



YOU LOVE LITTLE CAYMAN, NOW TRY

ISLA PROVIDENCIA, COLOMBIA

“Stingray!” yells my husband, pointing at a kite-shaped fish buried in the sand by my left foot. I forgot to do the stingray shuffle because the water is so clear. Now as we pull our dinghy to the empty beach, I push my toes into the soft sand and drag my feet to scare up other buried rays. This feels daring, voyaging out of Providencia’s main harbor to Playa Manzanillo, an isolated bay at the island’s southeast end. We spread out our picnic blanket in a shaded spot with a view of the endless ocean, away from palm trees ready to drop ripe coconuts and the beautifully gnarled but toxic Manzanillo trees. A few beaches on this Colombian island — once the refuge of pirates and now home to just 5,000 people — offer touches of civilization that could interfere with my castaway fantasy: South West Bay has horse races on Saturday nights; Freshwater Bay has colorful guesthouses and restaurants specializing in a stew called *conch rondón*. But Playa Manzanillo has just fine white sand, turquoise water and silence. As the warm wind whispers across me, I dream of building a palm-frond lean-to and foraging for food. Sound startles me, and I worry we’ve been rescued. Then I realize it’s only reggae music from rustic Roland’s Roots Bar back in the jungle. My exile to this green island isn’t over yet. — *Diane Selkirk*

WHY LITTLE CAYMAN There’s no VIP lounge at tiny Little Cayman Airport — unless you count the whole island. Check in at Southern Cross Club and hide your shoes — you won’t need them. Look up tonight at something rarely visible in the big city — stars. southerncrossclub.com

WHY PROVIDENCIA It’s a short flight on Satena from sister island San Andrés, but get in the castaway spirit on the fast ferry *El Sensacion* (call 57-312-567-2713). Providencia has no mega-resorts on its laid-back beaches, but Decameron has several affiliated guesthouses. decameron.com

MACQUIE EVERTON; INSET: DONALD WASSERMAN/CONRIS