

# Vacation Guide

## A Golfer's Paradise: Bermuda!

By CHRIS LODGE

**HAMILTON, Bermuda** - Think about Mother Nature's 'Grand Design' for sportsmen and imagine her having sat at some magnificent easel designing rivers, lakes, mountains and valleys. You might conclude that she reserved a special place for golfers and their beloved courses.

If she did, that place has to be Bermuda.

Almost anywhere you go you are within practically two club-lengths of the sea. There are nine golf courses on an island that's just 21 square miles in all. That means, for the statistically inclined, some 6.5 holes per square mile. And that makes a lot of fairways, greens and sand traps for the 57,000 permanent residents and the 10,000 weekly visitors to try to take advantage of every day.

It can easily be said that Mother Nature picked her spot well. All conditions that make golf one of the world's foremost sports are found here. You are challenged by gently rolling terrain, beautiful, deceptive water hazards (arms of the ocean, in most cases) and 'roughs' consisting of poinsettias, oleander, hibiscus and numerous other tropical flowers.

Even Bermuda's fall and winter weather promotes the game. Consider the average daily maximum temperatures: September (84.1), October (79.2), November (73.9), and December (70.0). In January, February and March the temperatures reach an average daily maximum of 68. As for the rest of the year, to say weather conditions are outstanding would be an understatement.

Clearly, when you come to Bermuda to play golf, you must be on guard or the island's many other attractions will lure you off the course.

If you overhit your approach shot at Belmont's 18th, the ball will skip across a roadway and bring you face to face with the biggest challenge to golf's reign as winter king in Bermuda - the tennis courts.

"Pack a racket in your golf bag," seems to be the message for Bermuda-bound travellers. But then, since tennis was introduced to the United States in 1874 from Bermuda, that is hardly surprising.

But where to start? Of the nine golf courses, six of them are 18-holers: Belmont, Castle Harbour, Mid-Ocean, Port Royal, Princess and Riddell's Bay.

Of the three nine-holers, two are set at the extreme eastern tip of the island overlooking the historic town of St. George's.

Because Bermuda is an island and an extremely narrow one (its widest point is about two miles) it would be unthinkable not to include



**TUCKER'S TOWN, Bermuda** - A favorite pastime in Bermuda is playing golf, which is natural simply because there are nine golf courses to be found from one end of this 21-square mile island to the other. One of the most scenic as well as the toughest links to play is the Mid-Ocean Club in Tucker's Town. Here, a happy foursome and two caddies move down the 12th fairway which is flanked by palm trees and lush foliage.

the sea as part of the game. Most of Bermuda's links are located at the side of the water. Many require shots over or around it. And the views of the ocean make those shots even more memorable and the hooks and slices not so bad after all...scenic but salty.

Rarely in Bermuda do you find a long wait on any tee - or players pressing you from behind. Nor is a sudden sound apt to distract your swing. Only four of the island's 135 golf holes parallel a main road and Bermuda has no highways, freeways or expressways.

Getting to Bermuda's nine golf courses just might be easier than getting to your own. Flying time from Toronto is less than two and a half hours. Other direct flights from major cities of Canada and the U.S. and London, England as well, make coming to Bermuda almost easier than coming out of the rough at Mid-Ocean.

To point up the accessibility and ease of playing golf in Bermuda, two Golf Magazine editors staged what they called the Great Bermuda Golf Race. On a Sunday morning, they simultaneously set off from New York City bound for the golf course, one editor headed for Bethpage on Long Island, the other editor for the Castle Harbour in Bermuda. The race was to see who could arrive at the course, play 18 holes and then get back first to a designated New York City restaurant which served

as the finish line. The editor who flew to Bermuda won by a full 19 minutes, and the Race was described in the November, 1978 issue.

Taking a brief sprint around Bermuda courses:

**BELMONT** - 5777 yards, par 70. Only one par-four exceeds 400 yards. The shortest four is 282 yards. Elevated and double-tiered greens, blind second shots, tight

fairways and a whole clutch of small, narrow putting surfaces are part and parcel of Belmont golf.

**MID-OCEAN** - Cathedral-like in its awesome beauty, Mid-Ocean ranks as one of the top ten links in the world. Good shots are rewarded, bad shots are penalized. The 6,547 yards take the golfer past superb views of the Atlantic.

**PORT ROYAL** - A youthful gem of a layout, Port Royal is moving to challenge magnificent Mid-Ocean as Bermuda's banner golf resort. The 6,380 Robert Trent Jones designed course is set against a backdrop of sapphire sea. With only one exception, every par four or five has judiciously placed fairway bunkers.

**RIDDELL'S BAY** - Winding along a peninsula which at its widest measures only some 600 yards, Bermuda's

oldest course provides the golfer with a magnificent challenge to both his game and his camera. The tight fairways and small, narrow greens are set in a relatively short 5,476 yards.

And the list goes on until the ratio reaches one golf course for every 6,000 persons! Though golf in Bermuda is played the year round, the near-perfect weather and course conditions in the fall, winter and early spring provide seaside golf at its best.

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