

**SPECIAL:** TRIPS THAT EXPAND YOUR WORLD pg 102

# ISLANDS<sup>®</sup>

OCTOBER 2007

**30** BEST  
UNDISCOVERED  
BEACHES

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REAL LUAU**

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island retreat

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FESTIVALS & MORE DIWALI

# ACCESS

Grass Cay and Mingo Cay, U.S.V.I.

DON HEBERT/GETTY IMAGES



## top-secret beaches

THE SECOND ANNUAL WORLD'S 30 BEST UNDISCOVERED BEACHES LIST

» THIS IS OUR FAVORITE FANTASY, AND WE BET YOU'VE HAD IT A TIME or two as well: You're walking through a forest, ducking under vines and minding the tree roots, when suddenly you emerge out into the sunlight on the edge of a perfect beach with soft, fine sand that gently descends into clear waters. You look left and right, and there's not a soul in sight. *Sigh.* Places like this do exist, and we've found them for you: Some require a bit of a trek, others are like natural swimming pools, and at one the sand is likely mixed with Minoan archaeological ruins. So get out there, have a local draw you a map, and be one of the few whose daydreams are fulfilled. »

## EXOTIC

■ **ANSE TAKAMAKA, Mahé Island, Seychelles** Across an archipelago of 115 islands, you'd better believe there are some beautiful beaches. Anse Takamaka, on the southwest coast of Mahé, the largest and most populated island of the Seychelles, is a beach backed by dense foliage. It slopes gently into the Indian Ocean, so you can walk out many yards and be no more than waist deep.

■ **OVAHE BEACH, Easter Island, Chile** This island in the South Pacific is known for its *moai*, large stone statues carved in the shape of human heads, but we love it for Ovahe Beach, a pink-sand oasis on the north shore about 15 minutes from the village of Hanga Roa.

■ **TROU D'ARGENT, Rodrigues Island, Mauritius** To reach the edge of exotic, first consider the Indian Ocean. Now envision Mauritius (of dodo-bird notoriety), and then push it one step further to Rodrigues Island. Rodrigues has many beaches, but when you come across Trou d'Argent, a narrow strip wedged between two rocky cliffs on the east coast, you'll know you've arrived. Be prepared: It's about an hour's walk from the bay of St. Francois.

■ **HARMINDER BAY BEACH, Little Andaman** Once you've secured your 30-day permit to visit the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal, head straight for Harminder Bay on Little Andaman's southeastern coast, right below Hut Bay. If you walk its smooth, sandy length, you might find blue coral washed ashore.

■ **LOPES MENDES, Ilha Grande, Brazil** Most people think, "Rio!" when they imagine Brazilian beaches. That's why Lopes Mendes, a magnificent 1.8-mile arc, has flown under the radar. Ilha Grande is about a two-hour drive and then a one-hour boat ride from Rio, and Lopes Mendes, with its blindingly-white sands and extremely clear waters, makes it well worth the trip.

## CARIBBEAN

■ **FOUL BAY BEACH, Barbados** Somebody got it right: If you want a beach all



to yourself, give it an ugly name. A few picnicking locals and some small fishing boats, which add to the ambience, are about all you'll find on Foul Bay Beach, a long, wide swath just south of media-darling Crane Beach on the island's southeastern coast.

■ **GRASS CAY AND MINGO CAY, U.S. Virgin Islands** Ten minutes by boat off the east coast of St. Thomas, Grass Cay and Mingo Cay come together head-to-tail, creating a gauntlet of beach. Slide into the bath-warm water to dive or snorkel the surrounding reef, which has huge coral heads and large sea fans.

■ **MUDJIN HARBOR, Middle Caicos** The biggest of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Middle Caicos has a north coast that is largely dominated by limestone cliffs and caves, one section of which cocoons Mudjin Harbor and its gorgeous beach. During low tide, walk the 100 yards from Mudjin across a sand spit to Drag-

on Cay, which has its own little beach.

■ **LUIS PENA BEACH, Cayo de Luis Peña, Puerto Rico** Between Puerto Rico and Culebra, to its east, is Cayo de Luis Peña, a two-mile-long, uninhabited nature reserve you can access for day trips, though not for overnights. This *isla's* beach is on its north coast and is quite private due to the effort (mild, by water taxi) it takes to get here.

■ **MAGAZINE BEACH, Grenada** Leave the crowds at Grand Anse and drive five minutes south to Magazine Beach. Even though the popular open-air Aquarium Restaurant is nearby with great Caribbean-fusion food, the beach is relatively uncrowded (except during Aquarium's Sunday barbecue).

■ **GUANAJA, Honduras** The island itself, one of the Bay Islands (others include Roatán and Utila), has been called the Venice of the Caribbean because its main town, Bonacca, is laid out around