

Can you live on Chocolate? P. 27

ISLANDS[®]

THE REAL BALI HAI

We found
it ... twice
START ON P. 10

BONUS
PHOTO
GALLERIES
islands.com

Best (and worst) of the Caribbean

P. 61

NOVEMBER 2012 U.S. \$4.99



PLUS THESE MYSTERIES

- How One Man Created His Own Island P. 31
The Playground Nobody Can Resist (we tried) P. 24
Why Are You Staring at This Water? P. 38



Halfway to the **British** Virgin Islands, on an
American Airlines flight serving **Mexican** beer
and **Canada** Dry, we ponder the first of

25

CARIBBEAN MYSTERIES



FROM TOP: PETER GUTTMAN; BEN PITT; OPPOSITE: LORI BARBELY

Or do this?

4 CAVING IN THE DR

We're far away from the safety of Punta Cana's golf resorts in the Dominican Republic, when I question my decision to take a taxi so far from cell-phone range. Our cabbie, Danny, speaks no English. I met him at the Iberostar Bávaro Resort, where I'd asked for a rare DR adventure. Danny parks and we walk to a cave known as La Cueva de Rulfo. Bats skitter overhead as we enter. I follow Danny through four rooms, and past patches of light where ferns sprout. After about an hour we rest, surrounded by dancing crepuscular rays. My senses must be heightened in the dark, because for some reason I recall the reverent sounds of a church choir and feel the presence of another body. I turn and jump at the sight of a man intently reading his Bible under a ray of light. It's triumphant for me, knowing we have come to the same place, an hour under the earth, to find peace from the outside world. — Brooke Morton

5 Two-Wheeling on Cozumel

Here, all rental cars are two-wheel-drive. Shop owners disengage the four-wheel-drive switches on Jeeps, and then tear the switches out. "People kept going off road on the northeast corner of the island and getting stuck," says the expat who owns the rental shop where I'm signing papers. I listen sympathetically. Then three friends and I load up our water and snacks, hop in the Jeep and drive northeast.

I'm not a rule breaker, but we've gotten our fill of downtown Cozumel and need something out of the ordinary, even if it's off the map. We cruise along in our emasculated Jeep, through the last settlement of huts, chickens and a kiosk where Cokes are sold, before the pavement ends. The wheels next hit nothing more than a sandy path bisecting desert flora. Oh, I think there might have been a sign that said "Do Not Enter." We crest a small hill and look over the rugged, isolated dunes. It's beautiful and, need I say, all to ourselves. So we keep going. After a mile or so, we stop to drink some of our water (it tastes amazing out here) before turning back.

This is when the Jeep's wheels get buried up to their hubcaps. We silently survey the situation, hands on hips, before starting the muggy, hour-long walk to the main road. There, we flag down a group of guys with a shovel and a four-wheel-drive truck. It is not a rental. — Andrew Marantz



Trailblazing leads underground in the DR (top), while on Cozumel it ends with an unceremonious stop.



WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE?

6 Hoodoo Sea. Limbo of the Lost. Port of Missing Ships. Call it what you'd like, but the Bermuda Triangle has terrified sailors, pilots and travelers ever since vessels were first reported missing in the 500,000-square-mile expanse of ocean during the early 1800s. Or it used to. When I moved to Bermuda four years ago, I barely heard a peep about the Triangle. In fact, I thought it had disappeared until I got this assignment. Locally, the Bermuda Triangle is a novelty referred to on T-shirts and in drinks, like the Dark 'n' Stormy. Which tells me the whole concept provided a marketing bonanza for the island — until scientists like Dr. Nicholas Bates, interim director of the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences, spoke up. "Asking me about the Bermuda Triangle is like asking a veterinarian about a unicorn," he tells me. "It's nothing more than a myth." Next assignment, please. — David LaHuta