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THE ART OF DOING NOTHING

An agenda-free beach vacation may be the most eye-opening trip you take this year.

by Jennifer Flowers

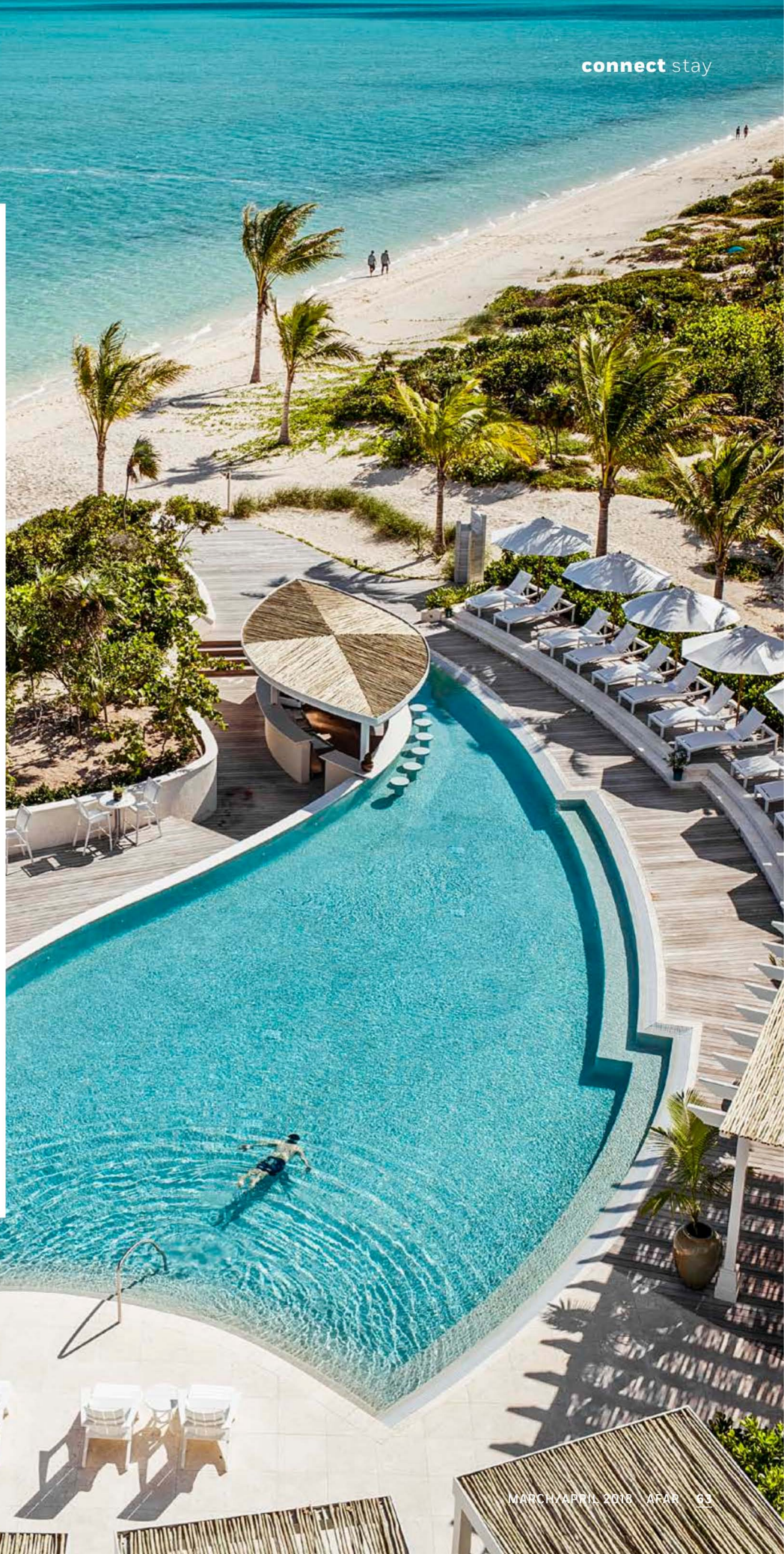
WE LIVE IN a world where we're encouraged to take transformative trips—vacations we fill with experiences that broaden our perspectives and take us outside our comfort zone.

But what if the biggest challenge is to do nothing?

On a recent trip to the Shore Club in Turks and Caicos (pictured), a new retreat set along secluded Long Bay Beach on the island of Providenciales, I was surprised to find out how hard it can be to take it easy.

To some, the beach getaway seems like a cop-out. I was in this camp until recently: A typical trip for me involves a dizzying list of restaurants and off-the-beaten-path hangouts. But this time, I was going to try to slow down.

My daily schedule went something like this: Wake up. Eat breakfast. Locate lounge chair on beach. Order frozen margarita. Enter water. Return to lounge chair; flip over. Migrate





to pool. Order jerk chicken. Watch sunset with another margarita. Order dinner. Fall asleep. Wake up, rinse, repeat.

It was surprisingly difficult to stay put beneath my beach umbrella, staring off into the mesmerizing blue horizon, when I thought of all the things I could be doing instead. Did I miss a photo-worthy sunrise by sleeping in? Should I see if there's a boat tour this afternoon? Is there a secret, locals-only conch shack I should check out?

My perspective shift was subtle. I started listening to my internal clock. (Feel warm? Jump in the ocean. Feel tired? Take a nap. Feel social? Talk to the strangers at the swim-up bar.) Free of distractions, I had no choice but to take in my surroundings more fully: the gradations of blue in the water, the sensation of soft white sand between my toes. Walks on the beach became intimate studies of the island as I looked down and focused on the microcosm of seashells and driftwood.

In those moments it occurred

to me that by doing nothing, I was actually doing something: I was wiping my mental slate clean, reminding myself that there was more to life than to-do lists. I was resetting my senses, and renewing my energy to meet the demands on my time back home.

If you're an antsy traveler, here's what I suggest: Book a trip to a sandy destination. Leave your phone in your room. Master balancing in a hammock. Float in the ocean on your back and marvel at your weightlessness. Contemplate the sand beneath you. And don't forget that experiences such as these can be just as transformative as packing things into your itinerary. Sometimes, the less you do, the better.

Doubles from \$700. theshoreclubtc.com

The rooms at **Chileno Bay Resort** in Cabo San Lucas feature walls of locally sourced stone and are furnished with teak-root tables from Guadalajara and rugs made in Mexico City.

RELAX, REFRESH, RECHARGE

Four Perfect Places to Do Nothing

1 Chileno Bay Resort Mexico

The beachfront Chileno Bay Resort may be among the most luxurious new retreats in Cabo San Lucas, but it exudes a down-to-earth vibe. Its **60 guest rooms and 32 villas feature outdoor showers and floor-to-ceiling windows** that showcase ocean views. The beachside bar sells tacos and artisanal tequilas. The resort also has one of the area's few swimmable beaches. *From \$675. chileno-bay.aubergeresorts.com*

2 Coral Caye Belize

Film director Francis Ford Coppola and his wife, Eleanor, own the low-key, thatch-roofed Turtle Inn, which recently debuted Coral Caye, a lodging on a private two-acre island. Sheltered by the Belize Barrier Reef, it lies a 25-minute boat ride from the main resort. **Two cottages with verandas and beach decor can accommodate up to 12 people**, and the central great house, managed by a dedicated staff, has daybeds and a full bar. *\$1,895 per night; two-night minimum. thefamilycoppola-hideaways.com*

3 Rosewood Bermuda

Rosewood Bermuda, formerly known as Rosewood Tucker's Point, is **set to reopen in April after an extensive renovation**. Look for local artwork on the walls of the 92 rooms and suites, and custom furnishings that offer a modern spin on Bermuda's colonial heritage. The Beach Club, on the island's largest pink-sand beach, will have new cabanas and a restaurant that serves freshly caught seafood. *From \$535. rosewoodhotels.com*

4 Amanoi Vietnam

The Amanoi, located in one of Vietnam's largest nature reserves, already had a 118,000-square-foot spa. Now you can have a spa to yourself. A stay at one of two new Spa Houses—the **Thuy Lien (Lotus) or the An Son (Peaceful Mountain)—includes daily massages** and access to private pools, steam rooms, and relaxation decks. Multiday programs focus on stress reduction, weight management, or mindfulness. *Spa Houses for up to four guests per house; from \$2,100. amanoi.com*