

GEORGETOWN



After waiting out “the big blow” in the safety of Emerald Bay marina, we get underway again. The entrance at Conch Cay Point into Elizabeth Harbor is only seven miles away. We arrive January 5th.

We’re anchored behind Stocking Island by mid-day; plenty of time to launch the dinghy, go ashore, and “look around” for a bit.



There are 126 boats in the harbor. During the next three weeks, 70 more arrive. Georgetown is the “Mecca” for cruising sailboats in the Bahamas.

Why? With its large, natural harbor Georgetown provides wonderful shelter from the dominant east winds. The other reason is the weather. While the Abaco’s get high winds and rain from winter cold fronts, the Exumas usually don’t. Most cold fronts dissipate before reaching Georgetown. You can shiver in January in the Abaco’s, or, bask in the sun in Georgetown. Duh...!!!



Occasionally a strong front will hold together long enough to reach Georgetown, but it's a fraction of what hits the northern Bahamas.

Cruisers love to pass the winter in Georgetown, and then visit the Abaco's later in the Spring, when weather is milder. Here's one of the three major anchorage areas. Can you count the masts? This is in front of Volleyball Beach.

Imagine a never-ending beach party, for cruisers. That's Georgetown!



And, we get right into the "swing" of things... (Smile!)

Most activities take place on one of the beaches. Stocking Island has several, but the main one is Volleyball Beach; it's centrally located, and is often the hub of activities.

Although it's used as a public beach, the property is owned by the "Chat-N-Chill" bar on the corner.

There's one rule at Volleyball Beach; you don't bring your own refreshments; you buy at the bar. \$4 beer, \$2 sodas, and a really good \$5 burger. NOT BAD!



So... what is there to do? There's a VHF radio net every morning at 8:00 a.m. Someone reviews the weather, and announcements are made. There may be a work party to do local improvements; a cruiser may ask for help on a project, there may be a hobby class, or, an announcement of a pot-luck on the beach.



POT LUCK! Ha! Nothing brings people together like FOOD!

There are a few picnic tables on each of the three popular beaches, and pot lucks just seem to happen somehow, a couple of times a week.

There's nothing like a tropical island paradise!

Here's the dock and dinghy's facing west as the pot luck winds down at sunset. The perfect end to another perfect day.

Now... where did we anchor? We have a dinghy ride back in the dark.. (smile!).



With all of the cruisers here, there's lots of things to do....

There's hiking trails on Stocking Island...

Walking on the beach...

The beach on the east side of Stocking Island is beautiful soft sand. There are sections with rock shelves, but also miles of “just sand.”



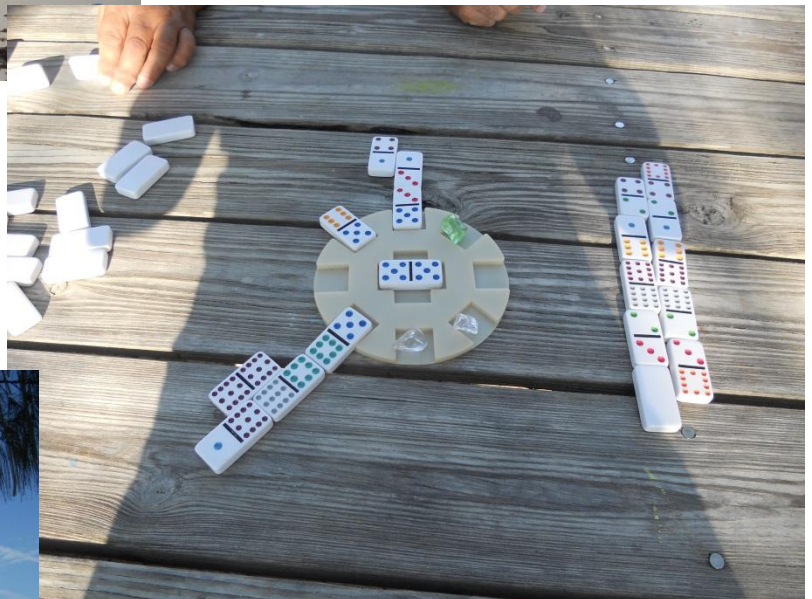
After you hike across the island to the Exuma Sound side, you'll often find you have a mile of beach all to yourself.

Clean sand... and only one set of foot prints!



Afternoons, there's always something going on.

Mexican Train Dominoes...



Beach Volleyball... the net posts are made from sailboat masts!

Feeding the Stingrays...

WATCH THE TAIL !



If things get too hectic, then take a break and kick back with a brew at the “Chat-N-Chill”...

(If you’re counting the empties... well... there were six people at the table. HONEST!)

But on Sunday morning, there’s a different theme.

BEACH CHURCH!

It’s just a set of benches on the sand. Everyone shows up and shares a time of devotion.

There’s a choir; there are instruments for the music; hymns and an anthem, and one of the cruisers gives a message.

“By cruisers, for cruisers!”





Here they are! CASA MARE arrives!

Fred and Patti are here! We left Stuart a week apart, and finally we're together again!

Captain Fred trained me on TowBoat U.S. in Beaufort, and I always enjoy his company. Patti is his First Rate First Mate. I swear she's taken 20 years off the old salt!



The four of us take the dinghys down to "Cheater's" bar and grill, south of Georgetown for lunch.

Cruisers will find a way, if possible, to go anywhere they can reach by water.

No dock; no problem! Here's the "Cheater's" parking lot.



Hey... does it seem like this is one continuous vacation? Not entirely. Work on the boat continues. There's more wear and tear as we're cruising, and working on the boat is more difficult when it's not at the dock.



Cruising means you get to work on your boat in interesting places! Oh no... RUST on the stainless! Bronze wool and Flitz and WD-40 and elbow grease address the problem.

At the dock, I could sit on a stool to do this. Here, I wait for a calm day and circle the boat sitting on the dinghy to try to clean the salt off and polish the stainless, before it rusts and pits.

Still, the cruising life style always keeps us young.

“Skipper” helps with comic relief. How did she get up there ???



Ha! The Coca-Cola Cat Trap is still working ! (Smile!).

And MORE activities...

We take the dinghys out along with Patti and Fred to go “shelling” on the beach.

Fred’s the Captain, but Patti’s the Admiral. “Let’s look over there!”



Later we go snorkeling among the coral heads. We head back to the “Chat-N-Chill” for lunch. We’re tired, wet, salty, and HUNGRY!

As I beach the dinghy I “mug” for the camera for a quick second thinking Mary won’t have time to snap the shutter and catch it. BUT SHE DOES...



Of course we stay in touch with family and friends at the local internet café.

It’s a broken picnic table next to an outdoor hamburger stand. The free WiFi from Exuma Market reaches here.

The internet café offers nature’s air conditioning. Welcome to the Bahamas!





Did someone say PARTY?

Rockin' Ron and Kool Karen supply a Rock-N-Roll dance night on the deck at the "Chat-N-Chill".

Here's a group of 50 and 60 year olds acting like they're 15 or 16!

We're a thousand miles away, and the kids can't see us! Ha!



Do you get it? All of those sailing lessons... chartering and building skills... the big investment in a sailboat and equipment... planning and reading the cruising guides... It's so you can get to GEORGETOWN! Come on down!

...Roy & Mary
S/V "Gideon" in Elizabeth Harbor.