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# Do I Dare to Bare?



*PHOTO: The author and his partner bare everything at Hedonism II. (photo by Paul J. Heney)*

My partner, Lance, and I recently took a trip to [Jamaica](#), and people kept asking us which resort we were staying at.

I pretty successfully played the deflection game with most of them, as we were going to an event, the Bloom Festival, which happened to be taking place at a clothing optional resort (Hedonism II).

I wasn't sure what people would think, and heck, I wasn't quite sure what I thought about the whole idea.

I'm pretty open to people's preferences and fetishes, even when they're not mine—hey, live and let live—but I wasn't sure what would happen when it came to stripping down. Would this cause even more stressful dreams about being naked in public at work or in high school? Could I actually do the “au naturale” thing?

And did I want to do it?

Years ago, we were at a resort in [Mexico](#) and several people told us that if you walked far enough down the beach, you'd pass by a nude resort. We went for a walk the next day, feeling a little bit silly, but curious. Sure enough, we soon saw a group of people playing volleyball naked—although all the super-fit guys obviously worked for the resort and were wearing Speedos. As Homer Simpson would say, “Doh!”

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Hedonism II is an [adults-only](#) resort that is clothing optional and also [all-inclusive](#). (There was a Hedonism III at one point, but never a Hedonism I. Someone explained the reason at one point, but it didn't make much sense to me—or maybe it was the multiple piña coladas interfering with my cerebrum—did I mention the free drinks?).

The [clothing-optional](#) areas at the resort are limited to the beach and pool areas—you won't see naked people at the breakfast buffet or on the treadmills, thankfully. And Hedo, as the locals call it, separates the clothing-optional areas into two halves.

The northern stretch of beach (and pool/hot tub/bar) is called the “nude side,” while the southern half is referred to as the “prude side.” You can wear as much or as little as you want (or nothing) on the prude side, while people on the nude side must be nude. There's a five-minute grace period there, so you can find your perfect spot on the beach and then disrobe like everyone else.

On our arrival day, we checked in and got our swim trunks on. We looked out our ground-floor window, overlooking the prude beach. A few people were fully bare, but most had bathing suits on. We ventured outside and wandered around, trying to get our bearings.

We soon found the dividing line between prude and nude. Lance, who's a bit more conservative than I am in situations like this, suggested that we simply walk through the nude side, clothed, just to see what it was like.

That would certainly take less than five minutes, so we'd be safe. I agreed that this was a brilliant plan.

The clientele tended toward the 50s and older crowd and was overwhelmingly Caucasian. All sorts of body types were evident—and people smiled, made eye contact and seemed genuinely content. We made a lap around the pool deck and headed back to prude world. The nude side was less scandalous than we'd surmised, but we felt more at home in our trunks, soaking up the sun and enjoying fruity drinks.

As luck would have it, the [LGBTQ](#) group that was at Hedonism (and made up a small fraction of the whole resort) stayed on the prude side. That worked out well for us because as we made new friends, we'd see them in the same area each day.

But our attitude toward the nudity took a turn on the second evening. We'd heard rumors about the naughtiness that often happens at the nude side's hot tub—late, late at night. When our group of gay men began to wander over there, we had two options. Go back to our room and sleep—or see what was going to transpire.

We decided you only live once, so why not?

Sitting in a hot tub full of gorgeous, muscular gay men sounds like the beginning scene of a porn movie, but to our great surprise, it wasn't as titillating as we'd thought. It was nice to watch the guys mingle and chat with them, but it was more freeing than overtly sexual, at least for us, a monogamous couple.

We did see an occasional—wait, what happens at Hedo stays at Hedo, so I'm going to stop there—although I'll say that the hot tub scene was not some sort of huge orgy, which seems to be what outsiders think must be happening.

After growing tired, we decided to head back to our room, and we both decided: Why bother getting dressed? The whole nudity thing was becoming less and less of a big deal to us.

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In fact, on subsequent days, we took advantage of the numerous (and free) cabanas on the prude side to give each other back massages—what a nice couples-bonding activity, with a gorgeous beach setting to boot. I stipulated that the one being massaged had to go bare, and we both agreed with the rule.

Friends came by and chatted with us—some dressed, some not—and it was no big deal. While we never quite got to the nude-all-the-time level ourselves, we realized that the whole vibe was one of non-judgment of bodies and body types, and that was incredibly refreshing.

On our last day at the resort, late in the afternoon, a lovely British woman named Mo came by our group as we lounged in our beach chairs. She was carrying a bottle of champagne and insisted that we join her in sharing it to toast the impending sunset. We thanked her and started a long conversation about her and her husband's travels. He came over as well, and we chatted until the sun dipped below the horizon.

It wasn't until later that evening that it dawned on me that the couple had been completely nude.

I'd been aware of it on some level, for sure, but it had simply not been as important as the conversation and the camaraderie. As Lance told me on our way home, "It felt like people there had nothing left to hide, so why not be authentic and truly yourself? It seemed easier to get to know people."

And really, what could be more natural than that?