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## Salterra, South Caicos, Turks & Caicos Islands

by Jennifer Bain, images courtesy Marriott

At a dinner table with views of abandoned salt flats that glow pink with the setting sun, we settle in for a tasting menu that honours a bygone salt industry.

There are five bowls of salt to pair with our five courses. The chef has harvested the salt here on South Caicos and flavoured it with citrus, coconut-seaweed, turmeric, bone marrow-rosemary, and even local “bush tea” herbs.

“What you can do is you can just take a pinch of salt, sprinkle it and just give a finishing touch to your dish,” advises Gyeem Tshering, our server at Brine restaurant in Salterra resort. “The reason for putting all the salt and letting you do the finishing touches is because we want you to feel like home — because at home we are the ones who put the salt.”

It's the perfect ending to a salt-infused stay at this Marriott Luxury Collection Resort & Spa.

South Caicos is home to just 1,200 people, gorgeous flamingos and wild donkeys that are descended from animals that hauled salt here from the 1700s to 1960s.

“In the decades since the salt business became unprofitable, the beauty of the Turks and Caicos Islands have been recognized by travelers from around the world,” writes resort co-founder and managing director Michael Tibbetts in the foreword to *Salt: A World History*. “Salterra has been designed with a sense of place in mind — taking cues from nature, vestiges of colonialism, and the beauty of erosion and rejuvenation.”

Salterra opened March 8, 2025 after transforming an existing property. Spread over four buildings, it has 100 oceanfront or ocean-facing rooms including 52 one- and two-bedroom suites and two penthouse suites.

A butler shows me to my one-bedroom king suite and we keep in touch by WhatsApp. The spacious third-floor suite has views of the Atlantic Ocean, part of the 3,000-foot of pristine white sand beach, and some of the resort's four swimming pools.

I appreciate the filtered water dispenser, mini-fridge, walk-in shower, free-standing tub and Frette robes and slippers. There's a Nespresso machine but I request a kettle for tea.

I've come to South Caicos on a 25-minute InterCaribbean Airways flight from Providenciales (Provo), but most guests arrive on American Airlines flights from Miami. Experience Turks and Caicos hopes that adventurous travellers will consider multi-island vacations.

At the Spa at Salterra, Tisna Wati provides a salt scrub and a small conch shell in one of eight treatment rooms. I start with hibiscus tea and a cold towel and finish by the spa's pool with a tea made from fresh lemongrass, ginger and honey.

As for the fancy fitness centre, pickleball courts and kids club, I'll admit to only eye-balling them. But I can happily vouch for the beach cabanas and the impossibly clear, turquoise seas.

I also enjoy five of the six dining options. Brine offers evening tasting menus. I'm partial to the beachside Cobo Bar & Grill but also like the lobby bar Sisal and the Flamingo Café for espresso and desserts. I have breakfast and one British Caribbean dinner in Regatta but can't squeeze in Jack & Jenny's, a food truck named for the wild donkeys.

Just as the resort staffs its spa, it also handles excursions and activities in-house. You can dive among eagle rays, kayak to uninhabited islands, go whale-watching or try bone fishing with Adventures by Salterra, but my Caicos Bank excursion lets me walk on Long Cay with endangered Turks and Caicos rock iguanas and snorkel in “Starfish Alley.”

Returning from that boat adventure, I spot the building where Salterra sponsors a coral reef research and restoration project. The lab is open twice a week for tours so I cycle over on one of the resort's bikes to learn what the South Caicos Coral Reef Consortium is doing to restore reef health in an archipelago that's home to the world's third largest barrier reef system. ■

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