



IS IT SAFE?

Key West

SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY GUIDE

OVERALL SAFETY ASSESSMENT

RATING: Safe — one of the most welcoming small cities in Florida for solo travelers; standard awareness applies on Duval Street after midnight.

Key West is a safe destination for solo travelers. Old Town, Bahama Village, the Truman Annex, the South Beach area, and the waterfront districts are all comfortable and active at most hours. The island's small geographic size means you are never far from a populated street or a well-lit commercial area. The general culture is unusually welcoming and tolerant — Key West has been a refuge for LGBTQ+ travelers since the 1970s and that spirit of inclusion extends to solo travelers of all kinds.

Duval Street on weekend nights concentrates the standard risks of any American bar mile — drink spiking awareness, rideshare verification, and the general unpredictability of a dense late-night crowd. The blocks of Duval north of Angela Street become particularly crowded and chaotic after midnight. The rest of the island is quiet and safe after dark.

RATING SCALE

★★★★★ = Very safe ★★★★★ = Safe ★★★ = Use awareness ★★ = Avoid at night ★ = Avoid

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY AT A GLANCE

AREA	RATING	NOTES
Old Town (South of Truman)	★★★★★	Residential streets and historic district. Very safe at all hours. Best walking neighbourhood on the island.
Duval Street (South of Angela)	★★★★	Better bars and quieter crowd. Safe and active until midnight.
Duval Street (North of Angela)	★★★	High-density bar corridor after 10pm. Standard nightlife awareness: watch your drink, confirm rideshare. Fine earlier in the evening.
Mallory Square / Waterfront	★★★★★	Active and visible during Sunset Celebration. Well-managed public space.
Bahama Village	★★★★	Historic neighbourhood west of Duval. Gentrifying; Blue Heaven and adjacent blocks are safe and comfortable.
Fort Zachary Taylor / South Beach	★★★★★	State park with managed entry. Very safe during park hours (8am-sunset).
Truman Annex	★★★★★	Gated community containing the Little White House. Secure and well-maintained.
Mid-Island / White Street	★★★★	Residential and commercial corridor. Safe at all hours; quieter than Old Town.

COMMON SCAMS & RISKS

Drink spiking: A risk on Duval Street on weekend nights, concentrated in the high-density bar corridor north of Angela Street. Do not leave drinks unattended and purchase drinks yourself at the bar rather than accepting them from strangers. This applies to all genders.

Rideshare safety: Confirm driver name, photo, and plate before entering. Rideshare pickups near Duval Street after midnight can be confused by multiple vehicles in the same area. Step away from the crowd to identify your vehicle clearly.

Sunset Celebration vendors: The Mallory Square performers and vendors are legitimate; the aggressive tip solicitation at some acts can feel uncomfortable. You are not obligated to tip for a performance you did not explicitly request.

Water tour operators: Book snorkel and water activity tours through established operators (Fury, Seago, Yankee Freedom) rather than walk-up solicitations on the waterfront. Unlicensed operators occasionally approach tourists near the Historic Seaport.

Heat and sun: The Keys sun is intense year-round. Use SPF 50+, wear a hat on reef tours, and carry water at all times. The combination of alcohol and sun exposure in summer is a genuine medical risk — pace both carefully.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Lower Keys Medical Center (5900 College Road, Stock Island) is the closest full-service hospital to Key West — 5 miles north on US-1. The Emergency Room serves the entire Lower Keys chain.

DePoo Hospital (1200 Kennedy Drive, Key West) is a smaller facility with an emergency room closer to Old Town, operated by Lower Keys Medical Center.

Urgent care: Concentra and DocStation have locations in Key West. For non-emergency needs, the CVS Minute Clinic on N Roosevelt Blvd is convenient.

Travel insurance with medical coverage is strongly recommended for US travel. The Lower Keys Medical Center is a private facility; without insurance, emergency costs are significant.

Water safety: the reef snorkel sites have boat traffic. Follow all captain instructions about staying within the designated snorkel zone. Wear water shoes for rocky reef entries. If you are not a confident swimmer, book a guided tour rather than renting a kayak independently for open-water crossings.

Marine hazards: jellyfish, sea urchins, and fire coral are present in Keys waters. Do not touch coral (it is also federally protected). Wear reef-safe sunscreen — standard sunscreen is prohibited near reef areas by Monroe County ordinance.

SOLO WOMEN TRAVELERS

Key West is one of the most comfortable destinations in Florida for solo women travelers. The island's long history as an LGBTQ+ refuge has created a culture of tolerance and inclusion that extends to solo women in all contexts. Blue Heaven, Seven Fish, and most Old Town restaurants seat solo women without awkwardness. The Sunset Celebration is safe and welcoming for solo women at any age. Fort Zachary Taylor beach is relaxed and comfortable. The standard precautions apply to Duval Street after midnight: watch your drink, confirm rideshare details, and prefer the quieter blocks south of Angela Street if you are out late alone. The AfterDeck bar at Louie's Backyard is a notably comfortable late-evening option — well-managed, good lighting, and a sophisticated crowd.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

SERVICE	CONTACT
Emergency (Police / Fire / Medical)	911
Key West Police (non-emergency)	(305) 809-1111
Lower Keys Medical Center (ER)	(305) 294-5531
DePoo Hospital	(305) 294-8511
Monroe County Crisis Line	(800) 273-8255
Poison Control (US)	1-800-222-1222

SERVICE	CONTACT
Crisis Text Line	Text HOME to 741741
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	988
US Coast Guard Key West	(305) 292-8727