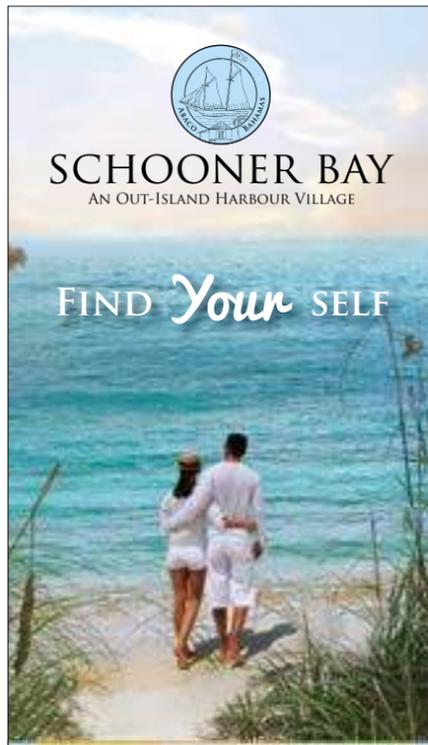

ULTIMATE CARIBBEAN:

Try Before You Buy



To move or not to move? Answer: Stick a toe in first.

The properties on the following pages have both rental *and* purchase options. See why each island is a candidate for the big move (a backyard barrier reef, 33 beaches to choose from) and what moving means (cost of gas, steps to buying property). Now it's time to play house. [→](#)



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Obtain the Property Report required by Federal law and read it before signing anything. No Federal agency has judged the merits or value, if any, of this property.

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Secret for Now

Roatan

TRY IT FIRST: WHY VISIT

➤ BARRIER REEF

Roatan is among our picks for best islands for starting over (page 40), in part because it's home to the world's second largest barrier reef and lies alongside the deep southern edge of the Cayman Trench. This means year-round visibility and healthy waters that contain 90 percent of all Caribbean reef species. It's like living in the Discovery Channel.



➤ **THE EAST END** Drive as far east as the gravel road will go, which is to Camp Bay Beach, a quiet nook where the locals and a handful of expats live. Go snorkeling right offshore.

➤ **STREET VENDORS** Eats on Roatan — a foodie spot for those who'd never use the word "foodie" — are authentic, messy and delicious. For \$2, grab a baleda (or three), the Honduran version of a small burrito, then wander to the tropical-fruit stand to learn how to peel a pomelo. Still hungry? Honey doughnuts, made from corn flour and covered with sugar-cane syrup, cinnamon and clove, linger nearby.

MAKE THE MOVE

➤ **LAS VERANDAS** A free-standing villa on a private 1,000-foot stretch of beach, with an infinity pool that practically spills right onto the Mesoamerican reef, can be had for \$800,000. In Anguilla or the BVI, the bathroom costs that. Wake up and decide if it's a beach or a zip-line day, a fishing or a golf day. Hurry up before word gets out and prices go up. Try: Standard room from \$195 a night. Buy:

Know Before You Go

➤ **Language** Caribbean English & Spanish ➤ **Population** 65,000 ➤ **Expats to locals** 10:100 ➤ **Currency** Lempira & U.S. dollar ➤ **Houses from** \$300,000 ➤ **Closest grocery** Two-minute walk from Las Verandas ➤ **Cost of ...** Gas, \$5/gallon; Milk, \$5.20/gallon; Utilities, \$150 a month for 900 square feet ➤ **Nonstop flights from** Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Miami ➤ **Ease of immigration** Moderate ➤ **Retirement/residency** Receive a retirement visa with proof of monthly income of \$1,500. Then own up to three-quarters of an acre of land with low taxes and no tax on foreign-earned income.



COURTESY LAS VERANDAS (2); OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: ZACH STOVALI; COURTESY BAHAMA MAR

One-bedroom, one-bath with ocean views from \$395,000. las-verandas.com

➤ **NUTS AND BOLTS** Roatan is the best of both: a quick 2½-hour flight from the States, but it feels exotic, nothing like home. Hire an attorney to help navigate the real-estate process, and keep in mind that financing is available but not common, as interest rates are currently at 36 percent. Many buyers refinance homes in the U.S. to purchase property here. — AS

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Paradise in No Time

Nassau, Bahamas

TRY IT FIRST: WHY VISIT

➤ **ATLANTIS** You think theme park, but Atlantis is also a community. It gives a glimpse (and it's only that) at a high-energy lifestyle in the Bahamas, like the one coming later this year (see below). A day pass for the marine habitats, beaches, water parks and pools goes for \$135 for adults, \$80 for kids.

➤ **BEYOND ATLANTIS** Soon-to-be expats can act like locals: Bring a picnic lunch to the Cloisters, 12th-century Augustinian stone ruins (near the statue of the woman in the center is the best spot). Camp out for the afternoon to watch the conch harvest at the bay between the two bridges to Arawak Cay. Grab a couple of stogies at Graycliff Cigar Company, whose signature blend was created by Avelino Lara, Fidel Castro's personal roller.



more than 200 units, ranging from one to four bedrooms. Here you can go big and go home. Try: Rates will be released July 1. Buy: One-bedroom oceanview units from \$1.4 million. bahamar.com

MAKE THE MOVE

➤ **BAHA MAR** Opening December 2014, Baha Mar rivals the size of Atlantis on a private island 15 minutes north of Nassau. Everything on the newly coined Bahamian Riviera is massive — a 100,000-square-foot casino, a 30,000-square-foot spa, 27 restaurants, three tennis courts, an art gallery set on 20 acres of beachfront. The residences will be products of three giant luxury resort brands — Mondrian, Rosewood and Grand Hyatt — and will boast



rent your home out, with up to 90 days of personal use per year. Time to sell? You're exempt from Bahamian income or capital-gains taxes. — AS

Know Before You Go ➤ **Language** English ➤ **Expats to locals** 1:30 ➤ **Population** 250,000 ➤ **Currency** Bahamian dollar ➤ **Cost of ...** Gas, \$5.59/gallon; Milk, \$7/gallon; Utilities, \$490/month for 900 square feet ➤ **Nonstop flights from** Atlanta, Charlotte, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Orlando, Philly ➤ **Ease of immigration** Moderate ➤ **Retirement/residency** Accelerated residency is considered with \$500,000 investment in property.

DID YOU KNOW?

Helping the less fortunate on Roatan is at the heart of life here — get involved

with the community through *Island Friends*, islandfriendsroatan.com.

BAY ISLANDS

OF HONDURAS

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