

Yah man...this is one cool—and hot—place to relax and play. If you only read one thing to prepare, read and take this **Inside Scoop** with your documents. It's packed with tips for delightful days and cool nights.

Maritime Travel

Inside Scoop: JAMAICA

Know before you go: travel isn't just your destination, it's also the journey

travel: delighting in the spirit of adventure • a vacation from home to explore places that are not your home • knowing life is different, knowing this is a joy of travel • enjoying the journey, not just the destination • a privilege best used with patience, humour and curiosity • fun • coming home with great tales •

Sample Specialties

Jamaica's Black Cake is a heavenly mix of spices with variations (fruit cake, rum cake/Tortuga). Try goat curry, fried plantain, ackee fruit, jerk (spicy) chicken and the ever-comforting rice and peas. Patties have a flakey dough shell: inside there's differing combinations of meat and spices. Canada's salt cod eaters will gain new recipes as it's in wide use.

Your Counsellor

Our knowledge and experience help turn dreams into first-rate vacations. Ask your counsellor about any details, including:

- advance seats & upgrades
- booking excursions ahead, especially dolphin swims
- insurance coverage
- Kids Club services.

Maritime Travel

We Know Travel Best.™

Although it has a laid-back atmosphere, there's a lot to do in Jamaica. It boasts spectacular sunsets, tropical landscaping and breathtaking beaches. Helpful tips:

- Be realistic: we know you want value balancing choices and amenities but no matter your budget, aim to relax and enjoy. Special requests are requests only. Unless you've paid for an ocean suite, this is why upgrade fees apply.
- Each person must have a valid passport. Keep a separate photocopy or a cell photo of ID pages www.cic.gc.ca/english/passport/index.asp.
- In the Eastern Time Zone (Toronto and Montreal, with way nicer winter weather), the country doesn't observe Daylight Saving Time.
- There's a tropical climate, high temperatures and humid conditions year-round. Averages range from 67-89F/19-32C with two rainy seasons, September-November/May-June. Brief tropical showers are a welcome break.
- Electrical service is 110 volts/50 cycles standard: appliances use two-pronged flat plugs (as in Canada). Some hotels have 220volts. Most hotels provide hair dryers.
- Jamaica enjoys good telephone service. Internet access is available at hotels, libraries and cafés. Contact your provider for cell phone use and security features (check roaming costs).
- Currency is the Jamaican Dollar (JMD); change money at licensed cambio centres and commercial banks, which are close to resort areas. Most hotels change money, ATM's take major credit cards and debit cards; inform your bank and credit card company of the dates you'll be away.

Above all, travel with a positive attitude—patience and a spirit of adventure will carry you through any experience!

Pack Strategically

The world is overrun with black bags so put coloured tape or ribbon on your luggage to spot it quickly. Put your name outside and inside and remove old tags. Check the dress code for your resort—while some are casual, some à la carte restaurants require less casual clothes. In your carry-on, pack valuables such as jewellery (maybe leave precious jewels at home); over-the-counter and prescription drugs in original containers with a list, dosage and doctor's phone number.

Pack most liquids/lotions/gels in checked bags (inside plastic bags)—due to carry-on restrictions, the maximum size container is 100ml(3.4oz). All must fit in 1 clear/resealable plastic bag of no more than 1 litre (often available at airport screening). You may take baby formula, food or milk for a child under 2 years of age (0-24 months). In carry-on pack pens/notebook, hand wipes, munchies (no fruit, meat or veg). Permitted in carry-on: laptops, cell phones, disposable razors, canes and nail clippers. Items to check include corkscrews and sports gear such as golf clubs, baseball bats and racquets. Check with your airline and www.catsa.gc.ca/home for restrictions.

Tips: If you snorkel or scuba, bring your gear as some resorts limit equipment time (sometimes gear is not as clean or new as you like). English is spoken with a "patois" accent; locals tend to drop the "r" at the end of words and subtract or add "h" as in, your "otel" and "heverybody." Some merchants require you to show photo ID if you're using credit cards.

For peace of mind, we strongly recommend Maritime Travel cancellation/interruption and medical insurance.

What To Do...What To Do...

Negril Beach is 7miles of serenity and water sports: river rafting, scuba diving, waterskiing, jet skis/parasailing, rock climbing and even circus workshops with trapeze, juggling and trampoline lessons. At the island's west end, visit **Riverwalk's** hidden caverns and waterfalls, lush rainforest and colourful coral reefs. Stroll through dense forest, portage rivers and swim remote waterfalls. **Island Village in Ocho Rios** is set among tropical trees and waterways. In season, take a turtle watching tour. **Village Green** hosts live performances, a reggae museum, restaurants (even Margaritaville with a waterslide/pool/beach trampolines), arcade and shopping.

Your Airline

Sign up online for your airline(s) email or text flight notifications as your flight could be delayed (the plane might be flying in). CATSA notes “*Travellers should arrive at the airport earlier than usual, exercise patience and contact their airline for further information on their flight(s).*” Airline staff are on duty some 3 hrs prior: due to staffing and security, check-in closes 1hr before departure. If late, you’re not entitled to board (or a refund). Unless booked ahead, seats are first-come first-served.

Check-in or carry-on baggage: see your airline’s website as size and weight restrictions vary. **Entry:** In addition to normal customs restrictions on what you can bring in, Jamaica restricts material on divination, magic, cultism and the supernatural. The customs form is online—fill it out now: www.jacustoms.gov.jm/sites/default/files/docs/C5new.pdf



Get Packing Checklist and General Planning & Packing Tips

at www.maritimetravel.ca/inside-scoops

- ☐ Your sense of adventure & humour!

When You Leave

Do room sweeps for belongings. Although noon is usually check-out time, you may be able to pay a late fee if you have a late flight. Or, pack what’s needed for a few hours and check luggage at the hotel. Before buying wood items, ensure there’s no worm holes: if so, your item will be confiscated at customs. Don’t buy or accept anything suspect or that may be taken from you. Don’t buy or use illegal drugs: “*Incarceration is not a pleasant way to extend your holiday—you really don’t get much sightseeing done from behind the bars of a prison!*” Jamaican Tourist Board Know your limits and exemptions, www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca/travel-voyage/bgb-rmf-eng.html such as on duty free alcohol and tobacco. Had a rum tour? Don’t bring back more than you’re allowed.



Websites and emails in blue are hyperlinked; just click!

Canadians: Emergency? The High Commission is in Kingston, 3 West Kings House Rd (Waterloo Road doors), 876-926-1500. Or call Global Affairs (collect if needed) 613-996-8885, sos@international.gc.ca, www.canadainternational.gc.ca/jamaica-jamaique/index.aspx.

Special Activities

- Swim in **Dolphin Cove**, a 4-acre tropical retreat in **Ocho Rios**. Three programs allow different interactions: touch, encounter and swim (*reservations essential*—to guarantee a spot ask your counsellor). Guests can also sample local fruit or enjoy a buffet on a terrace while watching dolphins. In Negril, see **Barney’s Hummingbird Garden** and in Wiltshire, the **Rocklands Bird Sanctuary**.
- Near **Falmouth**, swim at night in the Blue Lagoon and take a boat trip in the glistening waters or float on a river raft (rum punch in hand). Walk up **Mayfield Falls** (an alternative to **Dunn’s Falls**), one hour away from Montego Bay/Negril.
- Check out pottery or rum factory tours, and **Port Royal/Fort Charles** walking tours. Go ahead and scream, the ziplining tours have heard it all. Pick up/return from most Montego Bay hotels, book with your counsellor. www.visitjamaica.com.
- Take a helicopter from Montego Bay Airport to Negril for VIP fast-tracked service. Jamaica is Cocktails in a Cave fits the bill, a bar hidden in Negril’s cave walls.

When You Arrive

After clearing customs, if on a charter (confirm with your counsellor), meet your rep outside the baggage area; s/he will show you to the bus to your hotel. Others might say they can drive you and you’ll be reimbursed—this is not true. Locals might be aggressive in helping with bags—if you don’t want help, politely say so. Before you get on, check your bags to ensure they’re secure and loaded onto the bus. The bus may drop off other visitors—a great way to see resorts! Locals know Red Stripe fans can’t wait: beer sold to tourists, packed in ice for the hot and often long ride to hotels (you’ll be a bus hero if you pack an opener.) While a refreshing, buses usually don’t have washrooms and drive on often bumpy roads. Drivers will pull to the side if asked—for men this might not be as inconvenient as for women.

You’ll be advised of the time/place for your orientation—don’t miss it. The tour rep works part-time at your hotel (and other resorts) during posted hours. Since others are leaving, rooms are often not ready when you arrive, but start on the fun. Pack a swimsuit in your carry-on and head to the pool or beach: the hotel will hold bags.

When There

Enjoy local food and drink in moderation; sun and alcohol don’t mix. Use sunscreen especially the first few days. Avoid uncooked food, food from street vendors and street animals (rabies). Drink bottled/purified water and wash your hands often. Ice at the resorts is safe—check with the tour rep.

Many travellers go to the beach early to “reserve” beach chairs with towels; don’t leave valuables or swap chairs already taken. Beach towels are at the hotels; to reduce loss, a deposit is sometimes charged then returned on your departure. Water is a precious commodity: when people leave the beach to get ready for dinner, expect reduced water pressure/hot water; just return earlier to get ready. If approached to buy items or services (often on beaches) and you’re not interested, be politely firm. Some beaches are restricted at night for security; avoid them at dusk due to bugs. Avoid timeshare sales: there’s no “free lunch.” Make sure you can handle tours; don’t book Advanced Scuba if you can’t swim. Going to local nightlife? Go with others and always return to your resort.

The International Language of Courtesy

Delays and cancellations are part of travelling. A slower pace of life is guaranteed: enjoy! Tread lightly—on holiday we’re more casual, but littering and cigarette butts are unwelcome everywhere. Avoid wearing beach attire in town, especially Sundays and take off hats in restaurants to show respect. When you brush your teeth, don’t run the water until rinsing. It’s natural to be curious about working conditions, such as how much a server makes but if you have personal questions, ask the tour rep. Most staff work long hours—a smile, patience and a kind word are always welcome.

Our 24/7 Emergency Service

We constantly survey airlines, local tour companies and hotels to ensure they meet our customer service standards, so don’t let a problem ruin your holiday. Nearly all issues can be handled quickly on site—first seek help from the venue’s local staff. Otherwise, call our Emergency Travel Service at **1-888-551-1181**. Deposits are non-refundable and non-transferrable. Schedule changes can occur and airlines and tour operators have the right to change flight and/or tour times, alter, combine services or substitute accommodations. Your counsellor will work with you to ensure you receive information as soon as possible and ensure satisfaction. See your brochure and ticket terms and conditions.

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