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# The Pandemic Has Made Island Life Even More Appealing

Plentiful air travel options, the rise of remote work and increased on-site amenities have transformed the island experience.



While there seems to be some light at the end of the Covid tunnel, most of us could still use a break. If you could escape and *really* get away, where would you go?

For a lucky — and generally wealthy — few, the answer is an island, where life moves more slowly, local community thrives, and natural beauty — in particular, sparkling ocean — surrounds you.

It's the elusive dream of living in a resort in real life. Island developments combine varied living options (from vernacular-inspired bungalows to sleek contemporary villas) with world class golf (from seaside links to championship courses), along with myriad amenities (from beach bars to spas), allowing residents to get away, but not feel isolated or bored.

While many associate island living with a sense of disconnection, plentiful air travel options, the rise of remote work and an increased demand for on-site amenities have changed that. And the pandemic has only accelerated this trend.

What were once occasional getaways are in many cases morphing into part- or full-time homes, aided by upgraded technologies and reconfigured living and working spaces.

“Two years ago, we had three full-time families living here,” said Chuck Cary, vice president of sales and marketing at [Kohanaiki](#), a private community on Hawaii's Big Island. “By the end of this year I bet we'll have 30.”

The ability to spend more time on island has increased the appeal of this type of living. Each development below, for instance, is building more homes, and some are adding new golf courses as well.



THE BAHAMAS

## The Abaco Club on Winding Bay

Perched on a ridge on Great Abaco Island, overlooking a crescent-shaped bay and white sand beaches, the 500-acre Abaco Club offers a range of homes, from studio cabanas and three-bedroom cottages to sprawling custom estates.

Prices range from \$700,000 to \$12.5 million, according to Matt Deitch, managing principal for Southworth Development, Abaco's developer. Inspired by traditional Bahamian architecture — with pitched metal roofs and colorful clapboard siding — all have expansive decks and large outdoor spaces.

There are more than 90 properties on the site, with an entire new community of 36 units, called the Cays, on the way. Virtually every city in Florida offers direct flights to the island's Leonard M. Thompson International Airport.

The Abaco Club, designed by Donald Steel and Tom Mackenzie, is generally considered the top golf course in the Caribbean, hosting the Korn Ferry Tour's Bahamas Great Abaco Classic every January. Known as a "tropical links," it merges Scottish challenges — pot bunkers, seaside winds (especially on the back nine, which hugs the coast) and sloping greens — with idyllic weather and landscape.

Tim McGuire, a Toronto resident, has been staying here with his wife, Sheila, for about four weeks a year since they bought their home in 2012. They initially won a trip in a charity auction, and were immediately hooked.

"Island life is more relaxed than anywhere else," he said. There's a real "community feeling," he noted, and you can walk or take a golf cart to everything. His grown children also spend time here, and much of the year the McGuires are able to rent the house to visitors via the club's rental program.

Their bright blue pastel cottage, which Mr. McGuire describes as a "Bahamian beach house," opens to a large deck overlooking Abaco Bay on the north side of the resort. Their second floor has another large deck, especially good for viewing sunsets.

The McGuires enjoy the area's outdoor activities: They golf every day they can. Mr. McGuire runs in the morning while Ms. McGuire searches for exotic wildlife like the Abaco Parrot, and they spend time fishing or on kayaks chasing sea turtles.



“The little ones will be a little nervous and swim away,” Mr. McGuire said of the turtles, “and the big ones will stare at you and say, ‘Hey, I haven’t seen you for a couple of days.’”

“I put it down as one of the best decisions of our lives to come down here,” said Mr. McGuire, who plans to spend more time at Abaco once he retires from his job as chief executive of Mobile Klinik, a Canadian smartphone and tablet repair and sales company.

Even the region’s severe storms haven’t changed his mind. Hurricane Dorian in 2019 slightly marred their cottage’s roof and caused water damage. But thanks to the club’s protected location and the homes’ robust construction (most have raised concrete foundations, wind-resistant windows and galvanized steel roofs), there was little damage from what was a Category 5 hurricane.