

## (( DISPATCHES ))

### 4 Ways to Make the Most of a Hawks Cay Getaway

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With a balmy climate and lush scenery, the Florida Keys feel far-flung and exotic, even though they're just a short flight from many major hubs in the U.S. That's why it's one of our go-to destinations when we want to disconnect from the daily grind, and reconnect with the things we enjoy — whether it's family, a S.O., or just good food and perfect ocean water.

We were recently invited to [Hawks Cay Resort](#) in Duck Key to enjoy those very things, plus a myriad of planned activities that take place at the resort. During our visit, we spoke to the staff and got their tips for soaking up the best of the Keys. Here's what we learned...

## For kids:

**Activity:** Camp Hawk Environmental Academy

**What It Is:** This interactive program teaches kids about the environment through a series of hands-on activities; topics range from observing tropical birds to conducting wind experiments to learning about the weather. A schedule of the week's activities can be found in the hotel's lobby and [online](#).

**Staff Take:** "Kids can come play with the dolphins or learn about turtles, or we even have a program that's complimentary to grade K to 12 homeschool programs. We also offer a couple of advanced levels for private groups. It can be as simple or as complex as you need." — *Megan, director of fun*

## For grownups:

**Activity:** Beer Olympics

**What It Is:** The Beer Olympics — one of the most popular activities for adults at the resort — is a competitive set of challenges centered around beer. Games are held at the adults-only pool on Saturday evenings.

**Staff Take:** "We have flip cup, beer trivia, beer pong, and bucket-of-beer bingo all evening in the resort's adult area, while the kids are away at Camp Hawk." — *Megan, director of fun*

## For those who want to explore the wild:

**Activity:** SNUBA Diving or Trainer for a Day

**What It Is:** SNUBA affords guests an opportunity to get up close with marine life, but unlike SCUBA, which requires you to use an air tank, guests are connected to a raft by a hose, which serves as their floating air supply and allows them to dive up to 20 feet deep. Guests are accompanied by a guide while they explore tropical fish and the only living coral barrier reef in the U.S.

The Trainer for the Day program gives guests a behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to be a part of the resort's Dolphin Connection team. During the program, participants get one-on-one time with the trainers and learn how to care for and train dolphins. Afterward each guest is presented with a certificate and personal photo with a dolphin upon their completion of the program.

**Staff Take:**

*On SNUBA:* "You don't need certification or classroom sessions. You'll just head out to the dive site by boat and the instructor will prepare you on board. It's a really great way for a novice diver to try breathing with compressed air for the first time, and to see if SCUBA diving is a sport that they might also enjoy" — *Matt, marketing director*

*On Trainer for a Day:* "Two people work with a trainer for three hours. It's an intimate program where you get to ask a lot of questions and really interact with the dolphins, too." — *Jess, assistant supervisor*

## For the hungry traveler:

**Activity:** Dinner at Angler & Ale

**What It Is:** The resort's newest restaurant — located on Hawks Cay Resort's Marina Walk — offers an eclectic assortment of dishes with a local twist, such as Caribbean conch fritters with key lime aioli and tuna nachos with pickled ginger. All ingredients are sourced from the Florida Keys.

**Staff Take:** "People come to the Keys for the water, and to experience the unique island flavor. At Angler & Ale you'll be able to do both — enjoy a meal by the water, or go out and catch a fish and let our chefs cook it for you." — *Sheldon, managing director*

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