



(Photo by Barbara Currie)

Pious Puffin Pirate Ship Figures In The Fun

Cayman Pirates Week Just One Big Party

By DEAN DUBOIS
Special Writer

Looking for that new experience in a fall vacation?

One that's a big party, a week of fun? Something like a Mardi Gras, Carnival, Fiesta, Goombay Summer and Jamaican Boonoonoonoos all wrapped up in one?

Well, plan now to get on down to the Cayman Islands for Pirates Week, November 4-11.

Pirates Week was a natural, as they say, when the good folks of these beautiful British Crown Colony islands group called the Caymans decided to stage their own celebration.

Take the history of the Cayman Islands which has been riddled with piracy in the centuries past, mix it with a great desire to bring attention to the lovely, sun-kissed islands, add a sprinkling of that delightful Caymanian humor, and Viola! Pirates Week — seven days of fun and excitement, laced with time for fishing, swimming, scuba diving and snorkeling, music and dancing (calypso, limbo), beach parties galore, underwater treasure hunts, photography and topped off with a big Pirates Ball.

It all begins with arrival at Owen Roberts International Airport, Grand Cayman, aboard a Southern Airways jet, less than an hour's flight from Miami.

Everyone arriving is welcomed with rum punch and a vellum certificate conferring the title of "Honorary Admiral of the Cayman Islands Turtle Fleet." While you're clearing customs and enjoying the complimentary rum, you're entertained by musicians. By the way, all you need to enter the Caymans is proof of U.S. citizenship, like a voters registration or birth certificate.

There are scads of activities daily throughout the islands, in addition to those mentioned. The resort inns have special dances, treasure hunts (some real Spanish gold can be found!), island tours, barbeques, hot dog and pig roasts on the beach, and steel drum and bamboo dances.

A reproduction of a typical pirate ship, the "Pious Puffin", will enter Georgetown harbor the first day of the festival, accompanied by a parade of smaller craft, to "capture"

the islands. When the Pirates Week flag is hoisted, it signifies not only the "take over" but "Let the fun begin!"

The "golden age" of pirates in the Caribbean was in the last half of the 17th century and first half of the 18th century.. It was during this period that the pirates used the Caymans as a safe harbor for hiding, protecting their loot and taking on provisions. The islands, being low-lying, were difficult to see from any distance.

Among the priates who sashayed in and out at this period were Sir Henry Morgan, the notorious Edward Teach (you remember "Blackbeard," don't you?), John Fenn, George Lowther and Neal Walker.

The Cayman Islands lie 480 miles due south of Miami — three small islands hidden out of the mainstream, down on the warm, quiet edge of the Caribbean. For more information, write Dept. of Tourism, P.O. Box 67, Grand Cayman, B.W.I.

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