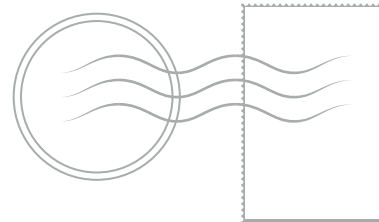


DESTINATIONS

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POSTCARD

Coconut Bay



Kavi Shah tests out the kitesurfing from Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa's revamped watersports centre

"Ladies are generally better at this than gents," says my instructor, which instantly fills me with confidence. "Gents tend to try and fight the power of the wind." I'm not sure whether it's me wanting to prove him right or not, but I manage to keep my trainer kite in the blustery air, and glide it from left to right as he'd showed me. It reminds me a little of riding a bike: you have both hands on the handlebar and the kite swerves in the direction of the hand that's pulling.

I'm taking an introductory kitesurfing 'taster' session at Coconut Bay Beach Resort & Spa's revamped watersports centre, Surf Shack. Guests over eight years old at the all-inclusive four-star resort can enjoy this, at no extra charge. It's certainly the right place to do it: the strong onshore winds coming from the Atlantic from November to April make this a hotspot for wind sports on the water. And this explains the number of Brits I meet who have purposefully chosen to visit the resort with their kitesurfing (and windsurfing) gear in tow.

Further away, I spy a kitesurfer suspended mid air – at least a metre above sea level – and think, "wow, that is cool."

"Who wants to do some body dragging?" the instructor asks. I recoil: whatever that is, it sounds painful. Turns out it's a technique you'd use in the water to catch your board if you've lost it. All I hear are screams from the ladies who give it a go: they're grabbing onto the back of the instructor's harness as the kite pulls them like a torpedo through the water, soaking them right through. (One-piece swimsuits are a must, ladies, to spare your blushes.)

Beginners typically need nine hours' worth of kitesurfing lessons to get confident on the water. That, I don't have time for, though the Surf Shack can kit me out for snorkelling (there's a nearby wreck to explore), stand-up paddleboarding or kayaking.

The guys from the Surf Shack give me a quick demo, before helping me get my paddleboard in the warm water. It's so choppy, it's like being on a ship in a storm, so I spend most of the time on my knees, but do eventually brave it and stand up for about five minutes. My legs tense as every wave threatens to knock me into the water. Ten minutes later, I end up beached on the sand way down the one-mile beach, due to the strong current – but I am still on my board, and, amazingly, still dry.

All these things for guests to try – and in a prime spot just five minutes from the airport – truly make this the perfect destination for wind sports fanatics who want to hit the water within an hour of landing on the tarmac. **TW**



BOOK IT

Caribtours offers seven nights' all-inclusive in a Deluxe Garden Splash Room from £1,949 per person, based on two sharing. The price includes return scheduled flights with British Airways on October 4, transfers and an airport lounge on departure in London. caribtours.co.uk



FROM TOP: Harmony Tiki pool at Coconut Bay; kitesurfing

PICTURES: www.freelanceimaging.com/Richard Hallman; Sean Deren