



# Jamaica

ALONG THE COAST TRAVEL



HISTORY



Jamaica is an island in the West Indies, 90-miles (145-km) south of Cuba and 100-miles (161-km) west of Haiti. It is a little smaller than Connecticut. By area, it is the third largest island in the Caribbean. The island is made up of coastal lowlands, a limestone plateau, and the Blue Mountains, a group of volcanic hills, in the east.

# *In the Beginning*

Jamaica's original inhabitants are the Arawaks, also called Tainos. They named the island Xaymaca, which means "land of wood and water".

They were followed about 800 by the Arawakan-speaking Taino, who eventually settled throughout the island. Their economy, based on fishing and the cultivation of corn (maize) and cassava, sustained as many as 60,000 people in villages led by caciques (chieftains). The Arawaks have quiet and peaceful lives until they were destroyed by the Spaniards years after Christopher Columbus discovered the island in 1494.

Jamaica served mainly as a supply base in conquering the American mainland.

## *Alexander Bustamante*

Sir Alexander Bustamante was born William Alexander Clarke on February 24, 1884, in Blenheim, Hanover. Considered one of the founding fathers of modern Jamaica, he was passionate about people and their welfare, particularly the poor working class and was a vanguard for human rights and national development. Sir Alexander Bustamante became the champion of the working class when he advocated their cause during 1937 and 1938, a period of major social unrest. In 1943 he founded the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), which he headed. The first general election under Universal Adult Suffrage was held in 1944 and the JLP won 22 of the 32 seats. He became the first Prime Minister of Independent Jamaica in 1962. He retired from active politics in 1967. In 1969, he was made a National Hero, the only Jamaican to receive this honor while still alive. He died on August 6, 1977, at the age of 93.

## *Fight for Independence*

Later in 1509, the first Spanish colonist came. On May 10, 1655, English had a successful attack on Jamaica. The Spaniards surrendered to the English. It was this set of slaves and their descendants who became known as Maroons. The slave trade became a popular and profitable venture for the colonist. The slaves, however, were unhappy with their status so they rebelled. The Maroon also had several wars against the English. In 1740 a treaty was signed with the British stating they were given the land and rights as free men. In return, they were to stop fighting and help recapture runaway slaves but this results in a rift because other Maroons did not agree to return runaway slaves. On January 1, 1808, the Abolition Bill was passed. Trading African slaves are utterly abolished and declared to be unlawful. Emancipation and apprenticeship came into effect in 1834 and full freedom was granted in 1838.



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*MONEY*



Jamaica has its own dollar, far less valuable than the U.S. dollar. The Jamaican dollar is the monetary unit of Jamaica, where it is issued, since 1969. The symbol is \$, J\$ or JA\$ to distinguish it from the American dollar and other dollars. The Jamaican dollar (as well as the Cayman Islands dollar) is different from all the other dollars in the British West Indies in that its value was half-pound sterling, while other dollars took as a reference either the US dollar unit or the Spanish dollar unit. Jamaican currency is issued in bank notes of J\$50, J\$100, J\$500, J\$1,000 and (rarely) J\$5,000.





## Credit Cards

American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard, and Visa are all widely accepted as are other cards bearing the Cirrus or Plus logo. Most Jamaican ATMs accept international bank cards and many banks give credit card cash advances.

## Debit Cards

Major cards are accepted throughout the island, although places like local groceries stores will not be able to process them, even in Kingston.



## Visitors from the USA

Jamaican law requires that local currency is used when paying for all goods and services, though that law is followed very loosely and the US Dollar is accepted almost universally. To avoid confusion determine which dollar unit is being quoted in the price prior to any transaction being made.

## ATM

Most Jamaican ATMs accept international bank cards and can be found at the airports, in larger towns, and in major hotels and resorts. However, the island's ATMs still have a reputation for unreliability and shouldn't be relied on exclusively. Bank cards supported by Visa and Mastercard will work in most situations and the island's Scotiabank cash points are generally considered the most reliable. As a precaution, it's recommended that you use ATMs during business hours and avoid visiting them after dark. If a bank is open but the ATM isn't functioning, many banks will give cash advances on a credit card.

HELPFUL INFO

## Climate

In Jamaica, the climate is tropical, hot all year round, with little difference between winter and summer (just a few degrees). Even in winter, daytime temperatures are around 27/30 °C (81/86 °F), and night-time temperatures around 20/23 °C (68/73 °F). The southern coast, where Kingston is located, is slightly warmer in the winter months, in fact, the maximum temperature is around 30 °C (86 °F) even in January. The best time to visit Jamaica as a whole, whether you intend to visit cities and go on excursions, or to swim and sunbathe, runs from January to April. In fact, it is the driest and coldest period.

## Electricity

In Jamaica the power plugs and sockets are of type A and B. The standard voltage is 110-V and the standard frequency is 50-Hz. Type A is mainly used in North and Central America, China and Japan. This socket only works with plug A. Type B is like type A but with an extra prong for grounding. This socket also works with plug A.



## Technology & Communication

Jamaica has a modern and fully liberalized telecommunications system, which has seen significant expansion since 2001. There are two primary mobile providers, former monopoly full-service provider, FLOW, and Digicel. The government has approved a third cellular license to a new player, Caricel. Digicel is the largest provider of cellular telecommunications in Jamaica and the Caribbean. Jamaica's teledensity now exceeds 100%, with many subscribers maintaining accounts with both providers. FLOW also operates a fixed line system. FLOW was acquired by Liberty Global in May 2016. While Jamaica continues to lag in broadband mobile and fixed internet penetration, Wi-Fi technology is prevalent in hotels and starting to be rolled out in limited public spaces. Jamaica has submarine communications cables with the United States, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic.

## Infrastructure & Transport

Jamaica enjoys an extensive though aging infrastructure which has received much government attention in the 1990s. The small island is served by a network of over 18,700-kilometers (11,620-miles) of roads, 13,100-kilometers (8,140-miles) of which are paved. With growing numbers of licensed automobiles in the 1990s, the road system, especially in urban areas, has become highly congested.





# In Case Of An Emergency

Keep in mind that some parts of Jamaica are safer than others. Exercise caution when moving around at night, avoid traveling in buses and stay in groups when at all possible. Petty theft has been reported in the past, so make sure to keep your valuables near you at all times. To reach local authorities, call the following numbers:

Ambulance and Fire: 110

Police: 119

## Language

Jamaica is regarded as a bilingual country where Jamaican English and Jamaican Patois are the most widely spoken languages. English is the official language in Jamaica and the language mostly used in formal contexts. The English spoken in Jamaica has been influenced mainly by British English. The Jamaican Patois is also referred to as Jamaican Creole or Patwa. Although English is the official language of the country, Jamaican Patois is the most widely spoken. Jamaican Patois is a form of English Creole developed on the island during the slave trade.



# LGBT Travel

Homophobia is unfortunately widespread in Jamaica, and gay and lesbian visitors may be subjected to harassment at a minimum and violence at worst. Gay sex is illegal and can result in prison terms. Until this aspect of Jamaican culture changes, gay and lesbian travelers should seriously consider the risks before planning a trip to Jamaica.

## Religion

Jamaica has the most churches per capita of any country in the world. Protestant majority (Anglican, Baptist, Church of God and Methodist) with Roman Catholic, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, and Baha'i communities. Rastafarianism, a religion based on belief in the divinity of the late Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie (Ras Tafari), is also widely practiced. Jamaica also has a number of small spiritualist cults.



## Getting There

Jamaica has two major international airports. Kingston Norman Manley International Airport receives flights from Air Canada, American Airlines, British Airways, Caribbean Airlines, Cayman Airways, Copa, Delta, Fly Jamaica, JetBlue, Spirit, and WestJet. Sangster International Airport in the resort town of Montego Bay is served by over 30 airlines and a number of charters. Major cruise ship terminals in Jamaica are located in Falmouth, Montego Bay, and Ocho Rios.

## Driving

The best way to get around Jamaica is by taxi, whether you're coming from one of the airports – Montego Bay's Sangster International Airport (MBJ) is the most accessible to the tourist areas – or making your way around town. Renting a car is also an option, but driving on the left side of the road can be confusing, road signs are unhelpful, drivers can be aggressive and potholes are rampant. Use of public transportation is not recommended since public buses are often overcrowded and can become venues for a crime.

THE EXPERIENCE

## Culture

The Jamaicans culture is expressed through local stories, songs, dances, the use of herbs and bush medicine, local beliefs, the preparation of indigenous foods and through religious practices. Jamaicans perform folk songs and dance mainly during festivals and independence celebrations. During celebrations, it is customary to wear their nation costumes, which is called the Bandana.

## Bucket List

Scuba Diving in Port Royal

White Water Rafting

Go Bamboo River Rafting

Swim With The Dolphins

Swim in the Luminous Lagoon

Go Caving

Hike up the Blue Mountains

Spelunk through limestone caves



# Family Travel Highlights

Shimmy to Soca Carnival

Discover Treasure Bay

Dip into Milk River Spa

Admire Shaw Park's floral splendors

Go on a Bob Marley pilgrimage

## Tourism Authority

The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), founded in 1955, is Jamaica's national tourism agency based in the capital city of Kingston. The JTB is a public company governed by a Board of Directors, appointed by the Minister of Tourism. The Director of Tourism, also appointed by the Minister, is the administrative head of the organization and is responsible for the day-to-day activities of the JTB. The JTB is responsible for the worldwide tourism marketing and promotion for Jamaica. Its mandate has been to promote Jamaica as a preferred travel destination; identify new and emerging consumer groups; cultivate new relationships with travel partners and disseminate timely and useful marketing information to its offices and travel partners worldwide. JTB offices are located in Kingston, Montego Bay, Miami, Toronto, and London. Representative offices are located in Berlin (Germany), Barcelona (Spain), Rome (Italy), Amsterdam (The Netherlands), and Tokyo (Japan).



## Foods To Try

Ackee and Saltfish

Jerk Chicken

Fried Breadfruit

Jamaican Red Peas Soup

Goat curry

Jamaican Beef Patty

Manish Water

Callaloo

Festival Bread

# Drinks To Try

Jamaican Sorrel Drinks

Rum Punch

Jamaican Blue Mountain Coffee

Red Stripe Beer

Dirty Banana

Jamaican Rum Crème

Bag Juice

Ting Grapefruit Soda



25 25  
83613



*Red Stripe*

LAGER BEER  
BREWED IN JAMAICA

NET 341 mL - 4.7% ALC. VOL

## Photography Hot Spots

Frenchman's Cove

Blue Lagoon

Blue Mountains

Rose Hall

Seven Mile Beach

Reach Falls

Blue Hole

Pelican Bar

Rio Grande

## Souvenirs To Buy

Jamaican Jerk Seasoning

Wood Carvings

Brand Jamaica Clothing

Bob Marley coffee

Jamaican dolls

Blue Mountain coffee candle

Jamaican oil paintings

Calabash wooden bowls

Coconut wine glasses





[lisa@alongthecoast.ca](mailto:lisa@alongthecoast.ca)  
[www.alongthecoast.ca](http://www.alongthecoast.ca)