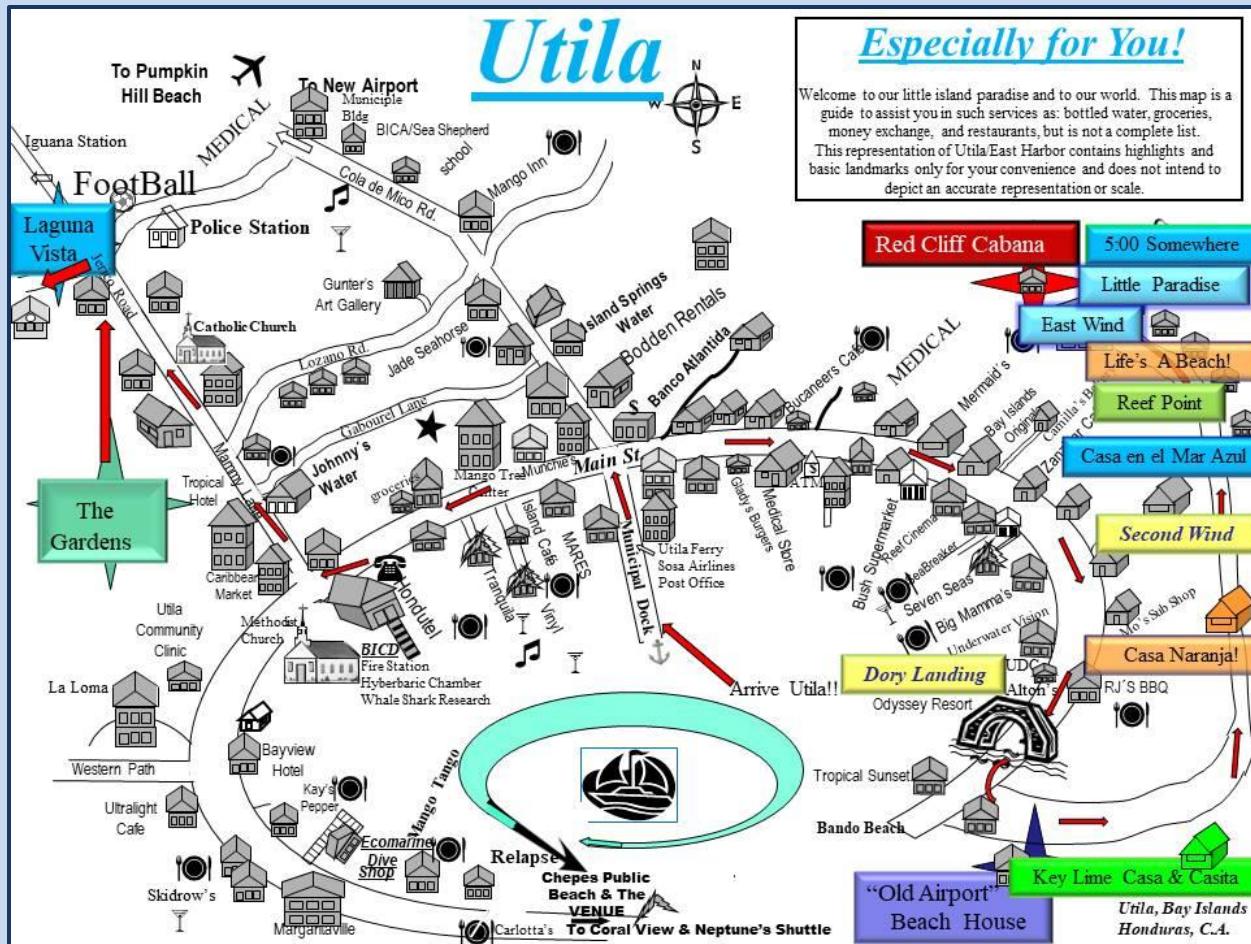




## GUIDE TO UTILA

For those who do not know the island too well we have put together (with help from our friends) some information you may find useful.



### SHOPPING FOR FOOD IN UTILA

Shopping can be an art form!

You are on an island and everything that isn't grown here comes from the mainland on the supply boats. Freight boats arrive on Tuesdays and Fridays. Fresh produce can be found in abundance on these afternoon's around 4:30ish. Bush's grocery store gets its fresh fruits and vegetables in on Monday, Wednesday and Friday around 11:30. (Yes, there can be a rush!) You will also notice local characters along main street with some familiar or not so familiar items for sale. If you are unsure of something, ask them what it is! For the most part, they will

be happy to explain what to do with it! You will also find avocados, star fruit, lychees (those weird red spiky fruits that are the ‘good food’ de jour), mangos, papayas, pineapples, coconuts and other treats that grow on the island!

### **Fresh Fish & Seafood:**

Zorro Bush is a local fisherman who docks at Paradise Driers between 9:30 and 10:30am on most days (when he catches something). He will have his catch from early that morning so you know it is fresh! He is also happy to filet it for you right there on the dock. No kidding. Some fish he catches may include tuna, snapper, grouper, mahi mahi, barracuda and whatever else is in season. You can also find limited selection of frozen fish and shrimp at Bush’s and at Archie’s. You can also take a boat out to the Cays to see what Bess has at the Fish Market. (Pigeon Cay is small but quite an interesting fishing village; worth a visit!)

### **SuperMarkets and Stores:**

Halfway along the main street, heading toward Bando Beach away from the ferry

Bush’s Supermarket: This would be the mega store on the island and perfect for a one-stop shop for everything you may need – canned and fresh foods, liquor, sodas, paper products, bug spray and an assortment of over-the-counter medications. It is usually a bit more expensive than the smaller stores; however, you will find items you cannot find anywhere else.



Big plus is that they will deliver to your house! We do recommend a tip to the delivery guy! Bush’s is located on Main Street.



**Mini Market at Mermaids:** This is a much smaller shop but competitive prices, biscuits, bread and basics. They also have a good selection of fresh fruit and vegetables. Located on Main Street – further up the main street from Bush’s

### **Caribbean Market:**

Ethane and Shelby are raising the bar for a small corner store. Right across the street from the park and the fire station (west of the dock by BICD) this little shop is jam packed with unexpected surprises. Jo gets our strawberries here for our smoothies, and they have an unexpectedly good selection of Del Coral steaks (mmm...) along with most of the basics. If you don’t see what you are looking for just ask. If they don’t have it they’ll try to get it for you on the next freight boat coming in! Wonderfully service oriented and excellently priced.

There are many, many more small shops lining the streets on Utila, and you may be surprised at what you can/cannot find in them. All are locally owned and operated. Stop in... look around...and maybe buy something!

### **Water**

For drinking water, you can purchase it from the supermarket, you can contact Gabriel's and they have speedy delivery service.

## **RESTAURANTS**

We are happy to share some of our favorite spots. As restaurants often change names and locations, please forgive us if they are not open during your stay! It won't be our fault~

### **Tipping Tips:**

Tipping for a full sit-down service is customary at 10% to 20%. Some restaurants are starting to add the tip to the bill, but do not tell you that **they have automatically added 10%**. You may want to check the bill before handing over your money or ask if they have added it automatically.

For counter or take out ordering, there is usually a tip-jar and a small tip is always appreciated.



**Mango Tango:** One of our all-time favorites! Located on the ocean down by the Public Beach, (Cheppes Beach) and with a view of the Bay, makes this a perfect spot to enjoy a sunset, a romantic evening or dinner with a group of friends! Great menu including homemade pasta's, wonderful appetizers, lionfish burgers, tasty salads, and a wonderful steak (a rare find on Utila). You may want to make a reservation. Sunday morning brunch is also a wonderful treat – Eggs Benedict and Bloody Mary's. You can find them about 100 yards shy of Cheppes Beach on Main Street.

<https://www.facebook.com/mangotangoutilia/>

**Mango Inn Bar and Grill:** Located at Mango Inn Hotel. Lovely Tropical setting and good food. Tuesday nights get very busy for their 2 for 1 pizza nights; show up early, or don't eat! A great plus is that they will deliver full meals from the menu. See their Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/Mango-Inn-Bar-Grill-1454907788080736>



**R.J.'s BBQ Grill:** BBQ grill specialties including fish (usually a variety of 5 options), beef, pork chops and lamb (usually). Order by the counter and grab your seat. Get there early – it gets busy and offerings sell out quickly). Open only on Wednesday, Friday and Sundays at 5:00pm. This is a long-time institution on the island, known for their large portions and low prices. Located across from Alton's Dive Shop (by the bridge). HINT: Sit at the 'liars table' in back!  
<https://www.facebook.com/RjsBarGrill>



**Pirates Bay Bar & Grill:** A great place for breakfast and lunch or supper with a great menu! Their chicken wrap is definitely worth a try! Freshly made smoothies are always good! Open daily to 6:00 PM-10PM We love it here! (If you're really hungry ask for a "Tony Breakfast", it's not on the menu, but they'll make it for you!) Located on the sea at Capt'n Morgan's Dive center.  
This bar is run by Eva – Gunter's daughter, and you will find it very welcoming. The prices are excellent and I get my breakfast and often dinner from Eva. If it is not on the menu just ask and it is delivered. You can sit in the shade or the sun, in a hammock or on the dock.  
Once a week there is a BBQ and beer pong – you need to sign up for these events! Be prepared not to dive the following day!!

**Burger Shack** For a great burger and 'proper handmade chips' the burger shack is a great place to pick up a very well-priced burger. They are based opposite the Tea Garden on the left-hand side from the ferry towards Chepes Beach.

**Caribbean Café:** A great menu when you are really hungry or just need a snack. Open breakfast, lunch and dinner. Located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor at Hotel Utila (next to the park).

**Buccaneer Café:** They usually have a very good nightly and lunch specials along with their regular menu items. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Try their Taco Salad!  
<https://www.facebook.com/Buccaneers-Grill-Utila-1413241532262590/>

**Skid Row:** Although it is known as the ultimate dive bar (it is VERY basic but iconic!) Great for a beer and a game of pool. <https://www.facebook.com/SkidRowBar>

**Mermaids:** Dinner and lunch buffet. Closest thing to fast food on the island. They also deliver if they know where you are. Food ain't too bad! <https://www.facebook.com/MermaidsUtila/>

**Trudy's:** Located at Underwater Vision. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Excellent Panini, Tuesday is Chicken Wing night, (ever had peanut butter and jelly?!) and Saturdays are BBQ night. They also serve a favorite breakfast of ours, along with some VERY good coffee. Worth it, for sure! They are the restaurant for Underwater Vision on Main Street. (<https://www.facebook.com/UnderwaterVision>)

**Josie's:** Located east of the Municipal (or Market) Dock, and in front of Bodden's industrial dock, you'll find a cute little bistro in the front yard of a house. That be Josie's! Great morning offerings with a lean toward more healthful items to select from include smoothies and healthful lunches; always served with knowledge and a smile. Also ask about the next Wine Tasting that she hosts as demand requires. (We generally end up buying 2-4 cases!)

**Bando Beach:** Okay... this is a favorite of ours. At the far east end of the island, Bando Beach is a full-service restaurant bar with fabulous views, good food, delightful cocktails, imported beers, and a few wine offerings. Staple foods include pork chops, tacos, nachos, hamburgers, and custom-made sandwiches. Yep, you can invent your own sandwich and they'll do their best to create it for you. Now, if that doesn't add fun to having a bite to eat we don't know how to help you! Sunsets here are spectacular and you'll often see us at a table or our corner of the bar for a sunset cocktail and a nibble.



**Tank'd:** This is where you will be diving from . Located just a tad further down from Pelicans just before the bridge to Bando Beach is Odyssey Resort on the lee side of the island and their Tank'd Bar & Grill. Primarily to serve the resort guests, but the food here is delicious excellent, and there are great views, too. Tank'd is also open to the general public and offers daily specials at reasonable prices. Stop by and say hello!

**The Tea Garden:** Another new addition to Sandy Bay, The Tea Garden is an unexpected delight! With an absolutely charming atmosphere you can enjoy not just the ambience of the space itself, but wonderful teas (hot or cold), nifty little nibbles and even a full bar. Wine and top shelf offerings are a great compliment. We enjoy The Tea Garden every chance we get.



**Munchies** (just opposite the ferry) Iconic Utilan meeting place – great for a coffee and your breakfast, reasonably priced and great service. This again is one of my favorite places for a coffee and to sit and watch Utila at its best as the world goes by!

**Chez Pancho** situated opposite Bay Trading you will see a small arch; this one is easy to miss. On the right-hand side, after Bushes supermarket, but they offer a great steak at a good price and many other dishes, even a plain omelet if that's what you require. Super friendly and a great price. Behind the restaurant is a DVD store, you can get any film you require, and they will download anything for you if you have a memory stick.

**Gleto** – next door to Munchies, fresh Italian “well made in Utila” ice cream – various flavours and a nice treat.

**Pizza Nut & Camillas Bakery** – Well if you fancy extremely fresh bread, baked fresh every morning, and a number of varieties you must go to Camilla's Bakery which in turn becomes the best Pizza place in Utila. This is a husband-and-wife team and totally recommend anything that you purchase here.

**Utila Chocolate Factory** – for this you need to follow the numerous signs. Great for watching chocolate being made, excellent ice creams and a beautiful seating area away from the hustle and bustle of town. They also sell numerous organic potions and lotions – a must for any visitor.

## BARS AND NIGHTLIFE

Expats, divers, backpackers and locals from both Utila and the mainland make up Utila's flourishing nightlife. You can pretty much find whatever you are looking for, from a mellow romantic drink to a sunset cocktail over the water to a crazy dance party! Sunset hour is usually calm and peaceful....later in the evening most places are ready to party!

**Tranquila Bar:** A perfect spot for happy hour. Tranquila, a longtime favorite of ours and perhaps Utila's most established waterfront bar, is the perfect place with an ocean view to watch the most amazing sunsets as well as to wander in for great parties, with fine music and a variety of cold beers and proper cocktails served by friendly and chilled bartenders! Tranquila Tuesday and daily specials. <https://www.facebook.com/TranquilaBar>

**Skid Row:** Under new, pleasant ownership recently and still the home of the original Guifity Challenge! Drink 4 and you will earn your Skid Row shirt – no need to wash another shirt!! Also sports on the multiple televisions scattered about. A substantial menu that will beckon you back to try something else AND you can bring your dog or a date! Party bar later in the evening. <https://www.facebook.com/SkidRowBar>

**Treetanic Bar:** Located at the Jade Seahorse Hotel, located on Cola de Mico Road, up from the ferry dock. A unique elevated wooden deck under a massive mango tree simulating an old ship, this is one of the coolest places in town and the architecture and art make it a must-see spot. Take a walk around the grounds as well – tropical gardens with very artistic surrounding created with the eclectic imagination of the owner (and lots of marbles and other fun things!) <https://www.facebook.com/Treetanic>

**Utila Brewing Company/Craft Beer!** Utila now has a craft beer bar! For those that enjoy locally made beers, this is a must do. They produce up to 4 different beers, depending on the

ingredients available, and they are a hit with vacationers. Located east of the dock on Main Street next to Camilla's Bakery, you'll find Sam Vidler's Utila Brewing Company ready to make you feel at home. Wander on in and there ya go. Great pizza (!), burgers, etc. Ask for a California Burrito for a real taste treat!

**Bando Beach Bar:** This is where you'll find us having a sunset cocktail a number of times a week. Frankly, it is our favorite place to go. The scenery is perfect for that sunset picture you've been trying to capture, AND, some of the most interesting, well-made cocktails to be found on the island. The bar is not stocked with esoteric liquors you've never actually used, but they manage to do a lot with what they have. To say their Bloody Mary is a meal is not too far off the mark. They now also have a full kitchen in place serving a limited menu, but don't let that stop you from trying everything (We have!). No we don't have stock in this place, but we should have when we had a chance! Vanessa keeps ideas fresh, and Pat makes it work. Great long-term staff. Located on the far east end of the island, and anyone can direct you there!

<https://www.facebook.com/UtilaBandoBeach/>

**Blue Bayou Beach Bar:** On the exact opposite end of the harbor from Bando Beach you'll find Blue Bayou Beach Bar. We have always been pleased here with this little bar that also has a kitchen. It's small enough to get to know everyone, but big enough to find a place by yourself to watch the sunset. They also have a dock bar where you can drop over the side for a quick dip, and pop back up for another beer or a bite to eat. You should check out this little slice of Utila that harkens back to days long gone by... <https://www.facebook.com/BlueBayouBeachBarUtila/>

**Neptune's:** Neptune's is on the opposite side of the lower lagoon, as far west as you can possibly go. Any further and you're wet. However, they run a boat hourly to ferry guest to the restaurant and bar that is the highlight of the South Shore. Look for their advertised boat landing in Blue Bayou. And the boat ride is FREE! Yay! Neptune's has a 180' dock just off of their air conditioned restaurant that allows for easy entry into the warm Caribbean waters where snorkeling is delightful. With libations ranging from shots of Crown Royal to custom made cocktails (some even with umbrellas! LOL), and a satisfying menu, Neptune's is a great way to while away a day on Utila. We go, enjoy ourselves, and recommend it.

<https://www.facebook.com/NeptunesAtCoralBeachVillage>

**Rockies** Refreshing bar with a great and relaxed atmosphere, you feel as if you are on a different island. Jungle based – well not really but a refreshing breeze surrounded by a few houses but mainly local trees and great views. Steve and Ron run this great little bar offering all drinks, including coffee if you really want one and a small selection of really well priced snacks. Worth the 10-minute journey or take a tut tut.

## THINGS TO DO – PLACES TO GO

Some fun ways to spend your days when you aren't diving!

**Water Cay:** Our favorite get-away! A completely deserted island. It is pristine white sand, beckoning palm trees leaning off the shore, and surrounded by the transparent waters of the Caribbean lapping at the sand's edge. Remember to bring everything with you though, especially your camera. This is the quintessential 'Kodak Moment'. There are no services

available on the cay. We suggest going with Dennie at Bush's Bay Island Charters. He can be found next to Bush's Supermarket. The cost is \$15 which includes round way trip, entrance fee, hammocks, coolers and water. There are usually 2 boats a day. Contact: Capt. Dennie Owen Bush Jr @ 3145-7139 or Kirstie Jackson @ 8921-0045  
Neptune's: See our note above, and don't miss this!

**Jade Seahorse:** The best description we can come up with is "Dr. Suess on Acid". Don't miss it.  
<https://www.facebook.com/JadeSeahorse>

**Iguana Station:** Their sole purpose is protecting the endemic iguana of the island of Utila, the Swamper. Go visit the breeding station and learn about this and other wildlife on the island. Located past the soccer field. <http://www.utila-iguana.de/>

**WSORC:** The acronym for Whale Shark & Oceanic Research Centre, is a scientific organization that is dedicated to the conservation of the whale shark, the coral reef, and the surrounding waters of Utila. Visitors or volunteers are welcomed anytime! <http://wsorc.org/>

**The Reef Cinema:** Patrons are allowed to bring in their own dinner to watch during the movie. Dinner and a movie, how fun is that! Movies are shown nightly at 7:30. Check out the marquee on the fence outside to see what is playing each week!  
<https://www.facebook.com/ReefCinema/>

**Horseback Riding:** Red Ridge Riding Stables provide horseback riding tours on Utila from the freshwater caves, Pumpkin Hill, along the beach or into the bush! Tours are generally available on one day's notice and run for a few hours. We can set this up for you with a phone call!  
<https://www.facebook.com/pg/Red.Ridge.Stable/posts/>

**Utila Handmade Co-op:** The creative part of our community has a new showcase! The new shop will serve as a workspace for artists to use where our guests can meet the craftsmen and women who produce their gifts from Utila's resources. This project aids the islands economy with more of the sales revenue of products staying directly with the artists. What a great way to help artists using sustainable resources for their products to support their families. By reconnecting with nature and protecting the limited resources that are unique to our tiny island, by growing and using fruits and vegetables available to us to make their products, these artists deserve and need your support.

Crafted teas, jams and jellies, dried fruits, sauces, creams, lotions, soaps, pottery and more are all available on Utila! Jewelry and artwork for your home or gifts from your visit to Utila are also available.  
<https://www.facebook.com/utilahandmadecoop>

**Bush's Bay Islands Charters:** Dennie Jr, and his wife Kirstie operate this professional charter business from the family grocery store on Main Street. We do recommend them and our guests have never reported being disappointed with them or their service. Our choice for doing a Whale Shark Watch or a trip to Water Cay or Cayos Cochinos.  
Contact: Capt. Dennie Owen Bush Jr @ 3145-7139 or Kirstie Jackson @ 8921-0045 and tell 'em Tony & Jo sent ya! <http://bayislandcharters.com/>

**SunBliss Charters:** Another locally owned charter company that specializes in sea-based charters, Junior and Lori can help you with everything from a day on Water Cay to private trips

around the island, and Day Trips to Cayos Cochinos. They're located east of the dock.  
<https://www.facebook.com/sunblisstoursutila/> Give them a call at 3343-1528

**Bay Island Air Charters:** Undoubtedly the most used of all charter flight companies available to us is Troy Bodden Jr.'s service. Reasonable pricing, comfortable aircraft, unblemished safety record, and the freedom to book when you want for where you want. We use them regularly and recommend them. Many, many of our guests take advantage of this service.  
[www.bayislandsaircharters.com](http://www.bayislandsaircharters.com)

**Kanahau:** Located on the White Road going to Pumpkin Hill, Kanahua is a serious research facility located on Utila. Concerned with the biodiversity of Utila, this research station is staffed by PhDs and volunteers who have ongoing projects on both the fauna and flora found on Utila. Always happy to share what they're doing this is a wonderful way to spend a day and learn more about this island we call home. <https://www.kanahau.com/>

## SNORKELING

Utila is known as a SCUBA dive destination, but it also has great snorkeling right from the shore or via boat. The Bay Islands are the continuation of the second largest living reef system in the world, the Great Western Barrier Reef, so it's no surprise that the ocean takes center stage. The diving and snorkeling are superb, very accessible, and extremely inexpensive compared to other locations. Utila is indeed blessed with warm Caribbean waters, great underwater visibility, a rich and varied coral fringing reef, offshore mounds and coral heads, populated with an abundance of reef fish, sponges, lobsters, turtles, dolphins and many varieties of rays. With over 60 different scuba diving sites to choose from, including caves and numerous wrecks (such as the famous Haliburton), scuba diving is always interesting and never crowded. But if you are not a diver, you can still take advantage of the great snorkeling around. Many of the dive sites begin at 15 feet, thus making it easy for snorkelers to enjoy the natural splendors of the underwater world. There is always the chance of seeing dolphins, manta rays and many of the other large pelagic creatures that inhabit the Caribbean, including of course, the largest of them all, the whale shark. With the extensive macro life, it is a photographer and videographer's dream!

**Please Note:** Our coral reef is ALIVE! Any time you touch or step on it, you basically are killing it. Though it makes it difficult to completely avoid stepping on it when you have to walk out into the ocean, we do suggest that you just try and get on your belly and swim as soon as possible and avoid standing on the bottom when possible (unless it is sand of course!)

**Boat Snorkeling:** Most dive shops will welcome you on their dive boat. Check at local shops to find out what days they will be at one of the shallower sites suitable for snorkeling. Expect a small boat fee for this service.

**Shore Snorkeling:** Some of our houses have excellent snorkeling right in front of the property. Key Lime Casa is one of them!  
Here are some of our other favorites!

**Blue Bayou** - Located in front of Coral View Resort. They have a great double story dock and charge a small fee of about \$2.00 to use their facility. If you buy drinks or snacks when the bar

on the dock is open they will happily waive the fee. Coral View is in Blue Bayou, about ½ mile west of Chepes Public Beach.

**Off Old Airport Road, by Sandstone Apartments/Paradise Regained and Key Lime Casa** - Walk down the road just before the apartments toward Paradise Regained. Directly ahead is the public snorkel and shore dive entrance.

**South Shore** – Catch a boat to Neptunes, plan on a nice lunch at their upscale restaurant and snorkel right in front. Nice lounge area with beachside drink service.

**Old Airport Road** – Just over the bridge that leads to Bando Beach and Trade Wind is one of the best spots to snorkel on the island. Look for the sign that say ‘Key Lime Casa’, and you’ll see a little road heading right to the sea. The left side there is an empty lot (until we build our home on it!) and snorkeling there is fantastic. Walk right in and swim out. It is the locating of Airport Caves, a very popular dive site. The reef is just in front of you, and because of it, NO BOAT CAN GET IN. That mean, safe, safe, snorkeling for you!

**Rent a Golf Cart** – There

are many places to rent a golf cart and no particular shop is cheaper or better than another, once you have your cart (around \$50 per day) you can travel freely around the island. This may seem a little expensive but well worth it to have a good look around Utila at your own leisure and discover some different and less chaotic places, maybe find your own little beach – all to yourself.

**Rent a Bike** for the more energetic you can travel by bike; I like to hire my bike from ‘Huffy’s. This is based just opposite Munchies, they have new bikes which are well maintained – to have a bike on the island gives you a little more freedom, I rent a bike for the duration of my stay and love just cycling around.

**Freediving** – a really great option for something a little different you could try freediving. Go to place for trusted knowledge skills and experience go to Free Dive Utila, this is based near to Tank’d on the same side of the road. Not something that I do but all I hear are really great things about this shop and the activity.



[www.wreckhunters.co.uk](http://www.wreckhunters.co.uk)