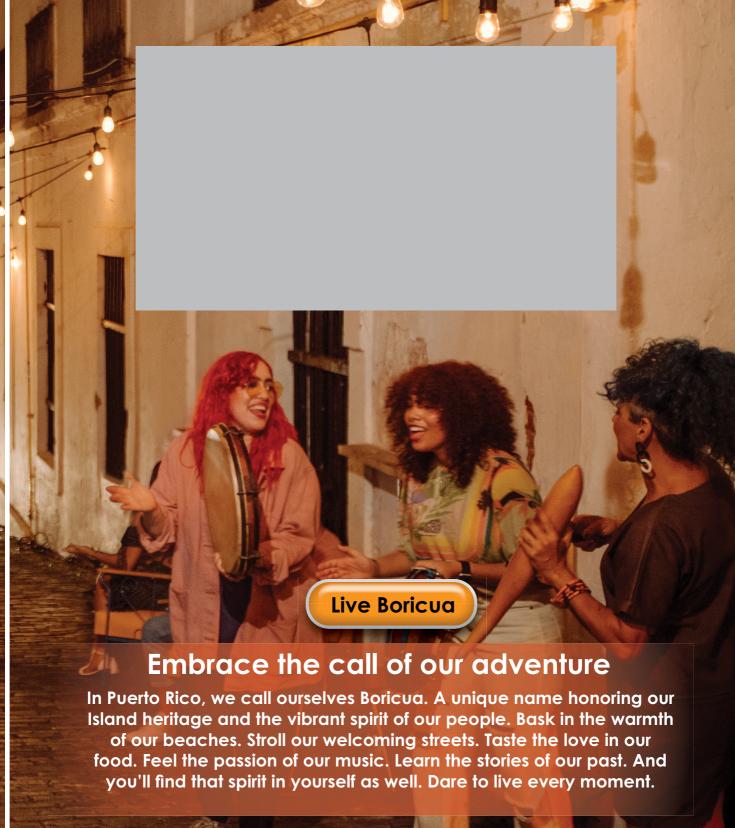




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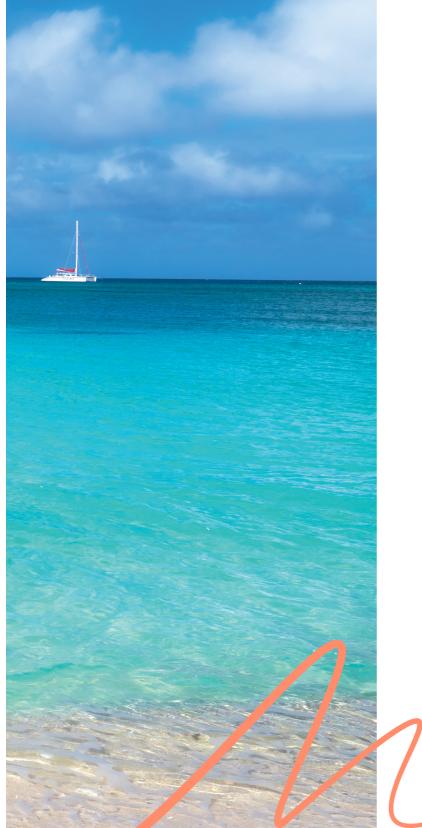




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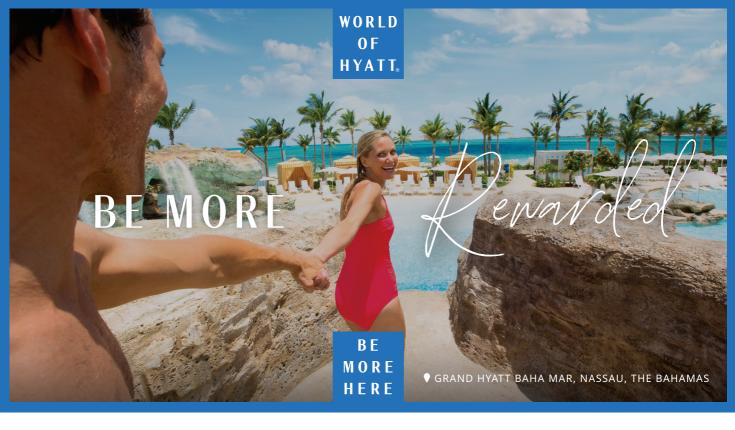




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The Bahamas experienced substantial damage from a major hurricane in 2019.

AAA recommends checking with your travel agent in advance of travel to this region.

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# Caribbean, Bermuda & Costa Rica

ike beads in a coral necklace strung between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, the islands of the West Indies stretch east and south from the Gulf of Mexico and Florida to the northern coast of South America—a span of more than 2,000 miles.

The Caribbean islands' diversity of races and traditions generates an aura of romance and mystery. The Arawak, Taíno and Carib Indians were the first to arrive, migrating to the Antilles some 2,000 years before Columbus landed in 1492. Spanish, French, Dutch and American settlers would follow, bringing with them African slaves to work the gold mines and sugar mills that flourished on the islands until the late 19th century.

Explorers, pirates, settlers and slaves-all would carry

their own customs to the archipelago Columbus called "the most beautiful land that human eyes have seen."

Today, tourism is the lifeblood of the islands, bringing a new influx of travelers from across the seas. Cruise ships have replaced three-masted schooners as the best way to get there, and lying in the sun with an umbrella drink may be all some visitors do once they arrive. For the more energetic, there's sightseeing, shopping, fishing, sailing, scuba diving, horseback riding, tennis and golf.

The lush islands of the Caribbean, The Bahamas and Bermuda offer enough natural beauty and cultural variety to please any visitor's tastes.

The hundreds of islands in the Caribbean archipelago are divided into The Bahamas and the Greater and Lesser Antilles. The Antilles were named after Antillia, a mythical island sought by Spanish explorers. The Greater Antilles include the largest islands: Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and the island of Hispaniola, which contains Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

The Lesser Antilles encompass the remaining arc of smaller isles as well as several islands off the coast of Venezuela. Major groupings within the Lesser Antilles include the Virgin Islands and the Windward and Leeward Islands. Bermuda is not a Caribbean island at all, but is located in the Atlantic Ocean, 650 miles due east of Cape Hatteras, N.C.

According to geologists the Caribbean archipelago is a portion of a once unbroken bridge that joined North and South America. Through unknown events some of the land sank, and what remains are the peaks of a submarine volcanic mountain range. A few of the Caribbean islands, as well as Bermuda, are coral formations.

The easterly trade winds that maintain the region's even temperatures were responsible for depositing Columbus at what he thought was the "back door" to India—probably San Salvador in The Bahamas. Columbus continued onward to Cuba and Hispaniola. Although the great golden treasures he envisioned never fully materialized, he did meet the Arawaks and the Caribs, whom he mistook for East Indians. His return to Spain with charts, a small amount of gold and tales of great fortune gained him financing for three more visits.

On the heels of Columbus came such conquistadores as Hernando Cortés and Francisco Pizarro seeking their share of land and gold. European investors built mining operations and sugar plantations, using native Indians as laborers. As the local work force declined, a license was arranged permitting the importation of African slaves—an agreement that was to have far-reaching effects on the New World.

Ships with holds laden with the produce of the Caribbean opened the door on yet another occupation. Buccaneers, pirates, smugglers and freebooters proliferated, using the islands' numerous caves and inlets for shelter and ambush. The result was many years of terror, bloodshed and territorial feuding. As Spanish supremacy in the region weakened, England, France, the Netherlands and the United States all added their cultural marks to the Caribbean.

Today's island groups reflect this heritage among sovereign states, overseas departments and dependencies. The French West Indies include Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Barthélemy and St. Martin. The Dutch islands of the Kingdom of the Netherlands are Aruba, Bonaire, Curação, St. Eustatius and Saba and St. Maarten. The British West Indies encompass Anguilla, the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos Islands. The American flag flies over the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

#### **Hundreds of Hideaways**

With so many islands to visit, choosing one can be a daunting task. If language barriers are a concern, keep in mind that English is spoken at most large resorts and in most shops and restaurants.

Consider your priorities and interests: If you do not care for water sports, sunbathing or having lots of time on your hands, choose one of the more developed islands that offers plenty of shopping, sightseeing, dining and nightlife. On the other hand, if you want to "get away from it all," there are still some islands that have yet to be "discovered" and commercialized. On such islands modern conveniences might be rather sparse but privacy is abundant.

The local currency exchange rate also might influence your decision. Check Fast Facts boxes for the governing rates at press time. Exchange rates can fluctuate significantly, so you should always check them with a financial institution prior to departure.

Because of the varying economic conditions on most islands, the contrast between luxury resorts and poverty-ridden villages can be a harsh reality. You might want to investigate the political and social climate of an island before planning your trip.

# **Tropical Seasons**

Much of The Bahamas and all of the Caribbean islands lie below the Tropic of Cancer, the northern limit of the tropics, and therefore enjoy a mild climate year round. The main season varies from island to island and hotel to hotel but is generally from mid-December to mid-April. The off-season is late spring, summer and fall except in Bermuda, where it runs November to mid-March. Most islands are subject to a rainy season between June and November, which coincides with hurricane season.

# Planning Your Trip

# **Getting There**

Travel to the islands is by plane, cruise ship or charter boat. Planned excursions tailored to fit your schedule and pocketbook are abundant; the mode of transportation you select is a matter of personal preference. However you



Virgin Islands, British Anguilla

# Caribbean Islands **Eastern**

St. Barthelemy

St. Martin/ Islands, US St. Maarten

**ATLANTIC** 

St. Eustatius & Saba

St. Kitts & Nevis

🧖 Antigua & Barbuda Montserrat

Guadeloupe

**OCEAN** 

CARIBBEAN

Virgin

**Dominica** 

Martinique

SEA

St. Vincent & The Grenadines

St. Lucia

Barbados

Grenada (

**Trinidad** & Tobago



SOUTH AMERIC

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choose to travel, a AAA travel agent can make all the necessary arrangements.

#### By Air

Air transportation has made the weekend, 1- or 2-week vacation as practical as it is delightful. Many excursion fares, some with stopovers, are available. Most Caribbean destinations can be reached in a matter of hours from major cities and often in a matter of minutes from Miami. Some islands do not have direct air service; check with a AAA travel agent about access to these smaller destinations. Also consult your travel agent for group fares, special packages, seasonal rates and current schedules. Most offices can make plane reservations and obtain tickets.

Air travel in the Caribbean requires some special considerations. Many island governments require visitors to complete a tourist card and perhaps a customs declaration form before entering their country. These forms are provided by your air carrier and should be completed while en route. Allow about an hour to clear customs and immigration upon arrival. Keep your copy of the tourist card; it must be returned when you depart.

Though island travel laws may vary, the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires that all citizens returning from the Caribbean present a valid passport. See your destination's Fast Facts box for specific immigration requirements. AAA recommends carrying a passport when traveling anywhere outside the United States, both to expedite your way through customs and to provide identification in case of emergency.

For information about the passport application process or an emergency passport, contact the National Passport Information Center at (877) 487-2778 or TTY (888) 874-7793. Passport photos are available through your AAA travel office.

On departure day you should arrive at the airport at least 2 hours before your flight leaves. (Check with your airline for local requirements.) This will ensure enough time to obtain seat assignments, check luggage, convert currency and clear security checkpoints before boarding. Allow another hour when you land to claim your luggage and clear customs. Allow at least 90 minutes to make a connecting flight. Schedule similarly for your return home, allowing time to pay departure taxes, convert unspent currency and submit customs declaration forms.

#### By Sea

Other than owning and operating your own vessel, there are two ways to visit the Caribbean via the bounding main: by charter boat and by cruise ship.

## By Air and Sea

Try a combination air and sea vacation. Some cruise lines will fly you from their departure point to one of the balmy Caribbean islands where you can relax and unwind for a few days; then you can return by luxury cruise ship—or cruise to the Caribbean and return by air. Many cruise lines will pay part of your airfare to and from their departure point as part of the full cruise package.

#### Interisland Travel

Island hopping is enjoyable and simple. Although almost all of the Caribbean islands are accessible by air or seaplane, a more exotic way to travel is by sailboat. These leisurely cruises to other islands usually include beverages and a meal. Mail boats, though not as glamorous, often take on passengers for a nominal fee. Ferries also connect several islands. Information on these services is available at most hotels, tourist bureaus and shops.

#### Intraisland Travel

Driving conditions on the islands range from good to poor. Most roads are not as well maintained as in the United States, and some are narrow and meandering, making it difficult to stay to one side. As well, in some areas domestic animals are known to roam the roads freely. Where road signs exist they are usually in the native tongue, so studying a phrase book or translation dictionary in advance is helpful. On most of the islands driving is on the left side of the road.

Given the confusion of other tourists and the independent driving nature of some locals, defensive driving is a must. It might be best to first monitor the driving conditions on the island before going out on your own. You might decide to leave the driving to the cabbies and bus operators.

#### Sightseeing Tours

Sunning, swimming, surfing and skin diving are all part of a Caribbean vacation, but to make your pleasure complete add another "S"-sightseeing. Each island has its own scenic attractions, quaint villages and exotic countryside. To miss them is to miss some of the islands' charm and history. For information on self-guiding or guided tours, see *Sightseeing* under the individual islands.

Car rentals are available on the major islands; rental information is listed under Transportation. To avoid disappointment, make reservations well in advance through a local AAA club. Arrangements for guided tours can be made through a AAA travel agency, your hotel activities desk or your ship's cruise director.

## Climate and Clothing

The best rule to follow when packing for any trip, whether by plane or ship, is to first include everything that seems absolutely indispensable and then repack, taking only half as much as you would have originally planned. Another rule is to not take anything you would hate to



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lose, such as expensive jewelry or unneeded credit cards. Remember to pack toiletries and extra sunglasses, as they are often more expensive on the islands. Be sure to pack prescription medicines, in their original containers, and other essentials in your carry-on luggage.

Keep in mind the climate, the islands you will visit and where you plan to stay. Clothing made from artificial fibers can be uncomfortable in the heat. A good compromise is a cotton-synthetic blend that is both cool and wrinkle free.

In general, colorful, lightweight sport and resort-style clothes are appropriate all year throughout the islands. A lightweight wrap for cool evenings should be added for The Bahamas, Bermuda, the Cayman Islands, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica. In fact, it is always wise to pack a sweater, no matter how tropical the climate. In Bermuda, silks and lightweight woolens are comfortable during the day from mid-December to late March. For the most part, cocktail dresses and jackets and ties are not required for evening wear in the Caribbean except at resorts and large hotels on some of the more developed islands.

When packing for a cruise follow the same general rules. Formal clothes—dinner jackets and long dresses—are suitable for such highlights as the captain's dinner or the captain's cocktail parties. For regular dinners, most passengers change from their daytime attire to more sophisticated garb.

For shore visits or strolling around the deck, any type of vacation or outdoor clothing is appropriate. Swimwear, however, should be worn only at the beach or pool, not in public areas. Bathing *au naturel* or topless is fashionable at some beaches in the French West Indies, but is still an unwelcome trend on most of the other islands. Some of the people in the more conservative countries are offended by revealing clothes, especially if they are worn in the daytime.

# **Electricity**

Typical U.S. electric shavers, hair dryers and travel irons operate on 110- to 120-volt, 60-cycle alternating current. However, some islands use 210-230 volt, 50-cycle AC electricity, which will burn out most U.S. appliances. On other islands, 110- to 127-volt, 50-cycle AC current is used. At 50 cycles U.S. electric appliances operate at slower than normal speeds and damage to an appliance can occur. A converter plug is necessary in the French West Indies, where European plugs are used. Check the Fast Facts boxes for the electric current used locally.

While some U.S. department stores do sell electric items for use overseas, be sure to check the voltage requirements before you purchase; do not be misled by a

salesperson who offers you an "adapter" that only enables you to plug the appliance into the wall socket. A transformer is needed to convert high-voltage current for use with U.S. appliances.

# **Health and Safety**

The sun's rays are intense in the Caribbean. Just an hour in the Caribbean sun can result in a painful sunburn and even illness to the unwary visitor. Be sure to bring plenty of suntan lotion or sunscreen; the higher the sunscreen rating the more it protects the skin from the most harmful rays. A good pair of sunglasses and a lightweight hat give added protection.

Some other commonsense precautions include taking an extra pair of glasses or contact lenses and extra quantities of prescription medicines, along with a letter from your physician stating the nature of your ailment and the recommended dosage. Keep prescription medicines in their original containers. Persons with physical conditions that might require emergency care should carry a card or tag identifying the condition. Medical services are generally excellent on the more developed islands. Emergency medical treatment also is available on cruise ships.

Rain is the main source of fresh water on many islands; sparse rainfall means scarce water. Even on islands where water is distilled from the sea, the supply is limited and should be used sparingly. Tap water and water served in restaurants and bars is generally safe; if in doubt, abstain or drink bottled water, beverages made with boiled water, canned or bottled carbonated beverages, beer or wine. If the water quality is unknown, avoid ice, containers that have held water, and such foods as fruit or vegetables that might have been rinsed in contaminated water.

Where mosquitoes abound, use a repellent, wear clothing that covers your arms and legs and stay in wellscreened areas. Mosquitoes bearing malaria, yellow fever and other infections exist in very limited regions. In the Caribbean the risk of malaria is present in Haiti and in rural areas of the Dominican Republic bordering Haiti. Travelers to any of these areas are urged to check with their physician or local health department to determine the advisability of taking a preventative drug.

Cases of dengue (breakbone) fever and the Zika virus, also mosquito-borne infections, have been reported on most Caribbean Islands and throughout northern South America, Central America and Mexico. There are no preventative medical measures other than wearing insect repellent, and treatment is limited to relieving the symptoms. A few cases of yellow fever have occurred in Trinidad and Tobago. Inoculations for yellow fever are available; most of the islands require vaccination certificates for yellow fever *only* of those travelers arriving from endemic countries.

Hepatitis B is highly prevalent in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. A hepatitis B vaccination is recommended for those traveling to these areas. Hepatitis A is found in rural areas. Schistosomiasis is a parasitic infection contracted in the Dominican Republic, Guadeloupe, Martinique and St. Lucia. A few cases of vaccine-related poliomyelitis were reported in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the early 2000s; visitors should consult a physician about the need for immunization.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta recommends that before traveling, visitors should make sure that all immunizations are current (the tetanus/diphtheria vaccine should be boosted as needed). It also is recommended that travelers receive either an immune serum globulin or the hepatitis A vaccine if they are planning to visit an area of questionable sanitation. The center's hot line, offering international health requirements and recommendations for foreign travelers, is available daily 24 hours; phone (800) 232-4636.

Carefully assess the risk potential of recreational activities on the islands. Sports equipment that you rent or buy might not meet U.S. safety standards. Unless you are certain that scuba diving equipment, for example, is safe, do not use it. Be especially careful when out on excursions: Should you need it, help might not be readily available.

Many pools and beaches on the islands do not have lifeguards, so take heed when swimming. Undertows can be treacherous; be sure to inquire about such conditions before entering the water. Do not dive into unknown waters; hidden rocks, coral formations and shallow depths can cause serious injury or death.

Familiarize yourself with the local laws and customs of the islands you are visiting; remember, you are subject to their laws. It is wise to leave a copy of your travel itinerary with family or friends at home and to phone or register in person with the U.S. embassy or consulate upon your arrival. If you get in trouble, contact the U.S. consulate.

You can take various precautions to avoid being victimized by thieves. Travel light and do not leave luggage unattended in public places. It also is a good idea to leave expensive jewelry, clothing and unnecessary credit cards at home. Be sure not to travel with all of your money, credit cards and travelers checks in one place. Consider leaving valuables in your hotel safe or safe deposit box.

You should be alert at all times, especially in crowds. Secure your wallet carefully, perhaps in a front pocket, or wear a money belt; carry your purse diagonally across your chest. When shopping, keep just a small amount of spending money readily available; do not display the entire contents of your wallet. Try to conceal your camera

when not in use. Do not venture into unfamiliar areas, especially when you are alone and certainly not at night.

Visitors are often approached on the street by locals offering a variety of products and services that are best obtained through more reputable outlets. In most cases a polite "No. thank you" will suffice, but the more persistent vendor will require several similar responses. It is best to display a pleasant but assertive manner in such situations. Avoid prolonged discussions and do not answer questions that might reveal where you are staying or what your plans are. Accept rides from only licensed taxi or tour operators.

#### **Travel Advisories**

The U.S. Department of State issues Country Specific Information, Travel Alerts and Travel Warnings concerning serious health or security conditions that might affect U.S. citizens. They can be obtained at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad, regional passport agencies in the United States and from the Overseas Citizens Services; phone (202) 501-4444 or (888) 407-4747. The Bureau maintains a Web site at http://travel.state.gov.

Country Specific Information provides information about entry requirements, currency regulations, health conditions, security, political disturbances, areas of instability and criminal penalties. A Travel Warning is issued when the situation in a country is dangerous enough for the U.S. Department of State to recommend that Americans not travel there. Travel Alerts are a means of releasing information to travelers about short-term conditions that might pose security risks to Americans traveling abroad.

In addition, travelers are urged to remain abreast of regional events and to contact their AAA travel agent or air or sea carrier for the latest updates.



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# **Anguilla**

ong and narrow Anguilla (An-GWIL-ah) takes its name from the Spanish word for eel. The island lies about 9 miles (14 km) north of St. Martin and 60 miles (97 km) north of St. Kitts. Unlike the other Leeward Islands, low-lying Anguilla is of coral limestone rather than volcanic formation. Cottages and houses are sprinkled across the island, with concentrations around the capital of The Valley and the villages of South Hill, Stoney Ground, Blowing Point and Island Harbour. Accommodations on Anguilla range from charming cottages to world-class hotel and villa resort properties.

# **History**

Christopher Columbus sighted Anguilla during his second voyage in 1493; it is not known whether he actually visited the island. English settlers from St. Kitts colonized Anguilla in 1650, and the island has remained a British territory ever since. In 1688 the island was attacked by a party of Irishmen who eventually settled there, and such surnames as Smith and Webster are evident among their descendants, particularly around Island Harbour. Anguilla repelled two attacks by the French in the 18th century. The island declared its independence from the Associated



State of St. Kitts and Nevis and became a self-governing territory of the British Commonwealth in 1967. After several years of negotiations, Anguilla became a separate British dependent territory on Dec. 19, 1980.

It is said that the first seeds of the highly prized sea island cotton came from Anguilla. Today the island's economy is based on tourism and financial services.

# Shopping

Visitors to Anguilla won't find the duty-free shops and open markets common on other islands, but browsing at a resort boutique, an art gallery or a craft shop is still a popular pastime. Diverse shopping opportunities include such products as fine jewelry, gourmet foods and spirits, designer beachwear and elegant resort wear.

Local shopping favorites include the Anguilla Arts and Crafts Center in the Brooks Complex in The Valley; Savannah Gallery, on Coronation Avenue in The Valley; Irie Life, overlooking the scenic Road Bay and Sandy Ground; Cheddie's Carving Studio, on the island's west end, containing sculptures and carvings; Devonish Art Gallery, on West End Road; World Art and Antiques; and ALAK Art Gallery in Shoal Bay. Boutiques such as Janvel's, Kimmy's and Shoes Plus feature elegant resort wear, casual summer fashions, shoes and accessories.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are available from the People's Market in The Valley and at roadside stands throughout the island. Shopping hours are generally Mon.-Sat. 8-4, with supermarkets usually open until 8:30 p.m.; some stores are open on Sundays. Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 8-2, Fri. 8-4.

#### Food and Drink

Fine dining is a specialty in Anguilla, which calls itself the "cuisine capital of the Caribbean." Local restaurants from casual beachside eateries to elegant establishments—serve sumptuous dishes that reflect the ancestry of island residents: European, African and Caribbean.

Freshly caught lobster, crayfish, and red and yellowtail snapper are several of the seafood delights that appear on tables in Anguilla. The tantalizing fare includes stuffed crab, conch salad, grilled crayfish and Creole soups.

# Sports and Amusements

Nightlife of the classic variety is somewhat limited on Anguilla. Most hotels offer nightly music, and several beach bistros can be found at Sandy Ground and Shoal Bay. Most recreation, however, is related to the island's white coral sand beaches, which offer many opportunities for swimming and shell collecting; swimming and sunbathing au naturel are prohibited.

Some of the island's beaches are accessible only by rough dirt roads or paths. The secluded atmosphere of these beaches, however, makes the visit worth the trouble. Popular beaches include those at Meads Bay, Rendezvous Bay and Shoal Bay East. Visitors should note that wearing swimsuits in public places other than the beach is considered inappropriate.

The crystal-clear waters surrounding Anguilla are excellent for snorkeling, scuba diving and fishing. Favorite snorkeling and diving spots are Little Bay, Cove Bay, Prickly Pear, Sandy Island and Shoal Bay, the last distinguished by its undersea garden trail. Experienced divers can reach seven shipwreck sites. Scuba Shack, (264) 235-1482, rents snorkeling equipment. Most hotels rent water sports equipment. Tennis also is popular on the island; most hotels and villas have courts. The Anguilla Tennis Academy, (264) 498-0697, in Blowing Point has six lighted public courts and Ronald Webster Park Complex in The Valley offers two public courts.

Boats and guides for fishing trips are available for hire at Sandy Ground and Island Harbour. Many islanders are anglers by trade, and you can sample their succulent bounty at any local café or restaurant. Fish soup, sweet and sour conch, and lobster with lime butter are some of the primary delicacies.

Special events are held on Anguilla Day, May 30, and in August during the annual Summer Festival. On both occasions, sailors race boats made in Anguilla. Summer Festival, which begins on the first Thursday in August and ends on the second Sunday in August, features calypso contests, street dancing, the coronation of Miss Anguilla (the carnival queen), sailboat races, beach barbecues and the Prince and Princess Show.

# Sightseeing

Sightseeing tours can be arranged through Bennie's Travel & Tours at Blowing Point and Malliouhana Travel & Tours, in The Valley. Bennie's offers tours of the island and half- and full-day trips to Prickly Pear; Marigot, St. Martin; and Philipsburg, St. Maarten; phone (786) 207-4559 or (264) 497-2788. The Anguilla Culture Tour by Anguilla Access gives visitors an overview of Anguillian life and the culture of yesteryear; phone (264) 584-6498.

The Anguilla National Trust offers guided tours of the island, including stops at Fort Hill, the East End Pond Bird Sanctuary and the Big Spring Heritage Site; phone (264) 497-5297 for information and reservations.

## **Transportation**

Connections to Clayton J. Lloyd International Airport are through San Juan, St. Thomas, Antigua, St. Kitts and St. Maarten. Rental cars or taxis are necessary to get around the island, as beaches, stores and various accommodations are not within reasonable walking distance. Taxi rates are fixed, but agree on the fare in advance. Be sure to have enough cash on hand for the day if you are traveling by taxi; ATMs can be difficult to locate.

The Blowing Point Ferry runs to Marigot, St. Martin, about every 45 minutes from 7:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. The final return from Marigot leaves at 7 p.m. The ferry trip takes about 25 minutes. Travel documents are required, and a \$25 U.S. departure tax and \$3 U.S. security fee is collected upon departure from Anguilla (day trippers from Anguilla pay a departure tax of \$8 U.S. plus a \$3 U.S. security fee); departure tax from St. Martin is \$5 U.S. Oneway fare is \$20 U.S. Ferries also run frequently to Philipsburg, St. Maarten.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 18,066.** 

**AREA:** 91 sq km (35 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** The Valley.

HIGHEST POINT: 65 m (213 ft.), Crocus Hill. **LOWEST POINT:** Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

**TIME ZONE(S):** Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** British Overseas Territory.

**CURRENCY:** Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. =

2.7 E.C. dollars. U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. Temporary local license (\$25 U.S.) required, available at rental agencies or the Inland Revenue government office in The Valley and issued on presentation of current license from home country; valid for 6 months; drive on left.

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are not required by law, but are recommended for all passengers.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

**HOLIDAYS:** Jan. 1; James Ronald Webster Day, Mar.

(1st Mon.); Good Friday; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May (1st Mon.); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Anguilla Day, May 30; Queen's Birthday, June (2nd Mon.); August Monday, August Thursday and Constitution Day. (1st Mon. and following Thurs, and Fri.): Hero and Heroines Day, Dec. 19; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 10 percent room tax plus 13 percent GST and 10 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills, plus \$3 U.S. per room, per night. A 15 percent service charge is also added to restaurant bills. Departure tax is \$25 U.S., \$15 U.S. for children ages 12 and older, \$3 U.S. for children ages 2-4 (free ages under 2 years) by air, or by sea at Blowing Point Ferry Port. Departure tax for day trips leaving Blowing Point Ferry Port is \$8 U.S.

**IMMIGRATION:** A valid passport and return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Anguilla from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 264 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Anguilla Tourist Board Coronation Avenue The Valley, Anguilla Al-2640 (264) 497-2759 (800) 553-4939

Anguilla Hotel and Tourism Association Coronation Avenue The Valley, Anguilla Al-2640 (264) 476-2944

#### **MEADS BAY**



**BOOK NOW** 264/497-6111



Resort Hotel. Address: Meads Bay Al2640.

#### RENDEZVOUS BAY



# AURORA ANGUILLA RESORT & GOLF CLUB BOOK NOW 264/498-2000



Resort Hotel. Address: Rendezvous Bay Rd Al2640. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This distinctive resort on a white-sand beach has architecture reminiscent of a Greek Isle. With well-appointed and modern rooms, this resort caters to quests with discriminating tastes. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 179 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms and kitchens. 1-3 stories (no elevator), interior/exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 6 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, playground, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest **Services:** valet laundry.



























#### SHOAL BAY EAST

FOUR DIAMOND

**INSPECTED ©** CLEAN



ZEMI BEACH HOUSE, LXR HOTELS & RESORTS BOOK NOW 264/584-0001



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Resort Hotel. Address: Shoal Bay Rd Al2640.

#### **WEST END**



# FOUR SEASONS RESORT AND RESIDENCES ANGUILLA BOOK NOW

264/497-7000



Resort Hotel. Address: Barnes Bay Rd Al2640. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Perched on a bluff above sugar-sand beaches is this chic and contemporary resort hotel offering spacious guest units with upscale bathrooms. Many guest units feature a private plunge pool. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 188 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms, efficiencies, kitchens and houses. 1-4 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: heated outdoor, Activities: hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

















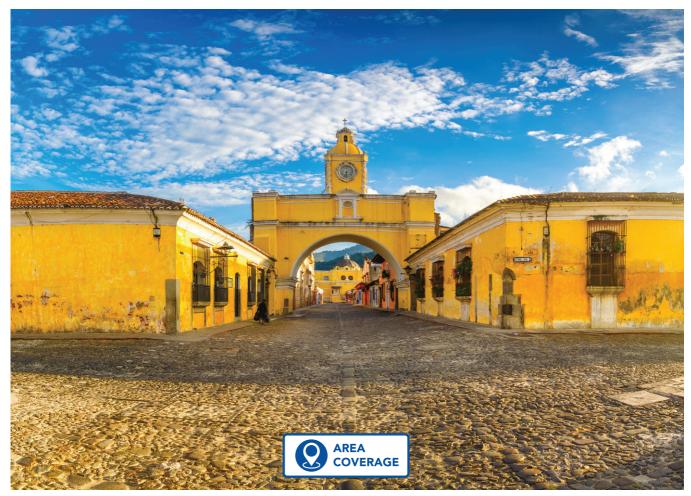












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# **Antigua and Barbuda**

t the northeastern curve of the West Indies, Antigua (an-TEE-ga) is one of 11 links in the chain of Leeward Islands. Christopher Columbus' first impression adequately describes this tropical paradise: "What beautiful lands the sun lights up in the distance." The seascape alternates rocky coves with white, sunny beaches punctuated by gentle salt breezes. Thirty miles (48 km) north is the tiny coral island of Barbuda (bar-BEW-da), a haven for seabirds. The rocky volcanic islet of Redonda is an uninhabited dependency.

Antiguans are charming people, reserved but cordial. Their expressive English *patois* with its musical intonation enchants visitors. While engaged in daily affairs, the locals form a vivid tableau. Sitting around a *warri* board, taxi drivers play an ancient game while waiting for a fare. Dressed for school in distinctive uniforms that vary according to school and grade, Antiguan children add their smiles and colors to the scene. In equally vivid dress, members of Antigua's many steel bands parade during

Carnival in St. John's, where the colorful activities contrast with the more traditionalist English atmosphere of the island's capital.

## History

Christopher Columbus sighted Antigua in 1493, naming it after Santa Maria de la Antigua, a church in Seville, Spain. An attempt to colonize the island was not made until almost a century and a half later, perhaps due to the unwelcoming population of Carib Indians.

Antiqua became a British possession in 1632, when English planters from nearby St. Kitts successfully settled the area despite Carib resistance. African slaves were imported to clear forests for the planting of tobacco, ginger, cotton and indigo. In 1666 French raiders claimed the island, but the Treaty of Breda in 1667 restored the land to the British.

In 1674 Sir Christopher Codrington, a former governor of Barbados, established the first large sugar plantation on Antigua. Codrington's accomplishments encouraged other landowners to become involved in the sugar industry, and by the early 1700s the landscape was dotted with some 170 sugar mills; the ruins of many of these structures can be seen throughout the island.

Codrington and his brother settled on Barbuda four years prior to cultivating sugar on Antigua. Ruins of the Codrington estate, Highland House, are on the island's highest point.

The economy suffered a severe blow when slavery was abolished in 1834, and a labor shortage ensued. Due to mounting pressure for a free trade market, sugar prices steadily declined and forced several plantations out of business. Three natural disasters in the mid-1800s—a hurricane, a fire and an earthquake—also contributed to the economic decline.

Antigua was granted status as an associated state of the United Kingdom as a result of the West Indies Act of 1967. This provision allowed Antigua to be self-governing with regard to internal matters, while the United Kingdom controlled defense and foreign affairs. On Nov. 1, 1981, Antigua graduated from its status as an Associated State of the British Commonwealth and became an independent country with Barbuda. The twin-island nation is governed by a prime minister and an upper and lower house of Parliament. Barbuda has often talked of secession, but remains for now with its own governing council.

Antigua's strategic position in the middle of the Antilles chain, as well as its natural harbors, made it the chief British naval base in the West Indies during the Napoleonic Wars and a prime U.S. base during World War II. The main sources of income for most islanders are tourism, light manufacturing and agriculture.

# Shopping

The main shopping district is in St. John's between Redcliffe and Newgate streets, but numerous other shops are concealed in alleys and lanes. Popular buys are imports, straw handicrafts and sea island and silk-screened cottons. Antigua's duty-free shopping includes French perfumes, cashmeres, English tweeds, Irish linen, tobacco, pipes, English bone china, Swiss watches, jewelry, crystal and cameras as well as children's clothing, accessories and toys. St. John's also has several jewelry stores where shoppers can find good buys on their favorite gemstones. Both locally produced rum and imported liquors sell at discounted prices. Cuban cigars are available here.

Situated on lower Redcliffe Street, Redcliffe Quay consists of a charming collage of shops overlooking the waterfront. The area, which was once a slave compound, harbored warehouses for area merchants after slavery was abolished in 1834. Traditional architecture is accented by narrow alleys and picturesque courtyards interspersed with quaint shops and restaurants.

Heritage Quay, at the foot of St. Mary's Street, contains a pier that accommodates cruise ships. Reggae and calypso bands occasionally perform at a small band shell, usually when cruise ships are in port. A modern complex, Heritage Quay provides a diverse selection of duty-free shopping for gemstones and handcrafted jewelry. Other shops feature apparel and accessories, fragrances and cosmetics, tobacco products, liquor and linens.

Local potters live and work at Sea View Farm Village, at the center of the island near Gunthorpes, where products range from primitive cooking pots, bowls and trays to figurines, vases, lamps and mugs.

Jolly Harbour, on the island's southwest coast, boasts an array of restaurants and shops overlooking a picturesque marina. Many of the shops feature beachwear, jewelry, perfume and souvenirs. Visitors also can make arrangements for boat charters, car rentals and diving excursions.

Nelson's Dockyard in English Harbour also accommodates an extensive marketplace. Restaurants and shops are tucked away in the restored buildings of what was once the headquarters of the British Royal Navy.

Some shops have extended hours, but stores are generally open Mon.-Sat. 8-noon and 1-5. Many shops are open on Sundays when cruise ships are in port. Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 8-2, Fri. 8-4.

#### Food and Drink

West Indian cookery, influenced by the English, graces most tables. Favorite local dishes include salted codfish, curry conch and souse, or pickled pork. Fungi, a type of polenta made with cornmeal and okra, is often served with pepperpot stew. Ducana dumplings are a favorite dessert, a mixture of grated sweet potato and coconut steamed in a banana leaf. A large portion of Antiguan food is imported, and resort-area restaurants feature American, Continental, French and Italian cuisine. Many eateries close during the summer months. In season, lobsters are

caught daily off the coast of both Antigua and Barbuda. Locally grown fruits and vegetables include herbs, eddoes, papayas, breadfruit, coconuts, ginger, pumpkins, soursop, okra, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, mangoes and Antigua's famous black pineapples.

## **Sports and Amusements**

Antigua is known as a sailor's paradise, and is a popular mooring spot for a variety of vessels, including luxury yachts. At most hotels and at English Harbour, you can charter yachts and other types of sailing vessels with trained crews for an afternoon or for longer island-hopping excursions. Smaller vessels also are available for rent.

Yachts, schooners and gaffers converge on English Harbour in mid-April for the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta, a celebration of traditional artisanship. Events include races, a heritage festival and the Concours d'Elegance show and competition. Antigua Sailing Week, considered by some to be *the* world's warm-water sailing regatta, generally is held the last Sunday in April through the first Saturday in May. The island also hosts the 7-day Antigua Charter Yacht Show in early December.

The coastline of Antigua is indented with beautiful bays and some 365 coral beaches, many accessible only by boat. Swimmers, shell collectors and sunbathers need never visit the same beach more than once in a year. Those planning beach outings are advised to carry insect repellent; no-see-ums can be a nuisance on the leeward side of the island, especially at dusk.

The beaches on the northwest coast are frequented by tourists due to the high concentration of resorts in the area. Popular northwest coast beaches include Dickenson Bay, a pretty white-sand beach bordered by several hotels and restaurants. Water sports enthusiasts will appreciate the multitude of operators offering rental equipment for windsurfing. The bay also is a departure point for glass-bottom boat and catamaran excursions.

The gentle surf at Runaway Beach also is perfect for water sports, especially children's activities. Visitors can rent floats, kayaks, windsurfers and sailboats. Water sking also can be arranged. Landlubbers can explore the area on horseback.

The coral reefs and the remains of shipwrecks, where many multicolored fish gather, make snorkeling and scuba diving popular; many dive operators on the island provide equipment and lessons. In Deep Bay, snorkelers and divers can explore a sunken ship, *The Andes*. The stately ruins of Fort Barrington rise high above the picturesque beach area bordering the bay. A path leads to the top of the fort; the hike can be strenuous, and only those in good physical condition should attempt it. Hikers who make the trek to the top will be rewarded with striking views of St. John's Harbour.

Half Moon Bay, in Half Moon Bay National Park on Antigua's southeast coast, derives its name from the coast-line's shape. The crescent-shaped beach, enhanced by

azure waters and cool breezes, is perfect for a pleasant stroll. Visitors like to climb the rocks at the north end of the shore. Surf conditions vary due to the bay's shape; visitors can experience crashing waves that present excellent opportunities for body surfing or gentle ripples ideal for swimming.

Darkwood Beach is situated on the island's southwest coast. The white-sand beach, surrounded by a hilly land-scape, is punctuated by sailboats docked in crystal-blue water. Beach chairs can be rented at a small snack area, and shelters covered with palm fronds provide respite from the sun. On a clear day, visitors can see the island of Montserrat looming on the horizon. Morris Bay, off Antigua's south coast, is the site of the Curtain Bluff Resort. In this tranquil, secluded setting adorned by sweeping palms, a prominent bluff rises majestically from the sea.

Deep-sea fishing trips for marlin, wahoo, kingfish, shark and barracuda may be chartered out of Falmouth Harbour. Fishing tournaments are held every Labour Day and Whit Monday.

Golf enthusiasts have two 18-hole courses on which to chase birdies: Cedar Valley Golf Club, (268) 462-0161; and Jolly Harbour Golf Course, (268) 462-7771. Tennis courts are available at most hotels, and tournaments held throughout the year attract many professionals. Men's and women's singles and doubles matches take place along with matches that pit amateurs against the pros. Antigua Tennis Week is held at Curtain Bluff Resort in early May.

As in other English West Indian islands, cricket is the national obsession, and Antigua is home to some of the world's best cricketers. A stadium for World Cup Cricket is named for one of the island's cricket legends, Sir Vivian Richards. Tournaments between local district teams can be seen across the island on weekends. Spectators also enjoy netball (a women's game similar to basketball, only the hoop has no backboard), basketball, soccer and Thoroughbred racing in season.

Carnival is the island's most spectacular event. Inspired by the splendor of Queen Elizabeth's coronation and the desire for a yearly festival symbolizing freedom, the Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Board instituted the Antigua Carnival. Beginning the last week in July, Carnival commemorates the Antiguan people's emancipation in 1834.

For 10 days, culminating the first Monday and Tuesday in August, Carnival throngs revel from early evening until dawn to the pulsating strains of steel and brass band music. Holiday visitors join the community in the traditional "jump up," a kaleidoscope of singing, dancing and laughter from the early morning hours until the sun is high in the sky. Carnival City, in the Recreation Grounds at St. John's, presents talented entertainers amid magnificent sets.

Shirley Heights Lookout, which offers a spectacular view of English Harbour, is the site of 6 hours of nonstop entertainment on Sunday beginning at 4 p.m. Visitors have the opportunity to mingle with residents, enjoy succulent barbecue and dance to the beat of reggae and steel bands. The island has a few small nightclubs, and year-round nightlife opportunities range from an evening at the theater to gambling in a casino or strolling on a beach.

## Sightseeing

Three-hour and all-day sightseeing cruises along Antigua's coast depart from Dickenson Bay and Heritage Quay. Catamaran cruises and eco-tours often include stops for snorkeling and swimming. Many other types of boat trips are available, including cocktail, barbecue and glass-bottom boat cruises. For more information inquire at your hotel, the Antigua and Barbuda Department of Tourism in St. John's at the Government Complex on Queen Elizabeth Highway, or the information booths at V.C. Bird International Airport, St. John's Harbor and Heritage Quay

Fig Tree Drive in southwestern Antigua winds inland through terrain similar to a rain forest and takes about 1 hour to explore by private car. Although this scenic drive is a bit bumpy, visitors are rewarded with views of old sugar mills and lush vegetation. Such tropical fruits as mangoes, oranges, guavas, pineapples, bananas and soursop grow alongside the road. Don't expect to see any figs—in Antigua, fig is the word for banana. Fig Tree Drive residents sell fruits and vegetables from stands in front of their homes. The road leading to Fig Tree Hill provides breathtaking views of fertile valleys and magnificent 1,320-foot (402-m) Mount Obama.

From Green Castle Hill, south of St. John's between Jennings and Emanuel, visitors can survey the island's interior plain and a volcanic formation; accessible via an uphill hike, it is recommended only for experienced hikers or with a local guide.

Allow about a day to drive the coastal routes, taking time along the way to explore Nelson's Dockyard in English Harbour, the small fishing villages and such coastal archeological sites as Indian Creek and Mill Reef.

An excellent opportunity to mingle with Antiguans is at Heritage Market near "The Bridge" on Market Street in southern St. John's. At this open-air market, you can bargain for fresh fish, fruits, vegetables and spices or simply enjoy the stimulating, colorful atmosphere. Local arts and crafts are featured in an adjacent complex. The market is open daily.

Another way to grasp the nature of the island and its people is to watch a game of *warri*. This ancient betting game is played on a board with 14 holes and a handful of seeds. Originally brought from Africa with the slave trade, it has remained a favorite pastime.

Air and sea excursions travel north to Barbuda, a sparsely populated coral island lined with white and pink sand beaches that run for miles. Reefs harbor tropical fish and lobster while hiding nearly 100 sunken wrecks. Barbuda's interior, notable for its wildlife, includes a large natural frigate bird sanctuary, said to be the largest in the Western Hemisphere.

The only monument on Barbuda is the Martello Tower; although its origins are unknown, its design and location suggest that it was a lighthouse. Caves near Two Foot Bay have sheltered Barbudans for centuries—even during the 2004 hurricanes. Dark Cave is home to a species of blind shrimp found in only two places in the world. There are a few guest houses in the main village of Codrington, which is named for the family who leased the island from the British Crown for "one fat pig per year if asked." Today most of the population lives here, leaving the rest of the island unspoiled.

A full-day excursion to Barbuda by air includes a tour of the Frigate Bird Sanctuary and Codrington as well as a picnic lunch with rum punch. Most hotels will make arrangements for the Barbuda day tour, which should be planned at least 24 hours in advance.

Eco-tours to Long Island and the Jumby Bay resort offer a rare glimpse of the hawksbill turtle, one of the most endangered sea turtles in the Caribbean. A stretch of sand known as Hawksbill Beach is one of the largest breeding grounds. Turtle watches are organized during nesting season from June to October.

Flights to Montserrat, the island paradise devastated by volcanic eruptions since 1995, depart four to six times daily from V.C. Bird International Airport via FlyMontserrat.

# Transportation

Direct service to V.C. Bird International Airport, 6 miles (10 km) from St. John's, is provided from Atlanta, Charlotte, Miami, New York City and Newark; carriers include American Airlines, Caribbean Airlines, Delta and United Airlines. LIAT offers nonstop flights to Antigua from San Juan, Puerto Rico. Many cruise ships include Antigua on their regular itineraries.

You can drive rented cars over most of Antiqua's roads: however, use caution due to left-hand driving. Be on the lookout for the occasional goat wandering across the road. The primary roads are navigable, but potholes are common—and so are "sleeping policemen" (the Antiguan nickname for speed bumps). Although most of the island's roads are not marked, most hotels and the Antigua and Barbuda Department of Tourism provide a map that is easy to follow.

Signs throughout Antigua show arrows pointing toward major resorts and attractions: These can assist in determining direction. If you are planning to drive through St. John's, be sure to obtain a good map; even though most of the streets are well-marked, many of them are one-way.

Presentation of a valid U.S. license and \$20 entitles you to a driver's license good for 90 days. Hertz in St. John's offers rental car discounts to AAA members; phone the office at the airport, (268) 481-4440. Taxis are readily available at major resorts and are plentiful throughout St. John's. Fares from the airport to hotels are listed at the airport, and range from \$15 to \$40 for four passengers and their luggage, depending upon the destination; for all other excursions round-trip fares are charged. Be sure to ask if fares are quoted in U.S. dollars or the local E.C. currency. If you are traveling by taxi, be sure to have enough cash on hand for the day; ATMs can be difficult to locate.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 98,012.** 

**AREA:** 280 sq km (108 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: St. John's.

HIGHEST POINT: 405 m (1.320 ft.), Mount Obama.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

**LANGUAGE:** English and an English patois.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent. Member of the British

Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. =

2.7 E.C. dollars. U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts AC and 220 volts AC, 60

cycles; voltage and current vary with location.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. Local license (\$20 U.S.) required,

valid for 90 days; drive on left.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.** 

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are

required for all passengers. Children under 10 must ride in the back seat.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1: Good Friday: Easter Monday: Labour Day, May (1st Mon.); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Carnival, Aug. (1st Mon. and Tues.); Independence Day, Nov. 1; National Heroes Day, Dec. 9; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** An 12.5 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Departure tax is \$51 U.S. and is usually included in airline ticket prices.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport or proof of U.S. citizenship and a return or onward ticket is required. No visa needed for stays up to 6 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call Antigua and Barbuda from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 268 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Antigua and Barbuda Department of Tourism

3 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza 305 E. 47th St., Suite 6A New York, NY 10017 (646) 215-6035

(212) 541-4117 (888) 268-4227

Antiqua and Barbuda Department of Tourism, St.

John's

Government Complex Queen Elizabeth Highway St. John's, Antiqua Antigua and Barbuda (268) 462-0480



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#### CEDAR GROVE



**BOOK NOW** 268/462-0290 ANTIGUA



Resort Hotel. Address: Soldiers Bay.



THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Hotel. Address: Sandy Ln.

#### **ENGLISH HARBOUR**

English Harbour is 15 miles (24 km) from St. John's on the south side of the island. Once an outfitting center for British warships, this harbor played host to the ships of Horatio Nelson, Sir Francis Drake and Walter Rodney. It suffered from neglect for many years until yachtsmen rediscovered its charm and natural beauty. Restored to its 18th-century appearance, the town is now one of the island's most popular tourist destinations.

NELSON'S DOCKYARD NATIONAL PARK extends inland from a line along the southern coasttends inland from a line along the southern coastline from Mamora Bay to Carlisle Bay. Built 1743-94, the site is reputed to be the only existing Georgian dockyard. It was used by a number of British admirals, including Horatio Nelson, as the home port of the British Fleet during the Napoleonic Wars. The dockyard also was used as a repair and maintenance station for ships. Several buildings have been restored. Fort Berkeley, the original British garrison, was built in 1704 and manned by more than 3,000 troops. Also noteworthy is the dockyard's marketplace.

The park, which covers 15 square miles (39 sq km) of rolling hills, affords memorable views of the dockyard and surrounding countryside. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (268) 481-5021. GT TI

Nelson's Dockyard Museum is on the ground floor of the Admiral's House in Nelson's Dockyard National Park. Displays in the 1855 Victorian building include naval buttons, maps, coins from the 1800s, telescopes, muskets, cannon balls, clay pipes, ships models and belongings of Horatio Nelson. A late 1700s sandbox tree next to the museum produces pods which once were used as ink blotters. Phone: (268) 481-5037.

SHIRLEY HEIGHTS is across the bay from Nelson's Dockyard. This lovely rise, which affords a view of Antigua's southern coast, was named for Gen. Thomas Shirley, who became governor in 1781. Clarence House, the Georgian villa on the road to the Heights, was built 1804-1806 as the residence of the commissioner of the Royal Navy's dockyard. The Heights served as the main lookout post in the days of Nelson. Approximately 60 structures were built here 1781-1825, and visitors can see the remains of Fort Shirlev's barracks, officers' quarters and powder magazines.

The Shirley Heights Barbecue, popular with tourists and locals alike, starts every Sunday at 4 and runs late into the night with live music and dancing. Phone: (268) 764-0389 or (268) 728-0636.

#### **FIVE ISLANDS**

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

GALLEY BAY RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 268/462-0302

Resort Hotel. **Address:** Five Islands Village.

Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

# Long Island

#### **JUMBY BAY**

FIVE DIAMOND

INSPECTED CLEAN



Resort Hotel. Address: Long Island.

# **PARES**

BETTY'S HOPE PLANTATION is in the rural limestone district. Once the largest sugar plantation on Antigua, the site served as the seat of government 1689-1704. Sir Christopher Codrington assumed ownership in 1674, naming the plantation for his daughter. The estate remained in the Codrington family for nearly 300 years. Most of the buildings lie in ruin, but one of the windmill towers has been restored. Museum exhibits illustrate the history of sugar in the West Indies, and interpretive markers describe the site. Phone: (268) 462-4930.

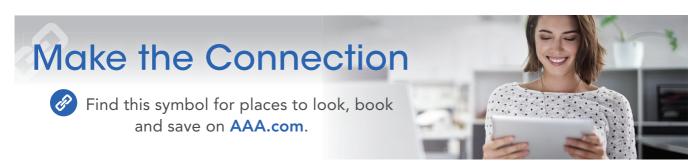
#### ST. JOHN'S

Antigua's capital, St. John's has quaint shops and colonial homes above a landlocked harbor. Tempering St.

John's 19th-century English atmosphere is a progressive spirit symbolized by modern architecture. The man-made harbor, completed in 1968, has made the island an important port of call for passenger and commercial vessels; cruise ships dock at Heritage Quay.

Shops, banks and other businesses line High Street, which runs through the center of the city to the pier. The produce market in the southern part of town is divided into sections for fruits and vegetables, meat and fish. Vendors pay weekly or monthly rent for stalls, except on Saturdays when they pay according to the number of bundles they carry through the gates. Visitors enjoy watching this "weighing-in" process.

**MUSEUM OF ANTIGUA & BARBUDA** is at Long and Market sts. The Old Court House, built in 1750, contains exhibits tracing the history of early inhabitants, colonists and slaves. **Time:** Allow 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (268) 462-1469 or (268) 462-4930.





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# **Aruba**

ruba is the smallest and most westerly of the "ABC" (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) islands. Just 15 miles (24 km) north of Venezuela, it has an exceptionally dry climate that is considered one of the most desirable in the Caribbean. Aruba's arid interior, marked by surreal, wind-bent divi-divi trees, sprawling stands of cactus and aloe vera, and huge boulders strewn like marbles contrasts sharply with the more tropical, palmlined southwest coast. It is perhaps as much the desert landscape as the active nightlife that gives Aruba the reputation as the Las Vegas of the Caribbean.

# **History**

Assessments of Aruba's worth have varied since 1499, when Alonso de Ojeda claimed the island for Spain. Because the Spaniards considered Aruba worthless, the native Arawak Indians were spared the annihilation their kinfolk faced on islands thought more valuable. The Dutch, who hardly considered the island prime real estate, took over in 1636.

During the Napoleonic Wars the British settled Aruba for a few years, but by 1816 the Dutch had returned to stay. Compared with other Caribbean islands, Aruba had a



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

rather guiet history; the island was fought over only twice and suffered few pirate attacks.

Gold discovered on Aruba in 1824 attracted considerable investment, but a century later the mine was exhausted. A different sort of gold renewed interest in the island in 1924, when the Lago Oil and Transport Co. built a large refinery that brought one of the highest standards of living in the Caribbean.

This prosperity was furthered by the development of tourism, which became Aruba's primary industry when the refinery closed in 1985. (It reopened in 1991 and closed again in 2012.) Because of the focus on tourism and the number of resorts on the island, Arubans enjoy a very low unemployment rate. A moratorium on building new hotels or timeshare resorts contributes to sustainable development and a high standard of living on the island. Arubans are proud of their heritage and are concerned that with the importation of additional workers the island's local flavor might be lost.

Aruba's location outside the hurricane belt, its near constant 82 F (28 C) temperature, the ever-present trade winds (which, at times, can be quite gusty) that cool off even the hottest days, its comparatively low humidity and infrequent rainy days combine to make the island a favorite for visitors year-round.

Practically all Arubans are fluent in four languages: English, Dutch and Spanish and Papiamento, the native language of the three "ABC" islands. A mélange of Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, African, English and French, Papiamento is a lilting, melodic language spoken by locals at home and with friends. Arubans, known for their hospitality and their friendly, outgoing nature, treat visitors as important guests and extend a sincere Bon Bini ("welcome"). This conviviality can be traced to a line from the country's national anthem: "The greatness of our people is their great cordiality."

Aruba became a separate entity within the Kingdom of the Netherlands on Jan. 1, 1986; prior to that date it was a member of the Netherlands Antilles, which was dissolved in October 2010. The Kingdom of the Netherlands, which also includes the Netherlands, Bonaire, Curação, St. Eustatius, St. Maarten and Saba, is responsible for the entire kingdom's defense and foreign affairs while the government of each country performs autonomously.

# Shopping

Aruba offers the finest in European luxury items, but it is always wise to check prices before leaving home, as not everything sells at a discount. Shops in Aruba charge 1.5 percent sales tax on purchases. U.S. dollars are as readily accepted as Aruban florins, and prices are frequently shown in dollars as well as the local currency. Credit cards are accepted at most stores. The main shopping areas are Royal Plaza Mall, Renaissance Mall, Renaissance Marketplace, Aventura Mall, Plaza Daniel Leo

and the shops along Caya G.F. Betico Croes (Main Street) in cosmopolitan Oranjestad. In addition to these downtown shopping areas, many of the larger hotels have shopping arcades that feature branches of the downtown shops.

Paseo Herencia Mall, opposite the Holiday Inn Resort Aruba, features designer shops, restaurants and a cinema. There also is a main stage featuring a nightly waterworks extravaganza and musical performances; phone (297) 586-6533. In front of Barceló Aruba is Arawak Garden, featuring souvenir shops and restaurants, while the Village and South Beach shopping complexes are adjacent to the Hilton Aruba Caribbean Resort & Casino.

Palm Beach Plaza, just moments away from Aruba's Palm Beach hotels, is a multi-level mall with shopping, dining and entertainment as well as luxury condominiums. A variety of businesses include 20 retail stores, a bowling alley, movie theater, arcade, amphitheater, day spa, restaurants and food court; phone (297) 586-0045.

Alhambra Casino and Shops, south of Palm Beach Plaza and opposite the Divi Village Golf Course, features restaurants, boutiques, a casino, a market and a spa. Retail highlights include Aruba Aloe, Bijoux Terner Boutique and The Lazy Lizard; phone (297) 588-9000.

Royal Plaza Mall on L.G. Smith Boulevard features designer clothing, jewelry and watches. Souvenirs, beachwear, local and foreign music, and Cuban cigars also can be found at the colorful mall built in the Dutch Caribbean style of architecture; phone (297) 588-0351.

Behind the Royal Plaza Mall are a post office and Botica Kibrahacha, a drugstore and pharmacy. Two ATMs inside the mall offer local currency and U.S. dollars. The Renaissance Mall adjoining the Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino has entrances on Havenstraat and L.G. Smith Boulevard. The mall, where visitors can see the hotel's indoor boat lagoon, contains some 40 shops and designer boutiques; phone (297) 523-6115.

On Plaza Daniel Leo across from the Renaissance Mall are European boutiques, perfumeries and cosmetics shops. The square is recognized by its Dutch Colonial architecture painted in pastels.

Shops along Caya G.F. Betico Croes, which starts at Plaza Daniel Leo, offer clothing, perfume and cosmetics, sunglasses, souvenirs and imported items such as Dutch pewter, Delftware and Hummel figurines.

Renaissance Marketplace is on L.G. Smith Boulevard across from the Parliament building. Situated on the waterfront next to a marina and the Seaport Casino, the market contains a movie theater, restaurants and souvenir shops; phone (297) 582-4622.

Most Oranjestad stores are open Mon.-Sat. 9-6. Some stores also are open Sunday mornings and holidays when cruise ships are in port. The port, which can handle up to four ships, is near downtown Oranjestad and convenient

to the main shopping areas. Banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-4. The Caribbean Mercantile Bank at the airport is open Mon.-Fri. 8-4:30, Sat. 10-6.

#### Food and Drink

Menus catering to all tastes and budgets can be found in Oranjestad. Signs reading Aki ta bende kuminda krioyo mean "local food sold here." Island specialties include funchi, a polenta-like cornmeal staple served with meat or fish; pan bati, a somewhat sweet Aruban pancake made of cornmeal; and *keri keri*, a mixture of tomatoes, peppers, shredded fish and herbs.

Other popular Aruban dishes include keshi yena, a Dutch cheese stuffed with meat, chicken or fish that is seasoned with raisins, olives, onions and tomatoes; and pastechi, pastries filled with cheese, meat, seafood or other ingredients. *Erwten soep* is a thick pea soup cooked with pork, ham and sausage; stoba is a stew of vegetables and meat (usually goat); and soppi di pisca is fish soup seasoned with yerbi hole, a local variety of basil. Robo porco, salted pig's tail, is often added to traditional dishes.

Island flavors are evident in fresh caught fish such as wahoo, snapper or grouper simply prepared and served with a *Criollo* (Creole) sauce of tomatoes, onions, garlic and bell peppers. The proximity of the island to South America accounts for the popularity of Argentinian churrasco steaks and churrascarias, Brazilian steak houses. A popular accompaniment to any Aruban meal is the locally produced Balashi beer, a pilsner-style brew.

Most restaurants automatically add a service charge of 15 percent to the bill, which is shared among the restaurant staff. An additional tip is appreciated, especially when service is exceptional. Dinner reservations are recommended at the island's better restaurants, and the majority accept credit cards.

As for liquid refreshment, sparse rainfall used to make drinking water scarce, but modern technology allows fresh water to be distilled from the sea. In fact, Aruba boasts one of the world's largest desalinization plants; drinking tap water is safe and refreshing.

## Sports and Amusements

As on its sister islands, vegetation on Aruba is sparse. The dusty interior contains huge boulders and wind-bent divi-divi (watapana) trees. Recreational activities include hiking through Arikok National Park; cave exploring at Fontein, Huliba and Guadirikiri; and horseback riding through the outback.

There is plenty to do along the coast, with beachrelated and water activities at the top of the list. Although all of Aruba's beaches are public, beach chairs are reserved for hotel guests. Palapas, or thatch-covered beach huts, are so coveted for shade that guests line up early in the morning for reservations.

Seven miles (11 km) of uninterrupted beach stretch from Druif Beach to Eagle Beach and from Palm Beach to Malmok Beach. The best swimming spots are Eagle and Palm beaches, due to the fact that the water is the calmest off the island's southwest coast. These beaches also are where the majority of the island's hotels are concentrated. Banana boats and parasailers being towed behind speed boats are a common sight along Palm Beach. For those in search of expansive stretches of sand, Eagle Beach and nearby Manchebo Beach offer wider strips than can be found at Palm Beach.

Druif Beach, south of Eagle Beach, also is a pleasant place to swim for those not averse to some slight wave action. There are small beach coves on the north coast— Boca Prins, Boca Grandi and Dos Playa. Although the scenery is beautiful, the north coast is not recommended for swimming, due to strong currents and large waves.

The beaches in the southeast section of the island just beyond the oil refinery tend to be less populated than the southwest beaches. Baby Beach, a large, secluded inlet at the island's southeast tip, is so named because it is perfect for small children and inexperienced swimmers. This is because the water remains shallow quite a distance from the shore, achieving depths no greater than 5 feet (1.5 m). It also is a popular beach among the locals for relaxing and picnicking.

At Rodgers Beach, next to Baby Beach, swimmers can enjoy a little more surf and find good swimming and snorkeling opportunities. And although it can be somewhat disconcerting to see the large refinery looming so close by, the water and air at Baby and Rodgers beaches are crystal clear, and the beaches are ideal for a family outing.

Trade winds that blow at a maximum speed of 27 knots (31 mph, 50 km/h) daily, with an average speed of 18 knots (21 mph, 34 km/h), make conditions perfect for windsurfing and kitesurfing; the Aruba Hi-Winds Tournament takes place in June or July. The entire area of coast between Hadicurari and Malmok beaches provides excellent windsurfing opportunities. Hadicurari, locally referred to as "Fishermen's Huts," is one of the most popular spots.

North of Fishermen's Huts, the Malmok Beach area is a great place to learn how to windsurf since the water is only between 2 and 3 feet (.6 and .9 m) deep. There are many small guest houses and day-rental apartments in this area which cater to windsurfers, and windsurfing lessons and equipment rental are readily available. Boca Grandi, just north of Seroe Colorado Point, is an area famous for professional windsurfing.

Visibility in Aruba's clear waters can extend as far as 90 feet (27 m) and the water temperature is never under 70 F (21 C), making the area very desirable for snorkeling and scuba diving. A vessel often explored by divers is the Antilla, the wreckage of a World War II German freighter off the coast midway between Arashi and Malmok. One of the largest wrecks in the Caribbean, the ship was purposefully sunk in 1941 in order to avoid capture by Allied forces. Another cement cargo ship, the *Jane Sea*, lies near the Barcadera Reefs.

Arashi Beach, north of Malmok on the southwest coast, is frequented by both scuba divers and snorkelers. Mangel Halto, a reef off the southeast coast halfway between Oranjestad and San Nicolas, is a favorite with divers; snorkeling also is possible in this area. Isla d'Oro, about 1 mile (1.6 km) east of Spanish Lagoon, is another popular dive site. Barcadera Reef is especially recommended for scuba diving.

Snorkeling is a featured activity at De Palm Island, and a beautiful reef is easily accessible off the shallow channel of Baby Beach. Berth Reef, off Rodgers Beach, and the reefs off Bachelor's Beach, on the northeast coast, are favored snorkeling spots for advanced swimmers. Rental equipment for diving, windsurfing and water skiing is available throughout the island.

Fishing for blue and white marlin, king fish, tuna, bonito and other game fish is best July through October. Also in abundant supply are sailfish, mahi mahi, amberjack, wahoo and barracuda. Boats for deep-sea fishing can be chartered at the Seaport Marina and Oranjestad piers. Some yachts and catamarans offer 2-hour coastal cruises, complete with snacks and beverages. Motorboats, small sailboats, pedal boats and sea jeeps (wave runners) can be rented for shorter periods of time at diverse aquatic facilities.

As for non-aquatic recreation, most hotels and private clubs provide tennis courts and information about horse-back riding. Tierra del Sol, (297) 586-7800, features an 18-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr. A nine-hole course is available at The Links at Divi Aruba, (297) 581-4653.

Regardless which outdoor activity you choose—whether languidly soaking up some sun on the beach or energetically hiking or bicycling through the island's interior—always remember that you are in the tropical Caribbean, and the effects of the sun can be devastating. Keep hydrated, use plenty of high-octane sunscreen and wear a head covering.

In addition to the many activities available during the day, Aruba also has an active nightlife: Hotel casinos and various nightclubs and restaurants offer dancing and after-dinner entertainment. The island's resorts sponsor more than 50 themed events that occur on a weekly basis, including folkloric, limbo and steel-band shows.

Casino gambling is a popular pastime in Aruba, with 11 casinos offering blackjack, roulette, baccarat, craps and slot machines. One of the most common games is Caribbean stud poker, which can be played by table or machine. Visitors to the casinos must be at least 18. Aruba's

casinos are not as formal as those in Atlantic City or Las Vegas, and casual attire is acceptable.

Some of the best local entertainment takes place at the Bon Bini Festival, held every Tuesday evening at Fort Zoutman in Oranjestad at 7 p.m. Offerings include food, music and crafts. Concerts and folkloric shows also are performed at the Cultural Center (Cas di Cultura) at Vondellaan 2 in Oranjestad. Movies, usually American, are shown at the cinema at the Renaissance Marketplace.

The Carubbian Festival takes place in San Nicolas Thursday night from 6-10 p.m. and showcases diverse cuisines from the region and a parade of local entertainers. Tourists can purchase a package at hotels including round-trip transportation. The main street is closed to traffic, becoming a pedestrian mall filled with colorful booths selling local food, handicrafts and logo souvenirs.

The island version of New Orleans' Mardi Gras, Aruba's Carnival is celebrated during January and February and enlists locals and tourists alike in parades, dances, contests and parties; the Grand Parade takes place the Sunday before Ash Wednesday.

Other major events include The Soul Beach Music Festival in May, Aruba International Film Festival in October and December's Dande Festival.

Aruba Today, Aruba's English newspaper, is available free of charge at most hotels.

## **Sightseeing**

Aruba has good roads, though many are unmarked. However, the government has marked the roads to point the way to the resort areas and specific attractions. You might have to rely on word of mouth or try navigating by the divi-divi trees which always point southwest away from the trade winds; if you are lost, just remember that these trees blow in the direction of the resorts. The island is about 19.6 miles (32 km) long and 6 miles (10 km) wide at its broadest point and most of it can be toured by car.

Jeep tours are a popular way to experience the otherworldly rock-strewn, almost moon-like landscape common to Aruba's interior, and caravans of four-wheel-drive vehicles are a familiar sight along the hilly, bumpy dirt roads of such spots as Arikok National Park. A guide, who rides in the lead vehicle, provides a narration, which can be heard through speakers mounted in each visitor-driven jeep.

For an adventurous excursion, drive into Aruba's *cunucu*, or countryside, where fields of cactuses and aloe vera are punctuated by wandering goats and colorful cottages. Old-style cunucu houses, which appear throughout the island, are characterized by such features as rain tanks, a necessity in the days before desalinization, wooden windows and doors, and chimneys once used for cooking.

Chances are you will find your own Kodak moment perhaps one of the huge rock formations that mark the area around Casibari and Ayo, from which a road continues northeast to Andicuri. Here was the famed Natural Bridge, a coral limestone formation that collapsed into the sea in 2005. A smaller "daughter" bridge is nearby. With a little further exploration you might discover secluded inlets where crashing waves leap upward above the cliffs.

On J.E. Irausquin Boulevard, the main road leading to the high-rise hotels at Palm Beach, is an Aruban landmark, the Old Dutch Windmill. Built in the Netherlands in 1804, it was moved to Aruba and reconstructed at its present site in 1974. It currently houses a restaurant.

Directly across the road from the windmill is the Bubali Bird Sanctuary. An anomaly in semi-arid Aruba, the lush refuge is a resting and breeding grounds for more than 80 species of migrating waterfowls, including herons, egrets, cormorants, ducks and gulls. There is no charge to walk through the marsh grasses or bird-watch from the observation tower.

Visitors can view the entire island at Hooiberg, also nicknamed Haystack Mountain, between Santa Cruz and Ayo. Athletically inclined individuals may choose to climb the almost 600 steps that ascend to the mountain's top, which at 541 feet (165 m) is the island's second highest elevation. Mount Jamanota, to the southeast at the center of the island, is Aruba's highest point at 617 feet (188 m). The panorama from its summit includes Frenchman's Pass on the south coast, where Indians defended their island against the French.

At the island's northern tip, the California Lighthouse, named for the wreck of the cargo ship California just offshore, is on a cliff that offers a panorama of Arashi, Malmok, Palm and Eagle beaches. At this point, the difference can be observed between the calm southern coast and the northern coast with waves crashing against the shoreline.

Glass-bottom boats provide views of colorful fish, coral formations and shipwrecks during 90-minute trips to the California Lighthouse. Trimaran and catamaran sailing excursions, which offer snorkeling trips and sunset cocktail cruises, also are available.

Reputable ticket booking establishments include *Atlan*tis Submarine, De Palm Tours, Pelican Adventures, Red Sail Sports and Unique Sports of Aruba. Both half-day and full-day tours, in various combinations, are available; check with your hotel for details.

Some companies offer tours that cater to such specialized interests as wildlife or history. Information about excursions can be obtained at the guest service/concierge desk at hotels, at Aruba Tourism Authority at L.G. Smith Boulevard #8 or at most hotels; phone (297) 582-3777 or (800) 862-7822.

#### **Transportation**

Queen Beatrix International Airport has direct flights from Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Newark, New York, Orlando, Philadelphia, Toronto and Washington, D.C.; interisland flights to the other "ABC" islands are available. Direct flights from Aruba to Colombia and Venezuela also are available. In addition, Aruba is a popular port of call for cruise ships.

Hotels, by law, are not allowed to provide transportation to and from the airport for their guests. Taxis, however, are readily available at the airport. Cabs are not metered, but fares are set by the government and are based on destination rather than mileage. The fare (per taxi, not per person) from the airport to the downtown area is \$21; the fee to the Eagle Beach hotel area is \$28; and to the Palm Beach hotel area the cost is \$30. Fares slightly increase between midnight and 6 a.m. and on official holidays.

Most American car rental firms have branches on the island, and there also are several local companies. Many rental agencies have outlets across from the main terminal at Queen Beatrix International Airport, though if you prefer to rent a car for just a few days, the larger hotels have rentals available on-site. Hertz—with outlets at the airport, the cruise terminal and at several major hotels offers discounts to AAA members; phone (297) 588-7570 or (800) 654-3080.

Speed limits in Aruba are generally 30 mph (50 km/h) in town and 50 mph (80 km/h) on out-of-town roads. Drivers should be aware that most of the traffic in Oranjestad is one-way, and vehicles approaching from the right have the right of way when there is no road sign posted. Driving is on the right side of the road, and right turns on red are not permitted. "Roundabouts," traffic circles common in Europe, also can be found at major intersections in Aruba.

Traffic in the heart of Oranjestad can be quite congested during peak hours, and parking spaces are often at a premium. The free parking lot near Royal Plaza Mall, adjacent to the main bus station, is a good alternative; from there it's only a short walk to the main shopping

A trolley route begins by the Cruise Ship Terminal on the outskirts of Oranjestad, taking visitors through to the main street of Caya G. F. Betico Croes for shopping and access to historical sites. The trolley operates from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Due to Aruba's European heritage, speed limits and distances on road signs are presented in kilometers, and the international symbols used on the signs may be unfamiliar to drivers accustomed to U.S. signage. Not all of these symbols are self-explanatory; be sure and familiarize yourself with their meanings before setting out.

Part of L.G. Smith Boulevard, which runs in front of the Palm Beach hotels, is known as J.E. Irausquin Boulevard. Some street signs in the stretch of road between the Divi Tamarijn and the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino reflect this name.

Although maps might show street names and highway numbers, once you leave the downtown area in Oranjestad road signs and street markers are few and far between. Also, outside the main commercial and residential areas, and especially if you venture into the countryside (cunucu), roads are not likely to be paved. Even so, it's a small island and not difficult to navigate as long as you remember to ask for directions before heading out.

Use caution when traveling on wet roads; dirt and oil accumulate due to scarce rainfall, resulting in slippery conditions in the rain. If you are planning an excursion through Aruba's interior, a car with four-wheel-drive is a good idea. Make sure your vehicle is in good working order, since repair facilities are not always available.

Scooters and motorcycles also can be rented, but keep in mind that the island is deserted in certain areas and the terrain can be rough and hilly. Taxis also can be hired for sightseeing. If you choose to take a cab, check the fixed taxi rates beforehand. To order a cab phone (297) 587-5900.

An inexpensive transportation option to Oranjestad from the hotels at Eagle and Palm beaches is the regular bus service provided by Arubus. Stops are conveniently located in front of most major lodgings along the road to the downtown area. The main bus terminal is on L.G. Smith Boulevard, exit to Royal Plaza in downtown Oranjestad.

Buses run daily 5:40 a.m.-11:40 p.m. From Monday through Saturday the buses make scheduled stops 20 minutes before the hour, 10 minutes before the hour, on the hour and 25 minutes after the hour; after 7 p.m. buses only stop 20 minutes before the hour. On Sunday buses run on a reduced schedule, stopping 20 minutes before the hour. The fare is \$5-\$8 for a round-trip; \$10 for one-day pass.

Since the U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security has officers stationed at Queen Beatrix International Airport, U.S. visitors save time by clearing customs in Aruba before departure rather than at their destination.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** 119,496.

**AREA:** 181 sq km (70 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Oranjestad.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 188 m (617 ft.), Mount Jamanota.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

**LANGUAGE:** Dutch and Papiamento are the official languages, but Spanish and English are widely spoken.

**GOVERNMENT:** Autonomous member of the Kingdom

of the Netherlands.

**CURRENCY:** Aruba florin divided into 100 cents. \$1 U.S. = approx. 1.8 Aruba florin. U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-120 volts, 60 cycles AC.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS:** 21-25, depending on the rental car agency; maximum age 65-70. U.S. license valid; drive on right.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.** 

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are required for all passengers. Children under 12 must ride in the back seat. Child restraints are required for children under age 5.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; G.F. "Betico" Croes' Day, Jan. 25; Carnival Monday, Feb. or Mar. (Mon. before Ash Wednesday); National Anthem and Flag Day, Mar. 18; Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; King's Day, Apr. 27; Labour Day, May 1; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** Shops charge 1.5 percent sales tax on purchases. A 6- to 10-percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel and restaurant bills. For flights to the United States, a departure tax of \$36.75 U.S. and a special facility charge of \$3.25 are usually included in airline ticket prices.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport or proof of U.S. citizenship and return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Aruba from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 297 + the 7-digit local number beginning with "5."

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Aruba Tourism Authority, New Jersey 400 Plaza Dr. Secaucus, NJ 07094

(201) 558-1110 (800) 862-7822

Aruba Tourism Authority, Oranjestad

L.G. Smith Blvd. 8 Oranjestad, Aruba (297) 582-3777

#### BUSHIRIBANA

The castle-like ruins of an old pirate stronghold still stand at Bushiribana, perhaps dating to the 15th century. Here too are the abandoned gold mines that once produced some three million pounds of gold. The rugged north coast is known for its crashing waves and unusual rock formations.

The island's most famous tourist attraction, the Natural Bridge, fell into the sea in 2005. The 100-foot-long coral span, which had survived centuries of the ocean's pounding, was the largest of its kind in the Caribbean.

AYO ROCK FORMATIONS is 1.9 mi. (3 km) s. of Bushiribana. The origin of this geological mystery has never been determined. Diorite boulders, each weighing several thousand tons, balance precariously on edge or on each other. Indian paintings can be seen on some of the rocks.

#### **ORANJESTAD**

Oranjestad, which translates to "Orange City," derived its name from the House of Orange, the ruling family of the Netherlands. Dutch architecture in Oranjestad blends nicely with Caribbean colors: Dutch colonial houses are painted green, blue, yellow and brown. This profusion of color is maintained by a local tenet that warns against coveting the color of a neighbor's house. Modern residences, broad boulevards and a park complement the city's charm.

ARUBA BUTTERFLY FARM is on J.E. Irausquin Blvd. More than 35 species from around the world are housed in a tropical garden. Tours trace the four stages of the butterfly life cycle. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (297) 586-3656. **GT** 

ATLANTIS SUBMARINE EXPEDITION departs from Adventure Center on L.G. Smith Blvd. This 65-foot-long (20 m), 48-passenger submarine cruises at a maximum depth of 130 feet (43 m), offering excellent views of Barcadera Reef, marine life and coral formations. **Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (297) 522-4500.



### AMSTERDAM MANOR BEACH RESORT BOOK NOW 297/527-1100



INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Boutique Hotel. Address: 252 JE Irausquin Blvd. Facility: The Dutch Colonial exterior, painted a cheerful yellow with crisp white trim, gives this small hotel the feel of a charming village. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 72 efficiencies, some two bedrooms. 1-3 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.

























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#### BUCUTI & TARA BEACH RESORT, ARUBA BOOK NOW

297/583-1100



Boutique Hotel. Address: 55B LG Smith Blvd. Location: Oceanfront. Located behind Alhambra Casino complex. Facility: Located on a gorgeous stretch of beach, this adults-only resort delivers a personalized experience, making it a favorite for couples' celebrations. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 104 units, some kitchens. 1-4 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: complimentary and valet laundry.

























DIVI ARUBA ALL INCLUSIVE BOOK NOW 297/525-5200



Resort Hotel. **Address:** 45 JE Irausquin Blvd.

DIVI VILLAGE GOLF & BEACH RESORT BOOK NOW 297/583-5000



Resort Condominium. Address: 93 JE Irausquin Blvd.



EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON ARUBA RESORT

**BOOK NOW** 

297/525-6000



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking **AAA/CAA** rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 268 J E Irausquin Blvd.

#### HYATT PLACE ARUBA AIRPORT BOOK NOW 297/523-1234



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of HYATT PLACE Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates! Members also receive free breakfast at Hyatt Place/Hyatt House with their World of Hyatt membership!

Hotel. Address: 6B Wayaca. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 116 units. 7 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee). Amenities: safes. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: valet laundry.





























#### MVC EAGLE BEACH ARUBA BOOK NOW 297/587-0110



Motel, Address: 240 JE Irausquin Blvd. Facility: Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 19 units. 2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: tennis. Guest

Services: coin laundry. SAVE

















PARADISE BEACH VILLAS BOOK NOW 297/525-4000



Vacation Rental Condominium. Address: 64 JE Irausquin Blvd.



#### RENAISSANCE WIND CREEK ARUBA RESORT

BOOK NOW

297/583-6000



FOUR DIAMOND

INSPECTED @ CLEAN®

RENAISSANCE® HOTELS

AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel, Address: 82 LG Smith Blvd, Location: Waterfront, Part of Renaissance Marketplace. Facility: Set amid a bustling area of shopping and dining, this resort features its own private island and a

boat to ferry quests over for lounging in the sun and enjoying a variety of water sports. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 555 units, some efficiencies and condominiums. 5-6 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 6 restaurants, also, L.G. Smith's Steak & Chop House, see separate listing, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, steamroom, cabanas, self-propelled boats, marina, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.































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Resort Hotel. Address: 41 JE Irausquin Blvd.



L.G. SMITH'S STEAK & CHOP HOUSE 297/523-6195



Steak Seafood Fine Dining. Address: 82 LG Smith Blvd.

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AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: 101 LG Smith Blvd. Location: MARRIOTT Oceanfront. Facility: This sprawling oceanfront resort features a free-form, lagoon-style swimming pool and separate adults-only pool. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 414 units. 8 stories, interior corridors. Terms: check-in

4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, boarding pass kiosk, rental car service.



































COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT ARUBA RESORT BOOK NOW 297/526-7700



COURTYARD AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: 330 JE Irausquin Blvd. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 144 units. 2 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, cabanas, recreation programs, kids club, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry, boarding pass kiosk, area transportation.





























DIVI ARUBA PHOENIX BEACH RESORT

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THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Condominium. Address: 75 JE Irausquin Blvd.

#### HILTON ARUBA CARIBBEAN RESORT & CASINO BOOK NOW 297/586-6555







Resort Hotel. Address: 81 JE Irausquin Blvd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Lush landscaping creates a tropical oasis at this beachfront location. Rooms are spread across three buildings, each with an angled

balcony affording glimpses or full views of the ocean. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 358 units. 4-8 stories, interior corridors. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, bicycles, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service. (See ad p. 44.)





























#### HOLIDAY INN RESORT ARUBA - BEACH RESORT & CASINO BOOK NOW 297/586-3600



Resort Hotel. Address: 230 JE Irausquin Blvd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Good-size rooms are spread over three vintage, mid-rise buildings, each with comfortable bedding, a small task table and a furnished balcony. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 590 units. 6-7 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry, rental car service.





























#### HYATT REGENCY ARUBA RESORT, SPA & CASINO

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297/586-1234







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Resort Hotel. Address: 85 JE Irausquin Blvd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Lush landscaping fills the gorgeous courtyard, with multiple water features including a koi pond. Views from upper floors give a sweeping view of the pool complex and the ocean. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 359 units. 5-9 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. **Dining:** 2 restaurants, entertainment, **Pool:** outdoor, **Activities:** hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

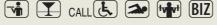






























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AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Resort Condominium. Address: 103 LG Smith Blvd.



#### THE RITZ-CARLTON, ARUBA BOOK NOW 297/527-2222





AAA Benefit: Special member savings plus Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

THE RITZ - CARLTON

Resort Hotel. Address: 107 LG Smith Blvd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Spacious rooms feature luxurious bedding, a large desk,

furnished balcony, and marble bathroom with a double vanity and separate shower and soaking tub. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 320 units. 7 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, playground, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, boarding pass kiosk, rental car service.



































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## The Bahamas

🖪 he subtropical Bahamas, where turquoise waters flow along miles of white sand beaches, include more than 2,000 cays, islets and rocks. Of the approximately 700 islands, 30 of the largest ones are inhabited. Beginning 50 miles (80 km) from the Florida coast, The Bahamas form a 760-mile (1,223-km) arc through the Atlantic, creating a natural barrier across the eastern gateway to the Gulf of Mexico. The island of Bimini is closest to Florida, while the southernmost island, Inagua, is 60 miles (97 km) from Haiti. Spaniards named this archipelago baja mar, or "shallow sea."

The most popular tourist destinations in The Bahamas is the islands' capital, Nassau, on New Providence Island. It is rich in colonial history and charm and offers varied opportunities for sports activities, shopping and sightseeing. Prestigious Paradise Island, linked by entry and exit bridges to Nassau, is a playground of the rich. Bahamar, a multi-hotel resort complex, is one of the island's latest developments. About 80 percent of the people vacationing in The Bahamas are from the United States.

The Out Islands, known the world over for game fishing, scuba diving, sailing, pristine beaches and emerald-blue seas, extend as far as you can see. There are resorts in



areas noted for their lack of commercial development, and where only the silver-top thatch palms and flamingoes claim residence. The principal Out Islands are Abaco, Andros, Bimini, Cat Island, Eleuthera, Exuma and Long Island. Abaco has naturally protected waters and dozens of offshore cays (pronounced keys) that make them a favorite with yachting and fishing enthusiasts. Here there are excellent marinas, guides and boats for hire, and championship golf courses.

Just off the island of Eleuthera, with its picturesque little villages and exclusive resorts, are the charming settlements of Harbour Island, with its pink sandy beaches, and Spanish Wells, which in the old days served as a watering hole for Spanish galleons. The Exumas have many cays, most of which can be reached only by boat.

#### **History**

The Bahamas claim the distinction of being Christopher Columbus' first New World discovery. In 1492 he stepped ashore on an island originally called Guanahani and renamed it San Salvador. The Lucayan Indians, who then populated the islands, were soon sent by the Spaniards to labor in the mines and sugar mills of Cuba and Hispaniola. However, the Spaniards did not settle here, and in 1629 King Charles I of England granted the islands to Sir Robert Heath, attorney general of England.

A group of English merchants and pioneers from Bermuda, known as the Eleutherian Adventurers, then came seeking religious freedom. They colonized Eleuthera in 1648 and attempted to establish the first republic in the New World. This attempt at colonization and other settlements which followed were, for the most part, unsuccessful. As a result, The Bahamas were soon overrun by pirates such as Blackbeard and Calico Jack, who were finally routed in 1718 by Capt. Woodes Rogers, the first royal governor.

Another wave of immigration occurred after the American Revolution, when Loyalist refugees fled to The Bahamas, taking their slaves with them. England ruled until 1782, when Spain captured the islands; however, the Treaty of Versailles returned them to England once again in 1783.

Throughout The Bahamas' turbulent history their strategically positioned cays and islets played a vital role in international intrigues. Not only were The Bahamas a formidable hideout for pirates, but Confederate blockade runners during the American Civil War and bootleggers during America's Prohibition Era also exploited the islands' proximity to Florida in efforts to smuggle contraband into the United States.

From 1718 to 1969 a governor was appointed by the British Crown; after 1969 the appointment was made in consultation with The Bahamas Government. On July 10, 1973, the islands became an independent sovereign nation headed by a prime minister. Now a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, the islands retain many legacies from the years of British rule, including the distinctive Bahamian accent and two popular spectator sports—cricket and rugby.

#### Shopping

Shoppers have a field day exploring the multitude of stores and boutiques lining the streets of Nassau. Shops also are found just over the bridge on Paradise Island, at Cable Beach and at shopping malls in the outlying areas.

Bay Street is the center of activity in Nassau, where the merchandise consists of imported European goods: perfumes, brass, leather goods, cameras, cashmere, candies, jewelry, china, porcelain, crystal, glass, figurines, linens and designer and sportswear fashions to name just a few. Duty-free prices, made available for the first time in 1992, make these items all the more attractive. Available at discount prices are the island's own liqueur, Nassau Royale, and local banana rums and coconut liqueurs. Festival Place, on Prince George Wharf, features local crafts, food and music in an atmosphere reminiscent of a Bahamian village.

Since the 1930s, Nassau's Straw Market on Bay Street was famed for its island handicrafts made not only from straw but also from wood and a variety of shells, including coconut and conch (pronounced konk). Bargaining is expected here, but not in Nassau's shops. Items made from tortoiseshell are banned from importation into the United States. Most shops are open Mon.-Sat. 9-5. Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 9:30-3, Fri. 9:30-4:30. All banks are closed on Saturday and Sunday. ATMs are available 24 hours a day. Major credit cards, such as Visa and MasterCard, are widely accepted.

#### Food and Drink

With the exception of fruit, vegetables and seafood, most food is imported. Many restaurants and hotels feature European, Chinese, Italian, Japanese and American cuisines. But Bahamian specialties should not be overlooked: dishes include pigeon peas and rice, rock lobster, baked crab, grouper cutlets and fried snapper. Souse is a hearty dish of simmered vegetables and chicken or pig's feet. Conch, a meaty mollusk, is served raw—with fresh lime juice, onions, tomatoes and peppers—and can also be steamed, pounded and deep-fried ("cracked"), or used as an ingredient in soups, chowders and fritters. Rumraisin ice cream, guava duff (a steamed bread pudding topped with guava sauce) or a coconut tart round off the meal. Tap water is usually safe to drink; bottled water is widely available. Milk is pasteurized.

Prices for meals in hotels are higher during the winter season, and on the whole, native dishes are usually the least expensive. Most restaurants add a 15-percent service charge to the bill.

#### **Sports and Amusements**

Local and international yachting and sailing regattas, golf and tennis tournaments, cricket, rugby and squash are only a few of the activities available in The Bahamas. That golf ranks high in popularity is verified by the number of 18-hole public golf courses on New Providence Island, including the Ocean Club golf course. The PGA-rated Ocean Club Golf Course on Paradise Island is exclusively for the guests of Atlantis properties.

Great Abaco Island boasts an 18-hole course, the Scottish-style Abaco Club on Winding Bay. Some hotels have tennis courts and information about horseback riding which is available in Nassau.

Though landlubbers enjoy their share of activities, water sports captivate the majority of island travelers. The numerous coves along the beaches of New Providence Island create natural pools ideal for swimming and snorkeling. The 142-mile (228-km) underwater coral reef known for its "blue holes," freshwater springs that well to the surface, offers excellent scuba diving. Paradise Island boasts one of the finest beaches in The Bahamas. Fishing in The Bahamas is good, and light-tackle anglers are amply rewarded.

Peterson Cay National Park, some 15 miles (24 km) east of Freeport, offers excellent opportunities for snorkeling and diving in a pristine setting and is accessible by boat only.

The trade winds ensure fine sailing conditions all year; boats and equipment for sailing, parasailing, fishing, water skiing, windsurfing, snorkeling, scuba diving and spear fishing can be rented from charter firms at the major marinas and from the docks of many waterfront hotels. Hotels that offer parasailing are found in Nassau and Paradise Island; and Cockburn Town, San Salvador Island.

An informative publication for those interested in bareboat charters is the "Yachtsman's Guide to The Bahamas," available at many yachting supply stores, marinas and bookstores in The Bahamas. The 1- or 2-hour scuba diving lessons offered throughout the islands are usually not enough preparation for the sport; you should take a complete course in advance.

Those who prefer indoor recreation will find nightclubs and casinos on New Providence Island and Paradise Island. Hotel nightclubs and restaurants usually sponsor dancing and after-dinner entertainment. The Out Island hotels occasionally feature calypso and steel-drum bands. First-run American movies are shown in New Providence, Grand Bahama and Eleuthera theaters.

Lively festivals and tournaments are offered throughout the year. Junkanoo, the Bahamian national festival, is held on December 26 (Boxing Day) and January 1. Across the islands, competing groups in costumes and playing music parade through the streets from 1 a.m. to dawn vying for prizes. The most spectacular parade takes place on Bay Street in Nassau, where the sounds of cowbells, goatskin drums and whistles can be heard in the distance. Visitors are free to join in the revelry as part of a "scrap" group.

Smaller versions of Junkanoo are held at various hotels year-round. The Junkanoo Summer Festival is held in Nassau the last weekend of July. Featured are Bahamian food, craft demonstrations, storytelling, special children's activities, live entertainment and parades. For additional information, contact the Ministry of Tourism's Events and Entertainment Department or the Bahamas National Festival Commission; phone (242) 302-2000 or (242) 356-2100, respectively.

#### **Sightseeing**

Popular excursions include glass-bottom boat trips, which depart from the Prince George Dock in Nassau and the Port Lucaya Marketplace on Grand Bahama Island, or swimming and snorkeling cruises around Nassau and to Blackbeard's Cay on catamarans. Several yacht trips depart from the Nassau Yacht Haven for excursions to nearby cays.

Views of the underwater world around Nassau are offered daily aboard the *Seaworld Explorer*, a semisubmarine that operates out of Prince George Wharf. Glass-bottom boats also depart from Prince George Wharf for 90-minute tours of the Sea Gardens, with views of colorful tropical fish and coral formations.

The tour buses that leave from the major hotels and Festival Place (the cruise ship port) are convenient and economical ways to tour Nassau. A pleasant 2-hour drive might include stops at such sites as the Queen's Staircase, Government House, Ardastra Gardens and forts Fincastle, Montagu and Charlotte.

#### **Transportation**

Air service from the East Coast and the Midwest is available aboard many major carriers to Lynden Pindling International Airport and Grand Bahama International Airport. American Airlines provides nonstop scheduled flights from Charlotte, Dallas/Fort Worth, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. Delta provides nonstop service from its Atlanta hub to Nassau/Paradise Island and Grand Bahama Island; daily service from New York (LaGuardia) to Nassau/Paradise Island; and seasonal service from Boston and Minneapolis to Nassau/Paradise Island. JetBlue offers up to three nonstop departures per day (during peak periods) from JFK to Nassau/Paradise Island and daily service from Boston to Nassau/Paradise Island. American Airlines, Spirit, JetBlue and Silver Airways provide direct service from such Florida cities as Fort Lauderdale, Miami, Orlando, West Palm Beach and Melbourne to several points in The Bahamas.

Some of the large islands have bus service. Bicycles and motor scooters rent by the hour, day or longer. For

more luxurious transportation, chauffeur-driven limousines can be hired in Nassau and Freeport. A quaint way to see the sites in Nassau is by horse-drawn carriage, called a "surrey tour." Metered taxis are a convenient way to get around, and the rates are regulated. There are major car rental agencies in Nassau and on Grand Bahama Island; rentals also are available on most of the Out Islands. Driving is on the left side of the road.

More than 145 miles (230 km) of good roads make for pleasant motoring from downtown Nassau to almost all parts of New Providence Island; road conditions on the Out Islands have improved since 1992. Automobiles can be taken duty free to Nassau for up to 6 months. A deposit covering duty charges (50 percent of the car's value plus 4 percent stamp tax), in the form of a customs bond executed by a local bank, is refunded if the vehicle is removed from the Commonwealth before the end of this period. A U.S. driver's license is valid for 3 months.

Island-hopping is possible by both plane and boat. Bahamasair has regularly scheduled interisland flights from Nassau. SkyBahamas offers service from Nassau to Exuma, Freeport, Grand Bahama and other points. If there is not a direct flight to the island of your choice, check with area charter companies; information also is available at hotels on the Out Islands.

Many cruise services travel from Miami, Port Everglades and Port Canaveral to Nassau and Grand Bahama Island on a once- or twice-weekly basis. Traveling by mail boat, though it might be slow and lacking in some comforts, is an inexpensive way to island hop. Since departures are subject to change without notice, advance arrangements with the captain are recommended.

Bahamas Ferries offers a 2-hour ferry ride to Harbour Island, Spanish Wells or mainland Eleuthera. The ferry departs Nassau at 8 a.m. and returns at 6:50 p.m.; phone (242) 323-2166. Balearia Caribbean offers ferries that depart from Fort Lauderdale, Florida with stops at the Bimini Islands and Grand Bahama Island. Ferries depart at 9 a.m. and return times vary; phone (866) 699-6988.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** 349,655.

**AREA:** 13,934 sq km (5,380 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Nassau.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 63 m (206 ft.), Mount Alvernia, Cat

Island.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level. Atlantic Ocean. **TIME ZONE(S):** Eastern Standard. DST.

LANGUAGE: English (Creole among Haitian

immigrants).

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent. Member of the British

Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Bahamian dollar. \$1 U.S. = 1 Bahamian dollar. U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-220 volts, 60 cycles AC; voltage varies with location.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency; maximum age 65 without medical certificate. U.S. license valid for 3 months; drive on left.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.** 

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for all adult passengers. Children are to be secured in seating apparatus fitted to the rear seat; those less than 20 pounds require an infant car seat that should face the vehicle's rear, those between 20 and less than 40 pounds require a convertible car seat, and those over 40 pounds or up to 4 feet, 9 inches tall require a booster car seat. Seating apparatus may be fitted to the front seat if the vehicle has no rear seat.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Majority Rule Day, Jan. 10; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Labour Day, June (1st Fri.); Independence Day, July 10; Emancipation Day, Aug. (1st Mon.); National Heroes Day, Oct. (2nd Mon.); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 10 percent VAT (value-added tax) is added to hotel rooms and most consumer goods. On Grand Bahama Island, a \$15 airport security fee is assessed for all ticketed passengers; \$7 for other islands. Departure tax of \$29 U.S. is included in the airline ticket cost.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 90 days for U.S. citizens. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call The Bahamas from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 242 + the 7-digit local number.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:

The Bahamas Tourist Office, Florida 1200 S. Pine Island Rd.

Suite 450 Plantation, FL 33324 (954) 236-9292 (800) 224-2627

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism

Bay St. 4th floor Nassau, New Providence Island The Bahamas (242) 302-2000

(800) 224-2627

#### **Grand Bahama Island**

Only 55 miles (89 km) east of Florida, Grand Bahama Island the fourth largest island of the group. It covers more than 530 square miles (1,373 sq km) and is known for excellent bonefishing, reef and deep-sea fishing.

The community of West End gained notoriety during America's Prohibition Era as a jumping-off place for rum runners to the United States. Public beaches include Barbary, Churchill, Coral, Fortune, Gold Rock Creek, Lucaya, Paradise Cove, Smith's Point, Taíno and Xanadu.

mangrove marshes and sand dunes. A 1-mile trail and boardwalk leads to Ben's Cave, Burial Mound Cave, Gold Bock Creek and Gold Bock Beach.

Swimming in the caves is prohibited; diving requires special permits. **Phone:** (242) 374-6282.

## **Great Abaco Island**

#### **FREEPORT**

The resort center of the island, Freeport lures outdoor enthusiasts with its many opportunities for fishing, sailing, snorkeling, swimming, golf and tennis.

RAND NATURE CENTRE is 3 mi. (5 km) n.e. of the International Bazaar on E. Settlers Way. A 2,000-foot nature trail winds through this 100-acre (40-hectare) sanctuary, which preserves the native flora and fauna of Grand Bahama Island. An ideal spot for bird-watching, especially October through May, the area is home to more than 120 species. Exhibits at the education center reflect the island's ecology, culture and natural history. The Gloria Harris Banks Art Gallery features the work of local artists. Phone: (242) 352-5438. GT

#### **HOPE TOWN**

Elbow Cay's famous landmark, the red-and-whitestriped Hope Town Lighthouse, was built in 1863. The mechanically-operated beacon is powered by kerosene; its Fresnel lens floats in a bed of mercury. Cars are not permitted in the harbor village.

WYANNIE MALONE HISTORICAL MUSEUM is on Queen's Highway. Wyannie Malone, the widow of a British Loyalist who fled America during the Revolutionary War, was one of the founders of the settlement of Hope Town in 1783. The museum, in a replica of her century-old white clapboard house, displays historical maps, ships models and items of everyday life. The Balcony House contains historical displays, artifacts and flora and fauna from across the region.

Guided tours of the museum may be arranged by appointment. **Note:** At time of publication, the museum was closed due to damages caused by Hurricane Dorian in 2019. **Time:** Allow 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (242) 366-0293 to schedule a tour or (815) 312-9856. **GT** 

#### **LUCAYA**

Twenty miles east of Freeport along the southern coast of Grand Bahama Island is Grand Lucayan, Bahamas. The 6-acre Port Lucaya Marketplace and Marina features shops, restaurants, and live entertainment centered around Count Basie Square, named for the jazz artist who wintered on the island.

**LUCAYAN NATIONAL PARK** is on Grand Bahama Hwy. The 40-acre (16-hectare) park contains one of the largest explored underwater cave systems in the world. Ecological zones in the park include upland pineland with hardwood hammocks, rocky coppice, whiteland coppice,

#### **NEW PLYMOUTH**

In downtown New Plymouth on Green Turtle Cay, the Loyalist Memorial Sculpture Garden displays 24 bronze busts of famous Bahamian citizens; phone (242) 367-3067. Green Turtle Cay is a sister city to Key West, Florida, where many Abaco residents moved in the 1800s.



#### Great Exuma Island

The Exumas consist of 365 islands, ranging from small, uninhabited dots on the map to the two largest islands, Great Exuma and Little Exuma. At the southernmost tip of the Exuma Cays, Great Exuma is 40 miles (64 km) long.

A popular excursion follows the slave route from George Town to Rolleville, a village once owned by Loyalist Lord Rolle, who, upon his death, gave freedom, the land and the name of Rolle to all the tenants. The land may never be sold, but is passed down to each succeeding generation.

Visitors will enjoy touring Elizabeth Harbour and the pristine hidden coves and inlets throughout the 365 cays. Sailing tours often stop to feed swimming pigs at Big Major Cay, iguanas on Allan Cay and nurse sharks at Compass Cav.

Thunderball Grotto is the site of colorful underwater reefs, while Dog Rocks is one of the best dive spots in the Bahamas—it starts at 35 feet and slopes off to approximately 50 feet before dropping off into the Exuma Sound. The Exuma Wall, off Highbourne Cay, is a 75-foot sloping wall dive offering views of such tropical creatures as angel fish, grouper, turtles, horse-eye jacks and the occasional shark, billfish and tuna.

Sixty miles of flats on the island's west side offer excellent bonefishing in knee-deep turquoise waters. Sheltered coves and hidden inlets make kayaking in the Exumas ideal for the whole family.

#### GEORGE TOWN

The administrative capital of Exuma, George Town is on Lake Victoria. Several popular festivals entertain visitors. In March, the Bahamian Music and Heritage Festival features popular musicians as well as arts and crafts, Bahamian foods, storytelling, singing, poetry reading and a sloop and Junkanoo exhibition. More than 60 native sloops race at the National Family Island Regatta during the last full week in April. George Town also hosts its own Junkanoo festival on Saturdays in July and August.

EXUMA CAYS LAND AND SEA PARK stretches 22 mi. (35 km) from Wax Cay Cut in the north to Conch Cut in the south and is accessible only by boat. Said to be the first national park of its kind, this marine preserve was established in 1958. The park is made up of 15 major cays and many smaller islands in a pristine area encompassing 176 square miles (456 sq km). The vast underwater park attracts snorkeling and scuba enthusiasts from around the world. The bird and marine life sanctuary is home to sea turtles, rock iguanas and the Bahamian Hutia, a small rodent once thought to be extinct. **Phone:** (242) 225-6402.



GRAND ISLE RESORT & RESIDENCES BOOK NOW 242/358-5000



Resort Condominium. Address: Emerald Bay.

#### **New Providence Island and Nassau**

Home to a majority of the country's population, New Providence Island is the domain of the capital city, Nassau. A prime tourist destination, the island features all the amenities associated with The Bahamas—an array of water sports, golf, tennis, nightlife, casinos, international shopping and a colorful history.

The 21-mile-long (34-km), 7-mile-wide (11-km) island also is home to the popular resort areas of Cable Beach and Paradise Island, linked to Nassau by entry and exit bridges. The tiny island was privately owned for many years until Huntington Hartford, whose fortune came from

the A&P supermarket chain, developed it as a resort. In the 1960s, Hartford purchased a ruined 14th-century monastery from William Randolph Hearst, who had imported it piece by piece from France. The stone ruins, known as the Cloisters, overlook Nassau Harbor, surrounded by the Versailles Gardens. A popular wedding site, the gardens are open to the public.

Boasting one of the finest beaches in the Caribbean, Paradise Island offers tennis, golf and parasailing for the sports minded; the "strip" features a casino and other entertainment. Bridge toll is \$2 per vehicle.

#### CABLE BEACH



GRAND HYATT BAHA MAR BOOK NOW 242/788-1234



**INSPECTED ©** CLEAN

GRAND HYATT AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: One Baha Mar St. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This hotel's light and airy rooms have cozy bedding, 42" TVs, tablets with games and Balmain toiletries in the bathroom. Each room also has a small Juliet or fully furnished balcony. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 1800 units. 7-28 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 18 restaurants, also, Shuang Ba, see separate listing, entertainment. **Pool:** heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

































ROSEWOOD BAHA MAR BOOK NOW 242/788-8500



Boutique Contemporary Hotel. Address: One Baha Mar Blvd.



SLS AT BAHA MAR BOOK NOW 242/788-8200



Resort Hotel. Address: One Baha Mar Blvd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This trendy hotel offers a variety of room types, all including robes, slippers & a custom mini bar. The pool area is a buzzy spot to hang, while the adjacent water park is more family-friendly. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 299 units. 24 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 18 restaurants. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, regulation golf, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.





























#### WHERE TO EAT



SHUANG BA 242/788-1234

THREE DIAMOND

Chinese Fine Dining. Address: One Baha Mar Blvd.

#### GAMBIER VILLAGE





International Fusion Fine Dining. Address: 657 W Bay Rd.

#### NASSAU

Capital and principal city of The Bahamas, Nassau is on the northeast coast of New Providence Island. This resort was a battleground for Spanish, British and French colonization efforts and a haven for buccaneers. It was here that the infamous pirate Blackbeard posted a lookout in his tower while he caroused around the islands. In 1718, a century after the first British colony was established, the British sent the first royal governor to The Bahamas. Nassau was named in 1729 for King William III of the House of Orange-Nassau. Residents call themselves "Nassuvians."

There is always plenty to do in downtown Nassau: touring by surrey (a horse-drawn carriage), photographing the colorful buildings, dining, dancing, duty-free shopping or enjoying native entertainment during the holiday season. The focal point of Nassau is Bay Street, which runs along the water from Prince George Wharf. Directly across from the cruise ship docks is Rawson Square, anchored by the Churchill Building. Across from Rawson Square is Parliament Square. Here are the two chambers of Parliament and the Supreme Court. Visitors can watch the proceedings of the House of Assembly when it is in session by making arrangements with the Chief Clerk; to find out when the House will be in session, phone (242) 322-2041. Not far from the square is the Garden of Remembrance, with its cenotaph honoring Bahamians who died in World Wars I and II; nearby is the octagonal Nassau Public Library and Museum, once a jail.

Nassau's 18th-century forts also are worth visiting. Of the three forts, only Fort Montagu at the eastern entrance to the harbor was confronted by invaders. High above the city. Government House is host to tea parties held the last Friday of each month; shorts and jeans are not permitted. A colorful 45-minute changing of the guard ceremony takes place the second Friday of each month at 11 a.m.; phone (242) 302-2000.

Vibrant, sociable Nassau possesses almost every conceivable sports facility. Tennis courts and golf courses abound, as do local entrepreneurs marketing rentals or lessons for snorkeling, scuba diving, fishing and sailing. Nassau's many fine beaches include Cabbage, Goodman's Bay, Saunders, Delaport, Caves, Montagu and Western Esplanade.

The waters, noted for deep-sea and reef fishing, are most famous for giant blue marlin, but white marlin, tuna, wahoo, bonito and sailfish also are abundant. Nassau Yacht Haven on E. Bay Street is the charter and fishing headquarters. Sailing is popular in the bays and around the coral islands; local and international races are held by The Bahamas Sailing Association, Royal Nassau Sailing Club and the Nassau Yacht Club.

DOLPHIN ENCOUNTERS AT BLUE LAGOON IS-LAND departs from the Paradise Island Ferry Ter-LAND departs from the Paradise Island Ferry Terminal at 1 Marina Dr. between the bridges. Visitors board a high-speed catamaran which transports them to this pretty saltwater lagoon, where they have an opportunity to mingle with highly intelligent bottlenose dolphins. Participants receive an orientation prior to meeting the dolphins. so they know what to expect; observers are welcome to watch from nearby. Professional trainers are on hand to ensure guests enjoy as much hands-on time as possible with the dolphins, and photographers stand by to record the moment.

During the Dolphin Encounter, exposure to the dolphins is obtained by standing on a submerged platform in shallow water—these sociable animals will allow participants to pet, hug and kiss them. Children are very comfortable in this more controlled setting. In a similar environment, guests choosing the Sea Lion Encounter interact instead with California sea lions. A Stingray Encounter also is available.

With the Dolphin Swim, there's even more personal interaction through free-form swimming and frolicking with the friendly creatures. The strength of these remarkable mammals can be witnessed during the "foot push," which involves two dolphins pushing a volunteer's feet, ultimately propelling him or her across the lagoon.

Participants should bring a towel and change of clothes. Time: Allow 3 hours minimum. Phone: (242) 363-1003, (242) 363-7171 or (866) 918-9932.

PIRATES OF NASSAU is near the corner of King and George sts. The history of local pirate activity 1690-1720 is related through taped commentaries, sound effects and wall plaques. Visitors can experience a pirate's life at sea aboard Revenge, a replica pirate ship. Exhibits about female pirates and the pirate's code of conduct also are offered. Time: 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (242) 356-3759.

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# **Barbados**

asternmost of the Caribbean islands, Barbados is the "Little England of Eternal Summer." Meaning "the bearded ones," its name is said to have been given by a Portuguese discoverer because of the beardlike vines on the fig trees. With nearly 1,600 inhabitants per square mile, Barbados is one of the most densely populated countries in the Caribbean; the friendliness of its people is its foremost charm.

The silver sand beaches on the Caribbean side of the island contrast with the rugged Atlantic coastline. Roads are bordered by fields of cane, royal palms and rolling hills and terraces. Vivid tropical flowers, including fragrant oleander, frangipani, jasmine, cassia, bougainvillea, hibiscus and lady-of-the-night, lie in profusion along neat hedgerows. Scarlet flame trees and coral walls shelter the welltended lawns of color-washed houses, and windmills of former sugar plantations dot the land, though the Morgan Lewis Sugar Mill is the only one with its arms and wheelhouses still intact.

Bridgetown, the capital, is representative of the island's heritage. Its typically English atmosphere is enhanced by names like Yorkshire and Windsor and by the ritual of afternoon tea, which occurs at "half past four."



#### **History**

Once inhabited only by Arawak Indians, Barbados was discovered by the Portuguese in the 16th century. The English claimed it in 1625, and 2 years later the first settlers arrived. The island's population increased significantly during the mid-1600s as English immigrants fled the political unrest in their homeland and slaves were brought from Africa to work the sugar crops. The colony thrived early on as a result of the tobacco and cotton trade and became a prosperous sugar producer in the 17th and 18th centuries. During the struggle for European supremacy in the Caribbean, 35 forts were built along 25 miles (40 km) of coastline. The ruins of many are still visible.

Of all the islands in the West Indies, Barbados is one of the only ones to have remained solely in the hands of its original settlers. This fact helps explain the island's stability and the British flavor that has remained constant over the centuries.

Since 1954 Barbados has had a ministerial system of government with a governor general appointed by the Queen of Great Britain on recommendation of the prime minister, who heads the island's government. Barbados became an independent nation on Nov. 30, 1966. A coat of arms bearing the motto "Pride and Industry" speaks for the high literacy rate and prosperous economy; Barbados is one of the most economically stable Caribbean islands, with tourism, sugar production, financial services and light industry forming the basis of the economy.

#### Shopping

High-quality English clothing and Scottish and English fabrics are excellent buys in Barbados. Bridgetown tailor shops on Prince Alfred and Tudor streets offer made-tomeasure clothing in a variety of materials ranging from sea island cotton to imported tweeds. Baskets, seashell trinkets, pottery, English china and silver, silks and Oriental objects and antiques also are popular purchases. Another leading commodity available at a very low price is Barbados rum, said to be the world's oldest. By shopping in the afternoon you can avoid the morning rush.

Most of the duty-free shopping in Bridgetown is concentrated on Broad Street. Cave Shepherd & Co., Bridgetown's largest department store, features Waterford, Wedgwood, Royal Doulton and Swarovski china and crystal, an extensive selection of cosmetics and fragrances, leather goods, jewelry, electronics, fashions and a liquor department. Harrison's is a department store containing a vast assortment of luxury items including Lladró figurines, designer sweaters, jewelry and watches by Cartier, Fendi and Gucci.

The Colonnade Mall, also on Broad Street, houses several interesting boutiques. Just opposite is Mall 34, with shops displaying high quality merchandise from India and Europe, and the Royal Shop, with a wide selection of watches.

Malls in the Hastings and Worthing area of Christ Church include Lanterns at Hastings, Hastings Plaza, Skyway Plaza and Quayside Centre. Sheraton Mall, said to be the island's largest shopping establishment, is in Christ Church at Sargeants Village, less than 20 minutes from the airport.

Chattel House Village, a shopping area in Holetown, St. James, consists of a medley of actual chattel houses, all colorfully painted. The village contains a variety of boutiques, including a Best of Barbados gift shop. Limegrove Lifestyle Centre offers a mix of designer stores and restaurants.

Barbados is said to have some of the finest antiques in the West Indies. Reputable dealers include Greenwich House Antiques at Greenwich Village, St. James.

Medford Craft World, on White Hall Main Road, specializes in such local handicrafts as pottery, wood carvings, and batik and woven baskets. Shells, metal art, leather, coral and other island-made articles can be found at Pelican Village, on Princess Alice Highway near Deep Water Harbour. Clothing, jewelry and mahogany pieces are among the items crafted by artisans at Heritage Park in St. Philip.

The Best of Barbados Shops, with several locations throughout the island, sell only products made or designed in Barbados. The shops have a wide assortment of local handicrafts and souvenirs including hand-painted tile, kitchen items, local prints, pottery and T-shirts. Earthworks Pottery atop Shop Hill in St. Thomas offers handmade pottery.

Some stores feature in-bond departments, where certain merchandise has been set aside and marked with two prices. The higher price applies to buy-and-take purchases. The second in-bond price, usually considerably lower, once applied only to merchandise purchased in the store and delivered to the airport or pier. However, most in-bond shops now allow tourists with proper ID (passport and travel ticket) to take their duty-free items from the store. Shopping hours for most stores in Barbados are Mon.-Fri. 8-4, Sat. 8-noon. Banks are open Mon.-Thurs. 9-3. Fri. 9-4.

#### Food and Drink

In addition to fine Continental and curried dishes, Barbados has many island specialties. These include bonavist, small white beans often seasoned with pumpkin and herbs; jug-jug, a molded dish of chopped ham and salt beef or pork combined with green peas; cou-cou, a savory pudding made with cornmeal and okra; and Barbadian black pudding, similar to a sausage stuffed with seasoned grated sweet potatoes.

Other local foods include pepperpot, a spicy stew made with selected meats; and conkies, a steamed concoction of sweet potatoes, cornmeal, pumpkin, coconut, raisins and spices served in a banana leaf. Roast suckling pig

and native "flying fish" are favorite specialties. Fresh lobster and seafood are available. The fruits of Barbados are avocados, mangoes, guavas, bananas, breadfruit, golden apples, hog plums, gooseberries, cherries, pears, oranges, limes and grapefruit.

The name "rum" may have originated in Barbados, where a 17th-century observer wrote, "The chief fuddling they make in the Island is Rum Bullion, alias Kill-Devil, and is made of sugarcane distilled, a hot, hellish and terrible liquor." Today, the island rum is known for its smooth, refined taste.

Most hotels and resorts on Barbados include a 10percent service charge on the guest's bill to cover gratuities. However, in nightclubs and restaurants, tipping is at the discretion of the guest.

#### Sports and Amusements

Most major hotels have a beach or are near one, and all types of aquatic gear can be rented. Motorboats (for water skiing) and sailboats are available for hire at beach club resorts. Conditions are excellent for skiing in the tranquil waters off the west coast, while sailing is favorable on both the west and south coasts. In the path of the trade winds, the east coast beaches are considered dangerous for swimming but ideal for surfing, with the Soup Bowl at Bathsheba being the best area for this sport.

Popular west coast beaches include Mullins Beach near Speightstown, which features a good snorkeling reef just offshore as well as shaded areas, shower facilities and an open-air restaurant providing a view of the bay. Paynes Bay, recognizable by the neighboring fish market, is a site where numerous water sports are indulged in. Visitors will enjoy the picturesque bay at Sandy Lane, with public access available on either side of the hotel.

Southeast coast beaches are not known for swimming amenities, but rather for their rugged beauty. Bottom Bay is a delightful cove with a white sand beach surrounded by cliffs and a coconut grove. At Crane Beach, pounding waves crash against the rocky shore while the beach area offers plenty of pink sand. The Crane, reputedly the Caribbean's oldest operating hotel, rests atop a dramatic cliff surrounding the beach; parking is available at the beach or hotel. Foul Bay Beach is accessible by a road that travels downward to a paved parking area. This long stretch of beach, nestled between two cliffs, has a wide expanse of seagrape trees.

Popular beaches on the south coast of Barbados include Accra, where water-sports equipment is available for rental and opportunities are good for body surfing. Silver Sands Beach is frequented by windsurfers due to large waves and abundant winds. Worthing Beach, known by locals as Sandy Beach, is preferred by families because of its shallow lagoon and calm seas.

Conditions for windsurfing are excellent on the south coast, due to constant trade winds and year-round water temperatures of about 78 degrees Fahrenheit.

At the Folkestone Marine Park off Holetown on the St. James coast, snorkelers and divers can follow an underwater trail along a coral reef where fish, sea anemones and sea fans can be seen.

Scuba diving lessons lasting about 2.5 hours are taught at several dive shops; reputable establishments include Underwater Barbados. Scuba gear rentals and dives can be arranged through some hotels.

Numerous shipwrecks in the waters around Barbados provide excellent diving opportunities. A large number of these wrecks are concentrated in Carlisle Bay, including Sea Trek, deliberately sunk in about 40 feet (12 m) of water; The Berwyn, an old tugboat brimming with sea life less than 10 feet (3 m) from the surface; and The Fox, a 120-foot schooner approximately 40 feet (12 m) from the surface that is home to numerous crustaceans. Friar's Craig is a small vessel in the area of coast just east of Aquatic Gap. The *Stavronikita*, a Greek freighter, was deliberately sunk by the Park and Beaches Commission in Folkestone Underwater Park.

January through June are the best fishing months; dolphin fish, kingfish, snapper, yellowfin tuna, shark and barracuda are plentiful. Fishing boats and guides can be hired for fishing excursions at most hotels or through the Barbados Game Fishing Association. The association also sponsors an annual fishing contest the last week in March, and visitors may enter the international competition.

Though Barbados calls itself the "Land of the Flying" Fish," the national symbol has become scarce in recent years. Schools of the small, leaping fish have migrated south to warmer waters off Trinidad and Tobago, leaving the Bajan fishing fleet without its signature catch.

Check at your hotel's activities desk for information about snorkeling, scuba diving, deep-sea fishing and charter boats. Carlisle Bay is the island's sailing headquarters.

There are tennis courts at many hotels; reservations are recommended. Squash enthusiasts can play at the Barbados Squash Club.

Golfers also can enjoy their sport at several courses on the island. The 18-hole Barbados Golf Club in Christ Church is open to the public; phone (246) 538-4653. Renowned golf course architect Tom Fazio has designed two 18-hole courses at the Sandy Lane Golf Club, and the "Old Nine" also is available for play; phone (246) 444-2000. The championship golf course at Royal Westmoreland in St. James is open to resort guests and visiting golfers staying elsewhere; phone (246) 419-7242.

Horseback riding is offered at Cleland Equestrian Club at the Cleland Plantation in St. Andrew, (246) 236-4908.

Cricket is the chief spectator sport in Barbados. Visitors can watch matches at the national level at several sports clubs May through December, and at the international

level January through March. Kensington Oval in Bridgetown regularly holds matches; phone (246) 537-1600. Soccer is popular January through April. Polo is played July through February at Holder's in St. James.

The Garrison Savannah has a horse-racing track with races held every other Saturday, except during the month of October. The Sandy Lane Barbados Gold Cup, the biggest race in the Caribbean, usually takes place in March; festivities and a parade accompany this exciting event. The Barbados Turf Club's race meetings, held five times a year, are joyous occasions with music, food booths and a general carnival atmosphere; phone (246) 626-3980.

Many discos, nightclubs and restaurants provide afterdinner entertainment. The limbo and calypso, danced to the haunting rhythm of steel bands, entertain spectators and participants alike. For those who would rather look at the stars than dance beneath them, the Barbados Astronomical Society offers a night of stargazing at the Harry Bayley Observatory in nearby Clapham every Friday from 9 to 10:30 (weather permitting); phone (246) 622-2000 to verify status. Although there are no casinos in Barbados, slot machines are permitted; there are arcades in Bridgetown and at some resorts.

Annual events include the Barbados Horticulture Society's Flower and Garden Show, an event in late January showcasing local plants, crafts and pottery. The Holetown Festival in February commemorates the arrival of English settlers in 1627. Activities include a parade of vintage cars, a street fair and arts and crafts.

In late March or early April, the Oistins Fish Festival pays tribute to Barbados' fishing industry; boat races and a fish-boning contest are among the events. Gospelfest Barbados brings top performers to Bridgetown on Whitsuntide weekend at the end of May.

Barbadians eagerly anticipate the nonstop revelry of the Crop-Over Festival, which occurs from early June to early August. The event, an island-wide folk celebration in honor of the completion of the sugar cane harvest, is considered one of the Caribbean's most popular. It features calypso competitions, art shows, food, music, crafts, a costume parade and fireworks on Kadooment Day (a national holiday) and other entertainment. Bajan music, singing, drama, dance and writing are celebrated every year at the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts in November.

The Barbados Advocate and The NationNews are Bridgetown's daily newspapers. The Nation also produces The Weekend Nation, The Sun on Saturday, The Sunday Sun and Better Health Magazine.

#### Sightseeing

From January through March the Barbados National Trust offers its Open House, allowing the public to visit some of Barbados' most attractive and interesting private homes and gardens. Tours are offered every Wednesday

from 1:45-5:00. Admission is \$35; free (ages 0-12). A different house is featured each week, with past highlights including Morgan Lewis House, Newlands Manor, Foster Lodge and Gardenia Plantation House; phone the National Trust at (246) 426-2421 for the weekly program.

The National Trust also sponsors guided hikes. These free informative walks range from 6 miles (9.65 km) to 12 miles (19.31 km) and offer insight into Barbados' history, environment and culture. Tours are offered Sundays at 6 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. Reservations must be made a day in advance; phone (246) 436-9033.

Barbados has four lighthouses positioned on strategic areas of coastline. Ragged Point Lighthouse, in St. Philip at the island's eastern tip, is constructed of coral limestone and provides an outstanding view of the east coast and Pico Tenerife. South Point Lighthouse, at the island's southernmost point in Christ Church, is a cast-iron structure made in England and shipped to Barbados in 1851. Other lighthouses are at Harrison Point in St. Lucy and Needham's Point in St. Michael.

You can arrange to tour some of the large sugar factories, such as Portvale and Andrews. The Portvale Sugar Factory near Holetown, is open during the sugar-grinding season from February through May. Visits should be arranged in advance; phone (246) 426-2421. Tours and tastings also are available at Mount Gay Rum Distillery in St. Michael on Spring Garden Highway; phone (246) 227-8864.

Glass-bottom boats afford a fascinating view of sea life among the coral reefs of the west coast; the Folkestone Marine Park and the old shipwrecks in Carlisle Bay are popular attractions. Lunch cruises aboard the *Jolly Roger* depart from Carlisle House, The Careenage. Music and swimming are featured on four-hour cruises that take passengers along the coast in a replica of a pirate ship. Snorkeling stops are offered on catamaran cruises, which often include a buffet lunch; phone (246) 826-7245.

Cruises to neighboring islands can be arranged through Chantours Caribbean, (246) 432-5591, and St. James Travel and Tours, (246) 432-0774.

Tour operators offering a wide variety of land excursions include Island Safari, (246) 429-5337.

One of the most popular sightseeing drives follows the rugged Atlantic coast past such points of interest as Codrington College, St. John's Church and the pottery works at Chalky Mount. Those touring Barbados will notice numerous chattel houses made of wood, historically built up on rocks so they could be dismantled easily and moved to another location. Rum shops also contribute to the local flavor, serving as village meeting places where locals can exchange news.

The East Coast Road, traversing the rolling hills and greenery of the Scotland district and the rocky east coast, provides spectacular sightseeing opportunities. The road travels past Bathsheba, a haven for surfers and identified



by the huge boulders protruding from the water; a small park area provides picnic tables and restroom facilities.

Cattlewash, a scenic stretch of coast punctuated by beach houses, took its name from the cattle that occasionally wander through the area. North of Cattlewash, Barclays Park is a popular spot for picnicking and recreation. The park overlooks a scenic stretch of coast lined with seagrape, hog plum and Casuarina trees. Swimming is not recommended due to the strong undercurrent. Visitors have access to a facility with changing rooms, showers and restrooms. A small restaurant in the 50-acre (20hectare) park serves good Barbadian food on a seasonal basis.

Barbados' famed "Platinum Coast" along the Caribbean is lined with luxury hotels boasting tranquil beaches of powdery sand. A tour through St. Thomas Parish in the center of the island usually includes the botanical garden at Welchman Hall Gully and Harrison's Cave. St. Thomas and neighboring St. George are the only parishes without any coastal area.

Oistins is a picturesque fishing village in Christ Church Parish at the south end of the island. Several restored historic rum shops are in the area and can be visited. Visitors and locals can partake in freshly-cooked fish at the Oistins Fish Fry on Friday and Saturday.

#### **Transportation**

Daily nonstop flights from New York and Miami touch down at Barbados' Grantley Adams International Airport. Interisland flights connect Barbados with Trinidad, Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Martinique, Jamaica and the islands to the north. Barbados also is a port of call for many cruise ships.

The roads from Bridgetown to the popular districts are good, and the Adams-Barrow-Cummins (ABC) Highway from the airport to Highway 2A at Warrens enables traffic to bypass Bridgetown, reducing travel time by about 50 percent. You can rent cars, minimokes (resembling small jeeps), scooters, bicycles, chauffeur-driven cars and limousines. You must present a valid U.S. driver's license to obtain a Barbados permit.

Driving is on the left side of the road. Speed limits are 35 mph (60 km/h) in most areas of the island, with the exception being 25 mph (40 km/h) in town and 50 mph (80 km/h) on the Spring Garden and ABC highways. No car may be driven in Barbados without third-party insurance coverage. Slow-moving vehicles should travel on the left side of all double-lane highways.

Frequent bus service connects the parishes with Bridgetown. Transport Board buses, painted blue and trimmed in yellow, depart every half-hour from the two main terminals in Bridgetown: The Princess Alice Highway terminal provides transportation to destinations in the north part of the island and along the west coast, while the Fairchild Street terminal is for southbound travelers.

There also is a Transport Board terminal in the north in Speightstown.

Privately owned minibuses, yellow with blue trim, travel shorter distances and therefore have faster turnaround times. The main minibus terminals are in Bridgetown at Probyn Street, River Road and Cheapside. Even when at a designated stop, you must wave at the minibuses to get the driver to come to a halt. Buses run daily 6 a.m.midnight; fare is \$2 U.S. and exact change is required for the Transport Board buses.

Taxis are readily available in the National Heroes' Square area of Bridgetown; a taxi stand is next to a fountain adorned with dolphins. Check the fixed rates before taking a cab.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 301,001.** 

AREA: 430 sq km (166 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Bridgetown.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 332 m (1,089 ft.), Mount Hillaby.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Atlantic Ocean.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent. Member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Barbados dollar. \$1 U.S. = 2.02 Barbados dollars. U.S. bills are accepted by most hotels.

**ELECTRICITY:** 115 volts, 50 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. Local license (\$5 U.S.) required, valid for 60 days; drive on left.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for all passengers.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Errol Barrow Day, Jan. 21; Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; National Heroes Day, Apr. 28, Labour Day, May 1; Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Emancipation Day, Aug. 1; Kadooment Day, Aug. (1st Mon.); Independence Day, Nov. 30; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A 8.75 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills and restaurants. A 17.5 percent VAT (value-added tax) is charged for food and beverages. A \$70 airport passenger departure service charge and security fee is usually included in the airline ticket price.

**IMMIGRATION:** A valid passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa required for U.S. citizens for stays up to 6 months or for Canadian citizens for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security reguires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call Barbados from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 246 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Barbados Tourism Marketing, Inc.—United States 820 Second Ave., 5th Floor New York, NY 10017

(212) 551-4350

Barbados Tourism Marketing, Inc.—Canada

110 Sheppard Ave. E.

Suite 205

North York, ON M2N 6Y8

Canada

(416) 214-9880

Barbados Tourism Marketing, Inc.

Warrens Office Complex

First Floor

Warrens, Barbados

(246) 535-3700

#### Christ Church Parish

One of 11 parishes defining Barbados, Christ Church is at the southern end of the island. Visitors arriving by air see this parish first; it's the home of Grantley Adams International Airport. East of Oistins are Silver Sands and Enterprise beaches, both popular with sunbathers and windsurfers.

St. Lawrence Gap is the parish's hub for dining and entertainment opportunities. The area is punctuated with nightclubs, bistros and restaurants, some with views of the water. A small beach area dotted with fishing boats provides a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere ideal for a daytime or evening stroll.

#### **DOVER**



O2 BEACH CLUB AND SPA BOOK NOW 246/418-1800



Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Dover Rd BB15028.



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SAVE Resort Hotel. Address: Dover Rd, Christ Church BB15028.

#### **ENTERPRISE**



THE ABIDAH BY ACCRA BOOK NOW 246/538-8920



Hotel. Address: Enterprise Beach Rd BB17135.



LITTLE ARCHES BOUTIQUE HOTEL BOOK NOW

246/420-4689

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Boutique Hotel. Address: Enterprise Beach Rd BB17135.

#### WHERE TO EAT



THREE DIAMOND

International Casual Dining. Address: Enterprise Beach Rd BB17135.

#### **HASTINGS**

COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT BRIDGETOWN BOOK NOW 246/625-0000



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: The Garrison Historic Area.

SUGAR BAY BARBADOS BOOK NOW 246/622-1101

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Hotel. Address: Garrison Historic Area BB15156.

#### **MAXWELL**

BOUGAINVILLEA BARBADOS BOOK NOW 246/628-0990

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Hotel. Address: Maxwell Coast Rd BB15831.

SEA BREEZE BEACH HOUSE BOOK NOW 246/428-2825

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Hotel. Address: Maxwell Coast Rd BB15831.

#### **MAYNARDS**

SUGAR CANE CLUB HOTEL & SPA BOOK NOW 246/422-5026

Boutique Hotel. Address: Maynards St Peter BB26025. THREE DIAMOND

#### **OISTINS**

The fishing community of Oistins hosts the island's annual fish festival in March or April and a fish fry every Friday and Saturday night. The local catch is prepared by street vendors for all to enjoy.



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

#### WORTHING



THREE DIAMOND
INSPECTED & CLEAN\*\*

Hotel. Address: Rockley Beach Rd BB15139.

#### St. James Parish

The island's first English settlement was established in St. James Parish in 1627, two years after Captain John Powell claimed the island in the name of King James I. Originally named Jamestown, the village came to be called Holetown for the narrow offshore channel where ships were serviced.

North of Holetown, the Folkestone Marine Park is an underwater park and sanctuary where snorkelers and divers can follow an underwater trail along a coral reef. The park includes a beach and the Folkestone Marine Museum, which displays live and mounted fish native to local waters.

#### **APPLEBY**





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SAVE Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Appleby.

#### **HOLETOWN**

Opening celebrations of the week-long Holetown Festival are held in February at the Holetown Monument, which commemorates the first British landing on Barbados in 1625. Now a major tourist area, this area of up-

scale resorts, shops and shimmering beaches is called the "Platinum Coast."

Vestiges of the island's sugar industry are preserved at the Sir Frank Hutson Sugar Museum and Factory in the yard of the Portvale sugar factory. Antique and modern machines are displayed February through May during the harvest season.



THREE DIAMOND
INSPECTED ⊗ CLEAN™

Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Hwy 1, St James BB24024.

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Resort Hotel. Address: St James BB24024. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Boutiques, fancy cars and the beach await at this luxurious destination offering state-of-the-art amenities, gourmet dining and a world-class spa. The guest units are exceptionally spacious. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 114 units, some two bedrooms, kitchens and houses. 3-5 stories, interior corridors. Parking: valet only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.





























#### WHERE TO EAT



THE TIDES RESTAURANT 246/432-8356



New International Fine Dining. Address: Queens Hwy BB24024.

#### **PAYNES BAY**



BEACH VIEW HOTEL BOOK NOW 246/432-2300



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SAVE Boutique Hotel. Address: Paynes Bay.

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[fyi] Hotel. Under major renovation, call for details. Last Designation: Three Diamond. Address: Paynes Bay Rd BB24009.

#### **PORTERS**



CORAL REEF CLUB BOOK NOW 246/422-2372

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Hotel. Address: Hwy 1, St James BB24017.



FAIRMONT ROYAL PAVILION BOOK NOW 246/422-5555



Hotel. Address: Porters Rd BB24051. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This picturesque beachfront resort has a tranquil ambience set against colorful, lush landscaping. Luxuriously appointed rooms with refined décor feature fully furnished, ocean-facing balconies. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 75 units. 3 stories, exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants, also. Palm Terrace Restaurant, see separate listing, entertainment, Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, exercise room, massage. Guest Services: valet laundry.



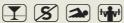




















#### WHERE TO EAT



PALM TERRACE RESTAURANT 246/422-5555

HREE DIAMOND

Steak Seafood Fine Dining. Address: Porters Rd BB24051.

#### **PROSPECT**



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SAVE Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Prospect Bay.

#### WESTMORELAND



ROYAL WESTMORELAND BOOK NOW

246/419-7298

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## St. Joseph Parish

St. Joseph, on the northeastern shore, is in the heart of the Scotland District, a rugged vista that reminded homesick settlers of their native hills. Near the top of Horse Hill is the Cotton Tower, one of six signal stations built across Barbados by the British as part of the island's defense.

#### **BATHSHEBA**

A fishing village 14 miles (23 km) from Bridgetown, Bathsheba has been called a miniature Cornish coast. Local fishing boats depart in the morning and return in the evening out of Tent Bay. The outside verandah of the Atlantis Hotel is a popular spot for a typical Barbadian lunch, with Tent Bay and Bathsheba providing a scenic backdrop.

FLOWER FOREST BOTANICAL GARDENS is on Hwy. 2 at Richmond Plantation, following signs. Well-marked, easy to navigate hillside trails wind among tropical trees and plants, including ginger lily, heliconia, bamboo, banana, avocado, breadfruit, coconut, coffee, cocoa and Barbados cherry. Relics of the sugar industry can be seen on the 53-acre (21-hectare) Richmond Plantation site. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (246) 433-8152.

## St. Lucy Parish

The Animal Flower Cave in St. Lucy is one of the most scenic coastal areas in Barbados. Steps descend into a coral limestone cave containing three rooms. This seasculptured formation obtains its name from the sea anemones that exist in the pools, one of which is deep enough to swim in. Sneakers or reef shoes are recommended since the steps are steep and the rocks can be slippery. A guide leads the way into the cave, which is sometimes closed due to rough seas; phone (246) 439-8797.

From the cliffs surrounding Cove Bay, visitors can watch the tumultuous waves of the Atlantic Ocean crashing against the shore. Towering above the cove is Pico Tenerife, a jagged rock formation rising from the ocean to a height of 269 feet (82 m).

#### **SHERMANS**





Extended Stay Hotel. Address: Fort Rupert, St Lucy BB27190.

#### St. Michael Parish

With its first English camp in 1628, St. Michael Parish soon gained prominence over earlier settlements in St. James and St. Peter due to its sheltered bay and freshwater access. The area later named Bridgetown would become one of the most important commercial ports in the West Indies.

#### BRIDGETOWN

Barbados' capital, Bridgetown was founded in 1629 and was the chief residential section during the island's settlement. The exuberance of its people and customs blend with a Victorian austerity typified by the public buildings that house parliament.

A statue of Lord Nelson in National Heroes' Square was erected by planters in recognition of the British admiral, who saved their sugar profits from the French. St. Michael's Cathedral, on St. Michael's Row, was rebuilt in 1831 of coral rock after the original was destroyed by hurricanes. George Washington is recorded as having attended services in the original cathedral in 1751; it is now one of the town's main attractions.

The parliamentary buildings are on Broad Street facing National Heroes' Square. The House of Assembly meetings, held in the east building's Public Gallery, usually can be observed Tuesday at noon; visitors must be appropriately dressed and cameras are not permitted. The gallery contains stained-glass windows representing the sovereigns of England and a speaker's chair with intricate carvings.

The Careenage, in central Bridgetown alongside Wharf Street, is a picturesque harbor where pleasure craft are

Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

docked. Chamberlain Bridge, one of two spans over the Careenage, contains the Independence Arch, originally erected in 1987 and later rebuilt; it commemorates the island's 21st anniversary as a self-governing nation. Next to the arch is an area of shops, craft vendors and restaurants overlooking the water. Fishing and sailing charters as well as scuba diving excursions can be arranged at the waterfront shops.

Off Broad Street, visitors can find duty-free shops offering china, crystal, leather and fine jewelry. A colorful market can be found on Cheapside Street.

The Nidhe Israel Synagogue, on Magazine Lane, dates from 1654. Said to be one of the oldest Jewish synagogues in the Western Hemisphere, the structure was destroyed by a hurricane in 1933 and has been restored. Of interest at the museum is a 17th-century mikvah. The adjoining cemetery has tombstones dating from the 1630s.

Situated on Bay Street, opposite the Prime Minister's office and next to Bayshore Beach, the Esplanade offers a nice view of Bridgetown's harbor area and Carlisle Bay. The small park, which was once a village of wooden houses, contains benches shaded by trees and a lovely gazebo. St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral, also on Bay Street, dates from 1899.

East of Bridgetown, in a residential area at the northern end of St. Barnabas Highway, is the Emancipation Statue of Bussa, a national hero. Commemorating the abolition of slavery in 1834, the statue depicts a slave standing with his chains broken and his hands to the sky in triumph. In 1816, Bussa purportedly led a revolt at Bayley's Plantation in St. Philip Parish that was to be the largest revolt on the island.

ATLANTIS SUBMARINE EXPEDITION departs from the Shallow Draught in Deep Water Harbour. The 65-foot-long, 48-passenger submarine cruises at a maximum depth of 150 feet (45 m), offering excellent views of reefs, coral formations, marine life and a sunken ship. Time: Allow 3 hours minimum. Phone: (246) 436-8929. **GT** 

BARBADOS MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY is 2.5 mi. (4 km) s.e. off Bay St. at the Garrison. Exhibits in the 1817 British military prison depict the natural history of the Caribbean, Amerindian prehistory and the history of Barbados. The museum also has collections of ceramics. silver, maps and prints; period rooms from a Barbadian plantation house; an African gallery; a military gallery; a children's gallery; and a prisoner's cell as well as changing exhibits. Phone: (246) 538-0201.

**MOUNT GAY RUM TOUR** is on Spring Garden Hwy. near Bridgetown's deep water port. The guided 45-minute tour begins with a rum punch tasting and an overview of Mount Gay history. Guests then enjoy a short film which offers an in-depth explanation of all aspects of rum production. The tour also includes a look at the blending and bottling areas of the plant. Afterward, visitors may participate in a tasting. A buffet lunch tour, a rum pairing tour and a cocktail tour are also available. Phone: (246) 227-8864. **GT TI** 

TIAMI CATAMARAN CRUISES departs from the Shallow Draught harbor of Bridgetown port. Lunch and sunset cruises are offered, both of which include snorkeling stops; sites may vary due to weather conditions. Passengers enjoy views of the island's southwest coast. Food, beverages and hotel transfers are included. Allow a half day. Snorkeling equipment is provided. Bring a swimsuit, towel and sunscreen. Phone: (246) 430-0900.







AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: Needham's Point BB11000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 342 units. 6-8 stories, interior corridors. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining:

5 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

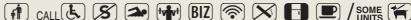


































#### St. Peter Parish

St. Peter and St. Lucy, which share the northern end of the island, are the only two parishes in Barbados with shorelines on both the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea. The port of Speightstown was once a vital trading link with England, and British landowners established several large estates here in the 17th century, including Saint Nicholas Abbey and Farley Hill.

Wild green monkeys frolic in their natural habitat at the Barbados Wildlife Reserve, which protects 4 acres (1.6 hectares) of mahogany forest.

#### SPEIGHTSTOWN

This fishing village was once a shipping center known as Little Bristol. In 1663 Sir John Yeamans sailed from Speightstown (pronounced Spites-town) on an expedition to colonize South Carolina; he later became the third governor of that colony. His house, St. Nicholas Abbey, is one of the oldest sugar plantation great houses still standing in the Caribbean. Also in the area are the remains of the Old Denmark, Orange and Dover forts. Six Men's Bay north of town is lined with cannons and old buildings once used for drying whale blubber.

FARLEY HILL NATIONAL PARK borders the Barbados Wildlife Reserve. On a cliff 900 feet (275 m) above sea level, the 17-acre park provides sweeping views of the coast amid gardens and the ruins of a sugar planter's estate. The earliest part of the house, known originally as Grenade Hall, is thought to have been built in 1818. In 1856, original owner Joseph Lyder Briggs gave the property to his son, Thomas Graham Briggs. Thomas spent large sums developing Farley Hill into one of the finest country residences in the West Indies and entertained distinguished guests there. The park also is the site of concerts and festivals. Phone: (246) 422-6700.

ST. NICHOLAS ABBEY is 5.5 mi. (9 km) n.e. via Hwv. 1 following signs. Built about 1658 for a sugar planter, the Jacobean mansion had as its second resident Sir John Yeamans, commissioned by King Charles II as lieutenant general and governor of South Carolina. This functioning sugar plantation, which never actually served as an abbey, has well manicured grounds and gardens. Visitors tour the ground floor, which is decorated with antique English and Barbadian furniture. An 1890 steam mill grinds sugar cane bi-weekly December through June for the on-site distillery; sugar and rum products can be sampled. An 18-minute home movie filmed in 1935 depicts the sugar-making process and other island scenes. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (246) 422-8725. GT (II

COBBLERS COVE BOOK NOW 246/422-2291

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Boutique Hotel. **Address:** Road View BB26025.





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# **Bermuda**

iewed from the air, Bermuda presents a kaleidoscope of pink beaches, blue-green ocean and patchwork isles. The mainland is a graceful chain of eight islands joined by roads and bridges; in all, Bermuda consists of 181 islands and islets. A closer view reveals well-ordered homes with white roofs and a profusion of flowers—Easter lilies, amaryllis, oleander, gladioli, hibiscus and poinsettias. Because Bermuda is the northernmost of the coral islands, limestone, the residual product of coral, is seen everywhere. The island is 650 miles (1,046 km) east of Cape Hatteras, N.C., and about a

2-hour flight from New York, Atlanta and other East Coast gateway cities.

Thanks to a mild climate and beautiful beaches, Bermuda's main business is tourism. However, Bermuda is a subtropical island—the weather from December through March can be brisk enough to keep most people out of the water. The peak tourist season runs from May-September.

#### **History**

Bermuda's discoverer and namesake, Juan de Bermúdez of Spain, is thought to have anchored off the islands



as early as 1505. The first settlers, however, were Virginia-bound British colonists who were shipwrecked off St. George's Island in 1609. Some historians credit the event with providing Shakespeare with background for "The Tempest."

Although tourism, banking and international business are today's primary industries, Bermuda relied on shipbuilding as the mainstay of its economy about 70 years after its founding as a colony. Vessels constructed of cedar were the basis of the island's flourishing economy until wooden ships were replaced by those made of steel during the late 1800s and tourism began to take on economic importance.

As a British colony Bermuda is administered by a governor appointed by the reigning British monarch; a cabinet appointed by the premier; a senate jointly formed by the governor, the premier and the opposition party; and a house of assembly elected by the citizens. The country's nine parishes are governed by separate advisory councils. The islands hold the distinction of being the oldest self-governing colony in the British Commonwealth. Bermuda's constitution, adopted in June 1967, provides for a large measure of self-government.

#### Shopping

Browsing for antiques and bric-a-brac is entertaining in itself. Shops in Hamilton have given Bermuda its reputation as the "Showcase of the British Commonwealth." Choice woolens, cashmeres, silver, English china, leather gloves and slacks, French perfumes, German cameras, Swiss watches, Swedish crystal and Italian leather can be purchased at a savings without sales tax.

The Calypso Shop on Front Street features womens clothing and Torwood Home offers home decor and linens; phone (441) 295-2112 and (441) 295-4089, respectively. Other boutiques and designer goods can be found on Front Street between Church and Queens streets. Lili Bermuda Perfumery, at 5 Queen St. in Stewart Hall, St. George's, preserves the traditional creative processes of this native industry; phone (441) 293-0627.

Branch stores and specialty shops are tucked away in St. George's and Somerset as well as in several of the larger resort hotels throughout the island. Most stores are open Mon.-Sat. 9-5, and some have extended hours during the Christmas holidays and summer months. Banking hours generally are Mon.-Fri. 9-4:30.

#### Food and Drink

In Bermuda the lobster season extends from September through March. The delicacy is served steaming with melted butter or one of several rich sauces. Cassava pie filled with chicken and pork is a popular treat during the Christmas season. The secret of its unique flavor is the grated and baked root of the cassava plant. Favorite desserts are sweet potato pudding and syllabub, a guava jelly-cream-wine concoction.

Fruits and vegetables are grown locally, but meat is imported from the United States and Canada. Drinking water is distilled from sea water for hotels or collected on rooftops, and milk is pasteurized. All popular American drinks are available; meals in hotels are similar to those served in the United States. Reservations are suggested for lunch and dinner at the best restaurants. A tip of 17 percent, with extra allowance for special service, is customary. However, most hotels, restaurants, cottage colonies and guesthouses add a 15-17 percent gratuity to the accommodation or food bill. Most hotels and restaurants accept credit cards.

#### **Sports and Amusements**

Part of Bermuda's appeal is that it has something for everyone. Golf, tennis, horseback riding, fishing and water sports lure the athletically inclined, while shoppers can enjoy Hamilton's exclusive stores and civic activities. St. George's, the former capital, provides a journey into the past with its 17th-century architecture and narrow lanes. Lazy days are filled by sunning, sightseeing or browsing in out-of-the-way shops.

Bermuda ranks among the most sports-conscious countries of the world: More than 30 sporting clubs are found in an area of 21 square miles (54 sq km). The island's diverse activities include bowling, bridge, cricket, cycling, dog and horse shows, fishing, golfing, parasailing, sailing, swimming, scuba diving, tennis, racquetball, squash, table tennis, horseback riding, water skiing and windsurfing.

Soccer and cricket are the national sports—soccer matches are scheduled September through April, and cricket matches are held May through September. The annual Cup Match, a national holiday, is a cricket match played between teams representing the island's east and west ends on the Thursday and Friday before the first Monday in August; most shops and eateries close during the event. Rugby also is popular; one major international tournament, the World Rugby Classic, is typically played in October or November.

Other sporting events include golf and tennis tournaments; yacht races on Saturday and Sunday; the Bermuda Game Fishing Association Tournament, held throughout the year; and the Bermuda Triple Crown Billfish Championship in July. Summer is celebrated on Bermuda Day, the last Friday in May, with dinghy races in St. George's Harbour and cycling and inline skating races in Hamilton.

The beaches on the south shore are wild stretches of sand and surf. Horseshoe Bay is one of the most popular. Because Bermuda is not subject to strong ocean currents that stir up sediment, the waters are usually clear and excellent for snorkeling. In addition, more than 600 species of fish live in the surrounding waters. One of the most unusual underwater sports Bermuda offers is bell diving, or

underwater walking. Hartley's Undersea Walk offers an opportunity for nonswimmers and people who wear glasses or contacts to see the incredible variety of marine life in Bermuda's waters. Anyone from 5 to 85 can participate in the guided 30-minute helmet dives departing from Heritage Wharf at the Dockyard, daily April through October and by reservation November through December, weather permitting; phone (866) 836-3989.

You can rent boats and equipment for snorkeling, scuba diving and spear fishing at many places on the island; spear fishing is not permitted within 1 mile (1.6 km) of the shore, and the importation and use of a spear gun in Bermuda is illegal. Since 1- or 2-hour scuba diving lessons are usually insufficient preparation for a novice, you should take a complete course in advance. Several operators offer snorkeling and scuba diving lessons on trips aboard glass-bottom boats.

Information on trips for deep-sea, reef or shore fishing is available from Visitor Service Center on Front Street in Hamilton, King's Square in St. George's and the Royal Naval Dockyard in Sandy's Parish. Boats with tackle and bait can be chartered for both half- and full-day excursions; no license is required. Rentals and lessons for sailing vessels and windsurfing are abundant. Water skiing is best May through September and is permitted in Hamilton Harbour, the Great Sound, Castle Harbour, Mangrove Bay, Spanish Point, Ferry Reach, Ely's Harbour, Riddells Bay and Harrington Sound; the law requires that skiers be towed by a licensed skipper.

If you prefer to play on land, you can choose among golf, tennis, squash, bicycling or horseback riding. Public golf courses include the Newstead Belmont Hills Golf Club, Warwick Parish; Turtle Hill Golf Club at Fairmont Southampton, Southampton Parish; Ocean View Golf Course, Devonshire Parish; and Port Royal Golf Course, Southampton Parish.

Many large hotels have tennis courts. The Bermuda Squash Racquets Association in Devonshire Parish is available by advance reservation to visitors; call ahead for reservation and court fees; phone (441) 292-6881. Bowlers can pursue their sport at the Warwick Lanes on Middle Road in Warwick Parish; phone (441) 236-5290.

Bicycling is an engaging pastime, particularly on the Railway Trail, which runs along an old railroad line. The nature trail runs the entire length of Bermuda, St. George to Somerset, except for a 3-mile (4.8-km) section in and around Hamilton. The 26 miles (41.8 km) of trails are divided into seven sections, each with its own flavor and character. The trail also is a fine walking and equestrian path. A free, 18-page trail guide is published by the Bermuda Tourism Authority (see Fast Facts box). The guide includes a history of the trail, maps, descriptions of various sections of the path and historical photos; phone (441) 296-9200 or (800) 223-6106.

The self-quiding African Diaspora Heritage Trail crisscrosses the island and provides glimpses into Bermuda's role in Black history. The trail includes such sights as the slave graveyard at St. Peter's, Crow Lane and the slave exhibit at Commissioner's House in the National Museum of Bermuda.

Several publications listing weekly events and entertainment are distributed at hotels and other establishments. Dancing and after-dinner entertainment are nightly fare at hotels and large cottage colonies. Calypso bands and local talent fill Hamilton nightclubs, some of which stay open until 3 a.m.

#### Sightseeing

Excursions can be taken to almost any point on Bermuda by cycle, taxi, boat or bus. A blue flag on a taxi signifies that the driver has been approved as a qualified tour guide by the government. Excellent maps are available at Visitor Service Centers on Front Street in Hamilton, King's Square in St. George's and the Royal Naval Dockyard in Sandy's Parish. Some hotels will arrange escorted excursions.

Popular cruises include a 2-hour cruise aboard a glassbottom boat to the sea gardens and a 3-hour catamaran cruise of Great Sound. Reservations can be made directly through the operator or arranged through a hotel activities desk. Ferries operate daily from Hamilton to the National Museum of Bermuda, Royal Naval Dockyard, in Sandy's Parish.

#### **Transportation**

Several air carriers provide service to L.F. Wade International Airport from Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Newark, London and Toronto.

Because law forbids the use of automobiles by nonresidents, car-rental services are not available. Perhaps the most common and economical means of transportation in Bermuda is cycling. Mopeds can be rented for about \$55 a day for a single or \$65 a day for a double, and electric minicars such as the Twizy can be rented for \$90-\$120 per day. Taxis are a popular option for families as a Twizy only holds two passengers. For the hardier visitor, bicycles (known as "pedal bikes") can be rented for about \$40 for a full day; weekly rates also are available. Cycle rental operations are found throughout the island and at many of the large hotels. Riders should use caution, as roads in Bermuda are narrow, hilly, curving and banked in many spots by coral walls.

Bus service, priced by zone, is available throughout the island; the central bus terminal is on Washington Street in Hamilton. Exact change, tokens or tickets are required; books of 15 tickets and multiday passes are available at substantial savings at the central terminal or at most subpost offices throughout the island. Adult fare for up to three zones is \$3.50 cash, \$19 for a day covering all zones.

SeaExpress Ferry Service runs daily between Hamilton, Paget, Warwick, West End, Dockyard and Rockaway. An additional route to St. George's operates May to early November. The cash fare is \$5 one way; \$2.75 for ages 5 to 15. Motor-assisted cycles and pedal bikes on the Hamilton-Somerset or Hamilton-Dockyard ferry cost \$4.50 extra one way at specific times and are not permitted on other routes. A bus and ferry combination day pass is \$19. Bus and ferry schedules, which include maps of routes and fare zones and sample fares, can be obtained at the bus and ferry terminals, visitor's service bureaus and most hotels; phone (441) 295-4506.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 71,818.** 

AREA: 54 sq km (21 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Hamilton.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 76 m (250 ft.), Town Hill. **LOWEST POINT:** Sea level, Atlantic Ocean. **TIME ZONE(S):** Atlantic Standard. DST.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** British Overseas Territory.

**CURRENCY:** Bermudian dollar, divided into 100 cents. \$1 U.S. = 1 Bermudian dollar. Most shops, restaurants and hotels accept U.S. currency.

ELECTRICITY: 110 volt, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: Nonresidents may not drive cars on Bermuda; rental cars are not available. Driving is on the left.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Good Friday; Bermuda Day, May

(last Fri.); National Heroes' Day, June (3rd Mon.); Emancipation Day (Cup Match) and Somers Day, Thurs. and Fri. before 1st Mon. in Aug.; Labour Day, Sept. (1st Mon.); Remembrance Day, Nov. 11; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 7.25-9.75 percent room tax and 10 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Most restaurants include a 15-18 percent service charge. There is no sales tax on the island. Departure tax and airport security fee is \$20 U.S. by sea per 24-hour period with a maximum of \$75 (Apr.-Oct.).

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 21 days.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Bermuda from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 441 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Bermuda Tourism Authority

675 3rd Ave. 20th floor

New York, NY 10017

(212) 818-9800

(441) 296-9200

(800) 223-6106

Visitors Service Center

The Royal Naval Dockyard

Pier 41

Sandy's Parish, Bermuda MA01

(441) 296-9400 (800) 237-6832



Help AAA keep our roadside techs safe. When driving, put away your phone and focus on the road ahead. Something so simple will mean the world to our roadside techs and those who love them.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

#### **Hamilton Parish**

Hamilton Parish, wrapped like a semicircle around Harrington Sound, is known for its labyrinth of caves. Though it shares the same name, this parish does not contain the island's capital; the city of Hamilton is in Pembroke Parish.

BERMUDA AQUARIUM, MUSEUM AND ZOO is at 40 North Shore Rd. in Flatts Village. Most species of fish found in Bermuda waters are represented, along with tropical birds, lemurs, golden lion tamarins, turtles, seals and binturongs. The 140,000-gallon North Rock Exhibit has two viewing tanks showcasing Bermuda's ocean resources and the underwater environment of the nearby North Rock coral reef. A touch pool and Discovery Cove also are on site.

Visitors can interact with free-roaming lemurs at the Madagascar Exhibit as well as view snake, chameleon, gecko and mantilla frog exhibits. A separate enclosure provides glimpses of fossa. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (441) 293-2727. [\]

#### **HAMILTON PARISH**

GROTTO BAY BEACH RESORT & SPA

BOOK NOW

441/293-8333

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Hotel. Address: 11 Blue Hole Hill CR 04.

ROSEWOOD BERMUDA BOOK NOW 441/298-4000



Resort Hotel. Address: 60 Tucker's Point Dr HS 02.

#### **Pembroke Parish**

Once known as Spanish Point, Pembroke Parish is home to the island's capital. Bermuda's most populous parish covers a peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and Hamilton Harbour

#### **HAMILTON**

Incorporated in 1793, Hamilton succeeded St. George's as capital in 1815. The city, overlooking Hamilton Harbour, is a latticework of pastel houses surrounded by tropical flowers. Whitewashed roofs, shuttered windows, arched doorways, Old World carriages and clusters of shops all enhance Hamilton's charm.

The sparkling white tower of City Hall rises 90 feet above Church Street. Its bronze weather vane depicts Sir George Somers' shipwrecked Sea Venture. A first floor gallery displays a stamp collection and oil portraits of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. Upstairs is the Bermuda National Gallery (see attraction listing). The Earl Cameron Theatre hosts music, dance and theatrical performances; phone (441) 292-1234. Behind the building is Victoria Park with its 19th-century gazebo, built in honor of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee.

BERMUDA NATIONAL GALLERY occupies the second floor of City Hall & Arts Centre at 17 Church St. The country's art museum showcases fine and decorative arts from around the world. The permanent collection features Bermudian works, 15th-through 19th-century European art, African sculpture and contemporary pieces. Highlights include paintings by Thomas Gainsborough, Berthé Morisot, Sir Joshua Reynolds and Lucas Granach the Elder; photographs by Richard Saunders; and prints by Francisco José de Goya and Hale Woodruff. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (441) 295-9428. **GT** 



FOUR DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

HAMILTON PRINCESS & BEACH CLUB BOOK NOW 441/295-3000

Historic Resort Hotel. Address: 76 Pitts Bav Rd HM 08.

# St. George's Parish

At the eastern end of Bermuda, St. George's Parish comprises several islands, the largest of which is St. George's Island. During World War II, when Bermuda became an important base for Atlantic military operations, four U.S. posts were built here.

### ST. DAVID'S ISLAND

The 650-acre St. David's Island is connected to the mainland by a bridge on St. George's Harbor. Its U.S. naval air station remained active until 1995. The picturesque St. David's Lighthouse has been in continuous use since 1879.

### ST. GEORGE'S

The town of St. George's is about 11 miles (18 km) northeast of Hamilton and is connected with the mainland by causeway. St. George's was once the seat of Bermuda's government, which was organized in 1612. It would be difficult to find a more delightful storybook town. The quaintness of St. George's is reflected in the names of its narrow, twisting lanes: Old Maids Lane, Shinbone Alley, Featherbed Alley and One Gun Alley.

The Old State House on the town square dates to 1620. In April the governor of Bermuda makes his formal call on the Freemasons to collect the annual rent of one peppercorn for their use of the Old State House.

At the head of Duke of Kent Street stand the stone arches and columns of the Unfinished Church, which was intended as a replacement for St. Peter's Church. Politics, budget problems and storm damage caused the roofless cathedral to be abandoned in the 1870s.

FORT ST. CATHERINE is at 15 Coot Pond Rd. Development of the fort began virtually from the moment Sir George Somers and the original settlers washed ashore at adjacent Gates Bay in 1609. The fort would be remodeled several times over the following centuries, growing in both size and armament. Today it stands virtually as it did in the late 19th century, with massive 18-ton rifled muzzle loader guns. Exhibits explain the life and times of the Victorian-era soldiers who stood vigil against any attack from the sea. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (441) 297-1920. **GT** 

ST. GEORGE'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM is on Featherbed Alley at Duke of Kent St. The 18th-century building of Bermuda limestone contains exhibits of Bermuda furniture, documents and pictures. Behind the museum is the Featherbed Alley Printery, which features a working replica of a Gutenberg-style printing press. Phone: (441) 297-0423.

ST. PETER'S THEIR MAJESTIES CHAPPELL is at 33 York St. Founded in 1612, this is the oldest Protestant church site in continuous use in the New World. The original cedar-frame structure was erected by Bermuda's first governor, Richard Moore. After a hurricane in 1712, parishioners salvaged the altar, pulpit and beams and rebuilt in stone. The silver Communion set displayed in the vestry was a gift from King William III in 1697. Another silver chalice dates from 1625. Phone: (441) 297-2459.



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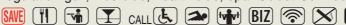
Resort Hotel. Address: 34 Coot Pond Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: STREGIS Opened in 2021, this secluded resort features elegant rooms with a free-form soaking tub and a furnished balcony or patio with tremendous views of St. Catherine's beach and the old British fort. Meets AAA quest room security

requirements. 120 units, some two bedrooms. 6 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet, winter plug-ins. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, regulation golf, kids club, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.























# Smith's Parish

Bermuda's largest nature and wildlife reserve, Spittal Pond, is in Smith's Parish on South Road. The 64-acre (26-hectare) sanctuary harbors many species of waterfowl and plant life. The best season for bird-watching is September through April. The H.T. North Nature Reserve at Mangrove Lake across from Pink Beach also preserves various examples of the island's fauna and flora. Both reserves are open daily.

**VERDMONT HISTORIC HOUSE AND GARDEN** is at 6 Verdmont Ln. This restored mansion, circa 1710, blends Bermudian and New England design elements and is furnished with period antiques. The three-story house remains virtually unchanged, standing as it did some 300 years ago. The grounds offer ocean views and gardens of herbs, old roses and fruit trees typical of the 18th century. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (441) 236-7369.

#### SMITH'S PARISH



THE LOREN AT PINK BEACH BOOK NOW 441/293-1666



Resort Hotel. Address: 116 South Rd.

# **Southampton Parish**

On the southwest end of the island, Southampton Parish was originally known as Port Royal, perhaps

preceding the town of the same name in Jamaica. The area is home to Seymour's Pond Nature Reserve and offers dramatic coastal views.

#### SOUTHAMPTON PARISH

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Hotel. Address: 56 South Shore Rd SN 02.



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# **Bonaire**

B onaire is the least populated and developed of the "ABC" (Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) islands. Pink is the island's official color—flamingos congregate here by the thousands—but a dive into Bonaire's turquoise waters reveals a world of rainbow hues. Not only is Bonaire surrounded by coral reefs, it is a reef, harboring an incredible variety of sea life. This, coupled with excellent underwater visibility, makes Bonaire one of the foremost diving and snorkeling spots in the world. Strict laws prohibiting spear fishing and the gathering of shells

and coral protect the delicate ecological balance of marine life in Bonaire's waters.

# **History**

When discovered by Amerigo Vespucci, sailing for Spain in 1499, Bonaire was the home of the Arawak Indians. Vespucci named the island after the Arawak word boynare, which means "low country." The Spaniards sent some of the natives to Spain and others to Hispaniola to work the copper mines; as a result, within 20 years no Arawak Indians were left on Bonaire. Several caves around

the island, particularly those at Boca Onima, bear Indian inscriptions that have never been deciphered.

In 1816 control passed to the Dutch, who realized that the abundant sunshine and scant rainfall created ideal conditions for the manufacture of salt through evaporation. It was the Netherlanders who first brought slaves to work the saltpans at the southern end of the island, an endeavor that thrived until abolition curtailed the labor supply and caused production to cease. The area, already agreeable to flamingos, became even more attractive, and the colorful, exotic birds moved into the deserted saltpans to build thousands of nests.

The Cargill Company has revived the practice using an updated version of the old methods. Thanks to a sanctuary set aside from a portion of the old saltpans, the flamingos continue to exist in harmony with people. Bonaire's other industry—in addition to its main staple of tourism—is an oil storage terminal.

An autonomous special municipality of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Bonaire is administered by an island council and has its own representative to the Crown. Though Dutch is the official language, the majority of islanders prefer the colloquial tongue of Papiamentu. Spanish and English also are widely spoken.

# Shopping

Shopping is not Bonaire's main attraction; even so, the island has many good buys. Most of the shops in Kralendijk are on Kaya Grandi, J.A. Abraham Boulevard and Kaya Simon Bolivar. Such stores as Littmans, Atlantis and Island Fashions & Gifts offer a wide selection of jewelry, watches, clothing and gifts. Shopping opportunities also are available at Royal Palm Galeries Mall, a mall in downtown Kralendijk.

Sand Dollar Plaza near the hotels on the island's north end features shops and an Internet cafe. The Harbourside Mall in Kralendijk has several shops and restaurants. Store hours are Mon.-Sat. 9-noon and 2-6; some stores remain open during lunch when cruise ships are in port. Banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-3:30.

# Food and Drink

Most of the best restaurants can be found in Kralendijk or in area hotels. Menus vary from fresh seafood and steaks to Chinese, Tex-Mex, Indonesian and Continental cuisine. Waterfront restaurants specialize in lobster, fresh fish, shrimp and, best of all, wonderful views of the sea, sailboats and sunsets. A number of restaurants serve such local specialties as goat stew, iguana, gumbo and a stuffed cheese known as *keshi yena*. Beer, wine and rum drinks complement meals. There is no lack of fresh drinking water since it is distilled from the sea.

# Sports and Amusements

Most visitors come to Bonaire for outdoor recreation: Water sports, including scuba diving, snorkeling, kayaking, kiteboarding and windsurfing, head the list of popular activities, along with bird-watching and mountain biking. The island is home to thousands of tropical birds, including parrots, parakeets, pelicans, pearly-eyed thrashers, mangrove cuckoos and hummingbirds. The flamingo colonies are particularly colorful March through May, when the deep-pink parents raise their gray hatchlings. To photograph or observe these shy birds, approach them slowly and quietly. If you come upon any nest areas, do not disturb them. The best bird-watching places are at Pekelmeer in the southern part of the island and Goto Meer Lake in the northwest (the actual flamingo sanctuary is off-limits to visitors).

Diving is popular in Bonaire; the island and its reef are said to be among the top five dive destinations in the world. Of the more than 80 diving locations around the island, more than half are accessible from the shore. The best spots for diving are off the leeward side of the island. Klein Bonaire, an offshore uninhabited island, is an excellent location for underwater exploring. You can make arrangements for snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, sailing or deep-sea fishing for marlin, tuna or bonito at several hotels or at the various commercial establishments on the island. Guided snorkeling programs also are available.

Although diving is what Bonaire is primarily known for, the island also offers opportunities for windsurfing, kiteboarding, sea and mangrove kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, landsailing and horseback riding, all of which provide alternative methods of exploring the island's natural beauty. The Horse Ranch Bonaire at Kunuku Warahama features a beach trail where riders can swim with their horses; phone (599) 786-2094.

Nightlife in Bonaire is mainly centered at the island's hotels, many of which offer theme dinners and live entertainment. Free slide shows are presented weekly at several establishments; more information is available in The Bonaire Reporter, a free bi-monthly newspaper available at most hotels. Dancing and live music venues include Karel's Beach Bar in Kralendijk.

# Sightseeing

Guided walking tours of Bonaire's outback, or "kunuku," are available at Rooi Lamoenchi Kunuku Park, a 138-acre (56-hectare) site highlighting the island's cultural history, flora and fauna. Rooi Lamoenchi, or Lime River, features a restored plantation house, aloe fields, a 1908 dam and marked trails showing such plant varieties as cactus, dividivi and mesquite. For tour reservations, phone (599) 717-8489.

Bonaire Tours & Vacations features bus tours to destinations across the island, including Washington-Slagbaai National Park, which covers nearly one-fifth of the island; phone (599) 717-8778. Soldachi Tours offers bus and walking tours of Rincon, Bonaire's oldest village, departing on Monday mornings, market days (the first Saturday of the month) and by request; phone (599) 796-7870.

Full- or half-day sailing excursions and cocktail cruises are the perfect way to experience Bonaire's charms and climate; information about charters is available at the Harbour Village, Bonaire Nautico and Plaza marinas.

# **Transportation**

Delta offers regular service from Atlanta. Divi Divi Air provides daily flights between Curacao and Bonaire, and EZ Air provides service to Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao. There is no regular ferry service between Bonaire and Aruba or Curaçao, but the island is a port of call for cruise ships.

You can tour Bonaire in a day on the island's excellent roads. Several car rental agencies serve the island. Double-cab pickup trucks are ideal for shore diving and tours across Bonaire's desert interior. Taxi rates are fixed, and you should check them before taking a cab.

#### **FAST FACTS**

POPULATION: 21,000.

AREA: 290 sq km (112 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Kralendijk.

HIGHEST POINT: 238 m (784 ft.), Mount Brandaris.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

**TIME ZONE(S):** Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: Dutch, Spanish, English and Papiamentu.

GOVERNMENT: Autonomous special municipality of the

Kingdom of the Netherlands. **CURRENCY:** U.S. dollar.

ELECTRICITY: 127/220 volts, 50 cycles AC; voltage

varies with location.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS:** 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. U.S. license valid; drive on right.

MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 21.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts and

child restraints are required.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS: Required.** 

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Carnival Rest Day (Jan. or Feb.); Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; King's Birthday and Rincón Day, Apr. 27; Labor Day, May 1; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Bonaire Day, Sept. 6; Kingdom Day, Dec. 15; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A per-day room tax of \$5.50-\$6.50 per person and a 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel and restaurant bills. An 8 percent sales tax (ABB) is assessed on most goods and services. The airport departure tax (PFC tax) and security fee is \$35 U.S. per person over age 2; interisland tax is \$9, \$4.50 ages 2 to 12 and over 60. A per-day tax of \$3.50 is added to rental car bills. Starting 7/1/2022 a \$75 per visitor entry tax is required to be paid at www.bonaireisland.com or at the airport.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Bonaire from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 599 + 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Tourism Corporation Bonaire 80 Broad Street, Suite 3202 New York, NY 10004 (212) 956-5910

Tourism Corporation Bonaire, Kralendijk

Kaya Grandi 2 Kralendijk, Bonaire (599) 717-8322



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#### **KRALENDIJK**

Kralendijk (crawl-en-dike) is the capital of Bonaire. The tropics and the Netherlands meet in this pink and orange town, whose name means "coral dike." North of town along the coast is Boca Onima, a grotto inscribed with Indian drawings. At the northern end of the island is Bonaire's inland lake, Goto Meer, home to great numbers of flamingos. The best time to view these colorful birds is early morning. The chief breeding ground is south at Pekelmeer Flamingo Sanctuary (see attraction listing).

BONAIRE NATIONAL MARINE PARK extends around the coast and coral reefs of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire. This unique environment can be explored by scuba diving, snorkeling and kayaking. The park protects the waters around the island from the high-water mark to a depth of 200 feet (60 m); its restrictions and regulations preserve and allow best use of the island's natural resources. Obtain a diving guide at dive operations or in local bookstores for a complete list of park guidelines. Guide service is available. Phone: (599) 717-8444.

WASHINGTON-SLAGBAAI NATIONAL PARK covers the northwest end of the island. The 13,500-acre (5,463-hectare) wildlife sanctuary—a tropical desert landscape of scrub plains, salt flats, beaches and caves—protects many bird and lizard species unique to Bonaire. Two rugged driving trails lead through the former Washington and Slagbaai plantations, which exported goats, cattle, aloe extract, charcoal, salt and divi-divi pods (used in leather tanning).

A hiking trail leads to the top of Mount Brandaris, and other options include the Kasikunda climbing trail and Lagadishi walking trail. Free maps are available at the park entrance. A visitor center features exhibits about the park's flora and fauna, plantation history, geology and archeology. Mountain biking, kayaking, swimming, snorkeling and scuba diving are popular activities; several companies on the island offer transportation and guided tours. Allow at least 5 hours for the 22-mile (35-km) driving tour, 3 hours for the 15-mile (24-km) tour. Vehicles should have high ground clearance and a spare tire; motorcycles are not allowed. During rain, the dirt roads may become impassable (four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended). Food is available on weekends. **Phone:** (599) 717-8444. GT



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# Cayman Islands

urrounded by sapphire waters and coral reefs, the Cayman Islands is an outdoor-lover's paradise. Neither a sleepy, secluded destination nor a luxury resort area, the Cayman Islands is the best of both worlds. Its reputation as one of the top diving spots in the Caribbean coupled with its proximity to Florida—the islands are about 480 miles (772 km) due south of Miami-also account for its increasing popularity.

Of the three islands—Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman—Grand Cayman, 22 miles (35 km) long and 8 miles (13 km) wide, is the largest and the best equipped to handle tourism. Most of the islands' inhabitants live on Grand Cayman near the capital city of George Town.

# **History**

Cayman Islands were sighted in 1503 by Christopher Columbus while on his fourth and last voyage to the New World. It was Columbus who named them Las Tortugas for the large number of turtles in the waters. The present name comes from *caymanas*, a derivation of the Carib Indian name for the crocodile.



Although the islands were ceded to the British by the Treaty of Madrid in 1670, there was no serious attempt to settle them until the early 18th century, when a group from Jamaica moved in; they were recalled 3 years later over problems in protecting them from Spanish pirates. The earliest settlers, however, were believed to be from Oliver Cromwell's army, shipwrecked sailors and refugees fleeing religious persecution in Britain.

With the passing of the days of sail, the Cayman Islands lapsed into isolation until the 1950s, when air travel was introduced. Flights now serve all three islands, making them a readily accessible vacation spot.

Despite independence movements among its neighbors, the Cayman Islands is content with its status as a United Kingdom Overseas Territory. Formerly governed by Jamaica, Cayman is now administered by a governor appointed by the king.

The governor is president of the Legislative Assembly and chairman of the Cabinet. Electoral districts in the Cayman Islands are George Town, West Bay, Bodden Town, North Side, East End, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. Every 4 years elections are held to select 18 representatives from these districts, based on each area's population. These representatives form the Legislative Assembly, which is responsible for enacting laws.

The Cabinet consists of seven elected ministers, while two official members are appointed by the governor—the deputy governor and the attorney general. Council ministers are responsible for the administration of the country. advising the governor on policy issues and instituting programs.

Political and economic stability—and tax neutrality has helped make the Cayman Islands one of the largest financial centers in the world. Laws passed by the Legislative Assembly in the 1960s paved the way for international banking, investments, trusts, insurance, corporate registries and the Cayman Islands Stock Exchange (CSX). The country has no income, corporation, capital gains, estate or gift taxes.

Though the biggest moneymakers are financial services and tourism, some Caymanians still depend upon the sea and soil for their livelihood. Relatively flat with no rivers, the Cayman Islands is covered by the tropical vegetation of mangroves, mangoes and palms. Trade is conducted mainly with Jamaica, the United States and Costa Rica.

Grand Cayman has one of the highest standards of living in the Caribbean. Visitors can explore the island without fear of being approached by street and beach vendors or beggars; the law prohibits such activity.

# Shopping

Free-port shopping is plentiful on Cardinal Avenue in George Town. Cameras, perfumes, watches, linens, china and British woolens are sold at reduced prices. Kirk Freeport Plaza contains La Parfumerie, Kirk Freeport and Swatch. Treasure Cove, affiliated with Kirk Freeport, is on the opposite side of the street and consists of Kirk Leather, Cartier and La Parfumerie II.

Island Plaza, between the shops on Harbour Drive, surrounds an open-air courtyard with a snack area. The mall contains Tropical Traders, with an array of island souvenirs, and jewelry stores Grand Switzerland Diamonds Direct, The Swarovski Boutique and Island Jewellers.

Caymania Duty Free, located on Main Street, has a vast selection of perfumes and some jewelry. Easily recognized by its flying flags and attractive blue and white buildings, Elizabethan Square is situated on Shedden Road. This complex contains an American Express office and boutiques that offer children's clothing, leather goods, jewelry, sportswear and gift items. Bayshore Mall is opposite the cruise ship terminal on South Church Street at Goring Avenue.

The Seven Mile Beach area has several shopping plazas with a wide assortment of goods. These plazas, all on West Bay Road, include Coconut Place, Cayman Falls Shopping Centre, Galleria Plaza, Queen's Court, Seven Mile Shops, West Shore Centre and The Marquee Plaza.

Island products make meaningful souvenirs: coral or conch-shell jewelry and sculpture, hammocks, and woven baskets. Antique gold and silver coins and coin jewelry are of high quality and good value in the Cayman Islands. Many shops in Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac offer local arts and crafts. For handicrafts with a unique touch, try Pure Art Gallery & Gifts on South Church Street or Cayman Craft Market on South Church Street at Boilers Road. The products of the local artistic community can be seen at several galleries, including the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands on Esterley Tibbetts Highway and Kennedy Gallery Cayman Fine Art in West Shore off West Bay Road.

Shopping hours are generally Mon.-Sat. 9-5; some hotel shops are open on Sunday. Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 9-4, Fri. 9-4:30. Cayman Islands Dollars are available in denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$25, \$50 and \$100.

## Food and Drink

Although 90 percent of the islands' food is imported from Florida, noteworthy local dishes include turtle steak, conch, lobster and chowders. Locally grown vegetables and fruit—bananas, plantains, cassava and breadfruit complement any meal.

Caymanians also enjoy their deep-fried or baked johnny cake, a doughy unseasoned concoction that resembles a heavy dough ball, and patties, pastry stuffed with beef, chicken or vegetables. "Bread Kind" refers to local vegetables such as yams, cassava, breadfruit and potatoes. Pepperpot is a hearty soup that contains *callaloo*, a leafy, spinach-like vegetable, and potatoes seasoned with hot peppers and spices. Ackee and saltfish, a dish adopted from Jamaica, is another local favorite. In addition to native fare, there are also restaurants devoted to Chinese,

Italian, German, Continental and Thai cuisine. Most dining establishments are in George Town, along Seven Mile Beach or in the hotels.

Desalination provides adequate drinking water, and water is safe in restaurants and hotels. Pasteurized milk is imported from the United States.

# Sports and Amusements

Vacationers come to the Cayman Islands to escape the pressures of the outside world; fishing and scuba diving are two means to this end. Rich catches of dolphin, blue marlin, wahoo and yellowfin tuna reward fishing enthusiasts. Little Cayman has bottom fishing outside the reef, bone fishing and fly fishing close to shore and tarpon fishing in a landlocked lake. Half- and full-day deep-sea charters are available. The Cayman Islands International Fishing Tournament takes place in late April or May. For entry information contact the Cayman Islands Angling Club, P.O. Box 30280 SMB, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands KY1-1202; phone (345) 945-3131.

Due to favorable currents and the proximity of deep open water to the shore, Northwest Point, Rum Point, Southwest Point, South Coast Drop Off and 12-Mile Bank are prime fishing destinations in Grand Cayman. Charter Boat Headquarters, (345) 916-5853, and Bayside Watersports, (345) 949-3200, serve as centralized booking agencies for charter boats in Grand Cayman; trips can be arranged for deep-sea, bottom, reef, bone and tarpon fishing. Marinas that are available to visiting yachtsmen include Cayman Islands Yacht Club and Harbour House Marina, both in the North Sound, and Morgan's Harbour Marina in West Bay.

Grand Cayman's trade winds coupled with water temperatures that average in the 80s provide excellent opportunities for windsurfing. Morritt's Tortuga Club at East End boasts good winds and calm waters inside the reef area. Winds blow 15-25 knots (17-29 mph) in the winter and 10-20 knots (12-23 mph) in the summer; lessons and rentals are available from Tortuga Divers/Red Sail Sports at the resort. A windsurfing regatta is held every January. With constant breezes blowing 6-12 knots (7-14 mph), Grand Cayman is a prime place to learn how to windsurf.

Parasailing is available on Grand Cayman: inquire at Red Sail Sports (located within most hotels) for information on equipment rentals; phone (877) 506-6368. A few operators offer water skiing. Sunfish, Hobie Cat and Jet Ski rentals are available at many hotels. Sailing regattas are scheduled by the local sailing club throughout the year, generally in conjunction with public holidays.

Landlubber activities range from cave exploring to sunbathing. Most of the caves that can be explored are on Cayman Brac.

Bird-watching opportunities abound on all three islands. The Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac parrots are found only in these islands, which also are home to more than 180 other resident and migratory species.

Seven Mile Beach, where 90 percent of the resorts and water sports operations are found, lures swimmers and sun worshippers to the west coast of Grand Cayman. One of the longest unbroken white sand beaches in the Caribbean, Seven Mile Beach is actually about 5.5 miles (9 km) long. The beach received its name from the fact that it is 7 miles (11 km) from the northwest to the southwest point of Grand Cayman.

Colliers Point on the east end of the island also has a lovely beach. Old Man Bay and Cayman Kai, on the north coast of Grand Cayman, are secluded beaches with golden sands that are occasionally punctuated by exquisite beach houses. Smith Cove, on the south coast off South Church Street, is known for swimming and snorkeling rather than for a beach. Picnic tables are available, and shaded areas provide respite from the sun.

Rum Point, on the north central tip of the island, is a park area that overlooks the North Sound. Visitors can relax on the beach, swim or snorkel in the shallow waters and rest in hammocks shaded by casuarina trees, also known as Australian pines. Red Sail Sports operates a full-service water sports and dive facility; activities include diving, riding Jet Skis, snorkeling, sailing, windsurfing and water skiing. A restaurant, snack bar, changing facilities, hammocks, picnic tables and showers also are available.

Hikers are attracted to the eastern tip of the island. Also popular with hikers is Cayman Brac, where a trek along the Bluff is rewarded with a view of the tropical wilderness where 150 species of resident and migratory birds can be spotted. A trail used primarily as a cow path leads to the caves that honeycomb the Bluff.

Many hotels on Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac are equipped with tennis courts. Temporary health club memberships are offered by World Gym, (345) 949-5132, off West Bay Road; The Fitness Connection, (345) 949-8485, just south of George Town on Glen Eden Road; and Powerhouse Gym at Kings Sports Centre on Crew Road, (345) 946-5464 or (345) 949-0555, which also features four bowling lanes, squash courts and a rock-climbing wall.

Two types of golf can be played at the Jack Nicklaus designed Britannia Golf Course—regulation play on a nine-hole course and a Caymanian version on an 18-hole course; phone (345) 947-4653. The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman has a challenging nine-hole course for the exclusive use of its guests; designed by Greg Norman, the course is situated along a scenic saltwater lagoon.

The Truman Bodden Sports Complex and Stadium in George Town features a variety of amateur and professional sporting events; phone (345) 949-7082.

While water sports dominate the action in the Cayman Islands, most hotels offer some form of evening entertainment. Ports of Call Seaside Bar, at The Wharf Restaurant at the south end of Seven Mile Beach, is known for its spectacular ocean view.

The Cayman National Cultural Foundation, (345) 949-5477, presents a variety of events from October to June, and the Cayman Drama Society, (345) 938-1998, stages productions at The Prospect Playhouse on Shamrock Road year-round. Top-name entertainers perform at the Lion's Community Centre on Crewe Road in the Red Bay area. Movies are shown regularly at Camana Bay Cinema; phone (345) 640-3456.

Island festivities peak when the Cayman Islands honors its earliest settlers during Pirates Week in November. Celebrations include colorful costumes, parades, treasure hunts and a lively reenactment, when a group of Cayman residents costumed as rogues and wenches board a replica of a pirate ship and approach the harbor. The landing turns into a mock battle with those who ruled the sea lanes more than 200 years ago.

Other island events include Carnival Batabano, a festival with costume parades and street dances held during the first week of May.

Several publications provide information about local events, activities and points of interest. Two island newspapers, *The Cayman Compass* and *Cayman News Service*, are published Monday through Friday. *Key to Cayman*, a complimentary magazine distributed at hotels, contains a wide assortment of visitor information.

# Scuba Diving

Scuba diving is the Cayman Islands' claim to fame: It is said that these islands are the most popular diving destination in the world. The three islands that make up the Cayman Islands are actually the tips of three undersea mountains surrounded by vertical drop-offs that plunge thousands of fathoms to the bottom of the sea. The Cayman Trench drops to a depth of 25,216 feet.

The Cayman walls encircle the Cayman Islands. The drop-offs begin at 55-60 feet and provide spectacular underwater scenery. A barrier reef encircles Grand Cayman in the shallower depths preceding the walls. Visibility can range from 125 to 200 feet, and conditions for underwater photography are excellent. Surrounded by colorful corals and sponges, the wall at Bloody Bay on Little Cayman begins its drop-off at 18 feet, then plunges to a reported 6,000 feet.

Diving close to the shore often eliminates the need for boats. Sometimes only a mask, snorkel and fins are needed to explore shallow-water reefs. An even more intensive diving experience is available on live-aboard dive boats, which offer divers access to the best sites around the islands. A guided trip with a qualified dive master is recommended. Among the many reputable dive operators are Divetech, (345) 946-5658 or (877) 946-5658; Don Foster's Dive Cayman, (345) 949-5679; Ocean Frontiers, (345) 947-0000 or (800) 348-6096; Red Sail Sports, (345) 623-5965 or (877) 506-6368; and Sunset Divers, (800) 854-4767.

All divers must possess a certification card from one of the international diving schools before any island dive shop will rent scuba gear. Most dive operations offer beginning divers a short "resort course" that provides enough familiarity with the equipment to allow them to take supervised, shallow diving trips. Harming or collecting coral or other marine life is illegal, as is spear fishing. A recompression chamber at George Town Hospital is staffed daily 24 hours; for emergencies phone 911.

The Cayman Islands has numerous recorded shipwrecks but divers are only able to see about a dozen. With some 350 known diving locations it is impossible to list each one, but following are some of the most popular dive sites surrounding Grand Cayman.

The waters off the north side of the island include Eagle Ray Pass, an area of narrow canyons inhabited by eagle rays, barracudas, tarpons and sometimes sharks. For experienced divers only, Grand Canyon consists of giant canyons up to 150 feet wide that were formed by collapsed reefs. Hepp's Pipeline, with depths ranging from 20 to 60 feet, has two mini-walls that provide a home for stingrays and tropical fish. Divers can feed and pet friendly stingrays in 12 feet of water at Stingray City, considered one of the world's best shallow dive sites.

The west side of Grand Cayman also contains several renowned underwater sites. Aquarium, a shallow dive considered ideal for beginners, has tame parrotfish and angelfish that provide excellent photographic opportunities. Experienced divers will want to visit Big Tunnels, where two tunnels lead downward through a reef to open up on the Cayman Wall; one tunnel can be entered at 80 feet, while the other can be entered at 160 feet. At Bonnie's Arch, extraordinary marine life and spectacular arch formations can be viewed. Trinity Caves, a wall dive with dramatic caves and arches, features such sea life as sponges, black coral, sea turtles and eagle rays.

East coast spots favored by divers include Grouper Grotto, situated just before the 6,000 foot drop-off at the Cayman Trench. The Maze is a series of caverns, tunnels and archways that twist through an elaborate coral formation extending 500 feet along the East End Wall. Three Sisters is composed of three massive pinnacles of coral named Agnes, Bertha and Claire; each measures about 70 feet in diameter.

The south side of Grand Cayman also has many underwater wonders. Among them are Japanese Gardens, a series of narrow passages containing beautiful elkhorn coral formations and tropical fish, and Red Bay Gardens, known for striking elkhorn and antler coral, colorful caves and wide areas of sand.

Devil's Grotto has numerous caverns and grottoes as well as a long tunnel that leads to a room. Eden Rock, a good spot for inexperienced divers, consists of a coral cliff inhabited by tropical fish. Parrot's Reef, only 30 yards off the park's dock, contains the wreck of the *Anna Marie* and

teems with parrotfish that swim among coral heads and sponges. About 150 yards from the dock, Polly's Perch is a wall dive that starts at 70 feet.

Many shipwrecks lay in the waters off the islands, such as the *Balboa*, a Norwegian freighter that sank off the George Town shore in the 1932 hurricane. The Cali is a sunken cargo freighter near George Town harbor that houses such marine life as barracudas, parrotfish and lobsters.

Oro Verde, off the coast of Seven Mile Beach, is the wreckage of an old cargo vessel sunk purposely in 1980 for the enjoyment of underwater explorers. Off Cayman Brac in 1996, the Russian frigate Capt. Keith Tibbetts was sunk to form an artificial reef. The MV Ridgefield, which ran aground on the coral reef off Gun Bay, attracts divers and snorkelers. Other shipwrecks include the *Doc Polson* wreck, a barge off Grand Cayman's northwest corner, and the wreck of the David Nicholson, a vessel in 65 feet of water deliberately sunk offshore from the Sunset House Dive Resort.

# Sightseeing

A driving tour of Grand Cayman runs south from George Town along the South Sound coastal road that merges with the Bodden Town Road. Lined with tall casuarina trees, the route travels through the historic outer districts, which were the heart of the island in the 17th and 18th centuries. Once a thriving settlement, Prospect was destroyed by a hurricane in 1846, leaving only a monument erected on the site of an 18th-century fort that was built to protect against Spanish pirates.

About 3 miles (5 km) east of Prospect in Savannah, the Old Savannah Schoolhouse has been restored to reflect a typical 1950s Caymanian school.

Two cannons guard the entrance to Bodden Town, the first capital of the Cayman Islands, where you can explore Gun Square and the Slave Wall. Across the street is a cemetery where pirates are supposedly buried. Queen Victoria's Monument, erected by residents to commemorate the queen, is in the center of Bodden Town. Also along the way is caymanite, a multicolored rock found only in these islands.

The road traveling east out of Bodden Town is bordered on the left by a bird sanctuary, where such species as heron, snowy egret and black-necked stilt can be viewed at dawn and dusk. About a mile (1.6 km) before East End are the Blowholes: As the incoming surf surges against the shore, water is forced through crevices in the coral rock, shooting more than 60 feet into the air to create a gevser effect.

Just northeast of the village of East End is Gun Bay, the scene of the "Wreck of the Ten Sails" in 1794. British sailors from the Cordelia tried to warn their merchant fleet after running aground; however, the other nine ships misinterpreted their warning and followed onto the reef. Islanders were recognized by King George III for saving all lives aboard. Folk stories claim that the islands were granted freedom from taxation as a reward. The two cannons in Bodden Town are from the wreck, and an anchor that protrudes from the water off East End's shore is believed to be from one of the ships. A monument and scenic overlook commemorating this maritime disaster was unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II in 1994. The coastal road continues through Old Man Bay Village and ends at Rum Point.

You also can drive to Boatswain's Beach on the rugged northwest coast. The forbidding "Hell" coral formations are near West Bay. The coral, which is more than 1.5 million years old, is colored by black algae and caymanite. Even though the coral limestone resembles charred ruins, folklore claims that the spot received its name in the 1930s when a visiting official from England fired at a bird near the formations, missed, and said "Oh, hell." Tourists have made the post office of this tiny town popular by getting their postcards and letters canceled with the stamp of "Hell, Grand Cayman."

Sightseeing tour buses depart from hotels on Seven Mile Beach and head to George Town. The 2-hour tours include stops at Hell and Boatswain's Beach, Tortuga Rum Company bakery and store, and a conch-shell house; the full-day tours also include stops at Cayman Kai and the Pirate's Caves. Cruises along Seven Mile Beach also are available. The National Trust conducts walking tours in George Town by reservation, visiting such Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park and Mission House; phone (345) 947-9462.

Several boats offer afternoon and dinner cruises, and glass-bottom boat rides can be arranged at many resorts and water sports outlets. Picnicking, shelling, snorkeling and swimming are other popular activities.

A popular way to spend a day and to experience the Cayman Islands is to participate in a North Sound Beach lunch/snorkeling trip. The all-day boat excursion features a native-style lunch prepared by the captain; diving for a conch (except during off-season, May through October) to be used later as part of the meal; and three snorkeling stops, including Stingray City. These trips, available from more than 20 captains, can be booked through Bayside Watersports at Morgan's Harbour, (345) 928-2482 or (954) 284-4434; and through Captain Marvin's, (345) 945-6975. Half-day excursions without lunch also are offered.

The smaller islands are less developed than Grand Cayman, but they provide a welcome change of pace and an opportunity to see the islands in a more natural state. The dramatic limestone cliffs of Cayman Brac, 89 miles (143 km) east of Grand Cayman, are a popular destination for hikers and bird-watchers. A 2-mile nature trail offers glimpses of frigate birds, red-footed boobies and the rare Cayman Brac parrot. The island also offers many opportunities for fishing, scuba diving and exploring, with many hidden caverns reputed to have once been the hideouts of pirates and their treasures.

Snorkeling, scuba diving and deep-sea fishing also are excellent on Little Cayman, 5 miles (8 km) northwest of Cayman Brac. The diving at Bloody Bay Wall has been described as spectacular. A haven for bird-watchers, the island is home to one of the largest breeding colonies of red-footed boobies in the Caribbean. Road signs advise: "Iguanas Have the Right of Way; Drive Slowly."

# **Transportation**

Cayman Airways, the national flag carrier, provides daily direct flights from Miami to Grand Cayman's Owen Roberts International Airport, as well as regular service from Chicago, Dallas, Tampa and New York (JFK). American Airlines offers daily flights from Miami and Charlotte. Delta Air Lines provides daily service from Atlanta.

Cayman Airways regularly flies between Grand Cayman and Kingston, Jamaica. Grand Cayman also is a leading port of call for cruise ships, serving an average of 13 vessels per week.

Interisland service to Cayman Brac's Charles Kirkconnell International Airport is provided by Cayman Airways. Cayman Airways Express provides day trips to Cayman Brac and Little Cayman leaving from Grand Cayman. Flights from Grand Cayman to Little Cayman take approximately 40 minutes. Service from Grand Cayman to Cayman Brac is 18 minutes by jet, and 45 minutes by propeller plane. There is no jet service to Little Cayman.

It is best to rent a car if your accommodations are not in the Seven Mile Beach area. Major and local car rental agencies serve the island. Hertz, (345) 943-4378 or (800) 654-3080, offers discounts to AAA members. Driving permits are issued upon presentation of a valid driver's license and cost \$20. Speed limits are 40 mph on West Bay Road in the Seven Mile Beach area and 25 mph in George Town; in other parts of the island, speed limits range from 25 to 50 mph. Driving is on the left side of the road. A seat belt law is in effect. Check with select rental companies for electric car availability.

Independent, privately-owned minibuses run between West Bay Road and George Town; buses stop at the side of the road by white circular bus stop signs. Roughly, buses run about every half-hour between 7 a.m. and 9 or 10 p.m.

Taxis, motor scooters and bicycles are available on both Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac. Taxis, often driven by islanders versed in local folklore and history, can be chartered for island tours. Jeeps are available on Little Cayman, where bicycling also is very popular. Taxis do not have meters, as rates are fixed by the government. Visitors must be at least 18 to rent a scooter, and a permit is required. The permit can be purchased for \$20. Use caution when renting scooters or bicycles; although the island is relatively flat, traffic can be heavy in George Town and on portions of West Bay Road.

#### FAST FACTS

**POPULATION:** 61,952.

**AREA:** 259 sq km (100 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** George Town, Grand Cayman.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 43 m (141 ft.), The Bluff.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

**TIME ZONE(S):** Eastern Standard.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** British Overseas Territory.

**CURRENCY:** Caymanian dollar, divided into 100 cents. \$1 U.S. = approx. .8 Cayman Islands dollars. U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. Local license (\$20 U.S.) required; drive on left.

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are required for all passengers.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; National Heroes' Day, Jan. (4th Mon.); Ash Wednesday; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Discovery Day, May (3rd Mon.); Monarch's Birthday, June (2nd Mon.); Constitution Day, July (1st Mon.); Remembrance Day, Nov. (closest Mon. to Nov. 11); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26. Cayman holidays falling on a weekend are legally observed the following Monday.

**TAXES:** A 13 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Seven Mile Beach area hotels may charge an additional daily resort fee.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 6 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call the Cayman Islands from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 345 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, United States Empire State Building 350 5th Ave. Suite 2720 New York, NY 10118 (212) 889-9009

# **Grand Cayman**

Covering about 76 square miles (197 sq km), Grand Cayman is the most developed of the island group. The majority of resorts and diving facilities are found along Seven Mile Beach, where portions of the movie "The Firm" were filmed.

Named for King George III of England, George Town is the capital of the Cayman Islands. It is a bustling city that serves as a center for shopping, banking, tourism and other businesses.

The post office on Cardinal Avenue is a busy meeting place where locals exchange news; the hundreds of boxes on the outside of the building reflect the fact that there is no home or office mail delivery in Grand Cayman. Just 2 miles (3.2 km) from the airport, George Town is the gateway to Seven Mile Beach, which stretches north to West Bay. The Royal Watler Cruise Terminal opened to passengers in 2006.

Distinctive Caymanian architecture, with its ornate hand-carved trim and zinc roofs, adds a gingerbread character that can be seen in Pantonville, where three original houses have been restored.

George Town's architectural landmarks include the Elmslie Memorial United Church, built by Captain Rayal Bodden, a skilled shipbuilder whose signature timber roof framing is a structural highlight; the Peace Memorial, which once served as a town hall; the Clock Tower, built in honor of King George V; and the George Town Public Library, which has elaborate ceilings and houses an assortment of English novels.

A plaque on the corner of Fort Street and North Church Street commemorates the area where Fort George once stood. Just a small portion of the wall remains. The coralrock fort, which guarded the harbor's entrance, was constructed in the late 1700s to defend the island against the Spanish.

When the legislature is not in session, the sergeant-atarms is frequently available to provide tours through the Legislative Assembly building on Fort Street. Visitors are Cayman Islands Department of Tourism, George Town 133 Elgin Ave.

George Town, Grand Cayman KY1-1102 Cayman Islands (345) 949-0623

permitted to observe the legislature in session from the upstairs gallery; appropriate dress is required.

CAYMAN ISLANDS NATIONAL MUSEUM is on Harbour Dr. at the waterfront. Cultural and historic exhibits are displayed in the 19th-century Old Courts Building. Highlights of the 9,300-item collection include natural history specimens, cultural artifacts, rare documents and a traditional catboat. A children's gallery offers interactive exhibits. New exhibits are presented in a frequently changing display. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (345) 949-8368.

CAYMAN TURTLE CENTRE: ISLAND WILDLIFE EN-**COUNTER** is 8 mi. (13 km) n. via Seven Mile Beach Rd. to 786 North West Point Rd. in West Bay. Green sea turtles once were a mainstay of the Cayman economy, but their numbers in the wild dwindled toward extinction. This 23-acre adventure marine park is home to some 7,000 turtles including primarily green sea turtles and also a small number of Hawksbill and Kemp's Ridley turtles. The site is an actual working farm, both educational and entertaining, and turtles are available for guests to hold for photographs. Feedings are conducted throughout the day.

The Exploration Tour includes an interactive turtle touch tank area and wading pool offering interaction with yearling turtles, while the crocodile enclosure houses the 9-foot Smiley, a hybrid Caiman crocodile. The park's educational and hatchery facility focuses on the conservation of green sea turtles.

On the Adventure Tour, visitors have access to everything on the Exploration Tour plus the opportunity to swim and snorkel with fish and other marine life in the 1.3million-gallon saltwater lagoon. They can also enjoy a refreshing dip and ride the waterslide in the Breaker's freshwater tidal lagoon, or see sharks and eels close-up in the predator tank. Additional choices include wandering through a free-flight bird aviary or strolling down a historic Caymanian street showcasing traditional architecture. A nature trail allows guests to experience Cayman's rich natural history in a fun and safe environment, while providing opportunities to observe and interact with native flora and fauna.

Visitors should be aware that sea turtle products purchased in the Cayman Islands cannot be taken home; U.S. customs officials will confiscate any items brought into the country. **Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (345) 949-3894.

#### **NORTH SIDE**

Once the most remote area of Grand Cayman, the North Side district preserves an ancient forest and a footpath used by islanders for two centuries. On the northern coast is Rum Point, named for the cargo barrels that floated ashore after a shipwreck. Nearby is Stingray City, where divers can swim with hundreds of docile stingrays.

MASTIC TRAIL has entrances s. of North Side Rd. off Further Rd. and w. of Frank Sound Rd. off Mastic Rd. The historic footpath winds through a 2 million-year-old woodland reserve in the dense interior of the island. The National Trust, 558 S. Church St., offers 3-hour hiking tours of the 2-mile (3-km) trail where visitors can view native flora and fauna, including the Grand Cayman parrot and other unique bird species. An ancient yellow mastic tree stands at the midpoint of the trail, which traverses rocks, swamps, high woods and farmland.

Comfortable hiking shoes, drinking water, insect repellent and sunscreen are advised. Hiking tours are not recommended for senior citizens or children under 6. **Phone:** (345) 749-1121.

QUEEN ELIZABETH II BOTANIC PARK is off Frank Sound Rd. at 367 Botanic Rd. The 65-acre (26-hectare) park is dedicated to preserving the island's native plants and animals. Along the Woodland Trail, visitors can view

labeled trees and plants representing 55 percent of the island's native flora. The Floral Colour Garden displays flowering plants from around the world. The Heritage Garden features a traditional wooden cottage, sand garden, fruit trees and crops. Palm and orchid gardens as well as a Xerophytic garden also are offered. Aquatic birds including the West Indian whistling duck reside at the lake, and endemic blue iguanas roam the park.

**Time:** Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (345) 947-9462.  $\boxed{\text{GT}}$ 

#### **SAVANNAH**

Savannah was settled in the 18th century by William Eden, who built a stone meeting house and residence named Pedro St. James. The "Pedro Castle" was the only building on the island to survive the hurricane of 1785. The house stood through two centuries of Caribbean storms; it was destroyed by fire in 1967. Pedro St. James has been restored as a national historic site.

PEDRO ST. JAMES CASTLE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is s. on Hirst/Pedro Castle Road, following signs. The 8-acre (3-hectare) site contains a restoration of one of the island's oldest structures, a 1780 plantation house built by English settler William Eden. Revered as the "Birthplace of Democracy in the Cayman Islands," the house was the 1831 meeting site of residents who established government by representation. The three-story manor features period Caribbean furniture. A multimedia theater offers a 25-minute film about the "Pedro Castle."

Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (345) 947-3329. GT

# **SEVEN MILE BEACH**

AQUA BAY CLUB CONDOS BOOK NOW 345/945-4728

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INSPECTED ⊗ CLEAN™

FOUR DIAMOND
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CLEAN

Condominium. Address: 2093 West Bay Rd KY1-1201.



Boutique Hotel. Address: 871 West Bay Rd KY1-1202.



THE CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS CONDOS BOOK NOW

345/945-4354



Condominium. Address: 2013 West Bay Rd KY1-1102.



GRAND CAYMAN MARRIOTT RESORT BOOK NOW 345/949-0088



THREE DIAMOND

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AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: 389 West Bay Rd KY1-1202. MARRIOTT Location: Oceanfront. Facility: The open lobby, restaurant and bar are great places to congregate. Newly renovated rooms are upscale and include a patio or balcony. Public access to Seven Mile Beach is adjacent to the resort.

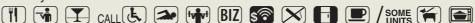
Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 301 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.





























HAMPTON BY HILTON GRAND CAYMAN BOOK NOW 345/945-7300





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Hotel. Address: 22 Piper Way KY1-1201. Facility: Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 120 units, some two bedrooms. 5 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: Ms. Piper's Kitchen + Garden, see separate listing. Pool: outdoor. Activities: bicycles, exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry, area transportation.



































HOTEL INDIGO GRAND CAYMAN, AN IHG HOTEL BOOK NOW

345/743-3600

 $[\mathbf{fyi}]$  Hotel. Pending inspection, call for details. **Address:** 32 Seafire Way KY1-1201.



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# KIMPTON SEAFIRE RESORT + SPA BOOK NOW 345/746-0000



Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: 60 Tanager KY1-1303. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: There's a playful ambience in the public areas of this stylized, luxurious resort where the fine service is relaxed and unpretentious. Rooms follow suit in design and have furnished balconies. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 264 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms, efficiencies, cottages and condominiums. 10 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and street. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants, also, Ave, see separate listing. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.





































LOCALE HOTEL GRAND CAYMAN

**BOOK NOW** 345/233-7829



Contemporary Hotel. Address: 455 West Bay Rd KY1-1209.



PLANTANA CONDOMINIUMS

**BOOK NOW** 345/945-4430



Condominium. Address: 1293 West Bay Rd KY1-1202.



# THE RITZ-CARLTON, GRAND CAYMAN BOOK NOW 345/943-9000



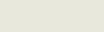


THE RITZ CARLTON

AAA Benefit: Special member savings plus Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 1066 West Bay Rd KY1-1209. Location:

Oceanfront. Facility: Serenely situated along the beautiful Seven Mile Beach, quests will find themselves in a tropical paradise at this luxurious resort. The lovely rooms have views of the garden, pool or beach. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 369 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms and kitchens. 3-8 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. **Dining:** 4 restaurants, also, Blue by Eric Ripert, see separate listing, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



FIVE DIAMOND

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SUNSHINE SUITES RESORT BOOK NOW 345/949-3000

Extended Stay Hotel. Address: 1465 Esterley Tibbitts Hwy KY1-1201. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 131 efficiencies. 3 stories, exterior corridors. Pool: outdoor. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.

































Condominium. Address: 1083 West Bay Rd KY1-1109.



## THE WESTIN GRAND CAYMAN SEVEN MILE BEACH RESORT &

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345/945-3800



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: 30620 Seven Mile Beach KY1-1203. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: The sprawling pool deck with a swim-up bar overlooks one of the widest stretches of Seven Mile Beach. The rooms are very stylish with larger than normal bathrooms. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 343 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.































# WHERE TO EAT



AVE 345/746-4111



New Caribbean Fine Dining. Address: 60 Tanager Way KY1-1303.



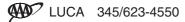
BLUE BY ERIC RIPERT 345/943-9000



International Seafood Fine Dining. Address: 1066 West Bay Rd KY1-1209.



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.





Italian Fine Dining. Address: 871 West Bay Rd KY1-1202.



MS. PIPER'S KITCHEN + GARDEN 345/536-1623

THREE DIAMOND

International Casual Dining. Address: 22 Piper Way KY1-1201.



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# Costa Rica

osta Rica is a Central American nation bordered by Nicaragua to the north, Panama to the south, the Pacific Ocean to the west, and the Caribbean to the east. The country is known for its tropical climate, with temperatures staying reasonably consistent throughout the year, typically ranging from the mid-70s to low 80s Fahrenheit (24 to 29 C).

Costa Rica is home to diverse biological ecosystems. including rainforests, beaches, mountains and volcanoes. It has a rich history, with pre-Columbian indigenous communities like the Chorotega and Huetar calling the country home before the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century. The Chorotega people remain centered around the Nicoya Peninsula and continue their traditional ceramics. In 1821, Costa Rica declared independence from Spain and became a republic in 1848.

"Pura Vida" is a popular expression in Costa Rica that can be translated to "pure" or "simple life." It's basically a lifestyle and represents the country's laid-back attitude, love of nature and appreciation for the simple things in life. In fact, the country's geographic features make it an ideal destination for those looking to get back to nature and have an adventure. Costa Rica attractions include zip-lining in the rainforest or surfing and paddleboarding in the Pacific Ocean. Other visitors relax on the country's beautiful beaches, hike through national parks or visit volcanoes. Easily reached from the capital San José, Irazú

Volcano National Park contains the Irazú Volcano (Volcán Irazú). With a height of 11,260 feet (3,432 m.), it is the tallest volcano in the nation and features a number of active craters.

Many visitors choose to stay in eco-lodges or resorts that are dedicated to sustainability. Eco-lodges let tourists experience nature and culture while minimizing their environmental impact. However, resorts also are popular options and include luxury amenities and world-class service. Both are great bases for touring the country.

# History

In the pre-Columbian era, the indigenous people of the area that is now Costa Rica were influenced by Mesoamerican cultures in the north and Andean cultures from the South. Indigenous peoples in the region included Chibcha, Chorotega and Diquis, but most died from exposure to diseases brought by Spanish conquest.

Spanish settlers set up their first permanent colony in the 1560s. The region lacked precious metals and an indigenous population large enough to conscript into forced labor to work on large plantations, so the Spanish government paid little attention to the settlement.

In 1821, Mexico declared independence from the Spanish empire, and at the time, Costa Rica and other Central American countries were part of Mexico. In 1823, they separated from Mexico and formed the short-lived United Provinces of Central America. Costa Rica left the federation in 1838 and established a democratic government before the end of the century.

Costa Rica's economy depended on banana and coffee exports and imports of oil, but in the 1970s, the price of coffee dropped as the price of oil rose, leading to a shift in the economy. Today, the Costa Rican economy depends on technology services and ecotourism, focusing on sustainable development and protecting picturesque landscapes.

# Shopping

Sales tax, or value-added tax (VAT), in Costa Rica varies depending on the type of product or service being purchased. The standard rate is 13 percent, but there are reduced rates for basic food items and medicinal goods.

Credit cards are widely accepted in Costa Rica, especially in larger cities and tourist areas. However, it is always a good idea to carry some of the local currency, which is the Costa Rican colon (or colones, plural), as smaller businesses may not accept credit cards. However, Visa and Mastercard are the most commonly accepted cards, and it may be better to pay with a card unless trying to break a large local currency bill. An ATM also will disperse colones. Only an official casa de cambio will exchange dollars for colones. Instead of the airport, it's best to exchange money at a bank or exchange office to ensure the fairest rate. Although many places do accept U.S. dollars, it is often at an unfavorable exchange rate. Exchange rates update daily; the Central Bank of Costa Rica offers the country's most updated exchange rates.

#### What to Buy in Costa Rica

Pura Vida, which means "pure" or "simple life" is not only a longtime slogan but also a way of life in Costa Rica, and it's found on everything from T-shirts to cups and magnets. Salsa Lizano, a widely used condiment in Costa Rica, could be an affordable souvenir. Handmade items like beautiful wood carvings, leather goods, handmade soap and pottery also make great gifts.

Other popular things to shop for in Costa Rica include chocolate and coffee. Coffee in particular is a major export for the country, so there are plenty of high-quality blends to try. One of the largest Costa Rican coffee companies, Café Britt, is a popular choice. There are also coffee-themed products, such as chocolate-covered coffee beans, for sale.

#### Costa Rica Shopping Districts

Shopping in Costa Rica is concentrated in several areas. In larger cities like San José, there are malls and shopping districts with a range of stores. Open-air markets are also popular, especially for buying fresh produce and crafts.

San José features several shopping areas, including Avenida Central and Paseo de las Damas. Avenida Central is a pedestrian-only street full of local art and street performers as well shops selling clothing, shoes and accessories. Paseo de las Damas is located near the National Museum of Costa Rica and offers a mix of shops, markets and food places. The Escazú neighborhood outside San José is home to retail establishments, such as The Multiplaza, with designer stores and local restaurants. In Guanacaste, the Liberia shopping district has Centro Plaza Liberia as well as supermarkets and souvenir shops. Guaitil offers authentic foods and colorful pottery produced by the indigenous Chorotega people. Meanwhile, at Tamarindo Beach there are artisanal goods to purchase at Tamarindo Farmers Market (each Saturday morning) or Tamarindo Night Market (6-9 each Thursday).

Last but not least, there are duty-free shops in Costa Rica overseen by the Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social (IMAS). They are the only duty-free stores in Costa Rica and can be found at the Juan Santamaría International Airport, Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport, and Depósito Libre Comercial de Golfito. They offer perfumes, spirits, luxury goods and electronics, and according to IMAS, a portion of the net profits go toward funding social innovation programs.

## Food and Drink

The country offers a delightful mix of dining settings, including quaint beachside bars and late-night eats and nightclubs in San José. Its culinary landscape is evolving

with an increasing number of innovative chefs turning the spotlight on Costa Rican cuisine. You'll find everything from sodas (open-air eateries serving home-style food) to high-end restaurants offering modern interpretations of classic dishes. The growing food scene in cities like San José also is worth exploring, with avant-garde restaurants pushing boundaries and experimenting with local ingredients.

One note about dining out: Tipping is not typically expected as most restaurants automatically add a 10 percent service charge to the bill, however, if you receive exceptional service, an additional tip is always appreciated.

As for the cuisine, traditional fare is largely comfort food, consisting of gallo pinto (Costa Rican rice and beans), fried plantains and a protein like chicken, fish, beef or pork. A typical Costa Rican meal, known as "casado," includes rice, beans, cheese, eggs, an additional chopped protein, and a salad, often containing cabbage. Breakfast meals are also substantial, with foods like rice, beans, and large tortillas often eaten at the start of the day. Fresh fruits are plentiful in Costa Rica, inspiring many to enjoy raw-food dishes or simply a fruity beverage; good choices include frescos, refrescos and jugos naturales (fresh fruit drinks made with milk or water). There's also a number of flavors well-known to the region to try. Coffee is a given, but there's also cacao and the nation's favorite condiment, salsa Lizano (Lizano sauce).

In Costa Rica, the food and drink scene is not just about taste; it's also about sustainability. Many restaurants and eateries are committed to using locally sourced, organic ingredients, contributing to the country's efforts towards a sustainable food system. This commitment to sustainability extends to the table, ensuring that your culinary experience is not only delicious but also respectful of the environment and local producers.

# Sports and Amusements

Outdoor activities are popular in Costa Rica. The national parks and wildlife refuges are great options for guided hikes and spotting wildlife, and the Pacific coastline has many areas that are popular for the beach. Ecotourism in Costa Rica also includes ziplines, kayaks and cycling.

There are popular spots along Costa Rica's coasts. Jaco Beach is considered an excellent beach for beginner-level surfers. Kelly's Surf Shop offers lessons and board rentals at Tamarindo Beach; phone (506) 2653-1355. Paddle 9 offers surfing lessons on Manuel Antonio Beach; phone (506) 2777-7436.

Anglers can enjoy sport fishing on the Pacific coast. Some of the species caught include marlin, roosterfish, sailfish and wahoo. Fishing charters are available in most of the tourist areas. In Guanacaste Province, Flaming Sport Fishing is located in Playa Flamingo; phone (506)

8389-5962. There's also Coyote Sport Fishing in Tamarindo; phone (506) 8363-3509. Further south, Captain Tom's Sportfishing takes out excited anglers from Herradura; phone (506) 2637-8994. And in Quepos, JP Sportfishing Tours operates in Quepas; phone (506) 8689-5353.

The Guanacaste Province has many opportunities for scuba diving. Dive shops often lead trip to Bat Island, where it is common to see bull sharks, and the Catalinas Islands, where the abundant aquatic wildlife include manta rays and turtles. BA Divers is located in Playa Hermosa; phone (506) 2672-0032. Playas del Coco has Rich Coast Diving Co. and Summer-Salt Dive Center; phone (506) 2670-0176 or (506) 2670-0308 respectively.

If you want to spend some time on land, Costa Rica has beautiful golf courses that take advantage of the verdant scenery that the country has to offer. The Westin Reserva Conchal, an All Inclusive Golf Resort (331458) in Playa Conchal has an 18-hole, par 71 golf course available to resort guests. Reserve your tee time before your stay; phone (506) 2654-3500. Visitors to Playa Herradura can play the 18-hole La Iguana Golf Course designed by Ted Robinson; phone (506) 2630-9151.

# Sightseeing

When arranging sightseeing tours in Costa Rica, there are various travel packages and options to book through a AAA Travel Agent, hotels or directly with tour operators. It is often more practical and cost-effective to book tours with a AAA Travel Agent prior to arrival. While hotels may offer last-minute convenience, there's also the option of communicating directly with local operators who specialize in the type of experience you are seeking. Halfday and full-day tours are perfect for those pressed for time or looking to combine multiple experiences in one day. They range from tours of natural landmarks and farmlands to culture and eco-tours.

Tours like ziplining, rafting and surfing are popular adventure travelers. Food and drink tours are on the rise, particularly coffee tours that showcase Costa Rica's world-renowned coffee industry. On-site options offer an authentic look at the country's agriculture and coffee production. Wildlife viewing opportunities allow visitors to observe the diverse array of flora and fauna in their natural habitats. Popular picks include excursions where visitors can see monkeys, sloths, rare birds and other tropical creatures in their natural habitats.

For those who want to learn about the country's culture and history, cultural tours that visit indigenous communities and local attractions are a great option. One of the most popular is in the Chorotega region, home of the Chorotega people, in the northern Pacific area. The community's folklore, music, cuisine and artisanal goods, including traditional Chorotega pottery, can be experienced on the Nicoya Peninsula, especially in the province of Guanacaste.

Ecotourism is a popular option for those seeking sustainable and accessible travel that supports local communities and conserves the environment. These usually enlist local guides and visit lesser-known destinations.

# **Transportation**

International flights arrive at Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO), approximately 11 miles (17 km) from the capital San José, and Daniel Oduber Quirós International Airport (LIR), around 7 miles (11.5 km) from Liberia, the capital city of the Guanacaste province. Connecting cities and airlines vary based on the season and flight schedules. Always check with the airline or airport for current information. Hertz in Costa Rica offers rental car discounts to AAA members; phone the office at SJO, (506) 2222-1818, or (506) 4002-0712 for Hertz Rent a Car Liberia.

Costa Rica doesn't require an international driver's license, but you must have a valid driver's license and carry a passport or copy of your passport. Seatbelts are required, and car seats or booster seats are mandatory in Costa Rica for children under age 12, up to 57 inches (145 cm) or 79 pounds (36 kg).

Drivers can travel most of Costa Rica's roads. However, unpaved roads and potholes are not uncommon, making four-wheel drive a good idea in more remote destinations. Caution is advised from May to November due to possible washouts in the wet season. If you plan to drive, use an updated map. There's limited signage. San José is an exception, with significant routes visible on signs or building walls. Where available, the speed limit is posted in kilometers.

Ride-hailing services are popular in San José, and in most areas, taxis are abundant. Use only official taxis if you hail a taxi. They are red with a yellow triangle— except official airport taxis which are orange— and display an official badge and plate with the province they service. Orange airport taxis may cost more; fares are generally \$25 (15,000 CRC). All official taxis use government-determined meters, aka "MARIA." Ask whether fares are in American dollars or colones; 10 percent is the standard rate for tips. Pay fare and tips in local currency (colones), as drivers may not have change.

Avoid pirate taxis; if necessary in more remote destinations, negotiate fares beforehand, document the license and driver, and don't ride solo. Costa Rican addresses are typically landmark-based, so look to a specific hotel or point of interest to avoid getting lost or being overcharged.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 4,890,379** 

AREA: 51,100 sq km CAPITAL: San José

HIGHEST POINT: 3,819 m (12,529 ft.), Mount Chirripó

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Pacific Ocean

TIME ZONE(S): Central Standard

LANGUAGE: Spanish

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent

CURRENCY: Costa Rican Colon (CRC). \$1 U.S. =

534.54 CRC. U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts, 60 cycles AC

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25 depending on the

rental agency. U.S. license; drive on right

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seatbelts are required for all passengers. Children age 12 and under must be secured in a car seat.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS: Required** 

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Juan Santamaria Day, Apr. 11; Labor Day, May 1; Annexation of Guanacaste Day, July 25; Day of Virgin de Los Angeles, Aug. 2; Mothers Day, Aug. 15; Day of la Persona Negra y la Cultura Afrocostarricense, Aug. 31; Independence Day, Sept. 15; Military Armed Forces Abolition Day, Dec. 1; Christmas, Dec. 25

**TAXES:** A 13 percent value-added (Impuesto al Valor Agregado or IVA) tax is added to most goods and services, including restaurant bills and accommodations. Departure tax is \$29 U.S. and is usually included in airline ticket prices.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or onward ticket is required. No visa needed for stays up to 90 days. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from Costa Rica to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Costa Rica from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 506 + the 8-digit local number

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Costa Rican Tourism Institute edificio ICT, Saturno, Uruca San Jose 10107 Costa Rica (506) 2299-5800

#### **ALAJUELA**

COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT SAN JOSE

**AIRPORT** 

BOOK NOW 506/2429-2700 ALAJUELA



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: Radial Francisco J Orlich Plaza Los Mangos.



FAIRFIELD BY MARRIOTT SAN JOSE AIRPORT ALAJUELA BOOK NOW 506/2429-2500 AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points

when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: Radial Francisco J Orlich Plaza.



INSPECTED @ CLEAN

XANDARI RESORT AND SPA BOOK NOW 506/2443-2020



Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: 1 Km Ne Del Salon El Diamante.

#### CARIARI



DOUBLETREE BY HILTON CARIARI SAN JOSE COSTA RICA BOOK NOW 506/2209-1000



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking **AAA/CAA** rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: San Antonio de Belen Ciudad.

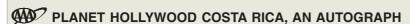


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If your visit to a listed property doesn't meet your expectations, tell us about it.

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COLLECTION

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506/4703-1000



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HOTELS

Hotel. Address: Playa Manzanillo Bahia Culebra. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Guests might feel like movie stars as they walk down the red carpet in the lobby, complete with claps and cheers from the staff members. Rooms have a unique Hollywood design and oversize showers. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 292 units. 3 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: cabanas, kids club, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest

Services: valet laundry, rental car service.































#### **CURRIDABAT**





HYATT PLACE. AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates! Members also receive free breakfast at Hyatt Place/Hyatt House with their World of Hyatt membership!

Hotel. Address: Carr Vieja a Cartago. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 120 units. 7 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: valet laundry.





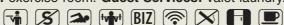




























#### HEREDIA

BRITT COFFEE TOUR is 0.2 mi, west of junction Ruta Nacional Secundaria 126 and Diagonal 17. The basic tour is 1 hour and 30 minutes and includes a tour of the nursery, coffee plantations, a tasting and chocolate

samples. Other tour options include a zipline canopy tour, a waterfalls tours and a tour of Toucan Rescue Ranch. Lunch is included with some tour options. Note: Recording video is not permitted. Reservations are recommended. Phone: (506) 2277-1600. GT (1)

AC HOTEL BY MARRIOTT SAN JOSE AIRPORT BELEN BOOK NOW 506/4036-7200



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Contemporary Hotel. Address: Cityzen Epicentro Laboral & Social.



COSTA RICA MARRIOTT HOTEL HACIENDA BELEN

BOOK NOW

506/2298-0000





AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. **Address:** 700 Meters West from Bridgestone/Firestone. MARRIOTT Facility: This hacienda style property offers a country oasis in the heart of the city. Amenities include a picturesque pool area, full service spa and

beauty salon as well as a variety of dining options. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 299 units. 6 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, recreation programs, playground, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.





























#### JACO

CROC'S RESORT & CASINO BOOK NOW 506/4001-5398



Resort Hotel. Address: Pastor Diaz Ave.

#### LA FORTUNA

ARENAL VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK is located 15 mi. from La Fortuna, San Carlos in Alaiuela Province, The landmark destination features the majestic Arenal Volcano, a stratovolcano known for its near-perfect conical shape, as well as rainforest, and a rich diversity of flora and fauna. Wildlife includes various types of monkeys, jaguars, deer and more than 850 bird species. Phone: (506) 2200-4192.

JACAMAR NATURALIST TOURS is located in La Fortuna de San Carlos, dedicated to promoting and operating diverse tourist services across the country. Visitors can expect an array of adventures including rafting, ziplining,

kayaking, horseback riding and more, all while gaining insightful knowledge about Costa Rica's rich history, culture, geography and geology. Phone: (506) 2479-9767.

MÍSTICO PARK ARENAL HANGING BRIDGES is located adjacent to the Arenal Lake dam, near La Fortuna, Alajuela, on Ruta 142 to Lake Arenal. This park in the tropical rainforest includes 16 hanging bridges spanning 1.6 miles (2.6 kilometers) that offer a unique viewpoint of the biodiversity below and breathtaking views of Arenal Volcano. The area is home to approximately 700 plant species and a wide range of animal species, making it a paradise for nature enthusiasts and adventurers. Phone: (506) 2479-8282.

ARENAL SPRINGS RESORT & SPA

**BOOK NOW** 

506/2479-1212

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Hotel. Address: La Palma, Arenal Volcano.



Hotel, Address: 13 km Noroeste de Centro de La Fortuna.



#### LIMON

TORTUGUERO NATIONAL PARK is at CFXV+H64. Limón Province, Roxana. To reach the park, situated in Limón Province, Costa Rica, you'll need to embark on an adventurous journey either by boat from Moin near Limón, or by a small aircraft from San José. There are lush rainforests and serene canals— home to a variety of wildlife including jaguars, sea turtles, monkeys and rare bird species. Phone: (506) 2522-6500.

#### MONTEVERDE

506/2519-1999

MONTEVERDE CLOUD FOREST BIOLOGICAL RE-**SERVE** is located at Carretera a Reserva de Monteverde. Provincia de Puntarenas. The shuttle picks up in front of Selinas Hotel. The reserve is a must-visit for nature enthusiasts. This ecological sanctuary is teeming with diverse wildlife, stunning trails and suspended bridges, offering visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in one of the richest biodiversity hotspots in the world. Phone: (506) 2645-5122.

#### **PAPAGAYO**

FOUR SEASONS RESORT AT PENINSULA PAPAGAYO BOOK NOW 506/2696-0000

Resort Hotel. Address: 26 Km al Norte del Doit Center.









AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 3 Km North West from Panama Beach. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Take a vacation away from the kids at

this adults-only property on the beautiful Papagayo Peninsula. Rooms are cozy with a nice outdoor seating area. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 202 units, some two bedrooms and efficiencies. 1 story, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: valet only. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.



























#### WHERE TO EAT



HREE DIAMOND

Latin American Fine Dining. Address: 26 km al Norte del Doit.



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

#### PLAYA CONCHAL



W COSTA RICA RESERVA CONCHAL BOOK NOW 506/2654-3600





AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: Reserva Conchal. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: The HOTELS design of this hotel provides visitors with a unique artistic representation of Costa Rica's native heritage. Rooms have a balcony area with comfortable seating and amazing views. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 151 units. 6

stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: beach on-site. cabanas, regulation golf, kids club, bicycles, game room, exercise room, spa. Guest **Services:** valet laundry.



































AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: Reserva Conchal. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This property is massive and has all the luxurious fun you can possibly want on vacation. The quest rooms have a generous layout, comfortable decor and two closets. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 406 units, some two bedrooms. 2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 6 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: beach on-site, cabanas, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, playground, game room, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, luggage security pick-up.































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#### PLAYA EL JOBO



DREAMS LAS MAREAS BOOK NOW 506/2690-2400





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: De Guanacaste, Playa El Jobo La Cru. **Location:** Oceanfront. **Facility:** Located along the northern border of

Costa Rica, this hotel promotes lush nature, luxurious accommodations and so many activities you will never want to leave the property. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 447 units, some two bedrooms. 4 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, game room, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.





























## PLAYA HERRADURA



LOS SUENOS MARRIOTT OCEAN & GOLF RESORT

BOOK NOW 506/2630-9000





AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 800 Meters West of Heredia Entrance. Location: MARRIOTT Oceanfront. Facility: This property offers a variety of amenities ranging from exercise classes in the pool and an on-site spa to gorgeous ocean

views. All rooms have a hammock by the window for relaxing. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 201 units. 4 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: beach on-site, cabanas, marina, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, playground, picnic facilities, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.



























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#### **PLAYA PANAMA**



EL MANGROOVE, AN AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION BOOK NOW 506/2105-7575



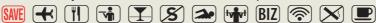
AUTOGRAPH AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott COLLECTION<sup>®</sup> Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

HOTELS

Hotel. Address: Gulf of Papagayo. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Perfect for those looking to relax, many rooms at this resort feature a

large hammock by the window. You can also enjoy a nice view of the sunset from a lounge chair on the beach. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 121 units. 2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, bicycles, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, area transportation.

























### **PUERTO VIEJO**

JAGUAR RESCUE CENTER is in Playa Chiquita, 2.7 km east from Punta Uva via Ruta Nacional Secundaria 256. The center rehabilitates sick, injured and orphaned animals to be returned to the wild and it serves as a sanctuary for animals that cannot be returned to the wild. The animal sanctuary houses birds, monkeys, ocelots, sloths and reptiles; it does not have any jaguars. Guided tours are offered in English and Spanish. Phone: (506) 2750-0710. **GT** 

Note: Pack water shoes or sneakers if you plan to walk on the rocky sandbar. Bring a credit card; cash is not accepted at the park entrance. Phone: (506) 2786-5392.

MANUEL ANTONIO NATIONAL PARK is located 7.6 km from Quepos via Ruta Nacional Treciaria 618. The park features trails and, as a protected wildlife area, is an excellent spot for viewing animals. Manuel Antonio Beach is a popular spot for lounging, snorkeling and swimming. Phone: (506) 8745-5658.

#### **QUEPOS**

BALLENA NATIONAL MARINE PARK is located 63.5 km from Quepos via Ruta Nacional Primaria 34. Humpback whales can be seen in the area July through October. Within the park is Whale Tale's Beach named for the whale tale shaped sandbar that is visible at low tide. Snorkeling and scuba diving are also permitted at this park.

# SAN JOSE

IRAZÚ VOLCANO NATIONAL PARK is 50 km from San José via Ruta Nacional Secundaria 219. Irazú is the tallest volcano in Costa Rica. The park has hiking trails, natural viewpoints. Popular points of interest in the park include Hermosa Beach, Principal Crater and Diego de la Haya Crater. Note: Temperatures near the top of Irazú are typically near freezing. Phone: (506) 2200-5025.



AC HOTEL BY MARRIOTT SAN JOSE ESCAZU BOOK NOW

506/2588-4500



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Contemporary Hotel. Address: Avenida Escazu, Complex Prospero Fernandez Hwy.



COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT SAN JOSE ESCAZÚ BOOK NOW 506/2208-3000





AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Contemporary Hotel. Address: Plaza Itskazú Autop Prospero.



# HOTEL REAL INTERCONTINENTAL COSTA RICA AT MULTIPLAZA

MALL BOOK NOW 506/2208-2100



Hotel. Address: In Front of Multiplaza. Facility: This upscale hotel is an oasis with multi-tiered pool areas, waterfalls and manicured landscaping. The guest rooms are exceptionally comfortable with a range of amenities and added technology. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 372 units. 4-8 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, health club, spa. Guest **Services:** valet laundry, rental car service, area transportation.

























RESIDENCE INN BY MARRIOTT SAN JOSE ESCAZÚ BOOK NOW 506/2588-4300



Residence INI. AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Extended Stay Hotel. Address: Avenida 2, San Rafael Escazu. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 109 efficiencies, some two bedrooms. 4 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: complimentary and valet laundry.



**INSPECTED**  CLEAN



































SHERATON SAN JOSE HOTEL BOOK NOW 506/4055-0505



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 350 Metros Oeste Multiplaza, 27.

#### **TAMARINDO**



JW MARRIOTT GUANACASTE RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 506/2681-2000





AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: Hacienda Pinilla. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: The hacienda design of the hotel and lush landscaping are a treat for the senses. Old world luxury blends seamlessly with modern conveniences and genuine hospitality. A great option for weddings too! Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 310 units. 5 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: beach on-site, cabanas, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, playground, picnic facilities, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, area transportation. (See ad p. 104.)

































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# RECONNECT TO THE BEAUTY AROUND YOU

JW Marriott Guanacaste Resort & Spa is a chic family-friendly Hacienda Style Ocean front hotel with the best location of Guanacaste, Playa Mansita. A pristine, exclusive white sand beach. A one-of-a-kind sunset that will delight your daily evening accompanied by a chill out session and pop cocktail to nourish your soul. The resort offers a wide range of comfortable accommodations, from deluxe rooms to spacious suites in a small, gated community called Hacienda Pinilla, only minutes away from the fashionable town of Tamarindo.

Surrounded by a natural reserve where the tropical gardens meet the Pacific Ocean. Making sure our guests can experience an authentic Costa Rican vibe and be inspired by the simple beauty of nature around them. Exceptional combination of magnificent architecture, divine cuisine set the mood in perfect harmony. Timeless elegance designed to bring you closer to your mind, body, and spirit.

BOOK NOW



© iStockphoto.com / sorincolac

# Curaçao

uração lies 35 miles (61 km) off the coast of Venezuela. Small hills throughout the island offer a variety of scenery, but vegetation is sparse because of slight rainfall. Willemstad, the capital, is a bright mosaic of narrow streets lined with 18th-century Dutch-Caribbean houses topped with red tile roofs. Each house is painted a pastel shade, which lends a storybook Dutch charm.

# **History**

Curação shares much of its history with the other Dutch islands. Discovered in 1499 by Alonso de Ojeda, a lieutenant of Christopher Columbus, the island was named

for the tribe of Caiquetios, an Arawak-speaking group which lived here. A more popular legend claims that Curaçao's name was derived from the Spanish word curación, meaning "cure," when several malarial sailors miraculously recovered from scurvy after an extended visit to the island. It is pronounced cure-a-sow.

The initial Spanish colonizers were displaced early in the 17th century by Dutch settlers, who made the islands flourishing centers of trade. One of the first governors was Peter Stuyvesant, later governor of another island colony: New Amsterdam on Manhattan Island. Sephardic Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition sought refuge on the island

among the tolerant Dutch and would make up half of the white population by the 18th century. The Netherlands Antilles changed hands several times in the early 19th century, but by 1815 the Dutch were here to stay. In October 2010, the Netherlands Antilles was dissolved and Curaçao became an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Except for a brisk slave trade that ended in 1863, the 19th century was less than prosperous for Curação and its sister islands. Then the discovery in 1914 of oil in Venezuela made their position astride the trade routes important. Curaçao's economic mainstays today are banking, tourism and refinery facilities. It also has several large local industries, including Senior & Co. Curação Liqueur; a battery manufacturer; one of the largest nonmilitary drydocks in the hemisphere; and cigarette, soap and paint factories.

One of the languages spoken on Curação is Papiamentu, a blend of Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish and English with African dialects. In this colorful language, Dushi Kòrsou means "Beloved Curaçao."

# Shopping

Because of the low import duty on most goods, Curaçao is an excellent shopping center; prices are often lower than in the products' countries of origin. Duty free shops sell perfume, electronics and jewelry. Local handicrafts also make popular souvenirs.

Curação's foremost shopping promenades are the Gomezplein and the Heerenstraat in Willemstad. Designed for pedestrians, they are closed to traffic and their roadbeds have been raised to sidewalk level and covered with European bricks.

Smart offerings combined with the excitement of a Middle Eastern bazaar are found on the estraat and Madurostraat in Punda, the oldest section of Willemstad. Mini-malls on the outskirts of Willemstad worth visiting include Salinja Galleries, Zuikertuin Mall and Bloempot Shopping Center.

Lining the Waaigat Canal is the "Floating Market," a string of schooners from Venezuela, Colombia and other West Indian islands. Alive with color and buzzing with voices haggling over the prices of fresh fish, tropical fruit, vegetables and handicrafts, this seafaring market is a photographer's delight.

Shops in Curação are generally open Mon.-Sat. 8:30noon and 2-6 and when ships are in port. Banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-3:30. The bank at the airport is open Mon.-Sat. 8-8 and Sun. 9-4 for currency exchange.

### Food and Drink

Like those on the other Dutch islands, restaurants on Curação set an international table, often combining Dutch, Spanish, American, Creole, Italian, Indonesian, French and Chinese cuisine on one board. Other specialties include *erwten soep*, a thick pea soup cooked with pork, ham and sausage, and funchi, a cornmeal-like dish served steamed or fried.

Local specialties include keshi yena, a baked Edam cheese stuffed with chicken or fish; sopito, a fish soup flavored with coconut; and sopi juana, otherwise known as iguana soup. Another local specialty is rijsttafel ("rice table"). This Dutch-Indonesian banquet consists of rice served with up to 20 side dishes. Local tap water distilled from the sea is so pure that minerals must be added for taste. Curação produces Curação Liqueur made from the laraha, a local variety of orange.

# Sports and Amusements

With 38 miles (61 km) of shoreline and 12.5 miles (20 km) of protected coral reef, recreation on Curação centers on the sea. The clear water draws swimmers, snorkelers, skiers, anglers, sailors, windsurfers and scuba divers, and the secluded coves and beaches at Blauw Bay, Cas Abao, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Westpunt, Jan Thiel, Knip Bay and the Curação Sea Aquarium are favorites for lounging. Game fishing for marlin, wahoo, kingfish and dolphin is best July through October. Fishing boats can be chartered for a half-day or a full day, and sailboats and speedboats can be rented by the hour. The Curação Yacht Club is in Spanish Water east of Willemstad. Windsurfing and scuba diving lessons also are available; check with your hotel for information.

Caracas Bay Island, on a scenic peninsula south of Willemstad, offers a wide variety of land and water activities, including bicycling, diving, windsurfing, jet skiing and snorkeling. Operators include Windsurfing Curacao, (599) 9-738-0883 and WannaBike, (599) 9-527-3720.

With 68 diverse dive sites, Curação is known for its scuba diving opportunities. In 1983, 12.5 miles (20 km) of Curação's waters were designated a national marine park. The park features coral beds, steep walls and several shipwrecks.

Sports include tennis and basketball, played at the Curaçao Sport Club; golf at the Curaçao Golf and Squash Club; and baseball and soccer at Ergilio Hato Stadium, Dr. Antoin Maduro Stadium and smaller fields. Horseback riding and bowling also are available. Schooner races between Curação and Bonaire are occasionally held.

Written in the native Papiamentu, Curação's tumba furnishes a lively and interesting musical comment on island politics and gossip. Spirited visitors can enjoy gambling at island casinos or joining in the songs and dances at discos, beachfront clubs and during the island's many festivals. K-PASA Curação, available at hotel desks, lists weekly events and entertainment.

# Sightseeing

You can tour the island by car in about a day. The western tour along the main road from Piscadera Bay includes



most of the island's beaches and plantation houses. Christoffel National Park, at the northwestern end of the island, encompasses a wildlife preserve, gardens, caves, plantation ruins and Mount Christoffel, the highest point on the island.

A shorter trip to Bullen Bay might include a stop at the fishing village of St. Michael. Interesting destinations east of Willemstad are Caracas Bay, site of Fort Beekenburg, and Spanish Water, home of the Curação Yacht Club. A popular 45-minute drive northwest from Willemstad heads through Curação's cunucu, or countryside, punctuated by wind-bent divi-divi trees, cactuses and other droughtresistant plants.

Glass-bottom boat tours depart daily from Cabana Beach, Santa Barbara Beach & Golf Resort Curação and Curação Sea Aquarium."

# **Transportation**

Two daily nonstop flights to Curação are available on American Airlines from Charlotte and Miami, with connections from all major U.S. gateways. Curação International Airport boasts one of the longest jet landing strips in the West Indies. Many of the major cruise lines visit Curação, docking at Willemstad.

There are taxi stands at the airport, major hotels and in Willemstad; check the fixed fares before you ride. Car rentals are available from major U.S. companies and several local firms; a U.S. driver's license is acceptable. Driving is on the right side of the road. Hourly buses connect Willemstad with the airport.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 151,370.** 

**AREA:** 471 sq km (182 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Willemstad.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 372 m (1,221 ft.), Mount Christoffel.

**LOWEST POINT:** Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

**TIME ZONE(S):** Atlantic Standard.

**LANGUAGE:** Dutch, Papiamentu, Spanish and English.

**GOVERNMENT:** Autonomous country within the

Kingdom of the Netherlands.

**CURRENCY:** Guilder (also called the florin), divided into

100 cents. \$1 U.S. = 1.8 guilders. U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-130 volts, 50 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. U.S. license valid; drive on right.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.** 

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are required for all passengers. Child restraints are required for children under age 4; children under 12 must ride in the back seat.

#### **HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

**HOLIDAYS:** Jan. 1; Carnival Monday, Feb. (Mon. before Ash Wednesday); Good Friday; Easter Monday; King's Birthday, Apr. 27; Labour Day, May 1; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Flag Day, July 2; Curação Day, Oct. 10; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 7 percent sales tax and 12 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Most restaurants include a 10 percent service charge. Departure tax \$52 U.S.: interisland tax \$15-\$30.

**IMMIGRATION:** A passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays of up to 2 weeks. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call Curação from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 599 + 9 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Curação Tourism Corp. 80 S.W. 8th St., Suite 2000

Miami. FL 33130 (305) 423-7156 (800) 328-7222

Curação Tourist Board

Pietermaai 19 Willemstad, Curação (599) 9-434-8200

#### WILLEMSTAD

Often called "Little Amsterdam," Willemstad is the capital of Curação. Its architecture is a tropical adaptation of the traditional Dutch style. The pastel colors characterizing government buildings and private homes alike are a legacy from a governor-general who complained in 1817 that the tropical sun's glare on the white-painted buildings caused his blinding headaches. To ease his discomfort, he decreed that thereafter only other colors would be used.

Curação's trademark, Queen Emma Bridge spans Santa Anna Bay. Originally, pedestrians wearing shoes paid a toll of 2c to cross the swinging pontoon bridge; the barefooted walked free. The toll was eventually eliminated after the wealthy routinely discarded their shoes before crossing. Today the bridge links the city's two sections— Punda and Otrobanda—along with the four-lane Queen Juliana Bridge, which arcs nearly 200 feet (60 m) above the bay. Otrobanda means, literally, "the other side." West of the Queen Emma Bridge in Brionplein Square is the Pedro Luis Brion Statue commemorating a local hero who served under Simón Bolívar and pursued the hostile British in 1805.

With its narrow streets and shopping promenade, Punda recalls old Holland. Architectural tours of the city include the classic colonial-style governor's mansion and Department of Finance building on Pietermaai, the Georgian-style Masonic Temple and the stately homes of the merchant princes in Scharloo. A collection of fine art is displayed at the Art Gallery at the Centrale Bank van Curação en Sint Maarten at Simón Bolivar Plein 1; phone (599) 9-434-5500.

Northeast of Punda atop Arrarat Hill is the Franklin D. Roosevelt House, constructed by islanders in 1950 as a symbol of the friendship between the Netherlands and the United States during World War II. It now serves as the residence of the U.S. Consulate General.

Willemstad and Schottegat Harbor, the island's natural harbor, are designated as UNESCO's (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage places.

CHRISTOFFEL NATIONAL PARK is 38 mi. (60 km) n. of Willemstad at the n.w. end of the island, entered at Landhuis Savonet. This 5.683-acre (2,300-hectare) wildlife preserve is the island's largest preserved area and encompasses three former plantations. Twenty miles (31) km) of driving trails offer glimpses of rare orchids, bromeliads, cacti, several bird species, iguanas, lizards and Curação's white-tailed deer. Several bat caves are adorned

with Arawak petroglyphs. Eight well-marked hiking trails traverse the park and ascend Mount Christoffel, the highest point on the island. The Savonet Museum houses a whale exposition with skeletons found on the island's shores.

The 2-hour mountain hike from the visitor center should be planned for the cool morning hours; last admission to hike Mount Christoffel is at 11. Safari, deer-spotting, birdwatching, mountain climbing, cave and guided walking tours are offered for an additional fee. Visitors should pack water, sunscreen and insect repellent. Time: Allow 2 hours minimum. Phone: (599) 9-864-0363 for the museum. GT (1) (-T-

CURAÇÃO OSTRICH FARM is 7 mi. (11 km) e. on Groot St. Joris. During the guided safari tour, visitors to this working farm can hold an egg and feed an ostrich while they learn about the life cycle and lifestyle of this large, powerful, flightless bird. Time: Allow 2 hours, 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (599) 9-747-2777.

CURAÇÃO SEA AQUARIUM is 4 mi. (6 km) e. on Martin Luther King Blvd. to Bapor Kibra. The facility displays more than 600 species of fish, crabs, lobsters, sea lions, dolphins, sharks, stingrays, sea turtles, anemones, colorful sponges and coral, all natives of the reefs surrounding Curação. A variety of diving, snorkeling and educational programs provide hands-on encounters with marine animals. The Seaquarium Beach is nearby.

Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (599) 9-461-6666. **GT TI** 

CURAÇÃO UNDERWATER MARINE PARK covers an area from the Curação Sea Aquarium to the s.e. tip of the island. Marked underwater trails and sunken ships can be explored by snorkelers and scuba divers. The park features 14 signed dive sites. **Phone:** (599) 9-462-4242.

KURA HULANDA MUSEUM is at Klipstraat 9 in Otrobanda. African culture and history is portrayed in reconstructed 19th-century buildings on the site of a former wharf and slave yard. Exhibits include a collection of original 19th- and 20th-century European prints and artifacts from ancient West African empires. The transatlantic slave trade is depicted through a full-size re-creation of the hold of a slave ship and a plantation worker's cabin. Note: Guided tours are available in English. Spanish. Dutch and Papiamento. Phone: (599) 9-462-9737.

POSTAL MUSEUM is at Kaya Toni Prince in Punda. The museum features a collection of stamps from the Netherlands Antilles and other countries as well as related artifacts, such as old post boxes and scales. Special exhibits of theme stamps from around the world change quarterly.

The museum is housed in Punda's oldest surviving building, which dates from 1693. Time: Allow 30 minutes

WILLEMSTAD TROLLEY TRAIN TOUR departs from Fort Amsterdam near the Queen Emma Pontoon Bridge. This 1.5-hour narrated tour passes many historic Willemstad sights, including the Floating Market, Scharloo, Bolo di Bruid (the "Wedding Cake House"), Mikve Israel Synagoque, Pietermaai Cathedral, Queen Wilhelmina Park, Waterfort Arches and Fort Amsterdam. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (599) 9-461-0011. GT



minimum. Phone: (599) 9-465-8010.

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Resort Hotel. Address: Piscadera Bay. Facility: The focus is on relaxation and well-being at this tranquil, all-inclusive resort set amid robust landscaping in a gated complex across the street from the

ocean. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 72 units. 2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, recreation programs, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.































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## **Dominica**

eep tropical rain forests, mountains and isolation have preserved the wild beauty of Dominica (domin-EE-ka), reminding visitors of an earlier, less commercial Caribbean. What the island lacks in nightlife. duty-free shops and white sand beaches, it makes up for with the natural splendor of its volcanic mountain ranges swathed in the rich green of towering trees, exotic ferns and flowers. Fed by the ample rainfall in the island's interior, numerous rivers wind through Dominica's primordial forest, which is home to such endangered species as the imperial and red-necked parrots.

#### **History**

So named because Christopher Columbus discovered it on a Sunday, Dominica was a stronghold of the Carib Indians, who were the dominant indigenous group found on many of the Caribbean islands. Although the Carib population on many other islands was severely depleted, and in some instances wiped out, the Caribs on Dominica frustrated the efforts of the French and British to successfully colonize the island. In the 18th century the island became the scene of fierce battles between the French and the English for outright possession. The British prevailed

in 1783 and remained in control until 1978, when Dominica became independent. Some 3,000 Carib Indians still live on the island.

Since gaining independence from Great Britain, Dominica has carefully nurtured its pristine resources. Rather than depending on high-rise resorts and glittering casinos for its economy, Dominica relies primarily on the export of produce. The island government also is encouraging tourism and light industry.

#### Shopping

Handcraft centers in the Old Market Plaza in Roseau and in the Carib Territory offer handmade items, including finely woven baskets and Dominica's unique grass mats; also in the marketplace is the Dominica Museum. There are several boutiques in Roseau and at some hotels throughout the island. Other buys include soaps made locally from fresh coconut oil, other toiletries, leather goods, cigars and cigarettes and cassette recordings of the traditional *jing-ping* folk music.

Duty-free shopping is available throughout Roseau. Pirates Ltd., on Long Lane, has a wide selection of cheeses and French wines. In the Fort Young Hotel on Victoria Street is Jewellers International. Baroon International is at the Prevo Cinemall on Kennedy Avenue. Duty Free Emporium is on Dame Eugenia Boulevard. Among the duty-free items available at various shops are cosmetics, crystal ware, handicrafts, articles made from pearls, perfume, cigars, liquor, watches and cameras.

Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 8-2, Fri. 8-4. Business hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-4. Sat. 8-1.

#### **Food and Drink**

Traditional dishes include freshwater crayfish; tee-tee-ree accras, fried fish cakes; callaloo soup, made from dasheen leaves and coconut cream; and crab backs, black and red land crabs stuffed with spicy crab meat. Nectar, syrups, jams and sherbets are available as well as locally made rums and ginger beer. Sea moss is a seaweed shake made with milk, sugar and cinnamon spices.

Crapaud, the local delicacy known as "mountain chicken," has disappeared from restaurant tables. The national dish is not fowl but frog—leptodactylus fallax, one of the world's largest frogs. Found only on Dominica and Montserrat, this rare species may be on the brink of extinction.

#### **Sports and Amusements**

Dominica's many streams and rivers shaded by giant ferns attract both swimmers and canoeists. A few northern beaches offer swimming; Coconut Beach is the most appealing. About 25 miles (40 km) north of Roseau, it has silver volcanic sand and a mountain backdrop. Other options are Mero Beach, about 12 miles (19 km) north of Roseau, and Purple Turtle Beach Club in Portsmouth, which

has restaurant facilities on the beach. Spectators can enjoy cricket, soccer, netball, volleyball, tennis and basketball in season.

Scuba diving also is available and must be arranged through a local dive operator such as East Carib Dive. The island has several spectacular dive sites, including L'Abyme, or the Abyss. Champagne, outside Pointe Michel, has an incredible reef where divers swim through bubbling waters created by volcanic activity on the sea bed. On the north side of Cabrits National Park, the marine park at Douglas Bay contains a snorkeling trail. There are wrecks at nearby Toucarie and Capuchin.

Sea kayaking and mountain biking are two popular ways to discover Dominica. In Portsmouth near Coconut Bay kayaking, windsurfing, kneeboarding and snorkeling are just some of the water activities available.

Dominica starts the new year with Mas Domnik (Carnival), in February and March. The arts are celebrated in May during the Dominica Festival of Arts (DOMFESTA). Sports enthusiasts can partake in Dive Fest in early July. The World Creole Music Festival is held in late October. National Day and Independence festivities are held during the month of October and continue through early November.

#### Sightseeing

Dominica is famous for the exotic flora that grows wild around its river pools and rain forests. Morne Trois Pitons National Park, covering 17,000 acres (6,880 hectares) on the southern end of the island, is the first natural heritage site in the Eastern Caribbean to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its volcanic wonders include mud pots, hot springs, sulfur vents and the Boiling Lake.

Dominica's Carib Indians distinguished themselves from other Caribbean tribes by fighting so fiercely that in 1748 both the English and the French abandoned the island. Consequently, Carib descendants are among the island's inhabitants, and in 1903 the British set aside 3,700 acres (1,497 hectares) of land to establish the Carib Territory on the east coast, where the Indians can practice their own culture and continue the craft of basket making. Trips to the territory can be arranged through your hotel or a local tour operator.

Whale-watching in Dominica is a popular activity with sightings of sperm, pilot and melon-headed whales as well as bottlenose, Risso and spinner dolphins.

Roseau, Dominica's capital, occupies a picturesque setting on the banks of the Roseau River. Saturday mornings come alive with the bustle of the colorful market, whose cinnamon scent fills the air. The grass rugs that are in demand throughout the Caribbean are woven at Tropicrafts Island Mats, opposite the Woodbridge Bay port.

A site pass is required for visiting selected tourist sites. Site pass \$5 per site, weekly pass \$12. Passes can be obtained from tour operators and at attractions.

Waitukubuli National Trail, a 114-mile trail (with 14 segments), runs from Scotts Head to Capuchin. One-day (\$12) and 15-day (\$40) passes are available at the Forestry and Wildlife Division, Waitukubuli Trail Headquarters in Pont Casse and from local vendors; phone (767) 266-5864.

#### **Transportation**

International access into Dominica is facilitated via airports of neighboring Caribbean islands with connections to the island's two small airports: Canefield Airport, 5 minutes from Roseau, and Douglas-Charles Airport, on the northeastern tip of the island about an hour from Roseau. Airlines servicing Dominica include Air Antilles, LIAT and Seaborne Airlines. Major gateway connections to Dominica are from Antigua, Barbados, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Puerto Rico, St. Lucia and St. Maarten.

Car rentals are available at the airports; taxis meet all flights. City and island sightseeing tours with a driverguide are available. L'Express des lles operates highspeed ferries that connect Dominica with Guadeloupe, Martinique and St. Lucia. A departure tax is charged; phone (767) 255-1125 for schedules and fares. Cruise ships call at the docks in Roseau and Woodbridge Bay.

#### **FAST FACTS**

POPULATION: 74,522.

AREA: 749 sq km (289 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Roseau.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 1,447 m (4,747 ft.), Morne Diablotins.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

**TIME ZONE(S):** Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English, but a French patois (Creole) is

widely spoken.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent. Member of the British

Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. =

2.7 E.C. dollars.

**ELECTRICITY:** 220-240 volts, 50 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 25 to drive a rental car; maximum age 65. Local license (\$12 U.S.) required, valid for 30 days; drive on left.

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are required for all passengers.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Carnival Monday and Tuesday, Feb. or Mar. (last Mon. and Tues. before Ash Wednesday); Good Friday; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May 5; Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Emancipation August Monday, Aug. (1st Mon.); Independence Day, Nov. 3; Community Day of Service, Nov. 4; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 10 percent VAT (value-added tax) is charged at all hotels. A 15 percent VAT (value-added tax) and a 10 percent service charge are added to restaurant bills. Departure tax \$22 U.S.

**IMMIGRATION:** A passport and a return or onward ticket are required. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Dominica from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 767 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Discover Dominica Authority Kennedy Avenue 1st Floor Financial Center Roseau, Dominica (767) 448-2045



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#### PORTSMOUTH

Portsmouth sits on the northwest coast at Prince Rupert Bay, where Christopher Columbus moored on his fourth voyage to the New World in 1504. It is said that the swampy terrain around the Indian River prevented Portsmouth from becoming the island's capital.

CABRITS NATIONAL PARK is 1.5 mi. n. of town between Douglas and Prince Rupert's bays. Perched on a forested, twin-peaked peninsula, Cabrits National Park contains the ruins of a military garrison used by British and French forces 1770-1854. Its centerpiece is Fort Shirley, which is surrounded by more than 50 major structures, including gun batteries, powder magazines, storehouses and barracks that housed up to 600 men. Of interest is the renovated classic Georgian 1774 officer's quarters.

Trails connecting the sites meander through thick tropical growth. Light clothing and comfortable shoes are recommended. Time: Allow 4 hours minimum.

#### **ROSEAU**

The island's capital, Roseau (Rōzō) was named by the French for the reeds that once grew at the mouth of the river. The busy wharf area north of town caters to large freighters as well as local wooden sloops.

**DOMINICA MUSEUM** is on the bayfront across from the cruise ship port. Housed in the old post office, the museum offers a comprehensive introduction to Dominica and its history. The formation of the island is illustrated with volcanic ash and rocks. Other exhibits depict the first Amerindian settlement, colonial plantation life and Dominica's agricultural and political changes.

MORNE TROIS PITONS NATIONAL PARK stretches across the southern half of the island. Emerald Pool Visitor Center is 14 mi. (23 km) n.e. on Canefield-Castle Bruce Rd. to Pond Casse-Rosalie Rd. Covering 17,000 acres (6,880 hectares), Morne Trois Pitons is the first natural heritage site in the Eastern Caribbean and only the second in the insular Caribbean to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The park centers around the volcanic "mountain of three peaks" with its steaming vents, fumaroles and hot springs. Boiling Lake is said to be the second largest of its kind in the world. Bubbling mud pots and sulfur vents mark the barren Valley of Desolation, where the sulfuric fumes have destroyed all vegetation. At TiTou Gorge, visitors can swim in hot-water springs.

At 300 feet (91 m), Middleham Falls is the highest waterfall in the park. Emerald Pool, a short walk from the visitor center, is a popular destination for cruise ship excursions. The twin torrents at nearby Trafalgar Falls in Roseau Valley offer an ideal setting for a picnic within reach of wild orchids and tropical rain forests. The 150-foot Sari Sari Falls can be reached via a 45-minute hike from La Plaine.

A qualified guide must be hired for the 8-mile (13-km) hike to Boiling Lake. Hikers should wear sturdy shoes and rain gear and protect cameras from moisture.

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# **Dominican Republic**

hen Christopher Columbus came ashore in 1492, he wrote in his diary, "This is the most beautiful land that human eves have seen." He would leave members of his family behind to colonize the island and would return to it after venturing throughout the Caribbean. In his will, he asked to be buried in Santo Domingo. It's no wonder the Dominican Republic calls itself "the land Columbus loved best."

A relaxed atmosphere is not just a promise here; it is a way of life. Old World charm lingers here in language, food, customs and thought. The emphasis placed on music, dance, history and art as well as the usual island activities of sunbathing and swimming make the Dominican Republic a popular Caribbean vacation destination.

Santo Domingo, capital and cultural center, preserves the Dominican Republic's rich history with its many churches, palaces, museums, forts, monuments and restored homes. Puerto Plata in the north, Punta Cana in the east and La Romana in the southeast are other major resort centers. Pico Duarte, at 10,128 feet (3,087 m), is the highest point in the Caribbean; just 50 miles (80 km) southwest, Lake Enriquillo, at 144 feet (44 m) below sea

#### **History**

The Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island the Indians called *Quisqueya* and Christopher Columbus named Hispaniola; Haiti occupies the western third. When Columbus ran the *Santa María* aground on the northern coast on Dec. 25, 1492, he used the ship's salvaged lumber to build Fuerte de Navidad, or Fort Christmas. About a year later, Columbus returned to discover the settlement destroyed and 38 of his men massacred.

Columbus then founded La Isabela farther east in the present-day Dominican Republic. The first European city in the New World, La Isabela was to become Columbus' base of operations for the next 2 years. In 1496 Bartolomeo Columbus, Christopher's brother, founded New Isabela on the southern coast—where the Republic's capital of Santo Domingo thrives today.

The only colony ever governed by its discoverer, Hispaniola was the base for excursions by many famous Spanish explorers, including Francisco Pizarro, Hernando Cortés, Hernando de Soto, Vasco de Balboa, Alonzo de Ojeda, Diego Velásquez and Juan Ponce de León. Considered the oldest university in the Americas, the University of Santo Domingo was founded in 1538.

The French settled in western Hispaniola in 1697, and within 100 years the entire island had come under French rule. Spain regained the eastern two-thirds in 1809. The Dominican Republic declared its independence in 1821 to prevent invasion from Haiti. Shortly thereafter, however, troops from newly independent Haiti overran the Republic and held it for another 22 years.

Led by national hero Juan Pablo Duarte, the Republic gained its independence once again in 1844, but it was to be lost and gained yet one more time: Spain reannexed the territory in 1861 and held it until 1865, when fierce fighting led to the Republic's restoration.

Foreign parties were not the sole source of aggravation; the country has experienced a turbulent internal history as well. Political instability had become the rule by 1904, when Theodore Roosevelt sent U.S. customs agents to oversee the Dominican Republic's finances and enforce payment of its foreign debt. U.S. Marines occupied the country 1916-24 until the installation of a constitutionally elected government. Democracy was restored but short-lived: The dictator Rafael Trujillo came to power in 1930 and held it until his assassination in 1961. U.S. troops intervened again in 1965 following another civil uprising. Democracy was restored the following year, and the nation has enjoyed free elections ever since.

For many years, agriculture was the backbone of the economy. Traditional exports—sugar, cocoa, coffee, bananas and tobacco—flourished in this land of fertile valleys and foliage-clad mountains. Today, tourism is one of

the Dominican Republic's primary industries. Resorts have sprung up in the coastal beach towns and around the capital city of Santo Domingo. There also has been an increase of ecotourism in the interior, with hiking, caving, white-water rafting, cascading and biking tours through the mountains and countryside.

#### **Shopping**

In Santo Domingo one shopping area extends along Calle El Conde from El Conde Gate eastward to the colonial section; the long thoroughfare is closed to vehicular traffic. There are less expensive shops nearby—along avenidas Duarte and Mella, near Columbus Park and along Mercedes. Plaza Central, at the intersection of avenidas 27th of February and Winston Churchill is a popular shopping center. Mercado Modelo, the public crafts market, is at the corner of avenidas Mella and Santome. Agora Mall, off Av. John F. Kennedy, offers a mix of shops and restaurants; the anchor store is Anthony's.

Shopping opportunities in Puerto Plata can be found around Central Park, the Plaza Turisol and a popular crafts center near Playa Dorada. In Santiago shoppers go to Calle El Sol and the Mercado crafts market. Haggling is expected in the crafts markets but not at the commercial shops.

There are free-port zones at Santo Domingo's Las Américas International Airport and at Puerto Plata's Gregorio Luperón International Airport. Duty-free purchases must be made in U.S. dollars and are delivered to your point of departure. Shopping hours are generally Mon.-Sat. 9-7:30. Banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8:30-5.

One of the best buys is jewel-like amber—the Dominican Republic is one of the few spots in the Western Hemisphere where this fossilized resin is found. Larimar, a blue stone similar to turquoise, also is found in the Dominican Republic. Other good buys include embroidery, woven baskets, dolls, leather goods, art objects and handicrafts of local cedar and mahogany. Imported perfume and jewelry also are available. Local handicrafts made of tortoiseshell, such as combs or jewelry, may not be imported into the United States.

#### **Food and Drink**

The national dish, sancocho, is a hearty stew of vegetables and meats. The local staple is the plantain, served ripe or green in a variety of ways. Fritos verdes are plantain fritters; mangú is a puree of boiled plantains and onions. La bandera, which means "the flag," is a tri-colored meal of white rice, red beans and meat. Dishes prepared a la criolla reflect the country's Creole heritage. Fish in coconut-milk sauce (pescado con coco) is a traditional favorite. Stewed goat (chivo guisado) is served in most restaurants; goats on the island are said to graze on wild oregano, which lends flavor to the meat. The locals are especially partial to a snack food of fried pork rinds, chicharones.

Numerous restaurants provide traditional and contemporary Caribbean specialties along with many Italian, French, Spanish, Indian, Japanese and Chinese dishes. A 10-percent service charge—in addition to a 18-percent value-added tax—is added to the bill in all restaurants and hotels; a tip of up to 10 percent more is customary for good service.

Dominican rum is the most popular drink, though imported brands claim a substantial following. Barcelo, Bermudez and Brugal are readily available. Dominican Republic beer rivals German brands for robust flavor. Presidente is the local favorite, but Bohemia also is popular.

If a milder form of refreshment is preferred, try a batida, or fruit shake. Dominican coffee is considered excellent, especially by those who like their coffee strong. Tap water is *not* considered safe to drink by visitors, even in the hotels. Water served in restaurants is generally safe, and bottled water is readily available.

#### Sports and Amusements

With nearly a thousand miles of coastline, the Dominican Republic offers a wide choice of unspoiled beaches for swimming and other water sports. Top destinations include the Amber Coast near Puerto Plata on the northern shore, La Romana on the southern shore, Punta Cana on the island's eastern tip and Samaná on the northeast coast.

Marlin, wahoo, kingfish and barracuda are the desired catches of deep-sea anglers. Samaná is noted for excellent bay fishing. Other prime fishing areas are Cumayasa, La Romana and Cabeza de Toro, east of the capital; and Puerto Plata on the north coast.

Charter boats for sailing and yachting can be rented at most resorts by the hour or day. Opportunities for snorkeling and scuba diving are not as widespread as on other Caribbean isles; however, the reefs around Catalina Island, accessible by boat from La Romana, are popular for underwater exploring. Windsurfing, kiteboarding, surfing, water skiing and other water sports can be arranged at the Puerto Plata and Cabarete resorts and at Casa de Campo Resort near La Romana.

Facilities for such land sports as golf, tennis and horseback riding are excellent. With more than 21 golf courses, the island is becoming a popular year-round golf destination. Championship 18-hole courses are available at Playa Grande Golf Course, (809) 582-0860, on the north coast; Puntacana Resort & Club, (809) 959-4653, to the east; Playa Dorada Golf Club, (809) 320-4262, at Puerto Plata; Casa de Campo Resort, (809) 523-3418, near La Romana; La Estancia Golf Resort, (809) 831-0036; and Guavaberry Resort & Country Club, (829) 659-8661, near Juan Dolio. Tennis courts are found in the resort areas as well as in the city. Stables are in and around Santo Domingo, Puerto Plata and La Romana, where horseback riding proves to be a practical way to sightsee in the surrounding countryside.

Spectator sports in the Republic include horse racing, basketball, baseball, boxing and polo. Sports facilities built for the 2003 Pan-American games represented the largest public works project in the country's history. Nearby are the Hipódromo V Centenario, the horse racing track, and Estadio Quisqueya, where baseball—the national sport—is played.

The country has lent more than its share of baseball talent to U.S. teams. In fact, over 10 percent of American Major League baseball players come from the Dominican Republic. Notable names include Bartolo Colón, Vladamir Guerrero, Pedro Martinez, David Ortiz, Manny Ramirez, Alex Rodriguez, Alfonso Soriano, Sammy Sosa and Miguel Tejada. Though baseball is played year-round, the more acclaimed winter league plays late October through January.

A country that gave the world dances like the *merengue* is bound to have a lively nightlife. African, Spanish and Indian influences have been sifted, filtered and then combined in a swirl of *Criollo* activity and Latin good times. Bachata, a soulful variation on the traditional merengue, has become a Dominican trademark. The nightclubs and casinos in Santo Domingo feature top-name entertainers; dance bands are featured at most restaurants and hotels.

The National Theater (Teatro Nacional Eduardo Brito) in Santo Domingo's Plaza de la Cultura regularly presents dramatic productions and orchestral performances; phone (809) 687-3191. Plays also are staged at the Palace of Fine Arts (Palacio de Bellas Artes) and the Casa de Teatro in the capital; phone (809) 687-0504 and (809) 689-3430, respectively.

#### Sightseeing

Major hotels and ground tour operators can arrange guided sightseeing tours. Tours away from the city visit coffee, sugar, banana, cocoa and pineapple plantations, rice paddies and tobacco farms. The drive along Duarte Highway, connecting Santo Domingo on the coast to Puerto Plata on the north coast, affords a glimpse of the country's diverse interior. The highway cuts through the mountainous region of the island, an area noted for its coffee plantations. Popular stops along the way are La Vega, a typical island mountain town, and Santiago, where Bermudez Rum is made. Both towns are known for their carnival celebrations, which are held every Sunday in February.

At Puerto Plata are opportunities to relax, swim or ride a cable car to the top of 2,565-foot (782-m) Mount Isabel de Torres, which offers a spectacular view of the countryside. At the top of the mountain is the statue of "Christ the Redeemer." East of town near Río San Juan is Laguna Gri Gri, where boats can be rented to explore the mangrove-lined lagoon and the island's north coast. The

mountain town of Jarabacoa, 90 miles (145 km) south of Puerto Plata, is an ecotourism base for river rafting, hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. About 50 miles (80 km) southeast of Río San Juan is the Samaná Peninsula, noted for its pristine white sand beaches and excellent sailing, diving, whale watching and fishing opportunities.

West of Santo Domingo are San Cristobal, where the dictator Rafael Trujillo built a fabulous palace and college; Barahona, with its miles of unspoiled beaches; and Lake Enriquillo, one of the largest lakes in the Caribbean, complete with flamingos and crocodiles. Another worthwhile excursion is a 2-hour drive east from Santo Domingo to La Romana. Here is Altos de Chavón, a replica of a 16th-century Mediterranean village, with an artists' colony on a cliff overlooking the Chavón River.

More than ten percent of the country's land area is set aside for national parks, natural monuments and scientific reserves. Though few sites offer tourist facilities, many are open to guided tours. In the north, Parque Nacional Monte Cristi covers 212 sq mi. (550 sq km) between the Haitian border and Punta Rucia. The coastal park features beaches, mangrove swamps and the limestone mesa of El Morro. Christopher Columbus's first home in the New World is among the archeological excavations at Parque Nacional La Isabela near Luperón.

At Cabarete, lagoons and underground pools characterize Parque Nacional El Choco. On Samaná Bay, Parque Nacional Los Haïtises is noted for its bird life, caves and rock formations.

In the central mountain region, Parque Nacional José Armando Bermúdez and Parque Nacional José del Carmen Ramírez are home to the highest peaks in the Antilles, including 10,128-foot (3,087-m) Pico Duarte. The ruins of Old Vega, a fort town destroyed by an earthquake in 1562, are preserved at Parque Histórico La Vega Vieja, where Christopher Columbus is said to have erected a wooden cross during a battle with the Taíno Indians.

In the southeast, Parque Nacional del Este covers 166 sq mi. (430 sq km) on the peninsula between Bayahibe and Boca del Yuma, including the island of Saona. Manatees and bottlenose dolphins are among the endangered marine mammals found in the park, which is noted for its caves and coral formations.

Near San Cristóbal, Anthropological Reserve of Cuevas del Pomier features a network of 55 caves marked by thousands of Taíno pictographs and petroglyphs.

In the southwest, Parque Nacional Isla Cabritos comprises three islands in Lake Enriquillo. The country's largest protected area, Parque Nacional Jaragua, covers 560 sq mi. (1,450 sq km) on the southern Pedernales Peninsula. The desertlike landscape is home to 130 bird species, including the region's largest flamingo population.

Parque Nacional Sierra de Bahoruco, on the Haitian border, is an area of great ecological diversity; some 50 bird species and 166 orchid species are found here.

When visiting any major tourist area, be prepared for the approach of helpful—and sometimes aggressive—freelance tour guides. You may find yourself walking with a friendly stranger who gives directions and then charges for the information. Should you wish to take a guided tour, agree in advance upon a fee, but feel free to decline such services. Tours are optional, even within most attractions.

#### **Transportation**

American Airlines, Delta, JetBlue and United are among carriers offering regular flights and packages from New York, Newark and Miami to Puerto Plata's Gregorio Luperón International Airport and Santo Domingo's Las Américas International Airport. Connections also are available from San Juan, Puerto Rico. American Airlines also serves La Romana International Airport and Punta Cana International Airport.

Ferry transportation from Puerto Rico to the Dominican Republic is provided by Ferries del Caribe, which operates between san Juan and Santo Domingo. The 12-hour overnight crossing departs Monday and Friday from Puerto Rico's Pan American terminal; phone (809) 688-4400.

The Dominican Republic has good highways, though the back roads are not as well maintained. The Duarte Highway (Autopista Duarte) bisects the country, connecting Santo Domingo with Santiago and Puerto Plata to the north. The Sanchez Highway stretches westward from Santo Domingo and the Mella Highway eastward. Rental cars are available. Unless otherwise posted, speed limits are 50 mph (80 km/h) on the highway, 35 mph (60 km/h) in suburban areas and 25 mph (40 km/h) in the city. On newer highways, the limit may be raised to 60 mph (100 km/h). A U.S. driver's license is valid in the Dominican Republic for 90 days.

Because Dominican law allows for detaining visitors who have become involved in accidents in which injuries are claimed, extreme caution is advised while driving. For some this possibility rules out driving altogether. Reasonable alternatives are available.

In the city most visitors prefer the convenience of taxis. There are four types. Regular taxis are government-regulated and rates are fixed; they are found at hotels and tourist spots. Radio taxis are dispatched and the rate is set over the phone. Public taxis, or *públicos*, are operated independently; they are available along established routes. Collective taxis, or *conchos*, also operate along major thoroughfares. Rates are fairly inexpensive. Regardless of the type of taxi used, the fare should be agreed upon before entering the vehicle.

Bus service is provided by Caribe Tours and Metro Bus between cities and from Santo Domingo to the airport.

Comfortable, inexpensive buses operate several times daily between Santo Domingo and Puerto Plata, a 4-hour ride. Buses depart hourly; reservations are advised. Phone (809) 221-4422 or (809) 530-2850, respectively.

Note: Rented vehicles cannot cross the border between the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** 10,498,946.

**AREA:** 48,443 sq km (18,704 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Santo Domingo.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 3,087 m (10,128 ft.), Pico Duarte. LOWEST POINT: -44 m (-144 ft.), Lago Enriquillo.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: Spanish.

**GOVERNMENT:** Representative democracy.

**CURRENCY:** Dominican Republic Peso, divided into 100 centavos, also known as "chele." \$1 U.S. = approx. 57 pesos. Keep all exchange receipts to reconvert to U.S. dollars. Only 30 percent of the original amount will be reconverted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 25 to drive a rental car: maximum age 65. U.S. license valid; drive on right.

MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for all passengers.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

**HOLIDAYS:** Jan. 1; Epiphany Day, closest Mon. to Jan. 6; Lady of Altagracia Day, Jan. 21; Juan Pablo Duarte

Day, closest Mon. to Jan. 26; Independence Day, Feb. 27: Good Friday: Labour Day, closest Mon, to May 1: Corpus Christi Day, May or June (9th Thurs. after Easter); Restoration Day, closest Mon. to Aug. 16; Our Lady of Las Mercedes Day, Sept. 24; Constitution Day, Nov. (2nd Mon.): Christmas. Dec. 25.

**TAXES:** Taxes and service charges totaling 28 percent are added to all hotel and restaurant bills. This includes a 18 percent sales tax and a 10 percent service charge: in restaurants, an additional gratuity of up to 10 percent is customary. Departure tax \$20 U.S.

**IMMIGRATION:** A passport and a return or onward ticket are required. Tourists without a visa must pay \$10 U.S. for a 30-day tourist card (available through air or sea carrier or upon arrival); the card must be surrendered upon arrival at the airport. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call the Dominican Republic from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 809 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Dominican Republic Tourist Office 848 Brickell Ave., Suite 747 Miami, FL 33131 (305) 358-2899 (888) 358-9594

Ministry of Tourism, Government Offices Calle Cayetano Germosen Esquina avenida Gregorio Luperón Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

(809) 221-4660





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Part of the Punta Cana destination area, Bávaro Beach stretches for 23 miles along the eastern edge of the island, protected by a coral reef. The first hotel was built here by a group of American investors in the 1970s; some two dozen resorts now line the shore.

MANATÍ PARK is n.w. of the Punta Cana resort district on Carretera Manatí; free bus service is provided from area hotels. This nature park features dolphin, sea lion, horse and parrot shows. Iguanas, exotic birds and reptiles are displayed in a tropical garden setting. An interactive program allows visitors to swim with dolphins; height restrictions apply. On the grounds is a Taino village with a museum and demonstrations of native dancing.

**Time:** Allow 3 hours minimum. **Phone:** (809) 221-9444. (TI)



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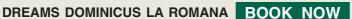
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#### **BAYAHIBE**





Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Carretera Dominicus Bayahibe 23000.



809/221-0303





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Contemporary Resort Hotel. **Address:** Playa de Bayahibe 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This modern all-inclusive hotel has stylish rooms with lovely beds and bedding, large TVs with screen mirroring and furnished patios or balconies. Bathrooms have spacious walk-in showers. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 488 units. 2-3 stories (no elevator), interior/exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: valet only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 8 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.























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Resort Hotel. Address: Carretera Los Melones, Playa Bayahibe 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This all-inclusive hotel has a stylish lobby with glossy floors and lots of areas to relax and enjoy something from the

café or bar. Attractive modern rooms all have a patio or balcony. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 354 units. 2-3 stories (no elevator), interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 10 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, tennis, recreation programs, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.































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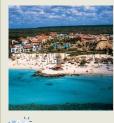


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SAVE Resort Hotel. Address: Carretera Los Melones, Playa Bayahibe 23000.



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Resort Hotel. Address: Playa Bayahibe 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: On beautiful grounds, this spacious resort has quest units spread throughout several buildings. Room highlights include colorful bedding, French provincial-style furniture and balconies or patios. 529 units. 2-3 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 6 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.































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Resort Hotel. Address: Av Boulevard de los hotels, KM 35, Playa Dominicus 23000.

#### LA ROMANA

A sugar town on the southeast coast, La Romana means "the scales"; the cane growers brought their crops here to be weighed and bought. Most of its residents work

at the sugar mill, which offers tours by appointment. Recreation includes tennis, polo, horseback riding and golf at three 18-hole courses, all at the nearby 7,000-acre (2.832-hectare) resort of Casa de Campo. An all-day boat excursion to Catalina Island, with its small offshore reef



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

and powdery beaches, can be arranged at the harbor near town. The fishing village of Bayahibe, noted for its pristine beaches and diving sites, is a growing resort area.

Thousands of Dominicans make the yearly pilgrimage to the Basilica of Nuestra Señora de la Altagracia at Higüey (EE-gway), which is 23 mi. (37 km) northeast of La Romana. The large cathedral, built in honor of the country's patron saint, is considered one of the island's finest examples of modern architecture. West of La Romana are the beach resort towns of Juan Dolio, Guyacanes and San Pedro de Macorís, home of some of the country's—and America's—greatest baseball players.

The Toros del Este baseball team, winners of several championship series, plays October through December at Estadio Francisco Micheli Stadium; phone (809) 556-6188.

ALTOS DE CHAVÓN is high above the Chavón River, 8 mi. (13 km) e. via Casa de Campo. Built in 1979 to resemble a 16th-century Mediterranean village, this artistic community promotes Dominican and international culture. The self-contained campus is host to many Dominican and international writers, painters, musicians and artisans.

The Altos de Chavón Art Gallery displays monthly exhibits by Dominican and international painters, sculptors and photographers. The Regional Museum of Archeology interprets aboriginal evolution from the first pre-ceramic

groups to the highly developed Taino Indians. The museum's fine collection of some 3,000 Taíno art and artifacts was collected along the banks of the Chavón River.

Chavón Amphitheater, built in the classic Greek tradition, presents performances all year. The 5,000-seat theater was inaugurated by Frank Sinatra in 1982. St. Stanislaus Church was named after Poland's patron saint in honor of Pope John Paul II, who donated the saint's ashes to the community. The church is built entirely of hand-cut stone.

Spanish influences can be seen along the cobblestone streets with their limestone buildings and wrought-iron balconies. Within these buildings are craft workshops, artist studios, ethnic restaurants and fine shops. Phone: (809) 523-8011, (809) 523-3333, ext. 3333 for guided tour information, or (809) 523-8554 for Regional Museum of Archeology. |||

CAVE OF WONDERS (LA CUEVA DE LAS MARA-VILLAS) is w. of La Romana between the Soco and Cumayasa rivers on San Pedro de Macoris Hwy. Guided 1-hour tours take visitors 80 feet (25 m) underground to the Cave of Wonders, which contains dramatic formations and some 500 pre-Columbian pictographs. Knowledgeable guides offer history and anecdotes; tours are available in English.

To protect rock formations, photography is prohibited. The cave is equipped with lighted pathways and an elevator; comfortable walking shoes are advised. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (809) 951-9009, or (809) 390-8181, ext. 3165 for tour information. GT

## **CASA DE CAMPO BOOK NOW** 809/523-3333

FOUR DIAMOND

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Classic Resort Hotel. Address: Casa de Campo Rd 22000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This iconic resort is legendary for providing a total vacation experience. Suites are spread out in a variety of buildings. All are noteworthy, but the premier luxury units are outstanding. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 317 units, some two bedrooms. 1-2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, marina, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, area transportation.





























#### **LUPERÓN**

On the northern coast of Hispaniola, the protected bay at Luperón has long provided shelter for seafaring travelers. Returning on his second voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus moored near here with 17 ships and 1,500 men to establish the first European town in the Americas. The settlement of La Isabela, named after the queen of Spain, would be abandoned within 5 years.

PARQUE NACIONAL LA ISABELA is 8.5 mi. (14 km) w. of Luperón. In December 1493, Christopher Columbus established the first European settlement in the New World, building a walled city named La Isabela on the east bank of the Bajabonico River. The foundations of a fort, a sentry tower, a chapel and Columbus's limestone house are visible. A small museum features exhibits about Spanish and Taíno culture and artifacts excavated from the site; labels are in Spanish. Phone: (809) 498-3534.

#### **PUERTO PLATA**

Puerto Plata, meaning "silver port," was named so by Christopher Columbus in 1493 because of the silver mist that hovers around the nearby mountains at sunset. Soon after its founding by Columbus' brother Bartolomeo in 1496, Puerto Plata began to flourish as a trade center for the Spanish colonies. Increasing competition from newer ports, however, led to its demise, and by 1520 Puerto Plata had become overrun by smugglers. Illegal trade continued well into the 17th century, despite the crown's decree that the town be destroyed and abandoned. Legitimate trade resumed in the mid-1700s, but it is tourism that fuels the local economy today.

Puerto Plata's charm lies in its cobblestone streets, Victorian homes and leisurely pace of life. Horse-drawn carriages are available for city tours. Central Park attracts sightseers; a large gazebo adorns the site. Puerto Plata's Brugal Rum is considered to be among the world's finest; the factory on Avenida Luis Ginebra offers tours Mon.-Fri. 9-noon and 2-5.

Puerto Plata is the gateway to the 75 miles (120 km) of golden beach known as the Amber Coast. The many beaches along this beautiful strip include Sosúa, Long, Grande, Dorada, Cofresí, Luperón and Cabarete. This glittering vista is best viewed from the top of Mount Isabel de Torres (see attraction listing this page). Most of the major resorts are east of town in Playa Dorada and Costa Dorada.

Other interesting local attractions include Laguna Gri Gri and the town of Sosúa, a refugee colony of European

Jews during World War II and the site of the island's largest dairy industry.

MOUNT ISABEL DE TORRES CABLE CAR (PICO **ISABEL DE TORRES TELEFÉRICO)** is s.w. of downtown near the jct. of Ave. Circunvalación Sur & Ave. Teleférico following signs. The cable car transports visitors to the top of 2,565-foot (782-meter) Mount Isabel de Torres for stunning views of the Cordillera Septentrional mountains, Puerto Plata and the Silver Coast. The statue "Christ the Redeemer" and a 35-acre botanical garden with tropical plants and winding paths crown the summit. Visitors should arrive in the morning to avoid view-obscuring clouds that often develop. Long waits can be expected on weekends.

**Time:** Allow 3 hours minimum. **Phone:** (809) 970-0501. 

OCEAN WORLD is 3 mi. (5 km) w. on the Carretera 5 (C-5) to Cofresí Beach following signs. Comprising a series of artificial lagoons and aquariums constructed along the Atlantic shore, the adventure park is home to bottlenose dolphins, sea lions, sharks, stingrays, tropical birds and other exotic animals. Park admission includes snorkeling in a tropical reef aquarium and swimming in Pirate's Pool.

The highlight of the park is its dolphin, sea lion and shark encounter programs, which allow guests to interact with these intelligent marine mammals; age restrictions may apply. Visitors can also walk through bird aviaries and a rain forest, enjoy waterslides and relax on a sandy beach.

Guests also can enjoy other forms of entertainment in the complex, including sunset dinners overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and a trendy bar with high-definition televisions. During "Bravissimo Fiesta," an international dinner show, performers in vibrant costumes take the audience on an enchanted Caribbean journey through interpretive dance: reservations are required.

Guests should wear swimwear under clothes and bring a towel and sunscreen. Time: Allow 4 hours minimum. Phone: (809) 291-1000.

**OUTBACK ADVENTURE SAFARI TOURS** picks up passengers at area hotels. The tour company provides halfand full-day narrated excursions into the countryside aboard four-wheel-drive vehicles. During the full-day safari, guides acquaint passengers with the lifestyle of average Dominicans through visits to a typical home, a fruit plantation and a schoolhouse. Activities include a cultural lunch, a beachside massage and boogie boarding at a white-sand beach. Highlights of the 4.5-hour Terra Cross

ATV tour include driving a two-person buggy through the backcountry, visiting the home of Don Chi Chi and swimming in a stream.

Pregnant women are not permitted on the full-day safari or the Terra Cross ATV tour. Phone: (809) 320-2525. GT (II



BLUE JACKTAR HOTEL BOOK NOW 809/320-3800



Hotel. Address: Playa Dorada Complex.



CASA COLONIAL BEACH & SPA HOTEL BOOK NOW 809/320-3232



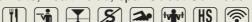
Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Playa Dorada Complex 57000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This lovely, serene property is set on gorgeous grounds and has spacious suites with tasteful décor, fine furnishings and comfortable seating. Highlights are huge bathrooms and patios or balconies. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 50 units. 3 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: Lucia Restaurant, see separate listing. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation. SAVE























#### WHERE TO EAT



#### LUCIA RESTAURANT 809/320-3232



International Fine Dining. Expert Advice: A luxurious and intimate tropical ambience pervades in this beautiful room where guests receive attentive service. The chef combines the best elements of Dominican, Italian and Asian cuisines and utilizes local products where possible. Starter options include Caesar salad and ceviche. The well-prepared entrées range from Caribbean lobster and pasta to curried goat and Chilean sea bass. There is also a lengthy vegetarian selection. **Features:** full bar, patio dining. Reservations: suggested. Address: Playa Dorada Complex 57000. Parking: valet only.





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#### **PUNTA CANA**

One of the country's fastest-growing destinations. Punta Cana is known for its quiet beaches and all-inclusive resorts. The silky sand beaches on this eastern tip of the island stretch for some 30 miles (50 km), and water sports offer the chief source of entertainment. A coral reef—the longest in the region—breaks the waves offshore, keeping the surf gentle. Local communities in the Punta Cana area include Árena Gorda. Bávaro (see place listing p. 120). Cabeza de Toro, Cap Cana, El Cortecito, Macao and Uvero Alto.

Punta Cana International Airport, reputedly the world's first privately owned international airport, is located within the 15,000-acre Puntacana Resort and Club. The Punta Cana Ecological Reserve is a natural sanctuary for local flora and fauna.

MANATÍ PARK-see Bávaro p. 120.



### AC HOTEL BY MARRIOTT PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW 809/466-0003





AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Hotel. Address: Av Barcelo Km 9 Bavaro Punta Cana 23301. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 129 units. 4 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: cabanas, exercise room. Guest Services: valet laundry.



























### BREATHLESS PUNTA CANA RESORT & SPA

BOOK NOW 809/551-0000







AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Playa Uvero Alto. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Words like lively, fun and sexy best describe this adults-only all-inclusive action-packed resort. With all of the activities, you will never get bored. Rooms feature hot tubs on the patio or balcony. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 750 units. 3 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 10 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



























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#### DREAMS FLORA RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 809/221-2626





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: Carretera Cabeza de Toro 23000. Facility: An impressive palapa design entrance and lobby will be sure to wow you on arrival. Stylish rooms feature a counter-height workspace with stools and a separate

area with a sofa bed and coffee table. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 520 units. 2-3 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 6 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

































#### DREAMS MACAO BEACH PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW 809/552-0150





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Macao, La Altagracia 23000. **Location:** Oceanfront. **Facility:** A games arcade, kiddie waterpark

and one for older kids/adults are just some of the many activities at this beautiful resort. Rooms are stylish with big TVs and furnished patios or balconies. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 500 units, some two bedrooms. 4 stories, exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 7 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, playground, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.





































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DREAMS ONYX RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 809/551-0055





#### AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Playa Uvero Alto Provincia La Altag 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This lovely destination

resort offers stylish junior suites with huge closets, balconies or patios with a big jetted tub, and exceptionally well-lit baths with fine amenities. Views vary by location. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 822 units. 3 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.



























EDEN ROC CAP CANA BOOK NOW 809/695-5555



Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Cap Cana 23000.



EXCELLENCE EL CARMEN BOOK NOW 809/285-0000

Resort Hotel. Address: Playas de Uveo Alto 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This lovely resort has an outstanding lobby with a majestic staircase leading to the beautiful lower martini bar. Sleek, spacious suites have full living room areas and large smart TVs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 492 units. 3 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply.

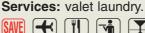
































Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, health club, spa. Guest











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#### **EXCELLENCE PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW** 809/685-9880



Resort Hotel. Address: Playas Uvero Alto-Higuey. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This beautiful all-inclusive, adults-only property has gorgeous grounds and a long, winding pool. The suites are spacious and feature a comfy couch as well as a huge jetted-tub in the bedroom. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 461 units. 3 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, game room, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.























#### FINEST PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW 809/285-1000



Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Uvero Alto Provincia la Altagracia. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Circling around a stylish lower bar area, the lobby has beautiful glossy floors and a huge modern sculpture. Sleek, spacious suites have comfy sitting areas, large smart TVs and premium bar offerings. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 455 units, some two bedrooms. 3 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 13 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry. CAVE TI TI CALL (L) (200 (1994) (BIZ)



FOUR DIAMOND

























FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON PUNTACANA VILLAGE

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SAVE Hotel. Address: Blvd 1ro de Noviembre 23000.



GRAND PALLADIUM PALACE RESORT SPA & CASINO BOOK NOW

809/221-8149

INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Resort Hotel. **Address:** Avda Francia S/n Playas De Bavaro.

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#### HARD ROCK HOTEL & CASINO PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW 809/731-0099



Resort Hotel, Address: Blvd Turistico Del Este KM 28 Parc 74 23000, Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Rock 'n' roll your days and nights away at this mega, all-inclusive resort with extensive facilities. The upscale, spacious rooms are loaded with amenities and huge jetted tubs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 1800 units, some two and three bedrooms. 3-4 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Some: video games. Dining: 10 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, miniature golf, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, playground, game room, lawn sports, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, area transportation.



FOUR DIAMOND

































#### HYATT ZILARA CAP CANA BOOK NOW 809/469-7090



HYATT ZILARA AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Blvd Zona Hotelera 23302. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Public areas are lovely at this adults-only resort which has multiple pools and a plethora of activities. Rooms feature huge TVs with superior programming and spacious furnished balconies. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 375 units. 8 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.































#### HYATT ZIVA CAP CANA BOOK NOW 809/469-7090





HYATT ZIVA AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Blvd Zona Hotelera 23302. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Gorgeous public areas are found at this resort with multiple pools, a water park and a multitude of thematic restaurants. Guests rooms are stylish and comfortable with huge TVs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 375 units. 8 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, health club. Guest Services: valet laundry.































809/221-6500



Resort Hotel. Address: Carr Arena Gorda.



IBEROSTAR PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW

809/552-1359



Resort Hotel. Address: Carr Arena Gorda 23000.

IBEROSTAR SELECTION BAVARO SUITES BOOK NOW 809/221-6500



Resort Hotel. Address: Carretera Arena Gorda. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Tastefully appealing rooms and comfortable, furnished patios are found in eight-plex buildings scattered around an expansive property. Interiors feature sunken living room areas and Smart TVs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 758 units. 2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, game room, lawn sports, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.





























JOIA BAVARO BY IBEROSTAR BOOK NOW 809/221-6500



Resort Hotel. Address: Av Estados Unidos 4. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This adults-only luxurious resort has lovely rooms with furnished balconies or patios. The bathrooms have a huge jetted tub with a big window and a separate shower. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 274 units. 4 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 7 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.





















## Make the Connection



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#### LOPESAN COSTA BAVARO RESORT, SPA & CASINO

BOOK NOW 833/422-3334



Resort Hotel. Address: Playas de Bavaro 23301. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This is a beautiful service-oriented property with stylish and spacious junior suites, many featuring a swim-out pool. They all have large furnished balconies or patios, smart TVs and walk-in showers. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 1042 units, some two bedrooms. 5 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, game room, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, area transportation. (See ad starting on p. 132.)























### MARGARITAVILLE ISLAND RESERVE HAMMOCK BOOK NOW 809/569-7260



Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Blvd Zona Hotelera, Cap Cana. Facility: A giant flip-flop marks the driveway at this adults-only resort, signaling the upscale beachy vibe found throughout the property. Rooms are also cool with a colorful design and big smart TVs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 266 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, cabanas, self-propelled boats, tennis, recreation programs, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



























### MARGARITAVILLE ISLAND RESERVE WAVE BOOK NOW 809/469-7260



Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Blvd Zona Hotelera, Cap Cana 23000. Facility: A giant flip-flop marks the driveway at this resort, signaling the upscale beachy vibe found throughout the property. Rooms are also cool with a colorful design and big smart TVs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 251 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.































<u>Unforgettable Memories</u> Await You In Punta Cana



## Lopesan Costa Bávaro Resort, Spa & Casino

An unforgettable all-inclusive experience await you in the heart of Punta Cana. The perfect combination of comfort, personalized service and exclusive ambiance of the highest quality. For the most discerning guests, we offer the Unique Club by Lopesan, which includes everything from premium services to exclusive access areas. An endless array of amenities sure to surprise you, as well as, an extraordinary gastronomic offering, complete the privileged experience in paradise that you deserve.











#### PARADISUS GRAND CANA ALL SUITES BOOK NOW 809/688-5000



Contemporary Hotel. Address: Avenida Alemania. Playa de Bayaro 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This lovely resort has all suites, starting with stylish one-bedroom units with a separate bedroom, living room, walk-in closet, big bathroom and large furnished balcony or patio with a jetted tub. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 432 units. 4 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, lawn sports, health club, in-room exercise equipment, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.































#### PARADISUS PALMA REAL GOLF & SPA RESORT BOOK NOW 809/688-5000



Resort Hotel. Address: Punta Cana Higuey Rd 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This fabulous all-inclusive property has a beautiful lobby with many areas to relax. The entry-level suites offer modern upscale appeal with comfortable sitting areas. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 596 units. 3 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.

































## ROYALTON BAVARO, AN AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORT &





AUTOGRAPH AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott COLLECTION<sup>®</sup> Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

HOTELS

Contemporary Hotel. Address: Carr Arena Gorda, La Altagracia 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Hands down this resort has so much to

offer: the 1.2 km (0.8 mi) "lazy river" and multiple pools, an upscale spa and an array of dining options - from a steakhouse to Japanese teppanyaki show cooking. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 730 units, some two bedrooms. 4 stories, interior/ exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet



#### ROYALTON CHIC PUNTA CANA, AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION BOOK NOW 809/468-0404



AUTOGRAPH AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott COLLECTION<sup>®</sup> Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

HOTELS

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Carretera Uvero Alto, Los Cambrones. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This all-inclusive hotel has

a modern, stylish vibe that flows into the rooms; some are swim-outs. Standard units are cozy in size. The lovely pool area is livelier than most. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 320 units. 3 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 6 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, game room, health club, spa, Guest Services; valet laundry.



FOUR DIAMOND



























ROYALTON PUNTA CANA, AN AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION ALL-INCLUSIVE RESORT &

BOOK NOW 809/221-2121



AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Resort Hotel. Address: Playa Arena Gorda-Bavaro.



#### SANCTUARY CAP CANA, THE LUXURY COLLECTION BOOK NOW 809/562-9191





THE COLLECTION AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: Blvd Zona Hotelera, Playa Juanillo, Cap Cana

23302. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This gorgeous all-inclusive resort has a historical feel with breathtaking areas. Suites are found in three

distinct sections. All are marvelous in their own ways and many have unbelievable sea views. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 324 units, some two bedrooms. 5 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, recreation programs, bicycles, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



































SECRETS CAP CANA RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 809/469-7545





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: Playa Juanillo 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: A beach and pool concierge will cater to your every need at

this luxurious all-inclusive adults-only resort. Most rooms come with either a swim-out pool or a huge soaker tub on the balcony. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 457 units. 2-6 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 7 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, bicycles, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.





























#### SECRETS ROYAL BEACH PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW 809/221-4646





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates! Resort Hotel. Address: Ave Alemania S/N El Cortecito. Location:

Oceanfront. Facility: Guests enjoy spacious suites featuring comfortable living areas with couches. You'll particularly love the hot tub on your patio or balcony at this adults-only, all-inclusive resort. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 641 units, some two bedrooms. 1-4 stories, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 7 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, fishing, scuba diving,



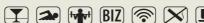




















snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services:







SECRETS TIDES PUNTA CANA BOOK NOW 809/831-7777



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: Punta Cana Uvero Alto.

#### TORTUGA BAY PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB BOOK NOW

809/959-8229



Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Punta Cana Main Rd 23000. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: In the original Punta Cana community, there are many activities available including an ecological preserve. Enormous, exclusive suites are all beachside with stunning views of the ocean. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 30 units, some two bedrooms. 2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants, also, Bamboo at Tortuga Bay, La Yola, see separate listings, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, bicycles, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.





























THE WESTIN PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB

BOOK NOW

809/959-2222



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AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Contemporary Hotel. Address: Playa Blanca at Puntacana Resort & Club.

#### WHERE TO EAT



BAMBOO AT TORTUGA BAY 809/959-2269



International Fine Dining. Address: Punta Cana Main Rd 23000.



LA YOLA 809/959-2262



International Casual Dining. Address: Punta Cana Main Rd 23000.

#### SANTO DOMINGO

Capital of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo was founded in 1496 by Bartolomeo Columbus. During the early 16th century, the city was the prize jewel of the Spanish colonies, enjoying great prosperity as the cultural center of the Caribbean and Spain's stepping stone to further explorations in the New World. It was during this period that many of the city's splendid palaces and churches were built.

However, when Spain turned its interests toward the gold fields of Mexico, Santo Domingo faced a sudden decline in prestige and wealth. The final blow occurred in 1586 when Sir Francis Drake of England pillaged and burned the city, which survived only to be invaded by the French and Haitians.

Many buildings and narrow streets reminiscent of the Old World have escaped the razing of expansive modernization projects. Ruins of city walls, ancient gates and crumbling fortresses in the colonial section (Zona Colonial) are vivid reminders of the city's history. Most notable are the ruins of San Nicolas de Bari Hospital and the Monasterv of San Francisco, first of their kind in the New World.

The Reales Atarazana, a restored 16th-century shipvard, covers a city block across from the Alcázar de Colón. Cafes, restaurants and boutiques as well as faithful restoration work make this a most interesting section to visit. A departure from the area's pervasive antiquity is the Mercado Modelo, the modern crafts market at avenidas Mella and Santome. On Calle Padre Billini is the Convent of the Dominicans, which dates from 1510. Inside the church is the Capilla del Rosario, or Chapel of the Rosary, a stone vault embellished with the signs of the Zodiac.

The western section of the city has benefited most from redevelopment. Of particular interest are the National

Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

Palace on Calle Moises Garcia and the Palace of Fine Arts (Palacio de Bellas Artes) at avenidas Independencia and Máximo Gómez. University City, site of the University of Santo Domingo, occupies several blocks west of Máximo Gómez. In the northwest section of the city are the Juan Pablo Duarte Olympic Center and Quisqueya Stadium.

COLONIAL ZONE (ZONA COLONIAL) extends about 1 mi. (1.6 km) w. from the bank of the Ozama River, bounded on the north by Ave. Mella and on the south by the Caribbean Sea. The New World's first fortress, cathedral, monastery, hospital, palaces and government offices were built here after Christopher Columbus' arrival in 1492.

At the heart of this UNESCO World Heritage Site is Columbus Park. Two blocks east is Fortress of Santo Domingo (see attraction listing), within which stands the Tower of Homage (Torre del Homenaje), built 1503-07. North along Calle de Las Damas is the National Pantheon (see attraction listing), where the remains of some of the country's greatest heroes are enshrined.

Visitors to the colonial section are advised to wear comfortable shoes and light clothing, but not shorts; those wearing shorts can be denied admission to some attractions. Caution should be exercised in this area, especially after dark, as tourists are often approached by locals asking for money. Amiable freelance tour guides are eager to offer their services; it is wise to ask to see a government-issued identification card and to agree upon the guide's fee before taking a tour. Visitors should feel free to decline tours despite the insistence of overzealous guides; such tours are optional, even within most of the attractions.

Amber World Museum is at the center of the Colonial Zone between Calle Vicente Celestino Duarte and Calle Restauración; the museum is on the second floor of a historical mansion. Formed over the course of millions of years from hardened tree resin, amber is found in abundance in the Dominican Republic. The museum's displays describe the semiprecious gem's origins, the variety of material often contained in amber (leaves, insects, spiders, small frogs, lizards, etc.), how it is mined and what distinguishes Dominican amber from that which is found elsewhere in the world. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (809) 682-3309 or (809) 686-5700. GT

Catedral Primada de América is on Arzobispo Meriño next to Columbus Park in the Colonial Zone. Pope Paul III pronounced this the first cathedral in the New World in 1542. Sir Frances Drake reputedly lived in the cathedral for 25 days. With a Gothic vault, Spanish Renaissance facades, Romanesque arches and Baroque ornamentation,

the cathedral is an architectural marvel. Exquisite stained-glass windows were crafted by Dominican artist Rincón Mora. Appropriate attire is required; persons in shorts are not admitted. **Phone:** (809) 682-3848 or (809) 689-1920. **GT** 

Columbus Castle Museum (Museo Alcázar de Colón) is next to the Gate of San Diego off Av Francisco Alberto Caamaño Deñó at the n. end of Plaza de España in the Colonial Zone. This 22-room palace overlooking the Ozama River was built 1510-14 for Columbus' son Diego, first viceroy of the West Indies. The coral-rock castle served as the seat of the Spanish court for 68 years. Colonial furniture and 16th-century works of art add to the elegance of the interior. Guided tours are available in English, French, Italian, German and Spanish. [GT]

Cord House (Casa del Cordón) is at 214 Calle Isabel la Católica in the Colonial Zone. Diego Columbus lived here while the Alcázar was under construction. Built in 1503 and spared by earthquakes, hurricanes and Sir Francis Drake, it is said to be the oldest standing house in the Western Hemisphere. The stone cord carved above the door is the sign of a Franciscan order. The building now houses a bank and offices.

Dominican Family Museum (Casa del Tostado) is on Calle Padre Billini and Arzobispo Meriño in the Colonial Zone. The 16th-century Tostado House, once used as the archbishop's palace, contains displays of 19th-century household effects and furnishings. The house's Gothic double window is architecturally unique. Phone: (809) 689-5000.

Fortress of Santo Domingo (Fortaleza Ozama) is in the southeastern corner of the Colonial Zone at Calle Las Damas and Padre Billini. Begun in 1503 on the banks of the Ozama River, the fortress is said to be the oldest military complex in the New World. Dominating the open space within is the Tower of Homage (Torre del Homenaje), which was used as a prison until the 1960s and offers picturesque views from its battlements. A bronze statue of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, the 16th-century Spanish historian and prison warden, looms nearby. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (809) 688-1553. GT

Larimar Museum is on the second floor of a building at the corner of Isabel La Católica and Padre Billini in the Colonial Zone. While the mineral pectolite can be found all over the world, blue pectolite—also called larimar—has been found only in the Dominican Republic's Barahona province. The small museum features labeled displays

describing the semiprecious stone's volcanic formation and how it is mined. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (809) 682-3309.

Museum of the Royal Houses (Las Casas Reales) is on Calle de Las Damas at Mercedes in the Colonial Zone. This architecturally interesting and historically important complex includes two palaces built in the early 16th century. Various facets of Spanish colonial life are depicted through artifacts, tapestries, maps and a re-created courtroom. Recovered treasures from sunken Spanish galleons and a large collection of arms and armor from the first through the 18th centuries also are displayed. Phone: (809) 682-4202. GT

National Pantheon (Panteón de la Patria) is near the corner of Las Damas and Las Mercedes in the Colonial Zone. Originally a Jesuit church completed in the 1740s, the building endured periods as a warehouse and a theater before it was converted to a mausoleum in 1956 for Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. Interred within its walls are the remains of many of the nation's most illustrious political figures. A large bronze chandelier, a gift from Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, hangs beneath the domed ceiling. Appropriate attire is required; persons in shorts are not admitted. Amiable freelance tour guides are eager to offer their services; it is wise to ask to see a government-issued identification card and to agree upon the guide's fee before taking a tour. Visitors should feel free to decline tours despite the insistence of overzealous guides; such tours are optional. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (809) 689-6010.

Naval Museum of the Atarazanas (Museo Naval de las Atarazanas) is at 4 Calle Colon at the corner of Vicente Celestino Duarte Ave. in the Colonial Zone. On the street of taverns and shops that once served Spanish sailors. this museum chronicles 17th-century maritime life. Exhibits include shipwreck artifacts from the galleon Concepción, which sank off the coast in 1641. The museum also chronicles the gold, silver and slave trades. Most exhibits are labeled in Spanish. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (809) 682-5834.

San Francisco Monastery Ruins (Ruinas del Monasterio de San Francisco) are on a hilltop n. of Ave. Mercedes at Calle Hostos in the Colonial Zone. The Franciscan monastery was thought to be the first in the Americas. Construction began around 1508, but a series of natural disasters, followed by Sir Francis Drake's 1586 rampage, thwarted its completion.

San Nicolás de Bari Hospital Ruins (Ruinas El Hospital San Nicolás) are on Ave. Mercedes in the Colonial Zone. Stone walls remain from the first hospital to be erected in the Americas. A wooden building that had housed the sick and injured since 1503 was replaced in 1530 by the stone structure; records contain accounts of facilities that included a number of wards, a chapel and a cemetery.

Wax Museum Juan Pablo Duarte (Museo de Cera Juan Pablo Duarte) is at 304-308 Calle Isabel la Católica between calles Restauración and Vicente Celestino Duarte in the Colonial Zone. The 1813 birthplace of Juan Pablo Duarte, father of the Dominican Republic, contains personal possessions and furniture of the patriot and the Duarte-Diez family, as well as portraits of Duarte, paintings with historical themes, artifacts and documents of the independence period and full-size wax dioramas detailing every stage of Duarte's life. Phone: (809) 687-1436 or (809) 687-1475.

COLUMBUS LIGHTHOUSE MONUMENT (FARO A **COLON)** is on the east side of the Ozama River at Ave. España in Mirador del Este Park. The massive sevenstory, cross-shaped edifice features 145 flood lamps that project a shining cross into the night sky. Displays in mahogany-trimmed rooms illustrate the discoveries of Christopher Columbus and how they changed the world.

Visitors also can see excellent scale models of the *Niña*. Pinta and Santa María. An entire hall is devoted to the construction of the monument, which was dedicated in 1992 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landing. Exhibits include photographs and drafts submitted by architects from around the world. An art gallery displays work from Santo Domingo.

The ornate bronze box suspended in a three-story marble monument—and guarded by militia—is said to contain a portion of the explorer's remains. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (809) 591-1492, ext. 238.

NATIONAL AQUARIUM (ACUARIO NACIONAL) is on Ave. España. A variety of marine and freshwater animals are displayed in tanks reflecting their natural habitats. A short film is presented. **Time:** Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (809) 766-1709.

NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK (PARQUE **ZOOLOGICO NACIONAL)** is at Ave. Vega Real and Ave. Los Arroyos Arroyo Hondo. The zoo preserves the natural environment of a wide variety of animals, which are allowed to roam freely. The park includes the African Plain, a children's zoo and one of the largest bird cages in the world. Five miles (8 km) of roads and walks traverse the park. Train tours also are available. Time: Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (809) 378-2149.

PLAZA DE LA CULTURA is w. of Av. Máximo Gómez on Av. Pedro Henriquez Ureña. Representing the modern side of Santo Domingo, this cultural and educational center is distinguished by its progressive architecture. A park inside the plaza contains national cultural buildings, a theater and museums, set amid tropical gardens.

Museum of the Dominican Man (Museo del Hombre Dominicano) is on Calle Pedro Henríquez Ureña in the Plaza de la Cultura. The museum presents Dominican history and folklore from pre-Columbian times to the present. Exhibits include Indian artifacts excavated on the island and graphic displays charting migration in the Caribbean. Phone: (809) 687-3622.

Museum of Modern Art (Museo de Arte Moderno) is on Av. Pedro Henríquez Ureña in the Plaza de la Cultura. The museum displays a collection of contemporary paintings and sculpture by Dominican and foreign artists as

well as changing displays by current artists. **Phone:** (809) 685-2155.

National Museum of Natural History (Museo Nacional de Historia Natural) is on Ave. César Nicolás Penson in the Plaza de la Cultura. Exhibits focus on the natural characteristics and ecology of the island, from its creation to future developments. Of note is an extensive collection of mounted birds and fish. A planetarium offers simulated views of the stars and planets. A library houses materials covering biodiversity and natural resources. **Phone:** (809) 689-0106. **TI** 

Pedro Henriquez Ureña National Library (Biblioteca Nacional Pedro Henriquez Ureña) is at Ave. César Nicolás Penson 91 in the Plaza de la Cultura. The library holds half a million books and magazines; its excellent research facilities require a good command of Spanish. Phone: (829) 946-2674.







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Hotel. Address: 500 Ave George Washington 10104.



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JW MARRIOTT Contemporary Hotel. Address: 93 Winston Churchill Ave 10502. Location: Located in business district. Facility: The eye-popping,

luxuriously modern lobby and terrace above the city is a happening gathering spot. Entry-level rooms are upscale and offer large TVs, comfortable seating and impressive bathrooms. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 150 units. 12-20 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee). Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: health club. Guest Services: valet laundry.































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Contemporary Hotel. Address: 115 Winston Churchill Ave 10502.



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Hotel. Address: 367 Ave George Washington 10104. Facility: In the main hotel where the facilities are located and also in the garden building a short walk away, rooms have a fresh, white and yellow motif; comfy lounge chairs have a laptop table and ottoman. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 300 units. 2-10 stories (no elevator), interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, cabanas, tennis, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.









































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AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Hotel. Address: Av Abraham Lincoln esquina Andrés Julio MARRIOTT Aybar 23000. Location: Corner of Andrés Julio Aybar; downtown. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 207 units. 21 stories, interior

corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: valet laundry.



























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## Grenada

opularly known as "the Spice Island of the Caribbean," Grenada (gre-NAY-da) has a moderate tropical climate that ensures the success of spice production. The island is famous for its cocoa, mace, cloves, vanilla, cinnamon, ginger-and nutmeg. Grenada is the largest nutmeg producer in the Western Hemisphere.

Grenada's balmy climate lures travelers seeking an ideal Caribbean retreat. Its 133 square miles (344 sq km) of tropical landscape, encompassing volcanic mountains, lush valleys and pristine beaches, have distinguished it as one of the most beautiful West Indian islands. Ninety miles (145 km) north of Trinidad, Grenada is the southernmost of the Windward Islands and offers a remoteness that is the essence of its appeal.

#### History

Though Christopher Columbus discovered Grenada during his third voyage in 1498, the island was relatively neglected until 1650, when it was purchased by the governor of Martinique. The French began their colonization with a series of skirmishes that virtually exterminated the island's native Carib population. The survivors were

pushed north to Le Morne des Sauteurs, where rather than surrender they jumped off the cliff to the jagged rocks below. Today the site of the Carib defeat is known as Carib's Leap or Leapers' Hill.

After gaining complete control in 1714, the French introduced the cultivation of cocoa, coffee and cotton. During the wars between France and Great Britain, the island changed hands several times until the Treaty of Versailles finally ceded it to Britain in 1783. Slave labor and large plantation holdings brought prosperity to the island, which served as the headquarters of the British West Indies 1885-1958. After unsuccessful attempts to federate with other West Indian islands, Grenada assumed the status of an Associated State of Britain in 1967. The island became independent from the United Kingdom in 1974 and obtained dominion status within the Commonwealth.

Following a revolution on March 13, 1979, a People's Revolutionary Government replaced the parliamentary system of democracy in Grenada. Revolutionary rumblings and ideological differences erupted into a coup d'etat against the presiding prime minister in October 1983, prompting U.S. and Eastern Caribbean military intervention. Political order in Grenada was reestablished with the election of a representative government on December 3, 1984.

#### Shopping

A Grenada spice basket—a handwoven pannier of palm leaf or straw filled with cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, vanilla, cloves and other native spices—is an easy way to bring the aroma of Grenada back home. Spice necklaces also are popular souvenirs. Straw and sisal items are usually bargains, particularly at shops on the Carenage in St. George's. Another good buy is woodcarvings.

Vendors at Market Square on Young Street in St. George's sell produce, spices and handcrafted items. Art Fabrik, also on Young Street, offers a large selection of hand-painted batik art, clothing and accessories; phone (473) 440-0568. Tikal is popular for artwork, batik items and woodcarvings.

More than 50 shops provide a wide range of quality items in Esplanade Mall at Melville Street Cruise Ship Terminal. Five shopping centers in the hotel area in Grand Anse contain fine shops, especially ones that sell china, crystal and other luxury items. With 82 booths, the Grand Anse Craft & Spice Market is an ideal place to purchase handcrafted jewelry, straw goods, clothing and spices. The market is open daily 9-5.

Spiceland Mall International, just outside St. George's on Morne Rouge, features 30 stores and is a popular tourist spot; phone (473) 439-9070.

Shops are generally open Mon.-Fri. 8-4, Sat. 8-1. Banking hours are generally Mon.-Thurs. 8-2, Fri. 8-4.

#### **Food and Drink**

An almost endless list of seafood and homegrown fresh fruit is available at most island hotels and restaurants. *Callaloo* soup, crab backs, *lambi* (conch) dishes and avocado and nutmeg ice cream are local favorites. A liberal dose of Grenadian rum punch, made with lime juice, syrup, Angostura bitters, grated nutmeg and local rum, often helps encourage the visitor to experiment with the native cuisine. Gin and coconut water is another popular libation, as is the locally brewed Carib beer.

#### **Sports and Amusements**

Since much of the island nation is mountainous, it is easy to understand why hiking is a popular activity. Although guides may be necessary for some excursions, opportunities exist for hikes to waterfalls, historic sites, scenic views and nature study. Sailing the island's clear waters is another available form of outdoor recreation. Grand Anse, a dazzling 2-mile (3-km) stretch of sand on southwestern Grenada, is considered one of the world's finest beaches. Grenada's dependencies of Carriacou and Petite Martinique also have scenic coves with white sand beaches.

Scuba diving has become a major sport and is good off Point Salines and Molinere Point. Viewing the underwater sculptures at Molinere Marine Park also makes for an intriguing dive excursion. Experienced divers can reach the *Bianca C.*, a cruise ship that sank outside St. George's harbor in 1961; it is the largest shipwreck site in the Caribbean. Deep-sea vessels can be chartered for a half- or full-day. Arrangements for day sails and longer charters around Grenada and the Grenadines can be made at the marinas in St. George's, L'Anse aux Epines and True Blue Bay.

For an exotic Grenadian experience back on land, visit the 1,740-foot-high (530-m) Grand Etang Lake, a lake-filled crater of an extinct volcano within a tropical bird sanctuary and forest reserve; local guides are available for hiking. Annandale Falls, a mountain stream plunging 30 feet (9 m) into an adjacent pool surrounded by flowers and plants, also provides an ideal setting for an afternoon off the beaten path. To the north of St. George's are the three Concord Falls. The first is accessible by road; the second and third, known as Au Coin and Fontainbleu, are reached by foot through mountain terrain. La Sagesse Nature Center offers hiking trails, some 86 varieties of tropical birds, a plantation with guided tours and an extensive beach area.

Several spice and cocoa plantations welcome visitors. Gouyave, a small fishing village on the island's west coast, is a center of the nutmeg industry; its Dougaldston Estate and spice processing station are open to the public. Every Friday at 6 p.m., the village hosts a fish festival with a smorgasbord of freshly caught shrimp, lobster and other seafood cooked on open fires. Grenville's spice factory also is open for tours. Saturday in Grenville and St.

George's is market day. Pastries, breads, fruits, spices, vegetables and handmade baskets, bags and hats are among the items for sale. At West India Spice in Nianganfoix, Birchgrove in St. Andrew, a guided factory tour takes visitors through the history of Grenada's nutmeg and spice cultivation; phone (473) 404-1753.

Some hotels have tennis courts, and two tennis clubs are near St. George's. The Grenada Golf & Country Club has a nine-hole course; phone (473) 439-9335. Cricket and soccer are the most popular spectator sports.

Because most visitors come to Grenada to soak up the sun, sail, snorkel or roam, the evenings tend to be much quieter than on some of the larger Caribbean islands. The hotels provide nightly entertainment in season, including dancing to popular music or calypso rhythms. When the sun finally sets, however, the majority of people are content to sit back, sip a rum punch and listen to a steel band.

## Sightseeing

Popular tours on Grenada include a 2.5-hour ridge tour past the 18th-century forts on Morne Jaloux Ridge above St. George's; the fishing village of Woburn, where parts of the movie "Island in the Sun" were filmed; a small rum factory at Woodlands; and the beaches at Lance Aux Epines. A city tour of St. George's, which includes the Market Square, the Grenada National Museum, churches and surrounding 18th-century forts, also lasts about 2.5 hours.

A 3-hour mountain tour explores the island's tropical interior and passes spice, cocoa and banana plantations en route to Grand Etang National Park and Annandale Falls. A full-day tour departs St. George's and leads to Dougaldston Estate and the Nutmeg Processing Station at Gouyave before continuing by way of Victoria, Sauteurs, Levera Beach, Tivoli, Grenville and Grand Etang.

Full-day tours usually last 7 hours (including lunch) and visit most of the island's points of interest as well as some beaches. A special photographer's tour, conducted for a minimum of eight people, leads participants past 40 miles (64 km) of landscapes, ruins, villages, wildlife and native vegetation. If you wish to brave Grenada's narrow roads and hairpin turns yourself, road maps are available at the Grenada Board of Tourism on the Carenage in St. George's. Most hotels provide information about guided tours.

Local hotels also can arrange all-day yacht cruises along the island's western and southern coasts. If your time on the island is short, you may want to take a cruise of St. George's harbor and the surrounding area aboard the *Rhum Runner*. Moonlight cruises also are available. Phone (473) 440-4386.

Another popular excursion is a visit to the island of Carriacou (carry-a-KOO), 23 miles (37 km) northeast of Grenada. Noted for some of the best beaches in the Caribbean, the island also is famous for its small boatyards where villagers build wooden schooners using hand

tools and centuries-old techniques. Good times to visit are in late April for the Carriacou Maroon & String Band Music Festival, late July to early August when the Carriacou Regatta Festival takes place, in August during Carnival and in December for the Parang Festival on the weekend before Christmas.

## **Transportation**

Flights to Maurice Bishop International Airport are offered by Caribbean Airlines and Delta nonstop from New York, with connections from other cities. American Airlines flies from Miami to Grenada three times weekly. There also are air connections to Grenada via Barbados and Trinidad. Many cruise lines also call at Grenada's deepwater port.

Taxis provide transportation between the airport and island hotels. Rental cars equipped for the island's left-hand driving are available in St. George's; a 2-day minimum rental is required. Driving conditions can be treacherous on some shoulderless, one-lane roads. Minibuses provide alternative means of transportation. Buses regularly depart from the St. George's bus terminal on the Esplanade for all parts of the island. Inexpensive water taxis transport passengers across the harbor and to the Grand Anse and Morne Rouge beaches.

Daily 15-minute flights and interisland ferries travel to the island of Carriacou. Local boat service also reaches Grenada's satellite island of Petite Martinique. Several flights depart daily to and from Maurice Bishop International Airport. Boats depart daily from the Carenage.

## **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 113,165.** 

AREA: 344 sq km (133 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** St. George's.

HIGHEST POINT: 840 m (2,756 ft.), Mount Saint

Catherine.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English and a French patois.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent. Member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. = 2.7 E.C. dollars.

**ELECTRICITY:** 220 or 240 volts, 50 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. Local license (\$13 U.S.) required; drive on left.

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are

required for front-seat passengers.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Independence Day, Feb. 7; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May 1; Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Feast of Corpus Christi, May or June (9th Thurs. after Easter); Emancipation Day, Aug. (1st Mon.); Carnival, Aug. (2nd Mon. and Tues.); Thanksgiving, Oct. 25; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 15 percent VAT (value-added tax) is added to most goods and services, including restaurant bills. Basic food items are not taxed. The VAT for accommodations and dive operations is 10 percent. Departure tax (included in ticket prices) \$22 U.S.; \$12 for ages 5-12.

IMMIGRATION: Passport and a return or onward ticket

are required. No visa is needed for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Grenada from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 473 + the 7-digit local number.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Grenada Board of Tourism, St. George's Burns Point St. George's, Grenada (473) 440-2279

## St. Andrew Parish

The largest of Grenada's six parishes, St. Andrew has the longest coastline and is the island's agricultural center. Mangos, pumpkins, yams, lemons and coconuts are just a few of the crops that supplement the region's nutmeg production.

## **GRAND ETANG NATIONAL PARK**

Grand Etang National Park is 9.3 mi. (15 km) n.e. of St. George's in St. Andrew Parish, following signs to Snug Corner and St. Margaret. The park preserves 3,816 acres (1,544 hectares) of rain forest in the central mountain range, 1,740 feet (530 m) above sea level. Grand Etang Lake fills the crater of an extinct volcano.

Marked trails include a 15-minute introduction to the rain forest, a 1-hour hike around the lake and a 3-hour climb to the top of Mt. Qua Qua. Trail maps are usually available at the Grand Etang Forest Center, which offers exhibits and video presentations about the park's diverse flora and fauna.

Trails are often muddy; waterproof hiking boots are recommended. Allow 1 hour minimum. Daily 8-4. Admission \$2.

## **GRENVILLE**

Grenada's second largest town is home to one of the island's largest nutmeg factories. The Grenville Nutmeg Processing Station offers guided tours and demonstrations; phone (473) 442-7241. Saturday morning is market day, when local farmers, anglers and merchants bring their wares to town. Culture, music and exotic foods are all part of the Rainbow City Festival on the first weekend in August.

## St. George Parish

Home to Grenada's capital city, St. George Parish encompasses the southwest corner of the island. A number of historic forts crown the hilltops above St. George's Harbour; the best restored of these is the Fort George, built by the French in 1705.

## L'ANSE AUX EPINES



Hotel. Address: L'Anse aux Epines.





INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Cottage. Address: L'Anse aux Epines.

## WHERE TO EAT



THREE DIAMOND

New Caribbean Fine Dining. Address: L'Anse aux Epines.

## ST. GEORGE'S

The streets of St. George's wind in a medieval tangle up several steep hillsides. One hill is so steep that it divides St. George's, but a tunnel through the hill connects the

two sections. These terraced ways, the red- and whitegabled houses and the lively Saturday morning market lend an Old World charm to the town, considered by many travelers to be among the most picturesque in the Caribbean.



INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Extended Stay Cottage. Address: Morne Rouge.

COYABA BEACH RESORT **BOOK NOW** 473/444-4612

**APPROVED** INSPECTED @ CLEAN

> THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

FOUR DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

FOUR DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Hotel. Address: Grand Anse.

MOUNT CINNAMON RESORT & SPA **BOOK NOW** 473/439-9900

Vacation Rental Condominium. Address: Morne Rouge.

SANDALS GRENADA RESORT & SPA **BOOK NOW** 473/437-8000

Resort Hotel. Address: Pink Gin Beach.

SILVERSANDS BEACH HOUSE BOOK NOW 473/438-8888

Resort Hotel, Address: Dr Grooms Rd.



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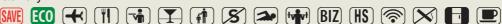


















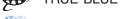












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# Guadeloupe

nown as "the Emerald Isle," Guadeloupe (gwa-da-LOOP) lies midway between Puerto Rico and Venezuela. The "island" is really two smaller land masses joined by two bridges over a narrow channel called Rivière-Salée. Grande-Terre to the east typifies the French Antilles with rolling hills and sugarcane fields; Basse-Terre to the west is a rugged, mountainous island dominated by the volcano of La Soufrière. Its hills and ravines are lush with hardwood forests, ferns, bamboo, bananas, hibiscus, bougainvillea and guava. One road

follows the coast while another crosses the highlands. providing a spectacular drive.

Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe's commercial center on Grande-Terre, and Basse-Terre, the capital, contrast busy port life with a French provincial atmosphere. This Gallic ambiance also is evident in Guadeloupe's island dependencies. The closest of these are Marie-Galante: La Désirade; and Les Saintes, where Norman-French speech and customs prevail.

## History

Called "the island of beautiful waters" by the Carib Indians, Guadeloupe was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493, on his second voyage. He named the island for the Spanish monastery of Santa Maria de Guadalupe de Estremadura, but Spain established no colonies due to fierce opposition from the Caribs. Guadeloupe and her sister island Martinique were settled by French colonists in 1635 and soon became important centers of sugar

Both islands were incorporated as departments of France in 1946 and elevated to regions in 1974, with each island holding representation in the French Parliament by two senators, four deputies and two members of the Economic Council. The local government consists of elected General and Regional Councils as well as a prefect, who represents the French government. The island's inhabitants are French citizens.

## Shopping

The French islands are excellent shopping centers, where perfumes and other luxury made-in-France products are sold at or below Paris, New York or St. Thomas prices. L'Atelier du Savon in Terre-de-Haut and Passion Beauté on the Rue Frébault are among the most popular places to shop for perfumes. Rues de Nozières and Schoelcher also have shops carrying French imports as well as madras cottons, watches, silver and china. Another popular spot is Pascal Foy Gallery in Terre-de-Haut, where visitors can peruse a selection of paintings of traditional Creole architecture. Local markets in Pointe-à-Pitre and Basse-Terre are worth visiting.

Most shops are open Mon.-Fri. 8-noon and 2-6, Sat. 9-1, and are closed holidays. Banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-noon and 2-4; summer hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-3. Stores can give up to 20-percent discounts on some luxury goods purchased with travelers checks or certain credit cards.

## Food and Drink

Guadeloupe shares its cuisine with France. Delicacies like escargots are on the menus of many restaurants and can be savored with excellent French wines. Traditional Creole dishes available in most restaurants lend added zest to dining. Colombo, a spicy Indian dish of currylike seeds cooked with either beef, pork, chicken, mutton, conch or goat, is eaten with rice; stuffed crab and crayfish are prepared in a variety of ways; callaloo soup is made from greens, West Indian herbs and bacon; court bouillon combines a thick fish stew with rice; gumbos are eaten with rice and fried codfish; and yams are cooked in their skins and seasoned with butter and cheese. Gourmet menus list roasted goat, duckling and a salad of coconut and hearts of palm.

Meals taste best preceded by Punch Guadeloupéen, or "Ti Punch," a delicious and quite potent rum potion. Rum is bottled locally, as is mineral water. Local milk and water are safe. Around the dock at Terre-de-Haut, one of the Saintes islands, barefoot children sell a delicious coconut pastry called tourment d'amour, or "torment of love."

Guadeloupe boasts more than 200 restaurants, often modest in appearance but superior in cuisine. Served after noon, lunch is a big meal in Guadeloupe, as evidenced by multicourse Creole lunches. Most hotels and restaurants include a 10- to 15-percent service charge in their prices.

## **Sports and Amusements**

Beaches of white, ochre and black volcanic sand offer almost unlimited opportunities for swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, water skiing, windsurfing and other aquatic sports. Grande-Terre's southern coast boasts several good public beaches, including those at Ste. Anne, St. François and Gosier as well as tiny coves of white powdery sands only a hike away from the main beach road. Favorable trade winds called *les alizés* create conditions ideal for sailing, water skiing and windsurfing between Grande-Terre and the islet of Gosier, just offshore from Gosier.

Beginning scuba divers can enroll in several diving schools based at local hotels. Several water sports concessions are congregated on the beach at Gosier. Yacht chartering has become increasingly popular in recent years. Arrangements can be made at Port de Plaisance Marina in Bas du Fort; Marina Rivières Sens in Gourbeyre: Station Nautique in Saint François; or through any of the island's hotels.

Sailing, cruising and jet skiing can be enjoyed at St. François, Ste. Anne, Le Gosier and Pointe-à-Pitre. Most resorts will arrange for boats for deep-sea fishing.

Riding, hiking, mountain climbing, tennis and golf are some of the most popular recreational pursuits on land. The adventuresome, wise to arm themselves with bug spray, might wish to hike around the many waterfalls of Parc National de la Guadeloupe on Basse-Terre; the Guadeloupe Islands Tourism Board at 5 Square de la Banque in Pointe-à-Pitre publishes *Walks and* Hikes. St. François boasts a championship golf course, and several of the larger hotels throughout the island have their own tennis courts, lighted for night playing. Cockfighting is in season from November through April, and horse racing takes place periodically at Baie-Mahault, Bellecourt and the St. Jacques Hippodrome at Anse Bertrand.

Guadeloupe has two seasonal festivals that captivate islanders and visitors alike. The first is the pre-Lenten Carnival in February or March, which includes masked revelers and costumed dancers winding through the streets, parades with elaborate floats and street parties. The second, on the Saturday closest to August 10, is called the Fête des Cuisinières, or the Women Cooks' Festival. The celebration begins with a religious service in the cathedral in Pointe-à-Pitre. Then there is a procession of women in Creole dress carrying exotic island specialties through the capital, followed by a 5-hour feast with much singing and dancing.

## Sightseeing

Guadeloupe's major road system encompasses about 1,200 miles (1,930 km). A day tour of Grande-Terre might include a drive from Pointe-à-Pitre to Port-Louis and Anse Bertrand. After the spectacular cliffs at Pointe de la Vigie, the return trip leads through Le Moule, Pointe des Châteaux, Ste. Anne and Gosier. Another all-day excursion can be made by crossing the channel to Basse-Terre, following Route de la Traversèe as it winds through the 73,240-acre (29,640-hectare) Parc National, then turning south along the coast to Basse-Terre and on to the archeological park at Trois-Rivières, and returning to Pointeà-Pitre via the coast road.

Other excursions include a drive from Pointe-à-Pitre to the village of St. François, then east to Pointe des Châteaux, returning via Ste. Anne or Le Moule; and a drive along the Route de la Traversèe through the national park to the white and golden beaches near Deshaies, returning through Ste. Rose. A detailed brochure on these drives is available from the tourist office in Pointe-à-Pitre.

Excursions to Guadeloupe's offshore islands of Les Saintes, Marie-Galante and La Désirade offer an alternative approach to sightseeing. Boat excursions leave Trois-Rivières for Terre-de-Haut, one of the eight Saintes islands, affording visits to fine beaches and a small village with quaint bistros. Ferries also travel round-trip from Pointe-à-Pitre.

Ninety-minute minibus tours of Terre-de-Haut (narrated in French) include a visit to the island bastion Le Fort Napoléon. The island of Marie-Galante, dotted with sugar factories and century-old windmills, can be reached by ferry in 35 minutes. Another scenic excursion cruises along the Rivière-Salée from La Darse (the harbor) in Pointe-à-Pitre to one of the small islands just north.

## **Transportation**

Pointe-à-Pitre International Airport, just north of Pointe-à-Pitre, services flights from Miami, San Juan and other U.S. cities and Caribbean islands. Air Caraïbes makes frequent flights to Guadeloupe's island dependencies and to the other islands of the French West Indies. Charter flights can be arranged at the small airports at St. François on Grande-Terre and Baillif on Basse-Terre. Pointe-à-Pitre is a port of call for many cruise ships.

Taxi fare from the airport to Pointe-à-Pitre is approximately \$22; from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m., all day Sunday and on holidays the fare increases by 40 percent. Crowded buses used largely by islanders also are available. Car rental plans should be made in advance; a valid U.S. driver's license is required. Rates are approximately \$55 a day plus a kilometer charge; gas is not included.

Daily ferry transportation to the island of Marie-Galante is offered by L'Express des lles and to the island of Les Saintes by CTM Deher and Val Ferry. Ferry services from Saint François to la Désirade is offered by BABOU One and Comatrile. Comatrile also serves Marie-Galante and Les Saintes. High-speed passenger ferries connect Guadeloupe with Dominica, Martinique and St. Lucia.

## **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** 400.000.

**AREA:** 1,373 sq km (530 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Basse-Terre.

HIGHEST POINT: 1,484 m (4,869 ft.), La Soufrière.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

**TIME ZONE(S):** Atlantic Standard. **LANGUAGE:** French and Creole.

**GOVERNMENT:** Overseas Department of France. **CURRENCY:** Euro Dollar. \$1 U.S. = approx. .88 Euro.

**ELECTRICITY:** 220 volts, 50 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. U.S. license valid; drive on right.

MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for all passengers. Children under 12 must ride in the back seat.

**HOLIDAYS:** Jan. 1; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May 1; Victory Day, May 8; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Abolition Day, May 27; Bastille Day, July 14; Feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15; All Saints' Day, Nov. 1; Remembrance Day, Nov. 11; Christmas, Dec. 25.

**TAXES:** A 10-15 percent service charge is added to most hotel and restaurant bills. Departure tax \$20 U.S. (included in air fare).

**IMMIGRATION:** A valid passport and return or onward ticket are required for U.S. citizens entering the French West Indies. No visa needed for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Guadeloupe from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 590 + 590 + the 6-digit local number.



## **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

French Government Tourist Office 825 3rd Ave., 29th Floor New York, NY 10022 (212) 838-7800

## **Basse-Terre Island**

The mountainous island of Basse-Terre (boss-TARE) is dominated by 4,869-foot (1,484 m) La Soufrière. The village of St. Claude, noted for its coffee and banana plantations and stately homes, is the starting point for many trips up the volcano. After driving through the East Indian village of Matouba, where such ancient rites as animal sacrifice are still practiced, another road runs through the Bains Jaunes Rain Forest to within a 20-minute climb of the summit.

Southeast of the capital city of Basse-Terre are the engraved rocks at Trois-Rivières, a string of fishing hamlets and Ste. Marie, where Christopher Columbus landed in 1493. Inland from Trois-Rivières are the well-known thermal baths at Ravine Chaude.

### PETIT-BOURG

VALOMBREUSE GARDEN (JARDIN DE VALOM-BREUSE) is on Chemin de Vallombreuse. A 9-acre (3.6hectare) tropical garden contains more than 450 varieties of plants and flowers. Also within the 20-acre (8-hectare) park is a bird sanctuary featuring some 300 species, an equestrian center and an outdoor children's water playground. Time: Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (590) 95-50-50. TI

## STE. ROSE

MUSÉE DU RHUM is at Belle Vue. The Rum Museum chronicles three centuries of sugar cane history, leading to the distilling of rum. Exhibits include early production

Guadeloupe Tourist Office 5 Square de la Banque Pointe-à-Pitre. Grande-Terre Island Guadeloupe (590) 82-09-30

equipment, models of trade ships and information about Caribbean customs and daily life. An extensive butterfly and arthropod collection also is displayed. Tastings are offered at the end of the tour. **Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (590) 28-70-04 or (590) 28-79-92. **GT** 

## **Grande-Terre Island**

Unlike its mountainous sister, Grande-Terre (gron-tare) is characterized by rolling hills, sandy beaches and sugarcane fields. The limestone islet of Gosier, off the coast of the town of the same name, has a white coral beach. Farther east, swimming is delightful at Ste. Anne, Le Moule, Port-Louis and St. François, a fishing village noted for its square and buildings. The coastline is particularly scenic between Le Moule beach and Pointe des Châteaux. A small airport in Saint-Francoise hotels offers charter flights to local islands.

## LE MOULE

The former capital of Guadeloupe, Le Moule has a beach that was once the battleground for Carib warriors and French and English soldiers. In the 19th century, nearly all of the sugar and rum produced on Grande-Terre was shipped from Le Moule's harbor.

EDGAR CLERC ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM is 1.2 mi. (2 km) n. at 440 Route de la Rosette in Parc de la Rosette. Two rooms house the permanent collection of archeological artifacts of the Carib and Arawak Indians. The building is surrounded by a tropical garden that overlooks the ocean. **Phone:** (590) 23-57-57 or (590) 23-57-43.



For highways, byways and more: AAA.com/maps



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# **Jamaica**

multiracial population and varied scenery are primary components of Jamaica's charm. Most Jamaicans are descendants of African slaves brought to the island between the 17th and 19th centuries, but Chinese, East Indians, Lebanese, Europeans and North Americans as well as nationals from neighboring republics, also have made the island their home. This multiplicity, most evident in the port city of Kingston, reflects a special unity in the country's motto, "Out of many, one people."

Third largest of the Greater Antilles, Jamaica is 550 miles (885 km) south of Florida. About 146 miles (235 km) long and 51 miles (82 km) wide, the landscape is primarily one of contrasts, ranging from misty forest-clad mountains to bare scrubland and fields. The island's diverse terrain also is reflected in its beaches, which vary from fine coral sand in sheltered bays and inlets to black sand along the rugged coastline, where the mountains plunge straight into the sea. Montego Bay, Negril, Ocho Rios and Port Antonio are some of the most popular resort centers. Small

towns and mountain villages might lack the comforts of the developed port cities but are rich in island lore and natural beauty. With peach trees and wild strawberries, the summit of 7,402-foot Blue Mountain Peak provides a 90-mile (145-km) panorama on clear days.

## **History**

The Indians in Cuba had told Christopher Columbus of *Xaymaca*, the "land of wood and water." He attempted to land at St. Ann's Bay in May 1494, but was met by hostile Taínos and had to remain offshore. After overcoming lighter resistance, he came ashore at Discovery Bay the next day, then landed at Montego Bay before moving on. Columbus made an inauspicious return in 1503; the last two ships of his fourth voyage were forced to run aground at St. Ann's Bay, and he and his crew were marooned there for more than a year. It wasn't until a small charter could be sent from Hispaniola that Columbus was able to return home, where he died 2 years later.

Diego Columbus, son of the explorer, returned to St. Ann's Bay in 1509 and founded Sevilla Nueva. The marshy site was soon abandoned, however, in favor of Santiago de la Vega (St. James of the Plain) at present-day Spanish Town. Having depleted the Taíno population through overwork and disease, the Spaniards turned to Africa for slaves and in 1517 imported the first of Jamaica's current majority race. The island was never fully developed as a Spanish colony, however, and in 1655 a British expedition took over Spanish Town. The island was officially ceded to England in 1670 by the Treaty of Madrid.

Also during this time, West Indian buccaneers had made Port Royal their headquarters, giving the city a reputation as a bawdy mecca for the adventurous and the wicked. These were the days when Sir Henry Morgan rose to a commanding position among the privateers who dominated the Caribbean. His widespread successful adventures, however, overlapped the signing of peace with Spain, and he was recalled to England under arrest in 1672. When the Spanish again became a threat, he was knighted by Charles II and returned to Jamaica in 1674 as the deputy governor and the island's only honored pirate.

Kingston, the present capital, was built after an earthquake destroyed Port Royal on June 7, 1692. The flourishing slave trade and sugar and cotton plantations made Jamaica rich during the 18th century.

The cause of the slaves was supported by a group known as the Maroons, slaves freed by the Spanish to harass the English before the Spanish fled the island in 1660. Taking refuge in the hills of the Cockpit Country and the eastern mountains of Portland, these former slaves were joined by other fugitives. Together they successfully waged a guerrilla war against the English, and in 1738 the Maroons were granted self-rule and given title to their lands free of taxes. Descendants of the Maroons still live

in this area; they are free of taxation and all government laws, except in the case of murder.

Although the slave trade was finally abolished in 1808, the oppression of this group did not improve. An uprising against the treatment of slaves took place in 1831; Baptist preacher Sam Sharpe led an islandwide revolt that forced the governor to declare martial law. So incensed were members of Britain's Parliament at the government's bloody crackdown, during which Sharpe and thousands more were executed, that abolition came shortly thereafter. Today Sam Sharpe is a national hero.

As a result of these frequent rebellions, slavery was abolished in 1834. Jamaica's newly freed population underwent years of economic and social hard times. As plantation life came to a gradual end, most workers took to the hills and practiced subsistence farming, a way of life that was to continue for generations. The 20th century, however, brought about sweeping reforms and a national identity. Marcus Garvey engendered racial pride, Alexander Bustamante organized a labor union and Norman Manley a political party. Increasingly, Jamaicans were making a place in the world.

The first civil governor of Jamaica was appointed in 1661, and the island was governed by a representative council until 1866, when a crown-colony government was established by act of Parliament. The island became independent within the British Commonwealth on August 6, 1962. A prime minister heads the government, which has its executive power vested in a cabinet; a governor general represents the British monarch. Legislative functions are assigned to a bicameral house. Sugar, bananas and coffee continue to fluctuate in prominence but are still the chief export crops. Since the 1960s bauxite and alumina exports and tourism have become the main earners of foreign exchange for the island.

## **Shopping**

Jamaica was rich with the plunder of a continent in the days when Capt. Henry Morgan swaggered down the streets of Port Royal. Today the island is rich with merchandise from the four corners of the Earth. Free-port shops in Kingston, Montego Bay, Negril and Ocho Rios have good buys on Swiss watches, cameras, French perfumes, British woolens and cashmeres, imported liquor, silverware, crystal, jewelry and bone china. Boutiques feature Jamaican resort clothes.

Island handicrafts include woodcarvings, inlaid boxes and trays, Jamaican dolls, straw hats, colorful baskets, pottery, shell articles and yard goods with vivid tropical prints. They are sold in specialty shops at the Kingston Crafts Market, north of the cruise ship pier in Kingston, and the Crafts Market at Harbour and Church streets in Montego Bay. Port Antonio has a straw market downtown, and the Ocho Rios Craft Park, Olde Market and Pineapple Craft Circle are along Main Street in Ocho Rios.

Islanders often set up stalls along the roadside; you should be prepared to barter for good prices. The skill of Jamaican needlewomen has made the island's embroidered Irish linen dresses valued throughout the world. Paintings and sculptures by local artists make lasting souvenirs. A pound or so of Jamaica's excellent Blue Mountain Coffee also is a favorite take-home item.

Several shopping centers cover the southern end of Constant Spring Road leading to the Half Way Tree area, Kingston's main shopping district. A shopping complex is on the grounds of Devon House, a 19th-century great house on Hope Road. There also are several shopping malls in the Kingston area. Mall shopping in Montego Bay is available at the Hip Strip (Gloucester Avenue), Half Moon Shopping Village, Fairview Shopping Centre and the town center. In Ocho Rios there are the Island Plaza, Island Village, Little Pub Shopping Complex, Ocean Village Shopping Centre, Soni's Plaza and the Taj Mahal all on Main Street. Kingston shops are open Mon.-Sat. 9-5. In Ocho Rios retail stores also are open Mon.-Sat. 9-5.

## **Food and Drink**

The Jamaican national dish is ackee and saltfish, a dish made from imported salted cod and the fleshy lobes of the seeds of the ackee tree, cooked with onions, tomatoes and pepper in oil. Another staple is boiled rice and peas (red beans). On more exotic menus, gourmets will find goat cooked with Indian curry and served hot with boiled green bananas and rice, baked crab and pepperpot soup, a thick green "hot-pot" made of callaloo (a spinach-like vegetable), Indian kale, salted pork, vegetables and pepper. West Indian lobster and red snapper dishes are abundant.

Another peppery-hot island specialty is jerk pork. This was a favorite dish of the Maroons, who roasted wild hogs over a wood fire. The special flavoring is achieved through spices from a rich, peppery marinade and the type of wood used—the pimento (allspice) wood. Jerk pork and jerk chicken are available at roadside stands throughout the island.

Jamaica has a mouthwatering assortment of locally grown fruits and vegetables: mangoes, papaya, naseberries, sweetsops, soursops, ortaniques, gooseberries, star apples, melons, rose apples, guinep, avocado pears, ugli fruit, tangerines, limes, pineapples, yams, green bananas, plantains, breadfruit, yampie, cocoa, cho-cho, turnips, pumpkins and beetroot. A delicious ice cream is made from coconut, papaya, pineapple and soursop. Another favorite dessert is matrimony, a refreshing dish of oranges and the pulp of the star apple.

Rum is Jamaica's national drink. Consumed in an endless variety of concoctions, it can be mixed with ginger ale or coconut water, brewed with pimento berries to produce Pimento Dram Liqueur, aged with citrus peel, heated to a toddy or blended with coffee to produce Tia Maria Liqueur. Rumona is another rum liqueur. The island's most popular rum-based beverage is Planters Punch. Popular rum brands are Appleton, Myers's and Wray and Nephew's White Overproof.

Jamaica also brews a pale lager called Red Stripe. Cooling nonalcoholic drinks include ginger beer; sorrel, a Christmas favorite; and fruit punches made with pineapple, banana, orange, melon and tamarind juices and coconut water. Also popular is Ting, a grapefruit-flavored soft drink. Tap water is chlorinated and filtered.

Among eateries offering local cuisine, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios also have their share of Chinese, Italian, French and Continental restaurants. Tips average 15 to 20 percent.

## Sports and Amusements

Swimming heads the list of sports and amusements for visitors to Jamaica. The most noted beaches with miles of white sand and crystal waters are on the north shore; Doctor's Cave Beach and Cornwall Beach at Montego Bay share an excellent strand. Negril Beach is on the western shore. Good beaches on the south shore include Alligator Pond and Bluefields near Savanna-La-Mar, and the black sand beaches in Kingston and Black River. Outside Kingston Harbour are the white sand beaches of Lime Cay and Maiden Cay. Mineral spas reputed to cure certain rheumatic ailments are Milk River in Clarendon, Rockfort Spa in Kingston and the Bath Fountain in St. Thomas.

Countless water sports opportunities await guests not content to merely lie on the beaches. The offshore islands and cays near Kingston, the coves around Ocho Rios, the offshore reefs at Montego Bay and the waters surrounding Port Antonio and Negril are good diving areas. Diving operators offer both guide services and courses for beginners.

Snorkel and scuba equipment, water skis, jet skis and small sailing craft can be rented from the larger resort hotels and at Turtle Beach in Ocho Rios. Arrangements for sailing can be made through the Montego Bay Yacht Club, where colorful regattas are held each winter. The Jamaica Tourist Board maintains a current list of charter companies.

Rafting is popular on the Río Grande, Martha Brae and Great rivers. Less adventuresome visitors can discover the mysteries of the undersea world in a glass-bottom boat.

Mountain streams offer good fishing for mullet; the sea yields marlin, dolphin, tarpon, barracuda, bonefish, snook, wahoo and small tuna. Boats can be chartered for deepsea fishing for half- or full-day trips at Kingston, Port Antonio, Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, Negril and Whitehouse. A fishing license is not required. Annual fishing tournaments include the Montego Bay and Port Antonio marlin tournaments in early autumn.

You can attend horse racing Wednesday, Saturday and holidays at Caymanas Park, 6 miles (10 km) west of Kingston; pari-mutuel and quinella betting are permitted. Kingston has cricket matches on Saturday afternoons, January through April. Polo matches are held at Caymanas in Kingston, at Chukka Cove near Ocho Rios and at Drax Hall, also near Ocho Rios. Horseback riding is offered at Chukka Cove and at resort centers.

The island has several golf courses as well as tennis and squash courts that are open to hotel and villa guests. Among the major golf tournaments held is the Jamaica Invitational Pro-Am in November.

Most hotels in Jamaica offer after-dinner entertainment, with many doubling as nightclubs and restaurants. Nightclubs and cabarets are available to suit almost every taste. Many clubs echo with the distinctive rhythms of calypso and reggae bands. Floor shows are presented regularly in many of the larger clubs.

Jamaica's reggae sound, made world famous by Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and associates, is a prominent fixture in the lives of Jamaicans. Shows featuring the nation's top performers take place regularly throughout the island. The most popular is Reggae Sumfest, held in late July in Montego Bay.

Winter visitors to Kingston can enjoy a series of local plays, as well as the "Pantomime"—colorful social commentary—at The Little Theatre. The National Dance Theatre Company also performs in Kingston. Films are shown in Kingston, Montego Bay and Mandeville. For more information contact the Jamaica Tourist Board, which publishes a calendar of events.

## Sightseeing

With more than 3,000 miles (5,000 km) of primary roads and 2,800 miles (4,500 km) of secondary roads linking every village and hamlet, Jamaica is popular for motor tours. Possible itineraries are numerous, the only limitation being the time you can spend.

Beginning and ending at Kingston, a driving tour around the island takes about 2 days. A condensed circle tour of the island out of Kingston might follow Rte. A3 to Ocho Rios and St. Ann's Bay on the north coast and return via A1 by way of Spanish Town, and include such sites as Castleton Botanical Gardens, restored plantations, Dunn's River Falls, Fern Gully and the Cathedral of St. James.

South and west of Claremont via unimproved roads is the village of Rhoden Hall in Nine Miles, St. Ann. Musician Bob Marley was born in Rhoden Hall in 1945 and interred there in 1981. The mausoleum grounds are open to the public; admission is charged.

Rte. A2 heading east from Negril skirts the pristine South Coast and passes through quaint seaside villages, their shores lined with colorful fishing boats. Near Black

River roadside vendors tempt visitors with such local delicacies as fresh escovitch fish, bammy and shrimp. A coastal road south leads to the peaceful town of Treasure Beach.

Tour buses offering 3-hour tours of Kingston drive past the historic residences of the prime minister and governor general and through the campus of the University of the West Indies. They also include stops at the National Gallery of Jamaica, Royal Botanical Gardens and Hope Zoo and the Kingston Crafts Market.

The 3-hour Ocho Rios Tour takes in such area highlights as Prospect Estate, Dunn's River Falls, Shaw Park Gardens and Fern Gully. A 3-hour trip from Ocho Rios to Port Maria and Brimmer Hall Plantation also is available. Departing from Montego Bay, the 3- to 4-hour Great Houses Tour includes a complimentary drink at either Rose Hall or Greenwood; reservations can be made through your hotel. Bus tours that include stops at YS Falls, the Black River and Appleton Estate provide lunch, drinks and hotel pickup; inquire at your hotel for information and reservations.

Scheduled morning and sunset cruises are available for tours of Montego Bay; snorkeling cruises also are available. Arrangements can be made through the tour desks at most hotels.

## **Transportation**

Jamaica is easily accessible by air from several North American cities to Kingston's Norman Manley International Airport and Montego Bay's Sangster International Airport. Air service linking Kingston, Port Antonio, Ocho Rios, Negril and Montego Bay is available by charter. Falmouth, Ocho Rios and Montego Bay are ports of call for many cruise ships; a few smaller ships also call on Port Antonio.

There are nearly 11,000 miles (17,700 km) of roadway in Jamaica. Since long-distance cab and limousine rides can be expensive, it is recommended that you secure an accommodations package that includes transportation between your hotel and the airport.

Several transportation companies operate on the island including the Jamaica Union of Travellers Association (JUTA) and Jamaica Cooperative Automobile & Limousine (JCAL). Licensed transportation providers have a red license plate on their vehicle. Taxis are unmetered; maximum rates are merely suggested by the government, so it is always wise to determine the fare in advance. A typical fare runs around \$25 U.S. for every 10 miles; from midnight to 5 a.m. the fare increases by 25 percent.

Cars can be rented by the day, week or month; a U.S. driver's license is valid for 3 months. Driving in Jamaica is complicated, and, at times, dangerous. Driving on the left side of the road (with the steering wheel on the right side of the vehicle) complicates navigation of narrow, ill-maintained, two-lane roads often found in the interior of

the island. Be prepared to relinguish your right-of-way. Though traffic is relatively light in smaller towns, sidewalks are nearly nonexistent, and thus roadways are shared with animals, pedestrians and those on mopeds and bicycles. Maps are often not helpful, as streets may or may not be marked. When driving across the island, allow 40 miles (64 km) to the hour. In larger cities, expect congestion; busy, unmarked intersections; poor road conditions and streets crowded with pedestrians.

If you're not up for a challenge, it is recommended you rent a car with a driver or hire a tour operator. Half- and full-day excursions are available from all the resort areas. Minibuses, inexpensive but usually very crowded, serve all areas of the island.

## **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** 2,815,048.

**AREA:** 10,991 sq km (4,244 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Kingston.

HIGHEST POINT: 2,256 m (7,402 ft.), Blue Mountain

Peak.

**LOWEST POINT:** Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Eastern Standard. **LANGUAGE:** English and a local patois.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent, Member of the British

Commonwealth of Nations.

CURRENCY: Jamaican dollar. \$1 U.S. = approx. 155 Jamaica dollars. While Jamaican law requires that Jamaican currency be used when paying for all goods and services, this is not enforced. Most hotels, restaurants and attractions accept U.S. dollars, and credit cards may be used. Jamaican currency is available at airport and hotel exchange bureaus and commercial banks. Keep all exchange receipts; you must present them upon departure when you reconvert unspent Jamaican currency.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-220 volts, 50 cycles AC, single and

three phases; voltage varies with location.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on

the rental car agency; an underage surcharge may apply. U.S. license valid; drive on left.

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are required for driver and front-seat passengers.

## **HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

**HOLIDAYS:** Jan. 1; Ash Wednesday; Good Friday; Easter Monday; National Labour Day, May 23; Emancipation Day, Aug. 1; Independence Day, Aug. 6; National Heroes Day, Oct. (3rd Mon.); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 10-15 percent room tax and a 10 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. A 17.5 percent government tax is charged on food, beverages and merchandise. A 20 percent tax is charged on rental cars. Departure tax \$37 over age 11.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport or proof of U.S. citizenship and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 6 months. After 3 months, all U.S. citizens must apply for the additional 3 month stay at the Office of Passport, Immigration and Citizenship in Kingston or Montego Bay. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Jamaica from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 876 + the 7-digit local number.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Jamaica Tourist Board, United States 5201 Blue Lagoon Drive, Suite 670 Miami, FL 33126 (305) 665-0557 (800) 526-2422 Jamaica Tourist Board, Kingston 64 Knutsford Blvd. Kingston, Jamaica



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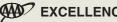
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## **FALMOUTH**

Falmouth is surrounded by sugar estates and cattle land. Once a leading port, the town has excellent examples of 19th-century Georgian architecture along with a faithful restoration of the early 19th-century courthouse destroyed by fire in 1926. Of special interest is the 1796 Falmouth Anglican Church on Rte. A1. Fresh fruit and vegetables are sold along Market Street. Falmouth is home to the historic Falmouth cruise port.

MARTHA BRAE RAFTERS' VILLAGE is 3.5 mi. (5.6 km) s. on Market St., following signs. A relaxing 3-mile trip down the Martha Brae River is offered aboard a 30-foot bamboo raft. Time: Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (876) 952-0889 or (876) 940-7018. GT



**EXCELLENCE OYSTER BAY BOOK NOW** 876/617-0200



Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Oyster Bay Peninsula Coopers Pen. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Sleekly elegant, the lobby of this resort has beautiful marble floors. All the spacious, stylish suites feature sitting areas and furnished patios or balconies with large jetted tubs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 320 houses. 2-4 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, bicycles, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: 























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HOTELS

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Hwy A1, Mountain Spring. **Location:** Oceanfront. **Facility:** Lots of seating enhances the upscale, comfortable lobby of this resort. Rooms are modern with big TVs and a nook area with a couch. They all feature balconies or patios. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 352 units. 2-6 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

























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HOTELS

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Hwy A1, Mountain Spring. **Location:** Oceanfront. **Facility:** This lovely resort features stylish

modern rooms with huge TVs, comfy chairs and furnished balconies or decks. Spacious open bathroom designs can be closed off with a curtain. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 228 units. 7 stories, exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 11 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



























## **HOPEWELL**

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Classic Resort Hotel. Address: John Pringle Dr.

## KINGSTON

Kingston was founded in 1692 when survivors of the Port Royal earthquake resettled around a piggery across the harbor. It became Jamaica's capital in 1872 and is today considered the island's cultural center. An earthquake and fire in 1907 destroyed most of the city, but it was immediately rebuilt. On a broad plain beneath the Blue Mountains, Kingston is built around one of the largest natural harbors in the world.

The new Kingston is even busier than the old; suburbs have grown up around residences of officials and wealthy merchants. The Kingston Craft Market on Port Royal Street is a shopper's mecca, and North of downtown is 50-acre (20-hectare) National Heroes Park, where Jamaican leaders Alexander Bustamante, Norman Manley and Marcus Garvey are buried.

King's House on Hope Road was built in 1907 as the official residence for the governor-general. Surrounding the house are immaculately landscaped grounds, which are open Mon.-Fri. 8-5; phone (876) 927-6424.

Hellshire Beach, 14 miles (23 km) southwest of Kingston on the coast, has 200,000-year-old Two Sisters Cave with rare Taino petroglyphs. Nearby is Fort Clarence Beach, a seaside recreational complex. Both beaches are popular with the locals on weekends.

BLUE AND JOHN CROW MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK has three main recreation areas in eastern Jamaica: Portland Gap, which is on the Blue Mountain Peak Trail; Holywell, on the road to Buff Bay; and Millbank, in the Rio Grande Valley.

This pristine UNESCO World Heritage site, covering more than 100,000 acres (40,500 hectares), offers mountain vistas, waterfalls, streams, lush rain forests and exotic flora and fauna. The park is the natural habitat for the Giant Swallowtail, the largest butterfly in the Americas. Numerous roads approach the park; however some roads can only be accessed by four-wheel-drive vehicles. Footpaths branch off of the main roads, making hiking a popular way to explore the park.

Hiking treks to the top of Blue Mountain offer thrilling views; Cuba is visible on a clear day. At 7,402 feet (2,256



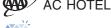
Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

m), this is the highest peak on the island. Hiking trails and a visitors center are located at Holywell Park. Cabins are available for rent. Phone: (876) 960-2848. GT

**DEVON HOUSE HERITAGE SITE** is at 26 Hope Rd. Following the lines of classical Georgian architecture. Devon House is one of the few buildings left from 19th-century Jamaica where the opulence of the time is preserved in the architecture and the finely crafted antiques and decorations within its walls. The current Devon House property formed part of 600 acres owned by the St. Andrew Parish Church in the 17th and 18th centuries.

George Stiebel, Jamaica's first millionaire of African descent, purchased the rectory and lands from the parish church in 1879 and built Devon House on its foundations in 1881 after amassing wealth from investments in gold mines in Venezuela.

The popular Devon House ice cream, which can be found all over the island, is made and served here. Guided 45-minute tours are available. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (876) 929-6602. **GT** 



AC HOTEL BY MARRIOTT KINGSTON, JAMAICA BOOK NOW 876/750-3000



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SAVE Contemporary Hotel. Address: 38 Lady Musgrave Rd.



THE COURTLEIGH HOTEL & SUITES BOOK NOW 876/929-9000



**INSPECTED @ CLEAN** 

Hotel. Address: 85 Knutsford Blvd. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 127 units, some two bedrooms and efficiencies. 2-10 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.



























COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT KINGSTON BOOK NOW 876/618-9900



COURTYARD AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Hotel. Address: 1 Park Close. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 129 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry, boarding pass kiosk.





























## THE JAMAICA PEGASUS HOTEL BOOK NOW 876/926-3691



Hotel. Address: 81 Knutsford Blvd. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 315 units, some two bedrooms. 17 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: tennis, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.





























 $^{7}$  rok hotel kingston, tapestry collection by Hilton

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COLLECTION

TAPESTRY AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

BY HILTON Contemporary Hotel. Address: 2-4 King St. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 168 units. 3-8 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: cabanas, exercise room. Guest Services: valet laundry.

























SPANISH COURT HOTEL BOOK NOW 876/926-0000



Boutique Hotel. Address: 1 St Lucia Ave.



## TERRA NOVA ALL SUITE HOTEL BOOK NOW 876/926-2211



Historic Boutique Hotel. Address: 17 Waterloo Rd. Facility: As soon as you step into the opulent foyer of this restored great house you know you are in for something special. Rooms run from spacious contemporary iunior suites to lavish heritage suites. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 41 units. 2 stories (no elevator), interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, exercise room. Guest Services: valet laundry.



## LUCEA



GRAND PALLADIUM JAMAICA RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 876/619-0000



Resort Hotel. Address: Point Lucea. Facility: A huge open lobby teases with glimpses of the Caribbean Sea. Rooms are found in buildings scattered around the expansive grounds. The design is stylish with comfy sitting areas and large smart TVs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 537 units. 3 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 8 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing. scuba diving, snorkeling, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club. playground, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, 



GRAND PALLADIUM LADY HAMILTON RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 876/619-0000



Resort Hotel. Address: Point Lucea. Facility: A huge open lobby teases with glimpses of the Caribbean Sea. Rooms are found in buildings scattered around the expansive grounds. The design is stylish with a comfy sitting area and patio or balcony. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 517 units. 3 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 8 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry. 

## MONTEGO BAY

On the northwest coast 119 miles (191 km) from Kingston, Montego Bay is an exciting, cosmopolitan resort with beautiful beaches and excellent accommodations. The shoreline is dotted with sparkling coves and luxury hotels offering the gamut of water sports. The main resort area is east of the airport in Rose Hall (see place listing p. 173), where such great houses as Greenwood and Rose Hall are open to the public. The ruins of the old British Fort Montego bears further witness to a rich history.

MoBay, as the city is known locally, was one of Jamaica's original settlements. Christopher Columbus called it El Golfo de Buen Tiempo, or "Fair Weather Gulf," back in 1494, but his successors were apparently not as impressed; the current name comes from the Spanish manteca, or lard, an early major export. Montego Bay later prospered as a sugar and banana port. Tourism was born in the late 19th century when Dr. Alexander McCatty began attracting wealthy North Americans to the "curative" waters off Doctor's Cave Beach.

At the center of town is busy Sam Sharpe Square, where the slave rebellion leader and hundreds more were hanged in 1832. The colonial government's harsh response to the uprising led England to abolish slavery 2 years later. A monument to Sharpe stands on the site. Northeast on Union Street is the Slave Ring, where slaves were bought, sold and traded.

The strand of MoBay's famous beaches begins just north of town at Aqua Sol Theme Park. Farther north are Doctor's Cave (see attraction listing), Cornwall and Chatham beaches. All but Chatham Beach have changing facilities, food and a slight admission charge. More resorts and beaches extend eastward from the airport to Rose Hall. South of town on a man-made peninsula is Freeport, home to the Montego Bay Yacht Club. The municipal bus company serves the airport and the hotel strip.

The wild and forbidding Cockpit Country southeast of Montego Bay once harbored the Maroons, slaves who established their own villages after being freed by the Spanish. They were fierce warriors whose relentless guerrilla tactics were successful in frightening the British colonists into riding back-to-back on a single horse whenever

they traveled through Maroon territory. Today their descendants welcome travelers to the historic "Land of Look Behind," though some may still warn, "Me no send you, you no come."

About 6 miles (8 km) southwest of Montego Bay on Rte. B8 near Anchovy is the Rocklands Bird Sanctuary, where a wide variety of birds can be observed. Bird feedings take place daily; admission is charged. For additional information phone (876) 952-2009. Rafting on the Great River west of the city is offered daily 9-5, with a twoperson maximum per raft; consult any tour operator or ask your hotel for information.

DOCTOR'S CAVE BEACH is off Gloucester Ave. in the hotel area. One of the best beaches in the West Indies was once the property of Jamaican tourism pioneer Dr. Alexander McCatty. The beach now has changing rooms and water sports rentals and is Blue-Flag certified for environmental standards. Phone: (876) 952-2566.



## BREATHLESS RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 876/953-6600



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. **Address:** Sunset Dr. **Facility:** At this hip adults-only hotel, you'll find modish, sleek rooms with huge TVs, high top tables with two comfy bar stools and spacious furnished balconies. The main pool is where all the action happens. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 150 units. 6 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 12 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, lawn sports, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



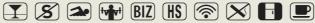


























SANDALS MONTEGO BAY BOOK NOW 876/952-5510



Resort Hotel. Address: 100 Kent Ave.



SANDALS ROYAL CARIBBEAN RESORT & PRIVATE ISLAND

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876/953-2231

Resort Hotel. Address: Mahoe Bav.

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SECRETS ST. JAMES MONTEGO BAY BOOK NOW 876/953-6601





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Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Lot A59 Freeport. Location: Oceanfront. Near Freeport cruise ship docks. Facility: This

adult-oriented resort features well-appointed suites-each with a small living area and large soaker tub-along with gourmet dining options and evening entertainment. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 350 units. 4-5 stories, exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet





# SECRETS WILD ORCHID MONTEGO BOOK NOW 876/953-6600





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Sunset Dr., Montego Freeport. Location: Oceanfront. Near Freeport cruise ship docks. Facility: This

adult-oriented resort features well-appointed suites-each with a small living area and large soaker tub-along with gourmet dining options and evening entertainment. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 350 units. 4-5 stories, exterior corridors. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.





























S HOTEL JAMAICA BOOK NOW 876/979-0000



Boutique Contemporary Hotel. Address: 7 Jimmy Cliff Blvd.

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## ZOËTRY MONTEGO BAY

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AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Boutique Hotel. Address: Mahoney Bay. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Rooms at this hotel are lovely. Highlights include bathrooms with large showers and rainfall fixtures. A variety of more luxurious

suites are on offer including some with butler service. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 49 units. 3 stories (no elevator), interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

























## **NEGRIL**

On Jamaica's western tip, Negril (neh-GRILL) is a 90minute drive down the coast from Montego Bay. Two bays sheltered by coral reefs lie along a 7-mile (11 km) stretch of unbroken shoreline, creating excellent conditions for swimming, snorkeling, scuba diving, sailing, windsurfing, parasailing, water skiing and horseback riding. The longer and more popular beach is at Long Bay. To the north is the more private Bloody Bay-its name dates back to the whaling era. Swimsuits are optional at Bloody Bay.

Pirates knew Negril well during their time. The coastal setting was a favored hideaway of Jamaica's notorious "Calico Jack" Rackham. He was finally apprehended in 1720 while lounging at Bloody Bay with two female mates.

Negril remained largely undiscovered, however, until the late 1960s when it became a haven for young escapists seeking freedom from the modern world. It remains an uncluttered destination; in order to preserve the beauty of the area, an ordinance prohibits the building of any structure taller than the average palm tree.

Given its location at the island's westernmost point, Negril is famous for its spectacular sunsets. Popular vantage points are the numerous cafés at the rock cliffs along West End (also called Lighthouse) Road; Rick's Cafe is one of the most popular. At some cafés locals and visitors can be seen diving off the tall cliffs into the calm sea below. At the end of West End Road is the 100-foot Negril Point Lighthouse.



AZUL BEACH RESORT NEGRIL BOOK NOW 876/620-0100



Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Norman Manley Blvd.

BEACHES NEGRIL RESORT & SPA

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876/957-9270

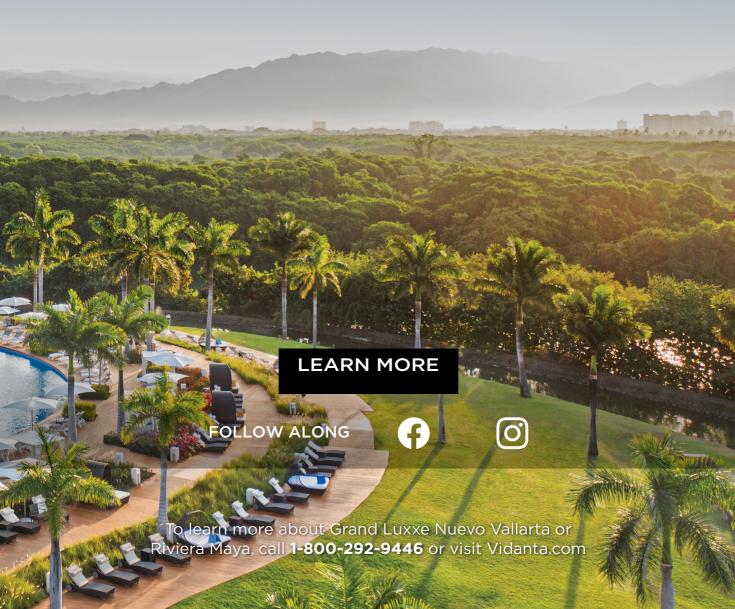
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SANDY HAVEN RESORT BOOK NOW 876/957-3200 THREE DIAMOND

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Boutique Hotel. Address: Norman Manley Blvd.

## **OCHO RIOS**

Ocho Rios, or Ochi as the locals call it, is on the north shore about 54 miles (87 km) from Kingston. A ballooning tourist industry has reinforced the town's bauxite harvesting, manufacturing and mining industries. The town's antique charm is complemented by its fine hotels, beautiful scenery, good shopping, active nightlife and stable climate. All manner of water sports are available both within the bay and along the coast. Ocho Rios is a popular port of call for private yachts as well as cruise ships.

Some of the island's oldest communities are within a few miles of Ocho Rios. St. Ann's Bay, 7 miles (11 km) west via Rte. A3, is said to be the final resting place of Christopher Columbus' last ships. The ruins of Sevilla Nueva, Jamaica's first settlement, are 9 miles (14 km) west. Laid out by the Spanish in 1509, the site is currently the subject of archeological research and guided tours are available.

Popular local tours include an excursion to Dunn's River Falls, a raft trip on the White River and a visit to Shaw Park Botanical Gardens, which has 34 acres (14 hectares) of tropical flora and a waterfall. The gardens are .75 miles (1.2 km) south on Rte. A3 then 1 mile (1.6 km) west, following signs; admission is charged. Ocho Rios' central location makes day trips to Kingston, Montego Bay and the interior manageable.

DOLPHIN COVE OCHO RIOS is 2 mi. (3.5 km) w. GEN on Belmont Rd. (Rte. A1). Visitors can touch, kiss and swim with these friendly marine mammals at a seaside park. For swimming participants over age 8, two programs offer deep-water encounters in a natural cove: the Royal Swim with two bottlenose dolphins includes play time, a kiss, a foot push, a belly ride and a dorsal pull; and the Swim Adventure offers splashing and dancing with a single dolphin. A program is offered where visitors can rub, hold, and feed sharks as well as snorkel with them.

Children and non-swimmers can enjoy the Encounter, which takes place in knee-deep water. Visitors also can interact with stingrays, snorkel, and take mini-boat and glass-bottom kayak rides. The park also offers a beach, a waterslide, a bird aviary and a jungle trail, where guides encourage interaction with parrots, snakes and iguanas.

**Time:** Allow 2 hours minimum. **Phone:** (876) 974-5335. or (866) 393-5158 in the U.S. TI

DUNN'S RIVER FALLS is 3 mi. (5 km) w. on Rte. A3. The waterfall cascades 600 feet (183 m) through tropical foliage, rushing over layered tiers of smooth rock to the beach. A paved walkway parallels the falls; visitors may also climb to the top with the assistance of guides. Official guides are available only inside the falls' gates.

Aqua shoes or water socks are required; swim wear is recommended. Footholds have been carved in the most difficult places. Personal effects, such as cameras or phones, are not allowed on the climb; guides are not permitted to secure property for guests. Swimming is permitted, and food, lockers and changing rooms are available. Time: Allow 1 hour, 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (876) 974-4767 or (876) 974-5944. **GT** 

**FERN GULLY** is along Rte. A3, 1.5 mi. (2.4 km) s. of Rte. A1. The tree-covered canyon features lush growths of ferns and tropical plants. The gorge descends for about 3 miles (5 km), following the course of a dry riverbed. Visitors should exercise caution, as the road is narrow and normally damp. Heavy rains can cause floods as well as mudslides and rockslides. There are a limited number of areas wide enough for vehicles to pull off the road.

KONOKO FALLS AND PARK is 1.5 mi. (2.4 km) s. on Rte. A3. then w. on Millford Rd. at St. John's Anglican Church to Shaw Park Rd., following signs. Named for the Arawak word meaning "rainforest," the park features a waterfall with natural swimming pools, tropical gardens and ponds. A small museum chronicles the island's history and a mini zoo offers an aviary and animal exhibits with endemic species. Ysassis Lookout Point affords panoramic views of Ocho Rios Bay. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (876) 622-1712 or (876) 408-0575.  $( \dagger \dagger )$ 

YAAMAN ADVENTURE PARK is 2 mi. (5 km) e. on Rte. A3, following signs. A comprehensive jitney tour takes visitors through a 1,180-acre (478-hectare) estate, and narrators provide the history of the estate as well as background of the various fruits grown on the grounds and information about native flora. Highlights of the tour include the Prospect College Chapel with its handmade furnishings, ostrich feedings and the great house and gardens. A bird aviary also can be toured.

Guided camel rides, Segway tours and cooking classes are offered; reservations are required. Phone: (876) 994-1058. **GT TI** 





Resort Cottage. Address: Hermosa St.



JAMAICA INN BOOK NOW

876/974-2514





## MOON PALACE JAMAICA RESORT OCHO RIOS BOOK NOW 876/974-2200



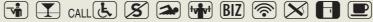
Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Main St. Location: Oceanfront. Adjacent to Ocho Rios Village. Facility: Sprawled along the bay, this resort's public areas have a striking décor with a definite wow factor. Standard rooms are compact but very appealing with marble-topped furniture and vivid island photos. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 731 units, some two bedrooms. 11-15 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Amenities: safes. Dining: 7 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry. (See ad starting on p. 170.)































Contemporary Resort Hotel. Address: Mammee Bay Rd.

# WHERE REGGAE MEETS LUXURY IN THE CARIBBEAN







## Say "Ya Moon" To This Stunning Resort

Moon Palace Jamaica, our tropical paradise in Ocho Rios, is close to world-famous attractions. Here, the warmth and laid-back charm of locals blend perfectly with all-inclusive luxury. Every moment of your island adventure will be wrapped in family luxury, from sunrise to sunset and beyond.

### The Best Of Jamaica

Welcome to the heart of the Caribbean, where the legendary Moon Palace brand joins in beautiful harmony with Jamaica's easy island charm. Gorgeous views, fine dining, warm tropical breezes & extraordinary natural wonders make Moon Palace Jamaica the perfect family or romantic getaway.

## **Unwind In All-Inclusive Luxury**

Book a room and step into your lavish Jamaican sanctuary. Relish the finest all-inclusive amenities, including a daily-refreshed minibar, in-room liquor dispenser, plush beds & more. Open the door and take a look at extraordinary Caribbean vistas.

## **Dining Options For Every Taste**

Moon Palace Jamaica offers unlimited access to worldclass dining: refined Asian fare at Momo; family-style Italian dining at Góndola; fresh seafood at Pier 8; enticing Jamaican dishes at Buccaneers Reef & more. Plus, poolside snacks, coffee, ice cream (now including vegan flavors), chocolates & desserts. You can also find a beachside hut serving authentic Jamaican Jerk.







## Let The Party Begin

Jamaica is synonymous with "party". The resort offers a range of high-end and casual places to grab a drink, including a chic Lobby Bar, the Loud Bar, where you can catch the big game, and intimate Piano Bar, as well as Swim-Up Bars. Plus, seize the night at Noir Night Club or catch one of our live shows.

## You Deserve Some "Me" Time

Come to the island's largest spa, where our experts will ensure you relax, rejuvenate & revitalize in supreme comfort. Come to our world-class Spa and choose from a variety of massages, facials, body wraps & other signature treatments, as well as a blissful hydrotherapy journey.

## **Always Something To Do**

The hardest thing about a Moon Palace Jamaica vacation is not deciding what to do but which activity to do first. Enjoy a day at one of the beautiful pools. You can't miss an opportunity to lounge on a stunning white-sand beach and gaze out at the azure-blue waters of the Caribbean. Test your skills on Flowrider® Double Wave Simulator, paddleboarding, and other non-motorized water sports.

## For Kids & Teens

The Dreamery is a new concept designed to ensure the youngest guests have the best vacation experience. Kids of all ages will have a blast with games, activities & kid-friendly amenities. The littlest guests will love The Playroom, while kids, teens and adults alike will find immersive video and interactive & arcade games at the Wired Game Lounge.

## **Explore Ocho Rios**

Explore the beauty and culture of Jamaica. Ocho Rios is close to many of the island's most famous natural resources. Explore Dunn's River Falls and the famous Fern Gully rainforest. Swim with the dolphins. Take diving lessons or sign up for an undersea exhibition. Go on exciting rides & thrills at Mystic Mountain.

No matter your age or interests, there is something for everyone.

Moon Palace Jamaica...Our luxury family-friendly resort where you can experience the best of the Caribbean.



Resort Hotel. Address: Main St.

FOUR DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

SANDALS ROYAL PLANTATION OCHO RIOS, JAMAICA **BOOK NOW** 876/974-5601

Classic Resort Hotel. Address: Main St.

FOUR DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

## WHERE TO EAT

CHRISTOPHER'S 876/974-3699

THREE DIAMOND

New Jamaican Casual Dining. Address: Hermosa St.

## PORT ANTONIO

About 60 miles (97 km) northeast of Kingston on the windward coast, Port Antonio was one of Jamaica's first tourist destinations. Its beautiful twin harbors at the foothills of the lush Blue Mountains lured North America's elite in the early 20th century. Among the likes of William Randolph Hearst, Bette Davis, Ginger Rogers and J.P. Morgan was the irrepressible Errol Flynn, who made Port Antonio his home.

The two harbors, sheltered by Navy Island and Titchfield Peninsula, were largely responsible for the town's early success as a banana port. Since 1729 imposing Fort George has overlooked the harbors, once busy with lines of steamers waiting for their shipments of bananas. Today the docks no longer hum with the rhythm of banana loaders and the colorful refrain "come mister tallyman. tally me banana," but the charm of this port town has survived.

Of interest to sightseers and photographers are the port's ruins of Folly. Built in 1905 by a wealthy American engineer, this extravagant 60-room mansion lay vacant within 30 years, a victim of poor construction and neglect. Its crumbling walls and pillars are all that remain. The Folly Point Lighthouse stands at the end of the peninsula. Dominating the skyline on Bridge Street is the Romanesque Christ Church, built in 1840. Produce and crafts can be had at Musgrave Market on West Harbour east of the ferry dock.

Among the nearby scenic spots is Somerset Falls, about 10 miles (16 km) west, where the Daniels River plunges through a gorge in a series of cascades and pools; admission is charged. Most of the area's beaches extend east of town. Three of the most popular are San San, Frenchman's Cove and Boston Bay; admission varies. Blue Lagoon is more of attraction than a beach with boat and bamboo raft tours.

RÍO GRANDE RAFTING departs 5.5 mi. (9 km) w. on Rte. A4. Guests climb aboard a bamboo raft for on Rte. A4. Guests climb aboard a bamboo raft for a 2.5- to 3-hour meandering journey down the slowmoving Rio Grande River, a route popular for transporting bananas from Jamaica's interior. The captain gradually guides the vessel downriver toward sea level, pointing out interesting sites along the way—one feature includes Lovers Rock, a narrow passage wide enough to accommodate the raft. Passengers view the lush valley from the river gorge sandwiched between the Blue and John Crow mountains, encountering banana groves and fluttering swallow tail butterflies, and have the option to swim or enjoy a picnic lunch on the river bank.

Note: Maximum capacity is two adults and one small child under 10 years per raft. Return transportation is available. Time: Allow 2 hours, 30 minutes minimum.

Phone: (876) 993-5778.

## **ROSE HALL**

Rose Hall was established in 1750 by George Ash, a wealthy Englishman who named his 6,600-acre (2,670hectare) sugar plantation after his wife. The estate fell into ruin after the 1831 slave rebellion and was restored in the 1960s. Of the 700 great houses built on Jamaica in the 18th century, Rose Hall and neighboring Greenwood are two of the finest to survive.

GREENWOOD GREAT HOUSE is 4 mi. (6 km) e. on Rte. A1, then 2 mi. (3 km) on a steep road to 435 Belgrade Ave. The house was built in 1790 by Richard Barrett, a relative of poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Having amassed considerable wealth from their sugar plantations, the Barretts presided over an estate that extended about 12 miles (19 km) along the coast from Little River to Falmouth. Antiques include period furniture, family portraits, rare musical instruments and Wedgwood china made exclusively for the Barrett family.

Visitors can see the curvature of the Earth from a 70foot-long veranda overlooking the Caribbean Sea. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (876) 631-3456. **GT** 

ROSE HALL GREAT HOUSE is on Rte. A1 following signs. The original owner named the house after his wife, Rose, who survived him to remarry three times. Rose's fourth husband, John Palmer, completed the Georgian mansion in 1780. Fifty years later, a Palmer descendant married Annee Mae Patterson, the plantation's last mistress. Known as the "White Witch of Rose Hall," she is rumored to have killed three husbands and countless lovers, many of them slaves. Legend says that Annee Palmer, murdered during the 1831 uprising, haunts the house.

Time: Allow 45 minutes minimum. Phone: (876) 953-2341. **GT** 



## **HALF MOON BOOK NOW** 876/953-2211



INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Classic Resort Hotel. Address: Hwy A1. Location: Oceanfront. Located in a gated area. Facility: Guests either check in at the iconic Founders lobby or the modern Eclipse Great House lobby. Each are gorgeous in their own right. Upscale standard rooms feature modern or classic designs. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 210 units, some two bedrooms. 1-2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants, also, Sugar Mill Restaurant, see separate listing, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, miniature golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, playground, game room, lawn sports, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.













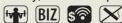


















HILTON ROSE HALL RESORT & SPA

**BOOK NOW** 876/953-2650



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Resort Hotel. Address: Rose Hall, Montego Bay.



## Use the free travel planning tools at AAA.com/maps



HYATT ZILARA ROSE HALL BOOK NOW 876/953-2800



HYATT ZILARA AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 1 Rose Hall Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Check-in for this adults-only resort is in the lounge at the airport. Suites are lovely with a very modern design. The lobby is trendy with a little bar/lounge off the side. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 344 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 9 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, tennis, recreation programs, lawn sports, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet 









HYATT ZIVA AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 1 Rose Hall Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Rooms and suites have a completely modern sleek design at this luxurious, sprawling resort. The pool is a beauty and at night is particularly inviting. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 277 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 7 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



































## IBEROSTAR ROSE HALL BEACH BOOK NOW 876/680-0000



THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Resort Hotel. Address: Rose Hall Main Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: There's a

huge lobby with interesting lighting, a central bar/lounge and lots of space to relax at this hotel. Rooms have bright, pleasing décor; bathrooms are big with lots of counter space. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 366 units. 3-5 stories, exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.

























## IBEROSTAR SELECTION ROSE HALL SUITES BOOK NOW 876/680-0000



Resort Hotel. Address: Rose Hall Main Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This upscale resort has a large modern lobby and lounge. You'll be very happy in the attractive suites with a recessed living room and a spacious bathroom. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 319 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.































## JEWEL GRANDE MONTEGO BAY RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 876/619-1640



Resort Hotel. Address: Rose Hall Main Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Rooms at this beautiful all-inclusive resort range from spacious junior suites up to the three-bedroom suites and villas. Almost all have at least a partial view of the ocean from a patio or balcony. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 217 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms, kitchens and houses. 12 stories, exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 8 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, recreation programs, kids club, trails, health club, spa.

































## JOIA ROSE HALL BY IBEROSTAR BOOK NOW 876/680-0000



Resort Hotel. Address: Rose Hall Main Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This adults-only luxurious resort has lovely, spacious rooms with large smart TVs, sitting areas and big desks. The bathrooms have a huge jetted tub, separate shower and his-and-her vanities. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 295 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, game room, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.



























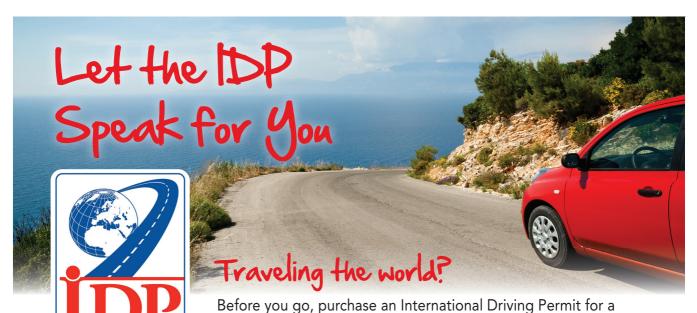


## WHERE TO EAT





New Jamaican Fine Dining. Expert Advice: Historic. Most of the seating is alfresco at this elegant restaurant set in a beautifully restored 17th-century sugar mill on the old plantation grounds. The innovative island cuisine is both flavorful and artfully showcased. Using local ingredients where possible, the chef changes the menu often. Examples might include pimento wood-smoked marlin or jerk chicken rolls as a starter, and spiny lobster thermidor, house-made pasta or charcoal-grilled meats as an entrée. Features: full bar. patio dining. Reservations: required. Address: Hwy A1.





INTERNATIONAL DRIVING PERMIT



recognizable form of identification, even if you're not driving. Translated into 10 languages, the IDP is valid in more than

150 countries — mandatory in some and highly recommended in others.

U.S. residents apply at AAA offices. Canadian residents apply at CAA offices. Or visit us online at: AAA.com/IDP or CAA.ca/services/travel

## ST. ANN'S BAY

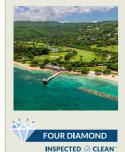
On the coast west of Ocho Rios, St. Ann's Bay and the surrounding parish were named for Lady Anne Hyde, wife of King James II of England.

CRANBROOK FLOWER FOREST is 1 mi. (1.6 km) w. of Chukka Cove on Rte. A1, then 1 mi. s. on Llandovery Rd. The River Head Adventure Tour follows a hiking trail through a 130-acre (53-hectare) botanical garden along the Little River. Flowering plants and ornamentals include royal palms, ginger lilies, orchids, hibiscus, begonias and bromeliads. Other activities include swimming and pond fishing.

Comfortable hiking boots and insect repellent are advised. Time: Allow 2 hours minimum. Phone: (876) 455-5676. **GT TI X** <del>T</del>+

## SANDY BAY





Historic Resort Hotel. Address: Sandy Bay Main Rd, Hanover. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Huge suites with individual, upscale design are found at the great house of this property which evokes a genteel ambience of yesteryear. Spectacular villas make up the rest of the units. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 90 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms, houses and condominiums. 1-2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, game room, trails, health club, massage. Guest Services: complimentary laundry, area transportation.





























## SILOAH

At the western end of the Siloah Valley is the rural town of Maggotty, where hydroelectricity is generated by nearly thirty waterfalls on the Black River. Views of the river gorge are offered along Route A2.

THE JOY SPENCE APPLETON ESTATE RUM EXPERI-ENCE is 7 mi. (11 km) n. on Rte. A2 to Maggotty, then 3 mi. (5 km) e. The Appleton plantation has been producing sugar, molasses and rum since 1749. The distillery is set in a valley along the Black River. A 90-minute guided tour takes a look at the history of rum and provides a demonstration of various stages of the production process and a tasting of "wet" sugar. A rum tasting venue is on the premises, and each legal-age visitor receives a complimentary bottle of rum. **Phone:** (876) 448-2037 or (876) 850-0090. GT (II

## WHITEHOUSE

FOUR DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN

SANDALS SOUTH COAST JAMAICA BOOK NOW 876/640-3000

Resort Hotel. Address: Whitehouse Main Rd.



© iStockphoto.com / Damien VERRIER

# **Martinique**

ne of the largest islands in the Lesser Antilles, Martinique is 50 miles (80 km) long and 22 miles (35 km) wide. The volcanic Mont Pelée in the north and Les Pitons du Carbet in the central section are the main peaks on this mountainous island.

It is easy to see why the Carib Indians once designated Martinique as the Isle of Flowers—bougainvillea, hibiscus, anthuriums, bamboo and wild orchids deck the woodlands; forests with many varieties of flowering trees rim the hills. Plantation fields with crops containing bananas, pineapples, sugarcane and coffee can be found throughout this fertile island. Martinique's tropical visage is scarred only by the ruins of St. Pierre, the result of an eruption of Mont Pelée in 1902.

## **History**

Christopher Columbus sighted Martinique in 1493 but did not land until his fourth voyage in 1502. Arawak and Carib Indians called the island Madinina, the "island of flowers." Because of opposition from the Indians, no settlement took place until 1635, when the French made the island a center for sugar production. France and Britain battled for the island throughout the 17th and 18th centuries until France gained permanent control in 1814.



Like Guadeloupe, Martinique is a department and region of France, represented in the French Parliament by two senators and four deputies. The island is administered by elected general and regional councils as well as by a prefect. The seat of government is Fort-de-France.

## Shopping

Martinique offers enough goods and bargains to suit the needs of most shoppers. French perfumes, china, linens, jewelry, crystal and other luxury imports are sold at or below prices in Paris, New York or St. Thomas. The main shopping district is in Fort-de-France along rues Antoine Siger, Victor Hugo and Schoelcher, where shops sell madras cottons, watches, silver and crystal at low prices. Just south of town in Lamentin is La Galleria, billed as the largest shopping center in the West Indies.

Several stores line rue Victor Hugo, rue Antonie Siger, rue Lamartine and rue Moreau de Jones. Most jewelry stores in the district feature handcrafted gold and Creole pieces, including a traditional beaded necklace known as a collier chou. Fort-de-France is not truly a "free port," but instead offers a 20 percent discount on purchases paid for with travelers checks or charged to a credit card.

At the Grand Marché market, artisans sell their tapestries, Creole dolls, straw baskets, ceramics, handmade jewelry and souvenirs along with local-grown fruits and vegetables. As on many other Caribbean islands, rum is a popular purchase; Martinique offers 17 varieties. Most distilleries offer free tours and rum tastings.

Shops are open Mon.-Fri. 8:30-6, Sat. 9-noon, and are closed on holidays. Banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 7:30noon and 2:30-4:30. Stores can give up to 20-percent discounts on some luxury goods purchased with travelers checks or certain credit cards.

## Food and Drink

Martinique's cuisine is a mix of classic French and Creole. Local specialties include *colombo*, an Indian curry dish cooked with either beef, pork, chicken, mutton, conch or goat and eaten with rice; boudin, a spicy local blood sausage; and callaloo, a soup made from greens and West Indian herbs. Typical Creole seafood dishes might include such exotic ingredients as oursins, sea urchins; lambi, conch; and langouste, local rock lobster or crayfish. For dessert, try coconut sorbet or amour caché, a traditional pastry made with coconut jam. Local beverages include a potent mix known as "ti punch," bottled rums from a dozen distilleries, and bière de Lorraine, the local ale. Didier Water, bottled on the island, is a naturally carbonated mineral water. Tap water and milk are safe to drink.

More than 350 restaurants in Martinique have elevated Creole and French cooking to its highest level of artistic perfection. Most hotels and restaurants include a 15percent service charge in their prices or add it to the final bill.

## Sports and Amusements

Beaches of white, ochre and silver-gray volcanic sand offer unlimited opportunities for swimming, skin diving, scuba diving, water skiing and other aquatic sports. Among the island's most popular beaches are Diamant Beach, about 21 miles (34 km) from Fort-de-France on the southwest coast, and the sandy strand at Salines near Ste. Anne. Other popular beaches include Anse Corps de Garde, Anse-Mitan and Pointe du Marin. Scuba diving services, including courses for beginners, are available to guests at hotels in the Pointe-du-Bout and Diamant resort areas and elsewhere.

The Pointe-du-Bout area also is a popular spot for sailing. Large boats can be chartered at Pointe-du-Bout and through several charter companies at the island's largest marina in Marin. Memberships of most U.S. yacht clubs are honored at the two yacht clubs in Fort-de-France. Most of the larger hotels and the marina at Fort-de-France charter boats for deep-sea fishing.

Other recreational pursuits include horseback riding, hiking, mountain climbing, tennis and golf. An alternative to the resort environment is camping. Campgrounds with showers are found in Ste. Anne, Anse à l'Ane and Le Vauclin. Horseback rides through the country and cane fields are conducted through several private clubs and ranches.

Empress Josephine Golf Course is a fine 18-hole golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones Sr. is at Trois-Ilets near the Pointe-du-Bout marina-hotel area. Besides the hotel tennis courts, the tennis clubs in Fort-de-France and Lamentin, as well as the Golf Country Club, offer temporary memberships to visiting players. Spectator sports include soccer matches, held every Sunday at the stadium in Fort-de-France.

An annual event that captures the island's mystery and charm is Carnival, a celebration for Vaval, the legendary king of the Carnival. Preparations last for 5 weeks, ending on Ash Wednesday. On Mardi Gras Tuesday, the streets of Fort-de-France are jammed with participants masked and costumed in red to depict the red devils, or diables rouge. They perform the biguine, a twisting, uninhibited dance that to the Martiniquais is a way of life. On Ash Wednesday, the costumes are black and white and a parade of rhythmic dancing and singing is a wake for Vaval. The parade leads to the waterfront where his funeral pyre is built. When dusk falls, the spectators dance in a frenzy of shadows and flickering flames until Vaval's effigy is burned and Carnival is over for another year.

There is dancing and entertainment in Fort-de-France at Coco Loco, Le Milk, Le Club Seven and Paparazzi Club as well as at several major hotels.

Tropiques Atrium Scène Nationale, Fort-de-France's cultural center, features concerts as well as dance and opera performances by internationally known artists. Theater life in Fort-de-France revolves around the Théâtre Aimé Césaire. Dance exhibitions performed by the Grands Ballets de la Martinique and other groups are frequently held at the major hotels. Several theaters show French and American films with French soundtracks.

## Sightseeing

Good roads, including many four-lane highways, afford pleasant excursions. These include a 5-hour drive to the old capital of St. Pierre, where the Frank A. Perret Museum can be visited, and on to Grand Rivière, returning through quaint fishing villages on the eastern coast. A 4-hour trip from Fort-de-France to the southern half of the island includes stops at Trois-llets, birthplace of Empress Josephine; Pointe-du-Bout, which offers a fine view of the capital across the bay; and Anses d'Arlets, a small fishing village. Diamant Beach affords a view of Diamond Rock, a giant offshore monolith. Return is through Rivière-Salée.

A half-day drive can be made from Fort-de-France along the island's west coast to St. Pierre, returning the same route. A 5-hour excursion to Ste. Anne might include a stop for a swim at Ste. Anne Beach or nearby Salines Beach; return via St. Esprit and Ducos.

Martinique maintains 31 well-marked hiking trails that make exploring the island easy. In addition, fascinating views of the underwater world are offered on glass-bottom boats and 1-hour aguascope excursions.

## **Transportation**

There are connecting flights from other U.S. cities with Air Caraïbes in Guadeloupe. Air Caraïbes also provides flights to nearby islands; information about schedules is available at local travel agencies. Most major cruise lines include Martinique on their itinerary.

Taxi fare from Martinique Aimé Césaire International Airport in Lamentin to Fort-de-France is \$30-\$42; fares are 40 percent higher between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. Taxis are metered but it is wise to determine the fare or hourly rate in advance. Rental cars are available at the airport, Fort-de-France and Pointe-du-Bout; camper-car rentals can be arranged at Anse Mitan.

Collective taxis, private cars or minibuses that serve as jitney buses, will take up to eight passengers to many standard destinations. The name of the final destination is marked on the car. These "group" taxis stop running at 6 p.m. A one-way taxi fare from Fort-de-France to Ste. Anne is approximately \$84-\$118. Crowded buses, used primarily by islanders, also serve sections of Fort-de-France.

Ferries link Fort-de-France with the main resort areas of Trois-Ilets and Ste. Anne. High-speed passenger ferries operated by L'Express des Iles connect Martinique with Dominica, Guadeloupe and St. Lucia.

## **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 375,000.** 

AREA: 1,101 sq km (425 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Fort-de-France.

HIGHEST POINT: 1,397 m (4,584 ft.), Mont Pelée.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: French and Creole.

**GOVERNMENT:** Overseas Department of France.

**CURRENCY:** Euro Dollar. \$1 U.S. = approx. .88 Euro.

U.S. currency is widely accepted.

ELECTRICITY: 220 volts, 50 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. An international driver's license is required; drive on right.

MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 21.

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are required for all passengers. Children under 12 must ride in the back seat.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May 1; Victory Day, May 8; Slavery Abolition Day, May 22; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); National Day, July 14; Assumption Day, Aug. 15; All Saints Day, Nov. 1; Armistice Day, Nov. 11; Christmas, Dec. 25.

**TAXES:** A \$1.62 to \$2.16 per person per day room tax and 10 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Restaurants include a 15 percent service charge.

**IMMIGRATION:** A valid passport and return or onward ticket are required for U.S. citizens entering the French West Indies. No visa needed for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call Martinique from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 596 + 596 + the 6-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

French Government Tourist Office/Martinique Promotion Bureau 825 3rd Ave., 29th Floor New York, NY 10022 (212) 838-6887 (212) 838-7800

Martinique Tourist Office (Comité Martiniquais du Tourisme) 5 Avenue Loulou Boislaville Fort-de-France, Martinique 97200 (596) 61-61-77 (596) 61-83-92

#### **FORT-DE-FRANCE**

Capital of the "island of flowers," Fort-de-France is stepped like an amphitheater around the celebrated Place de la Savane. This lovely park contains the statue of Pierre Belain D'esnambuc, founder of the French colony here in 1635, the island's first European settlement. Nearby is the marble statue of the Empress Josephine. who was born across the bay near Trois-Ilets. Fort St. Louis dominates the harbor promontory.

The Schoelcher Library, across from La Savane, was designed by French architect Henri Picq for the Paris exposition of 1889, then later disassembled and shipped to the island. The building is named for Victor Schoelcher, a French abolitionist who helped end slavery in Martinique in the mid-1800s. A statue of Schoelcher stands at the entrance to the Camille Darsières Cultural Center, the former Court of Justice Building at the corner of rues Schoelcher and Moreau de Jones.

On Rue Schoelcher is the 1895 Saint-Louis Cathedral. a neo-classical church featuring Byzantine décor, stainedglass windows and a massive pipe organ. Built upon the site of six previous churches, the iron structure was designed to withstand fire, earthquake and hurricane. The Sacré-Coeur de Balata basilica is in the suburbs north of Fort-de-France.

BALATA BOTANICAL GARDENS (JARDIN BALATA) is 6 mi. (10 km) n. on Route de Balata, following signs. Entered through a restored Creole house furnished in period, the gardens showcase labeled plant varieties including anthuriums, heliconias, begonias, orchids and many others. Ornamental lakes feature water lilies and lotus blossoms. Free-flying hummingbirds are often sighted. A suspended rope bridge and walkways provide a birds-eye view of the landscaped grounds below. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (596) 64-48-73. **TI** 





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# **Montserrat**

uring his second voyage to the New World, Christopher Columbus paid homage to a hill-encircled abbey near Barcelona, Spain, naming a tiny, mountainous island Montserrat after the Spanish landmark. Although the Caribbean land mass 27 miles (43 km) southwest of Antigua outwardly resembles Spain's venerated peak, geologically, it greatly differs from its namesake. The ruggedly beautiful slopes of the "saw-toothed mountain" actually are those of a 3,000-foot (914-meter) volcano, which drew worldwide attention in the 1990s as

torrents of hot volcanic debris destroyed its southern portion.

Although the disaster claimed Montserrat's capital and sole airport, the tropical oasis endures today, affording dramatic rock formations, lush vegetation, and secluded, sandy retreats. The government of the overseas British territory now operates out of Brades, with a new \$18.5-million airport receiving travelers. In the aftermath of nature's fury, the eruption yielded more fertile soil; healthier

and more diverse underwater environments; and an unusual natural attraction—the active Soufrière Hills Volcano.

#### **History**

The Arawaks and Caribs resided on *Alliouagana*, "the land of the prickly bush," before Columbus sailed Montserrat's waters in 1493. Irish-Catholic settlers from St. Kitts arrived in 1632 and were later joined by Irish exiles fleeing Lord Cromwell's troops in Britain. France twice attempted to claim the island, having purchased it from Spain, but Britain maintained control.

Tobacco, sugar and cotton plantations once flourished; the rich, fertile soil produced an abundance of crops. When world markets declined, lime orchards were planted and the juice bottled and exported. In the 1960s, real estate development replaced agricultural pursuits, as Americans. Canadians and Britons flocked to the island to build homes and businesses. Such musicians as Elton John, Stevie Wonder and Eric Clapton also began arriving to record at AIR Studios Montserrat, built by Beatles producer George Martin in 1979.

As the economy became more diversified and with tourism thriving, disaster struck. Hurricane Hugo damaged more than 90 percent of the island's structures, even forcing AIR Studios Montserrat to close. The vital tourist industry was eventually re-established but again crumbled in 1995 when the long-dormant Soufrière Hills Volcano began spewing hot gas and rock. Ash darkened the skies over Plymouth, forcing evacuation to the north as volcanic mudflows buried the capital.

Today, the Exclusion Zone prohibits most entry into the island's southern half. Resilient Monserratians continue to add modern facilities in the north, which also boasts such ecological lures as Runaway Ghaut and Centre Hills.

#### Shopping

Montserrat is particularly known for its sea island cotton. Long prized for its silky feel, sea island cotton clothing, tablecloths and other items are available through a variety of boutiques and gift shops.

Located in Brades, both the BBC complex and the Ryan buildings feature small clusters of stores. Expeditions can be arranged to shop the scattered studios of local craftsmen selling such handmade items as dolls clad in the plaid green and yellow national dress, leather belts and purses, and stationery. Woolcock's Craft & Photo Gallery carries a variety of photos of Montserrat birds, wildlife and landscapes; phone (664) 491-2025.

Bread hot from the oven lures visitors and natives alike to area bakeries, while fresh produce, domestic guava preserves and hot pepper sauces are abundant at several markets.

#### Food and Drink

Usually found in hotels or in small, colorfully painted wooden buildings with verandahs, a variety of restaurants are found in Montserrat, where the hardest part of ordering is deciding what to drink. The island's wealth of exotic fruits, including mango, guava, tamarind and papaya, can be sampled in juice form while taking in views of the Centre Hills rain forest or Little Bay. Ginger beer also is served, as is sorrel, a seasonal beverage made from a leafy plant of the same name.

Seafood is the heart of many area specialties, with restaurants serving up fresh mahi mahi, shrimp and salted cod. Goatwater, eaten with bread, is a thick stew that features goat meat and is the national dish.

#### Sports and Amusements

Along Montserrat's west coast, beaches with pearl-grey volcanic sand provide plenty of swimming and water sports opportunities; equipment can be obtained through most local hotels. Snorkeling and scuba diving are popular sports, and the island offers numerous coral reefs for exploration.

Beginners can dive at Lime Kiln Bay, with a maximum depth of 45 feet (14 m). Schools of reef fish dart past swimmers at Northwest Bluff, while Rendezvous Bay cave divers encounter thousands of fruit bats dangling from the chasm's ceiling. High waves make Little Redonda, the Pinnacles and Yellow Hole difficult to reach, although visiting such sights as a sunken 19th-century ship and spectacular undersea rock formations tempt advanced divers.

Little Bay and Woodlands Beach are popular shore sites, with picnic areas and snacks close at hand. For a little privacy, Lime Kiln Beach and Isles Bay Beach are great choices. Furthest north, Rendezvous Beach is the only non-volcanic white sand beach. In the south, the aftereffects of the volcanic eruption are evident at Foxes Bay, where stripped mangrove trees and the ruins of a former bird sanctuary linger. More inspirational is the sight of green, hawksbill and loggerhead turtles nesting on Montserrat's beaches August through September.

Bicycles can be rented on Montserrat either for demanding mountain biking adventures or leisurely tours of the island's charming villages. Arrangements for horseback riding or full- or half-day deep-sea fishing excursions can be made at your hotel. Marlin, wahoo and swordfish are just a few of the fish inhabiting the surrounding waters.

Entertainment and nightlife are found at hotels and at some of the clubs in Salem, St. John's, Cudjoe Head and Little Bay. Locals gather at cozy bars known as rum shops, which have no set closing time and generally offer food and live music as well as the chance to join a friendly game of dominoes.

Several of Montserrat's special events kick up the energy level a few notches. In March, natives commemorate



#### **Sightseeing**

Built almost exclusively of volcanic rocks, Montserrat is only 12 miles (19 km) long and 7 miles (11 km) wide. Galway's Soufrière, a volcanic crater on the southern half of the island, lies within the Exclusion Zone that covers nearly half the island. The island's volcano sirens are tested every day at noon.

Visitors can view the Soufrière Hills from a safe distance; several companies offer guided tours of accessible areas. Across the Belham Valley, the Daytime Entry Zone affords panoramas of devastating volcanic mudflows. The abandoned capital of Plymouth can be seen from St. George's, Garibaldi and Richmond hills. A viewing facility at Jack Boy Hill includes a platform, picnic areas, a walking trail and a telescope imparting close-ups of Montserrat's destroyed WH Bramble Airport and eastern villages.

The Montserrat Volcano Observatory (see attraction listing) provides the best vantage point along with insight into the island's famous, unruly tenant. Scientific staff explain the volcano monitoring program during short tours.

Although the southern portion of the island is uninhabitable, Montserrat remains worthy of the designation "Emerald Isle." The pure, open terrain demands extensive exploration by foot; most trails take hikers through Centre Hills, where the national bird, the Montserrat oriole, and the mountain chicken dwell.

A trail through The Cot, the historic site of an old banana plantation, provides glimpses of varied flora and fauna in their lush environs as well as views of Salem and the surrounding areas. Oriole Walkway and Silver Hills Trail are home to some of Montserrat's 34 species of birds, including the mangrove cuckoo. The latter route lies within one of the island's oldest inactive volcanic centers.

#### **Transportation**

Daily flights aboard FlyMontserrat connect Montserrat with Antigua and St. Maarten, where air travel to neighboring islands, North America and Europe is available. Charter flights to Montserrat's modern John A. Osborne Airport are available as well. Several Antigua tour operators offer day trips to Montserrat that include sightseeing and transportation; check with the tourist board for more information.

Transportation on the island is by car, taxi or minibus. There are no scheduled times or official stops for minibuses, but most can be hailed off main thoroughfares.

Both buses and taxis have green license plates beginning with "H"; agree on the appropriate fare to be paid in advance.

When exploring by rental car, a valid U.S. driver's license must be presented to obtain a temporary driving permit. The permit costs \$20 and is available at your port of entry or from Montserrat's police headquarters. Be sure to fill up at one of the two gas stations before maneuvering the island's lengthy roads peppered with twists and steep hills. In addition, driving is on the left and there are no traffic lights; however, names are posted on most streets. If driving seems too challenging, your hotel or the tourist board can provide a road map or a list of local quides.

#### **FAST FACTS**

POPULATION: 5,359.

AREA: 102 sq km (39 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Plymouth (abandoned in 1997 due to volcanic activity; interim government buildings have been built in Brades).

HIGHEST POINT: 930 m (3,051 ft.), Lava Dome in English's Crater (Soufrière Hills volcanic complex).

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** British Overseas Territory.

**CURRENCY:** Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. = 2.7 E.C. dollars.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-220 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. A valid U.S. driver's license must be presented to obtain a temporary driving permit. The \$20 permit is available at port of entry or from Montserrat's police headquarters at Brades.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; St. Patrick's Day, March 17; Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May (1st Mon.); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Queen's Birthday, June (2nd Sat.); August Monday, Aug. (1st Mon.); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26; Festival Day, Dec. 31.

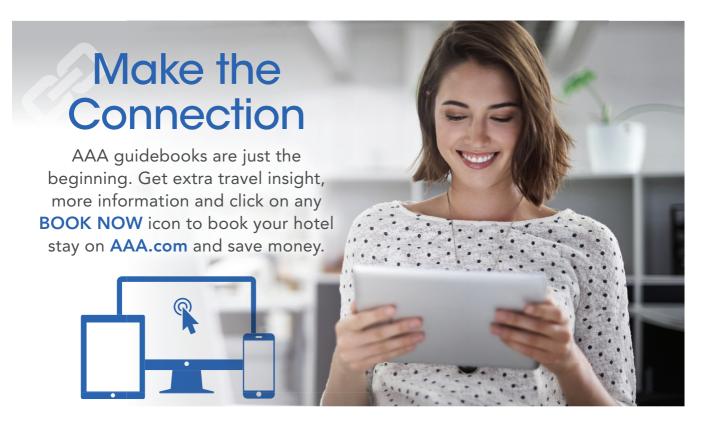
TAXES: A 7-10 percent room tax (depending on the size of the resort) and a 10 percent service charge are added to most hotel and restaurant bills. Departure tax \$21 U.S. or \$37.50 U.S. if not connecting through Antigua airport.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or through ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 3 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call Montserrat from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 664 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Montserrat Tourist Board #7 Farara Plaza, Buildings B&C Brades, Montserrat (664) 491-2230 (664) 491-8730





Find this symbol for further information or relevant contact.









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# **Puerto Rico**

A diverse tropical landscape awaits you in the U.S. Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, where more than 300 miles (500 km) of palm-fringed coastline and a lush interior of rain forests offer adventurers plenty of opportunity for exploration.

A U.S. territory rather than a separate country, the island of Puerto Rico is a progressive blend of old and new. Nowhere is this more evident than in the capital city of San Juan, with its mix of centuries-old Spanish fortresses and glamorous resort hotels.

Puerto Rico has made great strides economically and today boasts one of the highest standards of living in the Caribbean. The capital city of San Juan is home to the busiest and biggest airport in the Caribbean—Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport—in addition to a major cruise port hub.

#### **History**

Originally named Borikén (Island of the Brave Lord) by the Taino Indians, Puerto Rico was discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493 during his second voyage to the New World. He landed on the northwestern part of the island and named it San Juan Bautista.



The island of Puerto Rico gets its name from the exclamation "¡Qué puerto rico!" (What a rich port!), which is said to have been made by conquistador Juan Ponce de León when he entering the bay. He established the first settlement at Caparra in 1508 and in 1510 he was appointed the island's first governor by Spain's King Ferdinand. The capital was transferred to its present site and named San Juan Bautista de Puerto Rico in 1521, the year of de León's death.

The Spanish used San Juan Bay to protect their ships from pirates and attacks by other countries. This strategic site was attacked unsuccessfully by Sir Francis Drake, occupied by English forces in 1598, burned and plundered by the Dutch in 1625 and subjected to other sieges until a last attempt by the British in 1797.

Puerto Rico remained a loyal Spanish colony until 1897, when Luis Muñoz Rivera obtained the Charter of Autonomy, which gave the island dominion status. However, before the charter could go into effect, Spain became engaged in the Spanish-American War.

In 1898 Puerto Rico became part of the United States with the signing of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War and transferred control of Puerto Rico from Spain to the United States.

The Foraker Act of 1900 enabled the island to establish a civil government under the direction of a U.S.-appointed governor. The Jones Act in 1917 made the people of Puerto Rico officially citizens of the United States and provided for the creation of a local senate.

The first native-born governor was Jesús T. Piñero, appointed by President Harry S. Truman in 1946. The following year, Truman signed an act giving Puerto Rico the authority to choose its chief executive by popular vote. Luis Muñoz Marín, the first elected governor, held the office until 1965, when he was succeeded by Roberto Sánchez Vilella.

In 1952 President Truman signed a Congressional resolution elevating Puerto Rico to the status of a commonwealth associated with the United States.

#### Shopping

For Puerto Rico souvenirs, you can't go wrong with traditional island crafts from San Juan. You can find local artisans in Plaza Dársenas near Pier 1 every Saturday and Sunday from noon to late evening.

Some of the most common island crafts include mundillo or bobbin lace; santos, or hand-carved, wooden religious figurines; cuatros, handmade 10-string guitars; festival masks made from coconut husks or papiermâché; hand-embroidered linens, blouses and dresses; Spanish-style jewelry of copper, gold and silver filigree; hand-painted scarves and clothing; handbags; hammocks; baskets; ceramics; musical instruments; original artwork; mahogany goods.

Cigars and rum made in Puerto Rico also are popular buys.

For local crafts and imports, head to Calle Fortaleza in Old San Juan, a 20-minute bus or 10-minute taxi ride from the resort hotels in the Condado section. There you'll find a collection of shops selling Thai silks, Spanish furniture and antiques, as well as jewelry and items from the Philippines, India, Mexico and Europe.

Old San Juan is the best place to shop for art, as it has a reputation as an art center. Many galleries sell paintings and sculptures by Puerto Rican artists. Calle Cristo in Old San Juan is home to many well-known art galleries such as the Botello Gallery; phone (787) 723-9987.

The Plaza Las Américas in San Juan is considered to be the largest shopping mall in the Caribbean, and the Plaza del Caribe Shopping Center in Ponce offers a full range of goods. The Mall of San Juan, at jct. Hwys. 8 and 17, features such upscale boutiques as Louis Vuitton, Tory Burch and Versace, and a terrace provides a panoramic view of San José Lagoon and San Juan.

For last-minute shopping, San Juan's airport has stores which are open daily, with varied hours based on airline schedules.

Though some plants and fruits may be brought to the United States, it's best to check with the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in San Juan before your departure; phone (787) 919-0585 or (787) 931-7900.

Keep in mind that many shops in Puerto Rico are closed on Good Friday, in addition to the usual holidays. While banking hours are usually Monday through Friday 8:30-4, some banks also are open on Saturday.

#### Food and Drink

You'll find fruits, vegetables, poultry and fish prepared with a strong Spanish and island flair in Puerto Rico. Roast pork, lobster dishes and seafood platters are specialties in many restaurants. Main dishes often are combined with fruit for a tropical flavor. Several hotels offer buffets featuring American, French, Italian, Chinese and native fare. Upscale eateries around the island offer a wide range of cuisines.

Common Puerto Rican dishes include arroz con pollo, or rice with chicken; *pasteles*, a variation of the tamale made with ground plantain, meat, olives, raisins and chickpeas; lechón asado, or barbecued pig; pastelillos, thin dough filled with meat or cheese and deep fried; tostones, green plantains fried in deep fat; jueyes, fresh land crabs, shelled and boiled; paella, rice with saffron, chicken and seafood; and asopao, a traditional Puerto Rican soup made with rice and chicken or shrimp, cooked with wine sauce and often topped with peas, pimientos, asparagus and hard-boiled eggs.

Tap water is safe to drink in Puerto Rico, and milk is pasteurized.



It's customary to leave a tip of 15 percent at restaurants, with more for special service.

#### Sports and Amusements

Sports in Puerto Rico cover a wide range of interests and offer a blend of both Spanish and American cultures. One of the local favorites is basketball; Puerto Ricans eagerly await the beginning of basketball season in May. Second only to basketball in popularity is baseball; the season runs from October through February and is played at the Hiram Bithorn Stadium (Estadio Hiram Bithorn) in San Juan.

Golfers will find more than 20 courses to play in Puerto Rico. Most of these are of championship caliber, designed by some of the best-known architects in the golf world and hosting local and international tournaments. Championship golf courses are located at the Wyndham Grand Rio Mar Puerto Rico Golf & Beach Resort; Dorado Beach, A Ritz-Carlton Reserve; Palmas del Mar Golf Club in Humacao; The Links at Royal Isabela in Isabela; and Punta Boringuen Golf Club in Aguadilla.

Other golf courses on the island include Bahía Beach Resort & Golf Club in Río Grande; Club Deportivo del Oeste in Cabo Rojo; Caguas Real Golf & Country Club in Caguas; and Río Bayamón Golf Course in Bayamón.

With 272 miles (438 km) of coastline, the island of Puerto Rico has no shortage of good beaches. Public beach facilities called balnearios offer lockers, showers and parking for a nominal fee. They are open Tues.-Sun. 9-5 and closed on election days, Good Friday and the Tuesday following Monday holidays. One of the most beautiful and popular beaches is Balneario de Luquillo, or Luquillo Beach, located east of San Juan near El Yunque National Forest. The scenic bay at Balneario Boquerón near Cabo Rojo is another favorite beach among islanders.

Steady trade winds provide excellent opportunities for boating and sailing around Puerto Rico, particularly in San Juan Bay and the waters off Fajardo and La Parguera, which are well protected by coral reefs. You can rent boats and equipment for sailing or deep-sea fishing from charter operators and marinas in San Juan, Mayagüez, Fajardo, Humacao and other Puerto Rican towns.

More than 30 world records for fishing have been set in the waters around Puerto Rico, which are filled with marlin, sailfish, mackerel, dolphin fish and wahoo. Snook, grouper, snapper, tarpon and amberjack are plentiful along the southern coast.

The clear, warm waters of the Caribbean are also ideal for scuba diving and snorkeling. Coral reefs and cays in many areas around Puerto Rico provide natural harbors for an array of beautiful and exotic sea life—coral, sea horses, starfish and tropical fish.

One of the best diving spots is off the northeastern coast around a small chain of islands. Visibility is exceptionally good in these waters, which range in depth from about 15 to 60 feet (5 to 18 m).

The southwestern coast near La Parguera and the waters surrounding the eastern islands of Vieques and Culebra, dotted with many reefs, also are excellent spots for diving. Along the northwestern coast, the towns of Rincón and Aguadilla offer diving excursions to Mona and Desecheo islands.

Diving or snorkeling excursions from either the beach or a charter boat can be arranged for an hour, a day or longer; beginners might want to stay along the beach where there is a sheltered cove. There are courses for both beginning and advanced snorkelers and divers. The longer and more expensive advanced courses usually feature night dives or search and recovery expeditions. Major hotels and resorts have information about lessons and packages.

Like Costa Rica, Panama and many other Central American countries, Puerto Rico is also widely known as a mecca for surfing. Thousands of pro and amateur surfers come here to ride some of the best beach and reef breaks in the Caribbean. The surfing season begins in September and runs through May. Surfing conditions are excellent along the north and west coast. Rincón, on the west coast of the island facing the Mona Passage, is popular with winter surfers, with typical swells delivering 15-foot waves. Surf shops abound in Rincón, as well as throughout the rest of the island.

Tennis courts are available at San Juan Central Park and at many of the hotels in the Condado and Isla Verde areas of San Juan. Hotels out on the island with more than 7 tennis courts include the Palmas del Mar Resort in Humacao.

Horseback riding is available at Carabali Rainforest Park in Luquillo and Tropical Trail Rides in Isabela.

Government-regulated casinos are found in most of the large hotels.

#### Sightseeing

With about 3,000 miles (4,800 km) of good roads, Puerto Rico is the perfect place to explore by road trip. Though San Juan receives the majority of attention, it's a good idea to venture out on the island to get a true picture of Puerto Rico. Many interesting sites are only a short distance from San Juan, including famous resorts, craft villages, forests, beaches and scenic areas.

If you only have a half-day to explore, consider making the drive to the Palo Colorado or La Mina recreational areas in El Yungue National Forest. It'll take you less than an hour to drive from San Juan to El Yungue National Forest via Rio Grande on PR-66, PR-3 and PR-191. Many facilities and trails within the forest were damaged due to hurricanes in 2017, but you can still drive to popular photo spots like the 69-foot-tall Yokahú Tower and Baño Grande, a former manmade swimming pool.

If you have a full day, drive along the island's north coast from San Juan to Arecibo, including stops at Vega Baja, Manatí, and the Arecibo Lighthouse and Historical

Longer excursions out on the island are usually worth the extra effort.

A drive through coffee country from Manatí to Ponce on routes 140 and 10, then to San Juan via Route 1, might include stops at rock formations and at the ruins of Central Mercedita, where sugar was once refined.

A longer 3-day tour from San Juan to Ponce could include overnight stops in Mayagüez and La Parguera, before passing through San Germán and Ponce. If you're in La Parguera on a moonless night, you'll want to book an evening boat trip on the bioluminescent bay, where miniscule marine life known as dinoflagellates produce a chemical light that glows when the water is disturbed.

Another interesting attraction in the southwestern area of Puerto Rico between La Parguera and Ponce is Guánica Dry Forest, a scrub and cactus landscape that was the site of the American landing in 1898.

For an even longer journey, a 4-day tour beginning and ending in San Juan and reaching Ponce via Barranquitas can include extensive sightseeing along the highway winding through the Cordillera Central, Puerto Rico's mountain range.

Boat and airplane charters to Mona Island, about 50 miles (80 km) west of Puerto Rico and inhabited by a variety of wildlife, are available on the west coast; for information phone the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources at (787) 999-2200.

The outer islands of Culebra and Viegues off the east coast are reachable by plane from San Juan (a 30-minute flight) or ferry service from Ceiba (a 30- to 45-minute ferry ride).

#### **Transportation**

Flights from the U.S. mainland into Puerto Rico are considered domestic, as Puerto Rico is a U.S. territory, not a separate country. The island is accessible by air from most major cities in the U.S. The largest airport in Puerto Rico is Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, also known as the San Juan Airport. It is located about 15 minutes from the center of San Juan.

Flights are also available between San Juan and Aguadilla, Mayagüez and Ponce. Rafael Hernández Airport in Aguadilla and Eugenio María de Hostos Airport in Mayaguez serve the west coast of the island. Many of the flights continue to other Caribbean islands.

Puerto Rico is one of the largest home-based cruise ship ports in the world. The cruise terminal is in Old San Juan.

To get around in San Juan, your options include metered taxis at the airport, hotels and other locations throughout the city; you can rent taxis by the hour, if needed. Taxis are the fastest way to get to San Juan from the airport. Taxi flat fare from the airport to Old San Juan is \$21; from the airport to Condado is \$17; from the airport to Isla Verde is \$12. A \$1 fee is charged per piece of luggage, and there is a \$1 late-night charge for rides between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

The bus system also operates throughout the San Juan metropolitan area. Stops are designated by a magenta, orange and white sign with the word *Parada*. Bus fare is 75c-\$2.

Tren Urbano provides fast and reliable mass transit to the municipalities of San Juan, Bayamón and Guyanabo. The "urban train" runs daily from 5:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., and one-way fare is \$1.50; 75c for ages 60-74, students with ID and persons with a disability. For information, phone (787) 765-0927.

Carros Públicos, public cars that follow established routes between most towns on the island, run during daylight hours. Marked by the letters P or PD following the numbers on their license plate, públicos can usually be hailed from the main plaza of a town. Públicos are the most affordable transportation option available, but if you want to ride in one, you'll have to wait until the car is full.

Free trolley rides are available within the Old San Juan historic district and along the beachfront in Isla Verde.

Rental cars also are available, as are chauffeur-driven cars.

A valid U.S. driver's license is good in Puerto Rico for up to 90 days.

Speed limits are posted in miles per hour and are strictly enforced; metric measurements generally are used on distance signs, and informational signs are in Spanish.

Ferry service provides interesting and inexpensive links between Puerto Rico and its nearby islands. Crossing the bay every 30 minutes, Cataño Ferry (La Lancha de Cataño) connects Old San Juan with the municipality of Cataño; fares are very inexpensive. The Fajardo Ferry carries passengers and cars on a triangular route linking Fajardo on the east end of the island with the islands of Viegues and Culebra.

Transportation to other Caribbean islands is available on America Cruise Ferries, which operates the Caribbean Fantasy between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. The eight- to 12-hour overnight crossing operates Monday and Friday from Puerto Rico's Pan American terminal; phone (787) 622-4800.



#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** 3,190,410.

**AREA:** 8,897 sq km (3,435 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: San Juan.

HIGHEST POINT: 1,338 m (4,390 ft.), Cerro de Punta.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard. LANGUAGE: Spanish and English.

**GOVERNMENT:** Commonwealth associated with the

United States.

**CURRENCY:** U.S. dollar.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency; daily surcharge for ages 21-24, \$10-\$25. U.S. license valid for 3 months; drive on right.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.** 

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for driver and front-seat passengers. Child restraints are required for children under age 2; seat belts required for ages 2-12.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Three Kings Day (Epiphany), Jan. 6; Eugenio María de Hostos' Birthday, Jan. (2nd Mon.); Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. (3rd Mon.); Washington's Birthday/Presidents Day, Feb. (3rd Mon.); Emancipation Day, Mar. 22: Good Friday: Easter: José de Diego's Birthday, Apr. (3rd Mon.); Memorial Day, May (last Mon.); July 4; Luis Muñoz Rivera's Birthday, July (3rd Mon.); Constitution Day, July 25; José Celso Barbosa's Birthday, July 27; Labor Day, Sept. (1st Mon.); Columbus Day, Oct. (2nd Mon.); Veterans Day, Nov. 11; Discovery of Puerto Rico Day, Nov. 19; Thanksgiving, Nov. (4th Thurs.); Christmas, Dec. 25.

TAXES: Puerto Rico's sales tax is 10.5 percent. Municipalities may charge an additional 1 percent sales tax. A 7-11 percent room tax (depending on the size of the resort) and 10-12 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills.

**IMMIGRATION:** There are no immigration requirements for U.S. citizens, but a passport is required when travel may involve stops on other Caribbean islands.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call Puerto Rico from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + area code + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Puerto Rico Tourism Company 135 W. 50th St., 22nd Floor New York, NY 10020 (212) 586-6262 (212) 333-0347 (800) 223-6530

Puerto Rico Tourism Company, Old San Juan La Princesa Bldg. #2 Paseo La Princesa Old San Juan. Puerto Rico 00902 (787) 721-2400

(800) 866-7827

#### **ARECIBO**

Arecibo, on the north coast, is the island's largest city in geographical size. It has been called El Díamante Del Norte, or "the diamond of the north." The city was settled in 1556. Capt. Antonio Correa and a handful of soldiers repelled a British sea invasion here in 1702 and were later honored for their bravery by King Philip V of Spain.

Arecibo gained more recent recognition for the astronomical contributions of the Arecibo Observatory. Once the largest single-aperture telescope in the world, it was surpassed in 2016 after more than 50 years. Hurricane Maria in 2017 and subsequent earthquakes damaged the site. The telescope's receiver platform and dome collapsed into the reflector dish on Dec. 1, 2020— less than

a month after the U.S. National Science Foundation announced decommissioning plans.

Cambalache State Forest (Bosque Estatal de Cambalache), midway between Arecibo and Barceloneta on Highway 22, is noted for its eucalyptus, teak, and mahoe trees. The forest is a popular destination for hiking and mountain biking; a permit is required for camping.

ARECIBO LIGHTHOUSE AND HISTORICAL PARK is off Hwy. 22 exit 71 (Domingo Ruiz), following Rd. 2 to Rds. 681 and 655. The park offers five cultural representations of Puerto Rico's history, from the 1493 Spanish Conquest to the building of the lighthouse in 1898 during the Spanish-American War. Historic replicas include a Taíno Indian village, housing for enslaved workers, Blackbeard's pirate ship and the three sailing vessels of Christopher Columbus. Marine artifacts are displayed in the restored lighthouse. The surrounding park on rocky Punta Morillo includes a playground; a small petting zoo; a miniature water park; and a pirate's cave containing a saltwater aquarium with sharks, rays and eels.

Phone: (787) 880-7540.

#### BARRANQUITAS

Near the center of the island, the mountain town of Barranguitas (bahr-rahn-KEE-tahs) has been called the "cradle of the greats" for the many distinguished Puerto Ricans it has produced. Among them was Luis Muñoz Rivera, who negotiated the island's Charter of Autonomy with the Spanish government in 1897. The small house where he was born, Casa Natal de Luis Muñoz Rivera, has been restored by the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture as a library and museum. The bodies of Rivera and his son, Luis Muñoz Marín-who became Puerto Rico's first elected governor—are entombed at the nearby Mausoleo Luis Muñoz Marín.

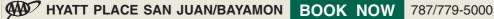
Islanders flock to Barranguitas in July for the Feria Nacional de Artesanías, considered the longest-running artisan fair in Puerto Rico and one of its most significant. The fair features food, music and exhibits by some 200 local artists and craftspeople.

South of Barranguitas is the only volcanic rift in Puerto Rico, San Cristóbal Canyon. This rugged and nearly inaccessible gorge is more than 650 feet (198 m) deep, with rushing streams and plunging waterfalls along the Río Usabón. Best viewed with a guide, the canyon is an emerging destination for rock climbing and adventure tours.

#### **BAYAMON**

On the northeastern coast, Bayamón (by-ya-MON) is a suburb of San Juan and is the island's second largest city. Founded in 1772, the city's name is derived from Bayamóngo, a Taíno name for the river running through it. The "city of the traffic jams" lacks a coordinated mass transit and bus system.

Río Bayamón Golf Course on Laurel Avenue offers 18 holes; phone (787) 780-4303. You can enjoy tennis at Honda Tennis Center, which features 16 courts; phone (787) 787-8057.



Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates! Members also



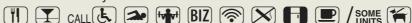
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#### **CAROLINA**

CASA COSTERA, ISLA VERDE BEACH APARTMENTS BY MARRIOTT

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AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: 7 Gardenia St 00979. Facility: Meets AAA guest room MARRIOTT security requirements. 107 efficiencies, some two bedrooms. 2-9 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee). Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: complimentary





























#### COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT-ISLA VERDE BEACH RESORT BOOK NOW 787/791-0404







#### COURTYARD AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: 7012 Boca de Cangrejos Ave 00979. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Located on an attractive stretch of beach, this is one of the area's most popular full-service hotels. Some guest rooms feature a sofa bed and a balcony to check out the amazing view of the beach. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 260 units. 12 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, bicycles, exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.































## EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON HOTEL & CASINO SAN JUAN BOOK NOW 787/791-0505







AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SUITES

EMBASSY Hotel. Address: 8000 Tartak St, Isla Verde 00979. Facility: The suite-style rooms offer an abundance of free floor space, ample seating and storage. soft bedding and well-coordinated furnishings. The outdoor pool area is

great for relaxing and sunbathing. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 313 units. 8 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, exercise room, massage. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.





























#### FAIRMONT EL SAN JUAN RESORT AND CASINO BOOK NOW 787/791-1000



FOUR DIAMOND

INSPECTED @ CLEAN

Resort Hotel. Address: 6063 Isla Verde Ave 00979. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This centerpiece of Isla Verde features a lagoon-style pool and an extravagant lobby with incredible chandeliers and wood moulding ceilings. Guest rooms are comfortable with upgraded amenities. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 388 units. 3-9 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 7 restaurants, also, Cana by Juliana Gonzalez, see separate listing, nightclub, entertainment. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, beach on-site, cabanas, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.































HAMPTON INN & SUITES BY HILTON SAN JUAN BOOK NOW 787/791-8777



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 6530 Isla Verde Ave 00979.



#### RESIDENCE INN BY MARRIOTT SAN JUAN ISLA VERDE BOOK NOW 787/961-1155



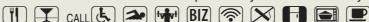
Residence INI. AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Extended Stay Hotel. Address: 6500 Isla Verde Ave 00979. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 231 efficiencies. 8 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee). Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: bicycles, exercise room. Guest Services: complimentary and valet laundry.



























## THE ROYAL SONESTA SAN JUAN BOOK NOW 787/791-6100



Resort Hotel. Address: 5961 Isla Verde Ave 00979. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: They offer a wonderful location on Isla Verde Beach with an upscale outdoor pool and excellent dining venues. The spacious rooms feature multiple USB ports and an abundance of seating and storage. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 398 units. 2-15 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, recreation programs in season, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.



































SAN JUAN WATER BEACH CLUB HOTEL BOOK NOW



787/728-3666



Boutique Hotel. Address: 2 Tartak St 00979.



TRYP BY WYNDHAM ISLA VERDE BOOK NOW 787/728-1300



Hotel. Address: 4820 Isla Verde Ave 00979. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 109 units. 9 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Parking: on-site (fee). Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.





















#### WHERE TO EAT



CANA BY JULIANA GONZALEZ 787/253-2007



Regional Puerto Rican Fine Dining. Address: 6063 Isla Verde Ave 00979.

#### COAMO

One of the oldest settlements on the island, Coamo (ko-AH-mo) is known for its thermal springs, long believed to have therapeutic properties. Local legend says that Juan Ponce de León, who traveled to the New World with Christopher Columbus and colonized Puerto Rico in 1508. mistakenly went off to Florida in search of the Fountain of Youth after hearing natives speak about the Baños de Coamo.

The lovely white Iglesia Católica San Blás de Illesca on the main plaza was established in 1563. Just off the

square, the Museo Histórico de Coamo displays archeological artifacts, local exhibits and colonial-style furnishings.

#### **DORADO**

West of San Juan on the northern coast, Dorado is home to several beachside golf resorts. The recreation area of El Ojo del Buey is named for a large rock formation resembling the eye of an ox. The public beaches at Sardinera and Cerro Gordo are particularly scenic.









## DORADO BEACH, A RITZ-CARLTON RESERVE BOOK NOW 787/626-1100



**FIVE DIAMOND** 

INSPECTED @ CLEAN



AAA Benefit: Special member savings plus Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

THE RITZ-CARLTON

Resort Hotel, Address: 100 Dorado Beach Dr 00646, Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Cutting-edge luxury is wrapped in the envelope of

naturally preserved sanctuary-style surroundings. The guest suites are spacious and have luxurious amenities, ocean views and some with private pools. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 96 units, some condominiums. 2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Parking: valet only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants, also, Posi+Ivo Sand Bar, see separate listing. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, playground, lawn sports, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, luggage security pick-up, area transportation.

































EMBASSY SUITES BY HILTON DORADO DEL MAR BEACH

RESORT **BOOK NOW** 787/796-6125



AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

SAVE Hotel. Address: 201 Dorado del Mar Blvd 00646.

#### WHERE TO EAT



POSI+IVO SAND BAR 787/626-1100



Asian Small Plates Fine Dining. Address: 100 Dorado Beach Dr 00646.

#### **EL YUNQUE NATIONAL FOREST**

Elevations in the forest range from 1,000 ft. to 3,533 ft. (305 m to 1,077 m) at El Yungue. Refer to AAA maps for additional elevation information.

The El Yungue National Forest is 25 miles (40 km) east of San Juan near the town of Palmer on Hwy. 191. Three other forest roads, rtes. 186, 966 and 988, skirt the western, northern and eastern boundaries. The scenic beach of Balneario Luquillo is off Rte. 3.

The forest, which takes its name from El Yunque (JUNE-kay), a 3,533-foot (1,077-m) peak in the Luquillo Mountains, covers 28,000 acres (11,287 hectares). Proclaimed a forest reserve by Theodore Roosevelt in 1903, El Yungue is the only tropical U.S. National Forest; it is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

The annual rainfall is extremely heavy, and at the high elevations it exceeds 200 inches. Moisture drips from massive trees, dense plants, ferns and moss. Hundreds of streams course down the mountainsides, creating countless falls and pools. The rain forest receives more than 100 billion gallons of rain a year.

Moist, misty and generally cool, the forest supports a dense system of vegetation. Largest are the towering hardwoods, their crowns hung with vines; many trunks or limbs support a fringe of air plants, a large number containing blossoms. Beneath these giants are smaller trees and shrubs that shade flowers, herbs, mosses and tree ferns growing as high as 30 feet (9 m).



Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

The montane thicket covering valleys and slopes above 2,000 feet (610 m) is generally composed of trees and a ground cover of ferns, vines and bromeliads. Extensive stands of sierra palms grow on steep slopes at higher elevations and along streams. The cloud forest, its trees about 12 feet (4 m) high, is found on the highest peaks. In all, the forest harbors more than 240 species of trees, four forest types and dozens of waterfalls. More than 50 of these species of trees are found only in Puerto Rico.

Such resplendent birds as tanagers, woodpeckers, cuckoos and euphonia inhabit the forest. The birds usually remain hidden, but their calls and whistles are heard frequently. The Puerto Rican Parrot, an extremely rare and endangered species, also inhabits the rain forest and is found only in this part of the island. *Coquies*, tiny inchlong tree frogs, fill the forest with their high-pitched notes, which resemble the singing of their own name.

The forest's main visitor center, El Portal, is just inside the entrance on Hwy. 191 at Km 4.3. Near Km 8 is La Coca Falls, named for 14th-century settler Juan Diego de La Coca. The Yokahú Observation Tower at Km 8.9 offers a magnificent view of the forest and the northeast coast of Puerto Rico. Picnic facilities are available at the Sierra Palm Picnic Area at Km 12.

The Palo Colorado Recreation Site, the most visited section of the forest, includes an information center and picnic shelters. In this area around Km 12 are trailheads leading to La Mina Falls, Mt. Britton Lookout Tower and El Toro Peak, the summit of El Yunque. Guided 1-hour interpretive hikes of the recreation area are offered by the Forest Service. In all, the forest contains 24 miles (39 km) of soft and paved hiking trails.

**Note:** Rain gear and hiking boots are recommended, as trails are often wet and slippery. Park open daily 7:30-6. Information centers are open daily 9:30-4:30; closed Christmas. Hiking tours depart Wed. 10:30-3:30, Feb.-Aug.; based upon guide availability rest of year. Tour tickets are sold at the Palo Colorado Information Center on a first-come, first-served basis. Park admission is free. Hiking tours \$5, ages 4-12, \$3. Phone (787) 888-1880.

EL PORTAL RAIN FOREST CENTER is on Hwy. 191 at Km 4.3, just inside the El Yunque National Forest entrance. An elevated walkway through the forest canopy takes visitors into the environmental education center, which offers information about the natural features and importance of the El Yunque National Forest and tropical forests worldwide. Noted for its award-winning tropical architecture, the center features three multimedia exhibit pavilions, an orientation film and an interpretive trail through landscaped grounds.

Phone: (787) 888-1880. GT

#### **FAJARDO**

On the eastern coast, Fajardo is a major boating center and the departure point for ferry and plane trips to the islands of Vieques and Culebra. With more than 1,000 boat slips, Puerto del Rey Marina is one of the largest marinas in the Caribbean.

The Ceiba Forest stretches from Fajardo to Ceiba along the coast and west to the El Yunque National Forest. It is a subtropical dry woodland, predominantly mangrove.





EL CONQUISTADOR RESORT BOOK NOW 787/863-1000



FOUR DIAMOND

Resort Hotel. Address: 1000 El Conquistador Ave 00738. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: The rooms are spacious with soft bedding, oversize flat-panel TVs, ample storage space, outdoor balconies and plenty of USB ports in convenient locations. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 984 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms, kitchens and condominiums. 1-6 stories, interior/exterior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 19 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, marina, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, playground, game room, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, luggage security pick-up, area transportation.





































THE FAJARDO INN BOOK NOW 787/860-6000



Hotel. Address: 52 Parcelas Beltran 00740.

#### LA PARGUERA

Settled in 1883, the fishing village of La Parguera has become a modest tourist area centered around the southwest coast's eerie neon waters. Along the coast, dozens of mangrove cays and islets form ornate channels that are popular among kayakers. The Lajas valley is known for its major crop, a large and delicious pineapple called the Piña Cabezona.

LA PARGUERA BIOLUMINESCENT BAY is 5 mi. (8 km) s. on the harbor. La Parguera is one of three bioluminescent bays in Puerto Rico: the others are found at Las Cabezas de San Juan Nature Preserve in Fajardo and at Mosquito Bay off the island of Viegues (see attraction listings). The eerie blue-green light is produced by microorganisms that cause the water to shimmer and glow when disturbed.

#### LOÍZA

East of San Juan on the northern coast, Loíza (loo-EEzah) has been nicknamed "the capital of traditions." The village was settled by Yoruban slaves in the 1500s and retains one of the highest percentages of African descendants on the island. The week-long Fiestas Tradicionales de Santiago Apóstol in late July is a colorful celebration of Taíno and African culture. Religious processions lead from the 17th-century Iglesia de San Patricio (St. Patrick's Church), considered the island's oldest church in continuous use. The festivities continue with music, food, fireworks and dancing the bomba. Loíza's festival masks, made from coconut husks and intricately painted, are highly prized.



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#### MANATI

HYATT PLACE MANATI BOOK NOW 787/854-1000



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HYATT PLACE AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates! Members also receive free breakfast at Hyatt Place/Hyatt House with their World of Hyatt membership!

Hotel. Address: 122 Carretera PR-2 00674. Location: Across from Doctor's Center Hospital Manati. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 104 units. 5 stories, interior corridors. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.



























#### **PONCE**

An important commercial port on the south coast, Ponce (PONE-say) is the center of the island's sugar, rum and coffee industries and has some of the largest textile mills in the Caribbean. In its center are two tree-shaded plazas bordering the graceful Cathedral of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Carnaval Ponceño, which coincides with Mardi Gras celebrations around the world, is famous for its papier-mâché masks and brightly colored costumes.

The Alhambra residential section has more than 125 Spanish-style estates. And throughout the city more than 600 of its 1,000 historic buildings have been restored, particularly on Isabel and Reina streets. A steep hill called El Vigía (The Watchman) was once a lookout post. At the top, a 100-foot observation tower in the shape of a cross, La Cruceta del Vigía, offers dramatic views of the city. A visitor information center is located at the base of the tower.

On the corner of avs. Marina and Esquina Aurora, a yellow house known as Casa de la Masacre de Ponce marks a bloody chapter in Puerto Rico's political history. On Easter Sunday 1937, police fired upon Nationalist demonstrators, killing 20 people and injuring hundreds.

PONCE MUSEUM OF ART (MUSEO DE ARTE DE PONCE) is at 2325 Luis A. Ferré Blvd. opposite Catholic University. Important paintings and sculpture

from Europe, Africa and the Americas span the 13th through 20th centuries. Highlights from the permanent collection include works by such artists as Eugène Delacroix, Lord Frederick Leighton, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, José Campeche, Auguste Rodin, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony Van Dyck and Diego Velázquez.

The Puerto Rican and Latin American galleries include pieces by Myrna Báez, José Campeche, Rafael Coronel, López Dirube, Luis Hernández, Carlos Mérida, Francisco Oller and Francisco Rodón. Traveling exhibits also are presented.

The building was designed by Edward Durell Stone, architect of the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. The Granada Garden is a replica of the gardens in Spain. Note: At time of publication repairs to the main museum galleries are ongoing. Exhibits can be viewed by appointment in an annex location: contact educacion@museoarteponce.org. Phone: (787) 848-0505 or (787) 840-1510.

SERRALLÉS CASTLE (MUSEO CASTILLO SER-**RALLÉS)** is at 17 El Vigía. Guided tours of this Spanish Revival home, built in the 1930s, provide insights into the lifestyle of its owner, a wealthy sugar and rum merchant. Gardens surround the home, and a butterfly house is on the grounds. Scenic city and coastal views are offered from an upstairs terrace. **Phone:** (787) 259-1774 or (787) 259-1775. **GT** 

## ALOFT PONCE HOTEL AND CASINO BOOK NOW 787/861-7080





AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy™ points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel. Address: Carr #2, Av Santiago de los Caballeros km 2289 00716. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 152

units. 6 stories, interior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants. Pool: outdoor, heated outdoor. Activities: lawn sports. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service.





























#### HILTON PONCE GOLF & CASINO RESORT BOOK NOW 787/259-7676





#### AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn Honors points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: 1150 Caribe Ave 00716. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: This lush tropically landscaped property lies on a black-sand beach. Each traditional-style room has either a private balcony or patio.

Relax in a hammock, cabana or day bed around the serene pool. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 255 units. 4-5 stories, exterior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, cabanas, regulation golf, miniature golf, tennis, playground, lawn sports, exercise room, massage. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry, area transportation.



























#### **RINCÓN**

The Atlantic Ocean meets the Caribbean Sea at Rincón (rin-KONE), where 8 miles of reef-lined beaches produce some spectacular waves. This sleepy village on Puerto Rico's west coast—the Porta del Sol, or "Door to the Sun"—has become a winter mecca for experienced surfers. Rincón first gained international attention during the 1968 World Surfing Championship, and many surfers now live here year-round.

Waves during the main season from November to March are generally too rough for swimming, but the surf quiets down the rest of the year for snorkeling, scuba diving and water sports. The largest breaks are at Domes

Beach, Playa Marías and Tres Palmas. Most restaurants, hotels and surf shops are clustered around Sandy Beach. More secluded spots include Pools Beach, Antonio's Beach and River Mouth. Tres Palmas Marine Reserve protects an offshore reef of elkhorn coral and other shallow-water varieties. The reserve also is home to hawksbill and leatherback turtles. Snorkeling is popular off Steps Beach.

Whale watching is popular from January through March, when humpbacks winter in the warm waters of Rincón Bay. The best view is from the park surrounding the Rincón Lighthouse, El Faro Punta Higüero, which was built by the Spanish in 1892 and reconstructed in 1922 after a tsunami.

VILLA COFRESI HOTEL & RESTAURANT BOOK NOW

787/823-2450



Hotel. Address: Road 115 KM 120 00677.

#### **RÍO GRANDE**

East of San Juan. Río Grande is the closest town to El Yungue National Forest. Several beach and golf resorts

have opened here in recent years, drawing new visitors to the northeast coast.



### HYATT REGENCY GRAND RESERVE PUERTO RICO BOOK NOW 787/657-1234





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of REGENCY Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Hotel, Address: 200 Coco Beach Blvd 00745, Location: Oceanfront, Facility: The spacious rooms feature upscale furnishings with ample seating and storage space, a 55" flat-panel TV with streaming features and USB ports near the desk and nightstand locations. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 579 units. 1-2 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 6 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry. (See ad p. 203.)































#### THE ST. REGIS BAHIA BEACH RESORT PUERTO RICO BOOK NOW 787/809-8000







AAA Benefit: Members save 5% or more and earn Marriott Bonvoy<sup>™</sup> points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Resort Hotel. Address: SR 187, KM 42 00745. Location: Oceanfront. STREGIS Facility: This stylish property sits on 483 acres with tropically landscaped grounds that overlook the ocean. The spacious suites feature luxurious

appointments with a soft color palette and outdoor seating. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 142 units. 2-3 stories, exterior corridors. Parking: valet only. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, fishing, snorkeling, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, bicycles, playground, lawn sports, trails, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.



FIVE DIAMOND































**BOOK NOW** 

For more information call: 787-657-1040

HYATT REGENCY GRAND RESERVE PUERTO RICO 200 Coco Beach Blvd, Rio Grande, PR., 00745





## WYNDHAM GRAND RIO MAR RAINFOREST BEACH & GOLF

BOOK NOW 787/888-6000



Resort Hotel. Address: 6000 Rio Mar Blvd 00745. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: There are many on-site activities: a casino, multiple dining venues, fantastic outdoor pools, a golf course, spa and more. The rooms are spacious with smart TVs, ample seating and storage space. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 400 units. 7 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee) and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, steamroom, regulation golf, tennis, recreation programs, playground, lawn sports, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, rental car service, luggage security pick-up.

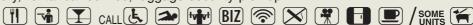


































#### SAN GERMÁN

Midway between Mayagüez and Ponce and surrounded by mountains, San Germán (her-MON) has been nicknamed Ciudad de Las Lomas, or City of the Hills. This is Puerto Rico's second oldest Spanish village, settled in 1511. It features two plazas with buildings representing a variety of architectural styles. The centerpiece of Parque de Santo Domingo is the famous Iglesia Porta Coéli (see attraction listing). Crowning the Plaza Francisco Mariano Quiñones is the Church of San Germán Auxerre, which was founded in 1688 and has undergone countless reconstructions over the centuries. The church features a crystal chandelier and a trompe l'oeil ceiling.

**IGLESIA PORTA COELI** is at Ramas and Dr. Veve sts., overlooking one of San Germán's two plazas, the Parque de Santo Domingo. Built in 1606, Porta Coeli is one of the oldest churches under the American flag. Its name means "gate of heaven."

Restored as a museum, the church has wooden statues, paintings, ornaments and liturgical objects from Puerto Rico's historic churches; images carved by 16thcentury santeros (saint makers); Spanish mosaics of Biblical scenes; and reproduction paintings by the 18thcentury artist José Campeche. Phone: (787) 892-5845.

#### SAN JUAN

San Juan is one of the oldest capital cities in the Western Hemisphere and the island's principal city, which draws a number of visitors for San Juan boat trips and southern Caribbean cruises leaving from the port in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The inner districts of Hato Rey, Río Piedras and Santurce, all connected to the rest of the city by the public transit system, are included within the metropolitan center. The large urban area also includes the towns of Bayamón, Carolina, Cataño, Guaynabo and San Juan. The Aqua Express, or AcuaExpreso, is a daily ferry service that connects Old San Juan with Cataño and Hato Rev at Pier 2.

El Condado Beach, an area also known as the Gold Coast, is distinguished by the luxury hotels along Avenida Ashford, where there's plenty of Condado Beach activities. In this popular resort region, there are numerous stores, restaurants, nightclubs and casinos, and a shoreline lined with umbrellas, palm trees and Spanish-style homes.

The General Archive and National Library of Puerto Rico, located on Avenida Ponce de León, is one of the final buildings erected by the Spanish. Constructed in 1877, it has served as a prison, a cigar factory, and a rum distillery. The structure is notable for its red-tiled flooring, stained-glass windows, chandeliers and chapel.

The 600,000-square-foot Puerto Rico Convention Center is another impressive structure. It's said to be the Caribbean's largest and most technologically advanced meeting venue of its kind. Designed in the "techno-tropic" architectural style, the San Juan convention center has the capacity to host up to 10,000 attendees.

ART MUSEUM OF PUERTO RICO (MUSEO DE ARTE **DE PUERTO RICO)** is at 299 Ave. de Diego in Santurce. Paintings, sculpture, photography, folk art and other media are housed within an expansive neoclassical building. The collection focuses on Puerto Rico's artistic tradition, with pieces ranging from colonial times to the

present. Peppered with sculptures and waterfalls, a nature trail weaves through a verdant setting of native island flora, encircling the center.

Guided tours are available by reservation. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (787) 977-6277. **GT** 

THE CAPITOL (EL CAPITOLIO) is on Ave. Ponce de León. Built of Georgia marble in the Renaissance style, the building is flanked by the commonwealth's legislative offices. The rotunda features an illuminated coat of arms; a pamphlet available on the second floor explains the symbolism of the rotunda's mosaics. Guided tours available by advance reservation. Phone: (787) 724-2030, (787) 721-5200, ext. 301 for tour information or (800) 981-2036. **GT** 

LUIS MUÑOZ RIVERA PARK (PARQUE LUIS MUÑOZ RIVERA) is on Avenida Luis Muñoz Rivera in Puerta de Tierra. The 27-acre oceanside park honors the statesman and poet who helped Puerto Rico gain its autonomy from Spain in 1897. This land was once a key part of San Juan's military defense; the 1769 powder house that supplied Fort San Jerónimo still stands on the grounds. Cultural events are held at the open-air Pabellón de la Paz. 

#### GAMBLING ESTABLISHMENTS

 San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino is at 1309 Ashford Ave. in Condado. Phone: (787) 722-7000 or (888) 817-2033.

#### **Old San Juan**

Settled in 1521, the seven-square-block area of Viejo San Juan remains partially enclosed by walls which once were believed necessary to protect San Juan Harbor. Spain continued this construction for 244 years. By the 19th century the military stronghold, protected by the fortresses of San Felipe del Morro and San Cristóbal, had developed into a quaint residential and commercial community. Restored to its former grandeur, Old San Juan exudes the atmosphere of colonial Spain with its pastelcolored houses, filigreed balconies, hidden plazas and narrow streets.

Paved with adoquines, bluish glazed bricks used for ballast in Spanish galleons, some streets in the old quarter are so narrow that the walls on both sides can be touched with outstretched arms. Other charming remnants of early times are the street staircases that scaled this hilly section. Halfway between the cathedral and San Juan Gate on Callejón de las Monjas and one block above it are two of these survivors. A prime example of colonial opulence is The Fortress (La Fortaleza), reputedly the oldest executive mansion still in use in the Western Hemisphere.

A series of bridges link the islet with the resort areas of Condado and Isla Verde as well as the residential communities of Santurce and the suburbs of Hato Rev and Río Piedras. The Plaza de Colón, where Old San Juan begins, is dominated by a statue of Christopher Columbus erected in 1893 to commemorate the 400th anniversary of his discovery of Puerto Rico. Today the plaza adjoins the main shopping district on Calle Fortaleza; city buses and free trolleys make frequent stops here. Plaza de San José is bounded by calles San Sebastián, Cristo and San José. Several historic structures and museums border the plaza, where a statue of Juan Ponce de León was fashioned from bronze cannons captured from the British in 1797. Narrow streets and slow-moving traffic make walking the most practical way to explore the old city.

Puerto Rico Tourism Company: La Princesa Bldg. #2, Paseo La Princesa, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico 00902-3960. **Phone:** (787) 721-2400.

CASA RAMÓN POWER Y GIRALT is at 155 Calle Tetuán. The former home of a Spanish military commander, the building is now headquarters for the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico (Para la Naturaleza). Interactive media exhibits explore the island's environmental issues. **Phone:** (787) 722-5834 or (787) 722-5882.

MUSEO DE LAS AMÉRICAS is on the second floor of the Cuartel de Ballajá on Calle Norzagaray. Housed in a massive three-story building designed to house Spanish soldiers and their families, the museum presents permanent and temporary exhibits with a concentration on the artwork of the Americas. Displays include archeological artifacts, sculpture, Amazon Indian photographs and objects, folk art, a peasant's house and a replica of a country chapel. A permanent exhibit highlights African heritage. Guided tours are available by reservation. **Time:** Allow 30 minutes minimum. **Phone:** (787) 724-5052. **GT** 

SAN JUAN NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE is on the north shore of Old San Juan overlooking the bay. The extensive site contains the fortifications built by the Spanish to protect San Juan and the treasure-laden fleets that sailed past the city en route to Spain. Puerta de San Juan at the foot of Caleta de San Juan is the most impressive and last remaining of six gates of the old city wall. The 1639 structure stands more than 16 feet (5 m) tall.

The site encompasses two large forts and a small inlet fortification, Castillo de San Juan de la Cruz. El Cañuelo, as the smallest fort is known, was built on Isla de Cabras at the entrance to San Juan Harbor, about 1610 as a wooden structure. Destroyed by the Dutch in 1625, it was rebuilt in stone in the 1660s. The tiny fort is closed to the public.

Guided tours of the national historic site are available by reservation. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. **Phone:** (787) 729-6777. **GT** 

Castillo San Cristóbal stands on a hill at the e. edge of Old San Juan n. of Ave. Muñoz Rivera at San Juan National Historic Site. The 27-acre (11-hectare) fortification was the largest ever built by the Spanish in the New World. Constructed 1635-1783, the castle fort is connected to outworks by a series of tunnels and dry moats. Gunrooms, barracks and officers' quarters surround the main courtyard. The fort's powerful artillery repelled British forces attacking from the east in 1797. The first shot of the Spanish-American War in Puerto Rico was fired from the fort in 1898.

Guided tours of the national historic site are available by reservation. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. **Phone:** (787) 729-6777. **GT** 

📆 Castillo San Felipe del Morro (El Morro) was built on a promontory at the n.w. tip of Old San Juan, now part of San Juan National Historic Site. The grounds are closed to motor vehicles; visitors walk onequarter mile (.4 km) to the fort from underground parking at Plaza del Quinto Centenario on Calle Norzagaray.

The most strategic of San Juan's defense systems, El Morro repelled attacks by the British, Dutch and French over the course of 300 years. Six levels of impressive batteries rising 140 feet (43 m) out of the sea afford a beautiful harbor view. A network of ramps and stairways connects the ramparts.

Construction began in 1539 with a simple tower designed to guard the channel to the harbor. Most of the massive earthworks and fortifications were built between 1589 and the 1650s, and the fort was completed by 1787. The fort contains a museum with examples of 16th- and 17th-century armor and weapons, a chapel and audiovisual exhibits. Guided tours of the national historic site are available by reservation. Comfortable walking shoes are recommended. **Phone:** (787) 729-6960. **GT** 

WHITE HOUSE MUSEUM (CASA BLANCA) is at 1 Calle San Sebastián above the seawall. A wooden fort on the site burned in 1521, and this fortified mansion was built in its place 2 years later for Juan Ponce de León by his sonin-law. The conquistador died before its completion. His family lived here for 250 years, until the Spanish government acquired it for a military headquarters. Gardens surround the mansion, which is furnished with 16th- and 17th-century antiques.

Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (787) 725-1454. **GT** 

#### **AAA Walking Tours**

#### Old San Juan

This walking tour of Old San Juan will take 2-4 hours, depending on your pace as well as the number of listed sites you visit. Those attractions appearing in bold type have detailed listings in the Old San Juan section. The historic district is small—a seven-square-block area of pastel-colored colonial buildings—but the cobbled streets are often steep and uneven; wear comfortable shoes and walk with care. Don't forget sunscreen, bottled water and a hat in the hottest months.

Begin your walking tour at the visitor center of the Puerto Rico Tourism Company. The building is on the waterfront at Plaza de la Dársena, just across the street from Pier 1. Here you can pick up maps, brochures and a free daiquiri sample before venturing into the heart of Old San Juan.

From the visitor center, follow the paved brick walkway west along the port toward Paseo de La Princesa. The U.S. Customs House with its pink stucco exterior and Moorish details will be on your left; the towering Art Deco edifice of Banco Popular will be on your right across the street. Two orange columns mark the entrance to the Paseo, the tree-lined promenade winding along the ancient city wall and the rocky shore of San Juan Bay. Pocket parks and benches provide resting places along the way. The massive wall, known as "La Muralla," stands 42 feet high and was constructed with parallel sections of sandstone blocks. Sand poured between the sections helped absorb the impact of cannon balls. Completed in 1782, the towering fortification stretches for 3.4 miles and once enclosed the entire colonial capital. Garitas, or sentry boxes, crown the wall at prominent points along the

Toward the end of the main promenade is **La Princesa**. the old penitentiary. Now restored, the gray-and-white building houses a visitor center for the Puerto Rico Tourism Company and a gallery for local artists. At the point where the Paseo meets San Juan Bay, the Raíces fountain by sculptor Luís Sanguino honors the three cultures—Taíno, Spanish and African—comprising modern Puerto Rico.

Following the walkway into the deep shade of banyan trees, you'll pass the jagged metal spikes of *Crecimiento*, a sculpture by Carmen Inés Blondet. Above the wall are the gardens of The Fortress (La Fortaleza), the governor's mansion.

Rounding a bend in the stone wall, you'll approach the Puerta de San Juan, or San Juan Gate, as seafaring guests approached the city for centuries. The red gate was one of six in the original fortification, and its massive wooden doors were locked at sundown to guard against attack. Disembarking from their ships, visiting dignitaries were greeted here and escorted to the cathedral for an official blessing. The Latin inscription reads, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

From here, the Paseo continues along the wall to the foot of Castillo San Felipe del Morro (El Morro). Future plans call for the trail to access the fort, but for now, it ends below the water battery. Should you decide to walk out to the point and back, you'll see many of Old San Juan's furry residents lazing in the sun; a colony of feral cats is protected by the national park service and fed by a local organization called "Save a Gato."

To continue the walking tour, pass through the gate and take a sharp left to follow the steep walkway up the hill on Calle Recinto del Oeste toward the Plazuela de la Rogativa. This little plaza at the top of the wall is home to La Rogativa, a striking sculpture created by Lindsay Daen to mark San Juan's 450th anniversary. The bronze statue of a bishop and three women bearing torches pays tribute to a beloved local legend: during a British siege in 1797, it is said that the enemy saw the lights of a religious procession and fled, thinking Spanish reinforcements were on the way.

The street splits just above the plaza; follow the lower road through the white gate and into the shade. On your right will be the walled gardens of Casa Blanca, or the White House Museum. On the left, you will pass Casa Rosada, the Pink House, a former Spanish barracks and now a day-care center. Follow the long walls of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture and the Academy of Fine Arts to the top of the hill, where you will face the low citadel of Castillo San Felipe del Morro (El Morro). It's a quartermile across the field; the grounds are closed to motor traffic. On weekends, you'll often see families flying kites and picnicking on the grass. The fortification is part of San Juan National Historic Site. Water fountains and restrooms are available at both sites.

Built on a promontory high above the harbor, El Morro repelled attacks by the British, Dutch and French over the course of three centuries. Construction began in 1539 and continued until 1787. Surrounded by a dry moat, it covers six levels—from the water battery to the upper bastions—and includes kitchens, barracks, a chapel, gun batteries, dungeons, secret tunnels and a lighthouse. Looking west from the battlements you can see El Cañuelo, smallest of the three forts built to defend the harbor. The first wooden fort, San Juan de la Cruz, was built on La Isla de Cabras (Goat Island) about 1610. Destroyed by the Dutch, it was reconstructed in stone in the 1670s.

To the east, you have a bird's-eye view of the beautiful Cementerío de San Juan with its pink-domed chapel dedicated to Santa Maria Magdalena de Pazzis. The colorful neighborhood beyond the cemetery, La Perla, is picturesque from a distance but should not be explored on foot—it's one of few places in Old San Juan deemed unsafe for tourists.

Leaving the fort, follow the main walkway across the field and through the traffic intersection on Calle Norzagaray into the Plaza de Ballajá. This was once the city's hospital center. The first building on the right, the 1858 Antiguo Manicomio, housed the mentally ill. It now contains classrooms for the Puerto Rican Academy of Fine Arts.

Across the plaza, the three-story Cuartel de Ballajá was a barracks for 19th-century Spanish soldiers and their families. With its massive inner courtyard, the building covers nearly 3 acres. Take time to walk upstairs to the second floor, where the **Museo de las Américas** displays archeological artifacts and colorful examples of folk art.

Leaving Cuartel de Ballajá, walk to the top of the plaza; on the right is the White House Museum (Casa Blanca). This fortified mansion was built in 1523 for Juan Ponce de León by his son-in-law. The conquistador died before its completion, but his family lived here for 250 years until the Spanish government acquired it for a military headquarters. Three centuries' worth of antiques decorate the museum home, and the gardens are a shady spot to rest.

Leaving Casa Blanca, cross the plaza to face the statue honoring Eugenio Maria de Hostos, a 19th-century educator who advocated an independent confederation between Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Cuba. Follow the street leading east between the Cuartel de Ballajá and its yellow counterpart, the Antiguo Hospital de la Concepción, toward the white Church of San José.

On the left, you will enter the top terrace of the Plaza del Quinto Centenario, commemorating the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World. The giant stone pillar, *Tótem Telúrico*, was created by sculptor Jaime Suárez as a symbol of Caribbean Indian cultures.

Beneath the monument is a parking garage, and the busy street of Calle Cristo emerges from under the terrace into Old San Juan. Watch for fast-moving taxis and trucks as you return to the walking route. The street will jog toward the right, bringing you into Plaza San José.

The statue of Ponce de León at the center of this square was created by melting down British cannons. It's a popular gathering place for local residents. The plaza's heart is La Iglesia de San José, the second-oldest church in the Western Hemisphere. Dominican friars began building the original chapel in 1532. The interior features vaulted Gothic ceilings, a collection of religious paintings

and frescoes, Ponce de León's family coat of arms and a figure of Christ on the cross that may date to the mid-16th century.

Follow the steep, cobbled street of Calle Cristo as it leads downhill from Plaza San José toward the port. On the right, you'll pass the 1842 Seminario Concilar and the 17th-century El Convento Hotel, a former Carmelite convent. The hotel faces the shaded Plaza de la Catedral and the graceful **Catedral de San Juan Bautista**. This rare example of Caribbean medieval architecture features a circular staircase, vaulted ceilings and venerated relics. The marble tomb of Juan Ponce de León stands near the transept.

Continue south on Calle Cristo past the designer shops and T-shirt stores to Calle Fortaleza. One block to your right is the oldest executive mansion still in use in the Western Hemisphere, **The Fortress (La Fortaleza)**. Also known as El Palacio de Santa Catalina, the blue-and-white building has been the residence of Puerto Rico's governors and the seat of government for more than 4 centuries. Guided tours of the gardens are offered in English; proper attire is required.

Calle Cristo ends at the gated Christ Chapel (Capilla del Cristo), a small stone chapel built in honor of a fabled miracle. Legend says that a horse and rider plunged off this cliff during a festival race in 1753, but prayers saved the rider's life. (Some versions of the story say he died but his mount survived.) Nevertheless, this tiny chapel was erected in thanksgiving. The building is only open to the public on Tuesdays, when the glass doors are unlocked to reveal a golden altar and painted icons. The Parque de las Palomas atop the city wall offers a good view of the port. Keep your camera handy—when a visitor buys a bag of dried corn to feed the pigeons, it can look like a scene from Hitchcock's "The Birds."

Also within the cul-de-sac at the end of Calle Cristo are the **Book Museum and Library (La Casa del Libro)**, a restored and furnished 18th-century residence holding a specialized library of 4,000 antique books; and the Centro Nacional de Artes Populares y Artesanías, a popular place to shop for handcrafted souvenirs.

To end the tour early and take a shortcut back to the waterfront, walk behind the chapel and follow Calle Tetuán east, passing Casa Ramón Power y Giralt—the former home of a Spanish military hero and now headquarters of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico (Para la Naturaleza)—and the pink Iglesia de Santa Ana. Turn right on Calle San Justo to finish your tour at the cruise ship piers.

To continue the full walking tour, return north on Calle Cristo to Calle Fortaleza and turn right. Take a left at the next corner onto Calle de San José to reach Old San Juan's main square, Plaza de Armas. The statues on the fountain represent the four seasons. The former Spanish treasury on the left, La Intendencia, is headquarters of the Puerto Rico Department of State. City Hall (Casa Alcaldía) fronts the plaza on Calle San Francisco. The building's façade was said to have been inspired by the city hall in Madrid.

There are two drug stores on the northeast corner if you need to pick up any supplies. Continue past them on Calle San Francisco. A little farther on is the Plaza de Salvador Brau with its seated statue of the 19th-century Puerto Rican writer. Adjoining the plaza is the 1756 Franciscan Chapel.

The street will open onto Columbus Square (Plaza de Colón), where a statue of the explorer stands on the stone column above a fountain. A two-sided sign with maps of the island and Old San Juan will help you get your bearings. At the bottom of the plaza is El Tapia Theater (Teatro Tapia), one of Puerto Rico's most cherished cultural monuments. Built in 1832, the restored theater is one of the oldest still in use in the Western Hemisphere. To the east, the gray-and-white Antiguo Casino is an opulent example of French Second Empire architecture, now used for state functions.

The walls of **Castillo San Cristóbal** dominate the northeast corner. From Plaza de Colón, follow the street up the hill to the gate of the city's main defense against land attacks. The 27-acre (11-hectare) fortification was the largest ever built by the Spanish in the New World. Visitors can climb the ramparts and wander a maze of tunnels inside this UNESCO World Heritage Site, which remains a monument to military engineering. Take time to explore the museum exhibits of armor and weaponry.

From Castillo San Cristóbal it's a short walk back down to the waterfront. If you're ready for a break, hop aboard the free trolley (although it may be crowded if cruise ships are in port).

On foot, walk back through Columbus Square (Plaza de Colón) and follow Recinto Sur; El Tapia Theater (Teatro Tapia) will be on your left. At the intersection of Recinto Sur and Calle Tetuán, you'll pass a triangular plaza and a statue of Arturo Somohano, composer and director of the San Juan Symphony Orchestra. International restaurants along Recinto Sur offer everything from sushi to Italian to Transylvanian cuisine. Passing the six-story Galeria, you'll see the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse with its Moorish roof. Turn left on Calle Tanca to come full circle on your walking tour of Old San Juan.



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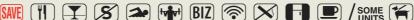
















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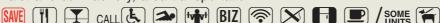
Hotel. Address: 250 Convention Blvd 00907. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 177 units. 7 stories, interior corridors.

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Extended Stay Hotel. Address: 615 Ave Fernandez Juncos Distrito de Convenciones 00907. Facility: Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 126 units, some efficiencies and kitchens. 6 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee). Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: game room, exercise room. Guest Services: coin laundry.































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Hotel, Address: 580 Fernandez Juncos Ave 00907, Location: Near San Juan Convention Center. Facility: Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 149 units. 6 stories, interior corridors. Parking: on-site (fee). Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Pool: outdoor. Activities: exercise room. Guest Services: coin laundry, area transportation.

























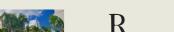






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heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, recreation programs, bicycles, exercise room. Guest Services: valet and coin laundry.



























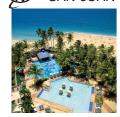












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Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.



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#### **VEGA BAJA**

MUSEO CASA ALONSO is at Calle Betances 34. A guided tour of the 1776 Neoclassic-Criollo structure includes the music room, library, kitchens and bedrooms. Furnishings from the 18th-through 20th centuries are on display. Guides discuss the various families that owned the house and their influence on Puerto Rico's history. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (787) 855-1931.

#### **VIEQUES**

Long a missile range for the U.S. Navy, Viegues (vee-AY-kays) finally saw an end to the bombing in May 2003. The military had purchased part of the island in the 1940s to use for weapons testing. After many years of protest, the base was finally turned over to the government of Puerto Rico, which is working to reclaim the land. Only the eastern tip of the island remains restricted. The Viegues National Wildlife Refuge has been established on nearly 18,000 acres on both ends of the island to protect such endangered animals as the brown pelican, the Antillean manatee and four species of sea turtles.

With its guiet beaches and coral reefs, Viegues has become a popular destination for eco-tourism. The waters literally glow in the dark at Mosquito Bay, one of the brightest bioluminescent bays in the world. Tiny microorganisms called dinoflagellates create the mysterious bluegreen light, which is best viewed on cloudy or moonless nights. Several companies provide guided tours of the bay, including Black Beard Sports, (787) 300-0155 and JAK Water Sports, (787) 644-7112.

The Punta Mulas Lighthouse, known as Morropó, has been protecting the port town of Isabel Segunda since 1893. Viegues lies about 8 miles off the eastern shore of Puerto Rico; daily ferries run from Fajardo, and air flights are available from Luis Muñoz Marin International Airport and also from the Isla Grande Airport in the Convention Center District.

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# St. Barthélemy

ffectionately called St. Barths, St. Barthélemy (bar-TELL-a-mee) lies 125 miles (200 km) northwest of Guadeloupe at the northern end of the Leeward Islands. St. Barths' residents are probably the least "Caribbean" of the islands' people. Because the island's rocky, arid soil supported few slave plantations—and due to an unlikely 100-year ownership by Sweden-most residents are fair-skinned. Remnants of the Swedish ownership remain, most notably in the name of the capital, Gustavia. A trip around the tiny island, however, reveals scenes reminiscent of 17th-century France, a legacy of the island's

original settlers maintained by today's reserved and selfsufficient residents. A quiet island with more than a dozen white sand beaches. St. Barths also has rocky hillsides and lush green valleys.

#### **History**

Discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1493 and named for his brother Bartolomeo, St. Barths was first settled by French colonists from nearby St. Kitts in 1648. The settlement failed, however, and in 1651 the French sold the island to the Knights of Malta. Five years later it was raided by the fierce Caribs, then abandoned until

1673 when it was again settled by the French, but from Normandy and Brittany.

This colony succeeded, in large part because French buccaneers brought to the island vast quantities of plunder from Spanish galleons. One such pirate, Monbars the Exterminator, reputedly maintained his headquarters on St. Barths, and his treasure is said to be hidden among the coves and buried in the island sands.

Except for a brief British takeover in 1758, St. Barths remained in French hands until 1784 when it was ceded to Sweden in exchange for trading rights in Gothenburg, Sweden. The Swedes declared St. Barths a neutral and free port, and made fortunes in trade for many years. Following a protracted economic decline, the Swedish people voted to sell the island back to France. France agreed to repurchase the island and maintained its free-port status. After being a dependency of Guadeloupe, a department and region of France, St. Barths became an Overseas Collectivity of France in 2007.

The people of St. Barths are industrious, spiritual and soft-mannered. Some work in the expanding tourist trade, but these private people return quietly to their homes at the end of the day. Lacking significant agricultural and industrial opportunities, the men have taken to the sea and are considered superb sailors and fishermen. Many women have become skilled at weaving straw hats, baskets and similar items to sell to tourists. Sailboats and yachts fill the harbor, but St. Barths doesn't promote itself as a cruise destination. Government officials hope to control growth on the island, thus preserving its reputation as a chic hideaway for the rich and famous.

#### Shopping

St. Barths is a duty-free port; therefore, perfumes, cosmetics, china, crystal, watches, imported jewelry, resort wear, liquor and tobacco sell at bargain prices. Some selections are limited, but there are enough bargains to warrant setting aside time for shopping, particularly for "name" merchandise. Besides duty-free items, there is delicately woven reed work unique to St. Barths as well as bonnets, seashells, pottery and island artwork. The village of Corossol is known for its straw goods.

Downtown Gustavia is a center for boutiques and dutyfree shops. Shopping centers include La Villa Créole and Pelican Plage in St. Jean and La Savane Commercial Center opposite the airport. An array of lotions and cosmetics is produced in Lorient.

Most shops are open daily 9-noon and 2-6, although some close for the day at noon on Saturday. Typical banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-noon and 2-3:30. The currency exchange office in downtown Gustavia is open Mon.-Fri. 8:30-noon and 2:30-5, Sat. 8:30-noon. Banks are closed on holidays and some afternoons preceding holidays. U.S. dollars are accepted most places, and prices are often quoted in dollars. Major credit cards are usually accepted.

#### Food and Drink

Dining on St. Barths can be a memorable experience. Young chefs who have trained in some of France's greatest restaurants enjoy plying their trade on the island. Combining local fruits and spices with classical French traditions, they have created a Caribbean showcase of French cuisine.

Most restaurants are small, but each is different either in food, setting or atmosphere. Some are beach cafes featuring fresh lobster and charcoal-grilled steaks; some specialize in seafood; and some, particularly in the finer hotels, present traditional French cuisine and international menus.

In Gustavia some of the restaurants are housed in quaint little buildings dating back to the Swedes and early French settlers. La Rotisserie is a deluxe French deli offering picnic fare and afternoon gourmet treats. Restaurants are required by law to add a 10-15 percent service charge (service compris) to their prices. Reservations are always a good idea. Some hotels and restaurants might be closed in the fall for refurbishing or due to their owners' vacations.

St. Barths offers the usual Caribbean fare in the way of beer and potent rum punch. The wine connoisseur, however, will appreciate the island's wine cellars, where more than a million bottles of France's best vintages are kept under strictly controlled conditions.

#### **Sports and Amusements**

For many the attraction to St. Barths is its quiet, leisurely pace. There are no casinos, large resorts or organized activities and few nightclubs. You won't find a single golf course on the island, though there is a driving range, and only a few tennis courts. Instead the emphasis is on sand and surf. Opportunities abound for swimming, yachting and sailing, windsurfing, deep-sea fishing, scuba diving and snorkeling.

The gleaming white sand beaches are all public and free; most are never crowded, and complete privacy is often readily available. The beaches of Grand Cul de Sac, on the northeast shore, and St. Jean are both in the vicinity of hotels, restaurants and water sports outlets. Flamands, to the northwest of St. Jean, is a classic stretch of white sand fringed with palm trees. Favored by island families on Sundays, the secluded beaches at Marigot and Lorient on the north shore are otherwise guiet.

In the south, Gouverneur offers complete privacy; Saline, just to the east, is more popular. Shell Beach, so named because it is partially covered with seashells, can be reached on foot from Gustavia. Public Beach is near the commercial pier on the other side of town. The least accessible is Colombier in the northwest. It can be reached by boat from Gustavia or by car to the villages of Colombier or Flamands, then a 20-minute hike down a scenic path.

Lying about midway between the major yachting centers of Antigua and Virgin Gorda Island, St. Barths is naturally a popular yachting destination. Gustavia's harbor has docking facilities for about 40 yachts, and there also are anchorages at nearby Public, Corossol, Colombier and Fourchue; mooring instructions are available from the Marine Reserve at Colombier. Shipchandler du Port Franc in Gustavia carries yachting supplies and accessories; phone (590) 27-86-29. Sailing information is available from the Office du Tourisme on the harborfront in Gustavia. A full-day round-trip sail from Gustavia to lle Fourchue, an uninhabited island, and Colombier is available. Other charter trips also can be arranged.

Windsurfing is perhaps the most popular sport on the island; the colorful, billowing sails are a common offshore sight. Rentals and lessons are available at outlets in St. Jean and Grand Cul de Sac. Sailing enthusiasts can rent Hobie Cats in St. Jean. CaribWaterplay in St. Jean offers specialized instruction.

The waters around St. Barths abound in thazard, wahoo, mahi-mahi, bonito, barracuda and marlin. Fishing is prohibited in several offshore zones protected by the St. Barthélemy Marine Reserve; information about deep-sea fishing expeditions is available through OceanMust Boat Rental Center, (590) 27-62-25; and Masterski Pilou, (590) 27-91-79.

Licensed, accredited diversaters at Jicky Marine Service in Gustavia conduct dive schools and have all the necessary gear available; phone (590) 27-70-34. Other scuba clubs in Gustavia include Plongée Caraïbes Catamaran. Snorkeling is good in many areas off the beaches and islets; the waters off Gouverneur, St. Jean and Grand Cul de Sac are usually the calmest. Gear is sold in Gustavia and St. Jean.

Although limited, nightlife on St. Barths is not totally lacking. Sailors and young locals gather at Le Select, across the street at the Bar de l'Oubli or at the BAZ Bar (Le Bête A Z'Ailes) in Gustavia. Bonito St. Barth's lounge overlooks the harbor and is popular with visiting yachtsmen. During the winter season, live jazz is on the menu at some spots. St. Barth Magazine, Le Journal de St. Barth, Le News and St Barth Weekly contain information about current entertainment. Published regularly during the winter season, they are distributed free all over the island.

With its Carnival festivities kicking off in early January and continuing through Ash Wednesday, St. Barthélemy is one of few countries in the world not to end its celebration on the traditional "Fat Tuesday" of Mardi Gras. The St. Barts Music Festival in mid-January features worldrenowned classical and jazz musicians. The St. Barths Bucket Regatta is a 4-day mega-yacht race held in late March. At the St. Barth Film Festival during the last week in April, all films are presented in the original languages, with subtitles in French. The St. Barthélémy Theatre Festival follows in May.

The year's most important event is the annual Festival of St. Barthélemy (Fête de St. Barthélemy), celebrated on the weekends before and after August 24—feast day of the island's patron saint. Colorful booths line the streets of Gustavia, giving it the look and feel of a French country fair. July and August events featuring regattas, live music and fireworks also are held in the villages of Corossol at the St. Louis Festival and Lorient at the Fête du Vent.

#### Sightseeing

Just four or five roads meander around St. Barths, so it's nearly impossible to get off the beaten path; you can drive all around the island in about an hour. An island map can be obtained in Gustavia at the Office du Tourisme on the harborfront. Gustavia also is a good place to get an introduction to island life; this quaint little harbor town can be explored on foot. At about 11 a.m., sleek catamarans start arriving with day trippers from St. Maarten, filling the streets and shops with visitors. From Monday afternoon through Thursday morning, visitors can mingle with the locals at a small public market on rue du Roi Oscar II.

Northwest of Gustavia is the village of Corossol, where colorful fishing boats bob at anchor in the harbor and women at roadside stands weave palm fronds into baskets. Even while displaying their wares, villagers are camera shy and do not like to be photographed. Similar scenes can be found in the nearby village of Colombier.

From Colombier you can continue north to the secluded beach where an easy hike takes you to viewpoint at Grande Roche. Here you can see the uninhabited offshore islands to the north and Pointe Milou to the east.

Another possible trip is through the busy resort town of St. Jean, east through Lorient, along the north shore to Pointe Milou and Marigot, then south to the rocky coast of Grand Fond. The hilly vicinity of Vitet is just a short drive from Marigot. The volcanic Morne du Vitet, at 938 feet (286 m), is the highest peak on the island. From Grand Fond the road turns inland and back to Lorient. St. Jean and Gustavia.

Island tours are available for up to eight people by minibus or taxi, and there are a number of tour operators.

#### **Transportation**

St. Jean's Gustaf III Airport has a short landing strip able to handle nothing larger than 20-seat STOL (Short Take-Off and Landing) aircraft, and it is not equipped for night landings. The steep landing approach tests the nerves of even veteran air travelers. From the United States, the principal gateway to St. Barths is St. Maarten, where St. Barth Commuter and Windward Island Airways (Winair) fly in from Princess Juliana International Airport. St. Barth Commuter also flies from Esperance Airport on the French side in St. Martin. These flights take about 15 minutes.

Other flights are available from San Juan, Guadeloupe and Antigua. Most carriers offer several flights daily. St. Barths also is a port of call for some cruise ships.

Taxis are available at the airport; the minimum fare is around \$17, and the fare to most hotels is about \$35. Fares increase by 50 percent Mon.-Sat. from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. and all day Sun. and holidays. Rates are not fixed, so it is always a good idea to agree upon the fare in advance. There are just two taxi stands on St. Barths: at the airport and on the Rue de la République harborfront in Gustavia.

Several major and local car rental agencies operate from the airport. Rates are about \$45-\$90 per day and include unlimited mileage, collision damage insurance and free delivery and pickup; rates are discounted in the summer. A U.S. driver's license is valid. Small sport utility vehicles are replacing the familiar gurgels, minimokes and other jeeplike conveyances for traveling the island's narrow, hilly roads.

Car rental plans can sometimes be made in advance through your hotel. Reservations are required during peak season. Motorbikes also are available for rent at about \$60 per day with a \$100 deposit; a valid driver's license is required. Helmets are required on the island when operating two-wheeled vehicles.

Edge Catamaran departs for Simpson Bay, St. Maarten, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. This is a 1-day roundtrip excursion, but the skippers will take one-way passengers on a space-available basis for about \$65. The ferry Voyager travels between Gustavia and Marigot or Oyster Pond, St. Martin, two-six times daily; phone (590) 87-10-68. The Great Bay Express offers ferry service between Gustavia and Philipsburg, St. Maarten; phone (721) 520-5015.

## FAST FACTS

POPULATION: 7,131.

**AREA:** 21 sq km (8 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Gustavia.

HIGHEST POINT: 286 m (938 ft.), Morne du Vitet.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard. **LANGUAGE:** French and English.

**GOVERNMENT:** Overseas Collectivity of France.

**CURRENCY:** Euro Dollar. \$1 U.S. = approx. .88 Euro.

U.S. currency is widely accepted.

**ELECTRICITY:** 220 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 18-25, depending on the rental car agency. An international driving permit is advised; drive on right.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Mardi Gras (day before Ash Wednesday); Easter Monday; Labour Day, May 1; Victory Day, May 8; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Bastille Day, July 14; Festival of St. Barthélemy, Aug. 24; Abolition Day, Oct. 9; All Saints Day, Nov. 1; All Souls Day, Nov. 2; Armistice Day, Nov. 11; Assumption Day and St. Barths' Pitea Day, Nov. 16; Christmas, Dec. 25.

**TAXES:** A 10 percent room tax, a 5 percent tourism tax and a 15 percent service charge are added to most hotel and restaurant bills. Departure tax \$15 U.S.

**IMMIGRATION:** A valid passport and return or onward ticket are required for U.S. citizens entering the French West Indies. No visa needed for stays up to 30 days. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call St. Barthélemy from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 590 + 590 + the 6-digit local number.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

French Government Tourist Office 825 3rd Ave., 29th Floor New York, NY 10022 (212) 838-7800

Office du Tourisme Quai du Général de Gaulle

BP 591

Gustavia, St. Barthélemy 97133

(590) 27-87-27

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Boutique Hotel. **Address:** Grand Cul-de-Sac Beach Main Rd 97133.

### ST. JEAN

EDEN ROCK - ST BARTHS BOOK NOW 590/590-29-79-99

Boutique Hotel. Address: Baie de St Jean 97133.

HOTEL LE VILLAGE SAINT-BARTH BOOK NOW 590/590-27-61-39

Cottage. Address: Rue de St Jean 97133.

#### TOINY

HOTEL LE TOINY **BOOK NOW** 590/590-27-88-88

Cottage. Address: Anse de Toiny 97133.

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# St. Eustatius and Saba

uiet and tiny, with an area of merely 11.8 square miles (31 sq km), St. Eustatius (also called Statia) consists of two dormant volcanoes linked by a central plain. While the northern volcano has been eroded to a cluster of hills, the southern one, known as the Quill, is perfectly formed and rises precipitously to nearly 2,000 feet (610 m). Home to some 58 species of birds and 18 species of orchids, the Quill derived its name from English settlers because they could not pronounce the Dutch word Kuil.

Climatic conditions vary strikingly for such a small island: The Atlantic side has strong winds and low vegetation; the Caribbean side is calm with tall coconut, almond, cotton and mango trees.

Even smaller is Saba (SAY-ba), only 5 square miles (13 sq km) and located just north of Statia. Saba is unusual among Caribbean islands—its steep volcanic cliffs rise straight out of the water, leaving no room for beaches. What it lacks in sand, the island makes up for in breathtaking views of the sea.

Along with St. Maarten, Statia and Saba form the Windward Islands of the Dutch Caribbean.

## History

Christopher Columbus first sighted St. Eustatius on his second voyage in 1493. Never settled by Spain, the island was first colonized by France in 1629, then by Holland in 1636. St. Eustatius changed hands 22 times between the French and Dutch-and the English in 1665-before Dutch possession finally became permanent in 1816.

During its early years St. Eustatius developed into a prosperous center for the slave trade and mercantile exchange of the eastern Caribbean, earning the nickname "The Golden Rock." It also was a vital depot for supplies shipped from Europe to the American Revolutionaries. In 1776 St. Eustatius became the first foreign government to officially recognize the United States by firing a salute from Fort Oranje to the American brig *Andrew Doria*. But the Dutch settlers' pro-American sympathies ultimately led to the sacking of St. Eustatius by George Bridges Rodney, a British admiral based in St. Lucia. Rodney arrived in St. Eustatius with a fleet of 15 ships and a crew of 3,000 men on Feb. 3, 1781, an event that marked the end of the tiny island's prosperity.

# Shopping

Shopping on Statia includes Mazinga on the Bay, where arts and crafts, a variety of cheeses, fine wines, gift items and souvenirs are offered.

Saba's local specialties are Saba lace, including handcrafted blouses, handkerchiefs and linens, and Saba Spice, an aromatic blend of 150 proof cask rum, brown sugar, fennel seed, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. The Windwardside is an ideal place to purchase these and one-of-a-kind handmade glass beads, jewelry, folk art and original paintings by local artisans and artists.

### Food and Drink

Spiny lobster in garlic sauce, whelk stew, bread baked in stone ovens and various shrimp and goat dishes are popular on St. Eustatius. Local restaurants serve such specialties as tripe, bullfoot soup, conch soup and curried vegetables.

Fare on Saba includes gourmet seafood and duck dishes as well as Caribbean and Creole meals.

# Sports and Amusements

Reef and wreck diving is popular in St. Eustatius. Several vendors offer PADI certification, dive packages and equipment rental, including Scubaqua Dive Center, (599) 319-5450. In Saba, various dive packages are offered by Saba Divers, (599) 416-2526.

The St. Eustatius National Marine Park offers more than 30 sites where divers can view pristine coral reefs, dropoffs, walls, pinnacles, canyons and historical wrecks with an abundance of fish, lobster and sea turtles. The park covers more than 10 square miles (27.5 sq km), encompassing the entire coast. Sites range from Gallows Bay to the White Wall area and from Jenkins Bay to North Point and Oranjebaai. No boat anchoring is permitted in the reserves. Fee \$6 per dive, annual pass \$30.

The Saba National Marine Park, which encircles the entire island, has marked dive sites and snorkeling trails. Fee \$3 per dive. Surrounded by waters with a visibility up to 200 feet (60 m), Saba is ideal for divers.

# Sightseeing

Sightseeing is concentrated near Fort Oranje in Oranjestad, the capital of St. Eustatius. The fort was built in 1629 by the French and enlarged in 1636 by the Dutch to include bigger cannons from Amsterdam. Maps for walking tours past many 17th-, 18th- and 19th-century buildings are available at the St. Eustatius Historical Foundation Museum in Upper Town. Three Widows' Corner near the fort features an 18th-century townhouse and a 19th-century Victorian home in a charming tropical courtyard.

In addition to a few shops and inns, the town also contains the historic Government's Guest House, where government is headquartered; the Dutch Reformed Church, a 1755 structure with a 75-foot tower; the ruins of the 1739 Honen Dalim Synagogue, one of the oldest Jewish synagogues in the Western Hemisphere; and a library. The St. Eustatius Historical Foundation Museum contains exhibits about the pre-Columbian and Colonial periods.

Fort de Windt, built in the mid-18th century presumably under the command of Jan de Windt, lies at the southern tip of the island, offering breathtaking views of St. Kitts. Fort de Windt and Fort Oranje are the only two forts that are restored out of 19 surrounding the island.

The tourist office has information about tours, history, cruises, swimming, kayaking, snorkeling and scuba diving. Guides lead hikes to the top of The Quill, an extinct volcano whose cone rises 2,000 feet (610 m); the crater contains a lush tropical rain forest. Near the Quill is the Miriam C. Schmidt Botanical Garden, which includes floral collections, walking paths and a variety of uncommon plants and tea bush along with a breathtaking view of St. Kitts, St. Barths and St. Maarten.

Day trips from St. Eustatius to Saba are possible. Possibly the only island in the Caribbean without a beach, Saba is a tiny volcanic island draped with lush vegetation. The rocky shoreline of the island contains tide pools home to numerous sealife.

A rain forest exists some 3,000 feet (915 m) above sea level; a constant cloud of moisture surrounds the area. Various trails lead hikers into the rain forest where 15 species of wild orchids live along with such other tropical foliage as ferns, giant elephant ears and banana and mango

trees. Here 1,064 steps chiseled from vertical rock connect the village of Windwardside with The Bottom, the island's capital. These steps were the island's only thoroughfare until a twisting road was built by hand in the 1940s. At 1,900 feet (580 m), Windwardside offers a superb view of the Caribbean. Trail maps and information can be obtained from The Trail Shop, Windwardside, Saba.

The Harry L. Johnson Museum is housed in an 1840s sea captain's cottage; contact the tourist bureau for more information. Descend by jeep to The Bottom, 1,000 feet (305 m) below, and head for the Saba Artisans' Foundation for locally designed fashions.

# **Transportation**

St. Eustatius' Franklin Delano Roosevelt Airport has daily flights to St. Maarten via Windward Islands Airways (Winair) as well as flights to Saba's Juancho E. Yrausquin Airport. Car rental information can be obtained at the airport information desk.

### **FAST FACTS**

POPULATION: St. Eustatius: 3,100. Saba: 1,900

AREA: St. Eustatius: 31 sq km (11.8 sq mi.). Saba: 13 sq

km (5 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** St. Eustatius: Oranjestad. Saba: The Bottom. HIGHEST POINT: 862 m (2,828 ft.), Mount Scenery,

Saba.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: Dutch, English, Spanish and Papiamentu.

**GOVERNMENT:** Autonomous special municipalities of

the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

**CURRENCY:** U.S. Dollar

**ELECTRICITY:** 110 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 18; a valid license is re-

quired; drive on right.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are

required for all passengers. Child restraints are required for children under age 4; children under 12 must ride in the back seat.

## **HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Carnival Monday, Feb.; Good Friday; Easter Monday; King's Birthday, Apr. 27; Labour Day, May 1; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Statia/America Day, Nov. 16; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A 10 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. In lieu of a gratuity, restaurants add a 15 percent service charge on food and beverage items. Departure tax \$15 U.S.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport or proof of U.S. citizenship and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 2 weeks. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call St. Eustatius and Saba from the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 599 + the 7-digit local number.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

St. Eustatius Tourist Office

Fort Oranje

Oranjestad, St. Eustatius

St. Eustatius and Saba

(599) 318-2433

Saba Tourist Bureau

P.O. Box 527

Windwardside, Saba

St. Eustatius and Saba

(599) 416-2231 (599) 416-2322





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# St. Kitts and Nevis

eparated by a mere 2 miles (3.2 km), St. Kitts and Nevis (NEE-vis) constitute one of the world's tiniest nations. Their beauty and charm, however, are not proportional to their size. Dominated by 3,792-foot (1,156-m) Mount Liamuiga, mountainous St. Kitts contains some of the islands' finest beaches. Nevis embraces a single peak rising from the sea to a cloud-shrouded height of 3,232 feet (985 m). Beaches of coral sand are found along its shores. Missing from St. Kitts and Nevis is the profusion of towering resorts found on many of the bigger, more developed islands, as by law no building can

be taller than the palm trees. Its visitors can still enjoy the rustic atmosphere and slow-paced "island time" that some say makes for real relaxation.

# **History**

When Christopher Columbus discovered the two sister islands in 1493, the cloud-encircled volcanic peak of the smaller island inspired him to call it *Las Nieves*, meaning "the snows." Over the years the island's name has evolved into simply Nevis. The larger island is said to be named St. Christopher after the explorer, but the British adopted the diminution St. Kitts after Sir Thomas Warner

established a settlement, the first English colony in the West Indies, at Old Road Town in 1623. The next year the French also established a colony, and the Anglo-French rivalry for control of the islands was to last for the next 160 vears.

After changing hands several times, the islands fell under British rule in 1783 through the Treaty of Versailles. Evidence of their turbulent history remains in the battlegrounds and ruined forts on St. Kitts. Today inhabitants pursue the more peaceful activities of accommodating tourists and growing the island's agriculture and other industries.

The two islands became an Associated British State in 1967. On Sept. 19, 1983, the British Union Jack was replaced by the green, red, yellow and black flag of the newly independent nation of St. Kitts and Nevis. The governmental structure includes a prime minister, governorgeneral and legislature for St. Kitts and an Island Assembly with a premier and deputy governor-general for Nevis.

# Shopping

Shopping activity on the islands centers on Basseterre, the capital of St. Kitts. Clusters of modern shops surrounding "The Circus," the town's main square at Fort Street and Liverpool Row, provide local crafts, souvenirs and some duty-free imports. Two blocks east near the ferry dock the Pelican Mall offers several duty-free shops in a pleasant indoor setting of traditional Kittitian facades and pastel colors. Port Zante offers such shops as the Caribbean Gift & Liquors, Diamonds International, International Concepts Jewelry, Kay's Fine Jewelry and Piranha Joe's.

A favorite take-home item is a hand-dyed tropical fashion from Caribelle Batik. These colorful cotton garments can be purchased in Basseterre and Charlestown, Nevis, but visitors to their factory at Romney Manor west of Old Road Town on St. Kitts also can witness the batik process. Stamp collectors will appreciate visits to the St. Kitts Philatelic Bureau in Basseterre and the Nevis Philatelic Bureau in Charlestown. For original pottery creations that have a distinct Caribbean flair, visit Potter's House Art Gallery and Studio on St. Kitts' North Independence Square.

Store hours are generally Mon.-Wed. and Fri.-Sat. 8-noon and 1-4, Thurs. 8-noon. Banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8-2 (also Fri. 2-4).

### Food and Drink

The cuisine of St. Kitts and Nevis is highlighted with exotic Caribbean and continental flavors. Beef, chicken, pork and seafood all are complemented by homegrown fruit and vegetables. Such favorite native dishes as Creole red bean soup, conch chowder, goat water (a soup) and boiled saltfish stew are served in several local restaurants. Conch fritters and saltfish balls make good appetizers.

St. Kitts' own Carib Beer or Brinley Gold Shipwreck Rum are good complements to a hearty West Indian meal. Two other local products—Ting, a grapefruit-based soft drink, and CSR (Cane Spirit Rothschild), distilled from fresh cane juice—make a fine blend.

## Sports and Amusements

Besides those along Frigate Bay, good beaches are found along the south coast, at Dieppe Bay in the north and along the southeast peninsula. From the white sands of the peninsula's Turtle Beach, Sandy Bank Bay and Cockleshell Bay, visitors can get fine views of Nevis. Pinney's Beach and Oualie Beach on Nevis offer excellent swimming.

The waters between St. Kitts and Nevis are the final resting place for more than 400 ships sunk 1492-1825, yet only about a dozen sites have been identified thus far. Experienced divers can explore many of the sites. Arrangements for dive trips can be made through most hotels. For a fee, local anglers will take you deep-sea fishing. A favorite spot for experienced divers is "The Caves," a series of coral grottoes on Nevis' west coast.

Water sports at various island establishments include scuba diving, snorkeling, windsurfing and sailing. PADI certification courses, full- and half-day charters and underwater camera and video camera rentals also are available.

The Royal St. Kitts 18-hole golf course at Frigate Bay lies on the narrowest portion of the island, between the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Evening entertainment is provided by many of the area hotels and local beach bars.

Most hotels on Nevis have tennis courts and will make arrangements for guests to go deep-sea fishing and horseback riding. Hiking to the top of Mount Nevis adds to the recreational activities available on the island. Nevis also offers isolated beaches and unspoiled, uncluttered countryside.

Special events on the islands start with National Carnival in late December. Highlights of the 10-day event include a beauty and talent pageant, calypso contests, parades, a masqued gala and musical entertainment. The Nevis Triathlon, in November, starts with a .93-mile (1.5km) ocean swim and is followed by a 37-mile (60 km) mountain bicycle race and a 6-mile (10-km) run. The St. Kitts Music Festival is held in June and features an eclectic mix of local and international artists.

# Sightseeing

Excursions on St. Kitts can be breathtaking—both aesthetically and physically. Climbing Mount Liamuiga (lee-a-MWEE-ga) is an all-day affair; the crater, 1,192 feet (363)



m) below the peak, is the usual stopping point. Hikers can explore the tropical rain forest, which abounds with monkeys, birds, butterflies, fruits and flowers, while enjoying a coastal view of the sea. The monkeys, left behind by the French who kept them as pets, now outnumber the human population by a ratio of approximately 2.5-to-1.

Other sites worth investigating are Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, positioned approximately 800 feet (244 m) atop a rock cliff; the Carib Indian petroglyphs at Old Road; Bloody Point near Challengers village, the site of a Carib Indian massacre in 1626; Montravers Great House, a former sugar plantation; and Caribelle Batik, housed at Romney Manor, a 17th-century great house set above Old Road Town. In a churchyard at Middle Island is the tomb of Sir Thomas Warner, the British founder of St. Kitts.

Fun-loving seafarers will enjoy an all-day cruise aboard the catamaran Spirit of St. Kitts. The day includes a beach barbecue and snorkeling. For information and reservations phone (869) 465-7474.

St. Kitts' scenic southeast peninsula is accessible via the Dr. Kennedy A. Simmonds Highway, a modern roadway completed in 1990. The 6-mile (10-km) highway leads from Frigate Bay east of Basseterre to Major's Bay, just 2 miles (3.2 km) from Nevis. The peninsula's mountainous terrain affords spectacular views of the sea and offshore islands.

# **Transportation**

Non-stop service to St. Kitts' Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport is available from Miami aboard American Airlines. LIAT provides flights and connections from Anguilla, Antigua and St. Maarten. Port Zante in Basseterre on St. Kitts is a leading port of call for cruise ships and offers duty-free shopping.

Taxis are readily available. An approximate fare from Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport to Basseterre is \$12. An additional 50 percent surcharge is added 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., with other fare increases on Sundays and holidays. A taxi tour around St. Kitts takes about 4 hours. If you are traveling by taxi, be sure to have enough cash on hand for the day; ATMs can be difficult to locate. Minimokes are also a fun way to get around. Car rentals also are available. A local driver's license is required to drive on the islands and can be obtained for about \$25 at the car rental office.

Nevis is accessible from Puerto Rico and St. Kitts via a brief flight to Vance W. Amory International Airport or regular ferry trips from St. Kitts aboard the Caribe Queen, Sea Hustler, Caribe Breeze/Surf and Mark Twain. Direct flights to St. Kitts are available from Miami and Charlotte. Sea Bridge Public Ferry will allow you to transport your vehicle to Nevis for a cash fare of \$75.

## **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** St. Kitts: 42,299. Nevis: 11,500

AREA: St. Kitts: 176 sg km (68 sg mi.). Nevis: 93 sg km

(36 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: St. Kitts: Basseterre. Nevis: Charlestown.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 1,156 m (3,792 ft.), Mount Liamuiga,

St. Kitts.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent. Member of the British

Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. =

2.7 E.C. dollars.

**ELECTRICITY:** 230 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. Local license (\$24) required; drive on left.

### MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 21.

**HOLIDAYS:** Jan. 1; Carnival, Jan. 2; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May (1st Mon.); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); August Monday, Aug. (1st Mon.); Culturama Day, Aug. (1st Tues.); National Heroes Day, Sept. 16; Independence Day, Sept. 19; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A 10 percent room tax, a 2 percent island enhancement tax and a 10-12 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. A 10-15 percent service charge is added to restaurant bills. Departure tax \$37 U.S and is generally included in the air fare.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 1 month. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call St. Kitts and Nevis from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 869 + the 7-digit local number.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

St. Kitts Tourism Authority, New Hampshire 7 Burgess Dr. Litchfield, NH 03052 (603) 674-3295 (800) 582-6208

St. Kitts Tourism Office, Basseterre Pelican Mall, Bay Road Basseterre, St. Kitts St. Kitts and Nevis (869) 465-4040 **Nevis Tourism Authority** 

Main Street Charlestown, Nevis St. Kitts and Nevis (869) 469-7550 (407) 287-5204 in the U.S.

# **Nevis**

Nevis is a volcanic island surrounded by coral reefs. Forested slopes rise from palm-lined beaches to the island's cloud-shrouded summit. Relatively untouched by tourism, Nevis attracts those in search of a guiet escape. Lodging consists mostly of small family-run businesses quest cottages, hotels and a few sugar plantations converted to inns, many of which are nestled among the foothills of Nevis Peak.

As on many of the Caribbean isles, the use of enslaved labor at sugar plantations on Nevis created a wealthy upper class. During the 19th century the islands, including Nevis, quickly became the haunt of the elite of British society, who frequented the island's mineral baths and hot springs at the Bath Hotel, considered one of the most ambitious structures built in the West Indies in 1778.

Jamestown, the former capital that fell prey to an earthquake and tidal wave in 1680, is accessible by the main road that circles Nevis. Snorkelers and scuba divers frequent the area.

Among the historic figures associated with Nevis is Alexander Hamilton, the American author and statesman, who was born here in 1757. When he was a captain, Horatio Nelson courted and married Fanny Nisbet in Nevis. Montpelier Plantation was the site of their 1787 marriage, in which the future King William IV of England acted as best man. Their marriage certificate was recorded at St. John's Church in Fig Tree Village.

### **CHARLESTOWN**

During the Spanish Inquisition many Jews fled South America to the Caribbean to escape persecution. The Jewish community on Nevis can be traced to the early 17th century with a tombstone in the Nevis Jewish Cemetery dated 1658. Visitors to Charlestown can view the Nevis Synagogue archeological dig taking place at an old stone building in partial ruin. The site, adjacent to the government administration building, is believed to be one of the Caribbean's oldest synagogues.

THE BOTANICAL GARDENS OF NEVIS is 3 mi. (5 km) s. at the Montpelier Estate in Gingerland. Orchids, bromeliads, rare palms, flowering vines and fruit trees are among the hundreds of species at this 7-acre (3-hectare) tropical hillside haven, which features fountains, waterfalls, lily pools and a rain forest conservatory with parrots. The garden also features a large collection of Asian stone sculptures. The estate offers striking views of Nevis and St. Kitts. Time: Allow 2 hours minimum. Phone: (869) 469-3509 or (869) 469-2673.

MUSEUM OF NEVIS HISTORY is .5 mi. (.8 km) s. in Belle Vue. A large collection of memorabilia associated with Adm. Horatio Nelson, a frequent visitor to Nevis, includes glassware, ceramics, paintings, prints and ship models. Permanent and changing exhibits chronicle the history of Nevis and its people. Time: Allow 30 minutes minimum. Phone: (869) 469-0408.

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Boutique Country Inn. Address: Cole Hill.

# St. Kitts

While it retains its charm as an off-the-beaten-track destination, St. Kitts is welcoming an ever-increasing number of tourists. Accommodations on the island range from grand beach-front resorts to intimate plantation inns, and activities range from sightseeing and shopping to deep-sea fishing and water sports. Beaches are guiet and secluded, with sands of volcanic black, gold or powder white.

### **BASSETERRE**

Bordering a harbor on the island's southern end, Basseterre (boss-tare) is the principal city and capital of St. Kitts. The town has preserved many early examples of West Indian and Georgian architecture; a good example of the former is the Treasury building on the waterfront. But the architectural legacy of British colonialism can best be seen in Independence Square, originally the slave market. This park of manicured lawns and shade trees includes the Church of the Immaculate Conception and several 18th-century homes. Another landmark is the ornate

Victorian clock in "The Circus," a roundabout in the town's main square that was modeled after Piccadilly Circus in London.

ST. KITTS SCENIC RAILWAY departs from Needsmust Station, just s.w. of the Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport. The narrow gauge railway, once used to transport sugar cane, has been converted for double-deck sightseeing cars. Given seats on both levels, passengers are free to move between the lower airconditioned compartment and the open-air upper deck. Each trip includes colorful narration, live musical entertainment and complimentary refreshments.

The 3-hour scenic rail and bus tour makes a complete circuit around the island, providing views of old sugar estates, villages and farms, cane fields, rain forests and the volcanic cone of Mt. Liamuiga. Historic sites include St. Paul, home of the prime minister; and Old Road Town, where Thomas Jefferson's great grandfather is buried. A 4-hour rail and sail tour also is available.

Time: Allow 3 hours minimum. Phone: (869) 465-7263. (GT)



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### **BRIMSTONE HILL FORTRESS NATIONAL PARK**

Nine miles (14 km) west of Basseterre, this massive British fortress on a hill 800 feet (244 m) above the sea was built by slaves over a 100-year period beginning in the late 1600s. Once known as "The Gibraltar of the West Indies," Brimstone Hill was so intimidating that ship captains often changed course rather than come within range of its powerful guns. The British believed the fort to be impregnable, but the French proved them guite wrong in 1782. Despite the French victory, the British regained the fort a year later through the Treaty of Versailles.

Today visitors can explore the fortress, look out over the now dormant cannons and enjoy the panoramic view that inspired Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, to declare Brimstone Hill a national monument. The UNESCO World Heritage Site covers 38 acres (15 hectares). A visitor center in the Commissariat features a 10-minute film orientation and audio tours for rental; all presentations are available in four languages. At the citadel museum, artifacts, paintings and exhibits chronicle the history of the fortress and the struggle between the British and French for control of the islands during the 1700s.

Food is available. Allow 1 hour minimum. Daily 9:30-5:30; closed Good Friday and Christmas. Last admission 30 minutes before closing. Admission \$10; \$5 (ages 0-16). Audio tour rental \$5. Phone (869) 465-2609.

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# St. Lucia

ush greenery, endless banana plantations, wooded mountains and fertile valleys are just some of the elements that harmonize to make St. Lucia (LOOsha) "the Helen of the West Indies." This tropical paradise, which is 27 miles (43 km) long and 14 miles (23 km) wide, contains 19,000 acres (7,689 hectares) of rain forest. Quaint fishing villages and enticing beaches provide a backdrop that complements the diverse landscape of the interior. Gros and Petit Pitons, regal twin peaks separated by a picturesque bay, are prominent landmarks.

# History

The first settlers were the peace-loving Arawak Indians, who probably came to St. Lucia to escape the warlike Caribs. However, the Arawaks did not endure—the Caribs eventually followed and succeeded in driving them off the island by A.D. 800.

Although it has not been established whether Christopher Columbus or Juan de la Cosa discovered St. Lucia, the first European to settle on the island was pirate François de Clerc. In 1550, de Clerc attacked passing Spanish ships from his base on Pigeon Island.

The English attempted to settle the island in 1605 and 1639, but the fierce Caribs thwarted their efforts on both occasions. In 1650 the French finally established the first permanent settlement; a treaty with the Caribs was signed in 1660. About this time, a bitter dispute originated in which each country claimed ownership of the territory.

A 150-year-long struggle for control ensued, as St. Lucia changed hands between the feuding French and British 14 times. The island was ultimately ceded to the British in 1814 and became one of the Windward Islands in 1838.

Sugar plantations flourished from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s. With African slaves providing free labor, the industry thrived. Once slavery was abolished in 1834, a labor shortage ensued that contributed to the industry's decline. Such epidemics as smallpox and cholera also impeded prosperity during the remainder of the 19th century. The economy improved in the early 20th century, as a greater emphasis was placed on the cultivation of bananas and cocoa. Although the sugar industry briefly resurged, production eventually ceased in the 1960s.

As a provision of the West Indies Act of 1967, St. Lucia became entirely self-governing in internal affairs. The United Kingdom retained authority in regard to defense and external matters. On Feb. 22, 1979, the island obtained full independence. That same year, St. Lucia became a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

The country remains a stable parliamentary democracy, with a governor-general designated by Queen Elizabeth II. Agriculture and tourism are economic mainstays, accounting for about 80 percent of total economic revenue.

# **Shopping**

Local goods available on St. Lucia include batik fabrics, perfumes, straw works, unglazed pottery, and handicrafts produced from wood and shell. The island is particularly known for its cane furniture and batik designs. These items can be found in duty-free shopping complexes at La Place Carenage in Castries and at Pointe Seraphine on the north side of the bay on Vigie Peninsula; both places are expanding to meet cruise ship demand.

Gemstone jewelry; fine china, crystal, figurines, perfume, international apparel and colorful silk-screened clothing are among choice buys. Local straw work is sold at two large open-air markets, the Vendor's Arcade and the Castries Market. For a dollar fare, water taxis provide transportation across the bay.

Several shops and restaurants, including the JQ Rodney Bay Mall with more than 50 stores and the Bay Walk Mall with more than 45 stores offering duty-free shopping, can be found at the Rodney Bay Marina, near Gros Islet at the north end of the island. While browsing in boutiques

offering beachwear, local crafts, electronics and island souvenirs, visitors can enjoy splendid views of the bay and of gleaming yachts docked in the marina.

Downtown Castries also provides shopping opportunities such as those at the Castries Market. William Peter Boulevard, lined with department stores, souvenir shops and banks, is the city's center of shopping activity. A multitude of street vendors make their home on the boulevard as well as on many other streets in the downtown area. Gablewoods is a small shopping complex just north of Castries off the Castries-Gros Islet Highway.

Eudovic's Art Studio is about 15 minutes south of Castries off the road that snakes up the slopes of Morne Fortune. Woodcarvings fashioned from mahogany, teak and cedar are exhibited in a small gallery; works available for purchase at the adjacent shop include whisk-broom dolls in traditional madras costumes; phone (758) 452-2747.

Also on Morne Fortune is Caribelle Batik, situated in Hewelton House on Old Victoria Road. Clothing enhanced by unique colors and patterns is available for purchase, and the dye-resistant method incorporated by the batik process is demonstrated by workers as they create free-hand designs. On the terrace at the rear of the facility, shoppers can sip a refreshing drink and relish the view of Castries; phone (758) 452-3785.

Caribbean Perfumes, also on the Morne, creates exotic fragrances from herbs and tropical flowers found throughout St. Lucia.

In addition, St. Lucia's major resorts usually have shops on the premises. Shopping hours throughout the island are generally Mon.-Fri. 8:30-12:30 and 1:30-4, Sat. 8:30-12:30. Shopping malls are usually open until 6.

### **Food and Drink**

Restaurants on St. Lucia are concentrated in Castries and Gros Islet. Many specialize in Creole cuisine, while others offer Italian, Chinese and Continental food. The national dish is "green fig," boiled green bananas usually served with saltfish. Other local specialties include lobster, snapper, dolphin, kingfish, swordfish, *callaloo* soup, breadfruit, plantain and pumpkin soufflé. Hearty pepperpot stew and spicy curries also are popular.

Fresh juices—including tamarind, guava, passion fruit, mango and grapefruit—accompany most meals. Bounty Rum is distilled near Roseau in the Cul-de-Sac Valley. The local Piton beer is often mixed with fruit juice for a lighter taste. Restaurants providing native fare include The Still, an establishment in Soufrière that was once a rum distillery.

# **Sports and Amusements**

Aquatic pastimes—water skiing, snorkeling and boating among them—are popular recreational pursuits on St. Lucia. Conditions for windsurfing are good at Reduit Beach

on the northwest coast and at Vieux Fort at the island's southern tip.

Day or sunset cruises operate out of Castries Harbour and Rodney Bay Marina; longer excursions to Martinique or south to St. Vincent and the Grenadines also are available. Sailing enthusiasts can charter boats with or without a crew at Marigot Bay, Rodney Bay Marina and Vigie Marina. Deep-sea fishing charters are provided by Captain Mike's. The main catches are barracuda, blue marlin, kingfish, tuna, swordfish and wahoo.

Because of St. Lucia's volcanic origins, black sand is found on many beaches. All of St. Lucia's beaches, even those fronted by resorts, are open to the public. The most popular are on the north and west coasts; waves are very powerful on the Atlantic side, where only the strongest swimmers should venture. Anse Chastanet Resort, just north of Soufrière, is named for the hotel that graces its shores. The beach area, accented by a hilly panorama, is flanked by a restaurant and dive shop. Water taxis provide transportation to Anse Chastanet and the hideaway beach of Anse Mamim; be sure to reserve a ride for the return trip.

Farther north, the quaint fishing village of Anse la Raye boasts a picturesque beach with a wealth of graceful palms. South of Castries, Marigot Bay is a charming tropical cove peppered with colorful yachts. Visitors can just relax and sip a refreshing drink in the shade, or take a swim in the cove's tranquil waters where the original "Dr. Doolittle" was filmed. Yachts anchor offshore at the little beach at Soufrière, which is perfect for sunning and a leisurely lunch.

Although the beige-sand beach at La Toc Bay, south of Castries, is a great place to soak up the sun and enjoy the view, swimming is not advised due to occasional strong currents. Choc Bay, north of Castries in the vicinity of several major resorts, has calm waters ideal for swimming. Windsurfing is popular at Vieux Fort in the south and Casen-Bas in the north; beginners prefer the calmer waters of the resort area of Reduit Beach, where a variety of water sports rental equipment is available.

Sun worshippers will revel in the fine selection of secluded white-sand beaches at Pigeon Point; the area is connected to the island by a man-made causeway. Conditions are excellent for swimming, and a nearby restaurant provides refreshment. At the extreme southern tip of the island, Vieux Fort consists of miles of white-sand beaches against a backdrop of coconut palms. From this expanse of land, the contrast between the deep blue Caribbean waters and the murky hues of the Atlantic is apparent. The island also possesses several isolated stretches of beach accessible only by boat.

Scuba St. Lucia offers diving courses geared toward certification as well as daytime and evening diving expeditions; locations include the Anse Chastanet Resort in Soufrière, (758) 459-7000 or (800) 223-1108. Dive Fair

Helen, (758) 451-7716, Eastern Caribbean Diving, (758) 456-9581, Marigot Beach Club & Dive Resort, (758) 451-4974, and Ti Kaye Island Divers, (758) 456-8110, offer PADI training facilities with dives at several sites around St. Lucia.

Divers can experience a spectacular sampling of steep underwater drop-offs and unspoiled marine life. The waters off the west coast provide the best opportunities for diving, with most of the sites concentrated between Marigot Bay and Choiseul. *Lesleen M.*, a 165-foot vessel south of Marigot Bay that was deliberately sunk in the 1980s, has several compartments that can be explored. For the less adventurous, *Volga* is an easy 20-foot wreck dive near Castries.

Anse Chastanet Reef contains a colorful display of coral and a 150-foot-deep wall; this reef also is home to a large school of squid. Keyhole Pinnacles is another popular dive site just south of Anse Chastanet. Piton Wall, a site that features a vibrant assortment of coral and sponges, begins at about 30 feet and plunges to a depth of 1,300 feet.

Horseback riding, an excellent way to tour St. Lucia, can be arranged through Atlantic Shores Riding Stables, (758) 285-1090, on the southeast coast on Micoud Highway.

Sandals St. Lucia Golf & Country Club's 18-hole course, one of two public golf courses on the island, is scenically situated on the northern end of the island at Cap Estate. Reservations are required; phone (758) 450-8523. Sandals Regency La Toc Golf Resort & Spa, (758) 452-3081, has nine holes for guests. Tennis courts are available at St. Lucia Racquet Club and the National Tennis Centre in Beausejour. The St. Lucia Golf Club and the St. Lucia Yacht Club offer squash courts. Legacies of the island's English heritage are the popular spectator sports of soccer and cricket. Cricket matches can be observed on Sunday near the Choc Bay War Memorial in the northwestern portion of the island.

Gros Islet, a small fishing town in northern St. Lucia, hosts a Friday night street party, known locally as a "jump-up." Locals and tourists alike enjoy the carnival atmosphere, where the pulsating beat of reggae and soca music permeates the air. Food vendors stationed on the sidewalk grill spicy Caribbean delights as merrymakers dance to the latest soca tunes. Many hotels arrange round-trip bus transportation to the "jump-up."

Island nightlife centers on the hotels, where steel bands perform folk music, calypso and reggae. The island also plays host to a number of cultural events.

The Saint Lucia Jazz & Arts Festival, now one of the world's top jazz events, draws international acts—and their fans—for two weeks in early May. Free lunchtime and evening concerts are held at Derek Walcott Square in Castries. Many hotels also host shows in conjunction with official jazz events. A day-long concert known as Jazz in

the South, held at the Balenbouche Estate south of Choiseul, is popular with locals.

Masquerade bands take to the streets during the annual Carnival celebration held the third Monday and Tuesday in July; a multitude of activities takes place in the days preceding these holidays, among the island's biggest events. The festivals of La Rose and La Marguerite occur on Aug. 30 and Oct. 17, and St. Lucia's Day on Dec. 13. October is Creole Heritage Month, featuring a series of cultural activities leading up to International Creole Day, or *Jounen Kweyol*, celebrated by Creole-speaking people around the world.

# Sightseeing

Those exploring St. Lucia's interior will be rewarded with views of the island's lush greenery. Drivers will often encounter roosters and other farm animals during their travels and may have to stop and wait patiently while a stray cow or goat wanders slowly across the road.

It is not unusual to see natives diligently walking with a huge display of bananas perched precariously on their heads. Sightseers will be overwhelmed by the seemingly endless maze of banana plants, sometimes wrapped in peculiar plastic bags which serve as protection against insects. Colorful rum shops, often ramshackle in appearance, serve as neighborhood meeting spots where locals exchange the latest news.

Pigeon Island off the northwestern coast is named for Admiral Rodney's carrier pigeons, which were once housed at the ruined fort. Joined to the main island by a causeway, the area is now a national park which contains Arawak remnants, lookouts, gun batteries and barracks set amid tropical plant life. Union Agricultural Station, also in the northern portion of the island, is the headquarters of the Forestry Division. The station has a small zoo with animals native to St. Lucia, a medicinal herb garden and a nature trail.

Just north of Castries, Rodney Bay Village is a yachting center and resort area. Marigot Bay, a popular yacht harbor with an inviting beach, is a half-hour coastal drive south of Castries. Nearby, at the colorful fishing village of Anse la Raye, fishermen continue to craft their vessels out of logs. Also south of Castries is Soufrière, which can be reached by a long but scenic drive or by boat, which also provides an oceangoing view of Les Pitons. Soufrière's volcano acts as a safety valve; it releases small amounts of pressure, forestalling a major volcanic eruption.

From Soufrière the road toward Fond St. Jacques penetrates the island's rain forest, which can be seen by organized tour. Hikers may spot the endangered St. Lucia parrot and are rewarded with views such as orchids and anthuriums growing wild, and agoutis and manicous playing. The rain forest also can be toured by arranging a guide through the Forestry and Lands Division. Visitors are cautioned to dress appropriately, as the forest can be extremely muddy in areas.

Flora-loving travelers may tour the Diamond Falls Botanical Gardens and Mineral Baths in Soufrière and the Mamiku Gardens off the East Coast Highway.

Excursions also can be made to Errard Plantation, a working banana plantation in the Dennery area. The rise and fall of St. Lucia's once-thriving sugar industry is the subject of an organized tour at Invergoil Estate; a restored sugar mill is on the grounds. Excursions to the Cap Moule à Chique Lighthouse also are available.

Most boat excursions sail from Castries to Soufrière and include bus tours of Sulphur Springs and Diamond Falls. Tours usually include lunch and time for snorkeling.

Dramatic views of St. Lucia's rugged terrain and lush rain forest are possible by helicopter. Flights glide past such sites as the inspiring twin Pitons and the 18thcentury fortifications on Morne Fortune. Narrated tours are offered by St. Lucia Helicopters; phone (758) 453-6950.

Zipline tours, hiking and mountain biking are available at Adventure Tours St. Lucia, (758) 452-0808. In addition to zipline tours, Rainforest Adventures in the highland community of Chassin in Dauphin, (758) 458-5151 or 866-759-8726, offers a gondola ride through the canopy of trees.

# **Transportation**

Non-stop flights arrive at Hewanorra International Airport from Charlotte, Miami and Philadelphia aboard American Airlines, New York aboard JetBlue and Atlanta via Delta Airlines. George F.L. Charles Airport, just outside of Castries, services on-island charters and interisland flights to and from Barbados, Trinidad, Antigua and several other islands. Some resorts in the northern end of the island furnish complimentary transportation to guests flying into Hewanorra; the trip usually takes about an hour.

While there is no organized public bus system in St. Lucia, minibuses do run frequently between Castries and such points as Vigie, Gros Islet and Vieux Fort. There is no set schedule, and buses are often crowded, but they stop at designated sites about every half hour, and the longest trip costs no more than \$5. Service between Castries and some outlying villages may be limited to once a day. Taxis are available but relatively expensive; establish the fare before your ride. The cab rate for sightseeing tours is usually around \$25 per hour. Cars can be rented; a temporary license, which costs \$21 and is valid for 3 months, is required. Hertz, with outlets at both airports and Rodney Bay Marina, offers discounts to AAA members; phone (758) 452-0680 or (800) 654-3080.

Water taxis provide one of the quickest routes between Castries and Soufrière. Expect to pay around \$90 for two people, depending on the boat or yacht. Service also is

available north to Anse Chastanet and points along the coast. High-speed passenger ferries operated by L'Express des Iles connect St. Lucia with Dominica, Guadeloupe and Martinique. Channel Shuttles also travels between St. Lucia and Martinique.

### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 166,141.** 

**AREA:** 616 sq km (238 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Castries.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 950 m (3,117 ft.), Mount Gimie.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard. LANGUAGE: English and Kwéyòl.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent. Member of the British

Commonwealth of Nations.

CURRENCY: Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. =

2.7 E.C. dollars.

**ELECTRICITY:** 220 volts, 50 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. Local license (\$20) required, valid

for 3 months; drive on left.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are

required for all passengers.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Carnival, Jan. 2; Independence Day,

Feb. 22; Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May (1st Mon.); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Feast of Corpus Christi, May or June (9th Thurs. after Easter); Carnival, July; Emancipation Day, Aug. 1; Thanksgiving, Oct.; St. Lucia Day, Dec. 13; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A 7 percent VAT (value-added tax) is charged at all hotels in addition to a \$6 per person per night fee. A 12.5 percent VAT (value-added tax) is added to restaurant bills. Some hotels and restaurants also add a 10 percent service charge. Departure tax \$38 U.S. over age 12.

IMMIGRATION: Passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 6 months. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call St. Lucia from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 758 + the 7-digit local number.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Saint Lucia Tourist Board 800 Second Ave. New York, NY 10017 (212) 867-2950 (800) 456-3984

Saint Lucia Tourist Board, Castries

Vide Bouteille Castries, St. Lucia (758) 458-7101

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### **ANSE LA RAYE**



TI KAYE RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 758/456-8101



Resort Cottage. Address: Anse Cochon. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: On a hillside overlooking Anse Cochon, this mini-resort is in a spectacular setting. West Indies-style cottages have verandas and open-air showers. Fourteen of the cottages have a private plunge pool. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 33 cottages. 1 story, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Terms: age restrictions may apply. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: beach on-site, self-propelled boats, boat dock, scuba diving, snorkeling, recreation programs, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, luggage security pick-up.

























## **CASTRIES**

St. Lucia's capital, Castries (CASS-trees) is a bustling harbor town surrounded by rolling hills. Only a few historic landmarks stand; since its founding by the French in the 18th century, Castries has been destroyed by fire four times.

The town's colorful downtown market on Jeremie Street has been in existence since 1895; it is open Monday through Saturday 6-6. Saturday is the best time to visit the market, which is renowned for its lush tropical fruits, fresh vegetables, exotic spices, wicker furniture, wood carvings and handicrafts. Boutiques in town sell European perfumes, jewelry, clothes and fabric. Some shops sell handmade cane furniture and batik clothing, for which the island is noted.

Bordered by Peynier, Laborie and Micoud streets, the 1890s Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception reveals impressive murals by St. Lucian artist Dunstan St. Omer, Derek Walcott Square, next to the cathedral, is named for the island's Nobel prizewinning poet. The square contains a 400-year-old samaan tree and a monument to the St. Lucians who died in World Wars I and II. An antique map collection focusing on St. Lucia and the

Caribbean Sea can be found at the Central Library on Bourbon Street.

Morne Fortune, or "hill of good fortune," is on the southern side of Castries. The 845-foot-high hill offers a striking view of Castries Harbour, Vigie Peninsula and the northern portion of the island. The road winds past Government House, a Victorian-style residence occupied by the governor-general. At the top of the Morne are the remains of Fort Charlotte, which changed hands between British and French forces during the 18th and 19th centuries. A monument marks the site of a battle fought in 1796. Many of the structures have been restored to house the University of the West Indies.

PIGEON ISLAND NATIONAL LANDMARK is 7 mi. (11 km) n. via a man-made causeway. The 44-acre (18hectare) park preserves the crumbling barracks, magazines and ramparts of Fort Rodney, built in the late 1700s and named for British Adm. George Rodney. From the fort's excellent vantage points, Rodney monitored the French fleet in Martinique. A hike to the top of the fort will reward visitors with a contrasting view of the lush landscape of the Caribbean side of St. Lucia and the rugged terrain of the east coast.

Hiking trails and two private beaches are on the premises. **Phone:** (758) 453-1495.

SANDALS HALCYON BEACH ST. LUCIA

**BOOK NOW** 

758/453-0222



Resort Hotel. Address: Choc Bay.

SANDALS REGENCY LA TOC GOLF RESORT & SPA IN ST.

LUCIA

**BOOK NOW** 

758/456-8800



Resort Hotel. Address: La Toc Rd.

### **GROS ISLET**

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758/452-8212

THREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Cottage. Address: La Brelotte Bay.

HARBOR CLUB ST. LUCIA, CURIO COLLECTION BY HILTON

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SAVE Hotel. Address: Rodney Bay.



THE LANDINGS RESORT & SPA

BOOK NOW

758/458-7300



Resort Condominium. Address: Pigeon Island Cswy, Rodney Bay. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: All rooms at this resort are spacious with ample seating and include double balcony or patio. They also have full designer kitchens, washer and dryer and some feature a private plunge pool. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 98 kitchen condominium units. 3-4 stories, exterior corridors. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, boat dock, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: complimentary and valet laundry.























SANDALS GRANDE ST. LUCIAN SPA & BEACH RESORT

**BOOK NOW** 

758/455-2000

FOUR DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Hotel. Address: Pigeon Island Cswy.

### MARIGOT BAY



ZOËTRY MARIGOT BAY ST. LUCIA BOOK NOW 758/458-5300





AAA Benefit: Members save up to 10% and earn World of Hyatt points when booking AAA/CAA rates!

Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Marigot Bay. Facility: This tranquil setting is the perfect spot to enjoy a relaxing vacation immersed in nature. Spacious rooms and villas are set on a hill overlooking the

marina, surrounded by lush tropical gardens. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 124 units. 2-4 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Parking: valet only. Terms: off-site registration. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, steamroom, self-propelled boats, recreation programs, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry, area transportation.





























BAY GARDENS BEACH RESORT & SPA BOOK NOW 758/457-8514



Hotel. Address: Rodney Bay Village.

# SOUFRIÈRE

Established by the French in 1746, the quaint west coast village of Soufrière (soo-free-AIR) is actually a lowlying volcanic crater. The town derived its name from the bubbling pits of sulfur at the nearby volcano and sulfur springs. Once the flourishing French capital, Soufrière is now a sleepy fishing village characterized by traces of French Colonial architecture and black sand beaches.

Soufrière is perhaps most renowned as the home of the towering twin Pitons, volcanic peaks that spring forth majestically from the ocean to a height of more than a halfmile (.8 km). Gros Piton (2,619 ft./798 m) can be climbed

by experienced hikers; Petit Piton (2,438 ft./743 m) is not considered safe to climb. Anse des Pitons, a picturesque bay, separates the Pitons.

The town's marketplace, especially active on Saturday. can be recognized by its charming gingerbread trim. Situated near the waterfront on Bay Street, the market offers fresh fruits and vegetables, spices and island crafts. Le Toc Battery, built in 1888, overlooks Castries Harbor. The military installation includes cartridge and shell stores, underground tunnels and an original 18-ton cannon.



For highways, byways and more: AAA.com/maps

# ANSE CHASTANET RESORT BOOK NOW 758/459-7000



Resort Cottage. Address: Old French Rd. Location: Oceanfront. Located in a secluded area. Facility: Spacious rooms are upscale with a rustic charm, showcasing beautifully crafted furnishings with ample seating. The décor blends well with the rain forest surrounding the property. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 49 cottages. 1 story, exterior corridors. Bath: shower only. Amenities: safes. Dining: 5 restaurants, entertainment. Activities: beach on-site, self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest **Services:** valet laundry, boarding pass kiosk, area transportation.



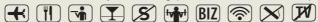
































# JADE MOUNTAIN RESORT BOOK NOW 758/459-4000



Boutique Resort Hotel. Address: Old French Rd, Anse Chastanet. Location: Located in a secluded area. Facility: The rooms are spacious sanctuaries that are open to the elements: They are high up on the mountainside and offer panoramas of the rain forest. Caribbean Sea, the Pitons and a glittering night sky. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 29 units. 8 stories (no elevator), exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: entertainment. Activities: self-propelled boats, boat dock, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, bicycles, trails, exercise room, spa. Guest **Services:** valet laundry, luggage security pick-up, area transportation.





























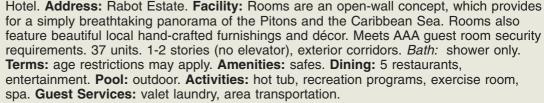






# LADERA RESORT BOOK NOW 758/459-6600















































SUGAR BEACH, A VICEROY RESORT BOOK NOW 758/456-8000



Resort Hotel. Address: Val des Pitons. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: Located between the two Piton peaks, this beautiful resort resides on more than 100 acres of lush rain forest. The spacious villas all feature private plunge pools and extremely comfortable beds. Meets AAA quest room security requirements. 130 units, some two bedrooms, houses and cottages. 1-2 stories, exterior corridors. Amenities: safes. Dining: 3 restaurants, entertainment. Pool: outdoor. Activities: steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, motor boats, self-propelled boats, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, playground, health club, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.































### **VIEUX FORT**

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758/459-6000

IREE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Hotel. Address: Bean Field.





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# St. Martin/St. Maarten

hared between France and the Netherlands, St. Martin/St. Maarten is the smallest territory in the world governed by two sovereign states. Until a few years ago the island was a largely undiscovered hideaway; today modern tourist accommodations are plentiful. Philipsburg, the capital of St. Maarten, is on a sandbar between Great Bay and the Great Salt Pond. Marigot, the quintessentially French capital of St. Martin, is known for

its fine shopping and as a haven for yachts, as are Oyster Pond and Great Bay in St. Maarten.

# **History**

The Arawaks were the first to inhabit the island in pre-Columbian times. The Caribs, who eventually replaced their peace-loving predecessors, called the island Soualiga, meaning "land of salt," due to its numerous salt ponds. When Christopher Columbus discovered the island during his second voyage in 1493, he named it after St. Martin of Tours.

Spanish colonization didn't come until about 1640; until then they battled with the Dutch and French for the island's coveted anchorages and valuable salt ponds. In 1634 a Spanish battery went up at Pointe Blanche, southeast of present-day Philipsburg, and on the peninsula where the ruins of Fort Amsterdam can now be found, and the island was defended successfully until the Spanish finally abandoned it in 1648. The island was then settled by French and Dutch prisoners and their countrymen from nearby St. Kitts and St. Eustatius.

The two remaining contestants decided to divide the island, and local legend holds that they defined the border through a walking contest. A Frenchman and a Dutchman started in the same spot, walked around the island in opposite directions and drew the boundary line where they met. In reality, though, the 1648 Treaty of Concordia granted France the greater portion of the island because its navy could offer greater protection. Though claims to the territory remained in some dispute for another 170 years, the settlers' idea of harmonious coexistence has lasted. In 1948 the islanders, who by this time considered themselves one people, erected a monument commemorating their 300 years as neighbors.

The salt ponds remained important economically through the 19th century. Sugar cane and tobacco, however, brought only brief prosperity; slaves were imported to work the plantations in the late 1700s, but following abolition in 1848 most of the plantations fell to ruin. A devastating hurricane followed by an earthquake in 1819 foreshadowed the island's economic decline. It was not until 1939 when the island declared itself a free port that the economy began to turn around. An airport was built in the late 1950s, and the tourism industry was born.

Since 1845, Dutch St. Maarten was part of the Netherlands Antilles; it became an autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 2010 when the Netherlands Antilles was dissolved. In 1946, French St. Martin became a dependency of the French overseas department of Guadeloupe, ultimately becoming a French Overseas Collectivity in 2007.

# Shopping

The two capitals of Philipsburg and Marigot are a treasureland for shoppers. Duty-free luxury imports include Dutch and French silver, crystal, Delftware, cameras, French perfume, china, fashions, jewelry, Italian leather and electronics. Inexpensive souvenirs are available among such plentiful island wares as hand-drawn and embroidered linens, ceramics, woodcarvings, straw goods, original paintings, St. Martin music and books. cane furniture and pareu, a length of fabric that is twisted and turned depending on how it is worn.

The island's shopping mecca is Philipsburg's Front Street, where more than 100 shops line the mile-long (1.6 km-long) thoroughfare. Hidden behind Front Street are numerous shops along Backstreet and Cannegieter Street—all connected by *steegjes*, or alleyways. Island handicrafts are for sale along the pier and in nearby Wathey Square. Other shopping opportunities are available west of town in the Simpson Bay and Maho Bay areas as well as the Blue Mall in Cupecoy.

In Marigot the shops center on Port la Royale on the marina and across the street along rue Général de Gaulle and rue de la Liberté. Rue de la République, the road leading to the ferry pier, also has several fine shops. Boutiques in Marigot specialize in European designer fashions and tropical clothing. Wednesday and Saturday mornings Market Square on the harbor bustles with the activity of locals selling fresh food and handicrafts.

Shopping hours on the Dutch side are generally Mon.-Sat. 8-noon and 2-6, and on the French side Mon.-Sat. 9-12:30 and 3-7. Banking hours in Philipsburg are Mon.-Fri. 8:30-3. In Marigot banking hours are Mon.-Fri. 8:30-4.

### Food and Drink

Few experienced travelers would disagree that St. Martin/St. Maarten offers some of the best dining in the Caribbean. The dual nationality of the island adds a dimension of culinary variety, and there are more than 300 restaurants to choose from. French and West Indian menus predominate, though Italian and American also are popular.

As expected of a former French colony, St. Martin is especially renowned for its cuisine, both in its classic version and its Creole cousin. Northeast of Marigot is the tiny village of Grand Case, considered the island's gourmet capital; some of the island's best French and West Indian restaurants can be found here. In Marigot there are several Gallic restaurants as well as those offering other cuisines. Marigot also features several French-style sidewalk cafes.

The restaurants in Philipsburg and elsewhere in St. Maarten offer greater variety. In addition to French, the finest in West Indian, Italian, American, Mexican, Thai, sushi, Argentinean, Indonesian and even Chinese cuisines can be found. Restaurants add a 10- to 15-percent service charge to the bill.

St. Maarten's own Guavaberry Island Folk Liqueur makes a good take-home item. Seven bittersweet flavors are available and can be sampled at a tasting house at the east end of Frontstreet in Philipsburg. The island's tap water is purified; bottled water also is widely available.

# **Sports and Amusements**

Most daytime activities on the island are water oriented and take place on white sand beaches and in secluded coves. The island is fringed with some three dozen beaches. Great Bay and Little Bay beaches are the most accessible from Philipsburg. To the west are Simpson Bay Beach, replete with water sports outlets; Mullet Bay Beach, with convenient facilities; and secluded Cupecoy Beach. Scenic Dawn Beach on the east coast also is good for snorkeling. Tiny but popular Maho Beach offers an unusually close view of jets landing at Princess Juliana International Airport.

On the French side west of Simpson Bay Lagoon are the unspoiled beaches of Baie Longue, intimate Baie Rouge and family-friendly Baie des Pères. Mile-long (1.6 km) Grand Case Beach on the northwest shore has calm, clear waters. Orient Beach on the northeast shore is the island's most popular. Topless bathing is common on the French side; bathing *au naturel* is possible at Orient.

Such water sports concessions as scuba diving, snor-keling, windsurfing, parasailing, water skiing and jet skiing are concentrated around Grand Case Beach, Anse Marcel and Orient Beach in St. Martin and Great Bay, Little Bay and Simpson Bay in St. Maarten. Sea Trek at Bobby's Marina in Philipsburg has participants don specially made bell helmets for a walk on the sea floor; swimming is not required.

The island's coral reefs teem with marine life, and its waters allow for visibility of up to 200 feet. Experienced divers have many interesting diving spots to choose from, including the Alleys, bound by cliffs and ledges; Green Key; Flat Island; and Hen and Chick, small islands with beautiful elkhorn coral reefs. Outside Great Bay is the 1801 wreck of the British warship HMS *Proselyte*.

Several firms offer scuba diving lessons lasting about 3 hours. Picnic sails and snorkeling trips to such nearby deserted islands as Tintamarre (Flat Island) and Pinel or Prickly Pear islands also are available. Arrangements for diving and snorkeling trips and lessons can be made through all the island's marinas and major hotels. Deepsea fishing charters can be arranged at Bobby's Marina and Great Bay Marina in Philipsburg, Port la Royale in Marigot and Port Lonvilliers in Anse Marcel. Dolphin, kingfish, sailfish, blue marlin and wahoo are the main catches.

But those seeking land-based activities need not feel so out of the swim of things. Horseback riding is available at Seaside Nature Park in Cay Bay; guided excursions are available. Tennis courts can be found at some hotels and resorts, and many are lighted. An 18-hole golf course is available on the Dutch side at Mullet Bay; phone (721) 545-2850.

The island is definitely not lacking in nighttime diversions. Evening entertainment takes place primarily at 13 hotel casinos, all on the Dutch side, and the resorts, where carnival shows and Caribbean music are on tap.

The first weekend in March, the St. Maarten Heineken Regatta includes yacht races and soirees. A popular event is Carnival, held around Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday in St. Martin and for two weeks beginning in late April in St. Maarten.

# **Sightseeing**

The island is easily toured by car, but caution should be exercised—many side roads are rough and narrow, and wandering livestock are common, especially on the French side. Steep roads should not be attempted following rains. The border between the Dutch and French sides can be traversed freely. Road maps are available at the airport, car rental agencies located at the airport and the tourist offices in Philipsburg and Marigot.

On a peninsula between Great Bay and Little Bay is Fort Amsterdam, built by the Dutch in 1631 but occupied by the Spanish 1633-48. Peter Stuyvesant, eventual governor of America's New Netherlands colony, lost his right leg here while battling the Spanish in 1644. The unimproved site is accessible via the Divi Little Bay Beach Resort. Due north atop Fort Hill are the ruins of Fort William, which dates to 1801. A steep hike to the top rewards the adventurous with a spectacular panorama; driving is not recommended.

Another excellent vantage point is the roadside lookout a few miles west on Cole Bay Hill. Several neighboring islands can be seen, including on a clear day St. Kitts and Nevis—about 45 miles (72 km) southeast. Union Road, the route north from Cole Bay Hill, is the quickest way to Marigot; at the halfway point stands the Border Monument, erected in 1948 to commemorate the islanders' 300 years as neighbors. A longer but worthwhile route proceeds west past the airport and through the island's low-lands, circling Simpson Bay Lagoon. En route are some of the island's finest resorts.

From Philipsburg the especially scenic east coast of St. Maarten is accessible via Sucker Garden Road. The first turnoff leads to Guana Bay Point and the second to Dawn Beach and Oyster Pond. Both paved routes are steep and meandering, but the vistas to be enjoyed are worth the effort. Most noticeable among the numerous offshore landmarks is the French island of St. Barthélemy, about 14 miles (23 km) offshore. Picturesque Oyster Pond, reminiscent of the French Riviera, is a favorite anchorage of Caribbean boaters.

North of Oyster Pond is the rural area of Orléans, seemingly untouched by time and tourism, and the large Etang aux Poissons, or Fish Lake. Farther north along the coast are popular Orient Beach and several smaller, more secluded spots. Off the eastern shore of rural French Cul de Sac is uninhabited Pinel Island, a favorite day-sail destination where water sports and facilities are available.

From French Cul de Sac the road turns westward through Grand Case. This charming former fishing village has earned its reputation as the island's gourmet capital. The Creole-style structures along the main road house some of the island's best restaurants. And at numerous

roadside food stands, or *lolos*, barbecued lobster, chicken and ribs and such Caribbean specialties as plantains and johnnycakes are sold.

The road south passes Paradise Peak; at 1,391 feet (424 m) it is the highest point on the island. On clear days the view encompasses both capitals and the island's patchwork of blue and green. The road to the inland village of Colombier, south of Paradise Peak, is lined on the north by lush tropical flora and on the south by rolling green hills decorated with long, meandering stone walls.

Glass-bottom boat trips, picnic sails and luncheon, sunset and moonlight yacht cruises are available out of the marinas at Philipsburg, Simpson Bay, Cole Bay, Marigot, Anse Marcel and Oyster Pond. Day trips to nearby Anguilla, St. Barthélemy, Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Kitts and Nevis also can be arranged.

## **Transportation**

Princess Juliana International Airport has direct flights from San Juan, Atlanta, Boston, Charlotte, Chicago, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. LIAT offers service from Antigua, St. Kitts and Tortola; and Windward Islands Airways (Winair) from Nevis, St. Barthélemy, St. Eustatius and Saba. Air Caraïbes has daily flights from Guadeloupe. In addition to Juliana Airport, Air Caraïbes flies into Grand Case Espérance Airport, a small domestic airstrip in Grand Case. Philipsburg is a port of call for many cruise ships. Smaller ships dock at Marigot.

Automobiles rented from companies with outlets at Princess Juliana International Airport cannot be picked up at the airport; courtesy shuttles transport visitors to the rental car lots. Automobiles rented from outlets not near the airport are delivered free to hotels, and many hotels have car rental offices on the premises. Most cars have automatic transmissions and air conditioning. Motor scooters also are available; caution is advised due to rough roads and steep hills. Major credit cards are accepted.

Taxis are abundant on both the Dutch and French sides. Taxi rates are regulated, but it is always wise to agree on the fare in advance. Rates increase by 25 percent from 10 p.m. to midnight and by 50 percent from midnight to 6 a.m. Each additional passenger over two is an extra \$5. The rates from Princess Juliana Airport are posted at the taxi stand outside. Tipping is customary. The two capitals of Philipsburg and Marigot are connected by inexpensive public buses that operate from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. If you are traveling by bus or taxi, be sure to have enough cash on hand for the day; ATMs can be difficult to locate.

The islands of Anguilla, St. Barthélemy, Saba and St. Eustatius are accessible by any one of several boats operating out of Philipsburg in St. Maarten. High-speed ferries can make the trip in 40 minutes. Several ferries to St. Barthélemy and Anguilla operate out of Marigot in St. Martin.

### **FAST FACTS**

POPULATION: St. Martin: 39,000. St. Maarten: 43,000.

**AREA:** 96 sq km (37 sq mi.)

CAPITAL: St. Martin: Marigot. St. Maarten: Philipsburg.

HIGHEST POINT: 424 m (1,391 ft.), Pic du Paradis

(Paradise Peak), St. Martin.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: St. Martin: French and English. St. Maarten: Dutch, English and a local patois.

GOVERNMENT: St. Martin: French Overseas Collectivity. St. Maarten: Autonomous country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

**CURRENCY:** St. Martin: Euro Dollar. \$1 U.S. = approx. .88 Euro. U.S. currency is widely accepted. St. Maarten: U.S. Dollar.

**ELECTRICITY:** St. Martin: 220 volts, 60 cycles AC. St. Maarten: 110 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 25; maximum age 65-70. U.S. license valid; drive on right.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.** 

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for all passengers. Child restraints are required for children under age 4; children under 12 must ride in the back seat.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: St. Martin: Jan. 1; Mardi Gras; Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May 1; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Victory Day, May 8; Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Abolition Day, May 27; National Day/Bastille Day, July 14; Feast of the Assumption, Aug. 15; All Saints Day, Nov. 1; Concordia Day/Armistice Day, Nov. 11; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26. St. Maarten: Jan. 1; Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; King's Birthday, Apr. 27; Day after Carnival, late April or early May; Labour Day, May 1; Ascension Day, May (6th Thurs. after Easter); Emancipation Day, July 1; Constitution Day, Oct. (2nd Mon); St. Maarten's Day, Nov. 11; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: St. Martin: A 5 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Departure tax \$30 U.S.; interisland tax \$10 U.S. St. Maarten: A 5-8 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge

are added to most hotel bills. Departure tax \$30 U.S., ages 2 and up; interisland tax \$10 U.S.

**IMMIGRATION:** St. Martin: A valid passport and return or onward ticket are required for U.S. citizens entering the French West Indies. No visa needed for stays up to 3 months, St. Maarten: Passport and return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 2 weeks. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: St. Martin: From the U.S. or Canada, dial 011 + 590 + 590 + the 6-digit local number. St. Maarten: Dial 1 + 721 + the 7-digit local number.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

St. Martin/St. Maarten Tourist Office

825 Third Ave., 29th floor New York, NY 10017 (590) 87-57-21 (St. Martin) St. Martin Tourist Office Route de Sandy Ground Marigot, St. Martin 97150 (590) 87-57-21 St. Maarten Tourist Bureau Krippa Bldg., Unit 10 6 Juancho Yrausquin Blvd. Philipsburg, St. Maarten (721) 542-2337



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# St. Maarten

Covering 16 square miles (41 sq km) on the southern half of the island, the Dutch dependency of St. Maarten is characterized by rolling hills and white sand beaches. Arawak Indians harvested salt from the many lagoons and salt lakes in the area.

### **PHILIPSBURG**

Philipsburg is the busy Dutch capital. Its three main thoroughfares are usually crammed with shoppers browsing through stores stocked with duty-free luxuries. Among the jumble of shops, restaurants and modern buildings are remnants of an earlier Philipsburg. One of the most notable of the town's historic buildings is the 18th-century Philipsburg Courthouse. The courthouse borders Wathey Square, the town center of activity. Fort Amsterdam, built in 1631 on a peninsula between Great

Bay and Little Bay, was the first Dutch military outpost in the Caribbean.

ST. MAARTEN 12 METRE CHALLENGE departs from Bobby's Marina downtown off Yrausquin Blvd. Participants experience the thrill of riding aboard multi-milliondollar America's Cup race boats. Crew members can grind, winch, trim sails or sit back and relax aboard Dennis Conner's Stars & Stripes, Canada II or True North. Prior sailing experience is not necessary. Time: Allow 3 hours minimum. **Phone:** (721) 542-0045. **GT** 

# St. Martin

Occupying 21 square miles (54 sq km) on the northern half of the island, the French dependency of St. Martin is known for its secluded beaches and resort areas.

### **GRAND CASE**





Boutique Hotel. Address: 5007 Grand Case 97150.





Boutique Hotel, Address: 248 Blvd de Grand Case 97150.

### **MARIGOT**

The quaint harbor town of Marigot (MAR-ee-go) is thoroughly French. The traditional architecture of wrought-iron balconies and fretwork trim is visible along its busy streets and residential roads, and a stroll among the shops and sidewalk cafes of Port la Royale transports visitors to the French Riviera. The restored ruins of 18th-century Fort St. Louis overlook Marigot's harbor, providing an excellent view; the fort can be reached on foot via the steps behind the Sous-Préfecture off rue de L'Hôpital.

Adding to the quaintness, a tree-lined promenade borders the water's edge and a series of pleasure boat slips. At the far end of the boulevard is the town marketplace.

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# St. Vincent and The Grenadines

the barefoot life of a traditional West Indian island is readily available on St. Vincent, 18 miles (29 km) long and 11 miles (18 km) wide. Relatively unknown to tourists until recently, St. Vincent is one of the most picturesque of the Windwards, with quaint fishing villages, coconut and arrowroot plantations and palm-fringed coves of black volcanic sand. St. Vincent and its string of Grenadine islands, which reach south to Grenada, offer some of the best sailing, swimming, diving and snorkeling in the Caribbean. Complementing these pleasures are the small comfortable inns that provide much of the guest accommodations on St. Vincent and its sun-swept satellite islands, which include Beguia (beck-way), Mayreau (myrow), Mustique (mus-teek), Canouan (can-no-wan), Petit St. Vincent, Palm. Union and Young islands.

# History

Generations before Christopher Columbus sighted the area in 1498, fierce Carib Indians from the South American mainland had annihilated St. Vincent's population of gentle Arawaks. St. Vincent was left relatively undisturbed until the 18th century when, despite the hostility of the

Caribs, the French, Dutch and British began to vie for settlement. Near the close of the 18th century the Caribs were deported to the Bay of Honduras. By the Treaty of Paris in 1763, France ceded the island to Britain but recaptured it in 1779. Britain gained final possession in 1783 by the Treaty of Versailles. Independence from Britain was finally granted in 1979.

That same year La Soufrière, the 4,048-foot volcano in the north, erupted, spewing ash that filtered all the way to Barbados, 100 miles (160 km) east. While necessitating the evacuation of Carib descendants living on the volcano's slopes, the eruption posed no threat to the capital of Kingstown, 30 miles (48 km) south.

Sharing the characteristics of the other Windward Islands, St. Vincent relies on tourism and agriculture as its main sources of income. Cut flowers have become St. Vincent's newest export. Green mountains and productive valleys cover the island. The rural Mesopotamia Valley, also called Marriagua Valley, is the focus of much agricultural activity. Besides breadfruit, introduced from Tahiti by Captain Bligh of "Mutiny on the Bounty" fame, bananas, coconuts and arrowroot constitute the principal crops.

# Shopping

Kingstown's main street has several interesting shops, a few selling clothing with island motifs. Sea island cotton with screened designs is available at the cruise ship terminal. Local artisans offer a large variety of macramé items, jewelry and straw handicrafts, some made on the spot, at St. Vincent Craftsmen's Centre in Kingstown and Wallilabou Craft Centre in Wallilabou. A cluster of shops is tucked in the courtyard of the Cobblestone Inn, inland from the main waterfront road. The dockside Market Square comes alive on Friday and Saturday mornings when vendors and anglers gather to sell their goods; the weekly loading of the banana boats enhances this vibrant

Shopping hours are generally Mon.-Fri. 8-noon and 1-4, Sat. 8-noon, though some stores are open Mon.-Fri. 8-4. Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 8-2, Fri. 8-5.

### Food and Drink

Traditional West Indian cuisine—local fish, island produce and thick soups—as well as international flavors are available at hotels. Hotel restaurants worth investigating are in the Cobblestone Inn and Grenadine House. Hotel kitchens often use the bountiful produce from the native market at the far end of the main street.

# Sports and Amusements

The beaches at Villa Bay, Indian Bay and in the Grenadines are excellent for swimming, sunning, snorkeling and scuba diving. Sailing, boating, fishing and diving equipment can be rented for either half- or full-days. Cumberland Bay on the leeward coast is a secluded beach, ideal for snorkeling and diving. Just minutes from Port Elizabeth in Bequia, Princess Margaret is a tree-lined stretch of soft sand, named after the princess who enjoyed a dip there in 1958. Casuarina is a white-sand beach that runs the entire length of Palm Island. Boating enthusiasts consider Saltwhistle Bay in Mayreau to be one of the Grenadines' most stunning; sailors favor this bay due to its calm waters. Macaroni Bay, on Mustique's east coast, is one of the island's most popular beaches and includes a covered picnic area. The main dive centers are on St. Vincent, Bequia, Mustique, Canouan and Union Island.

Hotels offer evening entertainment—local steel or string bands play live music. Grenadine House, Sunset Shores Beach Hotel, Grand View Beach Hotel and Young Island Resort are some of the properties that host performances, usually on Friday and Saturday.

# Sightseeing

A hike to La Soufrière involves a full day and requires good physical conditioning. The trip to the still-active volcano begins by car along the coast and crosses the Yurumein/Taiwan bridge, then proceeds on foot through the Bamboo Forest and straight up the 4,048-foot summit for an unparalleled view. The Vermont Nature Trail and Trinity Falls also provide scenic outlooks. Dark View Falls, two majestic falls set in the forest-clad Richmond Valley on the island's northwest side, can be reached via a natural bamboo bridge spanning across a tumbling river. Elevations rise up to 229 feet.

Day trips also can be made on island schooners and motorized mailboats to Beguia and other islands of the Grenadines. Bequia, Union Island and Canouan are accessible by plane. Port Elizabeth's harbor area has colorful shops along the waterfront as well as lodgings, restaurants and water sports facilities. The production of hand-carved wooden sailboats is a prosperous industry on Beguia.

If you have less time you can take a half-day drive through the Mesopotamia Valley, which includes hillsides covered with banana and arrowroot crops and the craggy windward shore. On the leeward shore the quaint fishing village of Layou boasts the Carib Stones, huge sacrificial altars with carved heads and petroglyphs from pre-Columbian, Arawak and Carib Indians. Farther north lies the traditional fishing village of Barrouallie, which has remained unchanged for centuries. Close to Kingstown, Dorsetshire Hill and Mount Saint Andrew offer pleasant climbs.

# **Transportation**

Connecting air service is offered from Atlanta, Charlotte, Miami and New York to St. Vincent's Argyle International Airport. Public buses operate in Kingstown and throughout St. Vincent; rental cars are available with or without driver. Of the 600 miles (960 km) of roads on the island,

about 360 miles (580 km) are paved. The other 31 islands that constitute the Grenadines are accessible via small boats or planes. Flights also are available from St. Vincent and Canouan via SVG Air. Several resorts offer air limousine service from Barbados, Grenada, Martinique and St. Lucia. Bequia airport is 4 miles (6 km) south of Port Elizabeth and can accommodate small capacity propeller aircraft.

The *Bequia Express* makes daily ferry trips between St. Vincent and Bequia.

These islands possess a natural, unspoiled beauty that is fading from some of the more commercially developed Caribbean islands. A few of the Grenadines are owned exclusively by one resort or hotel; reservations for these secluded accommodations are often required a year in advance.

## **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 101,334.** 

**AREA:** 344 sq km (133 sq mi.).

CAPITAL: Kingstown.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 1,234 m (4,048 ft.), La Soufrière. **LOWEST POINT:** Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English and French patois.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent (parliamentary democracy). Member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Eastern Caribbean (E.C.) dollar. \$1 U.S. =

2.7 E.C. dollars.

**ELECTRICITY:** 220 volts, 50 cycles AC (except for Petit St. Vincent and Palm Island, which have 110 volts, 60

cycles).

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. A valid U.S. or international driver's license must be presented to obtain a temporary local license (\$37). Drive on left.

**MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.** 

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; National Heroes Day, Mar. 14; Good

Friday; Easter Monday; Labour Day, May (1st Mon.); Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Carnival, July (2nd Mon. and Tues.); Emancipation Day, Aug. (1st Mon.); Independence Day, Oct. 27 (or Mon., Oct. 28, if holiday falls on a Sun.); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

**TAXES:** A 10 percent service tax, 11 percent VAT on hotel room and 15 percent tax on food and other purchased items; service and VAT are often combined at hotels, often with a total of 11 percent charged for the two; the standard VAT is 16 percent. Departure tax \$40 U.S. over age 11.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 6 months for U.S. citizens. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call St. Vincent and the Grenadines from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 784 + the 7-digit local number.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

St. Vincent and The Grenadines Tourism Office, United States

801 Second Ave., 4th Floor

New York, NY 10017

(212) 687-4981

(800) 729-1726

St. Vincent and The Grenadines Tourism Authority

NIS Building, Floor 2

Kingstown, St. Vincent

St. Vincent and The Grenadines

(784) 456-6222

(784) 457-1502



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### CANOUAN

Named "turtle island" by the Carib Indians, this once deserted sugar plantation and whaling outpost is now home to Mandarin Oriental, Canouan that includes luxury villas and estate properties. The 18-hole course at the Grenadines Estate Golf Club was designed by Jim Fazio. An extensive coral reef offers excellent snorkeling and scuba diving.



MANDARIN ORIENTAL, CANOUAN

**BOOK NOW** 

212/461-8068

FIVE DIAMOND INSPECTED @ CLEAN Resort Hotel. Address: Carenage Bay.

### KINGSTOWN

The capital city of Kingstown is an enjoyable place to explore, with its mixture of English and French architectural styles, exemplified by 19th-century houses and such historic buildings as Wesleyan Hall and St. George's Anglican Cathedral.

St. Mary's Catholic Cathedral is an architectural wonder incorporating a variety of styles; it has Roman arches, Gothic spires and a myriad of balconies, turrets, battlements and courtyards.



BLUE LAGOON HOTEL AND MARINA

**BOOK NOW** 

784/458-4308



Hotel. Address: Windward Hwy, Ratho Mill.



GRENADINE HOUSE BOOK NOW 784/458-1800



Boutique Hotel. Address: Kingstown Park.

### VILLA



LAVUE BOUTIQUE HOTEL & BEACH CLUB

**BOOK NOW** 784/528-8883



Boutique Contemporary Hotel. Address: Indian Bay Rd.



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# **Trinidad and Tobago**

rinidad and Tobago are the southernmost islands of the West Indies. Trinidad once was an extension of the northern coast of Venezuela, but the lowlands were washed away by the Orinoco River centuries ago; at the closest point only 7 miles (11 km) of sea (Gulf of Paria) separate Trinidad and Venezuela. Located on the island of Trinidad, Port of Spain, the capital of this twinisland republic, is one of the Caribbean's most cosmopolitan cities. People from Africa, China, Europe, India, the Middle East and many other countries make their home here along with descendants of the Carib Indians. This di-

versity is reflected in the country's varied architecture, with ornate mansions, Spanish patios and tiled roofs, French grillwork, cathedrals, mosques and temples.

Christopher Columbus is said to have encountered the island of Trinidad on July 31, 1498, naming it after the Holy Trinity after spotting the three peaks of the southern mountain ranges. Many Trinidadians leave the hustle and bustle of their island to vacation on subdued Tobago, some 20 miles (32 km) away. Columbus reported seeing Tobago, which he named Bella Forma, but did not land on the island. Tobago's present name may be derived from

the Spanish word for tobacco, but exactly when and how the island was named is unknown. It is believed that Tobago was the inspiration for the shipwreck tales of the Swiss Family Robinson and Robinson Crusoe. Today's visitors will find wide, white beaches and small contemporary hotels.

# **History**

Trinidad was originally inhabited by several Amerindian tribes, including the Caribs, who called the island *lere*, meaning "land of the hummingbird." However, Christopher Columbus was inspired by three mountain peaks when he sighted land in 1498, and he called the island La Trinidad, a confirmation of his vow to name his next discovery after the Holy Trinity. He claimed it for Spain, but a permanent settlement. San Jose de Oruña, was not established until 1577 by Don José de Oruña. Now known as St. Joseph, the town was named as the capital in 1592 upon the arrival of the Spanish governor to Trinidad and Guyana, Don Antonio de Berrio y Oruña.

The 1600s saw raids by the Dutch and French, but the Spanish retained control. Crop failures kept the island poor until 1783, when the Cedula of Population, a proclamation by King José of Spain, offered land grants to immigrants willing to develop agriculture and commerce. In 1797, attracted by the resulting prosperity, the British sent an expedition that gained control of the island. Trinidad was formally ceded to Great Britain by the Treaty of Amiens in 1802.

Inhabited by Caribs when first sighted by Columbus, Tobago was subsequently coveted as a strategic position by every major power operating in the Caribbean. As a result the island changed hands more than any other in the West Indies; during the 17th and 18th centuries it was taken and retaken by France, Britain, Holland and Spain. In accordance with an agreement in 1749, the island was left unmolested for 13 years, but the struggle began anew when the reprieve ran out. Tobago finally became a crown colony of the Windward Island group in 1814.

Britain consolidated its hold on both islands during the Napoleonic Wars, and they were combined into the colony of Trinidad and Tobago in 1889. The richest and second largest country of the British West Indies, the islands acquired independence from Britain on Aug. 31, 1962. In March 1976, Trinidad and Tobago became a republic, with the capital at Port of Spain, Trinidad. The prime minister is elected by the people, and the president is chosen by the electoral college.

The islands' principal exports are petroleum, petrochemicals and sugar. The discovery of substantial natural gas reserves has enabled the country to embark upon a revitalized industrialization program, which has resulted in a large industrial complex at Point Lisas off Trinidad's southwest coast. Pitch Lake on Trinidad, an enormous asphalt reservoir, has provided material for surfacing many

of the world's roads. Cocoa, coffee and—increasingly tourism also are important economically.

# Shopping

Port of Spain is known throughout the Caribbean and South America for its fascinating shops and merchandise. Frederick Street is home to luxury imports including French perfumes, Swiss watches, jewelry, china, porcelain, crystal, silver, cameras, leather handbags, beads and petit point. Another popular shopping district in the city is Queen Street, which offers cloth stores filled with English tweeds and worsteds as well as a range of natural and synthetic fibers. Irish linens and fine silks are available; dresses, suits and sports and evening jackets are custom tailored from imported materials. Charlotte Street has developed into a thriving Asian quarter with shops featuring ivory carvings, jade jewelry, brassware, saris, richly patterned silks, carved curios and furniture, native filigree jewelry, embroidered slippers and silk apparel. On Sunday mornings the street transforms into a thriving Chinatown-style market with traditional vegetables, meats and such foods as sticky rice offered for sale from large straw baskets.

Trinidad's fine rums and Angostura bitters are available at bargain prices. There are several malls in and around the city, including a small one at the Cruise Ship Complex on Wrightson Road that features duty free stores, clothing boutiques and souvenir shops. The modern West Mall boasts a wide selection of shops. Stores in Port of Spain are open Mon.-Fri. 8-4; some are open until 5, on Fri. until 6. and on Sat. until 2 p.m. Malls are open Mon.-Sat. 10-7. Some of the larger malls are open on Sunday 1-6. Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 8-2 and Fri. 8-1 and 3-5 at banks: and Mon.-Fri. 10-6 at mall branches.

## Food and Drink

The food on Trinidad is as cosmopolitan as the island; British, American, Continental, Creole, Chinese African, Middle Eastern, West Indian fusion and Indian dishes are available. Popular dishes include sancoche and callaloo, excellent thick soups; stuffed or curried cascadura, a popular freshwater fish; crab meat served in the shell; the island's famous small oysters served in a spicy sauce; and roti, an East Indian dish consisting of curried meat and vegetables stuffed into a soft, flour shell. Pelau is a one-pot meal similar to pilaf and is a combination of pigeon peas and rice cooked with chicken or beef in coconut milk and pumpkin. Pastelles, a cornmeal pastry filled with ground meats, raisins, olives and capers, rolled in fig leaves or aluminum foil and boiled, is a Christmas specialty.

Angostura bitters originated and still are manufactured in Trinidad. Created in the early 1800s by Dr. Johann Siegert as a digestive aid for the troops of Simon Bolivar, the concoction is said to contain a mixture of herbs and spices. The ingredients have remained a secret, but the

recipe supposedly does not contain the bark of the Angostura tree. The local Angostura rum is a favorite in fruit punches. The water is safe to drink.

# Sports and Amusements

The islands' African heritage surfaces in three art forms: calypso, a lilting medium for political and social satire that can be traced to the arrival of the first African slaves brought to work on Trinidad's sugar plantations; limbo, a dance strictly for the athletic; and a steel pan, a percussion instrument fashioned from oil drums (reputedly the only musical instrument invented in the 20th century). Steel pans are especially popular during Carnival season which starts on Boxing Day and culminates in a street festival two days before Ash Wednesday. Many of the major Carnival events are hosted in the capital city, but celebrations take place in towns and villages throughout the country. Hundreds of thousands of costumed revelers, calypso contests, a pre-dawn revelry known as J'Ouvert, steel-band contests and the crowning of the king and queen of Carnival all make this one of the best known of Caribbean festivals. Yearly, the Prime Minister's Best Village Folk Festival in August offers displays of traditional skills, dance and drama combined with tastes of local cuisine. The islands also are the scene of Hindu and Muslim festivals.

Beautiful beaches line the coast of Trinidad and none is less than an hour's drive from Port of Spain. Maracas Beach, with its powdery beige sand, emerald water and towering coconut palms, is considered one of the world's most beautiful beaches. Trinidad's efforts to develop the natural beauty of the coastland are focused on Maracas and Las Cuevas bays northwest of Port of Spain and Manzanilla and Mayaro beaches on the east coast.

Good fishing in the Gulf of Paria and adjacent waters is available all year, but the best fishing is from June through September. Boats, guides and equipment are available for hire. Trinidad is a favored destination for docking a yacht during the hurricane season, usually falling between July and November. The racing season begins around November and continues through June. The Trinidad Yacht Club will arrange sailing parties, moorings and rentals.

Inland activities on Trinidad include golf, hunting (season is October through February) and some lively spectator sports. Eighteen-hole golf is played at St. Andrews Golf Club in Moka Valley, (868) 629-0066. Near the airport at Sunrise Park Trincity is Millennium Lakes Golf & Country Club, with a PGA-designed 18-hole par 71 championship course; phone (868) 640-8337. On the sister island of Tobago, golfers can play at the Tobago Plantations Golf Club, (868) 387-0288. Large hotels usually have facilities catering to tennis buffs.

Horse racing takes place at the Santa Rosa Racing Track in Arima. For spectators and players alike Trinidad offers such popular sports as cricket, January through April; field hockey, January through June; and soccer, which generally runs July through December.

The calypso singers, steel bands and Port of Spain's long history as a sailor's town have earned Trinidad a reputation for its own raucous, gaudy, exciting brand of nightlife. Clubs throughout town vibrate with the beat of Trinidadian dance and a mix of local and international music, and stay open until the wee hours of the morning. Hotels also have entertainment, but it is geared toward those with more conservative tastes.

Recreation on Tobago centers on the sea. The island's many inlets, bays, shoals and reefs are excellent for fishing with line or spear; boats, guides and equipment are available for hire. Scuba diving and snorkeling are excellent at Buccoo Reef, and there is bathing at the Nylon Pool, a shallow area 2 miles (3.2 km) out in the Caribbean Sea.

# Sightseeing

Lovely drives around Port of Spain enable visitors to relish the island's tropical beauty. The quiet, residential Lady Chancellor Road affords a panorama of the city, the Gulf of Paria and San Fernando Hill. Lady Young Road also offers fine views of the city and the hills. Excellent views of the countryside, Venezuela and the sea are available from the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Laventille and from Fort George, a short distance from Port of Spain.

The North Coast Road to Maracas and Las Cuevas Bay is spectacular; most of it is between 500 and 1,500 feet (150-450 m) above sea level and bounded by lush rain forest overlooking La Vache and Balata bays. This 34-mile (55-km) round trip from Port of Spain is the most popular shore excursion with Caribbean cruise ship passengers, as it highlights Trinidad's great scenic variety. Also high in Trinidad's northern mountain range at 1,200 feet (365 m) is the very secluded Asa Wright Nature Center. Tours can be arranged out of Port of Spain to the center, which has a former estate house and plantation offering day- and week-long nature programs; phone (868) 667-4655.

The northwest coast road to Carenage and Chaguaramas also is particularly scenic. This area includes several offshore islands (described by the locals as "down the islands"). One of the islands, Gaspar Grande, is home to an interesting group of caves on its southern end. The Gasparee Caves are entered by a long winding staircase to the bottom, where stalactites and stalagmites can be seen. There also is a pristine underground pool in the cavern. A nature trail on Gaspar Grande leads to mounted guns dating back to World War II and offers panoramas of the sea and surrounding islands.

A driving tour from Port of Spain to the Maraval Valley passes through the San Juan cocoa plantations and the Santa Cruz Valley, where planters' houses of French and Spanish colonial days and the great samaan trees still stand. An alternate route is along Saddle Road, which

winds through guiet residential neighborhoods; it eventually meets the North Coast Road, which passes Maracas and Las Cuevas Bay before coming to an end at the historic Spring Bridge in the tiny fishing village of Blanchisseuse.

From Port of Spain the trip to Pitch Lake travels along the Uriah Butler Highway through Chaguanas, noted as a hub for bargain hunters and shops specializing in East Indian jewelry; through Pointe-à-Pierre, the site of a large oil refinery and the Wildfowl Trust, reputedly the world's only animal reserve located in a refinery; and through San Fernando, Trinidad and Tobago's second largest city. Island tours of Trinidad can last up to 7 hours, traveling past the Gulf of Paria, across the central sugarcane plains, and through Pointe-à-Pierre and San Fernando; they then continue past coconut plantations to Mayaro Beach and return via Manzanilla Beach. Lunch and swimming are included.

An excursion on Tobago might include a tour of the restored Old Fort King George, the Botanical Gardens and a shopping district in Scarborough, combined with a drive past coconut plantations and beaches to Store Bay (known for its beach huts selling crab and boiled flour dumplings in a thick curry sauce) and Plymouth. A cruise to the Coral Gardens and the Natural Aquarium at Buccoo Reef provides an opportunity for snorkeling and swimming. Both of these excursions take about a half day.

A pleasant full-day drive on Tobago follows Windward Road along the wild Atlantic coast from Scarborough to Charlotteville. Visitors can take a pleasant detour off Windward Road, traveling northwest from Roxborough to Parlatuvier. The well-maintained, two-lane Roxborough-Parlatuvier Road climbs across the spine of the island, passing through rain forest, flocks of grazing sheep and cultivated farmland. As the road descends to Parlatuvier, it provides a fine view of the Caribbean side of the island.

Boats depart from Speyside to Little Tobago, where guides conduct walks through a 450-acre (182-hectare) bird sanctuary.

# **Transportation**

Daily direct flights to Trinidad's Piarco International Airport leave New York, Houston, Newark, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. There is regular and frequent air service between Trinidad and the other Caribbean islands. Trinidad also is a port of call for some major cruise lines. Cars can be rented by the day or week; driving is on the left. Trinidad's fast-expanding 4,600 miles (7,400 km) of asphalt highways are among the best in the Caribbean. City and island sightseeing tours with a driver-guide are available through the Trinidad and Tobago Incoming Tour Operators Association. Taxis are abundant.

Twenty-minute flights between Piarco International Airport and Tobago's A.N.R. Robinson International Airport are available several times a day. There are two ways visitors can travel on ferry between Trinidad and Tobago—fast ferry or conventional. Fast ferry sailing time is about 3 hours 30 minutes. The conventional ferry can take up to 7 hours; these car/passenger ferries have dining rooms and bars. For additional information, phone (868) 625-3055. Automobiles can be rented on Tobago, which has about 220 miles (354 km) of good roads. Public buses traverse the island several times daily and charge very reasonable rates.

## **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION:** 1,400,824.

AREA: Trinidad: 4,828 sq km (1,864 sq mi.). Tobago:

300 sq km (116 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Port of Spain, Trinidad.

**HIGHEST POINT:** 940 m (3,084 ft.), El Cerro del Aripo,

Trinidad.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

**LANGUAGE:** English.

**GOVERNMENT:** Independent (parliamentary democracy). Member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

**CURRENCY:** Trinidad and Tobago dollar. \$1 U.S. = approx. 6.7 Trinidad/Tobago dollars.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-230 volts, 60 cycles AC; voltage varies with location.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. U.S. license valid for 3 months; drive on left.

**SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS:** Seat belts are required for driver and front-seat passengers. Children under 5 years of age must be secured in a properly fastened and forward-facing child restraint seat.

**HOLIDAYS:** Jan. 1; Spiritual Baptist Liberation Day, Mar. 30; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Indian Arrival Day, May 30; Feast of Corpus Christi, May or June (9th Thurs. after Easter); Labour Day, June 19; Eid-ul-Fitr (Muslim Holy Day), Apr. 10; Emancipation Day, Aug. 1; Independence Day, Aug. 31; Republic Day, Sept. 24; Divali, Oct. 29; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A 10 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Many restaurants include a 10-15 percent service charge. A 15 percent VAT (value-added tax) is added to most consumer goods. Departure tax \$32 U.S. (included in airline tickets)



**IMMIGRATION:** A valid passport and return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for U.S. citizens staying up to 90 days. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

**PHONING THE ISLANDS:** To call Trinidad and Tobago from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 868 + the 7-digit local number.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Trinidad and Tobago Tourism Development Company Ltd.

# **Trinidad**

Just 7 miles (11 km) off the coast of Venezuela, Trinidad is the southernmost island in the Caribbean archipelago. Trinidad covers 1,864 square miles (4,828 sq km), roughly the size of Rhode Island. Three mountain ranges cross the island; at 3,085 feet (940 m), El Cerro del Aripo is the highest point. Half of the island is forest, and mangrove swamps provide wildlife habitats on both the east and west coasts.

The Pitch Lake at San Fernando prompted interest in Trinidad's petrochemical resources; the first oil well was drilled here in 1857. By the early 20th century, oil had replaced sugar as the island's chief export. A surplus of Navy oil drums led to the invention of Trinidad's famed steel drums.

The church of Notre Dame de Montserrat in Tortuga contains the statue of the Black Virgin. The wooden figure is said to have been brought from Spain by Capuchin monks. In nearby Carapichaima stands the 85-foot-tall Hanuman Murti, reputed to be the tallest Hindu statue of its kind outside India. The brightly-colored effigy of a monkey-faced god is east of the Waterloo Temple, also known as the Temple-in-the-Sea. A laborer built this shrine in the Gulf of Paria after he was forbidden from using sugar land.

### PORT OF SPAIN

Busy markets, exotic houses of worship and modern buildings give Port of Spain a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Maritime Centre, 29 Tenth Ave., Level 1 Barataria. Trinidad Trinidad and Tobago (868) 675-7034 Tobago Division of Tourism, Culture and Transportation 12 Sangster's Hill Scarborough, Tobago Trinidad and Tobago (868) 639-2125

The city has been the capital of Trinidad since 1757 and the capital of both Trinidad and Tobago since they were united in 1899. From the hills north of the city, the coast of Venezuela can be seen across the Gulf of Paria.

(868) 639-4636

Just outside of Port of Spain on the Eastern Main Road in Laventille is the House of Angostura, maker of several varieties of rum and its signature, Angostura aromatic bitters. The distillery features a museum, art gallery and butterfly collection; factory tours are available by reservation. Phone (868) 623-1841.

**WINSTON NANAN CARONI BIRD SANCTUARY** is 7 mi. (11 km) s. on the Uriah Butler Hwy. in Caroni. This 15,000acre (6,000-hectare) mangrove swamp is the protected nesting ground to the scarlet ibis, now threatened by pollution and poachers. At sunset, thousands of the brilliantly colored birds return to roost in the mangrove trees, offering a spectacular sight. Guided 2.5-hour boat trips are offered by several specialist tour operators, including Nanan's Caroni Bird Sanctuary Tours.

Insect repellent and binoculars are advised; boats do not disturb the birds by approaching closely. **Phone:** (868) 645-1305. **GT** 

NATIONAL MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY is on the s.e. corner of Queen's Park Savannah at 117 Frederick St. Guarded by Spanish cannons that date from 1797, the museum houses an anchor that Columbus lost in Trinidad. Displays relate to Trinidad and Tobago's natural history, industry, geology and archeology. Of special note are elaborate costumes worn during Carnival celebrations as well as a gallery of folk art and crafts. Time: Allow 1 hour minimum. Phone: (868) 623-5941.



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# **Turks and Caicos Islands**

he tiny islands of Turks and Caicos (KAY-kos) lie southeast of The Bahamas and north of the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The Turks and Caicos are comprised of eight major islands and some 40 smaller cays, most of which remain uninhabited. Grand Turk and Salt Cay are in the Turks, and North, Middle (also known as Grand), South, East and West Caicos and Providenciales (also known as Provo) are in the Caicos. The two groups are separated by the Turks Island Passage. Of the Atlantic group, these beautiful islands resemble those found farther south, with dazzling white or gold sand and

sparkling waters. Most of the resorts are on Provo and Grand Turk: more intimate accommodations are available on the other islands. The islands' business, banking and government center is Cockburn Town on Grand Turk.

#### **History**

The Turks and Caicos might have been among the islands mentioned in Christopher Columbus' 1492 diary, but there is no official record of discovery until Juan Ponce de León arrived in 1512. The native inhabitants were the Arawak Indians, whose population was almost destroyed by the French and Spanish. The British finally took control of



the islands under the Treaty of Madrid, and during the American Revolution they were the territory of Loyalists and pirates. After the war the Loyalists and settlers from Bermuda began producing salt and set up cotton and sisal plantations, ventures that eventually supported the islands for many years. Tourism is now the mainstay of the economy. The Turks are named for the Turk's Head Cactus, while Caicos is a derivation of *cayos*, the Spanish word for "small island."

# Shopping, Food and Drink

Compared with some other islands, shopping opportunities are limited. Shoppers commonly purchase stamps and coins and souvenirs crafted from straw or seashells. Popular shopping spots in Providenciales include La Petite Place, Regent Village and Saltmills Plaza. Liquor and tobacco are available at duty-free prices. Dining options are plentiful, with local restaurants serving such seafood delicacies as conch stew, spiny lobster, grouper, turtle and wahoo. Other restaurants serve French, Italian, Chinese and Mexican dishes. Some of the islands' fruit and rum libations are popular aperitifs.

#### **Sports and Amusements**

The focal point for recreation in the Turks and Caicos is the nearly 230 miles (370 km) of beaches. North Caicos and Provo each claim a 12-mile (19-km) stretch of sand; North Caicos also boasts a 5-mile (8-km) strand at Sandy Point. Swimming, snorkeling and scuba diving are understandably popular activities at most resorts. The scuba diving is said to be among the best in the world, especially off Provo and Grand Turk. Dive operators based at resorts on Grand Turk, North and South Caicos, Provo and Salt Cay provide rentals for scuba diving as well as the services of a divemaster. Along the north shore of Provo, Grace Bay is the location of Princess Alexandra National Marine Park.

The annual migration of the humpback whale takes place in the winter. These eastern Atlantic whales travel through the Turks Island passage to the Mouchoir and Silver banks to the south; they mate and give birth to their young in these waters. The whales can be observed from the shore south of Grand Turk and Salt Cay, and whalewatching charters also can be arranged.

Fishing is a favorite pastime throughout the islands; the Caicos are noted for bonefishing. Pine Cay has a freshwater lake, and South, Middle and North Caicos, Pine Cay and Provo offer guides who can predict where the best catch will be. Deep-sea fishing can be arranged at North Caicos, Provo, Grand Turk and South Caicos. Boat rentals for sailing are available at Provo, Pine Cay, South Caicos and at most hotels.

Tennis courts are available to guests of hotels on North Caicos, Pine Cay and Provo. The Provo Golf Club offers an 18-hole championship course; phone (877) 699-3539.

Hotels offer information about sightseeing. Some interesting sites include old churches, the 19th-century Bermudian Great White House (open by appointment) on Salt Cay, caves on Middle Caicos, the herd of wild horses roaming outside an 1820 house called Highlands on South Caicos, and ruins of the salt industry. Hotels also offer some nightlife in the way of after-dinner dancing and pubs.

A short boat ride from Provo, Little Water Cay has become a sanctuary for the endangered rock iguana. The Little Water Cay Nature Trail is a system of boardwalks that allows visitors to observe these creatures without endangering their habitat. Observation towers along the trail offer views of the island's interior and the azure waters surrounding it.

Boats from many towns participate in the annual regatta at South Caicos in May. Carnival is celebrated in September with the coronation of the queen and the parade in which each island is represented. Junkanoo, a street party celebrating the island's rich culture and history, is held on December 26 (Boxing Day) and January 1.

#### **Transportation**

Providenciales International Airport can be reached by air from Atlanta and New York aboard Delta flights, and Charlotte, Dallas and Miami with American Airlines. Bahamasair offers flights from Provo to Nassau. Island-hopping flights stop at Grand Turk, South Caicos, North Caicos, Salt Cay and Provo. Arrangements also can be made for flights to The Bahamas and the Dominican Republic.

Bicycles, mopeds and automobiles can be rented on Grand Turk and Provo. A valid driver's license from your home country is required for rentals, and vehicles are driven on the left side of the road. Chartering a boat is an excellent way to see a wide variety of islands while you enjoy the sun and sea.

#### **FAST FACTS**

POPULATION: 44,543.

**AREA:** 430 sq km (166 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Grand Turk.

HIGHEST POINT: 49 m (161 ft.), Blue Hills,

Providenciales.

**LOWEST POINT:** Sea level, Atlantic Ocean.

TIME ZONE(S): Eastern Standard. DST.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** British Overseas Territory.

**CURRENCY:** U.S. dollar.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-120 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on

the rental car agency. U.S. license valid for 30 days; drive on left.

MINIMUM AGE FOR GAMBLING: 18.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for all passengers.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Commonwealth Day, Mar. (2nd Mon.); Good Friday; Easter Monday; National Heroes' Day, May 26; Monarch's Birthday, June (3rd weekend); Emancipation Day, Aug. (1st Mon.); National Youth Day, Sept. 30; National Heritage Day, Oct. (2nd Mon.); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A 12 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Many restaurants include a 10 percent service charge. Departure tax \$65 U.Sand is typically included in the airline ticket fare.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and a return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 30 days. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens

returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call the Turks and Caicos Islands from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 649 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

Turks and Caicos Tourist Board, United States 225 W. 35th St.

Suite 1200

New York, NY 10001

(646) 375-8830

(800) 241-0824

Turks and Caicos Tourist Board, Grand Turk

Front Street

**Grand Turk** 

Turks and Caicos Islands

(649) 946-2321



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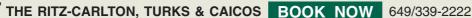


Vacation Rental Condominium. Address: 118 Grace Bay Rd.





Boutique Hotel. Address: Grace Bay Rd TKCA 1ZZ.







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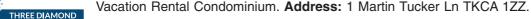














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# Virgin Islands, British

I slands tinged with the warm colors of a Paul Gauguin painting and white sand beaches cooled by refreshing breezes characterize the Virgin Islands. About 60 miles (97 km) east of Puerto Rico, the archipelago lies directly in the path of the trade winds and enjoys a pleasant climate with moderate rainfall and maximum sunlight. The principal British islands are Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada (ah-nee-GAH-da) and Jost Van Dyke; except for

the flat coral island of Anegada, both the U.S. and British Virgins are volcanic in origin.

Though not as developed as their U.S. sisters, the British Virgin Islands have a distinctive appeal. Tortola has the capital, Road Town, with its serene harbor and rugged 1,709-foot (521-m) Mount Sage. Virgin Gorda Island has an untamed natural beauty, and uninhabited Norman Island is reputed to be the "Treasure Island" of Robert

Louis Stevenson fame. Some of the smaller, secluded islands are privately owned and offer the ultimate in escapist vacations.

#### **History**

The British Virgin Islands saw their first Europeans when Christopher Columbus arrived in 1493. Except for some copper on Virgin Gorda, the Spanish found little of interest on the islands and eventually lost them to the British in 1628. However, it was the Dutch who settled Tortola and initiated the lucrative sugar trade, which sparked the envy of other countries. Yet, despite battles between the French, Spanish, Dutch, Danes and various pirates, Britain regained the islands in 1666 and has held them ever since. Today the islands constitute a territory, administered by a gueen-appointed governor and a locally elected government headed by a Chief Minister. While livestock raising is still important, offshore banking and tourism and its related industries dominate the islands' economy.

#### Shopping

Most of the retail shops in the islands are found along Main Street in Road Town or along the harbor in Virgin Gorda. Because there is no duty on British imports, bargains can be found on some English china, fabrics and foods. Among other bargains are rum, whiskey and gin as well as intricate straw goods, island crafts, jewelry and fabric designs. One popular shopping area in Road Town is Main Street, which has shops offering souvenirs, spices, jewelry and china. Such native spices as Tortola's rum, pepper sauce and BVI Caribbean seasoning are found at the retail outlets of Tortola's two spice factories. Locations include Main Street, Crafts Alive Market, Soper's Hole Marina and the Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport.

Local stamps are unique in that they are the only stamps in the British Commonwealth sold in a denomination of U.S. currency, official tender in the British Virgins. Stamps are available in Road Town or at the small post office at West End on Tortola. Major credit cards and travelers checks are accepted at most hotels and restaurants.

#### Food and Drink

Except for seafood, mutton, beef or homegrown vegetables and fruit, all food is imported. Tortola and Virgin Gorda have the largest selection of restaurants. On other inhabited islands a small hotel or inn is often the only establishment. Hotels usually serve three meals a day and have wine lists as well as a wide assortment of liquors and fruit drinks. Island cuisine is characterized by fish or seafood dishes, the most popular being *fungee*. This type of Caribbean polenta is made from corn meal, mixed with onions, sweet peppers and okra, boiled into cakes and served with boiled fish and green vegetables.

#### Sports and Amusements

The islands' most popular activity and biggest drawing card is sailing. Their reputation as a mecca for yachting enthusiasts, though long known by advocates of the sport, has been discovered by amateur sailors and tourists. As a result hundreds of yachts are available for charter. The more than 40 islands and cays are ripe for exploring.

Many half- or full-day cruises include a picnic lunch, snorkeling, swimming or tours of such sites as Virgin Gorda's Baths—gigantic boulders forming a labyrinth of grottoes and beaches. The best equipped marinas are on Tortola, Virgin Gorda and Peter Island. You should make reservations for longer sailing excursions during the peak season, December through February.

Deep-sea fishing is another popular activity in the British Virgin Islands, where record catches of blue marlin, tuna and wahoo have been made. Special competitions take place June through November.

The clarity of the waters off these islands creates superb scuba and snorkeling conditions. Especially notable is the wreck of the RMS Rhone located off Salt Island; this wreck is ranked as one of the top-rated sites by several diving publications. Expert guides are available, and arrangements can be made through any of the islands' many dive shops or hotels.

The variety of birds, including pink flamingos, inhabiting the flat island of Anegada also makes a visit worthwhile. Some 154 species of birds are found throughout the British Virgin Islands. Tennis courts can be found at hotels on Virgin Gorda and Tortola.

The appeal of the British Virgin Islands is tranquility, which means few dance clubs and no high-rises, jets or mammoth cruise ships. Evening diversions, therefore, are minimal. Moonlight cruises, listening to a steel band or dancing to after-dinner music at one of the hotels constitute most of the organized activities. Tortola's Festival, held the last week in July through the first weekend in August, incorporates the Emancipation Day Parade; Virgin Gorda's Festival celebrations take place Easter weekend. The festivities, popular with visitors and residents alike, include parades, dances, food fairs, beauty contests and band competitions.

The Welcome, the bimonthly tourist news magazine available free throughout the islands, provides up-to-date information. The Limin' Times is a good source for news about entertainment and activities. The British Virgin Islands Tourist Board maintains an office in Road Town and at the yacht harbor on Virgin Gorda Island.

#### **Transportation**

Tortola's Terrance B. Lettsome International Airport can be reached by plane from St. Thomas, St. Maarten, St. Croix, Antigua, St. Kitts or San Juan via Air Sunshine, Cape Air or LIAT. Virgin Gorda has frequent connections

with St. Thomas and San Juan. Frequent interisland flights link Tortola with Anegada. Charter flights are available through Fly BVI and VI Airlink.

While inland transportation is fairly limited, taxis are available on Tortola, Virgin Gorda, Anegada and Jost Van Dyke; all offer island tours. Rental cars can be hired on Tortola, Virgin Gorda and Anegada, and with limited availability on Jost Van Dyke; a local driver's license good for 90 days is required and can be obtained at car rental agencies or the traffic licensing office.

Ferries operate daily between both Charlotte Amalie and Red Hook, St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands, and West End, Tortola. Trips take 30-50 minutes. A 90-minute ferry runs to Road Town, Tortola. For fares and schedules phone Native Son, (284) 494-5674; or Road Town Fast Ferry, (284) 494-2323. Within the British Virgin Islands, ferry service operates daily from Road Town, Tortola, to Virgin Gorda. A ferry also connects West End, Tortola, with Jost Van Dyke. Phone New Horizon Ferry, (284) 542-5959; or Speedy's Ferry (284) 495-5240. Some of the more remote islands can only be reached by sailboat or motorboat out of Tortola and Virgin Gorda.

#### **FAST FACTS**

POPULATION: 30.000.

**AREA:** 153 sq km (59 sq mi.). **CAPITAL:** Road Town, Tortola.

HIGHEST POINT: 521 m (1,709 ft.), Mount Sage,

Tortola.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English.

**GOVERNMENT:** British Overseas Territory.

**CURRENCY:** U.S. dollar.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-120 volts, 60 cycles AC; voltage

varies with location.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 25. Local license must

be purchased for \$10 after 30 days; drive on left.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for all passengers.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; H.L. Stoutt's Birthday, Mar. (1st Mon.); Commonwealth Day, Mar. (2nd Mon.); Good Friday; Easter; Easter Monday; Whit Monday, May or June (8th Mon. after Easter); Sovereign's Birthday, June (2nd Sat.); Territory Day, July 2; Festival Days, Aug. (1st Mon., Tues. and Wed.); St. Ursula's Day, Oct. 18; Prince of Wales' Birthday, Nov. 14; Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Dav. Dec. 26.

TAXES: An 10 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Departure tax is \$50 U.S. included in most airline tickets and \$20 by ferry.

**IMMIGRATION:** Passport and return or onward ticket are required. No visa needed for stays up to 30 days. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all U.S. citizens returning from the Caribbean to present a valid passport.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call the British Virgin Islands from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 284 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

British Virgin Islands Tourist Board, United States

1 West 34th Street, Suite 302

New York, NY 10001

(212) 563-3117

(800) 835-8530

British Virgin Islands Tourist Board, Road Town

DeCastro Street

2nd Floor, AKARA Building Road Town, Tortola Island Virgin Islands, British

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# Virgin Islands, U.S.

aken together, all three U.S. Virgin Islands—St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John—create the ideal West Indies vacation package. Charlotte Amalie (a-MAL-ya), capital of the islands, typifies the Caribbean town with its delightful shops and patios, winding streets and Old World, Continental flavor. Its picturesque harbor is among the busiest cruise ports in the Caribbean. Varied nightlife and a resort atmosphere make St. Thomas the liveliest of the U.S. Virgins. The largest of the islands, St. Croix is dotted with the ruins of plantation great houses and secluded beaches. St. Croix also offers shopping and

amusement opportunities, but at a slower, less hectic pace. For those seeking peace, quiet and natural beauty, St. John is the archetype of the remote and undeveloped Caribbean isle. The beautiful Virgin Islands National Park covers two-thirds of the island.

#### **History**

Christopher Columbus discovered the Virgin Islands during his second voyage in 1493. His fleet of 17 ships first anchored off the north coast of Santa Cruz, or St. Croix as the French would later call it, then sailed off to



the chain of smaller islands on their northern horizon. Columbus named the chain in honor of the 11,000 virgins who in legend were martyred with St. Ursula in a battle with a pagan ruler in the third century.

The English and French attempted to colonize St. Croix as early as 1625; the Dutch and Spanish made later appearances. After changing hands several times, St. Croix was ceded to the Knights of Malta in 1653, then sold to the French. The Danish West India & Guinea Co., permanently chartered in 1671, established Denmark's first settlement in the West Indies on St. Thomas under Gov. Georg Jorgen Iversen. St. John was acquired in 1684, St. Croix in 1733.

Denmark ruled these islands for nearly 250 years, with the exception of two brief periods of British administration in the early 19th century. The Danish West Indies became the U.S. Virgin Islands in 1917, when Denmark sold them to the United States. The American government, which desired a naval base in the Caribbean and proximity to the Panama Canal, purchased the islands for \$25 million in gold. Many of Charlotte Amalie's thoroughfares still bear Danish names.

Tourism to the U.S. Virgin Islands began to boom in the 1960s partly because of the closing of Cuba to tourists from the United States. The number of visitors quickly escalated from about 100,000 per year to more than 2 million. At the same time tourism was rising, the islands' population tripled. Other islanders were attracted by the relative economic security.

Today the U.S. Virgin Islands is an unincorporated territory of the United States, and its people are American citizens. The islands were administered by a governor appointed by the president until 1970, when the first gubernatorial election was held.

#### Shopping

Among the bargains in the U.S. Virgin Islands are imported liqueurs and local rums. In some instances, considerable savings are possible on Royal Copenhagen, Limoges, Wedgwood, Bing and Grondahl china; Baccarat, Waterford, Lalique, Daum and Val St. Lambert crystal; Swiss watches; island wearing apparel; jewelry and precious gems; English doeskin products; cashmere sweaters from Scotland; and designer fashions from Europe. Silver bracelets, earrings, cuff links, table settings, fine perfumes and Danish silver also can be found. Handicrafts include basketry, hats, handbags, dolls and embroideries.

Hundreds of tiny shops crowd the narrow streets of Charlotte Amalie; at its center is Royal Dane Mall, a group of shops housed in former warehouses for trading goods and rum. Nearby are several shops at Palm Passage Courtyard and International Plaza Mall. Just south of Emancipation Gardens, at the corner of Veterans Drive and Forte Strade, locals sell handmade jewelry, artifacts,

fabrics and T-shirts at Vendors Plaza and Native Arts and Crafts Cooperative. Havensight Mall, at the cruise ship dock, has some 100 stores, restaurants and businesses. Atop St. Peter Mountain in the center of St. Thomas, Mountain Top offers a spectacular view of the north coast in addition to shopping opportunities. Designer fashions can be found at Yacht Haven Grande, an upscale waterfront development with more than 20 restaurants and boutiques. Also in St. Thomas, Tillett Gardens was once a Dutch farm and now is a marketplace for local arts and crafts. The adjacent TuTu Park Mall houses more than 30 stores. In St. Croix, King, Strand and Company streets in Christiansted are lined with shops and arcades, as is Frederiksted's waterfront; King's Alley Walk offers stores and restaurants. Shopping on St. John centers around Mongoose Junction, Wharfside Village and The Marketplace in Cruz Bay, which feature specialty shops, restaurants and water sports outlets.

St. Thomas shopping hours are Mon.-Sat. 9-5; Havensight Mall is open daily 10-5. Banking hours are Mon.-Thurs. 9-2:30 and Fri. 9-2 and 3:30-5. On St. Croix, most shops in Christiansted are open Mon.-Sat. 10-6, and banks are open Mon.-Thurs. 9-3, Fri. 9-4.

#### Food and Drink

Restaurants serve a variety of cuisine, including West Indian and Danish dishes as well as American, French, Mexican, Italian, Asian and Middle Eastern; seafood is especially popular. Many hotels also have individual specialties.

The Virgin Islands' tropical climate produces an abundance of exotic culinary favorites, including papayas, mangoes, avocados, passion fruit and bananas. Leaves of wild herbs and plants, combined with meat, fish, okra and other native ingredients, make the most truly native of all dishes, a thick island soup called *callaloo*. Cornmeal and okra are combined to make *fungee*, a common side dish.

Ripe soursop is used as a fruit and in ice cream; it also is made into a refreshing non-alcoholic drink, as is tamarind. Desserts include tarts made with pineapple, coconut, guava and guavaberry. It is said that the banana daiquiri was perfected at the U.S. Army base on Signal Hill in the 1940s; to date, more than 6 million of these sweet concoctions have been served at Mountain Top.

Drinking water, obtained by the desalinization of seawater or from rainwater cisterns, is safe in hotels and restaurants. Tipping customs are the same as in the United States.

#### Sports and Amusements

All of the U.S. Virgin Islands are havens of lovely beaches and pools, providing excellent scuba diving and snorkeling. Buck Island Reef, 6 miles (10 km) northeast of Christiansted, St. Croix, is an underwater U.S. national monument. Beginning divers enjoy investigating the more than 300 reefs around the islands; the experienced usually head for spots in Drake's Passage northwest of St. John. In a protected cove near Buck Island off the south shore of St. Thomas is the 190-foot World War I cargo vessel Cartenser Sr. On St. Thomas and St. John, dive shops operating through major hotels offer equipment rental, diving excursions and lessons; there are independent shops as well. Independent and resort dive shops in St. Croix are located near dive sites in Cane Bay, Christiansted. Frederiksted and Salt River.

For swimming and sunbathing, Magens Bay on the north coast of St. Thomas is considered one of the top 10 beaches in the world, as is Trunk Bay on St. John. On St. Croix, some of the out-of-the-way inns and hotels have superb beaches and plenty of privacy. Popular beaches include Ha' Penny, Cramer's Park and Jack's and Isaac's Bays. For sailors, and those on land with binoculars, there is the St. Thomas International Regatta in late March.

Deep-sea fishing is popular. The most important gamefish are blue marlin, sailfish, dolphin, kingfish, tuna and wahoo. The USVI Open/Atlantic Blue Marlin Tournament Marlinfest is held on Labor Day weekend. Fishing boats are available for charter on all three islands. Sailboats and yachts also can be chartered on all three islands; private cruises are available around the Virgin Islands to Puerto

For those who prefer land-based pastimes, St. Croix has an 18-hole championship golf course at the Carambola Golf Club, (340) 778-5638, an 18-hole course at The Buccaneer, (800) 255-3881, and a 9-hole course at The Reef Condominiums at Teague Bay, (340) 773-8844. You can play tennis at hotels and on public courts. St. Croix has many magnificent trails for horseback riding. Softball and baseball are played during the season on both St. Thomas and St. Croix, and some locals gather for cricket matches on Sunday.

Though sea, sun and sand are the islands' main attractions, there are enough evening pastimes to keep the spirit alive well after sunset. Dinner dancing, jazz, calypso music, limbo dancing and native acts are featured in many hotels and nightclubs. There are dance clubs on all three islands and movie theaters on St. Croix and St. Thomas.

Caribbean Community Theatre, at Estate Orange Grove on St. Croix, stages productions September through June. Similar fare is offered at the Reichhold Center for the Arts, an amphitheater on St. Thomas; phone (340-693-1559). Check with St. Thomas/St John This Week and St. Croix This Week magazines to find out what's happening and where.

#### Sightseeing

Island tours are most easily arranged through your hotel activities desk. A 2-hour tour of St. Thomas stops at Drake's Seat and Mountain Top. Visitors to the island's eastern end will find beach clubs and fishing centers. Sunset and harbor cruises are available from Charlotte Amalie.

A scenic trip to Magens Bay for swimming also departs from Charlotte Amalie; sailboats and beach equipment can be rented. A 2-hour tour to the island's western end passes a World War II submarine base, the University of the Virgin Islands and Brewer's Bay on the way to Crown Mountain. The return trip includes a stop at the old sugar mill at Estate Contant; admission is included. Safari bus tours of the island are often less expensive than taxi tours.

Perhaps the best of the many excellent scenic vantage points in Charlotte Amalie is Paradise Point atop Flag Hill. Southeast of Havensight Mall via a steep roadway, the site is especially popular at sunset. Paradise Point Skyride transports visitors to the hilltop. West of the harbor is the fishing village of Frenchtown, where the descendants of settlers from St. Barths continue to live off the sea.

Popular excursions on St. Croix include 3-hour glassbottom boat or catamaran trips to Buck Island Reef National Monument for snorkeling. Beach barbecues are available with some all-day sails. Arrangements can be made at local dive shops in Christiansted Harbor. Fulland half-day tours of local highlights are available, including the rain forest and Salt River, where Columbus landed. In February the St. Croix Landmarks Society conducts house tours that include restored sugar mills, great houses and elegant mansions.

You can hire one of several safari guides for exploring St. John. A popular day tour includes excursions to the Virgin Islands National Park, Annaberg Sugar Mill ruins and lunch and swimming at Trunk Bay. For those more interested in aquatic sports, boat trips to St. John are available and include 2 hours in Francis Bay for swimming and snorkeling.

#### Transportation

Direct jet service is available from the U.S. mainland via several airlines. Commuter airlines fly between Puerto Rico, St. Thomas' Cyril E. King Airport and St. Croix's Henry E. Rohlsen Airport. Many cruise ships call at Charlotte Amalie and Frederiksted.

The Vitran bus service on St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas is mainly for local traffic. Taxi service on St. Thomas and on St. Croix is good, and you also can rent cars on all three islands. Taxi rates are set in advance and apply per passenger. It is always wise to agree on the fare in advance. Parking is usually very scarce in Charlotte Amalie; a public lot east of Fort Christian costs \$1 per hour (\$5 per day). Taxi service is available on St. John as well, and jeeps can be rented by the day or week. A U.S. driver's license is valid.

Daily ferry service to Cruz Bay, St. John, is offered from two St. Thomas ports: Red Hook, a 20-minute trip, and Charlotte Amalie, a 45-minute trip. Daily ferry service connects both Charlotte Amalie and St. John with the British Virgin Islands of Jost Van Dyke, Tortola and Virgin Gorda; proof of citizenship is required. Service providers include Inter Island Boat Service, (340) 776-6597, and Native Sons, (340) 774-8685.

#### **FAST FACTS**

**POPULATION: 106,290.** 

AREA: 344 sq km (133 sq mi.).

**CAPITAL:** Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas.

HIGHEST POINT: 474 m (1,555 ft.), Crown Mountain, St.

Thomas.

LOWEST POINT: Sea level, Caribbean Sea.

TIME ZONE(S): Atlantic Standard.

LANGUAGE: English; Spanish or Spanish creole;

French or French creole.

**GOVERNMENT:** Unincorporated U.S. territory.

**CURRENCY:** U.S. dollar.

**ELECTRICITY:** 110-120 volts, 60 cycles AC.

MINIMUM AGE FOR DRIVERS: 21-25, depending on the rental car agency. U.S. license valid; drive on left.

SEAT BELT/CHILD RESTRAINT LAWS: Seat belts are required for driver and front-seat passengers. Child restraints are required for children under age 3; seat belts required for ages 3-5.

**HELMETS FOR MOTORCYCLISTS:** Required.

HOLIDAYS: Jan. 1; Three Kings Day, Jan. 6; Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Jan. (3rd Mon.); Washington's

Birthday/Presidents Day, Feb. (3rd Mon.); Holy Thursday; Good Friday; Easter Monday; Transfer Day, Mar. 31; Memorial Day, May (last Mon.); VI Emancipation Day/Danish West Indies Emancipation Day, July 3; U.S. Independence Day, July 4; Labor Day, Sept. (1st Mon.); Columbus/Puerto Rico Friendship Day, Oct. (2nd Mon.); D. Hamilton Jackson Day, Nov. 1; Veterans Day, Nov. 11; U.S. Thanksgiving, Nov. (4th Thurs.); Christmas, Dec. 25; Boxing Day, Dec. 26.

TAXES: A 12.5 percent room tax and 10-15 percent service charge are added to most hotel bills. Departure fee is \$10 U.S. by air. Rental cars are taxed at \$3.75 per day.

**IMMIGRATION:** Proof of U.S. citizenship is not needed to enter the U.S. Virgin Islands, but it is required to reenter the United States. A valid passport or birth certificate accompanied by a photo ID is accepted. A passport is required when travel involves stops on other Caribbean islands.

PHONING THE ISLANDS: To call the U.S. Virgin Islands from the U.S. or Canada, dial 1 + 340 + the 7-digit local number.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION FOR VISITORS:**

U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, St. Thomas 78 Contant 1-2-3

Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas Island 00804

Virgin Islands, U.S. (340) 774-8784 (800) 372-8784

U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Tourism, St. Croix

P.O. Box 4538

Christiansted, St. Croix Island 00822

Virgin Islands, U.S. (340) 773-0495 (800) 372-8784

## St. Croix Island

Old Danish towns rising above the Caribbean characterize the lovely island of St. Croix. Santa Cruz, as it was known by Christopher Columbus, rivaled Barbados as the leading sugar producer in the West Indies; great plantation houses recall these days of wealth on the 84-squaremile island. Modern St. Croix, the easternmost point in the United States territories, is the agricultural and industrial center of the U.S. Virgin Islands as well as a major tourist destination.

#### **BUCK ISLAND REEF NATIONAL MONUMENT**

About 6 miles (10 km) off the northeast coast of St. Croix, Buck Island Reef offers snorkeling, swimming, picnicking, bird-watching and exploring. The foremost attraction of the national monument—one of only a few underwater parks in the U.S. national park system—is the fine barrier reef. Buck Island, which covers 176 acres (71 hectares), is the only dry land in the park. The remaining 18,800 acres (7,600 hectares) comprise "one of the finest marine gardens in the Caribbean sea." Underwater trails offer excellent opportunities for snorkeling; markers identify the reef's fauna and flora.

Full- and half-day trips to Buck Island from St. Croix can be arranged with licensed concession boats at Christiansted Wharf or Green Cay Marina; snorkeling equipment and instruction are available. Concessionaires authorized to offer boat trips are Big Beard's Adventure Tours, (340) 773-4482; Buck Island Charters, (340) 718-3161; Caribbean Sea Adventures, (340) 773-2628; Jolly Roger Charters, (340) 513-2508; and Llewellyn's Charters, (340) 773-9027.

Park open daily dawn-dusk. Park admission free. Full-day boat trips (including meals) \$95-\$105; \$70-\$85 (ages 6-12); \$26 (ages 0-5). Half-day trip \$60-\$75; \$50-\$60 (ages 6-12); \$22 (ages 0-5). Big Beard's Sunset Sails \$35; \$25 (ages 6-12); \$15 (ages 0-5).

#### **CHRISTIANSTED**

Christiansted has preserved the 18th-century buildings of its Danish settlers. Solid stone buildings in pastel colors

with bright red tile roofs line the cobblestone sidewalks. adding a touch of European charm. The town's symmetry, with streets running at right angles to the waterfront, makes it popular for walking tours. The shopping area centers on King, Strand and Company streets, next to Christiansted National Historic Site.

CHRISTIANSTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE covers three city blocks along the waterfront and town square. The 7-acre (3-hectare) site includes such landmarks of the Danish colonial period as Fort Christiansvaern (1738). the best preserved of the five remaining Danish forts in the Virgin Islands; the Old Scalehouse; the Old Danish Customs House; the Danish West India & Guinea Co. Warehouse; and the Government House, once capitol of the Danish West Indies.

The Steeple Building, St. Croix's first Lutheran church, houses a museum with Arawak and Carib Indian relics. A self-guiding tour brochure is available from the National Park Service headquarters; caution is advised on the ar-



THE BUCCANEER BOOK NOW 340/712-2100



Historic Resort Hotel. Address: 5007 Estate Shovs 00824.

#### **FREDERIKSTED**

The emancipation of slaves was proclaimed on July 3, 1848, at Fort Frederik on the waterfront at the northern edge of Frederiksted. Destroyed by a fire in 1878, Frederiksted was restored during the Victorian era, as reflected in the town's architecture.

Frederiksted operates at a slower pace than Christiansted, except when cruise ships dock in Frederiksted's deepwater port. Visitor information is available at the entry to the pier. Fort Frederik houses art and cultural exhibits, including a police museum which details the history of the town; phone (340) 772-2021.

Of historical interest are the palatial ruins of Judith's Fancy, the former residence of the governor of the Knights of Malta. Set on an estate of several hundred acres, it has a view of the site where Christopher Columbus anchored at Salt River in 1493. Due to the greeting he received from the Carib Indians, Columbus named it the Cape of the Arrows.

CRUZAN RUM DISTILLERY, on West Airport Rd. at 3A Estate Diamond, is the world's only facility where this rum is produced. Tours and rum tastings are offered at the Estate Diamond visitor's pavilion. Note: At time of publication the distillery was temporarily closed with no scheduled time of re-opening; call ahead. Phone: (340) 692-2280. **GT** 

#### RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES Horseback Riding

• Paul and Jill's Equestrian Stables is off Rte. 58. Guided 1.5-hour horseback rides are offered. Weight limit is 230 pounds for men, 200 pounds for women. Phone: (340) 332-0417. GT

#### St. John Island

St. John owes its reputation as a quiet, largely undeveloped haven to the generosity of Laurance Rockefeller. His love of the island's beauty moved Rockefeller in the 1950s to purchase as much of St. John as he could acquire, then to donate most of it to the United States for the creation of a national park, ensuring that "this thing of beauty will be a joy forever." Rockefeller saw his wish fulfilled in 1956 with the dedication of Virgin Islands National Park.

Smaller than Manhattan Island, 19-square-mile (49sq-km) St. John is scalloped by lovely bays rimmed with white sand beaches of pristine beauty. The most famous is Trunk Bay, where the National Park Service maintains an underwater snorkel trail. Bordeaux Mountain, at 1,277 feet (390 m), dominates the island's rugged topography, and the lush forests conceal ruins of forts and plantation houses and traces of the Arawak and Carib Indians, the island's pre-Columbian inhabitants. Small museums at Cruz Bay exhibit relics of these peoples; their cryptic petroglyphs can be seen on rocks at Reef Bay, along Reef Bay Trail and other places.

The subdued atmosphere of Cruz Bay, the island's main town, conceals a history as a bustling center for the cotton, sugar and rum trade in the days when plantations thrived on St. John. A slave revolt occurred in 1733; the rebels held St. John for 6 months against the Danes and the British before the French finally overran them. Prosperous plantation farming continued through the mid-1830s and limited production continued until 1916, lasting through the emancipation of slaves in 1848.

Accommodations on St. John range from rustic to rich. Platform campsites front the beach at Cinnamon and Maho bays, while Caneel Bay, the world-renowned luxury resort developed by Laurance Rockefeller, occupies the site of an 18th-century sugar estate.

#### **CRUZ BAY**



Condominium. Address: 3AAA Gallows Point Rd 00831.



340/693-8000



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Resort Hotel. Address: 300A Chocolate Hole Rd 00830. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: On an idyllic bay, this resort offers fully equipped guest units with cooking facilities and ample seating. Some guest rooms even have a personal pool. There's a casual, oceanfront restaurant on site. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 252 units, some two bedrooms, three bedrooms, efficiencies and kitchens. 2-3 stories, exterior corridors. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 2 restaurants. Pool: outdoor. Activities: sauna, hot tub, beach on-site, motor boats, self-propelled boats, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, picnic facilities, exercise room. Guest Services: rental car service.



























#### VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK

Virgin Islands National Park covers about two-thirds of St. John and most of Hassel Island in St. Thomas Harbor off Charlotte Amalie. Encompassing nearly 15,000 acres (6,000 hectares), including 5,600 acres (2,300 hectares) of offshore waters, the park protects tropical forests, white-sand beaches and coral reefs. Pre-Columbian petroglyphs and the ruins of Danish sugar plantations also are found within its borders. The Cruz Bay Visitor Center,

north of the ferry dock, offers park information and exhibits.

Swimming, snorkeling and boating are popular at the park; equipment can be rented. To protect the coral reefs and seagrass beds, moorings have been installed in many areas. Boaters are encouraged to contact the park for information related to safe boating.

Hiking trails lead to scenic overlooks and into deep vallevs such as Reef Bay. Park programs range from guided

Please refer to pages 12-13 for Inspected Clean details.

hiking and snorkeling trips to illustrated evening programs at the campground amphitheater.

Annaberg Sugar Mill, built in 1718, is one of the island's best preserved examples of colonial sugar production. A self-guiding walking trail leads through the factory ruins, including a windmill and slave quarters; guided tours are offered by park rangers.

The park is open daily 24 hours. Cruz Bay Visitor Center open daily 8-4:30; closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Trunk Bay facilities daily 8-4. Ferry service from Red Hook, St. Thomas, to St. John departs hourly 6 a.m.midnight. Park admission is free. A \$5 user fee is charged at Trunk Bay; under 17 free. For park information, phone (340) 776-6201, ext. 238.

#### St. Thomas Island

Settled by Danes in 1672, St. Thomas covers 32 square miles (83 sq km) of hilly terrain about 40 miles (64 km) east of Puerto Rico. Crown Mountain, at 1,555 feet (472 m), and Signal Hill, at 1,505 feet (460 m), are the highest points. From the road that cuts through the mountain range, both sides of the island can be seen. Near the top of the range is Drake's Seat, from which Sir Francis Drake is supposed to have charted the course of the channel now bearing his name. From this point there is a fine view of Magens Bay, many islands and the Atlantic Ocean.

In the days of piracy, St. Thomas was a favorite hideout for Captain Kidd, Bluebeard and Blackbeard. The towers from which buccaneers are said to have searched the sea for potential victims are now hotels.

St. Thomas' checkered past has left the landscape dotted with contrasting architectural styles. Pastel houses line narrow cobblestone streets and alleys, where the doors reflect the Dutch heritage and the red tile roofs, the Danish. The elaborate iron grillwork was left by the French, and the patios lend a Spanish accent.

Tourism is the chief means of livelihood on St. Thomas. Tennis, golf, boating, swimming and fishing are available; spear fishing and snorkeling are excellent near the coral reefs around the island. Magens Bay on the north coast has a beautiful heart-shaped sand beach.

#### CHARLOTTE AMALIE

The only town on St. Thomas, Charlotte Amalie is the territorial capital of the U.S. Virgin Islands. This town, climbing up the steep sides of Mafolie Mountain, Frenchman's Hill and Solberg, once served as the home port for such unsavory characters as Captain Kidd, Bluebeard and Blackbeard. Sir Francis Drake employed the port's favorable location to descend upon the gold-laden galleons that sailed through the Anegada Passage en route to

Under the Danish colonial government the port accommodated one of the world's biggest slave trade operations, routing slaves from Africa to other areas in the Caribbean and on the mainland. From Emancipation Garden, the city's central square, slaves heard the proclamation giving them freedom in 1848.

Valdemar Hill Drive offers a panoramic view of Charlotte Amalie and its deepwater harbor, usually busy with several major cruise ships, container ships, island sloops and yachts. The 17th-century warehouses now house shops and restaurants that accommodate the tourist trade. Distinctive among the city's old buildings is the governor's office, the Government House, furnished with antiques and paintings by native impressionist Camille Pissarro.

At the base of the nearby "Ninety-Nine Steps," one of the few remaining stair-streets that once helped residents traverse the hilly town, is Government Hill, a wealthy residential community of the 18th century. Crown House, a national historic landmark, is a fine example of how wealthy Danish planters lived during the sugar heyday.

Historically significant churches include the St. Thomas Reformed Church, one of the first outside New York's Dutch colony; and the Frederick Lutheran Church, where silver equipment more than 2 centuries old is still in use. The St. Thomas Synagogue is one of the oldest in the Western Hemisphere and still has sand on its floor to symbolize the Jews' flight from Egypt through the desert. The New Herrnhut Moravian Church, about 2.5 miles (4) km) east of town, was built by missionaries in 1738.

CORAL WORLD OCEAN PARK is 7.5 mi. (12 km) n.e. at 6450 Coki Point. This 5-acre (2-hectare) marine park features exotic aquariums, outdoor pools, nature trails and the Undersea Observatory. Visitors can feed stingrays, lorikeets and iguanas during feeding shows. Additional activities include the Sea Trek helmet dive; sea lion swim; sea lion, turtle and shark encounter programs; snuba dives; and a semi-submarine ride.

Lockers and fresh-water showers are available. **Time:** Allow 1 hour minimum. **Phone:** (340) 775-1555, ext. 233.

**PARADISE POINT SKYRIDE** is across from Havensight Mall and the cruise ship dock. Aerial gondolas transport passengers 700 feet (213 m) up a mountainside to Paradise Point. The 15-minute round trip offers views of the

harbor and Charlotte Amalie. A restaurant and shops are at the top and a bird show is presented. Phone: (340) 774-9809.

#### FRENCHMAN BAY

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SAVE Hotel. Address: 2 Bakkeroe Estate.



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#### **RED HOOK**

THE RITZ-CARLTON, ST. THOMAS BOOK NOW 340/775-3333







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THE RITZ CARLTON Resort Hotel. Address: 6900 Great Bay 00802. Location: Oceanfront. Facility: The stunning rooms feature luxuriously soft bedding, balconies and walk-in closets. The bathrooms offer a European style deep soaker tub, dual sinks set in a marble vanity and plush robes. Meets AAA guest room security requirements. 180 units. 1-5 stories, exterior corridors. Parking: on-site and valet. Terms: check-in 4 pm. Amenities: safes. Dining: 4 restaurants. Pool: heated outdoor. Activities: hot tub, steamroom, beach on-site, cabanas, self-propelled boats, snorkeling, tennis, recreation programs, kids club, lawn sports, exercise room, spa. Guest Services: valet laundry.

























# Caribbean Club Contacts

AAA Auto Club South has an office in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to serve visiting AAA/CAA members. The branch office provides auto travel services, including maps, Tour-Book® guides and on-demand TripTik® routings, as well as travel agency services. The office is at 654 Avenida Muñoz

Rivera, Lobby Level, Suites 103 and 1119, approximately 6 miles from Old San Juan's cruise ship piers in the suburb of Hato Rey. Office hours are Monday through Friday 8:30-5:30 (Atlantic Standard Time). For more information, phone (787) 620-7805.

# **Language Tips**

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES are listed some of the words and phrases that are most useful to English-speaking travelers in the Caribbean. Expressions are given in Dutch, French and Spanish, the three languages most commonly spoken in addition to English.

**English** 

1. Please show me the road to .\_\_\_.

2. I want to go to .\_\_\_.

4. Where are we?\_\_\_.

5. May I park here?\_\_\_.

3. Are we far from ?\_\_\_.

Although not essential, knowledge of basic terms—particularly "please" and "thank you"—is helpful. Most islanders who deal with tourists speak at least some English, and those who don't will be only too glad to assist you in your attempts at a foreign language.

# **General Expressions**

deneral Expressions				
[	Dutch		Bonsoir	
Diagon	ا دا دا دا دا د		Bonne nuit	
	Alstublief	Good-bye	Au revoir	
	Dank u zeer	Do you speak English?	Parlez-vous anglais?	
	Neemt u mij niet kwalijk	I do not understand	Je ne comprends pas	
	Ja	Please repeat	Répétez, s'il vous plaît	
No	Neen	Sir	Monsieur	
Good day (hello)	Goedendag		Madame	
Good evening	Goedenavond		Mademoiselle	
	Goedenacht			
	Tot ziens	-	nish	
Do you speak English?	Spreekt u Engels?	Please	Por favor	
I do not understand	Ik begrijp niet		Gracias	
	Zegt u het nog eens	Excuse me	Discúlpeme usted	
	Mijnheer	Yes	Si	
	Mevrouw	No	No	
	Juffrouw		Buenos días	
IVIISS	Juillouw		Buenas tardes	
_	rench		Buenas noches	
•	Tellell		Adiós	
Please	S'il vous plaît		¿Habla usted inglés?	
	Merci		No entiendo	
	Excusez-moi		Repita, por favor	
	Oui	Sir	Señor	
	Non		Señora	
	Bonjour		Señorita	
2.222 day (1.0110)				
On The Road				



Go straight ahead.\_\_\_.
 To the right.\_\_\_.

8. To the left.\_\_\_.

9. How far is\_\_\_.

a. a garage?

b. a gas station?

e. a telephone?		7. A droit	
f. a post office?		8. A gauche	
g. a hotel?		<ol><li>À quelle distance se trouve</li></ol>	
h. a restaurant?		a. un garage?	
Dutob		b. un poste a essence?	
Dutch		c. un medecin?	
1. Wilt u mij de weg naar wijzen		d. un poste de police?	
2. Ik wil naar		e. une cabine?	
3. Zijn we ver van ?		f. la poste?	
4. Waar zijn we?		g. un hotel?	
5. Mag ik hier stoppen?		h. un restaurant?	
6. Rijdt u rechtdoor?		Spanis	h
7. Rechts		oparno.	•
8. Links		<ol> <li>Sirvase indicarme el camino par</li> </ol>	a
9. Hoe ver hier vandaan is		2. Quiero ir a ?	
a. een garage?		<ol><li>¿Estamos lejos de ?</li></ol>	
b. een benzinestation?		4. ¿Dónde estamos?	
c. een doktor?		<ol><li>¿Puedo detenerme aquí?</li></ol>	
d. een politie-bureau?		6. Siga el camino recto	
e. een telefooncel?		7. A la derecha	
f. een postkantoor?		8. A la izquierda	
g. een hotel?		9. ¿A que distancia está	
h. een restaurant?		a. un garaje?	
		b. una estación de gasolina?	
French		c. un médico?	
1 Vavillaz m'indiquar la routa a		d. una estación de policia?	
<ol> <li>Veuillez m'indiquer la route a</li> <li>Je desire aller a</li> </ol>		e. una cabina telefónica?	
3. Sommes-nous loins de ?		f. la oficina de correos?	
4. Ou sommes nous?		g. un hotel? h. un restaurante?	
4. Ou sommes mous!		II. uii Testaurante:	
	At The R	estaurant	
Dutch		Beef	Rundvlees
		Beefsteak	Biefstuk
Water		Pork	Varkenvlees
Coffee		Ham	
Tea		Mutton	Schapevlees
Milk		Venison	
Beer		Veal	
Wine		Chicken	•
Cider		Rice	
Lemonade		Potatoes	
Hors d'oeuvres		Vegetables	
Bread	_	Salad	
Soup	'	Tomatoes	
Eggs		Cabbage	
Fish		Green peas	
Lobster		Green beans	
Meat	Viees	Cauliflower	Bloemkool

5. Puis-je m'arreter ici?\_\_\_.6. Roulez tout droit.\_\_\_.

c. a doctor? d. a police station?

#### **272 LANGUAGE TIPS**

Cheese	Mushrooms	Champignons	Beer	Biere
Fruit				
Pastries   Gebak   Ceroams   Illegrater   Institute   Ceroams   Illegrater   Institute				
Cookies         Beschult         Bread         Pain           Orange         Sinaasappel         Soup         Soupe           Apple         Apple         Manana         Banana         Manana           Grapes         Druiven         Peer         Omelet         Omelet           Cherries         Kersen         Kersen         Normelet         Omelet         Omelet           Cherries         Kersen         Normelet         Omelet         Omelet         Omelet           Cherries         Kersen         Normelet         Omelet         Omelet         Omelet           Cherries         Kersen         Normelet         Omelet         Ome				
Orange         Sinasaspel         Apple         Soup         Soupe           Apple         Apple         Banana         Banana         Cerd         Omelett				
Apple	Orange	Sinaasappel		
Banana         Banaan           Grapes         Druiven           Pear         Peer           Cherries         Kersen           Strawberries         Aardbeien           Sugar         Suiker           Cream         Room           Salt         Zout           Pepper         Peper           Oil         Olie           Vinegar         Azijn           Mustard         Mosterd           Garlic         Knoflook           Butter         Boter           Jam         Jam           Knife         Mes           Fork         Vork           Spoon         Lepel           Stee         Riz           Plate         Boter           Fork         Vork           Spoon         Lepel           Bottle         Fles           Glass         Glass           Cup         Kopje           Plate         Bord           Napkin         Servet           Rare         Half rauw           Wedium         Geat           Warm         Koele           Warm         Koele				
Grapes         Druiven         Poisson           Cherries         Kersen         Strawberries         Aardbelen           Sugar         Suiker         Suiker         Crevette           Salt         Zout         Peper         Huitre           Pepper         Pepper         Peper         Beef         Boeut           Vinegar         Azijn         Mosterd         Mustard         Mosterd           Garlic         Knoflook         Mosterd         Mutton         Mouton           Butter         Boter         Pork         Porc           Jam         Jam         Mosterd         Mutton         Mouton           Knife         Mes         Fork         Veal         Veau           Jam         Jam         Chicken         Poulet         Rice           Fork         Vork         Veal         Veal         Veal           Cup         Kopie         Polatioes         Pornmes de terre         Veal         Ve				
Pear         Peer Cherries         Lobster         Homard           Cherries         Kersen         Shrimp         Crevette           Sugar         Suiker         Clam         Moule           Cream         Room         Moule         Clam         Moule           Salt         Zout         Peper         Peper         Boeuf         Boeuf           Vinegar         Azijn         Mosterd         Pork         Porc           Mustard         Mosterd         Mosterd         Mutton         Jambon         Mutton         Mouton           Saric         Knoflook         Butter         Boter         Porc         Ham         Jambon         Mutton         Mouton         Mutton         Mutton </td <td>Grapes</td> <td>Druiven</td> <td></td> <td></td>	Grapes	Druiven		
Cherries         Kersen         Shrimp         Crevette           Strawberries         Aardbeien         Oyster         Huitre           Sugar         Suiker         Clam         Moute           Salt         Zout         Beef         Beef         Beef           Pepper         Pepper         Peper         Oile         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc         Har         Usade         Porc         Har         Porc         Har         Double         Porc         Har         Waster         Porc         Har         Waster         Porc         Har         Usade         Porc         Har         Dambon         Mouton         Agneau         Veal         Veal         Porc         Har         Porc         Har         Porc         Har         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc         Porc	•			
Strawberries				
Sugar	Strawberries	Aardbeien		
Cream         Room Salt         Zout Pepper         Meat         Viande           Pepper         Pepper         Pepper         Beef         Boeur           Oile         Olie         Pork         Porc           Vinegar         Azijn         Mosterd         Ham         Jambon           Mustard         Mosterd         Mutton         Mutton         Mouton           Butter         Boets         Veal         Veal         Veal         Veal         Veal         Veal         Veal         Veal         Porton         Porton<	Sugar	Suiker	-	
Salt				
Pepper Oil         Peper Oile         Beefsteak         Bifteck           Vinegar.         Azijn         Pork         Porc           Mustard         Mosterd         Ham         Jambustand           Garlic         Knoflook         Mutton         Mouton           Butter.         Boter         Jam         Jamb         Agneau           Knife         Mes         Chicken         Poulet           Krife         Mes         Rice         Riz           Fork         York         Potate         Poulet           Spoon         Lepel         Vegetables         Legumes           Bottle         Fies         Salad         Salad         Salad           Cup         Kopje         Cyeetables         Legumes         Tomatees           Plate         Bord         Tomatoes         Tomatees         Tomatees         Tomatees           Rare         Half rauw         Gear         Asparagus         Asperges         Beans         Haricots         Asparagus         Asperges         Beans         Haricots         Asparagus         Asperges         Beans         Haricots         Asparagus         Asperges         Beans         Haricots         Asparagus         Asperges	Salt	Zout		
Oil         Oile         Pork         Porc           Winegar         Azijn         Ham         Jambon           Mustard         Mosterd         Knoflook         Mutton         Moutton           Butter         Boter         Chee         Mes           Jam         Jam         Chicken         Poulet           Knife         Mes         Chicken         Poulet           Fork         Vork         Potatoes         Pormes de terre           Spoon         Lepel         Potatoes         Pommes de terre           Vegetables         Legumes         Salad         Salada         Salada         Salada         Salada         Salada         Tomatoes         Tomatoes         Tomates         Lettuce         Latitue         Lettuce         Latitue         Lettuce         Latitue         Lettuce         Lative         Seans         Har outs         Asparagus         Asperges         Gere peas         Petits pois         Beans         Hariouts         Asparagus         Asperges         Gere peas         Gere peas         Gere peas         Gere peas         Gere peas         Forties         Gere peas         Forties         Gere peas         Gere peas         Gere peas         Forties         Gere peas         Gere pe	Pepper	Peper		
Vinegar	Oil	Ölie		
Mustard         Mosterd Garlic         Muston         Mouton           Garlic         Knoflook         Lamb         Agneau           Jam         Jam         Vork           Knife         Mes         Chicken         Poulet           Fork         Vork         Potatoes         Pormers de terre           Spoon         Lepel         Rice         Rize           Bottle         Fless         Potatoes         Pommes de terre           Vegetables         Legumes         Salade           Cup         Kopje         Legumes           Plate         Bord         Tomatoes           Napkin         Servet         Green peas         Petits pois           Bara         Half rauw         Medium         Gaar           Well done         Gebakken         Gebakken         Asparagus         Asperagus           Warm         Warm         Warm         Carrots         Carrotts           Warm         Geeft u mij het menu         Half rauw         Mushrooms         Cheeses         Fromages           How much is the meal?         Hoeveel kost de maaltijd?         Pastries         Patisseries           How much is the meal?         Hoeveel kost de maaltijd?         Cookies <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td>				
Garlic Knoflook Butter Boter Jam Jam Jam Jam Jam Jam Jam Jam Jam Knife. Mes Fork Vork Spoon Lepel Bottle Fles Glass Glass Glass Glass Glass Gup Kopje Plate Bord Rare Half rauw Medium Gaar Well done Gebakken Warm Warm Leed, cold Gede, cold Give me the menu. Geeft u mij het menu I should like Me me the menu. Geeft u mij het menu I should like Me me the meal? Hoeveel kost de mathtjd? Is service included? Is de bediening inbegrepen? The bill, please De rekening, alstublift Lunch Lunch Dinner Dinner French  Water French  Well done Gebakken Mushrooms Cheeses Fromages Cookies Biscuits Orange Orange Pastares Sugar Suga	Mustard	Mosterd		
Butter				
Knife Mes Fork Vork Spoon Lepel Bottle Fles Glass Glas Cup Kopje Plate Bare Half rauw Napkin Servet Rare Half rauw Medium Gaar Well done Gebakken Warm Warm Warm Is hould like Bare Hoveel kost de maaltijd? Is service included? Is de bediening inbegrepen? The bill, please. De rekening, alstublift. Lunch Lunch Dinner French  Water Ferench  Chicken Poulet Rice Rice Rice Rice Potatoes. Pommes de terre Vegetables Letuue Laitue Cale Gelos Glas Comatoes Tomatoes Tomatoes. Tomatoes Tomatoes. Tomatoes Caren peas Petits pois Beans Haricots Asparagus Asperges Carrots Carottes Warm Washrooms Chesese Fromages Fruits Pastries Patisseries Cookies Biscuits Orange Orange Orange Orange Mater Eau Coffee Cafe Pepper Poivre Butter Bottles Cookies Salad Cookies Salad Comatoes Caren Potential Cookies Salad Cookies Salad Salade Comatoes Cale Pepper Poivre Salad Salad Salade Comatoes Cale Pepper Poivre Orange Orange Fota Caren Salad Salade Comatoes Cale Pepper Poivre Salad Salad Salade Comatoes Cale Potatoes. Pommes de terre Vegetables Cale Potatoes. Pommes de terre Vegetables Cales Potatoes. Pommes de terre Vegetables Salad Salade Comatoes Cale Potatoes. Pommes de terre Vegetables Cales Potatoes. Potatoes. Poivre Negotions Cales Salad Salade Comatoes Cale Potatoes. Pommes de terre Vegetables Cales Potatoes. Potatoes. Poivre Potatoes. P	Butter	Boter		
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Fork Spoon	Knife	Mes		
Spoon				
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Glass				
Cup				
Plate Bord Napkin Servet Rare Half rauw Medium Gaar Well done Gebakken Warm Warm I Should like Ik sou willen. How much is the meal? Hoeveel kost de maaltijd? Is service included? Is de bediening inbegrepen? The bill, please De rekening, alstublift. Dinner French  French  Lettuce Green peas Petits pois Green peas Hearing. Het green peas Petits pois Beans Asperges Carrots Carottes Mushrooms Carottes Mushrooms Champignons Cheeses Fruits Fruits Fruits Fruits Pastries Patisseries Ice cream Glace Cookies Biscuits Orange Orange Pomme Banana Banane Strawberries Fraises Sugar Sucre Cream Cream Salt Salt Sel Coffee Cafe Pepper Poivre Butter Beutre				
Napkin	Plate	Bord		
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Give me the menu. Geeft u mij het menu I should like. Ik sou willen. How much is the meal? Hoeveel kost de maaltijd? Is service included? Is de bediening inbegrepen? The bill, please. De rekening, alstublift. Breakfast Ontbijt Lunch Dinner Dinner Diner  French  Fruits Pastries Patisseries Ice cream Glace Cookies Biscuits Orange Orange Apple Pomme Banana Banana Strawberries Sugar Sucre Cream Creme Salt Sel Coffee Cafe Pepper Poivre Tea The Butter Beurre				•
I should like.	Give me the menu	Geeft u mij het menu		
Is service included?	I should like	Ik sou willen.	Pastries	Patisseries
Is service included? Is de bediening inbegrepen? Cookies Biscuits The bill, please. De rekening, alstublift. Breakfast Ontbijt Lunch Lunch Dinner Dinner Diner  French  Water Eau Coffee Cafe Pepper Peiver Tea The bediening inbegrepen? Cookies Biscuits Orange Orange Apple Pomme Banana Banane Strawberries Sugar Sucre Cream Creme Salt Sel Pepper Poivre Butter Beutre	How much is the meal?		Ice cream	Glace
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Lunch         Lunch         Banana         Banane           Dinner         Diner         Strawberries         Fraises           Sugar         Sucre           Cream         Creme           Water         Eau         Salt         Sel           Coffee         Cafe         Pepper         Poivre           Tea         The         Butter         Beurre			Orange	Orange
Lunch         Lunch         Banana         Banane           Dinner         Diner         Strawberries         Fraises           Sugar         Sucre           Cream         Creme           Salt         Sel           Coffee         Cafe         Pepper         Poivre           Tea         The         Butter         Beurre	Breakfast	Ontbijt	Apple	Pomme
French         Sugar			Banana	Banane
French         Sugar         Sucre           Water         Eau         Salt         Sel           Coffee         Cafe         Pepper         Poivre           Tea         The         Butter         Beurre				
Water         Eau         Salt         Sel           Coffee         Cafe         Pepper         Poivre           Tea         The         Butter         Beurre	-	wa na ala		
CoffeePoivre TeaThe ButterBeurre	F	rencn	Cream	Creme
TeaBeurre	Water	Eau		
	Coffee	Cafe	Pepper	Poivre
MilkLait OilHuile	Tea	The	Butter	Beurre
	Milk	Lait	Oil	Huile



#### **LANGUAGE TIPS 273**

Vinegar	Vinaigre	Beefsteak	Bisted
	Moutarde		Cerdo
	Sauce		Jamór
	Ail		Cordero
	Confiture		Cordero
Knife	Couteau		Ternera
	Fourchette		Polic
	Cuiller		Arroz
	Bouteille		Papas
	Verre		Legumbres
	Tasse		Ensalada
Plate	Assiette		Tomates
	Serviette		Lechuga
•	Roti		9
	Frit		Guisantes
	Saignant		Habichuelas
	A point		Esparrago
	Cuit		Zanahorias
	Chaud		Hongos
	Glace		Queso
			Frutas
	Worldez mone to mend.		Pastelería
	al? Quel est le prix du repas?		Helados
	Le service est-il compris?	Cookies	Galletas
	L'addition, s'il vous plaît.		Naranja
	Petit dejeuner		Manzana
	Dejeuner	Banana	Güined
	Diner	Strawberries	Fresas
Diffice	Diriei	Sugar	Azúca
Spa	ınish	Cream	Crema
Water	Agua		Sa
	Café	Pepper	Pimienta
	Té	Butter	Mantequilla
	Leche	Oil	Aceite
	Cerveza	Vinegar	Vinagre
	Vino	Mustard	Mostaza
	Sidra	Sauce, gravy	Salsa
	Limonada	Garlic	Ajo
	Entremeses	Jelly	Jalea
	Pan	Knife	Cuchillo
	Sopa		Tenedo
	Huevos		Cuchara
	Tortilla	•	Botella
	Pescado		Vaso
	Langosta		Taza
	Langostino		Plato
	Ostra		Servilleta
,	Almeja	•	Asado
	Carne		Frito
Roof	Vaca	Paro	Poop poolds



#### **274 LANGUAGE TIPS**

Medium	A punto	How much is the meal?	Cuánto cuesta la comida?
Well done	Bien cocido	Is service included?	Está incluido el servicio?
Warm	Tibio	The bill, please	La cuenta, por favor.
Frozen	Congelado	Breakfast	Desayuno
Show me the menu	Muestreme el menú.	Lunch	Almuerzo
I want	Yo quiero.	Dinner	Cena

# DIAMONDS TAKE THE GUESS WORK OUT OF VACATION PLANNING.

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# **Caribbean Customs Information**

Each Caribbean nation has its own immigration requirements; these are summarized in the Fast Facts boxes. The U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security requires all citizens traveling by air between the United States and the Caribbean to present a valid passport book or card, NEXUS card, State Issued Enhanced Driver's License, U.S. military ID with travel orders or U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner document to reenter the United States. Citizens traveling by land or sea also are required to present a valid passport or other documents that comply with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). AAA recommends carrying a passport when traveling anywhere outside the United States, both to expedite your way through customs and to provide identification in case of an emergency. AAA travel agents can assist you with the passport application procedure.

Before you leave, make two color copies of your passport's identification page, keeping one at home and carrying the other with you separately. Should you lose your passport, go to the nearest American Embassy or Consulate, or contact the National Passport Information Center at (877) 487-2778 or TTY (888) 874-7793 for information about obtaining an emergency passport. A U.S. driver's license and a copy of the original passport



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will save time in applying for a replacement.

Pets taken to the islands are subject to each island's public health department's regulations, and pets taken out of the United States are subject to U.S. Public Health and Department of Agriculture requirements on return. Also check with state, county and municipal authorities about restrictions on importing pets, and make arrangements well in advance. Consult the Pets and Wildlife Licensing and Health Requirements online at www.cbp.gov or phone (877) 227-5511.

If you plan to carry more than \$10,000 in currency or negotiable instruments in or out of the United States, you must file a Report of International Transportation of Currency or Monetary Instruments (FinCEN 105) with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at the port of exit or at the port of entry. Forms are available online or from your local CBP office. They also can be obtained at U.S. international airports and all other ports of entry.

**Note:** AAA recommends travelers consult online U.S. State Department travel advisories when planning travel abroad. For information on specific islands, contact <a href="http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html">http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html</a>.

Due to heightened security, travel regulations may change without notice. For the most current information about passports, duties and taxes and federal restrictions, contact U.S. Customs and Border Protection at (877) 227-5511, or visit their web site at www.cbp.gov. The section "Know Before You Go" provides comprehensive information for U.S. citizens traveling abroad.

#### RETURNING TO THE U.S.

**EXEMPTIONS:** Any articles you acquire abroad and bring back to the United States must be declared. This requirement includes any repairs made to articles taken abroad and any gifts, such as wedding or birthday presents, you received while abroad.

It is wise to register foreign-made possessions—such as laptop computers, cameras and watches—at any CBP office *before* leaving the United States in order to avoid being charged duty on them when you return.



#### 276 CARIBBEAN CUSTOMS INFORMATION

Only items with serial numbers or other clearly identifiable marks may be registered. If you are traveling with unnumbered items such as expensive jewelry, a sales receipt, insurance policy or appraisal will be sufficient proof that the items were in your possession before you left the U.S. You may register items at the airport prior to departure or take them to a CBP office in advance. Inspectors must *see* the items being registered; keep your documentation for future trips.

Returning U.S. residents are allowed a duty-free exemption for articles they carry with them. If you are arriving from anywhere other than a U.S. insular possession (the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa or Guam), your personal exemption is \$800; there are limits on the amount of alcohol, cigarettes, cigars and other tobacco products you may include (see Alcohol and Tobacco). If you travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands, your duty-free allowance is \$1,600, of which no more than \$800 may have been acquired elsewhere in the Caribbean.

To receive the duty-free exemption, you must have been out of the country a minimum of 48 hours and have not used the exemption within the preceding 30-day period. The 48-hour minimum does not apply to U.S. residents returning from the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The exemption, based on fair retail value, applies to articles for your personal or household use or intended to be given as bona fide gifts (see Gifts). Returning residents who do not meet the 48-hour or 30-day time requirements may bring back up to \$200 worth of items for personal or household use free of duty and tax. Antiques at least 100 years old and fine art may enter the country duty-free.

High-quality merchandise from all over the world is usually featured in most duty-free shops. Prices are generally about the same as you would expect to pay in the country of origin. Do not be misled, however, by the words "duty free." This simply means that the local merchant has been exempted from his own country's taxes. All duty-free goods that return with you to the United States must be declared and are subject to U.S. import duties if you exceed your personal exemption.

**DUTIES:** A flat rate duty of 3 percent is applied to the next \$1,000 worth of merchandise in excess of the

maximum customs duty-free exemption. Items purchased in the U.S. Virgin Islands are assessed at a rate of 1.5 percent. Items originating from Cuba with a value between \$801 and \$1,800 are subject to a 4 percent duty rate. The flat-rate provision and duty-free exemptions may not be exercised more than once every 30 days. Assessment of merchandise is based on the fair retail value in the country of origin; remember to retain sales slips for proof of value. Keeping purchases and sales slips in a carry-on bag speeds the customs declaration procedure.

Members of a family residing in the same household and traveling together can make a joint declaration, combining their individual articles for application of the flat-rate duty. Any merchandise that exceeds the flat-rate duty on \$1,000 worth of goods is dutiable at the various rates that apply to particular articles.

The United States and the following countries have entered into an agreement called the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI). These countries include Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, the British Virgin Islands, Curacao, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. Some articles made in and purchased in these countries are accorded a free rate of duty and are not counted against your exemption or flat rate.

Articles acquired abroad and sent home by you or by the store where you purchased them do not qualify as accompanied baggage and are subject to duty and taxes. You do not have to declare these items, as they cannot be included on the customs exemption; duty may be waived on articles not exceeding \$200 in total value.

However, articles you purchase and send home from CBI countries or the U.S. Virgin Islands may be duty-free under your personal exemption if the items are properly declared and processed. The CBP form 255 (Declaration of Unaccompanied Articles) must be affixed to each mailed package; merchants can usually supply this form. All shipped items should be indicated on your customs declaration form.

If requested, you must present all sales receipts to Customs upon returning to the United States. *Do not* accept the friendly shopkeeper's offer to give you a sales slip



showing a price lower than that actually paid. Customs inspectors are experts at spotting fraudulent receipts. If you understate an article's value or misrepresent an article on your declaration, you might have to pay a penalty in addition to the duty. Under certain circumstances the article might be seized and forfeited. Keep a record of what you spend for merchandise as you spend it.

If you owe duty, it must be paid when you arrive in the United States. Acceptable forms of payment include U.S. currency, personal checks, money orders, travelers checks (value not exceeding \$50 of the amount due), and in some locations, MasterCard or Visa.

GIFTS: Gifts worth up to \$100 in total fair retail value may be sent duty free to friends and relatives in the United States, provided only one such package is received by the same person in one day. The dollar value for gifts sent from the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico increases to \$200. Gifts for more than one person may be mailed in the same package, provided each gift is individually wrapped and labeled with the name of the recipient. If any article in the consolidated gift package is subject to duty and tax, or if the total value of all articles exceeds the gift allowance, no article will be exempt from duty and tax. Duty cannot be prepaid; it is collected by the United States Postal Service when the package is delivered.

You may not send gifts to yourself, nor may persons traveling together send gifts to each other. The gift allowance does not include alcoholic beverages, tobacco products or perfume valued at more than \$5 if it contains alcohol. All parcels must be marked Unsolicited Gift—Consolidated Gift Package, and the recipients' names, nature of the gift and its estimated fair retail value must be noted on the outside wrapper.

**RESTRICTED ARTICLES:** To prevent the introduction of plant and animal pests and diseases into the United States, an agricultural guarantine bans importation of most fruits, vegetables, plants, livestock, poultry and meats. For details refer to the Department of Agricu-Iture's Animal Products and Fruit and Vegetable manuals online at www.aphis.usda.gov.

Endangered animal or plant species, and products made from them, generally cannot be exported or imported. This includes products made from elephant ivory, although articles made from antique ivory may be

imported, provided they can be documented as being at least 100 years old. If you wish to purchase and bring back to the United States any articles made from whalebone, ivory, tortoise shell, animal skins or fur, or products manufactured wholly or in part of any type of wildlife, contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at (800) 358-2104 to make sure items are admissible.

Certain articles considered injurious or detrimental to the United States also are prohibited; these include absinthe, firearms, biological specimens, Haitian animal hide drums, meat products and narcotics. There are stringent import restrictions on firearms and ammunition as well; consult the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Products originating in Iran, Myanmar (Burma), North Korea, most of Sudan and Cuba—and all items containing components—are subject to restriction and require a license. There are also non-comprehensive restrictions with respect to the following countries: Western Balkans: Belarus, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq (for cultural property), Liberia, Sierra Leone, Syria, Zimbabwe, and Lebanon. For further information consult the Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, 1500 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20220, phone (800) 540-6322, or visit their web site at www.treas.gov/ofac.

If you require medicines containing habit-forming drugs or narcotics, keep them in their original containers and bring an authorizing prescription to avoid potential customs problems upon return to the United States. It is wise to pack medicines in your carry-on luggage.

The distribution rights for many trademarked items are protected by law, and those items may not be brought into the U.S. by unlicensed entities. Residents returning with foreign-made articles bearing a protected trademark are allowed one exemption per type of article; for example, one Chanel handbag and one Polo shirt. The goods must be intended for personal use and must not be sold within 1 year of importation. Articles bearing a counterfeit mark or an inappropriately used federally registered trademark are subject to seizure and forfeiture.

ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO: A returning resident 21 years or older entitled to the \$800 duty-free exemption may include 2 liters of alcoholic beverages—provided 1



#### 278 CARIBBEAN CUSTOMS INFORMATION

liter was produced in a CBI country. Additional quantities are subject to duty and taxes. Travelers 21 years and older returning from the U.S. Virgin Islands may bring back 5 liters of alcoholic beverages, provided that 1 liter was produced there. Liquor cannot be mailed to the United States.

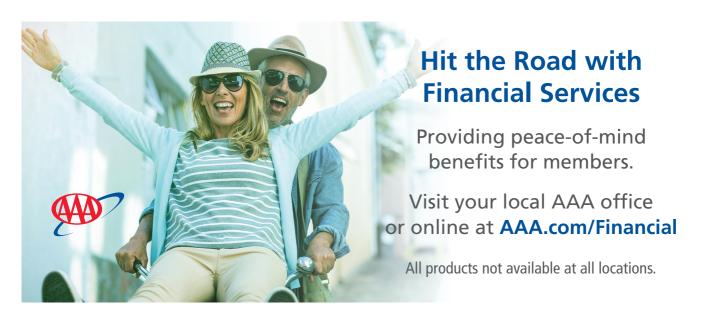
There are no federal age restrictions for persons returning with tobacco products. However, the laws of each state where an entry port is located are enforced, and tobacco products may be confiscated if the holder is under the state's minimum age for purchase of tobacco. Persons who meet age requirements may bring back up to 100 cigars and 200 cigarettes. Travelers returning from the U.S. Virgin Islands also may include in their exemption 1,000 cigarettes, provided no more than 200 were acquired elsewhere, and 100 cigars.

Travelers may import previously exported tobacco products in quantities not exceeding their eligible exemptions. These items are usually stamped "Tax Exempt: For Use Outside the United States." Amounts exceeding your exemption will be seized and destroyed.

Under this regulation, you may bring home 200 previously exported cigarettes plus an additional quantity of foreign-made cigarettes, paying duty and taxes only on the second group.

Laws concerning the importation of cigarettes and alcohol vary from state to state; check the importation requirements of your state of residence, as well as the state of entry.

AUTOMOBILES: Automobiles taken out of the country may be brought back duty free as long as they accompany you upon your return and meet EPA standards. Unleaded fuel is sometimes not available in the Caribbean; if leaded fuel is used, catalytic converters on latemodel cars will become inoperative and in most cases will fail to meet emission standards, requiring replacement in order to obtain entry back into the United States. For details visit the EPA's website at www.epa.gov/otaq/imports or contact the agency directly: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Compliance Division—Imports, 2000 Traverwood Dr., Ann Arbor, MI 48105; phone (734) 214-4100.



### **ICON LEGEND**



Eco-certified by government or private organization.

Electric vehicle charging station on premises.

Smoke-free premises

#### In select cities only:

**fyi** Indicates the property has not been inspected, but is included as an "information only" service.

#### **SERVICES**

Airport transportation

Pet friendly (Call for restrictions/fees.)

Restaurant on premises

Restaurant off premises

Room service for 2 or more meals

Full bar

Child care

**BIZ** Business center

Accessible features (Call property for available services and amenities.)

#### **AMENITIES**

Full-service casino

🚁 Pool

Health club or exercise room on premises

**HS** High-speed Internet service

High-speed Internet service (Call property for fees.)

Wireless Internet service

Wireless Internet service (Call property for fees.)

No wireless Internet service

Pay movies

Refrigerator

Microwave

Coffeemaker

M No air conditioning

No TV

No telephones

#### **SAFETY FEATURES**

No sprinklers

No smoke detectors

#### DINING

Designated smoking section

**B** Breakfast

L Lunch

D Dinner

24 Open 24 hours

LATE Open after 11 p.m.

#### **ATTRACTIONS**

**GT** Guided Tours available

Camping facilities

Recreational activities

Picnicking allowed

Designates an attraction of exceptional interest and quality. AAA GEM — a Great Experience for Members®.