

The Best of Bermuda

If you've decided that Bermuda sounds like the perfect place to relax, feel free to start unwinding right now, because we've done all the legwork for you. Below you'll find our carefully compiled lists of the best that Bermuda has to offer, from beaches and dive sites to resorts, restaurants, and sightseeing—and nearly everything else you'll want to see and do. For the locations of many of these items, see the maps “The Best of Outdoor Bermuda” and “Bermuda's Best Accommodations” at the front of this book.

1 THE BEST BEACHES

Your first priority on your Bermuda vacation probably will be to kick back at the beach. But which beach? Hotels often have private stretches of sand, which we've described in each accommodations review (see chapter 5). There are many fine public beaches as well. Here's our top-10 list, arranged clockwise around the island, beginning with the south-shore beaches closest to the City of Hamilton. For locations, see the color map “The Best of Outdoor Bermuda” at the front of this book, and for more details, see chapter 7.

- **Elbow Beach** (Paget Parish): The pale pink sand stretches for almost a mile at Elbow Beach, one of the most popular beaches in Bermuda. At least three hotels sit on its perimeter. Because protective coral reefs surround it, Elbow Beach is one of the safest beaches on the island for swimming. See p. 157.
- **Warwick Long Bay** (Warwick Parish): This popular beach, on the south side of South Shore Park, features a half-mile stretch of sand against a backdrop of scrubland and low grasses. Despite frequent winds, an offshore reef keeps the waves surprisingly small. Less than 60m (200 ft.) offshore, a jagged coral island appears to be floating above the water. There is excellent snorkeling here—the waters are clear and marine life comes in close to shore. See p. 159.
- **Chaplin Bay** (Warwick and Southampton parishes): At the southern extremity of South Shore Park, straddling the boundary of two parishes, this small but secluded beach almost completely disappears during storms and particularly high tides. An open-air coral barrier rises from the water, partially separating one half of the beach from the other. See p. 160.
- **Horseshoe Bay** (Southampton Parish): This is Bermuda's most famous beach, and it's one of the best for families. Unlike most island beaches, Horseshoe Bay has a lifeguard on duty from May to September. The **Horseshoe Bay Beach Cafe** (☎ 441/238-2651) offers complete facilities, including watersports equipment rental. See p. 160.
- **Church Bay** (Southampton Parish): If you like to snorkel, this southwestern beach is for you. The relatively calm waters, sheltered by offshore reefs, harbor a variety of marine life, and a concession stand sells snacks and rents snorkel gear. Sunbathers love the unusually deep, pink sands of this beach. See p. 161.
- **Somerset Long Bay** (Sandys Parish): The waters off this beach are often



unsafe for swimming, but its isolation will appeal to anyone who wants to escape the crowds. With about a quarter-mile of sand, the crescent-shaped beach is ideal for strolling. The undeveloped parkland of Sandys Parish shelters it from the rest of the island. See p. 161.

- **Shelly Bay** (Hamilton Parish): On the north shore, you'll discover calm waters and soft, pink sand—and you'll want

for nothing else. This beach is well-known among beach buffs, but it's rarely overcrowded and there's always a spot in the sun just waiting for you. See p. 161.

- **Tobacco Bay** (St. George's Parish): A popular stretch of pale pink sand, this is the most frequented beach on St. George's Island. It offers lots of facilities,



including equipment rentals and a snack bar. See p. 161.

- **John Smith's Bay** (Smith's Parish): The only public beach in Smith's Parish is long and flat. It boasts the pale pink

sand for which the south shore is famous. There's usually a lifeguard on duty from May to September—a plus for families. There are toilet and changing facilities on-site. See p. 162.

2 THE BEST OUTDOOR PURSUITS

See chapter 7 for details on arranging any of these activities.

- **Golf:** Known for its outstanding courses, Bermuda attracts the world's leading golfers. Over the years, such luminaries as President Eisenhower, President Truman, and the Duke of Windsor have hit the island's links. Rolling, hummocky fairways characterize the courses. Many avid golfers come to Bermuda to "collect courses." See "The Best Golf Courses," below, for our top picks, and p. 169.
- **Diving:** If you're happiest under the sea, Bermuda has what you're looking for. That includes the wrecks of countless ships, underwater caves, rich reefs, and, during most of the year, warm, gin-clear waters. All around the island you'll find a kaleidoscope of coral and marine life that's the most varied in this part of the world. Many scuba experts consider Bermuda one of the safest and best places to learn the sport. Seasoned divers will not be disappointed, either—Bermuda has terrific diving areas for experts. Depths begin at 7.5m (25 ft.) or less, but can exceed 24m (79 ft.). Some wrecks are in about 9m (30 ft.) of water, which puts them within the range of snorkelers. See "The Best Dive Sites," below, and "Scuba Diving," in chapter 7.
- **Boating & Sailing:** Yachters around the world agree: Bermuda is one of the world's top boating destinations. Many people forget that Bermuda isn't one island, but an archipelago, with all kinds

of nooks and crannies waiting to be discovered. With the fresh wind of the Atlantic blowing in your hair, you can embark on your own voyage of discovery, exploring Great Sound and its islets, including Long Island and Hawkins Island. Tiny, secluded beaches beckon you to put down anchor and relax awhile. If you're a novice, try Mangrove Bay; it's protected and safer than some of the more turbulent seas. See "More Fun in the Water," in chapter 7.

- **Biking:** You can't rent a car on Bermuda, so you might as well hit the road on two wheels. Most of the island isn't great cycling terrain; the roads are narrow and the traffic is heavy. So we suggest that you head for the Railway Trail, the island's premier bike path. The paved trail, which follows the former route of Bermuda's railway line, runs almost the entire length of the island. See "Other Outdoor Pursuits," in chapter 7.
- **Horseback Riding:** Steering a horse through the dune grass and oleander, especially at South Shore Park, is an experience you won't want to miss. Because this sport is restricted to supervised trails on Bermuda, it can be all the more memorable—you'll have the gorgeous seascapes all to yourself. Horseback-riding centers guide you on trails through the best of the countryside and to beautiful hidden spots along the north coast. See "Other Outdoor Pursuits," in chapter 7.

3 THE BEST DIVE SITES

The following are some of the most exciting shipwreck and coral-reef dives. See "Scuba Diving," in chapter 7, for information about dive outfitters and for more about the sites described below. For locations of the shipwrecks, see the color map

"The Best of Outdoor Bermuda," at the front of this book.

- **The Constellation:** This 60m (197-ft.), four-masted schooner, which wrecked en route to Venezuela with a cargo of

glassware, drugs, and whiskey in 1943, lies in 9m (30 ft.) of water off the northwest side of the island, about 13km (8 miles) northwest of the Royal Naval Dockyard. The true story of this ship inspired Peter Benchley to write *The Deep*.

- **The Cristóbal Colón:** The largest known shipwreck in Bermuda's waters is this 144m (472-ft.) Spanish luxury liner; it ran aground in 1936 on a northern reef between North Rock and North Breaker. It lies in 9 to 17m (30–56 ft.) of water.
- **The Hermes:** This 50m (164-ft.) steamer ship rests in some 24m (79 ft.) of water about 1.5km (1 mile) off Warwick Long Bay on the south shore. It foundered in 1985. The *Hermes*, the *Rita Zovetta*, and the *Tauton* (see below) are Bermuda favorites because of the incredible multicolored variety of fish that populate the waters around the ships. You'll have a chance to see grouper, brittle starfish, spiny lobster, crabs, banded coral shrimp, queen angels, tube sponge, and more.
- **L'Herminie:** A first-class, 60-gun French frigate, *L'Herminie* was 17 days out of its Cuban port, en route to France, when it sank in 1838. The ship lies in 6 to 9m (20–30 ft.) of water off the west side of the island, with 25 cannons still visible.
- **The Marie Celeste:** This paddle-wheeler sank in 1864. Its 4.5m-diameter (15-ft.) paddle wheel, off the southern portion of the island, is overgrown with coral

standing about 17m (56 ft.) off the ocean floor.

- **The North Carolina:** One of Bermuda's most colorful and well-preserved wrecks, this English sailing barkentine foundered in 1879 and now lies in about 12m (39 ft.) of water off the western portion of the island. The bow, stern, masts, and rigging are all preserved, and all sorts of vibrant marine life call the wreck home.
- **The Rita Zovetta:** A 120m (394-ft.) Italian cargo ship, lying in 6 to 21m (20–69 ft.) of water off the south side of the island, the *Rita Zovetta* ran aground off St. David's Island in 1924. It's a favorite with underwater photographers because of the kaleidoscope of fish that inhabit the area.
- **The Tauton:** This popular dive site is a Norwegian coastal steamer that sank in 1920. It lies in 3 to 12m (10–39 ft.) of water off the north end of the island and is home to numerous varieties of colorful marine life.
- **South West Breaker:** This coral-reef dive off the south shore, about 2.5km (1½ miles) off Church Bay, has hard and soft coral decorating sheer walls at depths of 6 to 9m (20–30 ft.).
- **Tarpon Hole:** Near Elbow Beach, off the south shore, this dive's proximity to the Elbow Beach Hotel makes it extremely popular. The honeycombed reef—one of the most beautiful off the coast of Bermuda—is known for its varieties of coral: yellow pencil, elk-horn, fire, and star.

4 THE BEST GOLF COURSES

All three of these courses are 18 holes. For locations, see the color map “The Best of Outdoor Bermuda,” at the front of this book.

- **Belmont Hills Golf & Country Club** (Warwick Parish): California-based

designer Algie M. Pulley, Jr., radically reconfigured this par-70, 5,501m (6,017-yd.) course in 2002. Since its re-opening, amid justifiable brouhaha surrounding the most extensive golf course rebuilding in the history of

- Bermuda, there has been endless discussion about the peculiar features of this relatively short but quirkily challenging course. See p. 170.
- **Fairmont Southampton Golf Club** (Southampton Parish): This is a par-54, 2,454m (2,684-yd.) course, with elevated tees, strategically placed bunkers, and an array of water hazards to challenge even the most experienced golfer. One golfer said of this course, “You not only need to be a great player, but have a certain mountaineering agility as well.” See p. 172.
 - **Port Royal Golf Course** (Southampton Parish): This public course ranks among the best on the island, public or private; in fact, it’s one of the greatest public courses in the world. Jack Nicklaus apparently agrees—he’s fond of playing here. Robert Trent Jones, Sr., designed the original ocean-fronting course. One wrong hit from the club and your ball will go flying into the ocean below. See p. 172.

5 THE BEST TENNIS FACILITIES

- **The Fairmont Southampton** (Southampton Parish): This is Bermuda’s premier destination for avid players. Its tennis court complex is the largest on the island, and is maintained in state-of-the-art condition. The deluxe hotel, one of the finest on Bermuda, offers six Plexipave (professional color surface) courts. The courts are somewhat protected from the north winds, but swirling breezes may affect your final score. See p. 174.
- **Elbow Beach** (Paget Parish): With the closing of several other tennis courts on the island in recent years, avid tennis players have had to search a bit harder for suitable venues on which to play. With a pedigree dating back to the early days of Bermuda tourism, and with a sprawling physical plant that incorporates just about everything, these five tennis courts are open to visitors who phone ahead. Three of them, incidentally, are lit for night play.
- **Government Tennis Stadium** (Pembroke Parish): Although Bermuda has been known as the tennis capital of the Atlantic since 1873, players often complain that the trade winds around the island affect their game, especially near the water. That’s why many prefer inland courts, such as those at this government-owned stadium. It offers three clay and five shock-absorbing Plexicushion courts (three illuminated for night play). The facility, which is north of the City of Hamilton, requires players to wear proper tennis attire. A pro shop, a ball machine, and a pro offering private lessons are on-site. See p. 175.

6 THE BEST DAY HIKES

- **The Bermuda Railway Trail** (Sandys Parish): Stretching for about 34km (21 miles), this unique trail was created along the course of the old Bermuda Railway, which served the island from 1931 to 1948 (automobiles weren’t allowed on the island until the late 1940s). Armed with a copy of the *Bermuda Railway Trail Guide*, available at visitor centers, you can follow the route of the train known as “Rattle and Shake.” Most of the trail still winds

along a car-free route, and you can travel as much of it as your stamina allows. See p. 88 and 174.

- **From the Royal Naval Dockyard to Somerset** (Sandys Parish): A 6.4km (4-mile) walk leads from the dockyard, the former headquarters of the British navy on Bermuda, to Somerset Island. Along the way you'll cross a beautiful nature reserve; explore an old cemetery; view the Royal Naval Hospital, where thousands of yellow-fever victims died in the 19th century; and be rewarded with a sweeping panoramic view of Great Sound. Sandy beaches along the
- route are perfect for pausing from your hike to stretch out on the sand or take a dip in the ocean. See "The Best of Bermuda in 3 Days," in chapter 4.
- **Spittal Pond Nature Reserve** (Smith's Parish): This 24-hectare (59-acre) sanctuary is the island's largest nature reserve, home to both resident and migratory waterfowl. You can spot some 25 species of waterfowl from November to May. Scenic trails and footpaths cut through the property. Explore on your own or take a guided hike offered by the Department of Agriculture. See p. 196.

7 THE BEST SAILING OUTFITTERS

Bermuda is one of the Atlantic's major sailing capitals. Many sail-yourself boats are available for rent to qualified skippers, and kayaks, paddle boats, sailboards, and more are available for everyone. If you'd like to sail on a larger craft, the outfitters will provide you with a captain. Here are some of the best outfitters. For locations, see the color map "The Best of Outdoor Bermuda," at the front of this book.

- **Blue Hole Water Sports** (Grotto Bay Beach Hotel, Hamilton Parish; ☎ 441/293-2915; www.blueholewater.bm): Here you'll find a large selection of watercraft, including Sunfish, sailboards, kayaks, Paddle Cats, and Sun Cats. Rentals are available for up to 8 hours. See p. 168.
- **Pompano Beach Club Watersports Centre** (Southampton Parish; ☎ 441/234-0222; www.pompano.bm): This is the best outfitter in this tourist-laden parish. Open from May to late October,
- it offers a variety of equipment, including the O'Brien Windsurfer, a popular sailboard suitable for one person at the intermediate or advanced level. Its fleet also includes vessels that hold one or two people: Dolphin paddle boats, Buddy Boards, Aqua-Eye viewing boards, Aqua Finn sailboats, and kayaks. These can be rented for up to 4 hours. See p. 168.
- **Somerset Bridge Watersports** (Somerset Parish; ☎ 441/234-0914; www.watersportssomersetbridge.com): This is the best place to rent a Boston whaler, a small boat that can hold three or four passengers. It's an ideal craft for exploring the archipelago's uninhabited islands. This outfitter rents 4m (13-ft.) whalers and a 30-hp, 5m (16-ft.) Open Bowrider, a speed-craft often used to pull water-skiers, which accommodates four. See p. 168.

8 THE BEST VIEWS

Bermuda is incredibly scenic, with lovely panoramas and vistas unfolding at nearly every turn. But not all views are created

equal. Below are some of our personal favorites. See chapter 8 for additional suggestions.

- **Warwick Long Bay:** This stretch of pristine pink sand is a dream beach of the picture-postcard variety. It backs up to towering cliffs and hills studded with Spanish bayonet and oleander. A 6m-high (20-ft.) coral outcrop, rising some 60m (197 ft.) offshore and resembling a sculpted boulder, adds variety to the stunning beachscape. See p. 159.
- **Scaur Hill Fort Park:** From Somerset Bridge in Sandys Parish, head for this fort atop the parish's highest hill. Walk the fort's ramparts, enjoying the vistas across Great Sound to Spanish Point. You can also gaze north to the dockyard and take in the fine views of Somerset Island. On a clear day, a look through the telescope reveals St. David's Lighthouse, 23km (14 miles) away on the

northeastern tip of the island. After enjoying the fantastic views from the fort, you can stroll through the fort's 9 hectares (22 acres) of beautiful gardens. See p. 184.

- **Gibbs Hill Lighthouse:** For an even better view than the one enjoyed by Queen Elizabeth II when she visited the lighthouse in 1953, climb the 185 spiral steps to the top. Built in 1846, it's the oldest cast-iron lighthouse in the world. From the top, you can relish what islanders consider the single finest view in all of Bermuda—a panorama of the island and its shorelines. You can, that is, if the wind doesn't blow you away—be sure to hang on to the railing. In heavy winds, the tower actually sways. See p. 189.

9 THE BEST HISTORIC SITES

See “The Best Old Bermuda Experiences,” below, for a description of the Royal Naval Dockyard and its showpiece, the Commissioner's House.

- **Scaur Hill Fort Park** (Sandys Parish): Fort Scaur and Fort St. Catherine were part of a ring of fortifications that surrounded Bermuda. Built by the British navy, the fort was supposed to protect the Royal Naval Dockyard from an attack that never materialized. During World War II, U.S. Marines were billeted nearby. Overlooking Great Sound, the fort offers views of some of the island's most dramatic scenery. See p. 184.
- **Verdmont** (Smith's Parish): This 1710 mansion is on property once owned by William Sayle, founder and first governor of South Carolina. Filled with portraits, antiques, and china, the house offers a rare glimpse into a long-faded life of old-fashioned style and grace. Resembling a small English manor house, it's the finest historic home in Bermuda. See p. 197.
- **St. Peter's Church** (St. George's Parish): This is the oldest Anglican house of worship in the Western Hemisphere. At one time virtually everyone who died on Bermuda was buried here, from governors to criminals. To the west of the church lies the graveyard of slaves. The present church sits on the site of the original, which colonists built in 1612. A hurricane destroyed the first structure in 1712, but some parts of the interior survived. It was rebuilt on the same site in 1713. See p. 202.
- **Fort St. Catherine** (St. George's Parish): This fort—with its tunnels, cannons, and ramparts—towers over the beach where the shipwrecked crew of the *Sea Venture* first came ashore in 1609 (becoming Bermuda's first settlers). The fort was completed in 1614, and extensive rebuilding and remodeling continued until the 19th century. The audiovisual presentation on St. George's defense system helps you better understand what you're seeing. See p. 203.

10 THE BEST OLD BERMUDA EXPERIENCES

Although much of Bermuda is modern, the first settlers arrived in 1609. The following places provide insights into the old, largely vanished Bermudian way of life. See chapter 8 for more details.

- **St. David's Island** (St. George's Parish): Though most of Bermuda looks pristine and proper, you'll still find some vestiges of rustic maritime life on St. David's. Some St. David's Islanders never even bother to visit neighboring St. George, and to some locals, a trip to the West End of Bermuda would be like a trip to the moon. St. David's Lighthouse has been a local landmark since 1879. To see how people used to cook and eat, drop by Black Horse Tavern (p. 199).
- **The Royal Naval Dockyard** (Sandys Parish): Nothing recaptures the maritime spirit of this feisty island colony more than this sprawling complex of attractions (with a multimillion-dollar cruise-ship dock) on Ireland Island. Fearing attacks on its fleet by Napoleon, greedy pirates, or rebellious Americans, Britain began building this massive fortress and dockyard in 1809. Convicts and slaves provided much of the construction labor. The Royal Navy occupied the shipyard for almost 150 years, doing much to influence the world's perceptions about everything associated with Bermuda. The Dockyard closed as an official outpost of the British Empire in 1951, and Her Majesty's Navy has little presence here today. The Maritime Museum's centerpiece is the spectacularly restored Commissioner's House, which during the mid-1800s was the most potent symbol of British military might in the western Atlantic. Its exhibits on Britain's (and Bermuda's) nautical heritage give you a good feel for a largely vanished era. See p. 186.
- **Great Head Park** (St. George's Parish): This memorial to the men and women who died at sea has been cited as one of the genuinely evocative monuments of Bermuda. See p. 201.
- **The Back Streets of St. George** (St. George's Parish): Almost every visitor to the island has photographed the 17th-century stocks on King's Square in historic St. George. But it's in the narrow back alleys and cobblestone lanes, such as Shinbone Alley, that you'll really discover the town's old spirit. Arm yourself with a good map and wander at leisure through such places as Silk Alley (also called Petticoat Lane), Barber's Lane Alley (named for a former slave from South Carolina), Printer's Alley (where Bermuda's first newspaper was published), and Nea's Alley (former stamping ground of the Irish poet Tom Moore). Finally, walk through Somers Garden and head up the steps to Blockade Alley. On the hill is the aptly named Unfinished Cathedral. See "The Best of Bermuda in 1 Day," in chapter 4.

11 BERMUDA'S BEST-KEPT SECRETS

- **St. David's Island** (St. George's Parish): Part of St. George's Parish, this remote little island is often missed by many visitors, but it represents Bermuda at its most authentic (see listing above).
- **Remote, Natural Settings** (Sandys Parish; ☎ 441/236-6483): Bermuda still has some oases that aren't overrun with visitors. One such place is the **Spittal Pond Nature Reserve**, along Somerset

Road, a sanctuary for migratory birds. It's a true walk through nature, with flowering bushes and citrus orchards. See p. 196.

- **Crystal Caves** (Hamilton Parish; ☎ 441/293-0640): Bermuda has the highest concentration of limestone caves in the world, many of them with echo patterns and sedimentary deposits that some spelunkers consider mystical. Collectively these caves form one of the

island's major natural wonderlands. Their surreal formations took millions of years to come into being, and the great stalactites and stalagmites have a gothic grandeur. Crystal Caves, at Bailey's Bay, are among the best, and also among the few whose tunnels and chambers can be navigated by laypersons as part of a guided tour. Discovered in 1907, these caves house crystal-clear Cahow Lake. See p. 197.

12 THE BEST RESORTS FOR HONEYMOONERS

Bermuda has long been a favorite destination of newlyweds. Its hotels, from deluxe resorts to guesthouses, attract lovers of all kinds looking for a little peace, solitude, and seclusion.

Although some couples seek out small cottages and guesthouses, most prefer a package offered by one of the splashy resort hotels. The following resorts feature not only romance but also some of the best deals around.

Note: It's a good idea to consult a travel agent for help in getting the best bargain. Before you call any of these hotels directly, see "Packages for the Independent Traveler," in chapter 3. For full hotel reviews, see chapter 5.

- **Tucker's Point Hotel & Spa** (Hamilton Parish; ☎ 866/604-3764 or 441/298-9800): This is the most opulent resort in Bermuda. On 200 private acres of the most beautiful seafront in Bermuda, the 88-room resort is a pocket of posh and privacy, appealing to lovers or those recently hitched. With four swimming pools, a championship golf course, a state-of-the-art spa, and a private pink sand beach, lovers will either get married or honeymooners will plan a return for a second honeymoon. It's that special. See p. 107.
- **The Fairmont Southampton** (Southampton Parish; ☎ 800/257-7544 in

the U.S. and Canada, or 441/238-8000; www.fairmont.com/southampton): The island's most luxurious hotel does everything it can to attract honeymooners seeking lots of activities, from watersports to nighttime diversions (other than those in the honeymoon suite). Its honeymoon packages, which start at 4 days and 3 nights, include breakfast and dinner on a MAP (modified American plan), "dine-around plan" (dinner and breakfast are included in the hotel rate, but you can dine in any of the two Princess resorts' restaurants), a bottle of champagne, a basket of fruit, admission to the exercise club, and even a special-occasion cake, plus a souvenir photo and a watercolor print by a local artist. See p. 101.

- **Elbow Beach Hotel** (Paget Parish; ☎ 800/223-7434 or 441/236-3535; www.mandarinoriental.com/bermuda): This hotel promises "marriages made in heaven." Its Romance Packages include a daily breakfast, plus a candlelit dinner for two in your room on the first night. Upon departure, newlyweds receive a copy of the *Elbow Beach Cookbook*. See p. 104.
- **Cambridge Beaches** (Sandys Parish; ☎ 800/468-7300 in the U.S. or Canada, or 441/234-0331; www.cambridgebeaches.com): Few other resorts in

Bermuda boast as loyal a roster of repeat guests, some elderly clients breaking records for as many as 40 repeat visits. Recognizing the allure of their resort for couples and repeat visitors Cambridge inaugurated, in 2008, an aggressive new self-image as a resort for relationship-building, sexual healing, and romantic “rediscovery.” As such, it articulates New Age sensuality with more verve and gusto than any other hotel in Bermuda. Couples in search of self-discovery (or re-discovery) love it. See p. 112.

- **Grotto Bay Beach Resort** (Hamilton Parish; ☎ 800/582-3190 in the U.S., 800/463-0851 in Canada, or 441/293-8333; www.grottobay.com): This resort, which actively caters to honeymooners, features everything from midnight swims at a private beach to cozy lovers’

nests with private balconies overlooking the ocean. The honeymoon packages include romantic dinners and arrangements for cruises and walking tours, as well as optional champagne, fruit, and flowers. See p. 108.

- **Pompano Beach Club** (Southampton Parish; ☎ 888/537-6448 or 441/234-0222; www.pompanobeachclub.com): The first and only American-owned hotel on Bermuda, this hotel appeals to couples in search of privacy, intimacy, and a sense of mystical union with the sea, which seems to roar and foam in virtually onto its foundations. And within a cottage colony whose exterior boasts an almost universal shade of pink (they call it pompano pink; lovers refer to it as Valentine pink), how could romance possibly take a back seat? See p. 109.

13 THE BEST PLACES TO STAY FOR FAMILIES

Bermuda is more kid-friendly than any place we know in the Caribbean or the Bahamas. It’s a safe, clean environment in a politically stable country. Nearly all Bermuda hotels go the extra mile to welcome families with children, but the following are our top choices. Turn to chapter 5 for full reviews. For locations, see the color map “The Best of Outdoor Bermuda,” at the front of this book.

- **The Fairmont Southampton** (Southampton Parish; ☎ 800/257-7544 in the U.S. and Canada, or 441/238-8000; www.fairmont.com/southampton): From June through Labor Day, this hotel features the best children’s program in Bermuda. Children 17 and under stay free; and if the parents choose the MAP (breakfast and dinner included in the rates), kids also get free meals. With its many sports facilities, including two freshwater pools and six tennis courts, the Fairmont is definitely for families

who enjoy the sporting life. The former Touch Club has been redesigned as Lenny’s Loft, a social center for children’s activities. From Lenny’s Loft, kids are taken on excursions around the island. See p. 101.

- **Elbow Beach Hotel** (Paget Parish; ☎ 800/223-7434 or 441/236-3535; www.mandarinoriental.com/bermuda): This longtime family favorite, on one of the best beaches in Bermuda, allows children 17 and under to stay free when sharing a room with their parents (though be aware that only some rooms are really big enough for an extra person). It also offers a year-round “Family Value Package,” which grants very low rates for four people (usually two children and two parents) and includes buffet breakfast, 4 hours of babysitting, 1 hour of paddle-boat rental, 2 hours of tennis, and free passes to the zoo and aquarium. Call the hotel or ask a travel agent for details. See p. 104.

- **Grotto Bay Beach Resort** (Hamilton Parish; ☎ 800/582-3190 in the U.S., 800/463-0851 in Canada, or 441/293-8333; www.grottobay.com): With its excellent summer children's program, this hotel attracts many families. It sits on 8.5 tropically landscaped hectares (21 acres), so guests usually don't mind its relative isolation across from the airport. The swimming pool has been blasted out of natural rock, and there are subterranean caves to explore. Beachside barbecues and other activities make this a lively place. See p. 108.
- **Sandpiper Apartments** (Warwick Parish; ☎ 441/236-7093; www.sandpiperbda.com): This is a viable alternative to the big resort hotels and their high prices. This apartment complex, located a short walk from a beach, attracts self-sufficient families who like to buy their own groceries and cook in their rented

apartment to cut down on the lethal dining costs of Bermuda. The accommodations are spacious and suitable for families, but they're far from luxurious. See p. 118.

- **Rosemont** (Pembroke Parish; ☎ 800/367-0040 in the U.S., 800/267-0040 in Canada, or 441/292-1055; www.rosemont.bm): It's a 15-minute ride from Elbow Beach, but this complex of cottages is another good choice for families who like to rent units with kitchens to keep dining costs within reason. A tranquil spot, each cottage opens onto its own veranda. Management can open and lock doors to suit different family groups—for example, as many as three rooms can be connected. A grocery store is close at hand, and there is also a coin-operated laundry on site; babysitting can also be arranged. See p. 119.

14 THE BEST HOTEL BARGAINS

- **The Oxford House** (City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish; ☎ 800/548-7758 or 441/295-0503): This is one of the best guesthouses on the island, built in the City of Hamilton in 1938 by a local doctor whose French wife wanted architectural features of her native land. Bedrooms, each named for one of Bermuda's parishes, are handsomely furnished and comfortable. The price is moderate, and quite good for the comfort offered. See p. 121.
- **Rosemont** (City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish; ☎ 800/367-0040 in the U.S., 800/267-0040 in Canada, or 441/292-1055; www.rosemont.bm): A collection of housekeeping cottages near the Hamilton Princess, Rosemont has long been a family favorite, offering a central location at a good price. The site offers panoramic views of Hamilton Harbour and the Great

Sound. Guests often prepare their own meals. See p. 119.

- **Salt Kettle House** (Paget Parish; ☎ 441/236-0407). The name is not the only thing charming about this informal and secluded 2-centuries-old cottage. It's a real discovery, and bargain hunters eagerly seek it out, preferring it to the glitz of the megaresort hotels. You can swim in the nearby cove, retiring to your waterside cottage at night. See p. 123.
- **Granaway Guest House & Cottage** (Warwick Parish; ☎ 441/236-3747; www.granaway.com): This former private home from 1734 is a virtual picture-postcard cliché of Bermudian charm, with its pink walls and white-washed roof. Opening onto views of Great Sound, it has been handsomely converted to receive guests—even the former slave quarters are now comfortable. See p. 122.

15 THE BEST RESTAURANTS

You don't come to Bermuda for grand cuisine. That said, there are quite a few places in which to enjoy a memorable meal.

- **Tamarisk Dining Room** (Sandys Parish; ☎ 441/234-0331): This is an elegant enclave at the western tip of Bermuda. Housed in one of the island's premier accommodations, Cambridge Beaches, it offers excellent service and a frequently changing menu of impeccably prepared international cuisine. For your main course, you can't do better than juicy tenderloin of beef with grain mustard and blanched garlic sauce. The wine cellar is up to the high standards of the menu. See p. 128.
- **Newport Room** (Southampton Parish; ☎ 441/238-8000): Part of the Fairmont Southampton Princess, this nautically decorated restaurant attracts an upscale crowd, especially yachters. The glistening teak decor makes it the most expensively furnished restaurant in Bermuda, and the French cuisine is worthy of the decor. The rack of lamb with mixed-nut crust is the stuff of which memories are made. See p. 132.
- **Waterlot Inn** (Southampton Parish; ☎ 441/238-8000): In a historic inn and warehouse that's part of the Fairmont Southampton Princess, this restaurant serves the island's most famous Sunday brunch, but it's also an ideal choice for dinner. Everybody from Eleanor Roosevelt to Mark Twain has praised the Mediterranean cuisine. See p. 133.
- **Ascots** (City of Hamilton; Pembroke Parish; ☎ 441/295-9644): In the Royal Palms Hotel, this restaurant specializes in a Continental menu that is mostly inspired by France and Italy, and does it exceedingly well. Classic techniques and first-rate ingredients are combined to make this one of the most enduring restaurants on the island. See p. 139.
- **The Harbourfront Restaurant and Komodaru Sushi Lounge** (City of Hamilton; Pembroke Parish; ☎ 441/295-4207): The most fashionable restaurant in Bermuda today attracts the serious gastronomes to its precincts for the kitchen staff's take on savory Asian and Mediterranean cuisine. Its sushi bar is also one of the best on the island. The location is on the ground floor of the Bermuda Underwater Exploration Institute. See p. 140.
- **Lobster Pot & Boat House Bar** (City of Hamilton, Pembroke Parish; ☎ 441/292-6898): If you don't find the local foodies at the restaurants discussed above, they'll surely be at this local favorite, enjoying some of the island's best regional dishes. Black rum and sherry peppers are the secret ingredients in the fish chowder, and baked fish and lobster are sure to tempt you. See p. 145.
- **Silk** (City of Hamilton; Pembroke Parish ☎ 441/295-0449): Some critics, including the discriminating readers of *Condé Nast Traveler*, are hailing Silk as the island's finest restaurant. After our most recent feast here, we're inclined to agree. Recipes are inspired by the ancient Kingdom of Siam—read “Thai” to modern palates. See p. 146.
- **Tom Moore's Tavern** (Hamilton Parish; ☎ 441/293-8020): The Irish poet Tom Moore reportedly was a frequent visitor to this restaurant, which dates from 1652 and overlooks Walsingham Bay. The menu, however, is no relic—it's quite innovative. Duck is a specialty, as is Bermuda lobster; but who can forget the quail in puff pastry stuffed with foie gras? See p. 151.