitors Centre is a huge complex of museums, theatres, rides, and exhibits.



The museums show space history up close.



Three bus tours take visitors to historic locations.



The first U.S. satellite was launched here at Launch Complex 26 in 1958.



Launch Control Room circa 1958. This equipment seems impossibly primitive for its task.



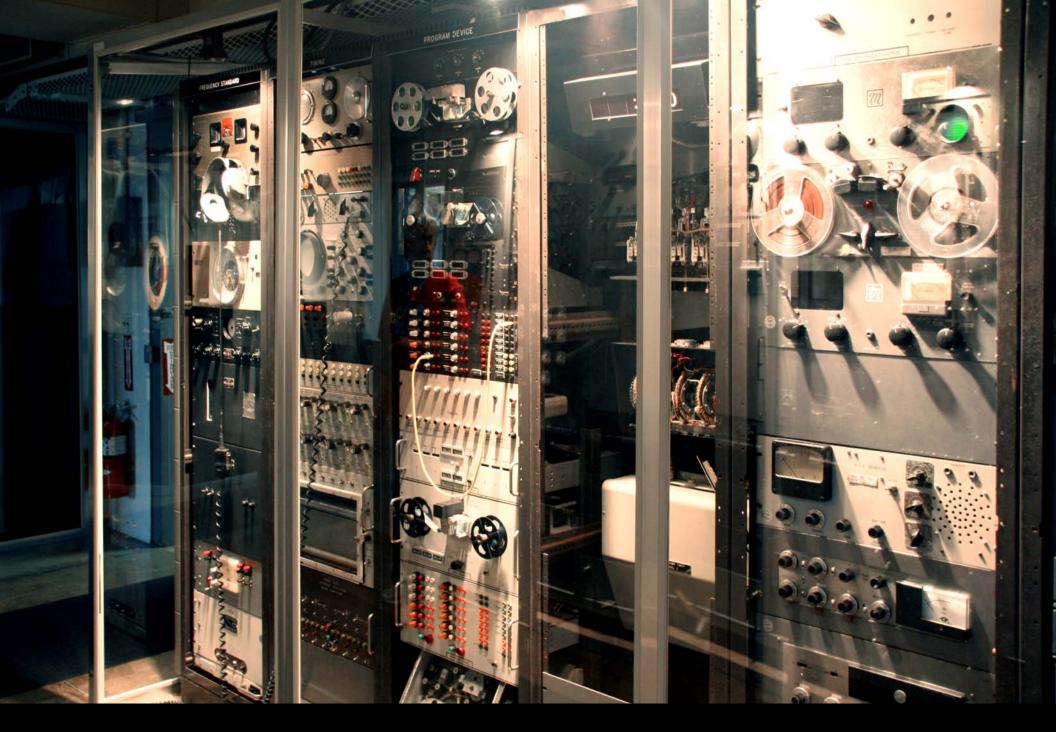
The Launch Control was in a blockhouse only about 400 feet / 120 m from the rocket to keep analog cable lengths short for reliability.



Block houses had concrete walls that started at2 feet thick and got much thicker as more dangerous rockets were developed.



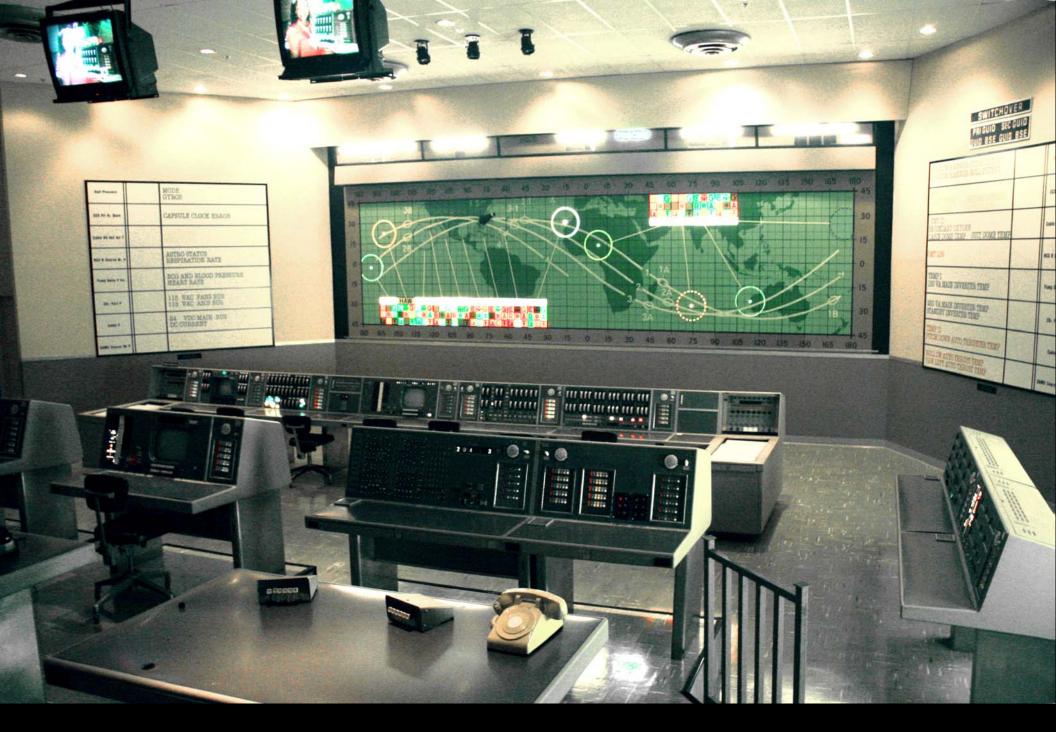
Launch Control Complex 5/6 shot the first U.S. astronaut into space in 1961.



This Launch Control is a museum. These types of technologies have disappeared.



This Mercury - Redstone missile is the type which carried Alan Shepard into space.



Mission Control equipment for Mercury and Gemini missions. There's more computing power in a digital wrist watch than in this room.



A Project Mercury (one person) capsule – # 12B, 1962. Cozy.



The Rocket Garden at the Visitor Complex shows the evolution of rocket technology.



With red escape rocket, left: a Mercury - Redstone, 1961. With red escape rocket, right: a Mercury - Atlas, 1962.



Close-up of a Project Mercury capsule atop the Mercury - Redstone.



This mock-up of a Project Mercury capsule shows how small these early spacecraft were.



This Saturn-1B is too big to stand upright in the Rocket Garden, but it's just a baby brother of the Saturn-5 rockets for moon missions.



These Saturn-1B rockets first flew in 1966, just five years after the first short, sub-orbital astronaut flight.



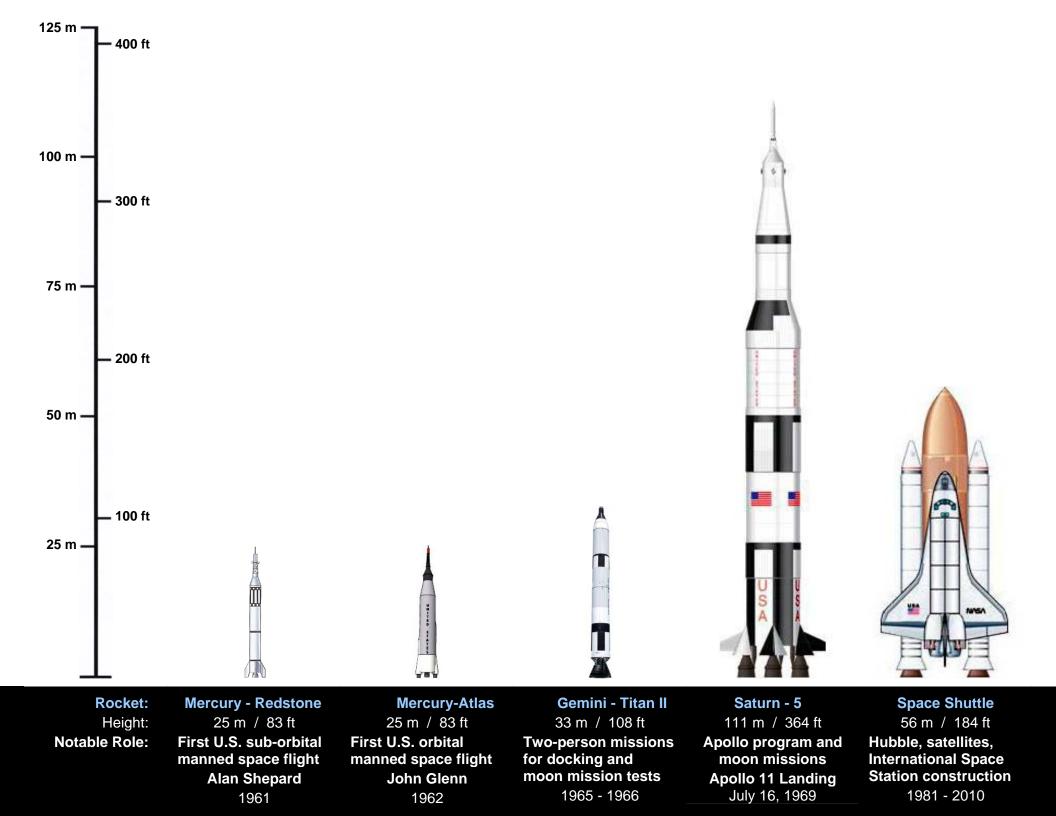
Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins walked across this Service Arm to board their Apollo capsule for the first moon landing in July 1969.



Saturn-V rockets of the type that flew to the moon are so huge NASA has built a visitors' building around one. It won't fit in one picture.



The stages of the rocket are separated in the Apollo / Saturn V Visitor Center. My chart on the next page traces the explosive growth of rocket size.





A full-size replica of a Space Shuttle with some original flight control equipment



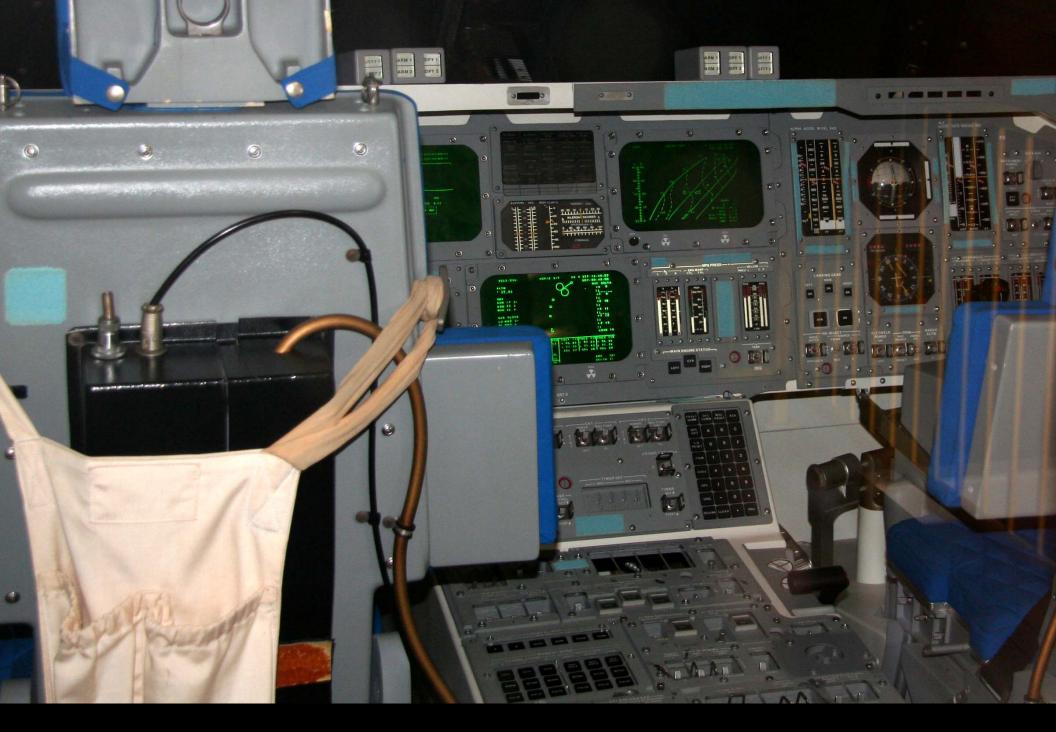
It's much bigger than we'd imagine from TV pictures.



The Shuttle's External Tank and two Boosters (all about 150 ft / 45 m long)



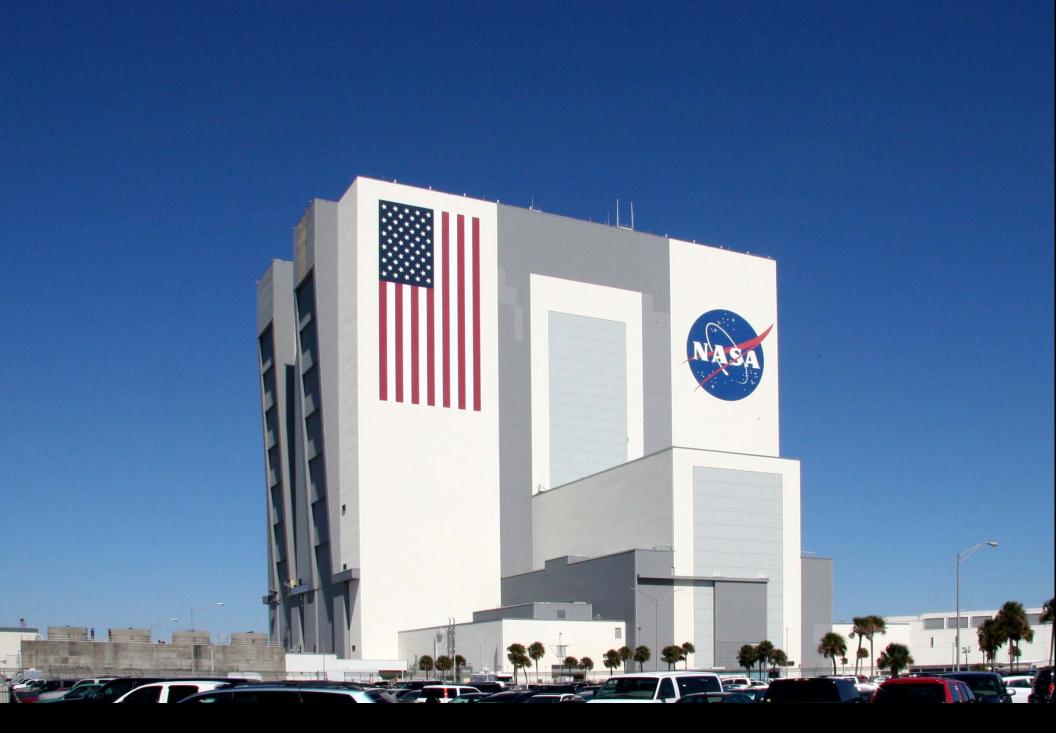
The cargo bay doors have reflective surfaces to help keep things cool while open.



The Shuttle's controls seem very dated now. It was designed in the early 70s and first flew in 1981.



The Space Shuttle is mated to its external tank and boosters in the mammoth Vehicle Assembly Building.



The Vehicle Assembly Building is 525 ft / 160 m tall. Each flag stripe is the width of a highway traffic lane.



Launch Complex 39A, site of the moon mission launches and the main Shuttle launch site. The extra towers are lightning rods.



There's no Shuttle on 39A today, but the service structure is impressive on its own. My facilities map follows.

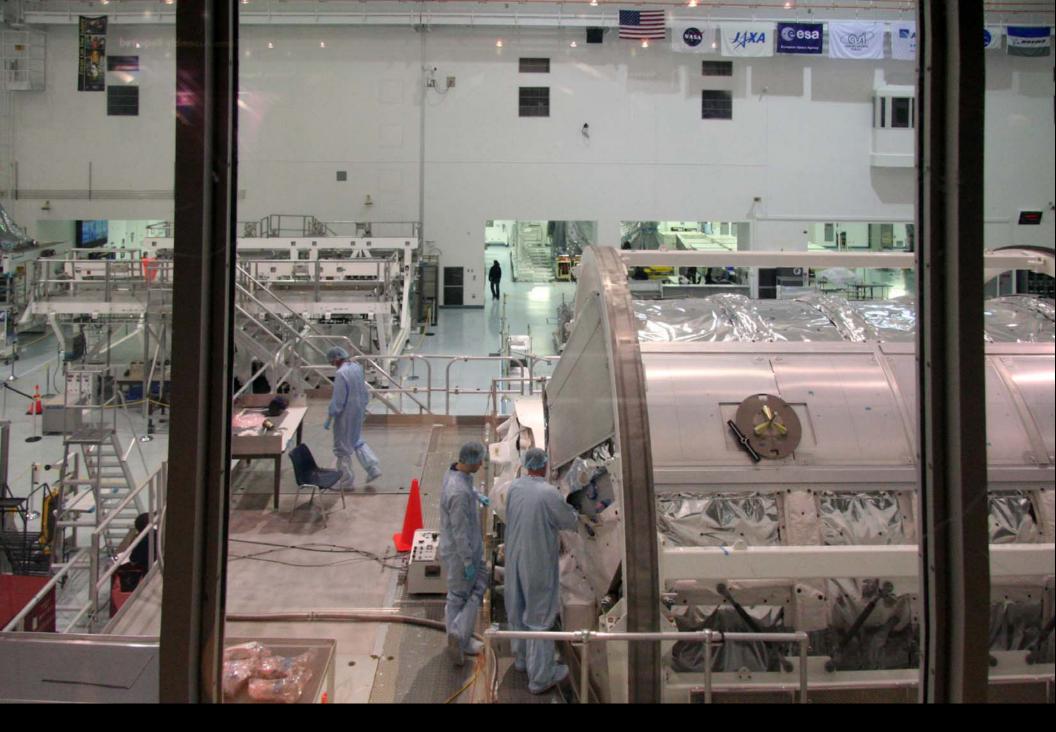




Launch Complex 37B is getting a Delta 4 rocket ready for its GOES-P satellite launch next week.



The International Space Station Center is assembling payloads for the final four Shuttle missions.



The payloads are assembled in a giant "clean room".



The next mission to the Space Station will leave here in about a month.





Delray Beach Nice sunny day. Relaxed.



**Delray Beach** 

Downtown Delray Beach is gorgeous and laid back.



Welcome to Fort Lauderdale.



Not as relaxed. Crowded.



In fact not relaxed at all.



A boat trip will be a pleasant change from the heavy traffic.



Lots of multi-million dollar mega-yachts ...





Fort Lauderdale has concentrated on developing its cruise ship business.



The Public Works department has a sense of style. The boat trip is all about "millionaires' row".



La Maison du Papillon / The Butterfly Mansion, a single family dwelling.



La Maison Blanche / The White House, now the home of an auto parts magnate.



The estate of Wayne Huizenga, who developed profitable businesses like Blockbuster Video.



This one is also very nice, but ...



... after a while all these \$ 20 million mansions start to look alike.



Everglades at Weston

Fort Lauderdale is at the eastern edge of the Everglades, Florida's subtropical wetlands.



Everglades at Weston

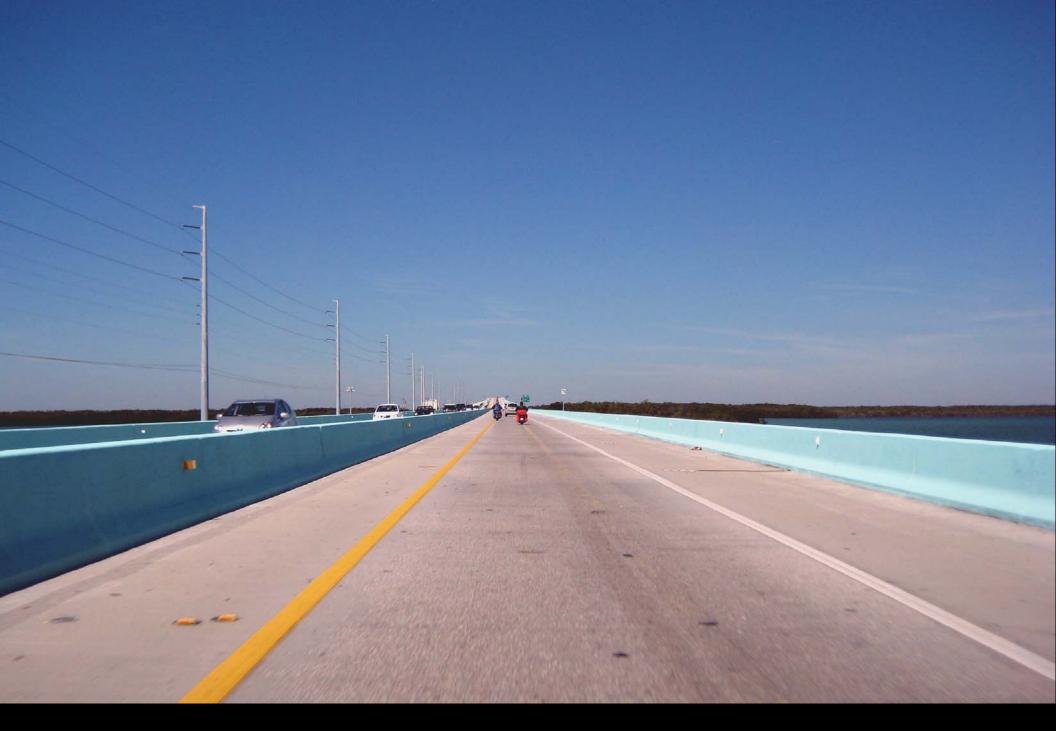
Airboats at Everglades Holiday Park use airplane engines to skim over the grassy wetlands.



Everglades at Weston

Novel, but the sound of the twin airplane engines is almost deafening. Pass.





To Key Largo Welcome to the Florida Keys.
The highway is painted to welcome you.



**Key Largo**First stop – Key Largo, where things are relaxed again.



A large catamaran with glass bottom windows sails from Pennekamp State Park to explore a coral reef.



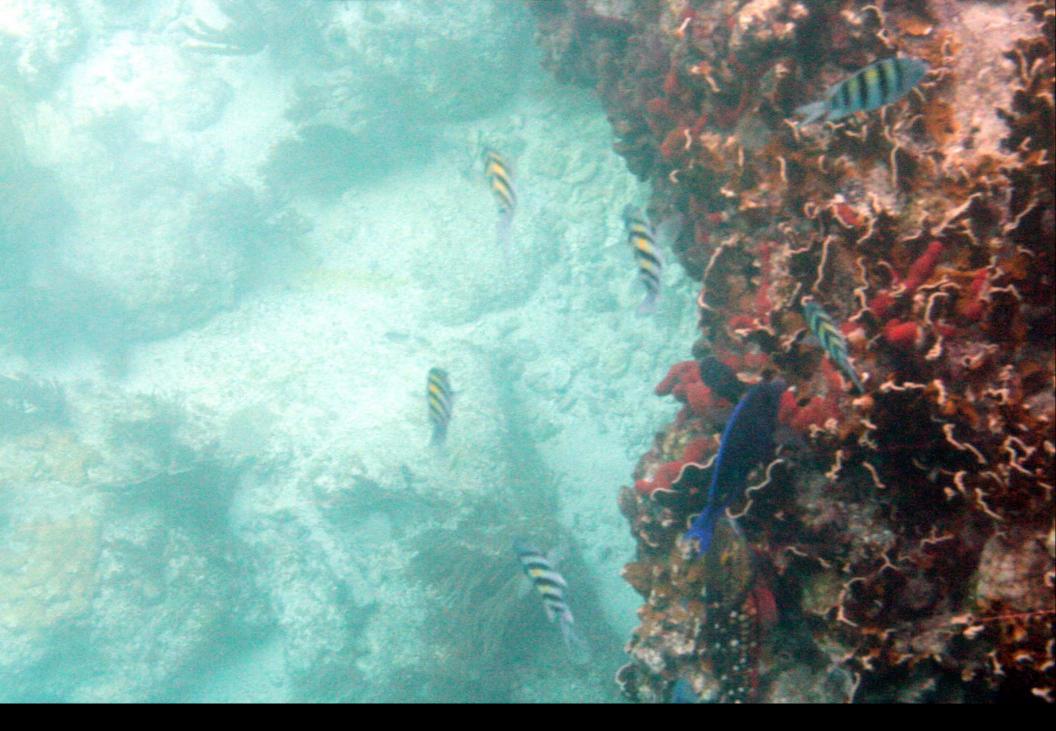
The Molasses Reef which we will visit is 6 miles / 10 km out in the Atlantic.



Key Largo The variety of corals is incredible. There's no vegetation here. Things that look like leaves or other parts of plants are coral.



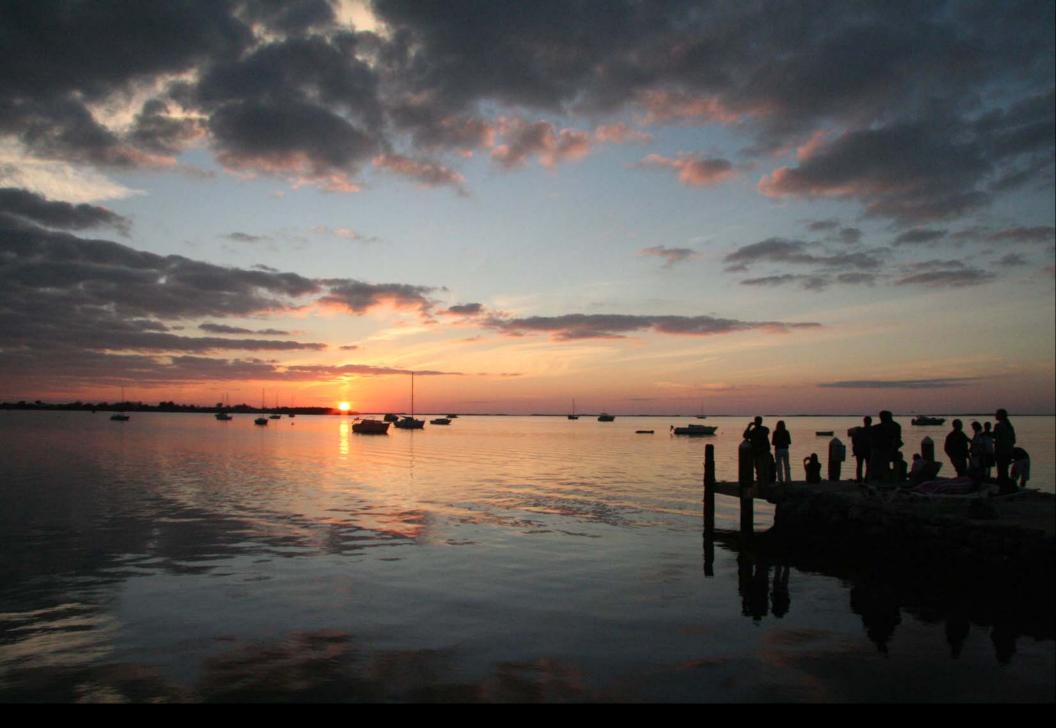
Key Largo There are also dozens of fish species here. "Sergeant Major" fish, with the black-and-yellow stripes, are the most common.



Key Largo Even seen through heavy viewing glass, this reef is incredibly beautiful.



**Key Largo** As the oceans warm, these coral reefs are among the first things threatened.



Key Largo
Visitors to Key Largo gather
to watch the sun set.



Key Largo And we're rewarded with a spectacular display.









Florida Keys

At Bahia Honda – remains of the early1900s railway that sparked development of the Keys.



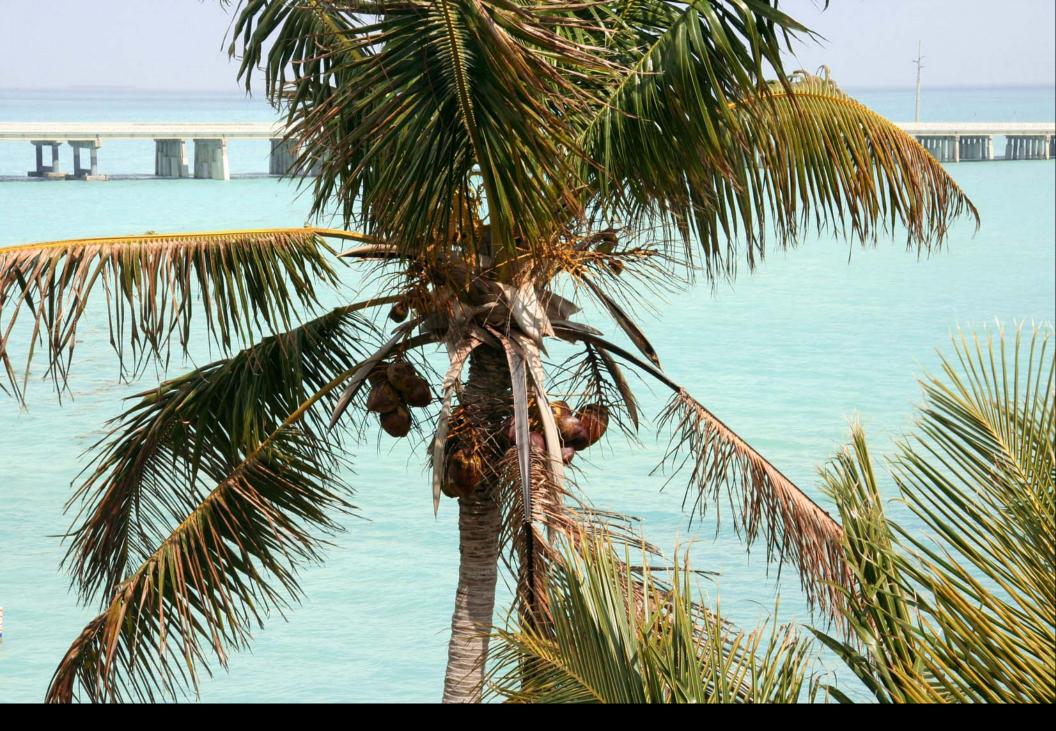


Florida Keys

The Bahia Honda bridge provides a good vantage point to view the state park ...



Florida Keys ... and its beaches.



Florida Keys

Lesson for today. Don't fall asleep under a palm tree.

More people are killed by falling coconuts than by sharks.



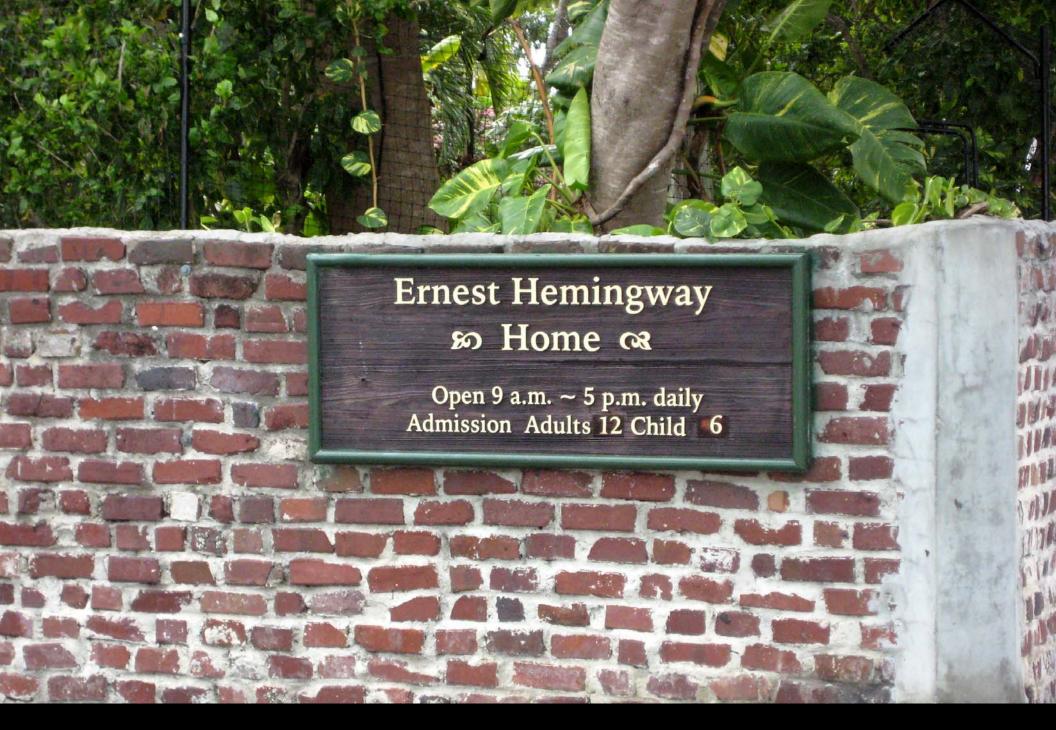
**Key West**No mistaking the architecture.
This is Key West.





**Key West** 

Guest house, in a mansion dating from about 1888.





Key West The Hemingway House is the city's most visited historic site.



**Key West** The Little White House was President Harry Truman's out-of-Washington refuge.



**Key West**The Key West Lighthouse of 1847 is open for visitors to climb the 98 shaky circular stairs.



Key West The Mel Fisher Museum displays some of Fisher's \$ 450 million haul from a Spanish galleon sunk in 1622.



**Key West** Fort Zachary Taylor was America's southernmost Civil War fortress.



**Key West**Fort Taylor served the Federal Navy's East Gulf Coast Blocking Squadron.



Key West Today Fort Taylor oversees more peaceful pursuits.



**Key West** Fort Taylor State Park features fine beaches ...





**Key West**But parts of Key West have changed dramatically.

Big cruise ships and big hotel chains are now here in abundance.



**Key West**There are crowds and big Harley motorcycles at all of the most heavily promoted tourist sites.



**Key West** Actually not the Southernmost Point. And Cuba is really 94 miles away.



**Key West** Each evening now tourists gather at Mallory Square for its Sunset Celebration.



**Key West** The sunsets over the Gulf of Mexico are impressive ...



**Key West** 

... but it's hard to get an unobstructed picture.



Key West Time to get out of town. Check out the marina.



Key West

This Great White Heron could just fly away.
I'll need a boat.



Key West This 80-foot turn-of-the-century style wooden pilot schooner will do nicely.



**Key West**We're going sailing, with real canvas sails and real people handling them.



Key West The Adirondack II has 1900s style, but was built in 1999 with some modern features.







Key West

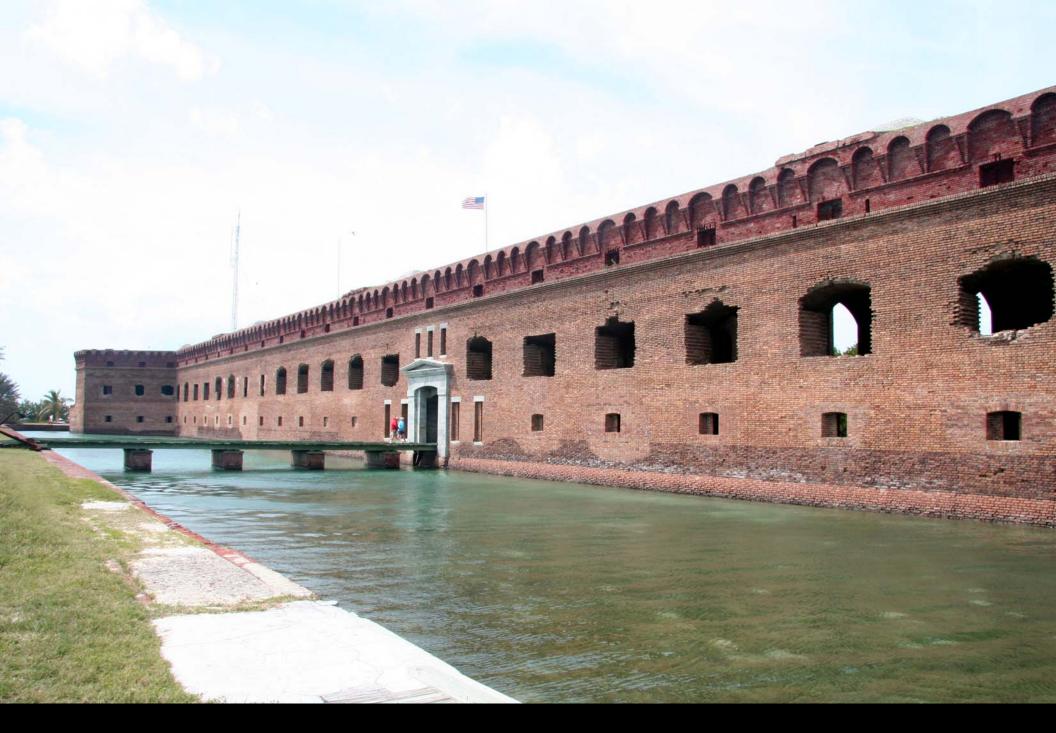
It's great to enjoy the day and watch the crew do all the work.

Tomorrow it's a naval adventure of a different sort.



Dry Tortugas Approaching Fort Jefferson, on one of the islands in the Dry Tortugas, 70 miles west of Key West in the Gulf of Mexico.





**Dry Tortugas** 

This is the second-largest masonry structure in the world, after the Great Wall of China.



Dry Tortugas Construction began in 1846 and lasted 30 years. It was intended to control navigation in the Gulf of Mexico.



Dry Tortugas Close to 2,000 people lived at Fort Jefferson during its peak years.



Dry Tortugas The fort was designed to house 420 heavy guns, but was never completed.



Dry Tortugas The invention of the rifled cannon made the fort obsolete, as its thick walls could then be penetrated.

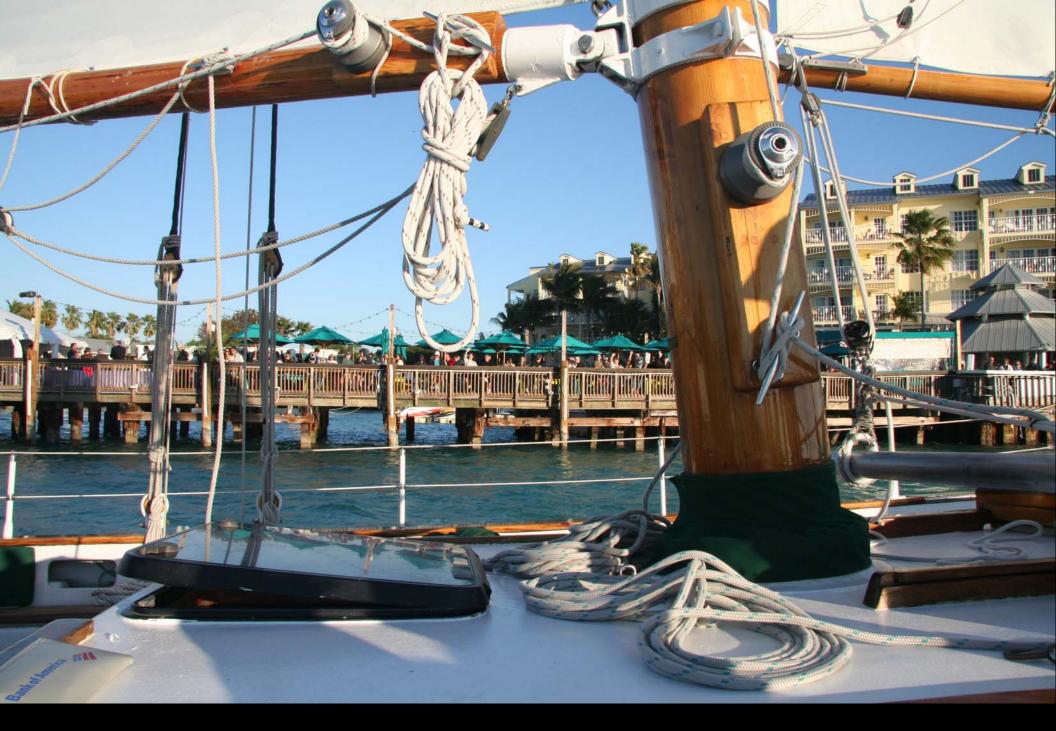


Dry Tortugas "Tortugas" is Spanish for turtles. "Dry" is nautical shorthand for "no fresh water". The fresh water problem was never solved.



Dry Tortugas

Today the Dry Tortugas area is a National Park and wildlife refuge, especially known for bird watching, with 299 species listed.



**Key West** 

Back to Key West for a sunset sail on the Adirondack II.











Florida Keys

Time to head back north, but with some casual stops along the way. This seaside bar is in Marathon.







Florida Keys

The Keys Highway back to Miami runs along remnants of the old railway.







Miami Off on a sightseeing boat, sister to this one.





Miami Cruise boats. Check.
The most cruise boats anywhere in the world.



Miami The City of Miami is the fourth largest in the U.S. ...



Miami ... and home to the largest concentration of international banks in the U.S.



Miami Beach, on the islands along the east coast, is also prosperous now.



Miami Beach Some real estate development was financed by laundered drug profits, but things seem cool now.



Miami Beach Our boat trip suddenly starts to show us the Miami Beach version of "millionaire's row".





Miami Beach Nice. But ...





**Art Deco District** 

This is different. This is the Art Deco District, saved from wholesale demolition by designation as historic in 1979, and then redeveloped.



This 1959 Cadillac and the 1955 Buick on the previous page add character, but the real stars here are the 1930s hotels facing the sea along Ocean Drive.



Avalon Hotel, 700 Ocean Drive, 1937. Formerly Park Central Hotel.

First hotel to be returned to its original splendor. 1st of 10 hotel photos.





Colony Hotel, 736 Ocean Drive, 1939. 3 / 10 These ten jewels are concentrated in a seven-block stretch.



Waldorf Towers Hotel, 860 Ocean Drive, 1937. 4 / 10 Designed by Albert Anis, a leading U.S. Art Deco architect.



Breakwater Hotel, 940 Ocean Drive, 1939. 5/10 Previously one of the most photographed. Now closed for renovations.





Leslie Hotel, 1244 Ocean Drive, 1937. 7 / 10 Another Albert Anis design, currently being redeveloped.



The Carlyle, 1250 Ocean Drive, 1939. 8 / 10 Now converted into opulent condominiums, \$1-5 million.





The Cavalier Hotel, 1320 Ocean Drive, 1936. 10 / 10 Symmetry and the 3-part facade are typical Art Deco.



Miami Beach This 1966 GTO is a youngster in this neighbourhood, but it fits just the same.



Miami Beach In the end, Miami Beach is probably best remembered as a beach.

< End >

