The best places to eat, sleep and play in Jamaica this spring and summer

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INTRODUCTION

TripAdvisor, the most trusted source for where to eat, sleep and play in thousands of destinations around the world, has collected the best insider tips from its 50 million monthly visitors to produce a unique series of travel guides. In addition to the best hotels, restaurants and attractions for every type of traveler, you’ll get great advice about what to pack, how to get around and where to find the best views. Be sure to check out the guides at www.tripadvisor.com.

Inside JAMAICA

Jamaica is a melting pot of African, Asian, European and Middle Eastern cultures. You’ll experience this diversity in its strong crafts tradition, performing arts and distinctive dining options like ackee and saltfish with roast breadfruit. But who are we kidding? You’re heading to Jamaica for its long beaches, protected coves, rugged mountains, waterfalls, caves and year-round sunshine. And for the chance to play in the surf, ride horses and swim with dolphins. Just think of all these attributes as positive extensions of the island’s unique culture. One of the negatives, however, is that there is also a fair amount of poverty in Jamaica. You’ll most likely be approached on a regular basis to do business with people selling everything from aloe for sunburns to jewelry. Be respectful and simply say “no, thank you” to anything you’re offered that doesn’t interest you—and then head to the beach!

PACKING TIPS

1. Don’t forget your passport—even for travel from the United States. It’s required for all air and sea border crossings.

2. “Pack a ton of swimsuits. They are slow to dry because of the high humidity.”—TripAdvisor Member

3. “I like to pack some CDs for music in our room and small candles; an extension cord or power strip may come in handy (there isn’t always an outlet where you want it).”—TripAdvisor Member

4. “Just pack some SPF30 and insect repellant that has DEET.”—TripAdvisor Member
VIEWS

JAMAICA'S BEST VIEWS

Lover's Leap "is a truly legendary and magnificent place, located on a cliff with a wonderful view of the entire South Coast Region. You’ll be fascinated by the local Romeo and Juliet-type legend associated with the place."—TripAdvisor Member, Kingston

Lovers’ Leap, St. Elizabeth Beach, South Coast

Negril Cliffs offers "thrillin’ beauty! It was an excellent spot for hangin’ around and relaxing or for having a picnic. If it’s the cliff jumping you’re there for, it’s just as satisfying. Different heights, for different people. Check out the Negril Cliffs for some nice scenery and a truly righteous cliff jump."—TripAdvisor Member, Toronto, Ontario

Negril Cliffs, West End

"Evita’s has its own special magic—it’s a restaurant in a beautiful historic building with a classic mahogany bar and floors, and the only restaurant in town where you can dine on the verandah while overlooking Ocho Rios Bay. They have music on weekends, and celebrities are often seen there as well. Don’t miss it!"—TripAdvisor Member, Santa Barbara, Calif.

Evita’s Italian Restaurant, Ocho Rios, 876 974 2333

Where to PLAY

TOP 10 Attractions

1. White Witch Golf Club, Ritz-Carlton Golf & Spa Resort, 1 Ritz-Carlton Dr., Rose Hall, 876 953 2800
2. Blue Mountain Peak, 876 924 2667
3. Reach Falls, East of Port Antonio
4. Hooves, 61 Windsor Road, Shop #5, St. Ann’s Bay, 876 972 0905
5. YS Falls, 2 Market St., South Coast, St. Elizabeth, 876 634 2455

6. Seven Mile Beach, Negril
7. Blue Hole Mineral Spring Jamaica, Brighton District, Negril, 781 696 4897
8. White River, Ocho Rios
9. Negril Cliffs, West End, Negril
10. Cinnamon Hill Golf Course, Rose Hall Resort & Country Club, Rose Hall, 876 953 2984

FAMILIES

“Nothing compares to the outing I had with my family climbing the Mahoe Falls at Coyaba Garden. We had a personal tour guide through a lush, beautiful botanical garden, then up a stunning and fun-to-climb waterfall. It was the most memorable experience for me.”—TripAdvisor Member, California

Coyaba River Garden and Museum, Shaw Park Estate, Ocho Rios, 876 974 6235

ROMANCE

“YS Falls is a beautiful setting. A jitney pulled by a tractor takes you up to the falls, the ride takes you through lush pasture and beside the river. When you get to the falls, it is a spectacular view. A lovely natural pool has been set up close to the falls so you can take a dip and cool off.”—TripAdvisor Member, Negril

YS Falls, 2 Market St., South Coast

As horse owners, we looked forward to riding on the beach. Our visit to Hooves was the fulfillment of our wish. Our tourist pounds make a small contribution to the care of abandoned horses that would otherwise have no quality of life. The employment of less advantaged Jamaicans is a valid demonstration that tourism can benefit at all levels. Our ride in the sea was sensational.”—TripAdvisor Member, Cotswolds, England

Hooves, 61 Windsor Road, #5, St. Ann’s Bay, 876 972 0905

Swim with the dolphins at Dolphin Cove: “You’re in the water for about 45 minutes, and during that time, you get to ride on the fins, pet them in the water and get pushed across (and right out of) the water. I have to admit it was pretty incredible. Plus, they do a few tricks—the flips and stuff.”—TripAdvisor Member, Africa

Dolphin Cove, Ocho Rios, 876 974 3335

“Treasure Beach is certainly ‘off the beaten track,’ but that’s what makes it the gem that it is. The people and the place seem almost wholly unaffected by the commercialism that abounds in most of the North Coast. It envelops you in its culture in a way that you don’t realize, taking you away from the ‘real world’ that waits for you back home.”—TripAdvisor Member, England

Treasure Beach, South Coast
**Where to PLAY**

**BUDGET**

“Doctor’s Cave Beach was truly amazing! The water was extremely clear, and there were reefs not too far from the beach—snorkeling is a must! There are a couple of restaurants on the beach, and the showers/changing rooms/toilets are very clean so you can easily spend a day or so there for only $5.”—TripAdvisor Member, London, England

**ADVENTURE**

“Wow! Zipline Adventure Tours was an amazing experience. I don’t do roller coasters, so thought that I would chicken out at the last minute. But thanks to our amazing guides, I truly felt I was in great hands. The scenery on the lines was spectacular as you zipped over the rainforest!”—TripAdvisor Member, Timmins, Ontario

**EDUCATIONAL/HISTORICAL**

“Loved the Rose Hall Great House. What a spooky history! The house is also just beautiful, with lovely antiques and a story for each room of the house.”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.

**RELAXATION**

“Test your putting and chipping skills at Half Moon Golf’s “excellent golf course facilities.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York, N.Y.

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**FAMILIES**

"After staying at the Seastar on a previous trip, I was extremely surprised how good the food was. During my most recent stay with my 7-year-old daughter tagging along, we ate here three or four times, never to be disappointed."—TripAdvisor Member, Windsor, Ontario

Seastar Inn Restaurant, Negril, 876 957 0553

**ROMANCE**

"Scotchie’s is a big smokehouse full of down-home treats! Nothing fancy here, just good ol’ fashioned Jamaican favourites and a place packed with locals and families, feasting in the sunshine."—TripAdvisor Member, London, U.K.

Scotchie’s, Drax Hall, Ocho Rios, 876 794 9457

"Marguerite’s is one of the finest seafood restaurants on the island. Enjoy a romantic and intimate dinner served on the starlit water’s edge terrace. Creative Caribbean seafood specialties are prepared at your table, and an imaginative selection of imported steaks, vegetarian specials and pastas complete the culinary experience."—TripAdvisor Member, Cuenca, Spain

Marguerite’s, Gloucester Avenue, Montego Bay, 876 952 4777

**BUDGET**

"Give Sips & Bites a try—it’s a great little Jamaican restaurant on the cliffs. The brown stew chicken is the best I’ve ever had and is accompanied by yams and fried dumplings. Everything is tasty, you can’t go wrong with the price, and they offer two options for portion size."—TripAdvisor Member, Sheffield, U.K.

Sips & Bites, West End Road, Negril, 876 957 0188

"It’s worth the trip to Jamaica just to visit Kuyaba. Try the freshwater mountain shrimp—OH MY! Also the lobster—it’s to die for."—TripAdvisor Member, Isle of Anglesey, Wales

Kuyaba on the Beach, Norman Manley Blvd., Negril, 876 957 4318

"3 Dives is visited and loved by locals and a few visitors to our island. I would prefer 3 Dives on an off-night over many other places on this planet on their best night."—TripAdvisor Member, Cuenca, Spain

3 Dives Restaurant, West End, Negril, 876 782 9990

"You can get food at Pork Pit from about $4 U.S. or under. They have some of the best jerk chicken and pork in town."—TripAdvisor Member, Kingston

Pork Pit, 27 Gloucester Ave., Montego Bay, 876 952 1046
WHERE to eat

HEALTH-CONSCIOUS

“Don’t miss Ras Rody’s! You are in for a treat: meat lovers, vegetarians, vegans alike—you will love it. The most satisfying food I have ever eaten!”—TripAdvisor Member, New York City, N.Y.

Ras Rody’s Roadside Organic, West End Road, Negril

Local markets dictate what’s on the ever-changing menu at this laid-back restaurant that focuses on seafood and vegetarian dishes. “For a Jamaican fusion option with an art gallery on the cliffs, go to the Hungry Lion.”—TripAdvisor Member

Hungry Lion, West End Road, Negril, 876 957 4486

“If you’re a vegetarian, you have to try Just Natural!”—TripAdvisor Member, San Diego, Calif.

Just Natural, West End Road, Negril, 876 957 0235

HIDDEN GEMS

“It was late, dark and our planned restaurant for the evening had sent the cook home. Our driver suggested Alice’s Restaurant, so we rode along the patchy streets of Negril to this lively little roadside spot with a thatched roof, outdoor seating and music supplied by a car in the parking lot. We were immediately greeted with smiles, a menu featuring local favorites and a warm breeze.”—TripAdvisor Member, Charlotte, N.C.

Alice’s Bar and Restaurant, South of Negril on cliff road

“I must rave about our favorite restaurant: Coconut International is such an amazing restaurant with a lot of local flavor! Fresh, delicious, inexpensive food—do not shy away from the soup that comes with dinner just because it’s hot out … it’s delectable, along with the fresh salad and everything else! Lobster creole, fried chicken, chicken and pineapple (all with the traditional rice ‘n’ peas), lunches and breakfasts are all great. It’s a terrific place to eat and chill out.”—TripAdvisor Member

Coconut International, Along Seven Mile Beach, 876 795 0064

“Located in an old house in Liguanea, Starapples specializes in local dishes prepared with an interesting twist for a reasonable price. The service can be slow, but it’s definitely worth the wait.”—TripAdvisor Member, Jamaica

Starapples, 94 Hope Road, Kingston

SPECIAL EVENTS

Test your endurance with a 500-meter ocean swim, a 25K mountain bike course followed by a 7K run at Jake’s Jamaican Off-Road Triathlon and Sunset Run. Partake in food, prizes, music and entertainment after the race. (April 21)

Jake’s Jamaican Off-Road Triathlon and Sunset Run, Jake’s Resort, Treasure beach, 876 965 3000, http://jakesoffroadtri.com

Discover your favorite new book for some beachside reading at Calabash International Literary Festival, featuring international and local authors presenting workshops, music, readings, storytelling and more. (May 25 – 27)

Calabash International Literary Festival, Jake’s Resort, Treasure Beach, 876 965 3000, http://www.calabashfestival.org

Experience the art of Jamaica at Kingston on the Edge Urban Art Festival. Featuring everything from painting & poetry to improv theatre & innovative percussion, the annual event is a showcase of both traditional artists and those who like to push the boundaries. (June)


Get on the Jazz Bus from Kingston to Ocho Rios and get down to some funky music at the Ocho Rios Jazz Festival, ten days of concerts and performances, many free, featuring internationally renowned musicians, as well as local talents. (June 9 – 17)


Feel the spirit of One Love at Red Stripe Reggae Sumfest, a four day party featuring a series of gigs and concerts from beach parties to concert hall performances. (July 15 – 21)


Wear your best green, black and gold to commemorate Jamaica’s Independence Day, celebrated island-wide with parades, dancers, performers, music and revelry. (August 6)

Independence Day, Various locations

Fill that empty stomach and do something good for the heart at the annual Wine & Food Festival, a fund-raising event benefiting the Heart Foundation of Jamaica. A plethora of food choices, complete with heart-healthy demonstrations, will tempt your taste buds. (September)


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FAMILIES
“Our room at Franklyn D Resort was clean, well-furnished, spacious and had a great view of the water. They have lots of activities and crafts for children that keep them very entertained. If you have kids that take naps, avoid getting a room by the main pool.”—TripAdvisor Member, Rhode Island
Franklyn D Resort, Main Street, Runaway Bay, 876 973 4591

“Peace, solitude, tranquility, and beauty are difficult to find when vacationing with kids, but it most certainly can be found at Citronella. The conch house fits our needs perfectly. The staff went above and beyond to make our stay most enjoyable.”—TripAdvisor Member, Michigan
Citronella, West End Road, Negril, 876 460 8369

“Our stay at the Spanish Court Hotel was hospitality at its best! The staff performed at an excellent level and were the key reason for my family having such an enjoyable time.”—TripAdvisor Member, West Palm Beach, Fla.
Spanish Court Hotel, 1 St. Lucia Ave., Kingston, 876 926 0000

ROMANCE

Sunset at the Palms offers “comfortable tree houses, exclusive in design, with large balcony and large day bed, nice view to the nature. Nice beach with good beach bar and beach grill, nice walk to the beach. The whole resort is like a botanical garden.”—TripAdvisor Member, Zurich, Switzerland
Sunset at the Palms, Norman Manley Blvd., Ruthland Point, Negril, 876 957 5350

“Warning: highly addictive.”

At the Seastar Inn, “they treat you like family. I have never felt more relaxed and comfortable at any other hotel. I cannot say enough good things about the Sea Star—it is paradise!”—TripAdvisor Member, Canada
Seastar Inn, West End Cliffs, Negril, 876 957 0553

“Rockhouse is an absolute jewel, the most romantic hotel for the best value that I have ever stayed in. Perched on the cliffs of Negril, it has a breathtaking sunset and ocean views across the resort. The rooms are comfortable and the bungalows have private ladders leading to the ocean.”—TripAdvisor Member, New York City, N.Y.
The Rockhouse Hotel, West End Road, Negril, 876 957 4373

BUDGET

Royal Decameron Montego Beach is the “perfect honeymoon destination. All in all, I cannot recommend this hotel highly enough. Everything was fantastic, from check-in to check-out. I do not know how they do it for the price!”—TripAdvisor Member, Paris, France
Royal Decameron Montego Beach, 2 Gloucester Road, Montego Bay, 876 952 4342

“I instantly fell in love with it.”

At the Seastar Inn, “they treat you like family. I have never felt more relaxed and comfortable at any other hotel. I cannot say enough good things about the Sea Star—it is paradise!”—TripAdvisor Member, Canada
Seastar Inn, West End Cliffs, Negril, 876 957 0553

LUXURY

“We cannot say enough about the staff of The Caves. Everyone was friendly, helpful and read your wishes off your lips from beginning to end. The rooms, though of rustic, artsy design, are roomy and equipped with everything. There were two loungers right out in front to relax and look out over the ocean.”—TripAdvisor Member, Erwitte, Germany
The Caves, Light House Road, Negril, 876 957 0270

“I am in love with Couples San Souci! When we were escorted to the room, I instantly fell in love with it. It was like an apartment, very comfy, with a homey feel. The balcony was large, and the view beyond the trees was lovely.”—TripAdvisor Member, Jamaica
Couples Sans Souci, Route A3, St. Mary, Ocho Rios, 876 994 1206

“Warning: highly addictive.”

“Mom’s Place is the best! If you want to enjoy some peaceful R&R, get to know some dynamite people and relax on the beach (and I mean ON the beach), go to Mom’s. You will love it!”—TripAdvisor Member, Chicago, Ill.
Mom’s Place, Norman Manley Boulevard, Negril, 876 957 3349

“Warning: highly addictive.”

“The Jamaica Inn had such class about it. Miles away from the all-inclusive towers of hotels, this place is something really special. The colonial vibe, breathtaking views and fabulous food make this place a true gem on the island.”—TripAdvisor Member, Ireland
Jamaica Inn, Main St., Ocho Rios, 876 974 2514

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HIDDEN GEMS

“We just loved Tensing Pen Resort! Located on a cliff facing west, it has the best view of the sunsets that you can get in Jamaica. All this while seated on a barstool with one of the funniest bartenders ever!”—TripAdvisor Member, Milan, Italy

Tensing Pen Resort, West End Road, Negril, 876 957 0387

If you want to “chill out in the country,” try Country Country Beach Cottages. “The accommodation itself is very comfortable and clean, with a pretty garden. And the food is excellent. Country Country has the best section of beach out of 7 Miles. What shone through was the helpful, friendly staff.”—TripAdvisor Member, Sydney, Australia

Country Country Beach Cottages, Norman Manley Blvd., Negril, 876 957 4273

Jake’s “is scenic; it has an indescribable ambiance; the architecture is interesting to look at; people are friendly; the food is great. The sea can be rough, but you can snorkel and swim in it.”—TripAdvisor Member, Denmark

Jake’s Hotel, Calabash Bay, Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth, 876 965 3000

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