

### OCEAN BAY MEAL PLANS

CHEF CLARK HUFF  
C.E.C., CCA.

Let us cook for you!

Chef's Specialities

Keto and Low Calorie Menus  
available weekly on Mondays  
via Facebook @OceanBayDining  
or by request via text msg to 1-888-403-4503



### OCEAN BAY CATERING




Catering services available  
for 6 to 600 guests

Custom tailored to your Event

Contact Chef Clark 501-626-2424  
OceanBayDining@gmail.com

## Lighted Bike Ride

4th Annual Lighted Bike Ride to  
benefit **Mrs. Claus a Merry Cause**



**Friday, December 17, 2021 at 6:30 PM**  
**DONATIONS WELCOME**

**YOU'RE INVITED TO A FUN-FILLED FAMILY EVENING  
BIKE RIDE ON DECEMBER 17th, STARTING AT  
TROPICAL REALTY AT 6:30PM.**

**WE WILL RIDE UP AND DOWN US-1 WITH A SHERIFF  
ESCORT RETURNING TO TROPICAL REALTY.  
(102901 OVERSEAS HWY.)**

**DECORATE YOUR BIKE, WEAR UGLY SWEATERS...  
WHATEVER FESTIVE ATTIRE YOU WISH.**

**THIS IS OUR 22nd YEAR AND THE 4th ANNUAL LIGHTED  
BIKE RIDE. WE ADOPT KIDS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO  
MAKE THEIR CHRISTMAS WISHES COME TRUE.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO FACEBOOK EVENT:  
LIGHTED BIKE RIDE-KEY LARGO**

## THE FEAST OF THE SEVEN FISHES- or -FESTA DEI SETTE PESCI

A PAID ADVERTISEMENT

As with any Italian feast or festival there is food involved. Sometimes lots of food. But what are we really celebrating and how did it get started? I asked a lot of people who should know about it but came up with guesses. I figured that I've been celebrating it for 73 years maybe it's time to get some facts. What I clearly know is that it is part of the immigrant heritage for many of us. But who and where did it really start?

Foremost, it is the Christmas Eve Vigil (La Vigilia) dinner and is celebrated mainly by those whose roots go back to Southern Italy. While it is not called a feast in Italy, they prefer to call it a festival as in a Grand Meal - there is a lot of food that takes hours to make and even more hours to eat. Like what we had at Thanksgiving would be the appetizer. This Southern Italy tradition is in anticipation of the birth of Jesus. Italian immigrants brought this celebration to the United States by way of New York's Little Italy in the 1800's. It combined elements of our Italian

history and today's trends. Which is to say it is still evolving.

In the Catholic faith, Friday is traditionally a day to fast by avoiding red meat and eating fish. (That was changed in the 1960's by the Pope, but some of us held the tradition.) Except that we were allowed to break the fast after sunset on December 24th. Hence, a meal of biblical proportions.

This Southern Italy tradition was started on the coastline known for its seafood. And seafood was preferred both because of its abundance and it was more affordable in the south, which was a poorer region of Italy. With the Unification of Italy in 1861 the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (roughly Naples to Bari and south to the island of Sicily) was absorbed into what we know as the Italy of today. With the Kingdom gone, funds were reallocated from the south to the industrial North. What was the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, southern Italy, became impoverished. Between 1880 and the 1924's about four-million Italians from the region emigrated

to the United States and other countries and brought many traditions with them. In New York's Little Italy it was called La Cena della Vigilia or something close to that. Because of the desire to hold onto the roots of their native southern Italy, this feast is actually more popular in the United States than Italy; however, we are responsible for the resurgence of the fest in Italy. A tradition that we exported.

But what's with the SEVEN fish? Because nobody really has proof of the meaning, and even fewer agree on what the number seven actually represents, it's open for discussion. It may refer to the seven sacraments of the church: Anointing of the Sick, Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Penance, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. Or perhaps it's from the seven deadly sins from Pope Gregory in 590AD: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, and sloth. Or perhaps the seven hills of Rome: Aventine, Capitoline, Caelian, Esquiline, Palatine, Quirinal, and Viminal. Or the seven kings of Rome:

Romulus, Numa Pompilius, Tullus Hostilius, Ancus Marcius, Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, and Lucius Tarquinius Superbus. Or perhaps the seven virtues: chastity, charity, diligence, humility, kindness, patience, and temperance. Or the seven days God took to create the Heavens and Earth. Or it could be that seven fishes were in season and on sale that day way back when.

Few people agree on what the seven fishes should be. But for my mom who didn't particularly like to prepare fish except to do one fish every Friday of my childhood, she said she would burn one seven different ways for us. My dad did this meal, but the kids didn't eat the sardines. And we would argue that clams aren't fish and neither is eel. I mean, really, why eat the bait?

In any case, the most important part of the celebration is food, family, and friends being together as we were growing up and now, hopefully, we are surrounded by family and friends at Christmas.



**LET US HOST YOUR NEXT  
Office Party, Birthday, or Event!**  
CATERING FOR HOLIDAY OFFICE PARTIES AVAILABLE



**BOAT PARADE  
December 17th**



**Largest  
December 31st**

**NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY**

Music starts at 6pm and ends sometime next year!

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**GARDENWALK**  
Presented by Garden Club of The Upper Keys  
**SATURDAY, FEB 19th, 2022**  
10am - 4 pm, rain or shine!



**TOUR SPECTACULAR  
PRIVATE GARDENS**  
and enjoy REFRESHMENTS,  
view an  
ART SHOW by Art Guild  
of the Purple Isles,  
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PLANT SALES  
and more at the  
**FRANCIS TRACY GARDEN CENTER**  
94040 Overseas Hwy.  
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**TICKETS: \$30  
IN ADVANCE.  
\$35 DAY OF EVENT.  
donation**  
NO PETS, PLEASE!

**TICKET VENDORS:**  
Tickets available 1/3 - 2/18/22. Also available the day of the Walk at all garden locations & Francis Tracy Garden Center.  
MM 106 Key Largo Chamber MM 88 Island Home Nursery  
MM 101 Wear With All Boutique MM 87 Islamorada Chamber  
MM 100 Key Largo Flowers & Gifts MM 82 Wild Lily Boutique

For additional information please contact info@GardenClubUpperKeys.org or find us online at  
**FACEBOOK.COM/GARDEN-CLUB-OF-THE-UPPER-KEYS | WWW.GARDENCLUBUPPERKEYS.ORG**

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