

Young Turks

With a new resort area added this year, Beaches Turks & Caicos is making a confident move into multigenerational holidays, discovers **Emma Blackmore**

Stay on the boat!" captain Wesly Dumorne exclaims when he discovers we haven't seen any sea turtles all week and makes a split-second decision to extend our tour. We've spent seven days exploring the turquoise waters around Turks and Caicos and, with just hours before our flight to a decidedly greyer Heathrow, the islands' most iconic resident remains elusive. We race towards Smith's Reef and slip into the crystal-clear sea, snorkels on, scanning a seabed rich with purple sea fans and schools of yellowtail fish.

"Over here!" I call, the first to spot them. A green turtle emerges, gliding across the seagrass, quickly followed by another. I watch as they rise towards the surface for air before gracefully diving and swimming away.

Back on board, captain Wesly is smiling. "We look after people here," he says. "Now, did you all see the turtles?"

SETTING THE STAGE

We're at the launch of Beaches Turks and Caicos' newest 'village' (resort area), Treasure Beach. Families, celebrities and dignitaries gather around the lagoon pool, drifting between pop-up food stations inside cabanas that face towards the Atlantic Ocean. As darkness settles, Junkanoo parades give

way to fire performers. Bruno Mars hit *Treasure* plays and I clock a 10-year-old cringing as his dad boogies along to the music. Comy? Yes, but that's half the fun.

"This is Sandals 2.0," Adam Stewart, executive chairman of Sandals Resorts International, tells me from the Chairman's Three-Bedroom Penthouse Suite. "It's a commitment to the future in innovation and advancement."

Opened in March, the village's 101 multi-bedroom suites and villas – a \$150 million expansion – reflect a growing shift towards multigenerational travel. My own Treasure Beach Concierge Suite sleeps six: alongside a calming palette of turquoise and coral are bunk beds with a trundle bed, a noughts and crosses dining table and children's dressing table.

Service is smooth, with concierge Jeyon just a phone call away, ready to help with dinner reservations or requests. Room attendants Felecia and Andy, transferred from Sandals in Jamaica and Saint Lucia, offer tales of other isles.

FAMILY VALUE

Families could easily spend a week here without repeating any activity. Set on three-mile Grace Bay Beach, this resort offers 10 swimming pools, offshore snorkelling trips, water ➤

Treasure Beach Village at
Beaches Turks and Caicos

DESTINATIONS

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3
OF THE
BEST

FOOD & DRINK

Butch's Island Chophouse

A staple at sister resort Sandals, now at Beaches, offering dry-aged steaks and build-your-own martinis. Go at breakfast to skip the buffet.

Pinta Food Hall

The brand's first à la carte food hall, serving Caribbean, Asian, Italian and Mexican dishes.

Brü Coffee Bar

Coffee by day, cocktails by night. Don't miss a nightcap by the firepit.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Family relaxation at Pirates Island Waterpark; fire performers at the venue's launch; Treasure Village

PICTURES: Alexandra Schaede; TRMN Hmltn Co; Corey Hunley



EXECUTIVE
insight



Adam Stewart, executive chairman, Sandals and Beaches Resorts

"Treasure Beach was created in my dad's [Gordon 'Butch' Stewart's] legacy, drawing on a deep family history that began when my grandfather sailed the salt-mining ship *Huswick* from Canada to Turks and Caicos in the 1950s. In today's busy, always-online world, I fundamentally believe multigenerational family vacations are a form of therapy. My own family time is sacrosanct, and Treasure Beach allows families to reconnect and create lasting memories."

and racket sports, unlimited scuba diving for certified divers, daily Sesame Street parades and Pirates Island Waterpark – complete with waterslides, splash zones and a surf simulator.

In kids' club Camp Sesame – open daily from 8am to 9pm – activities are carefully tailored by age group. Babies enjoy sensory play and water activities with a high adult-to-child ratio and staff with childcare qualifications, while toddlers join character-led experiences with Elmo, Abby Cadabby and Cookie Monster.

Older children can take part in treasure hunts, sports lessons and boat cruises, while tweens and teens gravitate towards beach volleyball, water polo and Club Liquid for karaoke and discos. For those looking to escape the sunshine, there are video games, air hockey and Treasure Beach's new 32-seat cinema.

"The kids always want to come back," says Fedeline Julien, children's activity manager. "If they're happy, the parents are too. Offering programmes for every age group, while also being autism-certified and welcoming children with special needs, is what makes us different."

BEYOND THE BAY

Wind and laughter fill the air as our catamaran skims towards Leeward Reef across waters sparkling in the sunlight. We snorkel between bright parrotfish and spur-and-groove coral – the islands' barrier reef system is the world's third largest – before we sail to Little Water Cay. Treading along the sandy trails, children whisper excitedly as rock iguanas emerge from the coastal scrub. Back on board, the catamaran's slide – and cocktail

bar for the parents – prove popular. The excursion is commissionable through Island Routes, Beaches Resorts' excursion partner, and costs from \$152 per person.

The appeal of the Turks and Caicos extends beyond main hub Providenciales. A 30-minute ferry takes us to North Caicos, where quiet villages and winding roads reveal a slower side to the destination. We stop at Cottage Pond, an underwater cave system that was only discovered in 2001, before driving to Middle Caicos.

The highlight is Conch Bar Caves, the archipelago's largest above-ground cave system. Guided through towering limestone chambers and cavernous lagoons, we learn how the caves once sheltered islanders during storms, before becoming the centre of a guano-mining industry in the late 19th century. As we walk gripping our torches, I spot graffiti left by miners, while bats dart overhead among spiky stalactites.

Nearby Bambarra Beach provides a gentler contrast: shallow waters, sands fringed by casuarina trees and colourful tiki huts. But it's not long before we're racing back to Grace Bay Beach, and after a week immersing myself in these island vibes, it feels like coming home. **TW**

BOOK IT

Unique Vacations offers a seven-night all-inclusive stay at Beaches Turks and Caicos in a Treasure Beach Concierge Suite, from £15,639 for two adults and two children (aged two to 11) sharing. Includes concierge service, in-suite dining, transfers and return flights from Heathrow departing September 10. sellingsandals.co.uk