

TRAVEL

Hop a plane bound for beautiful Bermuda

BY SANDIE PARROTT
SPECIAL WRITER

Bermuda is a mix of pink sand beaches, freshly painted pastel colored houses, pure white roofs, manicured lawns and flower gardens.

It is also an island steeped in British traditions, historic forts, brick streets, friendly people and a multitude of golf courses.

To get to Bermuda you must go through the legendary Bermuda Triangle. Demons were once believed to inhabit Bermuda because of the treacherous coral reefs surrounding the island, which destroyed many ships.

Is it worth the risk? Oh yes!

Fly a kite

The tradition of flying kites on Good Friday has been around for a long time. No one knows why the tradition began. One story is that a Sunday school teacher used the flying of a kite to show how Christ ascended into heaven. Once the kite was airborne and at the end of the string, the teacher cut the string, allowing the wind to take the kite up into the heavens.

Another story is that a minister noticed his congregation did not attend services on Good Friday. He could never find a way to get the normally good parishioners to attend, so he suggested that they fly kites. It was said he encouraged them to fly the kites on a high hill so they would be closer to heaven. He also suggested they make their kites in the shape of a cross.

This is an important tradition on the island. Everyone makes or buys kites of all sizes for competition and just good old-fashioned family fun. The place to go is Horseshoe Bay in Southampton.

Thousands of kites are involved in the spectacle. From the father trying to demonstrate the proper launching of a kite to a small child, and failing miserably — to professional groups that launch kites up to eight feet long using a hose reel with string trimmer cord.

If you are going

Tee for two

Golf tee times are rather difficult to come by at peak holiday times and fees are quite pricey, but if you like to golf, it is worth it. Some of the private clubs are open to the public on certain days. To book ahead, call (800) BERMUDA for a tee time.

Getting in

Requirements to get into Bermuda are a valid passport or a birth certificate with a raised seal and picture ID. If you go on a charter vacation trip, check-in will require you to show the raised seal birth certificate. Also, you are required to show a return ticket to leave Bermuda. Guess they don't want to be stuck with one-way passengers.

Getting around

Bermuda does not permit rental cars. This keeps the traffic manageable and is a good idea on a small island where many tourists are not used to driving on the left side of the road.

The other options are buses, taxis, horse and buggy, ferries and mopeds. The buses are convenient, inexpensive and run consistently on time except for holiday periods. Taxis are also readily available, extremely clean and have regulated fares.

Horse and buggies are available for a romantic ride but aren't practical for traveling very far. Another option is to rent a moped. It is a popular way to get around the island, but it's also dangerous. The roads are narrow, winding and sometimes have steep walls on each side. It's possible to get stuck between a large rock wall and a hard steel truck creating something known as "road rash" for the unfortunate soul on the moped.

Go fore it

Bermuda claims to have more acreage per square mile dedicated to golf than any other country. Golf courses take up an estimated 17 percent of open space. Since the island is only 21.6 square miles, that is quite a bit of real estate.

Even if you aren't a golfer, these nine courses are something to see. Famous course designers, Charles Banks and Robert Trent Jones, have used diabolic genius on some of these holes. Legendary professional golfer Jack Nicklaus ranks the Port Royal Golf Course among the world's best public courses.

Perfumery

The historic, family-operated Bermuda Perfumery and Gardens is a must see. The tours of the perfumery are free and the working gardens are open for a nice stroll and wonderful pictures. The family business was founded in 1929 and still pro-

duces perfumes and men's fragrances using many plants grown in the gardens. The most popular Easter Lily fragrance is sold here and throughout shops in Bermuda.

Sand between

your toes

On this small island there are a number of sparkling pink sand beaches. Why are they pink? It is a combination of ground shell particles and bits of coral mixed with sand.

There are around 20 public beaches and many other private beaches. They claim you are never more than a mile away from a beach. Popular, but crowded beaches, like Horseshoe Bay, Tobacco Bay and Elbow Beach are for people watching. Or, choose more secluded areas like Astwood Cove and Chaplin Bay if you like to be alone. There are shallow beaches for children and some for excellent snorkel-



Sandy beaches: The picturesque private South Shore Beach of the Castle Harbor Resort is an island oasis.

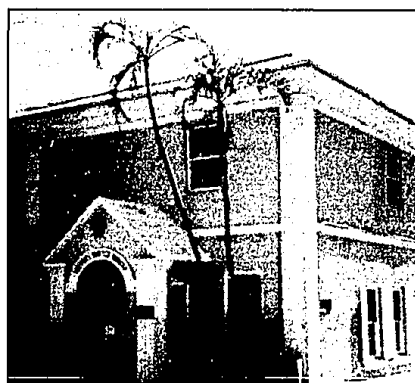
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Spelunking

Bermuda is a Spelunker's paradise. If you study Speleology (a question on a recent *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*) you study and map caves, water movement and the flora and fauna surrounding them.

Crystal Caves has a boardwalk type pontoon structure as a walkway and lights that make it look like some kind of fantasy land. Leamington's Amber Caves have grottos, cathedrals, underground lakes and supernatural landscapes lit by an amber glow. The eerie amber glow is caused from impurities or other minerals mixed with the calcium carbonate that forms the stalactites (icicle-shape forms hanging from the roof) or stalagmites.

If you're wondering when the best time to visit Bermuda is, the answer is anytime! The weather only varies from a high of 70 to 85 degrees all year. It is about a three-hour direct airplane ride from Detroit, so you can leave in the morning and be on the beach by noon.



Hot pink: Typical Bermuda pink pastel architecture is on view at the Visitor's Service Bureau.

Sandie Parrott is a Clarkston resident and a frequent contributor to the Observer & Eccentric! Newspapers.

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