



**Bermuda**



Bruce McKay  
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# Bermuda

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## Bermuda – Intro

Here are photos from a short visit to Bermuda.

Bermuda isn't far enough south to be a winter escape destination for me, but it's relatively easy to reach and has a fascinating history and culture.

There are three major destinations on these interconnected islands:

- St. George's, where settlement began, at the east end,
- The Royal Naval Dockyard, the busiest part of the island long ago, and now re-discovered on cruise itineraries, at the west end, and
- Hamilton, the capital and largest community, centrally located.

Fast ferries connect these major destinations and made visiting them from my base in Hamilton quick and easy, with gorgeous scenery en route as a bonus.

Heidi Cullen's friendly *Byways* small-group day tour took me to many of the out-of-the-way features that I wouldn't have found on my own.

A nice relaxing visit to a charming and beautiful jewel.

– Bruce McKay

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## **Bermuda – History**

**Bermuda was discovered by the Spanish in 1503, but not settled.**

**In 1609 colonists on an English ship bound for Virginia were shipwrecked on a reef at Bermuda. Most eventually carried on, a few stayed, and in 1612 the English began settlement. The first parliament was convened in 1620.**

**During different periods in the next two centuries the island produced salt, celery, potatoes, onions, tobacco, fish, wooden ships, and pirates.**

**American independence led to great changes for Bermuda. The Royal Navy, which ruled the world's seas, lost its bases in America and began improving harbour facilities in Bermuda to replace them. In 1811 it started building the large Royal Navy Dockyard for guarding the western Atlantic, and defence became the island's main industry.**

**In the early 20th century Bermuda began attracting tourists from the US, Canada, and Britain, but both World Wars renewed its military importance – for Allied navies in WW I, and also for air forces in WW II. During WW II a large counter-espionage operation intercepted and decoded radio signals from Nazi submarines and ships and screened trans-Atlantic mail. Britain withdrew its military forces in 1957, though the US still maintains an air base.**

**Today Bermuda is a self-governing British territory. The economy is now based primarily on offshore insurance and reinsurance. Tourism is now Bermuda's second industry.**





### Air Travel from Toronto

|            | Miles | km   | Hours |
|------------|-------|------|-------|
| Bermuda    | 1102  | 1773 | 2:48  |
| Miami      | 1245  | 2003 | 3:08  |
| St Maarten | 1974  | 3177 | 5:23  |
| Frankfurt  | 3968  | 6386 | 7:55  |

**Bermuda**  
**Locator**

Bermuda is about half way between Toronto and the Caribbean, about 3 hours by air. It is not "tropical", but "warm temperate", partially warmed by the Gulf Stream.

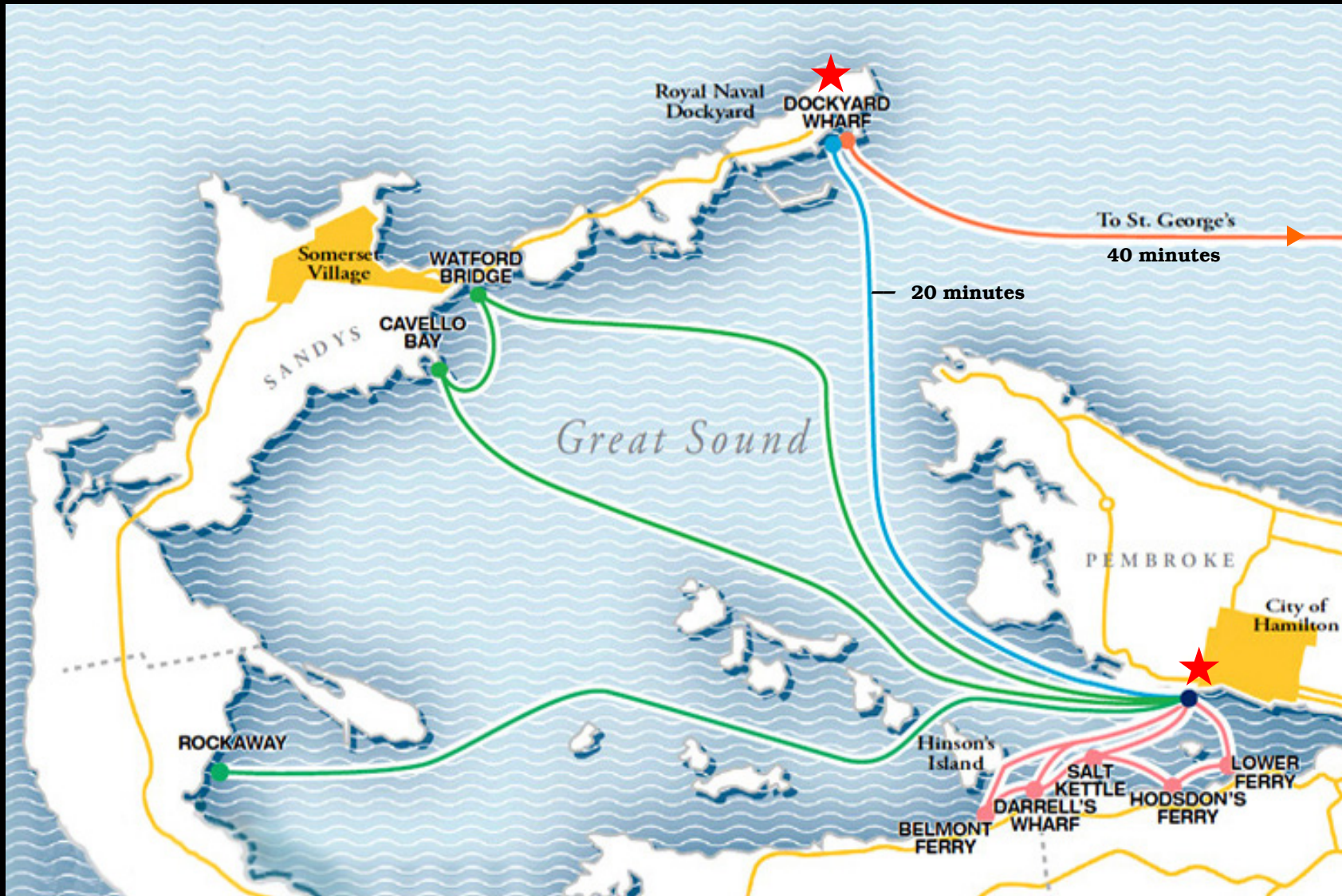




# Bermuda Parishes

**Bermuda is a collection of about 138 islands, of which a few larger ones are inhabited. Overall width – 14 miles / 23 km. Area – 28 sq. mi. / 72 sq. km.**





## Bermuda Ferries

The SeaExpress ferry service is a main component of Bermuda's transit system, connecting key locations faster than the buses, and with greater comfort.





**Welcome**

**Welcome to Bermuda, land of beautiful beaches,  
turquoise seas, and pastel homes with white roofs.**



**Welcome**

**My Air Canada Vacations package has me staying centrally,  
in Hamilton's legendary Princess Hotel.**





**Welcome**

The hotel is close to the main ferry terminal,  
and I'll use the ferries frequently.





## **Welcome**

**First we'll take ferries to St. George's in the east. On the way out we get a taste of the island's abundant up-scale real estate.**





**Welcome**

On this trip we change ferries at the Royal Naval Dockyard, the second-busiest place on the interconnected islands.





**St. George's  
Parish**

As we get to St. George's Parish, the eastern island,  
we see a cluster of the iconic pastel homes.



**St. George's  
Parish**

Fort St. Catherine overlooks the beach where Sir George Somers and his shipwrecked crew scrambled ashore in 1609.





**St. George's  
Parish**

The original wooden fort has been replaced and rebuilt several times, first in the 1700s and most recently in the 1860s and 70s.



**Town of  
St. George**

The Town of St. George is located in the interior of St. George's Island, on a huge natural harbour.





**Town of  
St. George**

**Sir George really lucked out. If he had to be stranded,  
this enclosed harbour was a great place to land.**





**Town of  
St. George**

**Sir George Somers**





**Town of  
St. George**

Over the following 10 months Sir George and his crew built two new ships to continue on to Virginia.





Town of  
St. George

This is a replica of *Deliverance*.





**Town of  
St. George**

Deliberate colonization of Bermuda began in St. George in 1612, and the town still retains the layout and the look and feel of its origins.





**Town of  
St. George**

**St. George's population of 6,500 is about 10% of Bermuda's total.**





**Town of  
St. George**

Historical re-enactments are performed for tourists by locals in period costumes.





**Town of  
St. George**

Or you can re-create historical punishments yourself  
using the provided do-it-yourself facilities.





**Town of  
St. George**

**Transportation choices**





Town of  
St. George





**Town of  
St. George**

Bridge House, from the 1690s, was home to several governors of Bermuda before the capital was moved to Hamilton.



**Town of  
St. George**

Many of the town's "streets" are narrow paths  
as established in the original layout.





**Town of  
St. George**

**St. Peter's Church was established in 1620, and is oldest Anglican church in the western hemisphere. The current building dates from 1713.**





**Town of  
St. George**

**The Unfinished Church was begun in 1874 to replace St. Peter's,  
but was never completed due to disagreements and lack of funds.**





**St. George's  
Parish**

St George's is a UNESCO World Heritage Site – "an outstanding example of a continuously occupied, fortified and preserved colonial town dating from the early 17th century".





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

In the early 1800s the Royal Navy built a new dockyard at the western end of the islands where there was more space and deeper water.





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

The dockyard was built to replace naval bases lost due to American independence. Today Americans contribute the bulk of the Dockyard's and Bermuda's tourist revenue.





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

**The Dockyard was a massive, sprawling complex of fortifications, docks, barracks, and maintenance and supply facilities.**









**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

The Royal Navy began to withdraw from the Dockyard in the 1950s. In the 1800s it had employed an average of about 1,000 Bermudians.





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

**Most of the original fortifications remain.**





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

**Shipbuilding is gone.  
Only small-scale repair shops remain.**





Royal Naval  
Dockyard

In the 1980s the government began to restore the Dockyard as a cultural tourist destination.





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

**The Dockyard's supply facilities were easily  
converted for commercial purposes.**





## VICTUALLING YARD

*Completed 1853*

*A Victualling Yard is an essential part of any naval facility. It is the area concerned with the storage, preparation and packaging of food and drink for the Fleet. The Victualling Yard in Bermuda is surrounded by a wall with only two gated accesses, making it a secure area within the Dockyard.*

*At the time the Victualling Yard was constructed, the only means of preserving supplies was to salt them and seal them in barrels. Each dockyard had its own cooper or barrel-maker who was responsible for the manufacture and maintenance of a large number of barrels. The Cooperage or barrel-maker's workshop was on the Northern side of the Victualling Yard and had two large fireplaces for working the iron hoops which bound the casks. Nearby were the Cask Store and the Hoop Iron Store.*





Royal Naval  
Dockyard

The Cooperage has become a restaurant.





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

Run cake, blown glass, and pottery businesses  
cater to tourist craft interests ...





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

... but the Clock Tower Shopping Mall, once the Dockyard's administration building, is now the most popular destination.





**Royal Naval  
Dockyard**

**The Snorkel Park beach and watersports centre  
just outside the fortifications is also popular.**





## National Museum

The most heavily fortified part of the Dockyard, the six-acre keep yard, has now been preserved as the National Museum of Bermuda.





## MOAT TO KEEP YARD

*Built in the 1820's*

*A keep is a strong defensive position within a larger defended area and it is the last refuge if the outer walls are taken by the enemy. This moat and an original drawbridge were part of the defenses of the Dockyard Keep.*

*The drawbridge was removed at about the same time as the South Yard was constructed in 190. The moat itself is tidal, fed by sea water seeping through the porous rock.*









**National  
Museum**

**A mix of original 24-pound cannons and more recent guns are on display.  
The Royal Naval Dockyard was never attacked.**









**National  
Museum**

**The Commissioner's House, completed in 1827, was the first to use a cast iron structural framework. It now contains museum exhibits.**





**National  
Museum**

The Dockyard zone continues south from the keep yard for miles, as we'll see in our Byways Tour.





**Sandys  
Parish**

**Our Byways Tour takes a back road away from the main part of the Dockyard.  
We go counterclockwise around Bermuda. Parish map on page 6.**





**Sandys  
Parish**

**This little bridge once connected to the Dockyard Hospital (now gone)  
on an island a mile and a half south of the keep yard.**





**Sandys  
Parish**

**Moon Gates originated in China, and came to Bermuda in the late 1800s.  
It's good luck for newlyweds to walk through the gates after getting married.**





**Sandys  
Parish**

We were told to watch out for the famous Somerset Bridge,  
but it doesn't look like such a big deal ...





**Sandys  
Parish**

... until we learn that it's the smallest working drawbridge  
in the world, with a centre opening of just 22 inches / 56 cm.





**Southampton  
Parish**

**Building of the original St. Anne's Church, from Bermuda cedar, began in 1616. Following hurricanes, this stone building replacement was completed in 1719.**





**Southampton  
Parish**

The Gibbs Hill Lighthouse dates from 1844, and was constructed of cast iron as steel was not available for building then. Gibbs Hill itself is 245 feet above sea level.





**Southampton  
Parish**

The lighthouse rises 117 feet above the hill. Its light can be seen by ships up to 40 miles / 64 km away, and by airplanes 120 miles / 193 km out.





**Southampton Parish** Looking north-east from Gibbs Hill





**Southampton** The City of Hamilton, seen from Gibbs Hill  
**Parish**





**Southampton  
Parish**

**The Fairmont Southampton Hotel, sister of the  
Hamilton Princess, is just east of Gibbs Hill.**





**Southampton** The Fairmont Southampton has its own 18-hole golf course.  
**Parish**





Warwick  
Parish

Astwood Cove





**Warwick  
Parish**

**The best beaches are on the south shore.**





**Warwick  
Parish**

**Bermuda's biggest banyan tree, planted in the 1700s.**





**Warwick  
Parish**

**Going for a walk in the tree.**





**Warwick  
Parish**

**Our guide Heidi, left, leads our group.**





**Devonshire  
Parish**

**Palm Grove is an 18-acre manicured garden  
open to the public on weekdays.**





**Devonshire  
Parish**

**This lily pond features a map of Bermuda.**





**Devonshire  
Parish**

**Palm Grove is privately owned by Sir David Gibbons,  
a former Premier of Bermuda.**





**Smith's  
Parish**

**Flatt's Inlet, on the north side of the Main Island**





**Smith's  
Parish**

**Flatts Village**





**St. George's  
Parish**

**Tobacco Bay, north shore**





**St. George's  
Parish**

**Fort St. Catherine, from land**





**St. George's  
Parish**

**St. Catherine's Beach.  
Completion of our west-to-east traverse.**





**Pink Ferry  
Route**

The ferry route that connects Paget and Warwick Parishes to Hamilton is primarily a weekday commuter run, but also fun for sightseeing.





**Pink Ferry  
Route**

**Tough life**





**Pink Ferry  
Route**





**Pink Ferry  
Route**

**Commuter parking lot, Bermuda style.  
Darrell's Wharf.**





**Pink Ferry  
Route**

With at least one exception, residences in Bermuda have stepped white roofs, used for the collection of rainwater.





**Pink Ferry  
Route**

**Bermuda has no natural source of fresh water.  
The steps slow down the runoff for collection.**





**Pink Ferry  
Route**

**Belmont Ferry dock.  
Last stop.**





**City of  
Hamilton**

**Hamilton is Bermuda's capital and its economic centre.  
About 40% of Bermudians work here, mostly commuters.**





City of  
Hamilton

Front Street





City of  
Hamilton

Traditional architecture on Front Street





City of  
Hamilton

Newer designs





City of  
Hamilton

ACE (insurance) building





City of  
Hamilton

Barr's Bay Park





**City of  
Hamilton**

**Sessions House, home of Bermuda's House of Assembly since 1826.  
Bermuda's Parliament dates from 1620.**





**City of  
Hamilton**

**Cabinet Building, home to Bermuda's Senate, and Cenotaph memorial.  
St. George's was the capital until 1815.**





City of  
Hamilton

Urban parking lot, Bermuda style





City of  
Hamilton

Hamilton Harbour





**City of  
Hamilton**

**A big Canadian visitor to Hamilton Harbour.  
HMCS Montréal.**





**City of  
Hamilton**

**HMCS Montréal is one of Canada's 12 Halifax-class anti-submarine and missile frigates, and part of its Atlantic fleet.**





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

The Princess Hotel opened in 1885 and was Bermuda's first hotel designed to attract affluent American tourists.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

Ownership has changed several times, but the Princess and its sister the Southampton are now owned by Bermuda's Green family.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

**The hotels are operated as part of the Fairmont group.  
The Princess now caters mostly to business visitors.**





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

A shuttle ferry service lets guests of the Fairmont Princess and the Fairmont Southampton visit each other for free.





## **The Hamilton Princess**

**During WWII the basement of the Princess became a British intelligence centre and way station. All trans-Atlantic mail, radio and telegraph traffic was intercepted and analyzed by 1,200 censors, part of the British Security Coordination (BSC) operation.**





# STEPHENSON BOARDROOM

## **The Hamilton Princess**

That basement operation is now long gone, but Canadian-born British spymaster Sir William Stephenson, head of BSC and the man called *INTREPID*, is remembered. After the war he resided for a time at the Princess, before buying a home on the island.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

Stephenson was often visited at the Princess by his former subordinate, Ian Fleming, author of the *James Bond* novels.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

When I checked in I was initially dismayed to find that my scenic harbour view was obstructed by a construction project.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

The new local owners are refurbishing the hotel and adding a major marina, not just a dock for rowboats.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

I found watching the tugboat-based  
construction project quite interesting.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

The views from my room were actually great. I could see the Fairmont Southampton and the Gibbs Hill Lighthouse in the distance.





**The Hamilton Princess** Sailing school filled the harbour one evening.





**The Hamilton  
Princess**

**And then, on my last evening, I happened to notice HMCS Montréal heading out.  
My turn tomorrow.**



< End >



**Bermuda**