

ESCAPE TO BERMUDA

OK!'s Becky Ward travelled to the British Overseas Territory for a break from the winter chill

Bermuda's high season runs from May to October. The weather is typically sunny, the sea water is warmer and the bars and restaurants are lively with tourists. But there's lots to be said for visiting this tiny archipelago in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean in the low season too.

You can enjoy the coastal walks without getting sweaty, there will be times when you have the hotel pool all to yourself and there are great offers to be found during January's Restaurant Week if you're a foodie and February's Spa Week for those who love a bit of pampering.

You might not have wall-to-wall sunshine during an off-peak visit, but our five-day stay included one glorious day, and it was warm even when it was cloudy - ideal weather for exploring. Plus, the sea is turquoise all year round, so you won't miss out on stunning coastal views.





FROM TOP: The stunning spa at Grotto Bay Beach Resort; Bermuda's oldest pub The Swizzle Inn; the famous pink phone box at the Hamilton Princess Hotel







CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The pool at Rosewood; one of the resort's luxurious suites; the fresh tuna bowl at The Pink Beach Club; Bermuda's national drink the Rum Swizzle



OUR HIGHLIGHTS

If we were to pick three don't-miss activities that you can enjoy year-round, top of the list would be a visit to the spa at Grotto Bay Beach Resort. It's situated in a natural cave filled with majestic stalactites – with a crystal clear pool inside one cavern that you can swim in and treatment rooms suspended over the water in another.

It's the most beautiful setting for a dip and the water isn't icy, as we'd expected, although we still warmed up afterwards in the outdoor hot pool. Heading back down for our massage felt serene and otherworldly. This is by far the most unusual place we've ever been to for a massage.

Modern art lovers should pay a visit to the Hamilton Princess Hotel, where you'll find every artist from Damien Hirst and Banksy to Picasso and Andy Warhol adorning the walls. Be sure to venture further than the lobby to see the Yayoi Kusama pumpkin in the garden as well as the famous pink phone box that makes the perfect Instagram photo.

We also loved the walking trail that begins at Spittal Pond. It meanders past the pond, weaves through tropical foliage and passes volcanic rock formations with hidden caves and rock pools. It's an hour from one end to the other if you stop to look at the sights, such as Portuguese Rock, thought to date back to the 16th century when the Portuguese first came ashore.

GET A ROOM

We stayed at the Rosewood hotel, a grand property on a sprawling estate just a short transfer from the airport, yet not affected by aeroplane noise. It has four swimming pools, three restaurants, a fitness centre, a championship golf course, a gorgeous beach with a seasonal beach club and a racket sports centre offering tennis, padel and pickleball.

Our favourite meal was in the hotel's Island Brasserie. The choice of steaks was seriously impressive, from prime striploin to Japanese Miyazaki, accompanied by an equally notable salt menu, with 19 different flavours from Scotch Bonnet to Vintage Merlot. Our American filet wagyu was so tender we could have cut it with a butter knife.

Breakfast is also served in the brasserie, from an à la carte menu, and the portions are very generous.

Guests can sign up for yoga classes most mornings. And in the evenings you can sample Bermuda's national drink, the Rum Swizzle, in the welcoming bar. It's a refreshing mix of black and gold Gosling's rum, orange and pineapple juice, grenadine, lemon and bitters.



MORE TO EXPLORE

The beaches here are known for their pink-tinted sand, with Horseshoe Bay and Warwick Long Bay both beautiful spots. In need of some luck? There are more than 40 limestone moongates dotted around and walking through one is said to bring good fortune.

We also joined charismatic vegan chef Doreen Williams-James for a foraging tour that showcased the edible and medicinal herbs that grow here. We ate leaves that tasted of lemonade and vitamin C-loaded flowers, and left with a bottle of prickly pear juice, said to be good for digestion and heart health.

LOTS ON YOUR PLATE

Traditional dishes include the Bermuda fish sandwich – deep fried local catch served with coleslaw and hot sauce on toasted raisin bread – and the codfish breakfast, a hearty combo of salted codfish, potato, banana, boiled egg and avocado in a savoury sauce. But for us, the standout dishes were the fresh tuna bowl at ocean-facing dining room The Pink Beach Club at the Loren, and the catch of the day – grilled wahoo – at Sul Verde, Rosewood's family-friendly Italian restaurant. The Pink Beach Club also offers a mocktail brunch if you fancy a booze-free alternative to all-you-can-drink brunches.

Be sure to stop off at Bermuda's oldest pub, The Swizzle Inn, for loaded nachos and one last Rum Swizzle before your journey home. It's only a four-minute taxi ride from there to the airport so it's a handy spot for a pre-flight nibble.

HOW TO BOOK

Rooms at Rosewood Bermuda start from around £437 (room only). British Airways flies from London Heathrow to Bermuda five times a week (seven times a week from March to October). Return economy fares start from around £891.

PHOTOS: GETTY, KEN HAYDEN