

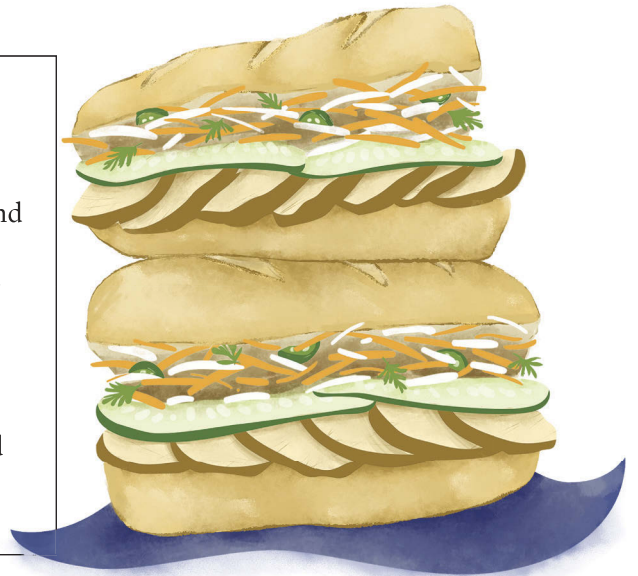
I'M THE COMMUNITY AFFAIRS MANAGER AT THE MONROE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY and president of the Key West Literary Seminar. I've lived in Key West for more than thirty years. It's a small town—roughly 25,000 people—with a huge tourism industry—more than a million visitors annually. As a full-time resident, I really savor the places and experiences that are not solely aimed at getting the maximum amount of money from the maximum number of people.



Pepper Pot Island Cafe
 This is a real family concern. They offer Trinidadian favorites like roti and curry. My husband used to run birding tours to Trinidad and loves their food. He gets especially excited on Saturday, Doubles Day. Doubles are a Trinidadian street food made with bara (a flatbread) filled with chana (curried chickpeas) and flavored with an array of condiments. Pepper Pot is in Key West's historic Black Pepper Pot is in Key West's historic Black neighborhood, known as Bahama Village.

Five Brothers Grocery and Sandwich Shop

Key West was basically the Miami of the nineteenth century: huge in the cigar industry and a hotbed for Cuban exiles working to overthrow the rulers on their home island. Back then it was Spain, not Castro. So, Cuban food and culture have been integrated for generations here. Five Brothers is one of the last real bodegas left in Key West. Every morning you see half the public employees and tradespeople on the island stopping here for their café con leche or buche (what we call a cafecito, or shot of espresso).



Books & Books @ The Studios

South Florida's legendary independent bookstore was founded in Coral Gables in 1982. It got its southernmost affiliate seven years ago when Judy Blume—yep, *that* Judy Blume—decided to quit writing books and start selling them. She and her husband, George Cooper, founded the store. They work there almost every day when they're not attending movie premieres or library conferences. And even if Judy's not there, they'll sell you one of her books for her to sign and send it to you later.

Key West Cemetery

The cemetery is at the center of the historic district on (relatively) high ground. I ride my bike through there almost every day on my way to work, appreciating what makes it special—like the memorial to the sailors killed in the explosion of the *USS Maine* in 1898. And the Otto family plot, which includes a small memorial for Elfina, their pet deer, and marble headstones for three of their dogs. This cemetery has some pretty good epitaphs, the most famous being, I TOLD YOU I WAS SICK. But my favorite is for Sunny Otto, beloved Yorkshire Terrier, born April 21, 1952, and died February 26, 1970: HIS BEAUTIFUL LITTLE SPIRIT WAS A CHALLENGE TO LOVE.



Illustrations by Bridgette Blanton / Tiny Pencil Studio

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