



I Went To Negril And Got Naked

Bianca Lambert

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If you've ever googled [Hedonism II](#), you have likely found message boards wondering if the resort is filled with a bunch of naked people having lots of sex in public. So, when I was invited to experience the resort myself, I was a little apprehensive — but like Shonda Rhimes, I said yes. In my mind, what did I have to lose by packing my bags, jetting off to Jamaica, and spending four days at a clothing optional resort? Nothing.

Well, except my [clothes](#).

Growing up in Atlanta, I always felt like we were "liberal," but when I look at how I was raised, my parents are very conservative. While I am the most liberal thinker in my family, I recognize that my conservative nature comes out in how I present myself to the world, and how I see my sexuality. The moment I hit puberty, my mom made sure I always wore a slip, a bra, and full panties because I guess anything else would have made me [too fast or too grown](#).

I understand why she did what she did. Her objective was to "make sure I looked like a child" so that grown men wouldn't sexualize me too early and I wouldn't be prone to sexual violence. The sad part is both of those things happened even with me doing all of the right things. As I packed for Hedo, I thought about this a lot, even calling myself a "prude" in conversation with friends when I talked about my trip. Wearing anything low-cut, short, or that shows any skin beyond what my parents taught me was acceptable makes me uncomfortable. I'm either covering up with a blazer or pulling down my skirt in fear of showing too much. Much of that now comes from all of my experiences with men from a distance and those that have been important in my life.



Courtesy of Bianca Lambert

I decided I was going against the grain for this trip.

My body has been policed, abused, and shamed. In my mind, this was my chance to take my power back. To defy the idea that wearing short, sheer, and sexy clothes made me anything but the beautiful black woman I am becoming.

I hit Amazon and added pasties, a sheer dress, and a strappy leopard [swimsuit](#) to my cart. I also knew I was "packing" my birthday suit because I was going to the nude beach and disrobing.

When I arrived, I was greeted by Denise and Chantel. Two stunning black women who treated me like family from the start. I soon met up with my girls for the four-day stay dressed in a thong, pasties, and a sheer dress. I questioned whether it was too early to be letting it all hang out since it was my first time meeting the group, but the ladies validated me immediately.





Courtesy of Bianca Lambert

Later, we caught the fetish show that featured stunning black men and women dressed in sheer bodysuits, colorful pasties, and at certain points, they were topless. As I watched them twerk, grind, and own their bodies — I was inspired. How does one get to this point in life? Especially the ladies. We are taught from the jump that enjoying sex is for men, and we're just there to fulfill their pleasure and fantasies. Then layering on sexual liberation as a black woman? Whoa, that's a whole different article.

After watching the show, I knew I was ready for the nude side of the beach. When in Rome...

There is a nude side and a prude side at Hedo, and while the prude side offers a chance to be naked or clothed, on the nude side, your only option is letting yourself be free. I gathered the girls after lunch, and we started our walk down the sandy stretch of the beach towards the nude side. Once we got there, we all hesitated. I felt knots in my stomach and kind of wanted to turn back, but I didn't. I went for it. I took off my [swimsuit](#) top and bottom and walked freely across the sand with the four other ladies with me.



I'd be telling a story if I told you it didn't feel awkward. "Is anyone looking at me?" I thought. Well, the answer to that is yes.

But, everyone was naked, so it made that reality less weird. Laying out and walking into the water sans clothing was incredibly liberating, much like my experience at Hedo. The resort is not about being a "freak," it's about letting go of judgment, eating good food, watching great entertainment, and dancing the night away at the disco or at a toga foam party.

My experience not only was a stepping stone in me, it was a moment of reclaiming my body from a traumatic situation that still haunts me. It helped me realize that I'm not as "okay" as I thought I was. There are moments when I walked the long way so that I didn't have to interact with men, there were times when I cowered when men complimented me. Having those reactions a month, two months or even years after an assault is normal, and as my fellow writer and new friend *Delores said, "You don't owe anyone an explanation."



The women of Hedo (who were all women of color) that I met on this trip (Hey Denise, Michelle, Diana, and Melissa!), are why I'd recommend women hit the resort with their girls. Hedonism isn't about hooking up with random people (which is an option if that's what you're into) or going nude. The resort is about allowing yourself to experience life without judgment and restriction, no matter what that looks like to you— and know that you're in a safe space to explore, thanks to women I mentioned above.

You can have whatever experience you desire. If going topless and walking the beach is your version of taking a chance, you can do that. If you're into finding a sex partner(s), to explore sexually, you can do that. Want to have sex in a pool out in the open? You can try that, too (I saw that for myself.). Or, if you just want a drink, tan, take twerking lessons, snorkel, and eat chicken wings (which are so good) at two o'clock in the morning, live your best life, sis.



Courtesy of Bianca Lambert

Sexual liberation can come in any form.

My liberation came from walking the beach naked and being reminded that I own the rights to my body no matter what a man, these Republicans, or society says.

I'm grateful I was able to have this "aha moment" amongst women who were supportive and fun; at a resort that is as beautiful as it is transformative.

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Bianca Lambert

Bianca Lambert is a proud Atlanta native soaking up the Los Angeles sun. She is the founder of Mae B: a stationery company for women of color and a digital content creator on a mission to elevate the voices of women of color everywhere.

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Women and wine have two very important things in common. The older we age, the more refined, distinguished, and potent we become. While each birthday may feel like another step toward the nursing home to some, Tracee Ellis Ross says that at nearly 50 years old, she's in her prime.

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This Is Why Your Skincare Routine Isn't Working

ASHLEY RENEE 9H





Why is it that many of us have our hair, nails outfit, and makeup game on point but our skincare routine is close to nonexistent? Unfortunately, many of our mothers, grandmothers and aunts instilled in us that black don't crack as they greased our faces with vaseline and sent us on our merry way!

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Summer is finally here! Now, I know it's not the same summer break we enjoyed during our grade school and college years, but that doesn't mean we can't cash in those earned PTO days and plan our next trip. [CNBC notes](#) that American companies are giving us less paid time off, so I can understand why using those days for leisure might feel overindulgent.

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There are a few things we absolutely know about [Rihanna](#): She's recently been [named the world's richest female musician by Forbes](#); she's the mastermind behind Fenty, the makeup line that literally revolutionized the beauty industry; she is the first woman of color to helm her own luxury fashion brand under LVMH, and oh right, and she's also a multi-talented Grammy award-winning singer and artist.

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Traditionally, marriage is associated with a loss of identity, infinite sexuality, exclusivity and letting go of your personal desires in order to serve those of your partner; but according to the latest episode of *Red Table Talk*, tradition isn't what kept Will and Jada's 20+ year marriage afloat, autonomy was.

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STYLE

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TAYLOR HONORE 10 JUNE



Much to my dismay, my mom used to pick out my school [clothes](#). Not only did my ribbons match my socks, but my socks matched my undershirt, and what was worse was, they were all the same damn color. Although I tried to convince her that times had changed and not everything had to match, she was persistent on her mission to send me to the local elementary school every day looking like a different color from my crayon box.

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