

Sun, sand and so much more



Discover Caribbean cultures and exhilarating adventures.

EVERY FALL, WATCHING FLOCKS OF BIRDS start their annual migration, many Canadians start planning their own escape to sun-kissed lands. The most popular Caribbean island destinations for Canadian travellers are Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.¹ Within and beyond those countries await unique adventures that can take you off the well-worn tourist path for a rich and memorable experience. Here's inspiration to help you create the summer-in-winter trip of your dreams.

Listen to the sounds of the islands

Looking for human accompaniment to the nightly serenade of the Caribbean's musical crickets and frogs? Explore reggae in Jamaica, calypso in Trinidad and Tobago, salsa in Cuba and bluesy bachata in the Dominican Republic.² If you time your trip right, you can attend a music festival, such as the World Creole Music Festival in Dominica (late October), the classical Festival Casals in Puerto Rico (late February to early March) or the Saint Lucia Jazz and Arts Festival (late April to early May).³

Enjoy the shade of a cool museum

Island beats don't get much cooler than the soothing sounds of reggae legend Bob Marley, and in Jamaica his former home has been converted into the Bob Marley Museum. For the visual arts, check out the Museo de Arte de Ponce's collection of 14th- to 21st-century masterpieces in Puerto Rico, or the more specialized Musée Paul Gauguin in Martinique. Step back in time at the National Archaeological Museum Aruba, displaying 5,000-year-old Amerindian artefacts, or the Barbados Museum and Historical Society, housed within a former military prison.⁴

Savour the region's foods

Each island in the Caribbean has its own food specialties. If you have an adventurous palate, try fungee (a paste made from okra and cornmeal) and pepperpot (a mix of meats and vegetables) in Antigua and Barbuda, seasoned conch and dumplings in St. Maarten, or stewed salt fish with a side of spicy plantains in St. Kitts and Nevis.⁵ You can also get up close and

Photo: Saint Lucia Tourist Board.

¹ [tiac.travel/_Library/documents/The_Canadian_Tourism_Industry_-_A_Special_Report_Web_Optimized_.pdf](#)

² [worldmusic.about.com/od/genres/f/What-Kinds-Of-Music-Come-From-The-Caribbean.htm](#)

³ [www.travelandleisure.com/articles/top-music-festivals](#)

⁴ [caribjournal.com/2014/04/07/10-caribbean-museums-to-visit-in-2014/](#)

⁵ [www.caribbeanandco.com/national-dishes-of-the-caribbean/](#)

personal with a ripening harvest on a banana, coffee, cocoa or spice plantation tour. The Caribbean is famous for its rum too, of course – learn how it’s made at a local distillery.

Choose your own adventure

If you’re looking for an adrenaline rush, how about driving into a steaming volcanic crater on St. Lucia, swinging from tree to tree through a Puerto Rican rainforest or mountain biking to Tobago’s tallest single-drop waterfall? In the blue-green waters offshore, experience the thrill of swimming with dolphins and stingrays in Grand Cayman, kayaking through a mangrove forest in Bonaire or paddleboarding through the Turks and Caicos backcountry.⁶

Island hopping

Can’t decide among the Caribbean’s more than 7,000 islands?⁷ A cruise is an all-inclusive resort on the move that lets you sample different destinations without unpacking, repacking and lugging suitcases around. Cruise lines make sure there’s

plenty to do on board and, when you’re docked, a little advance research can allow you to slip away from the crowds and get a more authentic impression of the culture and food at each stop.

Financially, cruises can be an excellent deal because they offer a complete package of accommodation, food and entertainment. However, it’s important to make sure you budget for everything that’s not included in the cruise price – from airfare to excursions, drinks and service tips.

Design your own vacation

Whether you choose a do-it-yourself trip or opt for an all-inclusive vacation on land or at sea, the Caribbean islands have lots to offer. Of course, if all you really want is a comfortable chair under a palm tree, far from Canada’s sleet and snow – well, they have that too. ■

⁶ caribjournal.com/2013/06/27/the-10-best-caribbean-adventures-2013/

⁷ traveltips.usatoday.com/trivia-caribbean-islands-108371.html



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