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SPRING BREAK

A worldly traveler's guide to exotic hot spots

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Libby Clain had a problem — spring break. So many options were available, but she just couldn't decide what she really wanted to do or where she really wanted to go? And, most importantly, where could she have the most fun? For help she turned to her most trusted friend, Buffy Brookfield. Buffy is an authority on just about everything: men, vacations, parties, clothes and fun. Everything. If anyone could help Libby, Buffy could.

"Last year I had just the most extraordinary time," Buffy said, "just extraordinary, Libby. I couldn't decide what I wanted to do either; decisions can be so taxing, you know. So I just threw caution to the wind and decided to do a little of everything.

"First of all, Libby dear, you need to experience spring break in Fort Lauderdale at least once. It's one long, crazy party after another. Students from across the country pour onto Fort Lauderdale's sandy beaches for a full week of fun in the sun. The drive down is about 16 hours, but getting there can be almost as much fun as being there.

"But darn it, this year the Fort Lauderdale city authorities are cracking down on a lot of the wildness that goes on during spring

break. The stricter ordinances that are being established are designed to rid Fort Lauderdale of its image as the spring break party capital of the country. Among other things the penalties for violating drinking restrictions, property damage and disturbing the peace will be more severe.

"There are some lovely places to stay in Fort Lauderdale though. Hotels range from \$60 to \$180 a night for two people. And most hotels charge an additional \$4 to \$10 for every extra person staying in the room. But I know costs won't be a concern for you, Libby.

"However, since Myrtle Beach is only a three to four hour drive away, you could easily go down for the day or a few days this spring break like I did last year. I had a blast. And if you do happen to be overcome by ennui, the drive home is a lot shorter from Myrtle Beach than from Florida. While you're there you could wet your appetite for a summer at the beach by enjoying seafood and visiting the amusement park.

"After you've gotten into the swing of things on the east coast, you should probably head out to Bermuda and down into the Caribbean. The Bahamas, a chain of more than 700 gorgeous islands off the southern coast of Florida, are a sun-lover's paradise. Round trip airfare from

Atlanta to Nassau starts at about \$149.

"The Bahamas have some great deals for avid shoppers like us, Libby. Locally made straw hats, bags and baskets are popular souvenirs. Imported Swiss watches, Japanese cameras, French perfumes and liquor are also bargains in the islands. And if you want to try your luck with cards, Nassau has two government licensed casinos.

"Campus Tours, a Fort Lauderdale-based travel agency, designs tours to the Bahamas, Jamaica and Cancun especially for students. Maybe our whole group could go, Libby. The trip to Nassau costs only \$299 this spring. This price includes round trip airfare to Nassau from Miami and six fun-filled days in the sun. Students stay in one of several hotels near the beach, are invited to attend free cocktail parties every afternoon on the beach, can take snorkeling and scuba diving lessons, and are admitted to bars and night clubs without paying a cover charge. I know this sounds like the place to spend your entire spring break, but there are so many possibilities, Libby.

"For instance, I had a wonderful time in Bermuda last year, but this year the Bermuda Tourism Bureau is inviting students who visit the island between March 1 and April

4 to a series of beach parties and sports activities. The first of these parties, which feature the island's best rock, steel and calypso bands, is the 'College Bash' at Elbow Beach. I may go back and try to improve a few memories.

"Round trip airfare to Bermuda from Raleigh is about \$360 and hotel accommodations range from \$40 to \$233 a night per person.

"I know how you love to get your exercise, Libby, so don't worry; Bermuda has excellent golf and tennis facilities. And touring Britain's oldest colony is easy and fun on a moped. Scuba diving, snorkeling, sailing and fishing are also available. The Bureau is also encouraging students to join in daily jogs along the beach and to enter in a 2K 'fun run.' Activities are just a super way to meet other people — especially tan, athletic, good-looking men.

"If you still don't think you've had enough white sand and crystal blue sea, you can pop down to Jamaica, the Caribbean's third largest island. Jamaica's is a natural beauty, featuring white sand beaches, rugged mountain ridges, rushing waterfalls and colorful tropical foliage. The average temperatures on the island in March range from a high of 87 to a low of 71. Jamaica is a wonderful place to get a head start on your tan, Libby.

"The two hour and 45 minute flight to Jamaica from Atlanta starts at about \$219 round trip.

"For some more fun in the sun and some cool rum punches you can always fiesta in Mexico. Cozumel and Cancun should be very popular vacation spots for spring break this year. I know I'll be there for a little while anyway.

"Once an ancient vacation spot for the Mayan kings of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, Cancun still boasts 14 miles of some of the world's most beautiful beaches. And if you tire of sun bathing, you can visit the ruins of the Maya's mysterious civilization.

"Cancun offers many varied water sports including scuba diving, fishing and sailing. Shopping in Mexico can be inexpensive and fun, especially if you take advantage of the customary bargaining between merchants and customers. And you should be great at this, Libby. I know how you love to go on and on in a conversation, never allowing anyone else to get a word in edgewise — unlike me.

"But Libby, should you tire of all the sand and sea as I did, don't despair, you can always go west to Colorado and try your luck on the slopes. You can explore the Rockies' spectacular snowy scenery and the quaint Alpine villages at the mountains' base. And you might even meet a handsome ski instructor.