

Bermuda rediscovered

The elegant island's buttoned-down British vibe is solidly in the past tense – Bermuda is perfect for letting your hair down.

by **Doug Wallace**

One of the wealthiest islands in the world is also one of the most original. Bermuda's white roofs and coral walls mirror the clouds and the pink sand, framing the lush landscape and winding, narrow roads. Bermuda is in the North Atlantic, and has a temperate climate, so spring and summer are the perfect times to visit.

Head into the heritage

Discovered by Spanish explorer Juan de Bermúdez, Bermuda was settled in 1612 by the British, an influence that still underlines much of the culture here. While there were no Indigenous inhabitants, today's visitors to Bermuda find Portuguese, African and Caribbean roots woven into the rich island tapestry.

The National Museum of Bermuda at the Royal Naval Dockyard is an indoor/outdoor cultural and maritime history lesson, with the Dockyard itself filled with shops and attractions to explore. Historical landmark Fort Scaur was built to keep American naval forces at bay in the 1870s, while Fort St. Catherine in St. George's dates to the 17th century. The nearby Bermuda Heritage Museum is worth ducking into for background on the island's history of enslavement, also highlighting the accomplishments of Black Bermudians from pre-emancipation to today.

The Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute is a museum and science centre anchored to fun exhibits on island history, marine life, shipwrecks and the Bermuda Triangle myth. The collection of retrieved shipwreck treasures in the lower level is quite spectacular.

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Escape for eco-adventure

Bermuda's clear, blue waters make it a water-sports paradise. Expeditions from myriad dive centres throughout the island head to some of the healthiest coral reefs in the Atlantic Ocean and to the 300-plus shipwrecks along Shipwreck Alley. Diverse marine life includes groupers and barracudas, eagle rays and sea turtles. Kayak adventure on Bermuda's West End sends you along Ely's Harbour, a coastline filled with egrets and herons, turtles and coral gardens.

Idwal Hughes Nature Reserve and nearby Tom Moore's Jungle and Blue Hole Park invite you to explore nature trails, hidden caves, lagoons and parkland. Spittal Pond Nature Reserve on the south shore offers 64 acres of footpaths, perfect for birdwatching.

At the southeast tip of Bermuda, Cooper's Island Nature Reserve, once a US military and NASA base, now offers 12 acres of wilderness, along with herons, kingfishers and giant crabs. Visitors can also find quiet repose in the 36-acre Bermuda Botanical Gardens.



Seek out island flavours

Only-in-Bermuda culinary experiences can be fashioned into a treasure hunt for the food adventurous. Start with sherry peppers, a staple ingredient in Bermuda fish chowder, with Outerbridge's Original coming through as the take-home favourite for lovers of hot sauce.

A small herd of goats on Hungry Bay is responsible for the amazing Tucker's Farm fresh and curd cheeses that come in a variety of flavours. Small-batch creamery Alex & Pete's is noted for artisanal handmade ice cream, with Bermuda-inspired flavours like rum and ginger, sea salt and caramel, and rum swizzle. Speaking of which, taking home a bottle of Goslings Black Seal Rum will see you mixing up Dark and Stormy cocktails all year long.

Devil's Isle Coffee in Hamilton is made from 100 per cent Arabica beans, hand roasted and blended to perfection. And out at the Dockyard, the Frog & Onion Pub is renowned for its flagship Somers Amber Ale, named after Bermuda's founder.

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Make your visit an event

June is Carnival month in Bermuda – four days of costumes and camaraderie, parties and painted faces, all leading up to the 12-hour Revel De Road parade. June also brings locals and tourists together for the Annapolis to Bermuda Ocean Race, the longest sailing race on the US east coast.

Cricket matches throughout the summer reveal how deeply Bermudians love this sport. The entire island comes together for Cup Match in August, one of the biggest celebrations of the year, honouring Emancipation Day with a two-day cricket match, plus parties on land and at sea.

Bermuda Pride hits the streets in August, while September brings the Bermuda Swizzle Festival to honour the national cocktail and the St. George's Seafood Festival to showcase the island's rich culinary culture.



WHERE TO STAY

The guest register at Hamilton Princess & Beach Club (managed by Fairmont) has been signed by a number of high-profile guests, one of the most regular being James Bond creator Ian Fleming. The other side of Hamilton Harbour is home to the upscale Newstead Belmont Hills Golf Resort and Spa.

St. George's Club Hotel offers 48 renovated, oceanfront cottages in the UNESCO-designated site of St. George's, while the Grotto Bay Beach Resort and Spa is spread across 20 acres of pristine beauty in Bailey's Bay. The spa itself is set within a 500,000-year-old cave.

The cliffside Reefs Resort and Club anchors the South Shore, along with the Fairmont Southampton, which is set to reopen in 2024 after a major refurbishment. And up in Somerset Village, the recently revitalized Cambridge Beaches, which opened in 1923, is a dreamland of private cottages and suites. GOTOBERMUDA.COM

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