

chill

ONLY A **lucky few** MAKE IT TO THE FRINGES OF THE
TURKS AND CAICOS. TIME SLOWS AND THE LIVING IS EASY.

LET'S HIDE OUT FOR A WHILE, we thought, somewhere with sea breezes, ceiling fans, and discreet service. That was the plan, and it led us to **Windmills Plantation**, an eight-room resort of whitewashed stone, Bermuda-style shutters, and brightly colored roof panels along an otherwise deserted beach. Here, on a little isle called Salt Cay in the Turks and Caicos, our primary responsibility is to make our wishes known, beginning with whether, once again, we would like to start the day with a lobster omelet.

Actually, the day starts before that, when we prop ourselves up in our four-poster bed and listen to the sound of the surf, easily heard from our suite, which faces the sea. We chose an upstairs aerie with a balcony—the better to scan the horizon for whales, which hover around the archipelago in winter. (Downstairs digs have private plunge pools, which aren't too bad, either.)

Each morning brings a different response. When the surf beckons with whispers, we take it as a call to slip on masks and fins for a lazy pre-breakfast swim among the coral gardens that bloom just off

the shoreline; if it booms, we think maybe this is the day we will finally walk into town, which on Salt Cay, we are told by the couple we bonded with one night over Trivial Pursuit and fruity rum drinks, means a place where weathered houses stand side by side for a few paces along an unpaved road.

But oh, with one diversion or another, we manage to let an entire morning pass without ever getting ourselves to breakfast. (You sure can spend a lot of time doing nothing.) So we greet the day and our hosts, Jim and Sharon Shafer, who own Windmills, over lunch. Set before us is conch ceviche, the dish we casually mentioned last night as our island favorite. And beside it, of course, because we also mentioned that we wished we could name some of the constellations that seemed so close overhead, is a field guide to the heavens—which, after a few nights of stargazing in a tropical paradise, don't seem so far away after all. Doubles from \$655; suites from \$685, including all meals, November through April; 649-946-6962 or windmillsplantation.com. —Bob Payne

