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Discover Why Anguilla's Idyllic Off-Shore Islands Offer A Breathtaking Beach Escape



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Travel

I write about travel.



Anguilla, Lesser Antilles, British Overseas Territory, United Kingdom DE AGOSTINI VIA GETTY IMAGES

With hope finally on the horizon that travel may return to normal by the fall or winter, many Canadians are already starting to dream of an island escape. Nestled in the northern Caribbean, Anguilla is a gorgeous under-the-radar gem boasting of plentiful coral reefs, verdant landscapes and over 30

pristine beaches. Get to know Anguilla a bit better by discovering these idyllic four off-shore cays.



Prickly Pear Cay ANGUILLA TOURIST BOARD

Prickly Pear Cay

Prickly Pear Cay is a small island located six miles from Anguilla's mainland. A boat channel between Prickly Pear East and Prickly Pear West divides the small pair of uninhabited islands. Especially popular with swimmers and snorkelers looking for a more private experience, stunning white sand beaches lead to aquamarine waters ideal for snorkeling. You can expect to see schooling goatfish, crabs, lobsters, barracuda, angelfish, nurse sharks, and more. There are even several sunken ships in the area, ideal for divers. Birding is another big draw. BirdLife International has identified the two cays as an Important Bird Area because of their breeding seabirds. You can go on a hiking or birding tour and then afterwards enjoy a meal at Prickly Pear Bar and Restaurant (try the freshly caught lobster and crayfish).



Scilly Cay, fresh seafood ANGUILLA TOURIST BOARD

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Scilly Cay

After two years of clean-up and rebuilding what Hurricane Irma demolished, Scilly Cay is ready once again for visitors. This family-owned and operated restaurant and private island has been welcoming families for the past 35 years. Located on the eastern part of Anguilla, this offshore cay lays about a quarter-mile from the mainland and is accessible by boat from Island Harbour. If you don't see a boat at the dock upon arrival, all you need to do is wave at the island, and a boat will be there in a few minutes to pick you

up. The waters here are always calm, making it the perfect setting to spend the afternoon snorkeling, swimming, or lounging on a floatie. Grab a bite at the restaurant and take in some live reggae. Don't leave without trying their famous potent rum punch.



Sandy Island, Anguilla ANGUILLA TOURIST BOARD

Sandy Island

Sandy Island is a small cay off Sandy Ground beach in Anguilla. This popular oasis features stunning white sand, beach chairs with umbrellas and beach beds. There's also a restaurant that serves incredible fresh seafood, grilled meats and—of course—amazing rum punches. Bring a towel, and don't forget your sunscreen as you spend the day snorkeling and relaxing.



Scrub Cay, Anguilla ANGUILLA TOURIST BOARD, JAMAL GUMBS

Scrub Island

Scrub Island, a British Overseas Territory, is a privately owned small island located off the eastern tip of Anguilla's mainland. A true sanctuary from urban life, there is no electricity and plumbing. Picnicking and swimming are popular pastimes. Take a short hike over the dunes, and you'll find a salt pond where several land birds, waterfowl, and shorebirds gather. The island has also been identified as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International because of its nesting seabirds. Birders will be excited to find the Caribbean Elaenia, pearly-eyed thrashers, and laughing gulls. You can also snorkel the caves filled with beautiful reef fish and nurse sharks. Be sure to keep your eyes peeled on the western part of the island where people have been known to spot whales!



I'm a Canadian writer and editor who specializes in travel, food and wine. My father was in the Canadian Air Force so my family was constantly moving from base to base,...

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