



Brewhaha #1: The Conch Flyer, Key West International Airport

OK, it's not a brewpub by any stretch, but they did serve Harpoon IPA, so I'm gonna count it, damn it. Nothing punctuates a sentence better than a good "damn it," damn it.

I obediently got to KWIA about 2 hours before departure, and felt like I was in *The Shining*, seeing nothing but long empty hallways. It didn't even look open. I could have arrived 10 minutes before departure and still done it in a stroll. But my ride has already skedaddled, and there really wasn't much to do here, so I deemed it time to start the brew hunt.

KWIA used to have tiny overpriced bar that had some Keysy, fishing-net kind of decor. Now there are two bar areas, an enormous one upstairs when you first enter, and another smaller one downstairs after you go through the Humiliation Station. The 2 photos are from the big room. I had an overpriced Harpoon IPA in each. It cost me more than a 12-pack of Yuengling would have at Amy's.



So, I knew the tour was on. It was a prelude to the pricey pints to come. When I planned this tour, that was one area I really should have budgeted better.

Actually the Brew Pub aspect was the last detail to click. A visit to the under-the-weather Mom was overdue, and I hoped to take a little ride up to Acadia National Park and get some coolo coastal pix, annnnd maybe take in a Sox game at Fenway, annnnd maybe connect with Fats in Burlington for some nice craft beers at the Vermont Pub and Brewery. Hmmm. Pubs. Breweries. Harpoon Brewery would be a nice take. And there was Bray's in Maine, on the way to Acadia. Ahh, and Portland had a few, I knew. Hmmm.

A little bit of Internet research later, and I had about 15 brewhahas on a zigging loop from Boston to Bar Harbor to Burlington, I wouldn't exactly be a ramack as such, since I didn't have the van to sleep in and would actually have to shell out for a few hotel rooms, but I'd have the Mom's metallic blue 4-door Buick Century as my wheels, so no rental expense.

Lots of up-sides, hardly any downs. Book it. I was gettin' mighty thirsty. This vacation needed a theme, and now it had it. The Key West beer scene had been improving of late, with more bars pouring Harpoon, and a few boasting far more esoteric

craft beers from points far and wide. So that whet my appetite for deep research and exploration. Not exactly Discovery Channel stuff, but more up my alley than *Hops vs. Wild* woulda been.

Then I got really carried away. The official logo was already over the top, but then I made koozies (2 kinds), coasters, key tags, t-shirts, a long sleeve t, and even a hooded sweatshirt, in case it got a might chilly on the Maine coast at night. I would leave coasters and koozies with barkeeps all along my route. The idea had galloped out of control and I was eager to ride that steed.

Anyway, the tall barkeep at the Conch Flyer got me in the New England mood. He was from Gloucester MA and very familiar with The X, my high school alma mater and former place of employment. We talked towns and teams for a good while, and he seemed like a good egg, but this bar is a consolation prize, a distraction, a waiting room with beer, not a destination. Movin' On Time could not come fast enough.

The 5:30 Delta flight got to Atlanta on time, but there was no time for quaffing there, so it was off to Providence RI. The next beer would be a genuine New England brew.

