



GULF & MAIN

ARTS + CULTURE + BEAUTY + FASHION



Login

HOME ADVERTISING ABOUT US PHOTO GALLERY CONTACT US PAST ISSUES



DELECTABLE DELIGHTS OF THE OUT ISLANDS

“Rough it” in style at Lubbers’ Landing in the Bahamas

by Doug Thompson

Not long ago, “environmentally friendly” meant uncomfortable and undesirable. I used to think suffering for Mother Nature’s sake meant enduring cold showers and using ineffective natural soap. Meals consisted of whatever I could grill over a fire pit—provided I did not burn wood from protected trees.

Thankfully, there’s a middle ground for environmentally conscious travelers, where Mother Nature gets a break and there’s still a whole lot of pampering going on. At Lubbers’ Landing on Lubber’s Quarters Cay in the Abacos, accommodations are built on what was once a small and uninhabited tropical island (it measures one mile long by one-half mile wide), a member of what are deemed the Out Islands of the Bahamas.

Of course, over the last few thousand years, everyone from the Lucayan Indians who voyaged from the mainland in dugout canoes to pirates, British settlers, and lost and lonely castaways has probably spent the night on the tiny isle. Your Lubbers’ Landing nights, however, will be spent on a queen-size bed under a ceiling fan, inside a cottage built on stilts within a Bahamian forest. You have hot and cold running water; a fabulous shower with hand-laid glass tiles; a toilet and sink; and electricity for lamps, a refrigerator, an XM satellite radio, and even a small air conditioner.

The proprietors at Lubbers’ Landing, Amy and Austin Smith, reside in the main two-story lodge (with Wi-Fi available) near the water’s edge, where an organic breakfast is served each day and ice-cold drinks are enjoyed each evening. There’s a full kitchen and barbecue available to guests—optimum conditions for preparing, cooking, and enjoying the edible bounty you’ve pulled from the abundant Atlantic Ocean. Lubbers’ Landing is built on a thirteen-acre parcel right on the aqua blue water’s edge, with a private beach and a dock for tying up your twenty-foot center console Albury Brothers rental boat (a worthy option that can be packaged with your cottage fee).

Going Green

Gathering rainwater using cisterns is the only way to get freshwater on the outer islands of the Abacos. At Lubbers’ Landing, they collect all of their own freshwater off the huge sloped roof of the main lodge and funnel it into freshwater cistern tanks. The water is then pumped into each cottage, and there’s enough usage between rainstorms so it stays fresh.

Amy and Austin recycle everything. Bottles and cans are packed up and transported for processing. Electrical power comes from two sources: the main Bahamas power grid and solar panels on the roof of the main lodge.

“About 80 percent of our power comes from solar,” Austin explains. “Solar runs the lights, fans, water pumps, radios, refrigerators, and our

office. The only items not on solar are the air conditioners in the cottages and the coffeemakers.”

Lubbers' Landing also utilizes environmentally friendly materials and methods. The beds feature 100 percent natural latex mattresses and organic sheets and linens. Hemp products are used throughout, and the bathrooms are stocked with locally produced neem soaps and lotions.

Finding Food, Bahamas Style

Whether you choose to prepare your own meals or venture out to the quaint restaurants and pubs nearby, your food choices are exceptional. If you're preparing your own food, then you need to either bring it with you or gather it. During a trip I took with my wife, Ann, to Lubbers' Landing last year, we brought along staples like rice, bread, and flour, since they can be expensive to buy in the Bahamas. Then it was up to us to go fishing or gather Bahamian crawfish (lobsters) for our meals.

The fishing in the Bahamas ranges from very easy to very involved, depending on the species you're targeting. A light action rod you can pack in a suitcase, combined with small hooks and easily applied weights, is all you need to catch snapper, grouper, and other reef fish. Simply bait the hook with a bit of shrimp and cast out, even right off the Lubbers' Landing dock.

Fishing for popular saltwater gamefish such as marlin is a whole different ballgame and best left to a professional guide. Still, within just a few miles of Lubbers' Landing you can find excellent marlin, wahoo, and tuna sportfishing, and you can book a sportfishing charter out of Marsh Harbour, located about fourteen miles northwest of Lubber's Quarters Cay on Great Abaco Island.

Catching the local crawfish—in the United States known as spiny lobster (without claws)—is a hugely popular sport. You can catch the lobster by coaxing them out of their rocky hiding spots with a long rod known as a tickle stick. The idea is to get the lobster to back out of the hole by prodding him with the stick, and then you grab him and stuff him into a fish sack. It sounds simple, but it's definitely not easy. The lobster season runs from August 1 to April 30, and the minimum size is a lobster with a five-and-a-half-inch-long tail.

“Amy and I just went out with our guests, two newlyweds, to go spear fishing, and got one hogsnapper, three triggerfish, and a lobster,” Austin says. “We took them out to a spot we know of and the husband actually shot the best fish, the hogsnapper. But fish are everywhere.”

That's because sea life thrives in the Bahamian waters. During a quick snorkel session, I spotted two huge lobsters under a public dock on Elbow Cay near Lubber's Quarters Cay. I was tempted to wrestle one out and plop it right into a pot of boiling water, when a local pulling up in another boat scolded me, saying, “Don't you touch those lobsters; those are our pets!”

Life at Lubbers' Landing

“We really enjoy the interaction with our guests; we try to make it look like we don't work at all and are just out here having fun,” says Austin. “Now if people want their privacy, if we have a honeymoon couple that wants to be left alone, we respect that. We tell them what they want to know and send them on their way.”

Austin moved to the Bahamas with his parents at age fourteen—more than two decades ago—and his family ran a small furniture business. When his parents moved back to the United States in 2005, he stayed and with Amy has operated the rental properties they own on Lubber's Quarters Cay. “We started building the main lodge in 2005 and opened with the lodge and one cottage in February of 2007,” he says. “Over the next two years, we built two more cottages and the elevated walkways.”

Lubbers' Landing operates under the auspices of Wild Island Resorts, which also owns Sea Level Cottages, a cluster of larger accommodations for large groups. Lubbers' Landing caters to guests eighteen and older and primarily focuses on couples. “Couples are easier to talk to and lead around, so we can make sure they have fun,” says Austin.

Dining in the Bahamas

Where and how you eat is just like the fishing—either really simple or really involved. The simplest way is to eat at the only restaurant and bar on Lubber's Quarters. Cracker P's features a full-moon party every month and a great lunch and dinner menu.

Hope Town on Elbow Cay is within sight of Lubbers' Landing and a five-minute boat ride. It's home to three great restaurants/bars: Captain Jack's and the Harbour's Edge at the Hope Town Harbour and the beach-side restaurant at the Hope Town Harbour Lodge, which offers a breathtaking view of the open Atlantic. Also on Elbow Cay is White Sound, a natural harbor where dining facilities can be found at the Abaco Inn and Sea Spray Resort & Marina.

However, dining at Lubbers' Landing may be best way to satiate your hunger. Amy prepares outstanding breakfasts and there's always a fresh pot of good fair-trade organic coffee brewing.

“I serve as much organic as I can—organic oatmeal, organic cereal with choice of regular milk, soy milk, almond or rice milk,” says Amy of the daily breakfast, which is included with your room fee. “It depends on what is available, as we are remote compared with stateside resources. I include a locally made breakfast bread, such as banana bread, coconut banana, guava, and chocolate chip banana bread. Most are made with whole-wheat flour and healthy ingredients, although on occasion I put out glazed donuts for those kids at heart!”

The lodge's common kitchen, well stocked with pots and pans, an oven, cutting areas, a refrigerator, and icemaker, is open twenty-four hours a day. There's also a large grill and stove with multiple burners, so guests can cook anything they want.

Our meals consisted of lots of grilled lobster, fish, and vegetables, along with the rice and vegetables we brought along. One night we also had rib-eye steaks—those were brought over by some friends who came from Miami on a boat.

Enjoying your meals and evening drinks on the lodge's main patio is outstanding, as there is a bar area, huge comfy couches in a reading alcove, and a big deck with tables and chairs. You can easily serve a meal for sixteen people, but most likely your group will be small. With only three cottages, the maximum occupancy at Lubbers' Landing is six guests.

Venturing Out

Once settled at Lubbers' Landing, you'll have numerous options for exploration of the surrounding islands. There's a tremendous amount of protected boating area—meaning the sea conditions inside the lee of the islands are relatively flat and calm—compared to the outside waters that are essentially the open Atlantic Ocean.

A twenty-foot Albury Brothers center-console boat with a 150-horsepower engine is standard issue, and you can rent one through Lubbers' Landing. The only way to get to Lubbers' Landing is by boat, and the commercially run water ferries don't service Lubber's Quarters. The bottom line: to stay at Lubbers' Landing you need a boat, and it is well worth it.

A twenty-foot boat is big enough for four adults and has plenty of stowage space. It does take some boating experience to navigate the Abacos, and you'll need to heed these few simple rules. Go slow, especially around docks, rocks, and things you can hit. Pay attention to the charts and beware the breaks between the islands where sea conditions change. Pay close attention to the weather; winds can shift and cause roiling seas inside the lee of the islands, and storms can develop quickly. And stay inside the lee of the islands unless you are confident and the sea conditions are calm.

“Unless you just want to chill out and not do a thing, there's not enough to do on Lubber's all day long,” says Austin. “During the day,

everybody goes out on the water. Our favorite is to go to Pete's Pub in Little Harbour on the south end of Abaco Island. It's eleven miles away and it gets really nice and tropical as you boat that way. Along the way is a really nice sand bar for snorkeling and shelling, and then there are remote beaches where you will be the only person there.

"Then you go through Sandy Cay Marine Park, which is a marine protected area and has buoys for tying your boat off and snorkeling," he continues. "Pete's Pub is the only commercial establishment at that end of Abaco, and that's the beauty of it. You're at the end of the line."

Freelance writer Doug Thompson lives in Hollywood, Florida, and writes about boats, fishing, and the outdoors.

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE

SUBSCRIBE

RENEW

ADDRESS CHANGE

Copyright (c) 2010 TOTI Media, Inc.

[Terms of Use](#)

[Privacy Statement](#)

Web Design By: Sanibel Logic LLC