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1000 Places to See Before You Die

Written by Patricia Schultz

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THE NEW

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BEFORE
YOU DIE®



FULL-COLOR • SECOND EDITION

A TRAVELER'S LIFE LIST

by PATRICIA SCHULTZ

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

33 Spectacular Beaches

ANGUILLA

Lesser Antilles

Anguilla is a flat, scrubby island that's light on interior scenery, but take a look at its confectionery 12-mile perimeter: These are some of the most picture-perfect white-sand beaches and crystal-clear waters you'll find

anywhere. Some of the finest of its 33 beaches are anchored by special hotels with celebrated in-house restaurants, making the island an unrivaled choice for an indulgent stay-put vacation. Venture beyond your hotel grounds and you'll find friendly towns undisturbed by cruise ships, casinos, or strip malls.

Sensual, romantic Cap Juluca was an early arrival on the island, attracting Hollywood moguls and financiers with whitewashed Moorish turrets, arches, and domes on Maunday's Beach, a magical, mile-long crescent of sugary white sand that all 98 luxurious suites overlook. It manages Anguilla's first and only golf course, an 18-hole links-style creation by Greg Norman. The only place guests wear anything more elaborate than a swimsuit and a suntan is in its Pimm's Restaurant, whose menu features Eurobbian cuisine—think Anguillan lobster bisque drizzled with spiced Cognac or green peppercorn-marinated swordfish.

Just a few beaches east on Rendezvous Bay, CuisinArt Resort & Spa is another whitewashed Mediterranean vision on a long stretch of perfect beach. Lie back in a beach chair and enjoy the dreamy views of the volcanic slopes of St. Martin. Dinner at Santorini, the resort's restaurant, is a major draw; its famous grilled tuna and johnnycakes are served with herbs and vegetables grown on the hotel's hydroponic farm. The two-story Venus Spa is one of the largest in the Caribbean.

Stroll down the shoreline to the Dune Preserve, a fantastical beach bar owned by

local reggae legend Bankie Banx, who sometimes performs, especially during the full-moon parties and March's music festival, Moonsplash.

On the island's northern side, the bluff-top Malliouhana Hotel & Spa on Meads Bay was the first luxury hotel on Anguilla when it



Anguilla's 12 miles of coastline are home to some of the world's most beautiful beaches.

opened in 1984, and it wears its age beautifully. It offers hands-on involvement by the gracious British owners and staff and a highly regarded spa. Nonguests are welcome to dine at the island's most refined restaurant, which offers classic French dishes with an island accent, as well as one of the most extensive wine lists in the Caribbean. A boutique alternative is the Mediterranean-style Anacaona Hotel, just paces from Meads Beach. Save an evening for nearby Blanchard's, a trailblazer in Anguilla's impressive food scene where choices like chunky lobster cakes and warm lemon-buttermilk pound cake with homemade ice cream explain its popularity.

Shoal Bay might be the beauty pageant winner of Anguilla's can't-go-wrong beaches, a 2-mile strip on the northeast coast known for food shacks such as Uncle Ernie's, famous for grilled chicken, ribs, and special cole slaw, and Gwen's, another rib specialist, with hammocks in a shady palm grove and a reggae colada-fueled Sunday afternoon jump-up. Or play castaway on Gorgeous Scilly Cay, a popular beach-shack restaurant on its own coral-sand islet. The alfresco feast of simple grilled Anguilla lobster marinated in a curry-based sauce is legendary, so reserve ahead.

VISITOR INFO: www.anguilla-vacation.com.
CAP JULUCA: Tel 888-858-5822 or 264-497-6666; www.capjuluca.com. *Cost:* from \$495 (off-peak), from \$995 (peak); dinner \$75. *When:* closed Sep–Oct. **CUISINART RESORT:**

Tel 800-943-3210 or 264-498-2000; www.cuisinartresort.com. *Cost:* from \$440 (off-peak), from \$815 (peak); dinner \$75. *When:* closed Sep–Oct. **MALLIOUHANA HOTEL:** Tel 800-835-0796 or 264-497-6111; www.malliouhana.com. *Cost:* from \$430 (off-peak), from \$860 (peak); dinner \$80. *When:* closed Sep–Oct. **ANACAONA HOTEL:** Tel 877-647-4736 or 264-497-6827; www.anacaonahotel.com. *Cost:* from \$150 (off-peak), from \$300 (peak). **BLANCHARD'S:** Tel 264-497-6100; www.blanchardsrestaurant.com. *Cost:* \$60. **GORGEOUS SCILLY CAY:** Tel 264-497-5123; www.scillycayanguilla.com. *Cost:* lobster lunch \$75. **BEST TIMES:** Nov–Apr for finest weather; Mar for Moonsplash; May for Anguilla Regatta; Nov for Tranquility Jazz Festival.

A Nautical Kentucky Derby and Stellar Beaches

ANTIGUA

Lesser Antilles

In 1784, a young Horatio Nelson arrived in Antigua, the premier Caribbean naval base for the British fleet during the Napoleonic Wars. He'd still recognize the restored dockyard, now a national park bearing his name and

one of a few British Georgian-style naval dockyards left in the world. Antigua remains one of the most British of the Caribbean isles and reveres its rapport with the sea. Every April some 200 boats from 25 countries descend on this otherwise quiet outpost for Antigua Sailing Week, one of the top regattas in the world.

The Admiral's Inn, a Georgian brick building dating back to 1788, is the unofficial headquarters for the Sailing Week hubbub and the architectural centerpiece of the Dockyard. Known as the Ads, it's the island's most interesting historic hotel, with 13 rooms and the ambience of an old ship. The well-tanned yachting crowd comes here to cool off

in the shady terrace bar/restaurant, their carefully tended pleasure craft and racing yachts bobbing nearby. For a quiet retreat from the sailing scene, a loyal clientele repairs to the time-honored Curtain Bluff resort, flanked by two perfect beaches in one of the prettiest spots in Antigua. Guests are lulled to sleep at night by the pounding surf on the windward side, while the lagoon-smooth leeward beach serves as the launching place for the hotel's host of water activities. Tennis buffs come to participate in the prestigious Antigua Tennis Week held here every May.

The newest and chicest hotel on Antigua, Carlisle Bay, swept the island scene into the 21st century: Its sleek and soothing suites



A traditional English telephone booth sits on Dickenson Bay.

overlook a lovely crescent of white and golden sand backed by rolling hills, with not a neighboring hotel in sight. Guests rarely leave the grounds, with everything you could want available—kids club, water sports, spa, yoga pavilion, tennis, fabulous food—and all offered with restrained good taste.

The largest of the Leeward Islands, Antigua is rightly known for its abundant beaches (365 of them)—and the snorkeling that goes with them. The most popular are Dickenson Bay in the northwest, a wide strip of powder-fine sand with blissfully calm turquoise waters, and Half-Moon Bay, which stretches for a sandy mile on the eastern coast. The most fashionable, however, and only five minutes from the Dockyard, is Pigeon Point.

Wherever you are (the island is only 14 miles long and 11 miles wide), it's never very far to Shirley Heights, the highest point in

Antigua (where the remains of General Shirley's 17th-century fort still stand), for a sunset party on Sunday nights.

Antigua's sister island to the north, flat and rocky Barbuda, is a bird-watcher's paradise, best known for a rookery of frigate birds some 5,000 strong, outnumbering the local human population threefold. With seemingly endless stretches of white and pink sand beaches, Barbuda can bring tears to the eyes of beach aficionados.

VISITOR INFO: www.antigua-barbuda.com.
NELSON'S DOCKYARD: Tel 268-460-1379; www.antiguamuseums.org/nelsonsdockyard.htm.
ADMIRAL'S INN: Tel 268-460-1027; www.admiralsantigua.com. *Cost:* from \$105 (off-peak), from \$170 (peak). *When:* closed late Aug–Oct 20. **CURTAIN BLUFF:** Tel 888-289-9898 or 268-462-8400; www.curtainbluff.com. *Cost:* from \$715 (off-peak), from \$1,100 (peak), all-inclusive. *When:* closed Aug–late Oct. **CARLISLE BAY:** Tel 866-502-2855 or 268-484-0002; www.carlisle-bay.com. *Cost:* from \$425 (off-peak), from \$920 (peak). *When:* closed early Sep–mid-Oct. **BEST TIMES:** Nov–Apr for good weather; Apr for Classic Yacht Regatta and Sailing Week; Aug for Summer Carnival; Dec for Yacht Show.

A Mini-Archipelago Lures Boaters, Diners, and Anglers

SAILING THE ABACOS

The Abacos, The Bahamas

Among the most affluent of the Out Islands, the Abacos are known as “the sailing capital of the world.” Although that’s a title it might share with the British Virgin Islands and the Grenadines (see pp. 1071 and 1106),

the Abacos promise a fine collection of 25 cays off the eastern coast of the long, thin, boomerang-shaped Great Abaco Island. Some are uninhabited, while others are home to small resorts and inviting towns that date to the American Revolution, when Loyalists from the Carolinas resettled here. Sail from

one cay to the next, dropping anchor for snorkeling, swimming, excellent fishing, diving, or island exploration. With the exception of Eleuthera's Harbour Island (see p. 1062), you'll find more 18th-century charm here than anywhere else in the Bahamas.

The prime launch pad is Great Abaco's

Marsh Harbour, an easy harbor to enter and equipped with several full-service marinas—this is the place to rent a boat, with or without a crew. Before setting off, stop by the Jib Room for conch burgers and their signature



Built in 1838, Hope Town's Elbow Reef Lighthouse is powered by kerosene, one of the last lighthouses of its kind in the world.

Bilge Burner drink. The popular harbor-view spot really jumps with music and dancing on the two nights it serves dinner—barbecued baby-back pork ribs on Wednesdays, and juicy New York strip steaks on Saturdays.

There are beautiful beaches and harbors aplenty, but some are not to be missed. Elbow Cay is best known for its 120-foot-tall, peppermint-striped lighthouse built in 1838 in the charming village of Hope Town.

Hotels in the Abacos tend to be small and casual. Elbow Cay's Abaco Inn draws return guests to its cheerful island-style rooms nestled among sand dunes and coconut palms. Perched at the crest of a sandy ridge with views of both the Atlantic Ocean and Sea of Abaco, the inn's restaurant has a reputation for the best seafood around (try the grilled wahoo or crispy, pan-fried coconut grouper). Leave room for the desserts by Miss Belle, a fourth-generation Hope Town Bahamian whose fresh-squeezed key lime, coconut, and chocolate silk pies are a local legend. At the very tip of Elbow Cay is Tahiti Beach, a gorgeous curve of sand whose utterly placid, clear turquoise waters are so remote you can only get there by foot, bike, golf cart, or boat.

With pastel clapboard homes and white picket fences, Man-O-War Cay takes you back in time. Residents are justly proud of their 200-year history of shipbuilding, and continue to craft their famous fiberglass boats today. Great

Guana, the longest of the Abaco cays, stretches nearly 7 miles tip to tip but has just 100 full-time residents. Its endless beach, alluringly deserted and with grassy dunes, runs the entire length of the island and is one of the loveliest in the Bahamas. It's home to Nippers, one of the best (and most family-friendly) beach bars around. A multilevel structure perched high on a 40-foot dune, it offers snorkelers and divers easy access to the out-

standing Great Abaco Barrier Reef Beach, which starts less than 50 feet from shore. Adults indulge in frozen Nipper Trippers—a frozen concoction of five rums and two juices—while kids can splash about in small swimming pools. Sunday is an all-day party disguised as a pig roast.

Some of the best fishing grounds border Treasure Cay. It's also the place to be for golf. Treasure Cay Hotel Resort & Marina has a Dick Wilson-designed 18-hole course that is one of the best in the Bahamas. The property is just steps from the surprisingly uncrowded Treasure Cay Beach, a 3.5-mile-long stretch of incredibly powdery sand, which is perfect for swimming. On Green Turtle Cay, New Plymouth is another historic village settled in 1783 when Loyalists fled America to find a new home. Now it's best known for Miss Emily's Blue Bee Bar—a shack, really—hung with Junkanoo masks and home of the Famous Goombay Smash. The top secret recipe is believed to contain coconut rum, dirty rum, apricot brandy, and pineapple juice. Get one to go and amble over to Coco Bay beach, shaded by casuarina pines and, amazingly, almost always empty.

The fishing in the Abacos is renowned: Find yellowtail and grouper on the reefs,

marlin and tuna in the deeps, and fast, canny bonefish in the Marls, 400 square miles of lush mangrove islands and sandy cays on the western side of Great Abaco.

VISITOR INFO: www.myoutislands.com.

How: The Moorings rents bareboats and crewed yachts. Tel 888-952-8420 or 242-367-4000; www.moorings.com. **JIB ROOM:** Tel 242-367-2700; www.jibroom.com. *Cost:* dinner \$25. **ABACO INN:** Tel 800-468-8799 or 242-366-0133; www.abacoinn.com. *Cost:* from

\$160; dinner \$50. *When:* closed mid-Aug–mid-Oct. **NIPPERS:** Tel 242-365-5143; www.nippersbar.com. *Cost:* lunch \$15. **TREASURE CAY HOTEL RESORT & MARINA:** Tel 800-327-1584 or 954-525-7711; www.treasurecay.com. *Cost:* from \$130; greens fees \$65 (guests), \$90 (nonguests). **BEST TIMES:** Nov–May for nicest weather; Apr–Jun for Bahamas Billfish Championship; early Jul for Bahamas Cup and Regatta Time in Abaco; May–Aug for blue marlin fishing.

Blue Holes, Bonefish, and Beaches

ANDROS ISLAND

The Bahamas

Because of shallow channels called “bights” that indent and cut across the island, most of Andros, the Bahamas’ largest island, remains sparsely inhabited, little visited, and largely unexplored—except by in-the-know

visitors drawn here by its gin-clear waters and the world-class diving and fishing they provide.

Running parallel to its east coast, Andros’ 142-mile barrier reef is the third longest in the world after those in Australia and Central America (see pp. 653 and 961). Venture beyond the reef for a wall that plunges 6,000 feet to a narrow underwater canyon known as the Tongue of the Ocean (aka TOTO). There, divers also find dozens of cathedral-like caves called blue holes (first made famous by Jacques Cousteau)—there are more in the Bahamas than anywhere else in the world.

All this lies just 1 mile offshore from the Bahamas’ oldest (and arguably best) diving and fishing resort, Small Hope Bay Lodge. If you don’t know how to dive or snorkel, they’ll teach you at your own pace (you can even get certified), while nondiving guests are happy with a book or a beer in a hammock among the coconut palms. No one puts on airs at this easygoing beachfront cottage colony—no one even puts on shoes very often, except perhaps

at dinner, a hearty, convivial affair that might include fresh conch fritters and chowder, lobster, and warm home-baked johnnycakes. Guests also come for the fishing: Marlin and bluefin tuna are plentiful, but Andros is known as the bonefishing capital of the world. With large numbers of trophy-size bonefish (often topping 12 pounds), Andros provides some of the most exciting light-tackle fishing there is. Cargill Creek is the place to hire a local specialist to guide you through the sandy, shallow flats.

Amp up the luxury quotient at Kamalame Cay, one of the few private-island resorts in the Bahamas’ Out Islands. A 96-acre hideaway off the northeast coast of Andros with a 19th-century British colonial atmosphere, Kamalame ranges from relatively affordable marina rooms to breezy beachfront villas. Only 3 dozen people enjoy this off-the-grid experience at any one time. And with the barrier reef just a mile away, divers and snorkelers are promised exceptional underwater thrills.

VISITOR INFO: www.myoutislands.com.
SMALL HOPE BAY LODGE: Tel 800-223-6961
 or 242-368-2013; www.smallhope.com. *Cost:*
 from \$470, inclusive. **KAMALAME CAY:** Tel

800-790-7971 or 876-632-3213; www.kamalame.com. *Cost:* from \$400. *When:* closed late
 Aug–mid-Oct. **BEST TIMES:** Nov–Apr for nicest
 weather; Nov and May for fishing.

Out-Island History and Pink Sand

HARBOUR ISLAND

Eleuthera, The Bahamas

The Martha's Vineyard of the Caribbean and one of the oldest settlements in the Bahamas, Harbour Island is known for its colonial charm and barefoot glamour. It's so diminutive at 3.5 miles long and less than a mile wide that

everyone zips around in golf carts or on beach bikes. Celebrities and fashionistas arrive via the 5-minute water-taxi ride from Eleuthera, the narrow 100-mile-long island whose name is Greek for "freedom," a reference to Puritan pilgrims who settled here in 1648 after being expelled from Bermuda.

Harbour Island ("Briland," as it's known by locals) is best known for its 3-mile pink sand beach, which runs the length of the island. The postcard-perfect crescent, whose color comes from flecks of red plankton mixed with finely crushed white coral, is languidly lapped by calm, turquoise waters that are protected by a reef, making for some of the safest and most enjoyable swimming in the Bahamas. It's an unpretentious spot, unobtrusively lined with small villas and resorts, happily void of crowds. Along with barefoot R&R, the quietly posh island is favored for bonefishing and for diving the Current Cut Dive, an exciting underwater gully that ranks among the world's finest.

Looking startlingly like a Cape Cod village, charm-packed Dunmore Town was laid out in 1791 by Lord Dunmore, governor of the Bahamas, after having lost the same job in Virginia during the American Revolution. Eating is excellent here, from the dive-y to the inspired. Start at Queen Conch, a simple shack right off the fishermen's dock on Bay Street,

where there's just one thing on the menu: fresh-caught, -cracked, and -diced conch salad (be forewarned that locals consider conch an aphrodisiac), revved up with Scotch bonnet peppers and cooled down with a cold Nassau-brewed Kalik beer. Spicy conch chili is the draw at a lime green-painted beachside spot called Sip Sip—lobster quesadillas and rum-spiked carrot cake round out the simple menu.

A little slice of Miami Beach has arrived on a low bluff above the harbor, where the Rock House, a former Catholic schoolhouse, has been transformed into a very chic British-Mediterranean inn and sophisticated restaurant, with a centerpiece pool surrounded by thatch-roofed cabanas. Wonderfully stylish rooms can also be found at the Landing, set right at the ferry dock and dating from 1800. It is one of the island's stately old mansions, with original Abaco pine floors, limestone walls, and wraparound verandas where diners enjoy a globally inspired menu and fine harbor views.

At the heart of it all and setting the standard since it opened in 1951, Pink Sands Resort (formerly owned by Chris Blackwell, founder of Island Records) is still a glamorous destination for a young and decidedly cool crowd. Perched on one of the finest beaches in all of the Bahamas, its 25 pastel-colored cottages are spread over 20 tropical acres. Guests

and nonguests alike frequent the Blue Bar for its Caribbean fusion menu. The elegant informality of the place is deliberately and deceptively unassuming, in keeping with the island's vibe.

VISITOR INFO: www.myoutislands.com. **SIP SIP:** Tel 242-333-3316. *Cost:* lunch \$40. **ROCK HOUSE HOTEL:** Tel 242-333-2053; www.rockhousebahamas.com. *Cost:* from \$300; dinner \$75. *When:* closed Aug–Oct. **THE**

LANDING: Tel 242-333-2707; www.harbourislandlanding.com. *Cost:* from \$250; dinner \$70. *When:* closed Sep–Oct. **PINK SANDS RESORT:** Tel 800-407-4776 or 242-333-2030; www.pinksandsresort.com. *Cost:* cottages from \$495 (off-peak), from \$750 (peak); dinner \$55. **BEST TIMES:** Nov–May for pleasant weather; Jul for Eleuthera Pineapple Festival; Oct for North Eleuthera/Harbour Island Sailing Regatta.

Swimming Pigs! Plus Spectacular Sailing and a Marine Preserve

THE EXUMA CAYS

The Bahamas

If you arrive in the Exumas by air, book a window seat. Swooping in over the 110-mile-long, spiny chain of 365 cays, which start about 30 miles southeast of Nassau, provides one of the most stunning sights in all of the Caribbean, and a first glimpse of why these mostly undeveloped islands are often considered the crown jewels of the Bahamas. Like a sand painting rising out of the sea, elaborate channels and sandbars are surrounded by waters in every imaginable shade of blue.

While the Abacos (see p. 1059) are traditionally touted as the Caribbean's best sailing, many claim the Exuma chain steals the show. Its centerpiece is the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park, a 176-square-mile, breathtakingly beautiful "no take" marine preserve where coral gardens flourish with conch, grouper, and lobster populations that are so abundant they're helping to repopulate the whole archipelago. Established in 1959 and accessible only by boat (your own or a tour company's), this is the oldest land and sea park on the planet. But while the land is pretty, providing habitat for turtles, iguanas, and birds, it is the sea that truly dazzles, offering some of the best sea kayaking, yachting, snorkeling, and diving in all the Bahamas.

The closest civilization is an hour away at Staniel Cay Yacht Club. It is a perfect home

base for access to the park and other attractions, like Thunderball (a beautiful marine cave excellent for snorkeling and named for the 1965 James Bond movie shot there), and friendly swimming pigs (they paddle out to greet boaters who often bring them food). It may sound swanky, but the yacht club is a congenial social center of just nine unpretentious cottages in fun colors right on the water, an 18-slip marina for boaters, and a small landing strip. It becomes the yachting world's preferred place to be during the New Year's Day Cruising Regatta.

Great Exuma Island anchors the southern end of the Exuma archipelago; George Town is its charming pink capital. The popular Augusta Bay Bahamas is a freshly updated property whose 16 spacious suites enjoy sweeping views of a perfect white beach. Check in and then check out the local Fish Fry, a collection of colorful beach shacks at the pier where everyone hangs out, playing cards and listening to music while dining on conch salad, fried fish, and just-caught lobster. Or join the models,

photographers, and sailors who make the short trip to nearby Stocking Island for its especially gorgeous beaches and the legendary Chat 'N' Chill, a beach bar known for its grilled conch burgers, barbecued ribs, and on Sundays, a rowdy pig roast with music.

VISITOR INFO: www.myoutislands.com.
EXUMA CAYS LAND & SEA PARK: www.exumapark.com.
STANIEL CAY YACHT CLUB: Tel 242-

355-2024 or in the U.S., 954-467-8920; www.stanielcay.com. *Cost:* from \$145 (off-peak), from \$210 (peak). **AUGUSTA BAY BAHAMAS:** Tel 242-336-2251; www.augustabaybahamas.com. *Cost:* from \$175 (off-peak), from \$225 (peak). **CHAT 'N' CHILL:** Tel 242-336-2700. *Cost:* dinner \$30, pig roast \$20. **BEST TIMES:** Dec–May for nicest weather; late Apr for Family Island Regatta in George Town.

Enchanting Creatures, Face-to-Face

DOLPHIN DIVE

Little Bahama Bank, The Bahamas

The Bahamas is a vast archipelago of 750 sun-soaked islands with 2,500 cays, stretching over 100,000 square miles of green and cobalt blue seas. It's so close (but with a faraway vibe) to Florida that many visitors launch

their island-hopping on private sailboats, yachts, or planes from there. How convenient, then, that one of the Bahamas' finest attractions—a weeklong encounter with wild dolphins, strictly on their terms—actually departs from Palm Beach.

A pod of wild spotted dolphins congregates regularly north of Grand Bahama Island in spring and summer to play and swim and interact with people; they come without the enticement of food or reward, apparently charmed by their human playmates. Captain Scott of Dream Team, who has spent over 30 years leading weeklong expeditions, is an honorary member of the pod. Upon hearing the sound of his 86-foot boat, the *Dolphin Dream*, the dolphins appear, riding the bow waves of the boat. The dolphins have learned it's "zoo time" and come to see who Scott has dropped into the crystal-clear waters. Baby dolphins play with these strange but harmless creatures while the mothers circle nearby, keeping a watchful eye. They may stay a few minutes or a few hours. You'll usually have one or two encounters a day (or perhaps at



Wild spotted dolphins have become habituated to sharing their waters with humans.

night) over the weeklong trip on the boat, which serves as a hotel for 8 to 12 passengers. The water over the Little Bahama Bank—shallow, calm, and with excellent visibility—is perfect for nondiving snorkelers and swimmers, who can enjoy themselves even after the dolphins slip away.

DREAM TEAM: Tel 888-277-8181 or 561-848-5375; www.dolphindreamteam.com. **COST:** weeklong trips from \$1,595 per person, based on 8 passengers, all-inclusive. **WHEN:** Apr–Aug.