

YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS WITH US

MARCH | APRIL 2021

VIRTUOSO LIFE

MEDITERRANEAN SUMMERS • CARIBBEAN ISLAND ESCAPES • BEACHSIDE IN VIETNAM

A PLACE
IN THE
SUN

Shades of blue in the
Turks and Caicos.

Contributors



Writer
David Hochman
Los Angeles

"Vietnam's Royal Secret," page 68

THE REPORT: "The biggest stress of the day at Six Senses Ninh Van Bay was hitting the overwater hammock at the optimal photo-ready moment: At low tide, you might not get the mint-green sea in your shot. At high tide, you'd be bobbing in the water. Still, either way it was glorious."

TOP FAMILY-TRAVEL MEMORY: "It's hard to beat dining in Soneva Kiri's Treepod with my family while on assignment in Thailand for *Virtuoso Life* a few years ago – servers delivering meals via zip line, branches swaying with the tropical breeze. As I reported then: 'It made you want to hug someone.'"

📧 @heyhochman



Photographer
Lucy Laucht
Cornwall, England
"The Light Fantastic," page 80

THE REPORT: "I've always been drawn to beach scenes – the tones, textures, and sight of people relaxed and at play."

TOP FAMILY-TRAVEL MEMORY: "One of my earliest travel memories is of driving to France with my dad. We'd set out in the middle of the night, arriving in Dover at dawn to catch the morning ferry. I recall eating a lot of bread and cheese, camping in the middle of nowhere, and meeting all kinds of people. It was always a great adventure and no doubt shaped the way I travel today."

📧 @lucylaucht



Photographer
Lauryn Ishak
Singapore

"Vietnam's Royal Secret," page 68

THE REPORT: "I shot this story pre-Covid, so it feels like a distant dream of days full of carefree exploration. The two resorts are so remote that getting to them takes time and is an adventure in itself."

TOP FAMILY-TRAVEL MEMORY: "My father loved driving and going on road trips. It was always a treat to be able to stop whenever we wanted, for whatever reason, for however long. In high school, during summer holidays, which we usually spent in California, we'd drive up or down the coast, visiting new or favorite places."

📧 @laurynishak



Writer
Sarah Khan
New York City

"Our Kind of Caribbean," page 54

THE REPORT: "I've always thought of Saint Bart's as the sun-kissed idyll where billionaires converge. But while reporting this story, I discovered its distinctive patois, markets, and festivals – and now I want to explore that side of the island for myself. I also can't wait to spend a week eating my way around Puerto Rico."

TOP FAMILY-TRAVEL MEMORY: "When my grandmother passed away, my family traveled back to Hyderabad, India, a city that's always been like a second home for us. My parents took my siblings and me on a personalized tour – my dad's birthplace, my mom and grandmother's college – and it was such a special way to celebrate her ties, and ours, to her city."

📧 @BySarahKhan



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OUR KIND OF CARIBBEAN

Rum bars and seafood shacks, music and megayachts and boutique resorts galore. This time of year, we're ready to drop it all for a splash of sun – and the Caribbean's top of mind.

But in a sea of tempting sands, how to choose between Saint Lucia and Anguilla, Puerto Rico and the DR (while steering clear of tourist traps)? We asked nine high-profile locals what their islands mean to them, where they take friends, and how travelers can make the most of their next beach break.

INTERVIEWS BY SARAH KHAN





(EDEN ROCK ST-BARTHS) NOË BEWITT

Eden Rock vibes and (left) undeveloped Saline Beach, one of Saint Bart's most famous.



SAINT BART'S LIVE THE GOOD LIFE HERVÉ BRIN, FOUNDER, LIGNE ST BARTH SKIN CARE

AS SOON AS YOU REACH SAINT BART'S you are immediately immersed in good vibrations. No one will try to sell you anything or impose a tempo on you. It's a nice feeling of freedom amid the beauty of the landscapes, the brightness, the cleanliness, the absence of car horns. Maybe that's why, at one point, the oldest person on earth was an inhabitant of Saint Bart's (nun Eugénie Blanchard, who lived nearly 115 years).

I like the small market in Lorient for its fruits and vegetables from the neighboring islands. The intense smell of freshly picked tropical fruit combined with the market's spices is like no other and inspires my fragrances. Fishermen sell their catches at the market on Gustavia, where you're likely to run into anyone from Jimmy Buffett to Roman Abramovich to a local nurse.

One of the biggest spectacles of the year is the St Barths Bucket Regatta, held in March. This megayacht race is breathtaking and as formidable as the America's Cup.

BEACH RETREATS

- ✦ **Cheval Blanc St-Barth Isle de France** has breezy Jacques Grange-designed interiors.
- ✦ Don't miss the see-and-be-seen vibe at Oetker Collection's **Eden Rock - St Barths**.
- ✦ **Hotel Le Toiny's** standalone villa suites have their own private heated pools.
- ✦ Treat yourself to La Mer spa services at **Le Barthélemy Hotel & Spa**.
- ✦ **Le Sereno's** rebuild introduced waterfront suites and an expanded spa.
- ✦ The island's best kids' club is at **Rosewood Le Guanahani St. Barth**.
- ✦ **St. Barth Properties'** 265 villas dot prime hillsides, providing complete privacy.
- ✦ **Cuvée's** four Saint Bart's villas feature infinity pools and sleep 10 to 12 guests.

**As of press time, Saint Bart's was closed to travelers.*



SAINT LUCIA

CONNECT WITH NATURE

SHALA MONROQUE,
CREATIVE DIRECTOR, FASHION
AND ART CONSULTANT

SAINT LUCIA IS AN ISLAND WHERE nature's wonders never cease: While driving, you turn a corner and right there is a brilliant rainbow arching over an aptly named flamboyant tree (also known as royal poinciana). For divers, Soufrière Bay at the base of Petit Piton, is spectacular: On a calm day, there's a mirror reflection of the piton rising straight up from the ocean. Coral juts out at you like trees in the water below.

When I lived in New York, I kept returning home to Saint Lucia because it felt more human to me. I'd buy coconuts from the same vendor and he'd bring me gifts of food. At Latille Falls, Selai, a Rastaman, has tended a garden around the waterfall for more than 20 years; he offers a fish pedicure that's more like fish tickling your feet – which translates into forgetting all your worries. You have no choice but to laugh. And I love Gros Islet's Irie Bar, a remarkably chill and unpretentious spot where Andy, the owner, serves cold beers and rum with fish from his daily catch – with soothing reggae or film screenings in the background.

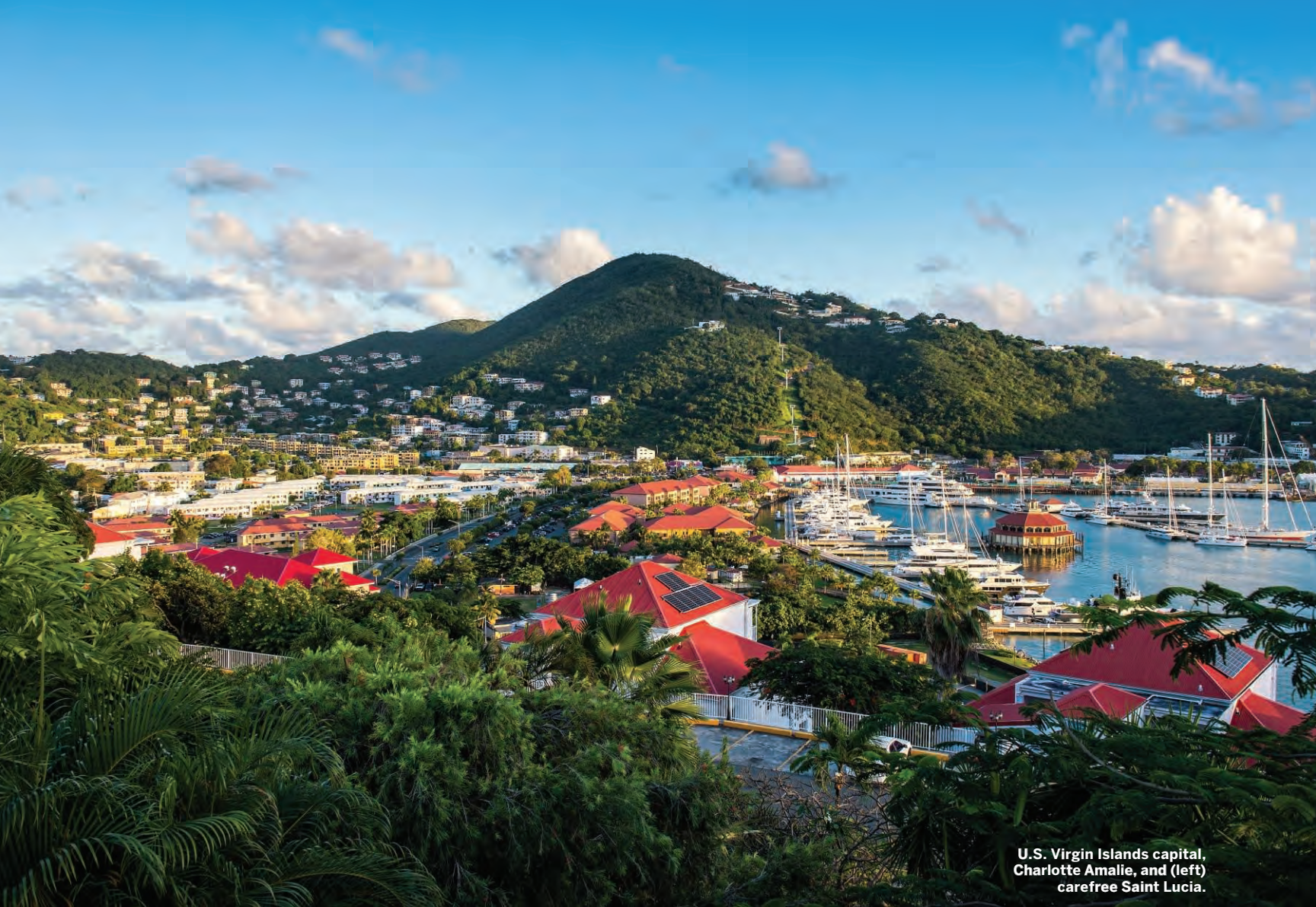
A tip when flying out: Check in three hours prior to departure as suggested – which is totally not necessary, as the airport is never that busy – then head back out to Island Breeze Bar & Grill on Vieux Fort's Sandy Beach, across from the airport. I like to think of it as the coolest airport lounge, and will sit there and have a Piton beer or two. You can even go for a swim; the terminal is literally a two-minute drive away.

BEACH RETREATS

- ✦ Stay at **BodyHoliday** for an all-inclusive wellness escape.
- ✦ For access to a secluded beach, check into **Cap Maison Resort & Spa**.
- ✦ **Jade Mountain** has suites without a fourth wall, bringing you closer to the lush landscape.



- ✦ Settle in at a prime perch between the two Pitons at **Ladera Resort**.
- ✦ **Sugar Beach, a Viceroy Resort** tempts guests with indulgent treatments in its treehouse spa.



U.S. Virgin Islands capital, Charlotte Amalie, and (left) carefree Saint Lucia.



U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS
A DIVER'S DREAM
ARNOLDO FALCOFF, OWNER,
PATAGON DIVE CENTER

(SAINT LUCIA) VANESSA ROGERS, (USVI) ROBERT HARDING/ALAMY

EVEN IF THE TYPICAL MARINE LIFE IS QUITE SIMILAR ACROSS THE CARIBBEAN, the diversity of diving sites around Saint Thomas is remarkable. From ancient coral reefs that grew steadily for centuries to giant granite boulders and from tunnel and canyon formations to the numerous shipwrecks, the visual impact is amazing. Boating and cruising past some of Saint Thomas' neighboring islands provides constant visual pleasure. Large schools of silversides blanket the coastlines of Thatch, Congo, and Carval keys during the summer. Jacks, bonitos, tarpon, and other predators feast incessantly on these tiny fish, and are one of my favorite underwater sights.

Saint Thomas' sheltered deep-water harbor made it a big colonial trading center. Main Street's fancy shops are partitioned from the old days' large warehouses – their original walls still show the many coral chunks used as bricks. The capital, Charlotte Amalie, is an extended relic of Danish colonial architecture with much to explore: the original house of impressionist Camille Pissarro; the old Danish fort, which was renovated years ago and turned into a museum; and the Pirates Treasure Museum's antiques, shipwreck artifacts, and exhibits. After seeing the town, take the gondola to Paradise Point, at the top of a high hill, for the best view of the city and the harbor.

BEACH RETREATS

- ✦ Take to the water on **The Ritz-Carlton, St. Thomas'** 60-foot catamaran, *The Lady Lynsey II*.
- ✦ **Villas of Distinction's** 50 U.S. Virgin Islands properties range from two-bedroom hideaways to ten-bedroom estates.





Clockwise from left: A quiet dip at Amanyara, a Turks and Caicos must, and parasailing off Grace Bay Beach.



TURKS AND CAICOS

MAKE A SPLASH

**KAREL RODNEY, MANAGER,
DA CONCH SHACK**

IT FEELS LIKE EVERYONE KNOWS everyone in the Turks and Caicos, even if they're not related. Providenciales – “Provo,” as it's called – is my favorite island and is the most developed. Da Conch Shack, located in beautiful Blue Hills, is Provo's most established beach restaurant and rum bar; locals head there to dine with their toes in the sand beneath palm trees, listening to the waves while drinking the “Jan” rum punch.

Of course, we're world-famous for our beaches: Everybody goes to Grace Bay Beach for its shopping, restaurants, bars, and pristine beach – I run 10K there every morning; quieter Long Bay Beach is windy and popular with kite surfers; Sapodilla Beach, on the Caribbean side, has powdery white sand and calm waters ideal for Jet Skiing. If you love water sports, as I do, you can do everything here from parasailing to deep-sea fishing, diving, or chartering a yacht to island-hop. On days off, I often take a boat to North Caicos. It's more popular with locals because it's way less busy than Provo – it's our quiet getaway, relaxing on the beach or visiting the caves. “Gon-ta-nort,” you say, with an island flair.

BEACH RETREATS

- ✦ Slip off to **Como Parrot Cay** for private-island bliss.
- ✦ **Amanyara** has serene Indonesian vibes transplanted to the Caribbean.
- ✦ Book a palatial private villa at **Grace Bay Club's** Estate, a resort within the resort.
- ✦ Treat yourself to the mother-of-pearl scrub at **The Palms Turks and Caicos'** 25,000-square-foot spa.
- ✦ Escape crowds at **The Shore Club**, set on a secluded stretch of Long Bay Beach.
- ✦ **Wymara Resort & Villas** features chic, minimalist design.





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
LET THE RHYTHM MOVE YOU
ISAAC HERNANDEZ,
MUSICIAN

DOMINICANS' SPANISH-AFRICAN HERITAGE DISTINGUISHES US IN TERMS OF music and food, as well as in our strong and recognizable accent and dialect. Music and dancing are an important part of our culture. Santo Domingo's live scene centers around the Zona Colonial's bars and theaters, such as Casa de Teatro. Some of our most famous artists – Juan Luis Guerra, Luis Días – performed here when being introduced in the scene; it's a loved and respected art house.

Every Sunday at the historic Ruinas de San Francisco, the band Grupo Bonyé plays merengue, *bachata*, and *son*. People of all ages from different places gather to enjoy it – it's a *thing*, as they've performed there every week for more than 12 years, sharing their happy, festive vibe. La Espiral 313 celebrates our roots music, which came from Africa and became our folkloric music. Outside Santo Domingo, Santiago de los Caballeros is the second most important city in the country. It's well known for merengue *típico*, the oldest style of the rhythm, and is home to some of our most talented musicians.

BEACH RETREATS

- * **Eden Roc Cap Cana's** La Furnia is a natural cenote at the heart of the resort.
- * **Amanera** makes an impression with its clifftop infinity pool overlooking Playa Grande.
- * Test your polo skills at **Casa de Campo Resort & Villas'** equestrian center.
- * **Casa Colonial Beach & Spa** is a restored colonial estate on the island's less-developed north shore.
- * Splurge at **Tortuga Bay Puntacana Resort & Club's** expansive Oscar de la Renta boutique.





BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

EMBRACE ISLAND CHIC

KRISTIN FRAZER, FASHION DESIGNER AND FOUNDER, TRÈFLE DESIGNS

WHETHER I'M ISLAND-HOPPING OR simply taking a scenic drive, the colors that nature provides in our flowers, trees, fruits, and animals always stand out. There's no better inspiration for me than the British Virgin Islands. Take one of our most serene beaches: Smuggler's Cove. When driving here on the western end of Tortola, along the Sir Francis Drake Channel, the ocean is about ten feet away – that's what I call living in true paradise. The private road to Smuggler's Cove can be rugged, but when you arrive, it's the way nature intended.

Coming into Zion Hill and just before reaching Apple Bay, there's a mural that depicts a little of the West End culture and its people; my late great-grandmother "Ms. Becca" is highlighted, which is inspirational in itself. Nearby, on Carrot Bay, I often head to D'CoalPot for ice-cold passion fruit juice or lemonade, along with its unmatched conch chowder and grilled lobster. The view serves as my canvas, and the sound of the waves never gets old. I have a soft spot in my heart for these places, which find their way into my collections' bold prints that are rooted in western Tortola's less touristy villages and untouched, natural shoreline. They're tranquil, but full of life.

BEACH RETREATS

- ★ The open-air Rum Room at **Rosewood Little Dix Bay** has more than 100 rare bottles from around the globe.
- ★ Retreat to **Moskito Island** for a memorable family reunion (see page 17 for more).
- ★ **Necker Island** is a sustainable private-island paradise, complete with flamingos and lemurs.



Tropical Tortola and (left) Encuentro Beach near Cabarete has the DR's most consistent surf.



Annandale Falls outside Saint George's.



GRENADA

UNWIND LIKE AN OLYMPIAN

**KIRANI JAMES, TWO-TIME
OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL
SPRINTER, TOKYO 2021
COMPETITOR**

YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND SOMETHING TO DO IN GRENADA. SAINT GEORGE'S IS fantastic; it's the capital and is where everything happens. When I'm home on vacation I always make sure to visit Market Square to stock up on spices – it's one of my favorite things to do because it's always a vibrant place. Nearby, the House of Chocolate has a café and small museum about the history of chocolate on the island, and will let you make your own cocoa balls.

The island's food in general will surprise you. Weekly Fish Fridays in my hometown of Gouyave are very lively, with steel pan music or live shows. Kelly's Hot Spot is a local favorite for fresh seafood from the nearby fish market. In Sauteurs, Petite Anse serves fantastic barbecue with a wonderful view of some of the smaller islands from its balcony.

If you like nature, visit Annandale or Concord waterfalls. They're secluded and very calming – if you're lucky, you might see a monkey. Wherever you go, you'll discover that the country's most positive attribute is our people: We are very down-to-earth, very laid-back and friendly.

BEACH RETREATS

- ✦ Plan for a romantic meal at **Calabash Luxury Boutique Hotel's** vine-draped, fine-dining restaurant, Rhodes.
- ✦ **Silversands Grenada** boasts the longest pool in the Caribbean.
- ✦ For the choicest spot on Grand Anse Beach, stay at **Spice Island Beach Resort**.



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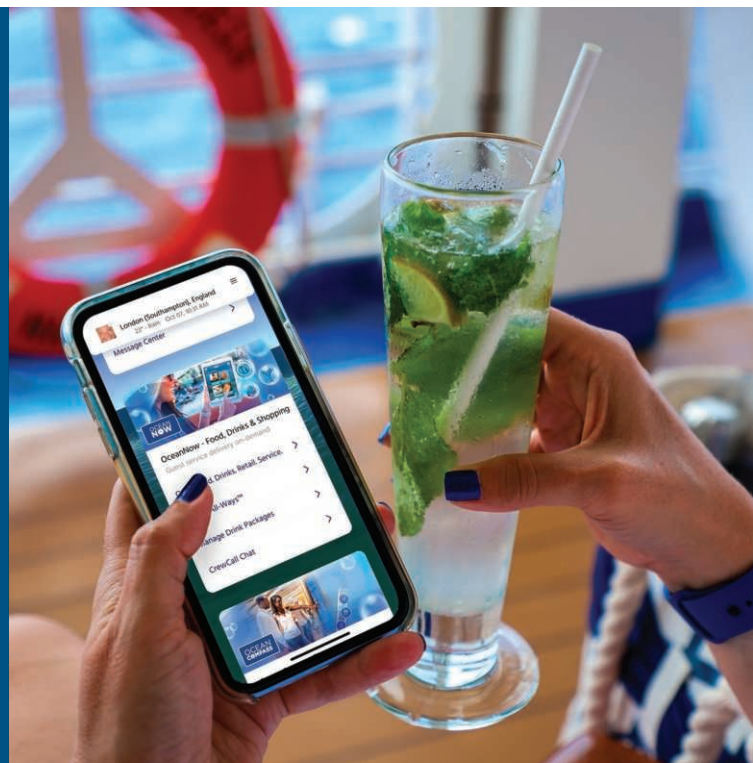
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ANGUILLA

SAIL INTO THE SUNSET

**DAVID CARTY, REBEL MARINE
OWNER, BOAT DESIGNER
AND BUILDER**

WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT ANGUILLA IS ITS SENSE OF FREEDOM AND INTIMACY that 15,000 people share. It's easy to know everybody; there's a familiarity and an egalitarian feel. We have a stunningly beautiful marine environment and beaches, and we get a nice sea breeze most of the year. I try to swim at Rendezvous Beach every day if I can – I like the angle of the wind coming off the sea in my face.

For boating, Prickly Pear Cays and Dog Island are my special places – undeveloped, just as they were a couple of hundred, if not a couple of thousand, years ago. I love that. Locals come here with a cooler and swim ashore to hang out for a few hours, then get on their boats and head back to Anguilla. The sea breaking over the reefs on Prickly Pear is magical.

Anguilla's national sport, boat racing, was born of poverty. Because of our country's aridity and lack of arable soil, we were never a successful plantation economy, so we relied more on the sea. As a result, we have this remarkable marine heritage and are competitive when it comes to sailing. If two boats come alongside, you can bet your bottom dollar a race will start. That's fueled the competition and the sport ever since, and there's no better time to witness it than on Anguilla Day, May 30, when we race right around the island. Sandy Ground is the best vantage spot, because all of the big races finish there. People line the beach and cliffs for a really cool bird's-eye view over the harbor.

BEACH RETREATS

- * **Belmond Cap Juluca's** whitewashed, Moroccan-inspired domed villas brighten moods on sight.
- * Taste your way from Tokyo to Morocco to Greece and beyond at **CuisinArt Golf Resort & Spa's** five restaurants and bars.
- * **Four Seasons Resort and Residences Anguilla's** glamorous interiors come courtesy of design maven Kelly Wearstler.
- * Spread out at **Malliouhana's** 25 oceanfront acres.
- * Book a museum-style escape to **Quintessence Hotel Anguilla**, an intimate mansion hotel with a lauded art collection.



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Ray of light: El Yunque, the U.S. National Forest Service's only tropical rain forest.



PUERTO RICO

TASTE OF PLACE

JUAN JOSÉ CUEVAS, HEAD OF CULINARY OPERATIONS, CONDADO VANDERBILT HOTEL

PUERTO RICO IS FAMOUS BECAUSE of our beaches, natural reserves such as El Yunque and Caja de Muertos, the old city's colonial architecture, bioluminescent bays, and music. But also for soul food. Our cuisine is distinguished by its abundance of flavorful meaty, crunchy, and fish dishes, with a healthy dose of herbs and spices. It's the kind of food you want to devour. Agritourism activities are a great way to connect with the island, such as a visit to Hacienda Tres Ángeles in Adjuntas, a hidden gem with beautiful views and even better coffee. Learning about this part of our culture, with a cup of coffee in hand, is a fantastic way to spend a day. It's not far from Ponce, and a great day trip from the popular southern city.

Piñones' coast in the north connects metro San Juan to the town of Loíza, which is the epicenter of Afro-Puerto Rican culture. It's more rustic than San Juan, and much smaller, with incredible ocean views. Locals come here on weekends for a *chinchorro*, a gathering of friends that may turn into a bit of a road trip, stopping to eat and drink along the way. Kiosko El Boricua and Carmín are among the most famous beachside shacks, known for fried staples such as *bacalaitos* (a pancake-shaped cod fritter), *sorullitos* (a delicious mix of cornmeal and cheese), and the crowd-pleasing *alcapurrias* (mashed cassava with taro root, green plantain, and crab or beef). This is the way we grow up – sharing family time around food.

BEACH RETREATS

- ★ Don't miss the **Condado Vanderbilt Hotel**'s historic pink-marble art deco lobby.
- ★ **Dorado Beach, a Ritz-Carlton Reserve** has a great water-sports program and outdoor activities on its 1,400 acres.
- ★ Post up at **Fairmont El San Juan Hotel** for its proximity to downtown and its perch on Isla Verde Beach.

- ★ In the heart of Old San Juan, **Hotel El Convento** occupies a cheery yellow seventeenth-century convent building.
- ★ **The Ritz-Carlton, San Juan** is set on a two-mile stretch of beach 20 minutes east of Old San Juan.
- ★ Tee off on **The St. Regis Bahia Beach Resort, Puerto Rico**'s Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed golf course. VI.