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5 Off-The-Beaten Spots In The Caribbean With The Kids



Taking the kids to the Caribbean sounds pretty simple: direct flights, all-inclusive options and lots of sun and surf. But plenty of parents assume that the only kid-friendly options in the islands include the big resorts and the even bigger, mega-resorts -- and all of the crowds that come with them.

The good news: A family vacation in the Caribbean doesn't need to mean battling for lounge chairs, fending off constant beach vendors or trying to tune out the jingling sounds of the casino that drowns out the sounds of the waves.

While some uncrowded Caribbean escapes require an added cost, other times, it's just a matter of knowing where to go. Here are five places where you and the kids can have the sands to yourselves while you also ride horses, watch monkeys scamper across hiking trails or even greet the elusive swimming pigs of the Caribbean:

The Exumas, the Bahamas

This chain of 365 cays is far from the madding crowds of Paradise Island and Atlantis, and carries some of its own show stopping features. You won't want to miss **The Starfish Reserve**, off Great Exuma, where you can pick up some of the biggest starfish you've ever seen; **Nurse Sharks of Compass Cay**, who like to be petted and will gently suck on you, rather than bite; and the **Swimming Pigs of Big Major Cay** -- the farm animals who arrived here under mysterious circumstances but now paddle out in the clear waters to beg for snacks from approaching boats. The most lodging options are on Great Exuma (**like the 78-villa Grand Isle Resort**), but another good option is Staniel Cay Yacht Club, with crayon-colored cottages, on Little Exuma.