

St George's Parish

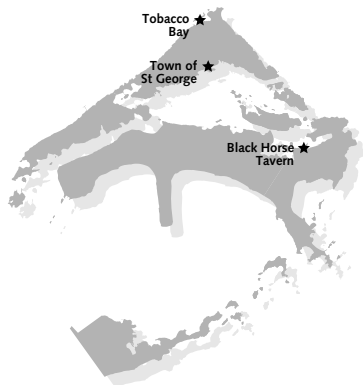


CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Town of St George | 71 |
| Information | 71 |
| Sights | 73 |
| Activities | 76 |
| Sleeping | 77 |
| Eating | 77 |
| Entertainment | 78 |
| Shopping | 79 |
| Getting There & Around | 79 |
| Around St George's Island | 80 |
| Sights & Activities | 80 |
| Eating | 82 |
| Getting There & Around | 82 |
| St David's Island | 82 |
| Information | 82 |
| Sights & Activities | 82 |
| Eating | 84 |
| Getting There & Around | 84 |
| Tucker's Town | 84 |
| Activities | 85 |
| Getting There & Away | 85 |

HIGHLIGHTS

- Stroll the cobbled streets of the **Town of St George** (opposite), with its profusion of historic sights
- Dine on freshly caught seafood at St David's waterfront **Black Horse Tavern** (p84)
- Snorkel over the underwater delights of **Tobacco Bay** (p81)



■ POPULATION: 5451

■ AREA: 2.14 SQ MILES

The parish of St George's embodies Bermuda's colonial past like no other place on the island. Indeed, some would argue like no other place anywhere. The centerpiece of Bermuda's easternmost parish is the historic Town of St George. Overlooking St George's Harbour, it was Bermuda's first capital and stands today as its most fascinating sightseeing area.

Established in 1612, the Town of St George is the oldest continually inhabited English settlement in the New World. Many of its original twisting alleys and colonial buildings remain intact, as do several forts. St George has done such an exceptional job of preserving its historic sites that in 2000 Unesco recognized the town and its fortifications as a World Heritage Site.

What is so unique about St George isn't simply that the town has preserved so many of its original buildings, but that it's done such a tremendous job of maintaining their original character in the face of changing times. The town has kept modern eyesores, such as overhead utility lines, to a minimum. Several buildings, from the town hall to the waterfront tavern, still have functions that reflect their original use.

The parish's other town, St David's, is a bastion of local tradition in its own right. It doesn't abound with historic buildings the way the Town of St George does, but it has deep roots that go back nearly as far. Most of the families living in the village trace their heritage to early colonial years and pride themselves on maintaining their legacy of living close to the sea.

The other side of St George's Parish is the exclusive community of Tucker's Town, which is located – somewhat confusingly – on the southwest side of Castle Harbour with no land connection to the rest of the parish. It has Bermuda's most expensive real estate and is a second home for some very wealthy folks, including a few prominent international billionaires.

TOWN OF ST GEORGE

No matter what direction you look in, this town exudes period charm. Some of its centuries-old buildings have been set aside as museums, but others continue to function as public meeting places, churches and shops. Even the names of the public ways – King's Square, Old Maid's Lane and Featherbed Alley, to name a few – conjure up images of the past.

St George has a pleasantly slow pace that sets it aside from the bustle of Hamilton, Bermuda's present-day capital. With the exception of outlying forts and beaches, all the main sights are within walking distance of the town center and are easily explored on foot. Be sure to give yourself a full day to appreciate all the town has to offer and treat yourself to lunch at one of those breezy harborside restaurants.

If you're touring in winter, consider coming on Wednesday, as it's the one day

of the week when the Old State House and the Old Rectory are open to the public. If you're visiting in the summer, keep in mind that cruise ships dock at St George during the week so it tends to be less crowded on weekends.

Information

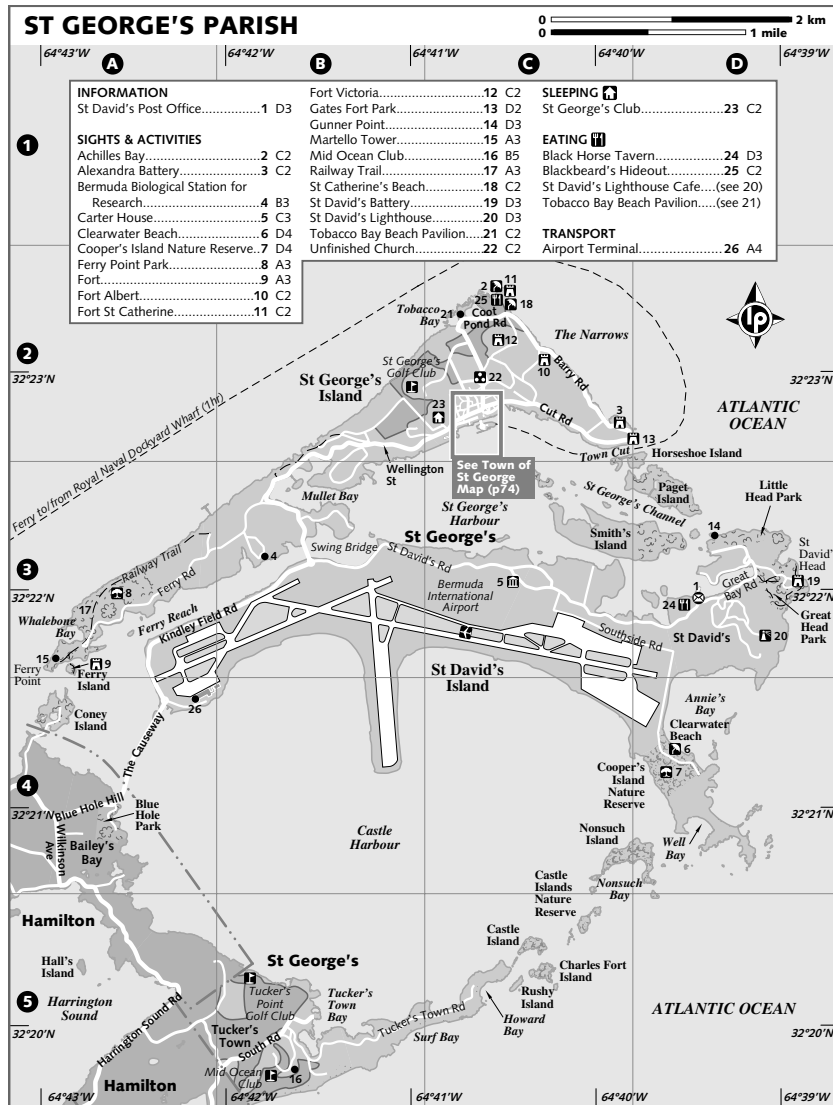
BOOKSTORES

Book Cellar (☎ 297-0448; 5 Water St) A quality little bookstore with books about Bermuda, travel literature and a choice selection of British and American novels.

Robertson's Drug Store (☎ 297-1736; 24 York St; ☎ 8am-7:30pm Mon-Sat, 4-6pm Sun) This is the place to pick up a wide range of foreign magazines and newspapers; it stocks some Bermuda-themed books as well.

EMERGENCY

Police station (☎ 297-1122; 22 York St) Centrally located in the heart of St George.

**INTERNET ACCESS**

Cyber Caffe Latte (☎ 297-8196; 8 York St; per 15min \$3; ☎ 7am-5pm) First-class cybercafé with good espresso and cushy chairs.

LAUNDRY

Tic-O-Matic Laundromat (☎ 293-9823; Shinbone Alley, north of York St; ☎ 7:30am-9pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Robertson's Drug Store (☎ 297-1736; 24 York St; ☎ 8am-7:30pm Mon-Sat, 4-6pm Sun) This large, well-stocked pharmacy is the place to get prescriptions filled.

MONEY

Bank of Bermuda (☎ 297-1812; King's Sq; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri)

Bank of Butterfield (☎ 297-1277; King's Sq; ☎ 9am-3:30pm Mon-Thu, to 4:30pm Fri)
Both banks have ATMs that are accessible 24 hours.

POST

St George's Post Office (☎ 297-1610; 11 Water St)

TELEPHONE

There are pay phones at King's Square, including one inside the tourist office.

TOILETS

Public toilets are located east of the tourist office.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Visitors Service Bureau (☎ 297-1642; King's Sq; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) The helpful staff here can pile you high with brochures covering all of Bermuda and provide local sightseeing information as well. It also sells bus tokens and passes. A second branch of the Visitors Service Bureau opens in the Penno's Wharf cruise ship terminal on mornings when cruise ships arrive.

Sights**KING'S SQUARE**

Step into this quaint square, in the historic heart of St George, and it would be easy to imagine you'd entered the set of a colonial-era movie. **Town Hall** (☎ 297-1532; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat), erected in 1782 and decorated with the parish's colorful seal, crowns the square's eastern flank. This attractive building, where the mayor and council still meet, retains its original period character inside as well as out, with walls of Bermuda cedar and portraits of former mayors.

Another place to stick your head into is the **pillory and stocks** at the north side of the square. Now a photo op for tourists, they were once used to publicly chastise male residents who offended colonial mores with such misdeeds as excessive drinking and rowdiness.

Colonial women had their justice doled out on the south side of the square, in the form of the **ducking stool**. This odd contraption has a seat at the end of a long seesaw-like plank that's hung over the water's edge. Women accused of gossiping or other petty offenses had to endure the humiliation of being dunked into the harbor. These days it's more fun, with costumed actors reenacting the scene at noon on Wednesday and Saturday year-round and on additional days in summer.

Just west of the ducking stool, a little causeway leads to Ordnance Island, which once served as a British arsenal and now hosts a cruise ship dock and the public ferry. At the northwest side of the island, you'll be welcomed by a lifelike **statue of Sir George Somers**, Bermuda's shipwrecked founder, created by local sculptor Desmond Fountain. On the east side of the island is a **replica of Deliverance** (☎ 297-1459; adult/child \$3/1; ☎ 9am-5pm Apr-Nov), the wooden ship that Somers built in 1610 in order to continue his journey to the Virginia colony of Jamestown. As happens to old ships, this replica could benefit from a little restoration, but you can walk through the boat's holds, where simple exhibits using mannequins give a glimpse of what life was like in these cramped quarters.

ST PETER'S CHURCH

Perhaps no building in town conveys a more thorough sense of history than **St Peter's Church** (☎ 297-8359; York St; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm). One of the oldest Anglican churches in the Western Hemisphere, it dates to 1612, though much of the present church was added in the early 1700s.

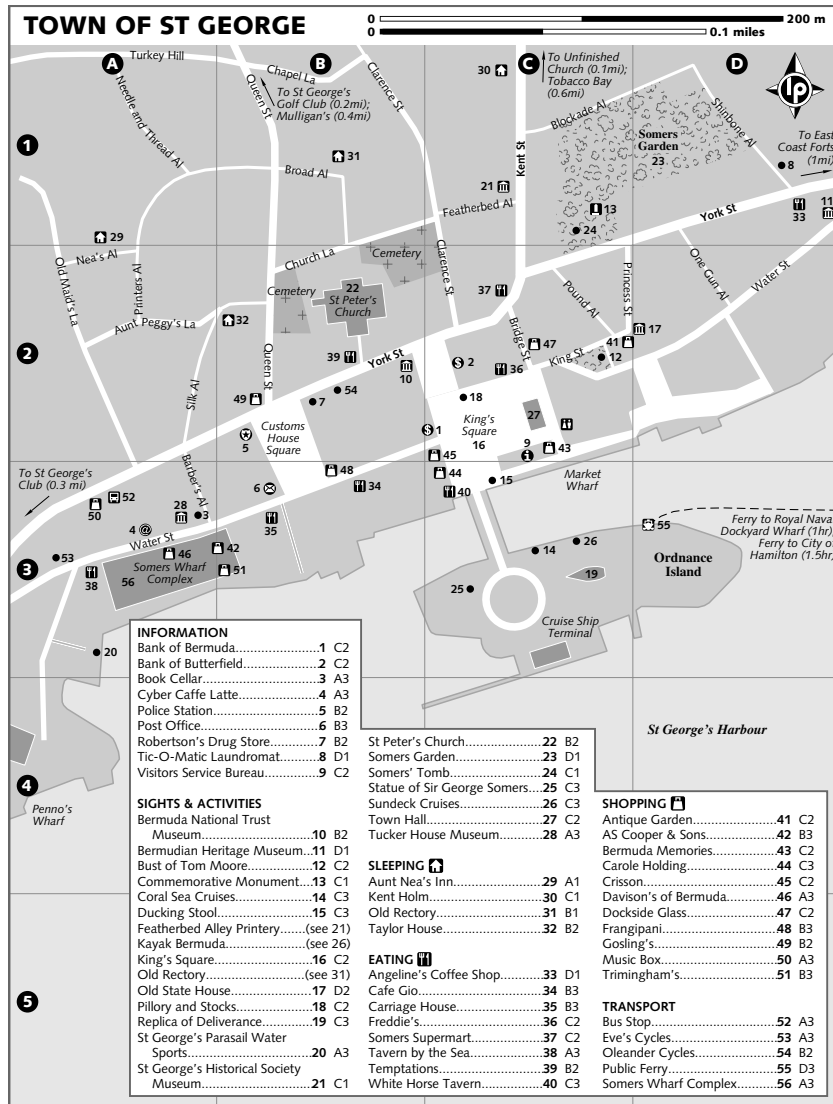
It's a completely historic building with open beams of timber, hanging chandeliers and a wall of marble memorial stones whose curious epitaphs honor early governors, clergy and business leaders. In the east wing is the oldest piece of Bermudian furniture on the island: a red cedar altar made under the direction of the first governor.

Other early colonial period items are in the vestibule behind the main altar, where a vault with a glass door contains a silver chalice that's been in use by the church since 1625. The chalice is engraved with the coat of arms of the Bermuda Company, which bankrolled the early settlers, and a scene showing the ill-fated *Sea Venture* grounding on a rock.

More insights into the past can be found in the surrounding **churchyard**. Like St Peter's

BY GEORGE, I THINK I'VE GOT IT

Parish, island, town – all these names are bloody confusing. So here's the deal: St George's Parish is home to the island of St George's, which in turn is home to the Town of St George.



Church itself, it once had segregated areas for black and white parishioners, with the graves for slaves confined to the west side of the yard in the walled area closest to Queen St. On the church's east side is the grave of Sir Richard Sharples, the Bermudian governor who was gunned down in March 1973. The governor is buried alongside his bodyguard,

Captain Hugh Sayers of the Welsh Guards, who was murdered by the same assassins on the grounds of Government House.

BERMUDA NATIONAL TRUST MUSEUM

If the walls could talk, this museum (☎ 297-1423; cnr York St & King's Sq; adult/child \$4/2; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Sat) would have some curious tales

to tell. This well-preserved colonial structure was built as the Governor's House in 1700 by Bermuda governor Samuel Day, who was later jailed for placing the land title in his own name. In the mid-1800s it was turned into the Globe Hotel, and in 1863 it became the office for Major Norman Walker, an agent for the US Confederate government.

St George had an interesting role in the US Civil War as a transshipment center for Southern cotton headed to mills in England. Because of the Union blockade, swift steamships were employed as blockade-runners by the Confederacy to get the cotton as far as Bermuda, where it was transferred to more seaworthy cargo vessels for the transatlantic passage. St George enjoyed an unprecedented economic boom, its harbor bustling with North American ships and its waterfront warehouses piled high with cotton.

The upper floor of the museum focuses on the role Bermuda played during the US Civil War, mainly through displays delving into the nitty-gritty details of blockade-runners and war profiteering. Downstairs there's a model of the *Sea Venture*, the flagship that carried the first English settlers to St George, and a 12-minute video presentation on Bermudian history.

Add \$1 to the admission fee and you can get a combination ticket that also allows entry to the Tucker House Museum in St George and the Vermont Museum (p94) in Smith's Parish.

OLD STATE HOUSE

The *Old State House* (King St; admission free; 🕒 10am-4pm Wed), perched above the east end of King St, dates to 1620 and is the oldest building in Bermuda. Although modest in size, the building incorporates Italianate features and has a stately appearance from its former role as colonial Bermuda's parliamentary house. After the capital was moved to Hamilton in 1815, the Freemasons were granted the building as a meeting hall in exchange for the annual payment of a single peppercorn.

Over the years, the place slipped into disrepair but was thoroughly renovated and reopened in a grand ceremony officiated at by Prince Charles in 1970. If you happen to be in town on a Wednesday, you can view the ornate chamber where island lawmakers debated their causes for nearly two centuries.

On King St, in front of the Old State House, you'll find a little green space containing the **bust of Tom Moore**, an Irish poet who sojourned in Bermuda in 1804. Moore made a bit of a wave in town when he developed a crush on the 16-year-old wife of one of the Tuckers and immortalized her in a collection of poems, *Odes to Nea*.

ST GEORGE'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM

This well-presented museum (☎ 297-0423; cnr Kent St & Featherbed Alley; adult/child \$5/2; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Fri Apr-Dec, 12am-4pm Wed Jan-Mar) does a fine job at recreating a sense of colonial days in this richly historic town. A portrait of the town's most famous resident, Sir George Somers, sits frozen in time above the fireplace. The rest of the museum, which resides in a 1730s house, is decorated with antique furnishings, including four-poster beds, a wood-fired oven, a 1644 Bible, period weapons, hand-blown bottles and the like.

In the basement of the same building, you'll find the **Featherbed Alley Printery**, where broadsides are still occasionally imprinted using a centuries-old press. Volunteers in period dress staff the museum and the printery and will cheerily show you around and point out intriguing little oddities.

TUCKER HOUSE MUSEUM

Walk through the door of the **Tucker House** (☎ 297-0545; Water St; adult/child \$3/2; 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Sat) and it's a bit like stepping back to 1775. That's the year that Henry Tucker, the colonial treasurer, purchased this place. Treasurers had deep pockets and the Tuckers were one of the most prestigious families in Bermuda. One unique aspect of this house is that it remains almost exactly as the Tuckers had it in the 18th century and provides a glimpse of that period through the life of just one family. The decor is unchanged and most of the furnishings, silver and china on display come from the Tucker estate.

The museum's collection includes numerous portraits of Tucker family members and priceless pieces of mahogany and Bermuda cedar furnishings. If you want to learn more, duck into the basement, where there's a little archaeological exhibit that details the history of the property.

Add \$2 to the admission fee for a combination ticket that also allows entry to the

Bermuda National Trust Museum in St George and the Verdmont Museum (p94) in Smith's Parish.

OLD RECTORY

The **Old Rectory** (☎ 236-6483; 1 Broad Alley; admission free; ☞ 1-5pm Wed Nov-Mar) was built in 1699 by the notorious pirate George Dew, who fled the American colonies for Bermuda where he converted to the good life, becoming a church warden and lawyer. Dew knew a bit about construction and erected the house with a stone roof, rather than the less durable palmetto thatch that had been used previously on island homes. He built the walls from limestone quarried beneath the house foundation, a technique that also created a cellar in the process.

The Old Rectory takes its name from a later owner, Alexander Richardson, an English minister who was given the property in the mid-18th century as a wedding gift from the father of his Bermuda-born bride. Today it's still a charming little house with period furnishings, cedar ceilings and a solidly colonial character.

Now owned by the Bermuda National Trust, you can tour the interior of the house in two ways – either by staying there as a B&B guest (opposite), or by visiting on Wednesday afternoons in winter, the only time it's open to sightseers. At other times, view it from outside the gate.

BERMUDIAN HERITAGE MUSEUM

Dedicated to the history of black Bermudians, this earnest **museum** (☎ 297-4126; nr York & Water Sts; admission \$4; ☞ 10am-3pm Tue-Sat) tells the story of the struggle for equality in Bermuda.

Displays cover the impact of slavery from 1616, when the first two slaves were brought to Bermuda to dive for pearls, up until emancipation in 1834. Look for the story of Sally Bassett, a slave burned at the stake for allegedly poisoning slave owners though she insisted she was innocent, and the account of the *Enterprise*, a US slave ship blown off course into Bermudian waters, a fortuitous event for the 73 slaves who were set free under Bermuda law. Today thousands of black Bermudians can trace their ancestry to the descendants of the *Enterprise*.

Also detailed are the 'friendly societies' that were organized in the years surround-

ing emancipation to create economic and social opportunities for black residents. Other exhibits touch upon the barriers of segregation that black Bermudians encountered long after emancipation ended, and the extensive contributions of black Bermudians in fields ranging from the construction trades to cricket and government service.

UNFINISHED CHURCH

Although it looks like the ruins of a once-grand Gothic church, the **Unfinished Church** (north end of Kent St; admission free) is, in fact, the hollow shell of a 'new' Anglican church. It was intended to replace St Peter's, which had fallen into disrepair by the mid-1800s. Construction began on this replacement church in 1874 and piecemeal work continued for two decades. Meanwhile, bickering between parishioners – some who supported the new church and an increasing number who favored restoring St Peter's – eventually brought the project to a halt.

Although it was left abandoned before a roof ever went up, the ruins have come to represent another slice of history and the Bermuda National Trust now maintains the property. The trust has even done restoration work to stabilize the walls so visitors can stroll the grounds safely.

SOMERS GARDEN

This **park** (York St; admission free; ☞ 7:30am-7:30pm summer, to 4:30pm winter), the town's largest green space, offers some shady respite with tall royal palms and a monument erected in 1909 to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Bermuda by Sir George Somers. Admiral Somers, as islanders like to note, left his heart in Bermuda – and they mean this quite literally. Somers' heart, along with his entrails, lie at rest in a modest **tomb** at the southwest corner of the park. As was customary at the time, the rest of his body was packed into a barrel of alcohol and shipped back to England for burial in his hometown of Lyme Regis. Incidentally, Lyme Regis and St George are now twinned as sister cities.

Activities

GOLF

Don't let the affordable rates mislead you at the government-run **St George's Golf Club** (☎ 297-8353, reservations 234-4653; 1 Park Rd; greens

fee \$60; ☞ sunrise-sunset). This par-62, 4043yd course, built by Robert Trent Jones, is a beauty. It offers breathtaking views and just enough challenges to keep you focused. Ask about reduced rates after 3pm in summer and 1pm in winter.

KAYAKING

Kayak Bermuda (☎ 297-4223; Ordnance Island; tour \$55; ☞ 9am-5pm Mar-Nov) runs a 3-hour kayak tour that paddles past unspoiled islands and allows time for swimming and sunbathing.

CRUISES

Sundeck Cruises (☎ 293-2640; Ordnance Island; tour \$45; ☞ departures 9:30am & 1:30pm May-Nov) takes out a 60ft glass-bottom catamaran to shallow reefs for a 3½-hour snorkeling cruise. It provides all the goodies – all you need is a bathing suit and towel.

Coral Sea Cruises (☎ 335-2425; Ordnance Island; adult/child \$25/15; ☞ departures 1:15pm Mon-Sat, also 11am Thu) operates a 60ft glass-bottom boat on a one-hour cruise to a coral reef. It's an easy and fun way to see Bermuda's colorful underwater world without getting wet.

PARASAILING

Feel like flying over the water? **St George's Parasail Water Sports** (☎ 297-1542; Somers Wharf; ride \$50; ☞ 9am-5pm May-Oct) will strap a harness and sail onto you and zip you up and away for a 10-minute thrill ride across St George's Harbor.

Sleeping

Old Rectory (☎ 297-4261; oldrectory@northrock.bm; 1 Broad Alley; r with shared bathroom \$100-150) This lovely historic building, which is owned by the Bermuda National Trust, has turned two of its rooms into a B&B. Staying in this authentically-preserved home is like plunging into another era, with rooms full of antique furnishings and a thoroughly colonial appeal. There's even an original fireplace in one of the bedrooms. Breakfast is included in the price. An unforgettable experience, especially for those who would like to soak up the rich sense of history that St George offers.

Taylor House (☎ 297-1161; mark@bermudagataway.com; Aunt Peggy's Lane; winter/summer \$100/130; ☞) A delightful split-level apartment in a c 1690 house, this place combines historic charm

with all the comforts of home. Downstairs there's a cozy living room and a kitchen equipped with every convenience imaginable. Upstairs is a roomy bedroom with a queen bed and a single bed. Both the living room and bedroom have cable TV, phones and ceiling fans. There's no housekeeping service, but the owner provides guests with clean towels and sheets as needed, and no service fees or taxes are added on to the bill.

Aunt Nea's Inn (☎ 297-1630; www.auntneas.com; 1 Nea's Alley; r winter/summer from \$160/190; ☞ ☞) Attentive service and comfy rooms await at this upmarket B&B in a quiet residential neighborhood within walking distance of the town center. The rooms, most of which are in the 18th-century main house, boast antique furnishings, with either four-poster or sleigh beds, and some also have fireplaces and whirlpool baths. Guests have access to a TV lounge and limited kitchen facilities; breakfast is included.

St George's Club (☎ 297-1200; www.stgeorgeclub.com; Rosehill Hill St; r winter/summer from \$180/325; ☞ ☞) It's as large as things come in this little town, but this hilltop condominium complex has an agreeable low-key layout that's in touch with its surroundings. The tone is serene, pampering and personable. The 70 units are comfortably furnished, each with a living room and complete kitchen and most with nice views of the town and surrounding sea. Facilities include a fitness center, three pools (one heated), tennis courts and a putting green.

Kent Holm (☎ 297-0528; Kent St; r/studio \$75/95) Home hospitality is the hallmark at this small family-run guesthouse at the home of Grace Smith. Situated on the road to the Unfinished Church, it's a short walk to anywhere in the town center and about 10 minutes to Tobacco Bay. Choose between a straightforward room that has one double and one single bed and a small refrigerator, or a studio unit that is equipped with a full kitchen.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Cafe Gio (☎ 297-1307; 36 Water St; lunch \$9-16, dinner \$15-29; ☞ lunch & dinner; ☞ ☞) This trendy place has a lot going for it: excellent food fusing Italian and island influences, an open-air waterfront patio and good service. The chefs know their stuff here. Favorites

include the crispy calamari fritti, a mouth-watering crusted tuna which is seared on the outside and sashimi-like in the middle, and of course the local catch of the day. It also offers a full range of pizza and pasta.

Mulligan's (☎ 297-1836; 1 Park Rd; lunch \$10-20, dinner \$26-34; ☺ lunch & dinner; ☺) Perched above St George's Golf Club, this place does a nice job with anything that swims in the sea. The chowder is an award-winner, the grilled wahoo sandwich is a sure bet and the chef consistently prepares tuna the way it was meant to be. Good codfish cakes and salads too. It's easy to see why people come from all over the island to eat here.

Temptations (☎ 297-1368; 31 York St; items \$2-6; ☺ 8:30am-5pm Mon-Sat; ☺ ☺) The best place for a quick bite in the town center, this simple eatery is a cross between a bakery and a café. You'll find reasonably-priced pies, cakes and pastries. A tasty house special is the chicken curry pie, or order a sandwich on your choice of breads. Temptations also doubles as the local ice-cream shop.

Angeline's Coffee Shop (☎ 297-0959; 48 York St; dishes \$5-9; ☺ 7am-3pm Mon-Fri, to noon Sat & Sun; ☺) This is where the locals eat. And there's absolutely no fast food here – instead, everything is made to order as you watch. Sit at the counter as Angeline grills up hand-patted burgers, thick and juicy. The fish sandwiches, crispy and mounded high, are a meal in themselves.

Carriage House (☎ 297-1730; Water St; lunch \$9-18, dinner \$22-38; ☺ lunch & dinner; ☺ ☺) Old World atmosphere permeates this 18th-century building that used to serve as a storage house for horse-and-buggy carriages. Although it's best known as an upmarket candlelit dinner restaurant, they serve some reasonably-priced lunch deals as well, including sandwiches and a seafood plate of the day. At dinner expect continental fare such as rack of spring lamb, roasted duck and filet mignon.

White Horse Tavern (☎ 297-1838; King's Sq; lunch \$10-16, dinner \$25-40; ☺ lunch & dinner) You can get better food elsewhere, but for atmosphere and setting, it's hard to beat this popular place, which has a patio that literally hangs over the water. At lunch most people opt for the salads, sandwiches or pub grub; the steak and ale pie is a favorite. At dinner there's a full complement of meat and fish plates.

Tavern by the Sea (☎ 297-3305; 14 Water St; sandwiches \$8-14, mains \$13-30; ☺ 11:30am-10pm or later) This pub is a busy eating spot on sunny days, when people flock to its waterside patio. It's best known for its sandwiches and burgers, which run the gamut from vegetarian options to a bacon-cheeseburger or classic reuben (corned beef, sauerkraut and Swiss cheese on rye bread). The place also has specialty salads and pub grub such as shepherd's pie.

Freddie's (☎ 297-1717; King's Sq; mains \$10-20; ☺ lunch & dinner) A sunny balcony overlooking the square, and decent prices, including a daily soup and sandwich special (\$10), make this a good central budget place to take a break from your sightseeing.

GROCERIES

Somers Supermart (☎ 297-1177; 41 York St; ☺ 7am-9pm Mon-Sat, 8am-8pm Sun) This is the only place to buy groceries in town, but it's conveniently located with long opening hours.

Entertainment

In St George, the entertainment generally varies with the time of year, with the most activity occurring during the season when the cruise ships are in dock, from May to October. The rest of the year things quiet down dramatically, so it's best to call ahead or take a look in the local papers to see what's happening.

White Horse Tavern (☎ 297-1838; King's Sq) One of St George's main entertainment venues and a fine place to linger over a mug of frosty brew while looking out at the sea. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights during the cruise ship season it turns into a DJ nightclub after dinner and rocks until 3am, and throughout the year on Friday and Saturday nights there's live music.

Tavern by the Sea (☎ 297-3305; 14 Water St; ☺ 11:30am-10pm or later) This pub has happy hour from 5pm to 7pm on weekdays. During the cruise ship season, there's live entertainment (anything from karaoke to rock bands) into the wee hours of most nights.

Freddie's (☎ 297-1717; King's Sq) Downstairs in the restaurant of the same name, this smoky sports bar right on King's Square attracts a mixed crowd of locals and American expats who come to watch the big-screen satellite TV that tunes in to Boston-based baseball, football and basketball.

On Tuesdays during the summer months, St George holds Heritage Nights from 7pm to 9:30pm with craft and food stalls set up in King's Square, and live music and Gombey dancers, all geared to entertain cruise ship passengers in port at the time.

Shopping

There are lots of good shopping possibilities in St George. Hamilton's two main department stores – **Trimingham's** (☎ 297-1726; Water St) and **AS Cooper & Sons** (☎ 297-0925; Water St) – have branches at the Somers Wharf complex. These stores carry a wide variety of items, including top international brands of china, crystal, designer clothing, jewelry and perfumes. They also have swimsuits and local items such as Bermuda shorts and Royall Bay Rhum cologne.

Bermuda Memories (☎ 297-8104; 7 King's Sq) Adjacent to the tourist office, this shop sells quality watercolors by artist Jill Amos Raine, who focuses on Bermuda's historic buildings, pastel-colored houses and waterside scenes. In addition to the original paintings, there are also reasonably priced prints and notecards, all of which would make nice take-home memories of Bermuda.

Dockside Glass (☎ 297-3908; 3 Bridge St) A branch of the famous Royal Dockyard company, the shop sells handblown glass – everything from tiny tree frogs to large serving bowls – it also sells Bermuda-made rum cakes. Come in for a free cake sample and to watch the glassblower do her thing.

Frangipani (☎ 297-1357; Water St) For women who like pastel colors and lightweight cotton fabrics, this clothing shop is a real find, with lots of beachwear in tropical flower and fish designs.

Carole Holding (☎ 297-1833; King's Sq) This namesake shop features the Bermuda-themed watercolors of Carole Holding on everything from bone china mugs to T-shirts and frameable prints. The shop also sells other souvenirs such as jams, trinkets and Bermuda-made handicrafts.

Davison's of Bermuda (☎ 297-0348; Water St) Head here if you want to pick up Bermuda design T-shirts, polo shirts, beach bags and other casual gear.

Antique Garden (☎ 297-0901; 2 King St) This shop, fittingly in a centuries-old building, sells high-end antiques, both from Bermuda and the owner's travels abroad.

Music Box (☎ 297-0484; 8 York St; ☺ closed Mon) CDs and cassettes by Bermudian musicians are for sale here. Choose from steel bands, reggae groups, the Bermuda Regiment Band, and even tree frogs!

Crisson (☎ 297-0107; cnr Water & King's Sq) This jewelry shop carries imported watches, jewelry and gemstones as well as Bermuda-themed pendants and bracelets with sea turtles, dolphins and similar designs.

Gosling's (☎ 298-7339; cnr York & Queen Sts) If you're looking for wine and spirits, this liquor store carries a good variety, including its namesake Gosling's Black Seal Rum.

Getting There & Around TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

It's a mere 10-minute ride from the airport to the Town of St George. The taxi fare is about \$12. Bus Nos 1, 2, 10 and 11 stop in front of the airport terminal on the way to St George (\$3), but the bus is only practical if you're traveling very light, as bus rules require that your luggage fits on your lap.

BICYCLE

Bicycles (p154) can be rented from **Eve's Cycles** (☎ 236-0839; 1 Water St).

BOAT

The public ferry (p154) runs a high-speed catamaran service from St George to the Royal Naval Dockyard (\$4) and the City of Hamilton (\$8) three times a day. The service operates only from mid-April to mid-November. It leaves Hamilton at 9:30am, noon and 2pm, arriving at the Dockyard after 20 minutes and departing 10 minutes later for the one-hour trip to St George. The boat then leaves St George at 11:15am, 1:30pm and 3:45pm, makes the one-hour trip to the Dockyard, and departs from the Dockyard at 12:30pm, 2:30pm and 4:55pm for the quick trip back to Hamilton. It's a great option for cruise ship passengers, providing a quick and convenient way to get between the three main tourist destinations in a fraction of the time it would take by bus.

BUS

No two places have better public bus service (p155) between them than St George and the City of Hamilton, a boon for visitors, since these are the two main sightseeing,

dining and shopping destinations. Buses terminate on (and depart from) York St.

Bus Nos 1, 3, 10 and 11 connect St George with the City of Hamilton, a ride that takes about an hour. Service is frequent during the day, with at least one of these buses operating every 15 minutes from 6:45am to 7pm; bus No 11 provides evening service once every hour until 11:45pm (10:45pm on Sunday). Bus No 6 connects St George with St David's (p82).

MINIBUS

The **St George's Mini-Bus Service** (☎ 297-8199 bus, 297-8492 office) operates around St George's Parish somewhat like a taxi service, with routes and drop-off points determined by where the passengers need to go. Hours of operation are 7:30am to midnight Monday to Friday and 9am to midnight Saturday and Sunday. The cost is \$3 around the Town of St George and up to \$5 to more distant places in the parish.

The buses, which are blue with a yellow minibus sign on top, pull into King's Square every 20 to 30 minutes or so. You can also call to arrange to be picked up anywhere in the greater St George area. As might be expected, the minibuses are busiest on cruise ship days.

MOTOR SCOOTER

Scooter rentals (p157) are available at **Eve's Cycles** (☎ 236-0839; 1 Water St) and at **Oleander Cycles** (☎ 297-0478; 26 York St). Rates, including mandatory charges, range from about \$70 for a one-day rental to \$140 for a three-day rental.

INVASION ANXIETY

In colonial times, no place in Bermuda held greater strategic importance than the Narrows, a slender reef channel that snakes for a mile along the northeast coast of St George's Island. It provided the only navigable shipping lane into the Town of St George. Consequently, this stretch of coastline was heavily fortified by British colonists to fend off potential invaders.

The handful of forts that still line the coast opposite the Narrows today offer an interesting glimpse of the invasion anxiety that gripped islanders for more than three centuries. Despite the energy exerted on their defenses, Bermuda has never been the object of a foreign attack.

In actuality, only once in its entire history has Bermuda even had the opportunity to fire its guns in anger, and that was way back in 1614, when two small Spanish ships surveying the new British colony decided to launch a skiff near the entrance of Castle Harbour. The skiff drew immediate fire and the Spaniards beat a quick retreat, marking the first and last of Bermuda's military 'skirmishes.' The incident did, however, serve to prompt the construction of some 50 forts throughout Bermuda in the years that followed.

TAXI

You can find a ride in a taxi (p157) at King's Square.

AROUND ST GEORGE'S ISLAND

There are several worthy sights to explore and attractive beaches to enjoy around St George's Island.

Sights & Activities

FORT ST CATHERINE

At the northeastern tip of St George's Island, the landmark Fort St Catherine has all the expected trappings – a drawbridge, a moat, ramparts, a maze of tunnels and five powerful 18-ton muzzleloader guns. The whole shebang has been made into a **museum** (☎ 297-1920; 15 Coot Pond Rd; adult/child \$5/2; ☎ 10am-4pm).

From the ramparts you're overlooking the beach where Sir George Somers and his shipwrecked crew scurried ashore in 1609. Bermuda's first governor, a carpenter by the name of Richard Moore, constructed a primitive timber fortification here a few years later. The fort has since been rebuilt several times, with most of the current concrete structure dating to 1865.

The fort's old powder magazine now contains a collection of period weapons, the artillery storeroom has dioramas depicting colonial scenes and other rooms have displays ranging from an audiovisual presentation on Bermuda's abundant forts to replicas of Britain's crown jewels.

Fort St Catherine is about a mile north of the Town of St George. To get there, turn right on Sapper Lane, north of the Unfinished Church, and continue on Victoria Rd.

OTHER FORTIFICATIONS

Two other monuments to the military madness of the day can be found about two miles southeast of Fort St Catherine, along the waterfront Barry Rd. **Alexandra Battery** (admission free; ☎ sunrise-sunset), which was built in the 1870s and extensively remodeled in the early 1900s, has a cannon with a unique cast-iron faceplate that was intended to protect the gunner from return fire (though of course there never was any!). The battery overlooks the site where the marooned English colonists constructed and launched the *Deliverance* in 1610.

Gates Fort Park (admission free; ☎ sunrise-sunset), at the point where Barry Rd changes to Cut Rd, holds a small battery with a couple of cannons and a lookout tower that offers a bird's-eye view of Town Cut, the strategic channel into St George's Harbour.

And as if that weren't enough, the grounds of the former Club Med, a closed hotel on the hillside southwest of Fort St Catherine, encompass the remains of two more forts: **Fort Victoria** and **Fort Albert**, both dating to the 19th century. The four guns at Fort Albert were of the same class as those displayed at Fort St Catherine, and the guns at Fort Victoria weighed in at 23 tons and shot massive 540lb shells. Neither of these forts can be visited, as the grounds remain closed to the public.

BEACHES

If you're up for a swim, there are a couple of beaches on the northern tip of the parish that are within walking distance of the Town of St George.

With the safest swimming on this end of Bermuda, **Tobacco Bay** (cnr Government Hill & Coot Hill Rds) is a little jewel of a beach with clear aqua-blue waters. It doesn't extend endlessly like Bermuda's south-side beaches, but there's certainly enough sand to make the kids happy. The bay's sheltered waters have intriguing pinnacle-like limestone rock formations that add an interesting element above the waterline and attract lots of tropical fish beneath the surface. If you're ready for some underwater sightseeing, this is a fun place to snorkel and you can rent gear at the beachside **pavilion** (☎ 297-2756; snorkel gear per day \$20; ☎ 9am-7pm summer only).

Tobacco Bay, incidentally, played a part in the American Revolution, when gunpowder

stolen from St George's magazine was loaded here onto small boats that scurried it across the reef to a waiting American ship, which in turn delivered the desperately-needed gunpowder to Washington's armies.

If you want to try something else, **Achilles Bay**, at the western side of Fort St Catherine, has a pleasant cove with a tiny public beach that's also good for swimming and snorkeling. The cove is backed by Blackbeard's Hideout, a bar and restaurant (p82).

St Catherine's Beach, at the south side of Fort St Catherine, is a longer and broader beach but with less-protected waters. Best for sunbathing, St Catherine's was once the private beach of the now-defunct Club Med.

RAILWAY TRAIL & FERRY POINT PARK

The easternmost section of the **Railway Trail** (p34), a 2.75-mile-long stretch, begins west of the Town of St George, off Wellington Lane, and follows the northern coastline to the desolate western tip of St George's Island at **Ferry Point Park**. Near the midway point, the trail connects back to the main vehicle road for about half a mile to loop around oil storage facilities that are off-limits to the public.

Just before Ferry Point, at the south side of picturesque **Whalebone Bay**, you'll find the foundations of a 19th-century gunpowder magazine and the **Martello tower**, a circular stone gun tower with a good 360-degree view. At Ferry Point itself there are two other historic remains – those of an early 17th-century **fort** and concrete footings that stand as the sole remnants of a **trellis** that once provided a rail link to Coney Island.

Nearby **Ferry Island**, which can be reached via a causeway, has more 19th-century fortification ruins that can be explored. Ferry Island, incidentally, takes its name from its former duty as the terminal for the ferry link that once provided the only connection between St George's Island and the rest of Bermuda.

When you're ready to leave, you can backtrack along the Railway Trail or simply return via Ferry Rd.

BERMUDA BIOLOGICAL STATION FOR RESEARCH

Commonly referred to in Bermuda simply as the **BBSR** (☎ 297-1880; www.bbsr.edu; Ferry Rd; ☎ tours 10am Wed), this very prestigious

research center was founded in 1903 as a joint venture of Harvard University, New York University and the Bermuda Natural History Society. Today the center provides facilities for resident staff, visiting scientists and university students. BBSR conducts research on the marine sciences, ranging from coral reef ecology to biological oceanography. Some of its work is in forefront environmental fields – the global geoscience program, for example, studies the effects that oceans have on climate in order to better understand global climate changes.

If you'd like to take a closer look, drop by on Wednesday for the free tour of the research station. The tours, which are led by BBSR docents, generally last about an hour and include a visit to the laboratories and research vessels.

BBSR is west of the Swing Bridge that connects St George's and St David's islands and can be reached by taking Biological Station Lane south from Ferry Rd.

Eating

Blackbeard's Hideout (☎ 297-1400; 6 Rose Hill; lunch \$9-12, dinner \$15-25; ☺ closed Mon) Best thing about this place is its great location overlooking Achilles Bay. There's a bustling indoor bar that's usually packed with regulars and an outdoor patio where you can dine alfresco and enjoy the view. Lunch offers up the usual fare of sandwiches (order the fish) and burgers. At dinner they add on steak and seafood dishes.

Tobacco Bay Beach Pavilion (☎ 297-2756; items \$3-6; ☺ 9am-7pm summer only) This simple counter at Tobacco Bay sells burgers, hot dogs and ice cream.

Getting There & Around

The public bus doesn't go east or north of the Town of St George, but the St George's Mini-Bus Service (p80) runs to this area on demand. The cost is \$3 to Tobacco Bay or Fort St Catherine and \$4 to the Bermuda Biological Station or Ferry Point.

ST DAVID'S ISLAND

So often overlooked, St David's Island offers a glimpse of Bermuda at its least touristed. The village of St David's, tucked into the east of the island, maintains a more timeless, unchanged character than other Ber-

مودian communities. Its pastel buildings are not fancy but they are picturesque in the late afternoon light. The village simply abounds with flowering hibiscus and is a particularly fun place to kick around on a motor scooter.

Until 1934, when the first bridge was built between St David's Island and St George's Island, St David's could only be reached by boat. For the most part, it was an isolation that was cherished by its inhabitants, a substantial number of whom are of Mahican ancestry – the descendants of native North Americans taken from the colonies during British Indian raids in the early 17th century.

In 1941 most of St David's Island was turned over to the US military for the development of a naval air station, and the residents, reluctant to leave St David's, were concentrated at the eastern end of the island.

In 1995 the US military finally left and returned the base lands to the Bermudian government. Large tracts of the former base still serve as Bermuda's airport, and the rest of the land is gradually being converted to civilian use. Some of the former base buildings are gaining a second life as new startup businesses and the old military homes are being renovated into affordable housing for first-time homeowners.

Information

The **St David's Post Office** (☎ 297-0847; 103 St David's Rd) closes over lunchtime from 11:30am to 1pm.

Sights & Activities

Once reserved for military personnel, **Clearwater Beach**, just south of the airport runway, is now a public swimming spot that's popular with island families both for its beach and for its fun children's playground. An adjacent area opposite the beach has been set aside for conservation as the **Cooper's Island Nature Reserve**, its rocky shoreline a favorite with island fishers.

GUNNER POINT

A good way to start an exploration of St David's Island is to drive to the end of the main road to **Gunner Point**, which offers a view of the nearshore islands that separate St David's from St George's.

The westernmost one, **Smith's Island**, is the biggest island in St George's Harbour. The eastern part of Smith's Island, as well as all of the island of **Paget**, which is north of Gunner Point, are government owned and set aside for natural preservation. In the 18th century, Smith's Island was used by whalers for boiling blubber, and Paget Island is best known as the site of the ironclad **Fort Cunningham**, one of the most costly forts ever erected in Bermuda. Unfortunately, the islands aren't readily accessible to visitors who don't have their own boats.

ST DAVID'S BATTERY

A visit to **St David's Battery** (Battery Rd; admission free; ☺ sunrise-sunset), perched on the edge of Bermuda's highest sea cliffs, will reward you with fine coastal views. This abandoned

coastal defense station also boasts the Bermuda's most formidable guns, their rusting barrels sitting like silent sentinels above the vast Atlantic. The two largest guns date to the early 1900s, reach 37ft in length and had a shooting range of more than 7 miles.

The cliff face below contains a number of caves; you can glimpse them from the battery but because of the steep drop here they are not accessible. No matter which way you look there are memorable water views, but for the loveliest, walk a few minutes north past the last gun to look down on scenic **Red Hole Bay**. The south side of Red Hole Bay – like St David's Battery – is encompassed within a 25-acre tract known as **Great Head Park**.

The quickest way to get to St David's Battery is to take Battery Rd up past the cricket

SEEING THE LIGHT

On an island that was 'accidentally' discovered by shipwrecked castaways, it comes as no surprise that marine safety has long been a paramount concern. Indeed, shortly after the English established the first settlement in Bermuda in the early 17th century, a handful of simple light beacons were set on prominent hills to help guide approaching ships through Bermuda's tricky reefs.

By the 18th century, increased sea traffic had brought a sharp rise in the frequency of shipwrecks off Bermuda. Alarmed by the situation, the British Navy erected the first lighthouse at the aptly named Wreck Hill, on the westernmost tip of Sandys Parish. An elementary structure that burned tar as its light source, the Wreck Hill Lighthouse overlooked Western Ledge Flats, a site so notorious for claiming ships that mariners nicknamed it 'the graveyard.'

The light's strength proved insufficient, however, and in December 1838 the French frigate *L'Herminie*, a 300ft vessel with 60 cannons and a crew of nearly 500 men, went down on the reef just 4 miles west of Wreck Hill. In all, some 39 shipwrecks occurred during that decade off the west side of Bermuda. In 1840 the British government responded by appropriating funds to erect Bermuda's first modern lighthouse.

Situated in Southampton Parish atop 245ft Gibbs Hill, the new lighthouse began operation in May 1846. The tower, constructed of cast iron, extended a lofty 117ft from the base to the light. Fired by sperm whale oil that burned from four concentric wicks, the revolving light had the capacity to reach not only the treacherous western shoals, but substantial sections of the northern and southern shoals as well.

In the years that followed, attention shifted to the northeastern side of the island, where Sir George Somers had wrecked the *Sea Venture* some 250 years earlier and which remained beyond the reach of the Gibbs Hill light. In the 1870s, following a rash of shipwrecks on the reefs north of St George's, Bermuda's second lighthouse, St David's Lighthouse, was built atop a hill at the eastern side of that parish.

This second light filled in the former blind spot. Furthermore, when viewed together, the two lights cast from opposite ends of Bermuda allowed captains to gauge their ship's exact position. In the decades that followed, the frequency of shipwrecks off Bermuda dropped significantly – with many of the more notorious ones occurring in times of mechanical failures at the lighthouses.

Both of Bermuda's 19th-century lighthouses stand largely unchanged, except for the modernization of their light mechanisms. Instead of burning whale oil, they now operate on 1000-watt electric bulbs, which cast beams 40 miles out to sea. Bermuda's lighthouses also serve as landmarks for airplane pilots, who can spot the lights from more than 100 miles away.

grounds from Great Bay Rd. However, if you're on foot, you can also get to the battery by taking the footpath that begins at the signposted section of Great Head Park on Great Bay Rd. The path, shaded by Bermuda olivewood trees and fiddlewood, begins at the back of the parking area. Continue about 200yd until you reach a narrow dirt road, onto which you bear right; when the track splits, bear left. En route you'll get glimpses of St David's Lighthouse, pass more military ruins and catch a few coastal views.

ST DAVID'S LIGHTHOUSE

Perched atop a hill at the southeastern side of St David's, this vintage 1879 red-striped lighthouse (☎ 297-4481; Lighthouse Hill Rd; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) offers a panoramic 360-degree view. To climb the stairs to the top of the 55ft lighthouse, just ask for the key at the adjacent café. Even if it's outside opening hours it's well worth scooting up here, as most of the view can be readily appreciated from the 485ft lighthouse hill.

To get to the lighthouse, take Lighthouse Hill Rd south from Great Bay Rd.

CARTER HOUSE

One of the nation's oldest homes, **Carter House** (☎ 293-5960; Southside Rd; admission by donation; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Thu & Sat) was built in the 1640s by descendants of Christopher Carter, a passenger on the shipwrecked *Sea Venture*. Of hardy stock, one descendant who lived in the house died in 1791 at age 114! Because Carter House was on US military base land, it was closed to the public for many years. Now the St David's Island Historical Society has set up a small museum inside, with displays on St David's culture as well as its history. Perhaps most interesting is the classic house itself, which has the original roof, cedar beams, open fireplace and a type of exterior stair walls known as 'welcoming arms.'

Eating

Black Horse Tavern (☎ 297-1991; St David's Rd; lunch \$10-18, dinner \$15-30; ☎ 11am-10pm Tue-Sun; ☎ ☎) Simply put, this local restaurant serves up the best fish on the island. Not only is the seafood unbeatable but the waterside view of Great Bay, complete with the fishing boats that bring in the catch, is the perfect match. In spite of being out of the way in

quiet St David's, don't expect the place to be undiscovered. The fish chowder is so famous that it's been written up in *Bon Appétit* magazine and the fresh wahoo is absolutely flawless. If they're out of wahoo, order the rockfish. Wherever you are in Bermuda, this place is well worth the drive – though avoid dinner on weekends as they often have to turn people away.

St David's Lighthouse Cafe (☎ 297-4481; Lighthouse Hill Rd; items \$2-5; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) This friendly little take-out stand adjacent to St David's Lighthouse serves up ice cream, drinks and sandwiches accompanied, of course, by a panoramic view.

Getting There & Around

Bus No 6 connects St George with St David's (\$3, 25 minutes, hourly) from 6:15am to 6:15pm on weekdays; on weekends the service starts an hour or two later but is otherwise the same. In addition to the village, the bus goes to St David's Lighthouse, St David's Battery and Gunner Point. For more information on public buses, including passes, see p155.

St George's Mini-Bus Service (p80) runs an on-demand service between St David's and St George for \$5.

TUCKER'S TOWN

Tucker's Town, at the southwestern side of Castle Harbour, is one of the most exclusive corners of Bermuda. Much of it is occupied by the members-only Mid Ocean Club, which boasts Bermuda's top-rated golf course. Tucker's Point Club, the site of the former Marriott hotel, is being developed with new multimillion-dollar homes and a posh hotel and spa.

Tucker's Town Rd, which runs along the narrow peninsula east of the Mid Ocean Club, is the crème de la crème, bordered by a few dozen homes belonging to wealthy foreigners, including the American billionaire Ross Perot and the Italian premier Silvio Berlusconi.

From the end of Tucker's Town Rd, you can look across a narrow strait to **Castle Island**, a nature preserve that contains the stone remains of a British fort, one of the earliest fortifications erected in the Western Hemisphere.

Nonsuch Island, to the east, is a bird sanctuary where great efforts are being made to

reintroduce the Bermuda petrel, or cahow, one of the most endangered birds in the world. The cahow's exotic predators have been eliminated and efforts are ongoing to restore the island's precontact ecosystem. Not surprisingly, human access to the island is restricted, but the **Bermuda Biological Station** (p81) and the **Bermuda Audubon Society** (☎ 292-1920) occasionally bring groups over; call for information.

Activities

Tucker's Point Golf Club (☎ 298-6900; Tucker's Town; greens fee \$185; ☎ sunrise-sunset), a par-71, 6440yd championship course, offers dramatic ocean views and interesting fairways. It's a private club, but reservations are accepted from nonmembers within 48 hours of tee time on a space-available basis.

You'll need an introduction by a member to play at the even more exclusive **Mid Ocean Club** (☎ 293-0330; Tucker's Town; with/without a member \$70/200; ☎ sunrise-sunset), a par-71, 6512yd course. Inquire at your hotel if you're interested in getting on these greens.

Getting There & Away

Bus No 1 connects Tucker's Town with both the City of Hamilton (\$4.50, 32 minutes) and Bailey's Bay (\$3, 15 minutes). The bus goes to the Mid Ocean Club, where it turns around, but goes no further east. The bus operates every 30 minutes from 6:45am to 6:15pm weekdays and 7:45am to 5:45pm Saturday. On Sunday the service is only once an hour from 11am to 5pm. For more information on public buses, including passes, see p155.

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'