

# Treasure island

*OK! enjoys a gem of a honeymoon in the romantic Cayman Islands...*

**W**ith Valentine's Day just around the corner, why not surprise your loved one with a holiday to the dreamy Cayman Islands. It's the perfect place to propose, get married or even honeymoon, as *OK!* favourites Steven and Alex Gerrard did...

## Why should I visit?

Balmy sunshine, white sandy beaches and pristine aquamarine waters – it's no wonder this picturesque Caribbean archipelago is a popular wedding location. And there are endless choices of where to get hitched. You can sign up for an intimate barefoot ceremony on the beach, say 'I do' on board a catamaran or even get wed underwater!

Pretty as a postcard, the Cayman Islands comprise three islands, from the larger and more touristy Grand Cayman, with its vibrant Seven Mile Beach hotel, restaurant and shopping strip, to its

smaller sister islands of Little Cayman and the rugged Cayman Brac, which offer some of the world's best diving with 365 sites.

Located 100 miles south of Cuba and 180 miles north-west of Jamaica, the Caymans are a British Overseas Territory, although Grand Cayman, just 28 miles by seven miles with 35,000 inhabitants, has a distinctly more American feel. The quieter island of Little Cayman, a short propeller plane hop away, is tiny, with 170 locals on less than ten square miles of land. It's a popular spot for eco-lovers, where you'll see indigenous red-footed boobies, striking birds with bright blue peaks and red feet, as well as iguanas and the endangered hawksbill turtle.

## When should I go?

As with all Caribbean islands, winter is the busiest and most expensive time. Avoid September, it's hurricane season. Alicia Keys and Michael Bolton have both performed at the annual Jazz Festival in December.

## Where should I stay?

Give your credit card a workout at the Ritz-Carlton ([www.ritzcarlton.com/GrandCayman](http://www.ritzcarlton.com/GrandCayman)), a luxury sand-coloured resort located on Seven Mile Beach and spread over 144 ocean-front acres on Grand Cayman. Often referred to as the island's plushiest resort, the 365-room hotel boasts acres of marble and chandeliers. *OK!* couldn't fault the service and loved the little touches such as the bottle of champagne wishing us a happy honeymoon. The hotel offers first-rate facilities, including an

excellent tennis centre, a nine-hole golf course, lavish spa and posh boutiques – there's even a Tiffany & Co should you wish to purchase a ring! The beachside watersport centre offers lots of water toys, but *OK!* favourite position was lying on one of the floating sunbeds admiring the action!

In total contrast, the Southern Cross Club ([www.southernclub.com](http://www.southernclub.com)) on Little Cayman is perfect if you want to experience a more laid-back island lifestyle. Guests stay in lovely bungalows on the palm-fringed beach. It's a tiny family run resort, with 14 rooms housed in brightly coloured beach chalets. Rooms are decorated in Caribbean style with wicker furniture and floral prints and have an alfresco shower. There's an honesty bar and service comes with a lovely Caribbean smile.

## What stars will I see?

A firm celebrity favourite, the Cayman Islands have attracted A-list actors such as John Travolta, Orlando Bloom and Chloe Sevigny. Tom Cruise and his then wife Nicole Kidman lived on the island during the filming of *The Firm*, while *OK!* favourites Steven and Alex Gerrard honeymooned here in 2006.



**Below: If you're looking for opulence, you'll find it at the Ritz-Carlton. Right: Alex Gerrard honeymooned in the Cayman Islands too**





**Main:** Grand Cayman's glorious Seven Mile Beach was our first port of call. We also went diving at the USS Kittiwake (left), made some stingray pals (below inset) and visited the harbour capital George Town (facing page inset)



kittiwakecayaman.com), a decommissioned five-storey American naval vessel. If you don't want to get wet, take a helicopter tour of the island – you can even see stingrays and turtles for the air!

### Where can I eat?

There are five restaurants at the Ritz-Carlton, ranging from top gourmet restaurant Blue to the 7 steak house and the family favourite Periwinkle grill. Although the highlight of OK!'s stay was our private candlelit dinner on the beach.

Venture from the hotel and have lunch at the laid-back Tikki Beach. Sit on the deck by the sea for a K-Brew beer, shrimp cocktail with Tikki sauce and an amazing chocolate brownie! At its posh sister restaurant, Osetra, on the island's west coast, OK! loved the swanky all-white décor worthy of any Miami lounge. Our tasting menu featured delights such as wild mushroom risotto, pan-seared mahi mahi and flourless chocolate cake with cilantro mint coulis.

For lunch, don't miss a trip to Rum Point, a laid-back beach shack set by a beautiful shallow cove. It was the perfect place to munch deep-fried calamari and a cheeseburger with your toes in the sand!

On Little Cayman, stop off for pasta at the Hungry Iguana. Or for something more sophisticated, head to Pirates Point for fantastic Wahoo steak and a glorious banana split with homemade ice cream.



trickling beneath the floor of translucent glass. With 17 treatment rooms and three hydrotherapy rooms, OK! had a massage in a wet room where our body was cleansed by overhead sprinklers. OK! also loved the warm neck wrap and the signature facial.

### What must I see?

On Grand Cayman, OK!'s favourite excursion was a day out on one of Captain Marvin's (www.captainmarvins.com) boat and island tours. We headed out to the Stingray City sandbar to check out the giant stingrays and went snorkelling at Coral Gardens. Back

on dry land, our trip also took in a visit to the Turtle Farm, where you can even swim with them.

If you prefer historic sights, visit the charming capital George Town and wander around the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park.

On Little Cayman, OK! kayaked over to the tiny islet of Owen Island for a real Robinson

Crusoe feel. Another must is a trip to the island's most dreamy pink-tinged beach, Point Of Sand. The coral reef-fringed Little Cayman is a mecca for scuba divers and snorkellers. Sign up with the Discover Diving course at the Southern Cross Club if you want lessons.

A brand new dive site was unveiled last month just off Seven Mile Beach on Grand Cayman, with the sinking of the *USS Kittiwake* (www.

### How can I get there?

British Airways (0844 493 0758; www.ba.com/grandcayman) offer a range of packages to the Cayman Islands. A seven-night package, including return flights from Heathrow, staying at the four-star Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort costs from £1,497pp. A similar seven-night package staying at the five-star Ritz Carlton, Grand Cayman costs from £2,796pp. Both based on a March departure.

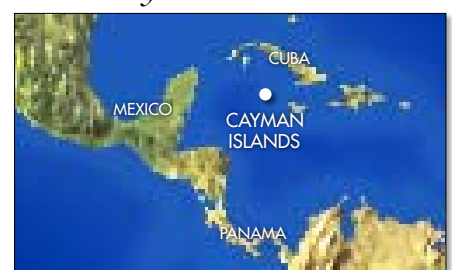
Rent a car from Coconut Car Rentals. For more information, visit [www.coconutcarrentals.com](http://www.coconutcarrentals.com). **OK!**

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### Where can I spa?

One of the Ritz-Carlton's major draws is its zen-cool pampering haven Silver Rain, a La Prairie Spa covering 20,000sqft with water as its main theme. The reception is an ode to running water, from the walls of faceted glass and quartzite to the river

### Where are the Cayman Islands?



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