



THE  
**JAMAICA INSIDER**  
*Guide*  
- *A native's eye* -

May, 2012

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Visit my website at [www.my-island-jamaica.com](http://www.my-island-jamaica.com)

## **DEDICATION**

in loving memory of my  
parents.

To my heavenly father for  
life, vision & direction

To my wife and daughters  
who ensure that I stop and  
smell the flowers

To my brothers & sisters

To all my ardent website  
subscribers who continues  
to inspire me &

To all Jamaican  
enthusiasts and lovers of  
our beautiful country

## Foreword

Congratulations! And Welcome To The Jamaica Insider Guide.

If you have been around [my-island-jamaica.com](http://my-island-jamaica.com) for any time, then you will know how much I love my country, and also how I really wanted to share this publication with you.

Well it's finally here!

Over the years, I've gotten hundreds of questions about Jamaica and vacationing here, seriously. From 'Where is Jamaica?' to how to relocate here. Interestingly too, I've also gotten many questions from local teachers, students and fun lovers, asking me, for example, 'where to take students on a trip?' and 'where to disappear to for a weekend?'

Essentially though, I was convinced that in addition to learning more about the country, people just wanted to know how to *really* enjoy Jamaica.

Many of these insightful queries pushed me to do much deeper research, allowing me to deliver real value to my site visitors - and this publication takes it to the **next level!**

It captures the best of Jamaica from my eyes - the insider, but I've also gain immeasurable information and insights from family, friends and others who have been here before.

I've taken all that and has delivered it to you in a very personable, refreshing and easy to read format that you'll love. I sincerely hope you enjoy it as much as I did bringing it to you.

Love & Thanks,

*Nellesley*

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## 1. Welcome To Jamaica

### a. Background

The jewel of the Caribbean, Jamaica is located south of Cuba and West of Hispaniola. It is the third largest island in the Caribbean. Jamaica is on Atlantic Standard Time, which means that in the summer it is one hour behind Eastern Standard Time and in winter it is on Eastern Standard Time.

### b. Weather

The climate varies from tropical to humid. Rainfall is seasonal; the wet months fall between May and October, which coincide with the hurricane season that extends from June to November. The temperature averages about 75°F in the winter and 80°F in the summer.

### c. People & Language.

The majority of the population is of African descent, but there is a mixture of different races which has influenced the diverse physical appearance, culture and customs of the Jamaican people, hence our motto, "Out of Many One People". The official language is English, but patois is the common dialect spoken amongst the people. Patois is the combination of French, English, Spanish and African Languages.

### d. Culture

We boast a rich blend of African, European, Chinese, Indian and some middle eastern cultures. Of course, the early Taino settlers played a pivotal role in our culture as well.

Some of our foods today, for example, are prepared similar to the way it was prepared by the early Taino settlers then. The concept of 'Jerk', as well as cassava preparations was inherited from this friendly tribe that inhabited Jamaica then. By the way, the name Jamaica came directly from them, who called the island 'Xaymaca' meaning 'the land of wood and water'. The areas of Dance, Music,

Folklore, Religion and Language have benefited tremendously from this amalgamation of cultures as well.

e. Currency

The Jamaican Dollar is official the currency used, but the USD is highly used as well, particularly in the tourist resort areas. The other major foreign currencies are all accepted. Credit card usage is popular and is an acceptable payment option. The British pound and Canadian dollar are among the other major foreign currencies used here.

For detailed information on the areas above, please visit our [Jamaica fact page](#) online.

## 2. **Emergency Contact Information**

Incidents and accidents do happen, so it is very important to prepare – just in case. The following are the contact numbers for the major departments and agencies that you'll probably need to contact in such cases.

If your embassy is not listed here, please ensure you know how to get to your embassy or consulate prior to embarking on your trip.

- Police Department (119)
- Fire Department (110)
- Ambulance (110)
- Directory Assistance (114)
- Country Code +876
- American Embassy (876-702-6000)
- British High Commission (876-936-0700)
- Canadian High Commission (876-926-1500)
- General Embassy Services (876-970-1536)
- Disaster Support (ODPEM) (876-906-9674)

Please note that regular and up to date security information about Jamaica (and other countries) is available for USA citizens at the United States Department of state, Bureau of Diplomatic Security website at:  
<https://www.osac.gov/Pages/CountryHome.aspx>

### 3. **Tips, Tricks & Cautions**

This chapter is one of my absolute favorites so I hope you'll find it resourceful as much as I did.

I've included some simple, but effective tips & cautions on getting around, communicating, managing your money, personal safety and even tipping!

#### a. Getting Around

A nature lover, adventure seeker or a party animal, there are lots here for you. In fact, just hopping around Jamaica can, by itself, be quite fun and adventurous too.

Taxis and buses are abundant, and probably cheaper, but we highly suggest you have a designated competent, trustworthy and knowledgeable driver/ tour guide.

The advantage? It's not just more secure, but you also get personalized attention, for example, you can dictate where and when to stop, obviously you don't have that luxury with the buses which have designated routes. If you have a friend here, ask him or her to point you to someone trustworthy and knowledgeable of the country.

You may consider authorized, licensed taxis, which can be called by your hotel or villas. JUTA, JCAL and MAXI are some of the recognizable (tour company) brands here. Jamaica Tours and Tropical Tours are also highly reputable. I've also included a short list of some of the best smaller [Tour Operators](#) in this publication. However, if you need me to recommend someone [just let me know](#).

If you are taking relatively longer distances, say Montego Bay to Kingston, I'd suggest you consider one of the two main express bus service.

There is the Knutsford Express (<http://www.knutsfordexpress.com>) that travels between Montego Bay and Kingston (via Ocho Rios) and the South Coast Express (<http://www.southcoast-express.com>) that, as the name suggest, travels the south coast – from Negril to Kingston. Both depart and arrive at intervals throughout the day.

Those could work out more economical for you as well and they are very comfortable and safe.

By the way, you may also drive, but we'd rather not recommend it, especially if you are not familiar with Jamaica. Basically, if you don't have to drive, don't. Driving here is not as easy as in the USA per se; outside of the fact that we drive on the left, many of the inner roads are narrow and infested with potholes. Drivers here do tend to take more risks as well.

#### b. Protecting Your Money

Probably like you, many of our visitors can only afford to come here after prolonged savings, so it makes sense to a) secure your money, and b) stretching it as far as you can.

The following are some simple tips & recommendations when you get here.

- i. Be familiar with the local exchange rate  
We found that many tourists exchange their home currency way below the going rate and end up been short changed (disadvantaged).
- ii. Do consider carrying various money options, cash, credit cards, travelers cheques, etc. if you can.
- iii. Always keep some Jamaican currency. Although most suppliers in the resort/tourist areas trade in the USD, and other major currencies, you'll find you can pay in Jamaican dollars as well, moreso, you can use the JMD for tips, local transportation etc.
- iv. Clarify payment before you leave with the drivers or tour operators.  
That's pretty straightforward right? ☺
- v. If your card is through a US bank you will be charged 3% of whatever you spend. If you take money out of the ATM there will be a US 5\$ fee from both your bank and the ATM in Jamaica plus you have to pay the fee of 3%.(Shiquita, 2011)

- vi. Do take care when using credit cards at retail outlets and be aware of your surroundings when using ATMs.
- vii. Always attempt to keep your credit card in sight when making purchases.
- viii. Don't take large sums of cash around.  
At the least of it, you become uncomfortable and it will show - turning you into an easy target.
- ix. Do carry smaller bills instead of large bills.  
It's usually hard to break bills greater than \$10.
- x. Regarding security at your hotel, Kelly, an ardent visitor on my website, suggested that 'you may consider purchasing a lock for your suit case and storing your cash in your locked suit case if it will give you extra peace of mind'.
- xi. B the way, do note that currently cash and negotiable items greater than US\$ 10,000 should be declared to Jamaican Customs while entering or leaving the country. (More Jamaican [money exchange tips](#) on the website as well)

You are welcome to get more information on how to [travel around with money](#) in Jamaica from folks who have been here before.

#### c. Tipping

'What are acceptable tipping rates?' This is a very popular question. Here are some basic suggestions.

- a. Restaurant:  
Tipping of 10-15% is OK.  
Note that some add a gratuity to the cost.

- b. Hotels:  
Some hotels prohibit tipping. Tipping to bellhops and maids can be up to 5 bucks (USD).
- c. Taxi:  
10-15% too, depending on the length of trip.

d. Dressing in Jamaica

- i. Generally speaking, you'd probably need to bring along cool, casual clothing when coming to Jamaica. It's a good idea to include a light jacket and pants/long skirt, as evenings may get cool, especially in the months from December to February.
- ii. Remember though that you may decide to attend an event where you want to be well dressed. Pack with this in mind.
- iii. Please note that outside of resort areas or on a beach, a swimsuit is not considered appropriate clothing. Some businesses will actually post their dress code in a notice on their premises, but most require at least a shirt and shorts.
- iv. Nude and topless swimming are restricted to specific areas. If you are unsure, please ask first!

e. Safety & Security

Jamaica is still the darling of the Caribbean and for good reason, but like everywhere else we have some crime too, albeit that crime has reduced by well over 30% (at the date of this publication), and that it is mainly between gangs concentrated in the depressed areas, but it still prudent for you to be aware and pay attention to your personal security.

In fact one of the frequent questions we get on the website is 'will I be [safe in Jamaica](#)?'. We strongly believe so. You can follow that link above for some great information, but I've also included some simple and practical tips on personal security here as well.

- i. Get a competent, trustworthy and knowledgeable tour guide to take you around (highly recommended)
- ii. Use ATM's instead of Travelers checks. Minimize transaction fees by making fewer and larger withdrawals. Store the cash safely in your money belt before exiting the booth.  
  
ATM's give the best possible rates of exchange and you can get your cash fast.  
(WorldTogetherTravel.com)
- iii. That said, avoid remote ATM's at night
- iv. Don't wander off by yourself, travel with friends. This is true regardless of where in the world you are.
- v. Don't wear expensive jewelry on trips or excursions. Ideally, don't take them on your trip.
- vi. Walking after dark, including on beaches, can be dangerous due to the increased risk of robbery and assault. Avoid walking alone in isolated areas.
- vii. Ensure your accommodation has adequate security, such as guards or security fences, particularly if you are staying in small B&B's or villa-style accommodation.
- viii. Stay close to the media for happenings.
- ix. Do make sure you travel with a valid passport or visa (if required). Also, bring another valid form of photo I.D., and photocopies of both ID.s. in case of loss or theft (JTB).
- x. Remember to try to give friends and family your contact information and itineraries –just in case of any emergency.

- xi. Never disclose where you are staying to persons you meet on the beaches and at other attractions. This serves both for your own safety and prevents persistent "sellers" phoning the hotel or coming to the hotel to corner you to go with them or buy their products.

f. Personal Care

Yes you might be on a vacation but even so, you still need to take care of YOU, right?  
Of course ☺, so here are some simple steps.

- i. Don't forget to carry your insect repellent as a precaution, depending on the season and/or where you are staying; there might be some mosquitoes and 'see-ums' at nights.
- ii. Don't leave your sunscreen lotions either.
- iii. When sunbathing, rafting or taking part in activities that expose you to the sun, do wear a hat and apply ample suntan especially around your ankles and knees which one normally forgets but gets exposed just the same.
- iv. Avoid getting duped into buying special "Coconut Oil" to give you a special tan. In reality coconut oil makes you burn.
- v. Do consider travelling with a foldable umbrella for the unplanned rain, and the sun too. It is light, easy and useful. You may just gift it to someone at the end of your stay.
- vi. Be extra careful when crossing the streets.  
As I mentioned earlier, our motorists are perhaps not as patient as those in the USA. In fact, USATODAY's John Zaremba reminds us that a tourist was killed in 2008 trying to cross the street after another car stopped to allow her.
- vii. Do ensure you have ample bottles of drinking water – especially when doing an excursion.

- viii. Do question your tour, resort or adventure operator about safety standards and relevant licenses. This is important should anything go wrong.

For example, do ensure that proper vests, life jackets and safety equipment are provided before going on a water excursion or expedition. I've personally had a bad experience here that you can avoid by just doing this.

#### g. Local Laws

Please consider getting yourself familiar with the basic laws of Jamaica. The penalties can be harsh and the jails are probably not as comforting as those from your country, seriously.

- i. Penalties for drug offences can be severe.  
In particular, be careful about marijuana usage. Possession of, or dealing in, could actually land you in jail! I've just completed a detailed [Q&A on ganja](#) for my site visitors on our website. Please take a quick read.
- ii. While the intolerance temperature has lowered considerably, homosexuality acts are not condoned by the mass and is still illegal.
- iii. Public nudity and indecent language can also lead to an arrest by the police.
- iv. Please do respect our wildlife, including marine animals and birds.  
It may not only be just illegal to hurt them, it's the right thing to do.

#### h. General Tips & Cautions

- i. Not all Jamaicans are Rastafarians, and on the other hand, not all Rastafarians are Jamaicans. Believe it or not, it is a widely popular misconception about Jamaicans.

- ii. In addition, please don't expect that everyone you see will be, or is interested in smoking.
- iii. When travelling, bring your camera.  
Surely you'd want to capture those special sights, sounds and moments.  
Those pictures will become handy when you are trying to share your experience with others.
- iv. Jamaicans, in general, are religious (primarily Christians) so please don't be offended if a bible verse is quoted or someone says 'Lord have mercy' when you think it probably unwarranted.  
Please take some time to understand [our culture](#), the way of life and the do's and don'ts.  
Understanding and respecting them could make a world of difference to your trip.
- v. People are sensitive about being photographed without permission though. If you want to take photographs of individuals, please ask them first.
- vi. If you do decide to drive, do remember to drive on the left and watch for those pot holes, especially in the interior of the island. We've had bad roads from as far as I can remember.
- vii. You might be approached by people selling wares, souvenirs and various services. If you're not interested in purchasing anything, just say so firmly and politely and you will be left alone.
- viii. Finally, and on a side note, (this holds true for most of my recommendations to come in this book), please be sure to make contact with any recommended entity I list here. Some require reservations and or have special opening days/ times.

#### 4. **Simple & Surefire Ways to Save Money During Your Jamaican Vacation**

Everyone wants to save, and who said you can't save even during your Jamaica vacation? It is not just sensible, and for many of us, very necessary.

Assuming you've already done your [proper vacation/travel planning](#), and selected the best options for you here in Jamaica, I'll now present you with some sure fire ways to save some bucks while vacationing on our beautiful island, regardless of the number in the party (group) or your place of stay.

First up...

a. Organize, Organize, Organize:

Surprise? C'mon, you shouldn't be, it's still the most effective way to save, on not just your time, but in your pocket – even on your vacation.

Proper planning and budgeting can still make a world of difference.

For example, create your vacation budget and set limits to your average daily spend. Travel only with the amount of cash you plan to spend for that day. This simple strategy is a proven money saver.

I've included a handy vacation activity planner [as a bonus](#), please make use of it.

b. Don't/Never exchange all your money at once!

More 'liquid' money could cause you to overspend, plus it just makes sense.

c. Don't exchange a lot of your currency at the hotel or airport either, nor with the man on the street.

Hotel and airport rates are usually poor. Exchange only what you need then and exchange the rest at a recognized cambio. And the man on the street? Well you may very well get a relatively higher rate, but your money can easily be swindled from you.

d. Bargain or ask for discounts

Feel free to do so, don't be afraid, Jamaicans almost expect you to bargain, in fact, we are good at it too!

In most cases if you have a fair bargain you won't be turned down, just be smart, fair and respectful.

- e. Always be mindful of the exchange rate.  
Just as I mentioned earlier (above).

- f. Eat Local

Unless you are staying at an all inclusive, it is probably cheaper to eat local than at the restaurant back at the hotel or villa. You will realize some savings, plus it is fun stopping at those small local eateries.

If you are staying at an all inclusive, be sure to eat before you leave.

- g. Choose lunch over dinner.

In many Jamaican restaurants, the price for the same or similar menus is vastly different between lunch and dinner. I know one, a Chinese restaurant in Montego Bay that serve lunch specials for just about \$5.5 USD but the same dinner menu goes for upwards of USD \$17.

- h. Stay with family or friends.

This is a no brainer right; all you need is someone trustworthy.

In a friendly way, you simply need to both agree on the terms beforehand. Instead of paying for expensive accommodation why not consider this option?

- i. Rent a car only if needed.

That said, it would probably makes sense if you are planning to take a lot of trips, and of course, if you are comfortable with the roads and the general Jamaican driving.

- j. Need to call back home? Consider getting a cheap prepaid phone and top up with an international plan which usually lasts for a month. Both local phone service providers - LIME and Digicel have international plans and they are amazingly cheap! (highly recommended)

- k. Is that free breakfast really free? It could be, but take time to consider that.

Sometimes we undervalue the cost of the accommodation simply because of the other 'free' stuff like breakfast. A hotel without a free breakfast may value much less. Of course, you may also make your

own cereals if you wish.

- l. Bring some snacks, especially when going on excursions.  
These could fill any void until it's time for your real meal (Highly recommended)
- m. Travel with your water too.  
Bottled water is still relatively cheap, but, like most things selling to the 'tourist' can get pricey. You can always store up on your water (from local grocery store) and take them on your excursions. Water is also a great filler before meals, preventing you from spending more to feel full.
- n. Consider free or almost free local events.  
For example, there are lots of food and cultural festivals throughout the year here and most cost just a minimal price, if any, to get in. I've included some free activities in this guide for you to consider, but feel free to contact your tour guide or hotel guest services for the latest [happenings in Jamaica](#).
- o. Planning to do an adventure?  
Do consider taking your own gear if it's not too much a bother. The cost to rental here could get pricey. Be sure to balance that with luggage costs on the airplane though.
- p. Partner if you can.  
Group activities will work in your favor most of the times, whether it's travelling around or booking an adventure. You will also have an advantage negotiating as well.
- q. And finally, get a trusted local guide or connect with your local friend. It just makes sense, not only will you get to see more of the real Jamaica, they know the best and cheapest local places. (Highly recommended).

In a nutshell, just be smart my friend ☺ If you need any other ideas, please [let me know](#).

## 5. **Best Jamaican Attractions & Tours**

Honestly, this was tricky; I must admit.

Considering that we have so many great attractions here it was never going to be an easy task to narrow it down to say, the top 10, but I am going to be bold and present them to you now ☺

Yes, my friends and I had varying views, but no one was willing to drop any from this list. Anyway, away with the preamble, here they are...

- Blue Hole Mineral Spring (Brighton District, Area, 876-860-8805)  
A must visit! It's new, it's different, its fun and entertaining.  
Great folks (tour guides) down there as well. Approximately 20 minutes from Negril.
- Croydon Plantation(Catadupa, St. James, 876-979-8267)  
Very educational and fun; from the drive up into the hills and along the countryside to the information about the plants and the historic plantation.
- The Blue Mountain Tours  
There are several tours into the majestic Blue Mountains; Jamaica's tallest point.  
Many look forward to the hiking. Prepare to get some amazing views.  
Check with your tour guide or hotel desk for information on the next trip! If you love adventure, you'll love it here in the mountains.
- Reach Falls (Near Manchioneal, Portland, 876-832-6740)  
Reach Falls has been featured in Hollywood films including Tom Cruise's 'Cocktails' and the remake of 'Lord of the Flies'. A hidden treasure!
- Negril Sunset/Cliffs Tour (Negril)  
Jamaica, in general is known also for its majestic sunsets, and Negril has the most heavenly ones.

Many of the best tours include this in their packages.

- Negril's 7 Mile Beach (Negril)  
World renown, Negril's proverbial 7 mile beach consistently ranks number 1 among beaches in Jamaica and for good reason. I don't need to say much about this, It speaks for itself.
- Outameni Experience (Coopers Pen, Trelawny, 876 954-4035)  
Outameni provides a rich cultural experience in a captivating and dramatic way. They have dramatic demonstrations of life during Jamaica's development. Outameni is also listed in our best attractions in Falmouth.
- YS Falls (St. Elizabeth, 876 634 2455)  
Many will tell you that you won't miss Dunn's River. It is certainly not as busy and is just serene. It's a must visit, whether or not you are staying on the south coast. We also listed it as a great [attraction for kids](#).
- Cranbrook Flower Forest (Laughlands, St. Ann, 876-610-6509)  
It's a beautiful tropical (rainforest) gardens featuring flowers, ponds, waterfalls, a natural rain forest and sports facilities. Families can do the river trail; observing nature at its best along the way, ending where the water emanates from the rock. If early enough, you can also do bird watching.
- Secret Falls (border of St. Ann and St. Mary)  
Rustic, undeveloped but awesome!
- Dunn's River Falls (Ocho Rios, 876 974-5944)  
World renown! Arguably Jamaica's greatest attraction.
- Here too are my website Visitor's Top 10 [Best Hidden Attractions!](#)

## 6. **Unique & Fun Things To Do in Jamaica**

These activities and experiences may not easily come to mind, but these can be quite fulfilling, satisfying and memorable.

- Visit a Local Basic School in a rural community.  
This will be exciting but equally insightful to you, no doubt. Rap with the teachers and kids. You'll have lasting memories and may just create some new friends.
- Do a coffee or sugar plantation tour  
There are several of them (example in the Blue Mountains). These tours give you a firsthand experience of local production and a true feel of the rich Jamaican heritage.
- Love adventure? How about doing some bird watching?  
All birds are adorable, but there are about 28 beauties that are found nowhere else on earth! Just ask your tour guide for recommendations on bird watching tours across the island.
- Enjoy Jamaica's Devon House Ice Cream  
Devon House ice cream is to die for – especially the Stout flavor ☺. The head office is in Kingston but there are distribution points and smaller cafés all over the island.
- Visit a local library.  
It's a great way to learn something about Jamaican art, literature and our writers, plus you get to mingle with some of the local students. There is a library in each parish, just ask your tour guide or friend for information and directions.
- How about a local church service?  
Are you associated with any of the major Christian denominations?  
Chances are, there is a local body that is actively holding service. Check them out, get a feel of the Jamaican worship. We hosted a family from Canada in our church recently and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

- Visit a rural community  
Rap with the citizens and taste the flavours, example sugar cane , freshly picked jelly coconuts, guineps, jackfruits, naseberry and other local fruits that are in season.
- Passing by the South Coast?  
Stop by "Border" in St. Elizabeth, the 'Fried fish & Bammy' capital of Jamaica.  
These vendors can't wait to make a sale, but beyond that, the fish and bammy are usually awesome!  
  
Middle Quarters has some sumptuous peppered shrimp for you too. The question is, Can you handle it?!
- Visit one of our botanical gardens.  
Cinchona Garden, near the Blue Mountain is a beauty!

## 7. **Best Fun Activities and Attractions For Kids**

Yes, we have lots and lots of great attractions here, but not enough could be considered child-friendly.

We've done some research and came up with this short list below; again wasn't an easy task but we did it. Special thanks to my friend Chester, a veteran in the tourism industry and a great tour guide.

### 1. The Outameni Experience

It is already spoken about it but I need to emphasize that Outameni specializes in children & family fun in a captivating and dramatic way. Children can see live re-enactments of historic Jamaica as well as educational information on the various eras of Jamaica's development.

It's a rich cultural and educational experience. Chester told me about a young adult who have been there 7 times already! Please see the contact information above. Of course, you'll also get real Jamaican food.

[Coopers Pen, Trelawny, 876-954-4035]

### 2. Dolphin Cove

Dolphin Cove offers a variety of great options for kids and indeed the entire family. They can pet the dolphins, swim or watch. They also offer kayaking. By the way, there they have a relatively new location on the NorthWest, near Lucea in Hanover but the Ocho Rios location still offer the best options. Lots of food options for children too.

[Ocho Rios, Telephone: 876-974-5335]

### 3. YS Falls

Remember I listed YS as one of the top spots to go in Jamaica?

And that's for good reason. It's not as busy as say a Dunn's River falls, but offers just as much, or perhaps more.

Kids have added options, if not the falls, then there are two (2) natural pools on the compound, coming straight from a fresh gushing spring. There is also canopy in addition to a nice picnic area around the pool. Parents are asked to supervise their children but they also have lots of lifeguards. Of course, food is in abundance.

By the way, there is also tubing when the river is high for kids over 10.  
[SouthCoast, St. Elizabeth, Telephone: 876 634 2455]

4. Cool Runnings Water Park

Located in 'vibezy' Negril, Cool Runnings is a favourite for local school trips. It is the surely the most popular local water park attraction we have at this time.

They have a lovely children area, and of course, lots of slides. The children are adequately supervised too. They may also play paintball and outdoor laser combat. Food; primarily sandwiches, are there for sale as well.

[Norman Manley Boulevard, Negril, 876-957-5400]

5. White River Tubing

This little attraction is quickly becoming a favourite for both locals and visitors. It's not yet fully developed but the 3 miles of tubing is great fun for children and adults alike. There are no assigned security guards though, just the guides. It's located at the border of St. Ann (Ocho Rios area) and St. Mary.

6. Negril Beach

World class. Parents and guardians are expected to provide their own supervision, however

some guards are usually present. The marine police also patrols the area. Vendors sell food and snacks nearby. Most of the island's tour companies include Negril Beach in their itineraries. We also listed it as one of [Jamaica's best attractions](#).

7. Rockland's Bird Sanctuary

This attraction is perhaps one of the oldest and most favored in Jamaica. It's located in Anchovy, in the hills of St. James (near Montego Bay). They have lots of birds including the ground dove, yellow bill, the humming bird (our national bird) and many others that migrate to the island at different times in the year. The doctor bird and the grass quit are the ones that are petted though. You can feed it on your fingers. Please note that there is no food nor water there so bring your own..

[Wiltshire, Anchovy, 876-952-2009]

8. The Jamaica Zoo (Originally named the "Value P Zoo")

...is a one of its kind in Jamaica. The zoo features approximately 25 different animals. It is located on the former Ostrich Park facility. The animals here include Lions, Llama, Zebras, Monkeys, Crocodiles, Toucans, Snake, Iguana, etc. There is also a petting area where kids can take pictures with the animals and slides for real fun! Ample tour guides.

A visitor will enjoy the complete experience, especially with the local school children.  
[Burton District, Lacovia, St. Elizabeth (South Coast), 876-435-9999,  
<http://jamaicazoo.webs.com/>]

9. Horse Back Riding

Horseback riding is a relatively new adventure here but is a feature of many of the local tours. Two of the company that easily comes to mind are Rhodes Hall (Plantation) on the North West coast and Braco Stables on the north (in St. Ann).

For most of them, kids ride on the horses accompanied by a guide. At Braco they ride up in the hills and complete the trip in the sea; yes the horses walk in the water too! Kids love it!

10. Mystic Mountain

Mystic Mountain offer loads of fun and adventure. They have the popular bobsled and also the sky explorer. Kids are accompanied by adults. They also have a zipline for adults. Another one of its kind in Jamaica. Food is ample and they have tight security as well.

[Near Dunn's River Falls, 876-974-3990]

11. Glistening Waters/ Luminous Lagoon

I am also including this as one of the top attraction in the Falmouth area, kids will be amazed when they see the water glow in the dark. A boat ride will assist in showing the full effect of the microscopic organisms that emit the phosphorescent light when the water is disturbed.

[Falmouth, 876-954-3229]

12. Cranbrook Flower Forest

Please refer to Cranbrook under [Jamaica's best attractions](#).

Kids may also do donkey rides or pond fishing.

[Laughlands St. Ann, 876 610-6509]

13. Sunshine Amusement Complex (formerly Putt and Play Amusement Park)

Many consider this to be Jamaica's premier amusement park. Activities include Bumper Boats, Trampoline, Mechanical Bull, Bumper Cars, Motion Theatre Simulator, Merry Go Round (Carousel), Safari Train, Cup & Saucer, Pumpkin Ferris Wheel and Scrambler.

It is definitely a must stop for your especially if you are in the eastern side of the island. They are conveniently located right in the heart of New Kingston (across from the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel)  
[New Kingston,876-906-4814, <http://www.sunshineamusement.com>]

## 8. Delectable 'Must Have' Foods In Jamaica

1. Breadfruit – Breadfruit, otherwise called “Bresheh”, can be eaten either boiled or roasted or roasted then fried. It tastes like doughy bread, and is similar in texture to most bread – but with more moisture.

It can be complimented with any form of meat or “salting” (Jamaican term for meat or meat replacement), and is especially enjoyed with coconut oil or rundown (coconut milk boiled to thickness with onion, pepper, tomato and salt fish or salt mackerel)

2. Ackee & Salt fish - Jamaica’s National Dish, this is a sumptuous favorite among Jamaicans which can be eaten for breakfast, lunch or dinner - even supper. It comprises few ripe pods of ackee, cooked with some well-seasoned salted fish. The only thing left to do is ENJOY!

3. Patty – Jamaica’s most popular lunch meal, a Jamaican patty is a filled turnover pastry, often golden yellow in colour.

The flaky crust is stuffed with one or more of various types of filling, including: beef, chicken, cheese, shrimp, lobster or vegetable prepared with Jamaican spices. Sumptuous.

4. Jerk Chicken – Jerking is a style of cooking native to Jamaica, in which meats are marinated in allspice, cinnamon, pepper, onion, thyme escallions, salt and garlic for hours prior to cooking. They are then grilled over fire coals in a “drum pan” (steel drum cut lengthwise attached with hinges) to create the authentic jerk (smoked) flavour.

The most popular jerked meats are pork, chicken and fish. If you have not had it as yet, you are missing a lot! The flavor, the aroma, the heat...they are out of this world!

5. Curried Goat – Another Jamaican favorite, this dish was introduced by Indians living in Jamaica. Spicy curried goat is usually served with white rice, and is readily available at any traditional restaurant.

6. Mannish Water – Also called Power Water, this is Jamaica’s #1 spicy soup and is made from goat head and/or “belly” (tripe) along with sliced green bananas or other ground provision. A few “spinners” (rolled, long boiled flour dumplings) are sometimes added as well. It is mostly served at traditional functions and is believed to be an aphrodisiac.
7. Fried Fish & Bammy - Bammy is a round flatbread made from the cassava plant, and is usually steamed or fried. Normally eaten with fried fish, it can also be added as a side order to almost any dish.
8. Red Stripe Beer – If you are thirsty, reach for an ice-cold Red Stripe. This lager beer is considered the true taste of Jamaica. It contains 4.7% alcohol and is refreshing to the taste. The world loves and recognizes it!
9. Festival – Rolled, fried dumplings made with flour, cornmeal, baking powder and sugar, festivals are “finger licking” delicious. They can be served with fried fish, chicken, ackee and salt fish or other meat kind, as well as eaten separately as a treat.
10. Steamed Fish & Okra – A finger licking, mouth watering and lip smacking serving of steamed fish is one of Jamaica’s best sea food meals. Many Jamaican men believe that a good steam fish, prepared with okra does the trick!
11. Sour Sop Juice – Soursop is a fruit that grows about 10 inches long and is fairly thin with green skin and short spikes. Beneath the skin is a thick, white, pulpy flesh with small, shiny, black, indigestible seeds. The thick flesh has a sweet taste – something like a mix between strawberries and pineapples. This may be prepared with sugar and lime or milk with spices. Nice!
12. Mackerel Run Dung/Down – Salted mackerel that is cooked in a well-seasoned coconut milk sauce until the fish falls apart or literally “runs down”. It is typically served with boiled green bananas, yam and dumplings, but it can be eaten with just about any food of choice. Very tasty!

13. Dukunooo – A Jamaican desert made from flour, green banana, coconut, brown sugar, spices and vanilla tied up in a green banana leaf. Sweet to the belly! The recipe is of African origin and it is also called Blue Drawers/Draws and Tie-a-Leaf.

Most of these foods can be found at almost any traditional Jamaican restaurant...just ask for them by name.

## 9. **Free Events & Activities In Jamaica – 100% Free!**

Everyone loves something free, and you do too right?  
Come on, admit it ☺

Well, I've done some digging for you and now here I present the top, highly popular free events in Jamaica.

I've categorized them by month to make it more convenient to you. Please be reminded that these are annual events and so the dates (and locations) do change, so please ensure you make contact before planning around each of them my friend.

I've included the phone contact and email (or website address) where possible as well. Enjoy!

### 1. January

- a. High Mountain Coffee 10K Road Race  
Williamsfield, Manchester  
876-963-4211

### 2. February

- a. The Equestrian Federation Events  
(876) 942-2413  
<http://equestrianjamaica.com/>  
[efj@equestrianjamaica.com](mailto:efj@equestrianjamaica.com)

In fact, they have an entire year of free events and activities across the island. Please check their website for the complete calendar.

### 3. March

- a. Elasha Spring Fest  
Waves Beach, Negril  
(876) 580-2363  
<http://www.elashaspringfest.com>

It gets together some of the best and most talented international and local gospel singers, worship leaders & DJs.

- b. Kingston Book Festival  
Across Kingston  
(876) 922-0127  
<http://www.bookindustryja.com>

The weeklong series of activities includes a church service, book readings at Kingston venues, an exhibit of rare Jamaican books at the National Library and a publishing workshop. The Festival culminates in a large book fair at Emancipation Park

- c. DOM Port Antonio Spring Fishing Tournament  
Port Antonio, Portland  
(876) 909-8818  
[rondq@mail.infochan.com](mailto:rondq@mail.infochan.com)

By the way the DOM means, 'Di Ole Marina'.

#### 4. April

- a. Jake's Off Road Triathlon  
Treasure Beach, SouthCoast  
(876) 564-6319/965-3641  
<http://www.jakesoffroadtri.com/>

This event kicks off the exciting calendar of events at Treasure beach. Excitement galore!

- b. Solo Exhibition  
Harmony Hall Gallery  
(876) 974-2870  
[info@harmonyhall.com](mailto:info@harmonyhall.com)

Please call for additional details.

- c. STEA 10k Road Race & 50k Cycle Race  
Albert Town, Trelawny  
(876) 910-0818  
[stea@cwjamaica.com](mailto:stea@cwjamaica.com)

It normally coincides with the exciting annual Trelawny Yam festival.

## 5. May

- a. Calabash Literacy Festival  
Jack Sprat, Treasure Beach  
876-965-3000  
<http://www.calabashfestival.org>

Held on the beach, this exciting cultural event is usually held the last week in May. Come for poetry reading, bands playing, ethnic cooking, etc. It is held over 3 days. Great Jamaican vibe.

- b. All-Jamaica Junior and Open Tennis Championships  
Eric Bell Tennis Complex, Kingston  
(876) 929-5878

Be amazed by the skill and talent of these youngsters.

- c. Jamaica Praise Fest Concert  
Montego Bay (Dump Up Beach)  
(876) 971-5275  
<http://www.jamaicapraisefest.org/>

Jamaica's best gospel artistes descend here to share in a sprit-filled event. It also features some of the world's top Christian artiste's including Donnie McClurkin.

- d. Roti Festival  
Various Venues  
(876) 907-5456  
<http://www.ncicj.com/>

This exciting event is staged by The national Council for Indian Culture in Jamaica. Visit the website or call to find out the next time and the venue.

- e. Regional Festival of Foods  
Various Venues  
(876) 926-5726  
[jcdc@cwjamaica.com](mailto:jcdc@cwjamaica.com)

Put on by the Jamaica Cultural Development Commission, this event facilitates exhibitors in all type of Jamaica foods. It's a rich, fun filled family day. It's staged at various venues, but usually at least two regions in Jamaica per year.

## 6. June

- a. On the Edge Urban Art Festival  
Various Venues  
876-909-9594  
<http://www.kingstonontheedge.org>

Painting, sculpture, photography, poetry, film and just about every other type of art

flourishes across Kingston at the annual On the Edge Urban Art Festival.

7. July

- a. Makka Pro Surf Contest  
South Haven, St. Thomas  
876-750-0103  
<http://www.jamsurfas.webs.com>

8. August

August is perhaps the busiest month on the event's calendar in Jamaica yet I was not able to find a completely free one ☹️. I will not give up yet though 😊

9. September

Things quiet down a bit in September, that probably explain why I was unable to find a free event.

10. October

- a. Treasure Beach Hook & Line Canoe Tournament  
Calabash Bay Beach  
(876) 965-3000  
[www.jakeshotel.com](http://www.jakeshotel.com)

A 3-day competition during which local fishermen vie for prizes by catching the largest fish using only traditional fishing method of a simple hook and line at this grass roots event. Other exciting events include boat race, local talent show, fish fry and community beach party. Rich Jamaican vibe! Yep, completely free for the spectator.

- b. RoseHall Triathlon  
Rose Hall Area

(876) 578-3581  
<http://www.rosehalltriathlon.com>

An exciting fun-filled day for the entire family. In 2011 the excitement culminated at the lovely Iberostar Hotel.

- c. Port Antonio International Marlin Tournament  
The Errol Flynn Marina, Portland  
(876) 927-0145  
[rondq@mail.infochan.com](mailto:rondq@mail.infochan.com)

This is perhaps the most exciting time in Jamaica for the fishing enthusiasts. The tournament invites anglers from all over the world to catch (and release) the prized Atlantic Blue Marlin, a fish that migrates through the Caribbean during September and October according to the moon's phases. Nice family vibe!

#### 11.November

- a. Harmony Hall Pre-Christmas Crafts Fair  
Harmony Hall Gallery, Ocho Rios,  
(876) 975-4222  
<http://www.harmonyhall.com/Gallery/gallery.htm>

Artists and craftsmen display their masterpieces on the lawns of the historic Harmony Hall.

#### 12.December

Interestingly I wasn't able to find any completely free events for the the two most popular months in Jamaica for events, August and December. I guess you'd understand why right? ☺

## 10. **Best of The Major Resort Areas**

Jamaica has some of the most amazing destinations, and I mean outside of Negril, yes; perhaps too much to mention in this publication. Many of these are captured on our [my-island-jamaica.com](http://my-island-jamaica.com) site with captivating photos of the places and their attractions.

For the purpose of this publication however, I've narrowed this down, capturing some of the most interesting, noteworthy and even the unpopular. I've included Negril, The South Coast, Kingston, Port Antonio, Ocho Rios, Falmouth and Montego Bay!

Which of these destinations are the best?

I honestly wish you didn't ask 😊 , as each has its own uniqueness and flavor. But never mind, go ahead and scroll down to learn more about each.

But remember that Jamaica is still a small island so it is still very possible for you to enjoy more than one destination while you are vacationing 😊

In addition to a brief background on each city, including landmarks, I'll share with you the best of the cities with you, including top attractions, top rated accommodation, beaches, eateries and nightlife.

OK, away with the preamble, here we go, starting with...

### **a. Montego Bay**

#### i. Montego Bay Facts:

- Is situated in the parish of St. James.
- Has a population of approximately 120,000.
- Is affectionately called the "friendly city" because of the warmth and friendliness of its people.
- Is also called MoBay - for short.
- Was made the second of only two cities in Jamaica-in 1980.

- Is the tourist capital of Jamaica.
- Boasts the island's largest airport, the Sir Donald Sangster International Airport.
- Air Jamaica, now managed by Caribbean Airlines, and quite a few other airlines run their Caribbean hub from here in Montego Bay, connecting the Island to several famous and well travelled destinations.

## ii. Must Visit Places, Attractions & Tours

- Bellefield Great House -Barnett Estate- Tour (Fairfield Road, 876- 952-2382)  
Get an insight into Jamaica's plantation-rich history.
- Bob Marley Experience and Theatre (Half Moon Shopping Village, 876- 953-3449)  
Recommended for lovers of his music and who never had the pleasure of watching Bob live.
- Zip Line Adventures (Lethe Estates, Hanover, 876-940-7394)  
The longest zip lines in the Caribbean. One of the best!
- Chukka Adventures ( Sandy Bay, (876) 953-5619)  
They have scores of exciting adventure options. Many options, canopy, safari, horseback riding, you name it! There is something for everyone.
- Club Mobay Lounge (MBJ Airport, 876-631-0872)  
Newly opened , a business -like posh atmosphere. Drinks, Coffee, internet, cultural displays etc. Check out early and wait for your plane there. Pay \$30 for the experience.
- Croydon Plantation (Catadupa, 876-979-8267)  
Get a panoramic view of the Jamaican countryside, taste exotic fruits grown there. Highly recommended.
- Great River Rafting (Great River, 876 956-4920)  
Great experience.
- MoBay Undersea Tours (Pier One, 979-940-4465)  
Corals, hundreds of different fish, turtles, and sting rays are all there to see.
- Montego Bay Heritage Walking Tour  
Tour includes The Dome, Sharpe Monument, The CAGE, The FORT & The Civic Center
- Montego Bay Pirate Cruises (Pier 1, 876-952-3090)  
They have both day and sunset cruises.

- Resort Divers (Royal Decameron, 876-881-5760)  
Various water sports, fishing tours, boat rides and even scuba diving courses! Budget prices.
- Palace Amusement Cinema (Alice Eldemire Drive, 1-888-429-5722)  
If you desire to check out the latest movies.
- Rastafari Indigenous Village (Porto Bello, 876 285 4750 / 876 410 1770)  
Learn about that aspect of Jamaica's culture that has become synonymous to the island.
- Rocklands Bird Sanctuary (Anchovy, 876-952-2009)  
A must for all bird lovers and bird watchers
- Rose Hall Great House (Rose Hall, 876-953-8150)  
The old-time haunted house. A visitor's favourite.
- The HIP STRIP (aka (on) Gloucester Avenue)  
One avenue with everything for a typical visitor. Food, beaches, shopping, nightlife etc.
- Widowmaker's Cave (at Doctors Cave Beach, Hip Strip)  
A must do for any diving enthusiast!
  
- Other Suggestions:  
Love Golf?  
There are ample options too! Example The Cinnamon Hill (876 953 2984) & White Witch courses. Look out, listen or ask about the latest happenings.

### iii. Notable Landmarks in Montego Bay

- Sam Sharpe Square (in the heart of the city)  
So named in honour of one of our national heroes, Samuel Sharpe.
- The Cage (St. James Street)  
A very ancient building which was used to house runaway slaves but is now used for selling all things Jamaica.
- The Dome (Dome Street)
- Fort Montego (Fort Street)

#### iv. Best Restaurants & Eateries in Montego Bay

- Cafe Manteca (St. James Shopping Plaza, Hip Strip, 876-407-6508)  
Great open air atmosphere and good food. Kid friendly. Go for breakfast and lunch.
- Dragon Court Chinese Restaurant (Alice Eldemire Drive (Fairview), 876- 920-8448)  
Great Chinese food - and lot's of it! Great Ambiance and a perfect central location.
- Groovy Grouper (Hip Strip, 876-952-8287)  
Nice beach atmosphere.
- Jerky's Bar & Grill (Fairview Shopping Center, Alice Eldemire Rd, 876-684-9101-2)  
OK food, but you can't beat the prices! Another popular for locals.
- Juici Patties (Fairview Shopping Center , Alice Eldemire Drive, 876-904-2619)  
Just as it suggest; great Jamaican patties! Easy access, cheap (local) prices!
- Marguerite's (Hip Strip, 876-952 4777)  
Another great option for that special, romantic, night out. Pricey.
- Pelican Restaurant (Hip Strip, 876-952 3171)  
Kid friendly. Great for groups or the entire family.
- Pork Pit Restaurant (Hip Strip, 876-940-3008)  
Casual (outdoor) eating. Still one of Mobay's best. Local prices too!
- Robbie Joseph's Seahorse Grill (Sunset Drive, Freeport, 876-684-9133)  
Tucked away from the hustle and bustle, by the Yacht Club. Great food. Good ambiance.  
Family Friendly too!
- Scotchies Jerk Center (Coral Gardens, 876-953-3301)  
Best Jamaican Jerk! Casual and budget friendly. Nice huts to sit under and eat!  
Highly recommended.
- Sugar Mill Restaurant (Rose Hall, 876-953-2228)  
Great ambiance but pricey!
- The Houseboat Grill (Southern Cross Rd, Freeport, 876-979-8845,)  
Great ambiance, perfect for a romantic evening. Great food. Pricey.
- The Native Restaurant and Bar (Hip Strip, 876-979-2769)  
Another good option for large groups and families. Option for outdoor dining.
- The Twisted Kilt Lounge (Hip Strip, 876-952-9488)  
Scenic Views. Romantic. Great for that special night out.

- Other Suggestions  
Hop down to Hopewell (Hanover) and stop by Sky Beach Bar & Grill (876-956-5006) – It’s one of my personal top spots!

v. Best Beaches in Montego Bay

- Aquasol Beach (Hip Strip, 876-979-9447)  
Great beach! Most popular in Montego Bay for locals. Very lively.
- Cornwall Beach (Hip Strip, 876-979-0102)  
Recently upgraded and re-opened but awesome!
- Doctor’s Cave Beach (Hip Strip, 876-952-2566)  
Might get crowded some days, but arguably the best.
- Seawind Beach Club (Freeport, 876-953-6600)  
Newly opened. Secluded. Nice, relaxed atmosphere

vi. Nightlife in Montego Bay

- Coral Cliff Gaming Lounge (The Hip Strip, 876-952-4130)  
Over 110 of the newest slot machines, 3 restaurants - one fine dining and two more casual, 3 bars including the only ice bar in the Caribbean.
- Jamaican Bobsled Café (The Hip Strip, 876-940-7009)
- Margaritaville (The Hip Strip, 876-952-9609)  
By far, the most popular for both visitors and locals in Montego Bay.
- Pier One (Howard Cooke Blvd, 876-952-2452)  
Weekends comes alive here
- Blue Beat Jazz n Blues Club (Hip Strip, 876-952-4777)  
Adopted as the favorite haunt of Mobay’s most beautiful people.

vii. Best Hotels & Accommodation

Being the tourist hub, Montego Bay probably has the most hotels for a city in Jamaica, and from

all the star classes too! I'm going to try my best to share the top ones, the best of Montego Bay hotels with you now.

- Iberostar RoseHall (Lilliput, Rose Hall, 876-680-0000)  
3-hotel complex with breathtaking views.
- Tryall Club (Sandy Bay, Hanover, 876-956-5660)  
Famous to the golfers. And yes, it's not really in Montego Bay, but Mobay is its closest recognizable city.
- The Round Hill Hotel (Hopewell, 876-956-7050)  
Higher end prices, but 'excellence personified'!
- Half Moon Hotel (Rosehall, 876-953-2211)  
Top class! Famous for the 'rich and famous' too!
- Secrets Montego Bay (Freeport, 876-953-6600)  
Opened in 2010 and has been rocking since. Nicely tucked away from all the distractions in Freeport area.
- Sandals Inn (Kent Avenue, 876-952-4140)  
I've not only vacationed there, I've worked there! A little gem!
- Sandals Royal (Mahoe Bay, 876-953-2231)  
Another from the Sandals chain. Higher end, but magic.  
Ask about the private island.
- Sandals Montego Bay (Kent Avenue, 876-952-5510)  
Lovely! Ask about the butler service!
- Coyaba Beach Resort (Mahoe By Rose Hall, 876-953-9150)  
Small and Intimate.
- Hilton Rose Hall (Rose Hall, 876-953-2650)  
Good family hotel.
- The Ritz Carlton Hotel (Rosehall, 876-953-2800)  
Lovely, highly respected hotel. Great reviews.  
Ask for the all-inclusive package for the best deal. ☺
- Royal Decameron Hotel (Gloucester avenue)  
Highly rated, budget-friendly. Right on the hip strip.

- Toby's Resort (Kent Avenue, 876-952-4370)  
Not awesome, but good little resort. Reasonably priced too.
- Sunset Beach Resort & Spa (Freeport, 876-979-8800)  
A value for money hotel. Still one of the cheapest all-inclusive.
- Richmond Hill Inn (Union Street, 876-952-3859)  
Right in the city but great views, lovely property and rich history.
- Riu Montego Bay (Ironshore, 876-940-8020)  
Ask about their jerk chicken!
- Holiday Inn Sunspree Resort (Ironshore, 876-940-8020)  
Good for family with kids.

#### viii. Shopping Options in Montego Bay

- The Shoppes @ Rosehall (Rosehall, 876-953-3245) – for exquisite jewelry and other duty free items.
- City Center Plaza (St. James Street) – Lot's of duty-free shopping options
- Gallery of West Indian Art (Fairfield Avenue, Catherine Hall, 952-4547)
- Harbour Street Craft Market (Harbour Street) - virtually in the heart of the town.
- Fort Street Craft Market (Fort Street) - adjacent to the Aquasol Theme park.
- Fontana Pharmacy (Fairview, 876-952-3866) - for a wide array of Jamaican books and souvenir items.
- The Hip Strip (aka Gloucester Avenue) – host a string of shops for complete shopping.
- Freeport Shopping Center (Freeport) – right at the cruise ship pier.
- The Whitter Shopping Village (Ironshore) – A new and exciting addition to the city's offerings.

## **b. Falmouth Area**

### **i. Falmouth Facts:**

- For the architecture or heritage buff, the coastal town of Falmouth in Trelawny is a virtual goldmine.
- In the late 1700s, when sugar was “King” and the profits from the sweet gold made the fortunes of men, families and nations, Falmouth was considered to be the most cosmopolitan city in the western world, the “Paris of the Indies”.
- The town had five newspapers, an active literary and fine arts society and – arguably its most distinctive attribute – fresh running water (Source: Jamaica Tourist Board)
- The new Pier now host some of the largest cruise ships visiting Jamaica

### **ii. Must Visit Places, Attractions in Falmouth**

- Chukka At Falmouth (Good Hope, 876-953-6699)  
A great adventure package
- Falmouth Heritage Walking Tour - Tour includes Church, Square, and Courthouse etc.
- Glistening Waters or Luminous Lagoon (876-954-3229)  
Yes, a breathtaking experience! This is one of the few bioluminescent waters worldwide
- Greenwood Great House (Greenwood, 876-953-1077)  
Now over 200 years old. Said to be one of the best preserved. Highly Recommended.
- King Pepper Products (Hague, 876-954-4462)  
Just as the name suggests, stop by and get a tour of this local processing facility.
- Martha Brae Bamboo Rafting (Martha Brae, 876-952-0889)  
A fun, yet relaxing way to enjoy Jamaica
- Outameni Cultural Experience (Coopers Pen, (876) 954-4035)  
A must do engaging experience, especially if interested in learning about Jamaica’s history.
- Windsor Caves  
Speak to the researchers. Learn about the rich biodiversity of the area.
- Note: Ask about Two Hills Falls & Park – an unspoilt beauty.

iii. Notable Landmarks in Falmouth

- Albert George Market
- Falmouth Court House
- Fort Balcarres
- St. Peter's Anglican Church
- The Baptist Manse
- The Falmouth Cenotaph
- Victoria Park
- Water Square
- William Knibb Memorial Baptist Church

iv. Best Restaurants in Falmouth

- Glistening Waters or Luminous Lagoon (876-954-3229)  
Yes, they have a restaurant too, one of the best in the Falmouth area!
- Leon's Lobster Hut (Near Breezes Trelawny)  
Just an eatery but a great one. Great lobster, Good service!
- Time 'n Place (Main Street, 876-843-3625)  
Good traditional Jamaican food!

v. Best Beaches in Falmouth

- Sorry to say, but outside of Jacob Taylor Beach, Falmouth is not known for its public beaches. Visitors tend to hop over to Montego Bay. In the Duncan's Bay area though there is Fisherman's Beach, which has a rich local vibe and silky Silver Sands beach, which is private for the most part.

vi. Best Hotels & Accommodations in Falmouth

- N-Resort All Inclusive (876-973-5561)
- Breezes Trelawny Resort

- FDR Pebbles (not really Falmouth, 876-973-4124)  
Perfect for families (children)
- ix. Nightlife in Falmouth
- Except a relatively new local club called Club Cali, there is currently not much nightlife in Falmouth. Again, visitors tend to head to Montego Bay after dark.
- vii. Shopping Options in Falmouth
- Jacob Taylor Beach & Craft Market (Duncans)  
More relaxed than the typical Jamaican craft market. Good variety of souvenirs
  - Falmouth Port (at the pier)  
Very new with ample choices!

### **c. Negril**

#### i. Negril Facts:

- Although officially in Westmoreland, Negril is really a small town located across two Jamaican parishes- Westmoreland and Hanover..
- It is primarily a beach resort town, the population is approximately 3000.
- The western coastline contains the island's finest beaches, the beach's length is the stuff of legends--it's actually little more than four miles in length, but tourists and travel writers insist on the "seven-mile" label.
- For years, Negril's beach has been rated as one of the top ten beaches in the world by many travel magazines.
- The early development of Negril as a resort is featured in Ian Fleming's 1965 novel The Man with the Golden Gun. One of the schemes of the novel's antagonist Francisco Scaramanga was to open an hotel called the Thunderbird on the beach. (Wikipedia.org)
- Negril is considered by many, the preferred tourist destination in Jamaica.

## ii. Must Visit Places, Attractions & Tours in Negril

- Blue Hole Mineral Spring (Brighton District, 876-860-8805)  
Please see Blue Hole under [Jamaica's best attractions](#).
- Caliche Rain Forest Park and Adventure Tour (940-1745)
- Cool Runnings Water Park (Norman Manley Boulevard, 876-957-5400)  
Great for the family.
- Mayfield Falls (Glenbrook, 876-610-8612)  
Not as popular as Dunn's River, but great atmosphere.
- Negril Cliffs  
Not for the weak heart like me ☺
- Rhodes Hall Plantation (Great Island, Hanover, 876-957-6422)  
See birds, eat fruits, ride horses etc. A great alternative to the hustle.
- Rick's Café (On West End Road) – for the diving & the sunsets!  
See Negril Nightlife for more.
- Royal Palm Reserve (364-7407)  
Adventures, hikers will appreciate it.  
Great, 'off the beaten path' option
- Stanley's Deep Sea Fishing (876-957-6341)  
Love adventure? You'll love it.
- The 'Seven Mile Beach'  
Probably Negril's best seller. \*see Negril's Best Beaches
- See also the Negril Lighthouse (Under Negril's Landmarks)

## iii. Notable Landmarks in Negril

- Booby Cay (At Bloody Bay)
- Peter Tosh Monument  
Not really in Negril, but in the general area.  
Interesting for Reggae Music Fans.
- Ricks Café  
Voted one of ten best bars in the world!

- The Negril Point Lighthouse  
Negril's most famous landmark; was built in 1894.  
A must visit. It was originally operated by kerosene

#### iv. Best Restaurants & Eateries in Negril

- 3 Dives Restaurant (West End Road, 876-344-6850)  
Amazing Jamaican jerk chicken! Local prices too!
- Canoe Beach Bar (West End Road, 876-878-5893)  
Another local eatery. Lunch & Dinner . Good for families.
- Cosmos (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4330)  
Good food, cheap prices! Many locals have their family meals there!
- De Bar (Norman Manley Blvd, across from Sunset)  
Good cheap food. Good for the entire family.  
Good Prices! Great atmosphere, great food!  
Great value! Exceptional Jamaican food. You'll love it!
- Ivan's Bar & Restaurant At Catcha Falling Star Hotel (West End Road, 876-957-0390)  
Rated #1 for restaurants in Negril on Trip Advisor for very good reason.
- Just Natural (West End Road, 876-957-0235)  
Amazing staff, great ambiance and great food. Cheap prices too!  
And yes, a must-visit for the real Vegetarian. Another of the best!
- Kuyaba (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4318)  
Try their lobster! Great for that romantic evening.
- LTU Pub (West End Road, 876-957-0382)  
Nice spot with good views. Good food.
- Niah's Patties (On the 7 Mile Beach –down from Coco La Palm Hotel)  
A little unusual, but good experience.  
See Niah makes the patties his way! Tasty too!
- PeeWee's (West End Road, 876-440-9833)
- Presley's Bar & Grill (West End Road, 876-440-9833)

- Ras Rody's (West End Road)  
A great local flavor of Jamaica. Good Vegetarian food too! Local prices.
- Rockhouse Restaurant (West End Road, 876 957-4373)  
Great atmosphere. Great for groups and hosting clients too.
- Sips & Bites (West End Road, 876-957-0188)  
Good food & good service. Good for families. They have breakfast too.

v. Best Beaches In Negril

- Well, there is truly only one beach in Negril, but this, the famous 7 mile beach is arguably the [best in Jamaica](#)! Enter from the hotel, Long Bay or Bloody Bay.

x. Nightlife in Negril

- Alfred's Ocean Palace (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4735)  
A good mix of tourists and local. Good cultural experience. Restaurant and Bar.
- Margaritaville Negril (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4467)  
Top tourist spot – must visit for the true Jamaican party lover!
- Negril Escape (876-957-0392)  
One love Reggae Series – every Tuesday.
- Ricks Café (At West End)  
My favourite spot in Negril! Rightly voted one of the top 10 bars in the world!
- Roots Bamboo (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4479)  
Another great option.
- The Jungle Night Club (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4005)  
Ideal, if you wish to experience the local dance/party vibe!

vi. Best Hotels & Accommodation In Negril

We probably have too many great ones to mention ☺  
The following , are among Negril's best:

- Catcha Falling Star Hotel (West End Road, 876-957-0390)  
Still a big favourite for many. Great food, service, location, everything. Economically priced too!
- Catcha Falling Star Gardens (West End Road, 876-957-0279)  
Another of my personal favourite. (Tell Jane I said Hi)
- Citronella (West End Road, 876-460-8369)
- Couples Negril (Norman Manley Blvd, 800-268-7537)
- Couples Swept Away (Norman Manley Blvd, 800-268-7537)
- Jackie's on the Reef (West End Road, 876-957-4997)  
It's different, a great place for contemplation, relaxation and rejuvenation.
- Moon Dance Cliffs (West End Road, 800-621-1120)  
Great staff, spacious rooms, great atmosphere. Great for weddings!
- Negril Tree House (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4287)
- Rockhouse Hotel (West End Road, 876 957-4373)
- Rondel Village ((Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-4413)
- Sea Star Inn ( West End Road, 876-957-0553)  
Great food too! Great for families. Highly rated. Budget prices.
- Sunset at the Palms (Norman Manley Blvd, 876-957-5370)  
The little jewel in the Sunset Resorts family. Romantic
- Tensing Pen Resort (West End Road, 876-957-0387)
- The Caves (Lighthouse Road, 876-957-0269 )  
For the perfect romantic getaway! Luxury prices though.
- Westender Inn (West End Road, 876 957-4991)

#### vii. Shopping Options In Negril

- Bay Side Village Mall (Across from Margaritaville)  
Ample choices!
- Negril Craft Market  
Just as it says, expect some amazing original works. Fridays are wholesale day!  
Be prepared to barter ☺

- The '7-Mile-Beach'  
Craft and souvenir vendors are abundant there. Sellers still follow the crowds.
- Times Square Mall (Norman Manley Boulevard)  
Get your Rum, Coffee, T-Shirts etc there.
- One Love Drive (on the Cliff Side)  
There is series of shops to choose from.
- Sunshine Plaza  
Duty Free Shops, beauty stores and supermarket.

#### **d. The South Coast**

##### i. Facts:

- The south coast extends from Sav-anna-la-mar in Westmoreland, south east along the coast in to the parishes of St. Elizabeth, Manchester and Clarendon.
- Considered the 'other side of Jamaica', the South Coast is famous for it's peppered shrimp and the 'Holland bamboo' avenue,
- The Black River, the largest wetland area on the island, and habitat for about 300 crocodiles is located here.
- For many, the south coast's serenity and tranquility is what takes them back here every year.

##### ii. Must Visit Places, Attractions On The South Coast

- Floyd's Pelican Bar (Treasure Beach, 876-354-4218)  
..in the middle of the ocean. Great atmosphere. Fun & different.
- YS Falls (St. Elizabeth, 876 634 2455)  
Please refer to YS falls in [Jamaica's best attractions](#) (earlier chapter).
- Treasure Beach

- Accompong Maroon Village Tour (876-952-4546)  
Meet the descendants of runaway slaves.  
A rich cultural experience (Book in advance)
- Bamboo Avenue (East of Middle Quarter)  
Great photo scenes.
- Milk River Mineral Bath (Mandeville, 876-924-9544)  
A therapeutic mineral bath. Rugged road to get there but worth the journey.
- Appleton Rum Factory Tour (Siloah, 876-963-9215)
- Black River Safari (876-965-2513)
- Lover's Leap (Southfield, St. Elizabeth, 876-965-6577)  
A 1700 feet cliff overhanging the sea. Interesting history – Now Open!

#### iii. Notable Landmarks on the South Coast

- Lover's Leap (Southfield, St. Elizabeth)  
Presents a magnificent view of the entire south coast!
- Munro & Hampton High Schools  
Two of Jamaica's oldest and most respected high schools

#### iv. Best Restaurants & Eateries on the South Coast

- Jack Sprat (Treasure Beach, 876-965-3583)  
Great hang out spot, and great food
- Jakes Restaurant (Treasure Beach, 876-965-3145)  
Serves a variety of food types, including great vegetarian meals.
- Little Ochie (Alligator Pond, Manchester, 876-625-3279/ 876-382-3375)  
Awesome seafood –Jamaican style, and plenty of it! (A personal favourite).
- Red Lobster (@Sunset Resort, Treasure Beach, 876-965-1043)  
For fresh and great tasting seafood.
- Sea Side Restaurant (@Mr Blu Verandah Villa Suites, Treasure Beach, 876-965-3408)  
Try the Thai flavoured curry goat and homemade ice cream.

v. Best Beaches on the South Coast

- Bluefield's Beach (Bluefield's, Westmoreland)  
My own backyard beach, love it! It get's excitingly busy on holidays .
- Font Hill Beach Park (Font Hill, St. Elizabeth)  
Great for picnics!

vi. Best Hotels & Accommodation on the South Coast

- Jakes Hotel (Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth, 876-965-3000)  
Sea is not always welcoming but the ambiance, food and service is top notch!
- Idlers' Rest Beach Hotel (Black River P.O., St Elizabeth)
- Treasure Beach Hotel (876-965-0110)
- Button Bay Beach Getaway (Treasure Beach Santa Cruz, St Elizabeth, 876-965-3873)  
One of the best small resorts in Treasure Beach.
- Sandals Whitehouse (Achindown, Westmoreland, 876-640-3003)
- Sparkling Waters Villas (876-927-8020)

xi. Nightlife on The South Coast

- Outside of the local bars, there's not a whole lot. Actually, that's another reason why many choose the south coast – for its tranquility and serenity.

vii. Shopping On The South Coast

You'll still see a few local crafts but for more of the popular souvenir wares, head north to Ocho Rios or west to Negril.

## e. Ocho Rios

### i. Ocho Rios Facts:

- Ocho Rios is a beautiful town located on the north coast of Jamaica.
- Ochi" (as it is affectionately called) has evolved from a small fishing village
- A large part of Ochie's fame came because of the world famous Dunn's River Falls
- The deep water pier, a later addition to the town, and with space for up to three ships, is now Jamaica's cruise ship capital.
- Several of Jamaica's best resorts are located in or near to Ocho Ríos.
- Ocho Rios is now one of the fastest growing towns in the Caribbean region with a population of over 96,000 people.
- Most of Jamaica's most popular attractions are in the general vicinity of Ocho Rios as well.

### ii. Must Visit Places, Attractions In Ocho Rios

- Cool Running Tour (Highway A3, Dunn's River Falls, 876 974-5197)
- Coyaba River Garden and Museum (Shaw Park Estate, 876-974-6235)  
Great for families! There is a lush botanical garden & waterfall there too!
- Dolphin Cove (Belmont Main Road, 974-5335)  
They phrase it 'Jamaica's best marine attraction' and that's true!
- Dunn's River Falls (Highway A3, 876 974-5944)  
Needs no introduction. It's Jamaica's most popular attraction!
- H'Evans Scent (Bamboo, St. Ann, 876-427-4866)  
For awesome Ziplining!
- Mystic Mountain (876-974-3990)  
Great fun, especially the bobsled rides!
- Nine Miles (Nine Miles, St. Ann)  
The birthplace of Bob Marley. You'll love it even more if you are a reggae/bob enthusiast.
- Shaw Park Gardens (Shaw Park, 876-974-2723)  
You'll love it if you appreciate flowers and nature.

- White River Tubing  
Great for the entire family.

### iii. Notable Landmarks in Ocho Rios

- Ocho Rios Baptist Church  
Although the present church is a modern structure, its history is intricately twined with the 171 years history of the Baptist movement.
- Prospect Plantation (974-5335)
- River Rd, 876 675 8995)  
One of the notable shopping areas in Ochie too.
- Brimmer Hall Estate (974-2244)

### iv. Best Restaurants & Eateries in Ocho Rios

- Bamboo Blu (Mamee Bay, Near RUI)  
A hidden gem!
- Evita's Restaurant (Eden Bower Road, 876-974-2333)  
Tasty Jamaican & Italian food. Children friendly too. Nice atmosphere.
- Juici Patties (61 Main Street, 876 974-3425)  
Centrally located. Of course, the best Jamaican patties, cheap prices too.
- Le Papillon (Main Street, 876-974-5601)  
Great Décor, Great Food!
- Miss T's Kitchen (65 Main Street, 876-7795)  
Authentic Jamaican cuisine. Good Ambiance.
- Mykonos Greek Bar and Grill (12 Main Street)  
It's Greek Food, but the food is great I hear – need to try it.
- Ocho Rios Jerk Center (DaCosta Drive, 876-974-2549)  
Centrally location. Gets lively on weekends.
- Scotchies (Greenwich Park, St. Ann's Bay, 876-794-9457)  
Just outside of Ochie. Another of the fine Scotchies Jamaican Jerk Center!

- Toscaninis (Harmony Hall, Tower Isle, St. Mary, 876-975-4785)  
Not really in Ochi, but a nice Italian restaurant. Romantic.

#### v. Best Beaches in Ocho Rios

- Mahogany Beach  
More a touristy beach.
- Mallards Beach  
A local beach.
- Puerto Seco Beach (Discovery Bay, 876-973-2660)  
Not really in Ocho Rios, but perhaps the most popular local beach on the north coast.  
Close enough to Ochie.
- Reggae Beach  
Maybe the best in Ocho Rios.
- Both Dolphin Cove and Dunn's River have nice beaches too.  
Newly opened. Secluded. Nice, relaxing atmosphere

#### vi. Nightlife In Ocho Rios

- Amnesia (876-974-2526)
- Oceans 11 (Lot 6 Fisherman Point Rd , 876 974-6896)  
Live band on Sundays, Karaoke on Tuesdays.
- Margaritaville (Island Village, 876-675-8977)  
Nightly themes. Top pick for tourists.
- All Inclusive Nightly Passes – Couples, San Souci, etc.
- Other Suggestions?  
How about some Cool Places For A Drink?  
Check Evita's Italian Restaurant, John Crow's Sports Bar & Toscanini Italian Restaurant.

vii. Best Hotels & Accommodation In Ocho Rios

- Chrisanns Beach Resort (Tower Isle, St. Mary, 876-975-4467)  
Actually in St. Mary. Nice & relaxing.
- ClubHotel Riu Ocho Rios, Mammee Bay SAbY, (876-972-2200)  
Junior suites, specialty restaurants.
- Couples San Souci (Route A3, St-Mary, 876-994-1353)  
Excellent room service and great parties and water sport.
- Couples Tower Isle (Formerly Couples Ocho Rios, 876-975-4271)  
Generally nice! Stop by the vege bar.
- Crystal Ripple Beach Lodge (1876-974-6132)  
Simple, sweet, nice little hideaway.
- Hibiscus Lodge (83 Main Street, 876-974-2676)  
Yep, I tied my knot there! Easy to not find it though.
- Jamaica Inn (Main Street, 876 974-2514)  
Top class! Charming & relaxing.
- Sandals Grande Riviera Beach & Villa Golf Resort (Main Street)  
Great place for great time!
- Sandals Royal Plantation (Main Street, 876-974-2501)  
"Gorgeous Heavenly Tropical Paradise"
- The Jewel Dunn's River Beach Resort & Spa (Mammee Bay)  
Good Jerk Chicken, fun staff, good times
  
- Other Suggestions?  
Sure, The Blue House and Villa Cocotera are the best B&B in Ochie.

viii. Shopping In Ocho Rios

Several shops & plazas, including:

- Island Village (Turtle River Road)  
Lot's of shops and a wide variety of Jamaican rums, coffee, jewelry, hemp products and other souvenir items
- Harmony Hall Art Gallery (Tower Isle, 974-2871)
- Wassi Art Pottery Works (Bougainvilla Drive, Greenpond, Ocho Rios, 876-974-5044)
- General Recommendation:  
It is actually said that you should shop in Montego Bay if you are circling, Ocho Rios tend to be a bit more pricey.

## **f. Kingston**

### **i. Facts:**

- Kingston is the capital, and the largest city in Jamaica, was founded on July 22 in the year 1692.
- It was a refuge for survivors of the massive 1692 earthquake that destroyed Port Royal. Before the earthquake, Kingston was purely agricultural.
- It became the capital in 1872 and remained capital at independence in 1962. Prior to that, Spanish Town in St. Catherine was the capital.
- Kingston has some of the most significant landmarks and attractions in Jamaica including the Ward Theatre, Devon House and Emancipation park (more below)
- At the time of this writing, Kingston had seven sister cities: Miami(USA), Kalamazoo(US), Coventry(UK), Topeka (USA), Panevėžys (Lithuania), Guadalajara(Mexico) and Shenzhen(China).

### **ii. Must Visit Places, Attractions & Tours in Kingston**

- Blue Mountains  
Clearly the #1 nature adventure tour in Jamaica. Heavenly views! Well worth it.
- Devon House (Hope Road, 876 929-6602)  
Nice historic/colonial charm, great food and awesome (world famous) ice-cream.

- Emancipation Park (Knutsford Boulevard)  
Beautiful park, now with the famous nude statue. Relax or do your laps.
- Hope Botanical Gardens (Old Hope Road, 876 927-1085)  
A lovely place for a tranquil stroll; attractions include a cactus garden, an orchid house, various greenhouses, an ornamental pond, and a forest garden.
- Jamaica Cultural Enterprises Tours (7 Charlton Way, 876 540 8570)  
They know Jamaica. Highly recommended. Tell Maureen I sent you.
- Hollywell Park (878-920-8278)  
In the mountains; a gem, especially to those interested in Eco-tourism.
- National Gallery (12 Ocean Blvd, 876-922-1561)  
A Jamaican treasure. It houses some of Jamaica's finest art.
- Institute of Jamaica  
Probably not in the most preferred location, but it host a lot of rich cultural and historical exhibits of the island.
- Port Royal (Palisadoes)  
In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Port Royal was notorious for its gaudy displays of wealth and loose morals, and was a popular place for pirates and privateers to bring and spend their treasure. A rich taste of historic Jamaica.
- Mavis Bank Coffee Factory (876-977-8013)  
See exactly how the famous Blue Mountain is harvested.

### iii. Notable Landmarks in Kingston

- Port Royal  
(mentioned above)
- University of the West Indies
- Devon House  
One of the leading national monument in Jamaica (see attractions above)
- Kings' House (876-927-6424)  
The official residence of the governor general. Great example of Jamaican heritage and fine architecture.

- Jamaica Defense Force Museum (876-926-8121)  
Open Wednesday to Sundays (minimal admission cost)
- Bob Marley Museum  
Devoted to Reggae Music maestro, Bob Marley.

#### iv. Best Restaurants & Eateries in Kingston

- Devon House (26 Hope Road, 876 929-7086)  
Yes, they have a restaurant too, one of the best in the Kingston area too!
- Red Bones Blue Café (1 Argyle Road, 876-978-8262)  
Nice shows, busy bar & great food!
- Scotchies Jerk Center (Chelsea Avenue, 876-906-0602)  
Another in the Scotchies line. Relatively new here! Great atmosphere and (again) great Jamaican Jerk!
- Strawberry Hill (Irish Town, 876-944-8400)  
Really nice atmosphere in the mountains! Relatively pricey but worth it!
- Guacho's Grill (South Avenue, 876-754-1380)  
Great & reasonably priced food in a nice outdoor setting. Something for everyone.
- Tamarind Indian Restaurant (Barbican Road, 876-977-0695)  
Highly recommended, great tasting Indian food. Good service too.
- Spanish Court Café (St. Lucia Avenue, 876-926-0000)  
Located in the hotel. Good ambiance, good food.
- Norma's On The Terrace (Hope Road, 876-968-5488)  
Ask for the Crab Stuffed Fish!
- Dragon Court Chinese Restaurant (South Avenue, 876-920-8448)  
Food and service doesn't get better! Recommended.
- StarApples (94 Hope Road, 946-1833)  
Authentic Jamaican food. Outdoor and indoor dining. Nice little spot
- Island Grill (Valencia Drive, 876-931-9869)  
Great local food, relatively cheap too! Branches located island wide.

- Columbus Restaurant (Knutsford Blvd, 876-926-3690)  
-at the Jamaica Pegasus Hotel. Finest Italian cuisine in Jamaica.

#### v. Best Beaches in Kingston

Kingston is not known for its beaches but there are a few, if you insist.

- Hellshire Beach – They have some excellent Jamaican delights there, but it can get pricey.
- Fort Clarence
- Lime Cay- In Port Royal, 20mins boat ride to get there. Beautiful beach. Exhilarating!

All are very popular with locals on the weekends and holidays.  
They also have numerous food stands.

#### vi. Best Hotels & Accommodation in Kingston

- Four Seasons (18 Ruthven Road, 876-929-7655)  
Good hotel - central location, good price, clean.
- Courtleigh (85 Knutsford Blvd, 876, 929-9000)  
A good business traveler resort.
- Strawberry Hill (Irish Town, 876-944-8400)  
Not cheap but top class! Note the restaurant above too.
- Spanish Court (St. Lucia Avenue, 876-926-0000)  
Impressive in most ways, a clear number 1.
- Terra Nova (Waterloo Road, 876-926-2211)  
An oasis of calm amidst the hustle and bustle.
- Wyndam Kingston (77 Knutsford Boulevard, 876-926-5430)  
Generally good feedback, good all around, food, price, rooms etc.
- Knutsford Court (Ruthven Road, 876-929-1000)  
Less expensive, known for hosting many media related events.

- Jamaica Pegasus (Knutsford Boulevard, 876-926-3691)  
Popular and highly respected hotel in Kingston.

#### ix. Nightlife In Kingston

- Aslyum (Knutsford Blvd, 876-929-4386)  
Themed nights. Very popular. Nice place to get a local feel.
- Carlos' Café (22 Belmont Road, 876-920-4184)  
Trendy. There's something different every night. Recommended.
- Mingles (at Courtleigh, 876-929-9000)  
This upscale locale offers theme nights including Friday night Escapade: dedicated to those who want to wind down after a busy week.
- Theatres:  
Ward Theatre, 922-3313, The Barn, 926-6469 or The Little Theatre, 926-6129  
Watch Riveting local productions. Call to find out what's playing.
- Red Bones Jazz/Blues Café (1 Argyle road, Kingston 10, 876-978-8262)  
They also host art exhibitions, foreign films, theatrical productions, world beat music evenings, vibes verse poetry nights, and the coolest live music shows in town!

#### vii. Shopping Options in Kingston

Kingston has lots of good commercial shopping options. It's a bit harder for me to pick the top ones, but these are some good recommendations for visitors.

- Carbys Discount Center (Twin Gates Plaza, Kingston 10, 876-968-4192)  
Inexpensive and great for souvenirs
- Kingston Crafts Market, at the west end of Harbour Street
- New Kingston Shopping Centre, 30 Dominica Dr.,
- Shops at Devon House (26 Hope Rd. (tel. 876/929-6602),)
- Things Jamaican, 26 Hope Rd. (tel. 876/926-1961)

- Jubilee Market
  - Wassi Art Gallery and Collectibles, 26 Hope Rd. (tel. 876/906-5016),
  - Frame Centre Gallery, 10 Tangerine Place (tel. 876/926-4644),
  - Mutual Life Gallery, Mutual Life Centre, 2 Oxford Rd. (tel. 876/929-4302),
  - Tuff Gong Recording Studios, 220 Marcus Garvey Dr. (tel. 876/923-9383),
- Source:Frommmers

## **g. Port Antonio**

### **i. Port Antonio Facts:**

- Port Antonio is the capital of the parish of Portland.
- It is situated on the northeast of Jamaica.
- Port Antonio became a thriving banana-shipping port in the late 1870's.
- It is said that its first tourists came from North America in the 1890s when they arrived on banana boats.
- The town's magnificent twin harbors are separated by 64-acre Navy Island.
- For many, Portland is still the best kept secret, not just in Jamaica, but in the Caribbean.
- Because of its seclusion, Port Antonio has attracted many movie stars, great musicians, well-known politicians and other celebrities.

### **ii. Must Visit Places, Attractions & Tours in Port Antonio**

- Reach Falls (Manchioneal)  
Please refer to Reach Falls in [Jamaica's best attractions](#) (above)
- Rio Grande Rafting  
World renowned. Peaceful, tranquil and romantic!
- Blue Lagoon  
"The Blue Lagoon" is more like it; world famous attraction.  
A few `buts ` but still lovely and worth the trip.
- Somerset Falls (Near Hope Bay, 876-913-0108)

- Another hidden gem. Perfect for the entire family
- NonSuch Caves  
Experience adventure and history in one.
- Other Notable Attractions in the Port Antonio Area are:  
Navy Island, Errol Flynn Marina and the Anglican Church.

### iii. Notable Landmarks in Port Antonio

- Blue Lagoon  
(see above)
- Folly Great House  
A crumbling, old and unusual, Roman/Greek style structure, yes in Jamaica.
- Fort George  
A British fort built in 1729 to protect Jamaica from invasion from the Spanish. The fort is now situated in the grounds of the Titchfield High School.
- Titchfield  
Picturesque neighborhood known for its Victorian architecture-style house.  
The Titchfield High school is also there.

### iv. Best Restaurants & Eateries in Port Antonio

- The Bush Bar (@ GeeJam Hotel, San San, 876-561-8600)  
A Top restaurant in Port Antonio! Romantic Caribbean Cuisine. Relatively pricey, but great food and great atmosphere.
- Woody Low Bridge Place (876- 436-5624)  
Good Jamaican food, budget-friendly, & friendly too!
- Restaurant Mille Fleurs (@Hotel Mockingbird, 876 993-7267)  
Try the cheesecake!

- Juici Patties (on William Street, 876-715-1808)  
Another of the local branches, yes, Juicy Jamaican patties!
- Antonio's Island Pizzeria and Ristorante (Harpers Lane, 876-352-8936)  
Love pizza? Well you just got the best in Portland!
- Wi Yard Anna Banana (Folly Road, 876-715-6533)  
Great atmosphere!
- Chill Out( Long Bay, 876-913-7171)  
Enjoy a game of dominoes or backgammon with Red Stripe! Truly Chill Out.
- Dickie's Best Kept Secret (on Main Road, 876-809-6276)  
'The hut/shack over the cliff' – Get the lobster! Good Atmosphere.
- The Italian Job (Harbour Street)  
Refreshingly different. Good reviews.
- Melinda's (@ Rio Grande)  
Wood fire prepared. Try the spicy crayfish!

#### v. Best Beaches in Port Antonio

- Frenchman Cove  
Postcard beach, clean and well kept too. Highly ranked!  
Good for almost all beach/water activities.
- Boston Bay Beach  
Off the beaten track and Jamaica's premiere surfing beach! I had a memorable time there.  
Yes, World famous Jamaican Boston Jerk is right there too!
- Winnifred Beach (Fairy Hill)  
Nice and popular local beach.  
Good, refreshing place to mingle with locals.

#### vi. Nightlife in Port Antonio.

Port Antonio doesn't match up to a Kingston or Montego Bay in terms of its nightlife options for tourists (it's known more for its lovely beaches and waterfalls).

There are however, a few places that keep the town alive which includes the Roof Club, the most popular for tourist and locals in that area. There are others too, but those are catered more for locals.

#### vii. Best Hotels & Accommodation In Port Antonio

Sadly, Port Antonio is often overlooked but those who have been there can attest to the beauty of the place and the warmth and serenity of the accommodation. The following are among the top hotels in Port Antonio area of the island.

- Hotel Jamaican Colors (Long Bay, 876-913-7716)  
Top class. Great location, great hospitality, great bungalows
- Hotel Mocking Bird Hill (Mocking Bird Hill, 876-619-1215)  
'The oasis on the hill' – visitor. Ask about the bird tours.
- Chateau en Exotica (San San)  
Quite, private and serene. Ask about the conch fritters and the pumpkin pie!
- Goblin Hill Villas (San San, 876-925-8108)  
Nice property and great views!
- Frenchman's Cove Resort  
Over 18 villas. Beautiful private beach.
- Whispering Bamboo Cove Resort (105 Crystal Dr Retreat Morant Bay, 876-982-2912)  
Popular for weddings.
- Jamaica Palace Hotel (Drapers, 876-993-7720)  
Not as great as it was but still OK.
- De Montevin Lodge Hotel (21 Ft George St Port Antonio, 876-993-2604)  
More a guest house, right in the city. Nicely restored Victorian style house.
- Jamaica Crest Hotel (Fairy Hill, 876-993-8400)  
Budget friendly and clean!

- Great Huts (Boston Bay, 873-353-3388)  
This is a top, adventure oriented, unusual B&B, but I wanted to include it here.  
Entrancing cultural shows on Saturday nights

#### viii. Shopping Options In Port Antonio

Port Antonio also doesn't have the wide array of shopping options compared to the other more popular destinations. That said, you can rest assured that you'll get your local crafts and souvenir items. Those vendors can be seen at the beaches or near tourist/visitor spots or destinations.

Near to the town center is also the Musgrave market which carry some excellent woodwork and crafts. The Port Mall also has good options, whether it is rum, beachwear or coffee.

## 11. **Best Educational Attractions & Sites In Jamaica (By Parish)**

Coupled with some majestic wonders of nature, Jamaica is blessed with a rich history and amazing culture, which, all combined, created the most adored island in the Caribbean. These sites and attractions, will provide you some deep insights into our strong heritage, history and culture.

Our picks include museums, estates, great houses, libraries, lighthouses, caves and botanical gardens, each having its own identifiable significance but all of which are insightful and interesting. Many of them are natural wonders – both to kids and adult alike.

### a) Kingston & St Andrew

#### i. Blue Mountains and John Crow Park

This Park houses a wide range of animal and plant species, consisting of resident as well as migratory birds. The rare species of birds are found in this Park, along with indigenous plants and trees.

#### ii. Bob Marley Museum (876- 978-2929/2991)

Dedicated to the “King of Reggae”, this site is located at Bob Marley’s former residence and was home to his Tuff Gong recording studio. A trip through it provides the visitor with an inside view of the reggae icon’s life.

#### iii. Devon House (876- 929-6602/926-0815)

Built around 1881 by the Hon. George Stibel – Jamaica's first black millionaire this mansion is a great place for families and friends to meet and socialize over lunch or dinner. It is a captivating, monumental and historical structure, comprised of a museum, sprawling lawns, quaint art and craft shops and sumptuous eateries.

iv. Fort Charles Maritime Museum (876- 967-8438)

Housed in what used to be the British Royal Navy headquarters in the 1700s, the museum houses a collection of memorabilia, inclusive of artifacts from the sunken city, sailing vessel scale models and a scale model of the original fort (which was the first ever built in the town of Port Royal), complete with guns and a garrison.

v. Giddy House

Formerly the old Royal Artillery Store for the Victoria Battery in Fort Charles, Giddy House was built in 1888. Upon entering the building, one experiences an off balance sensation due to the building's tilt. It is believed that the Port Royal Earthquake of 1907 shifted it to its present 45 degree angle.

vi. Hollywell National Park (876- 922-1287)

The Hollywell National Park/Nature Reserve – which is also part Blue Mountains and John Crow Mountains National Park – features beautiful nature trails, with indigenous species of flora, fauna, birds and terrestrial mammals being viewed along the way.

vii. The Institute of Jamaica Museum (876-922-0620-6)

Housed in a huge, eye-catching red building, the museum displays Jamaica's cultural, artistic and scientific history in an interactive, fun and creative form. It also highlights various exotic Jamaican flora and fauna, some of which are considered among the rarest in the world. The building itself is so stunning that people tend to stare at it for long periods of time.

viii. Museums of History & Ethnography (876-948-5300)

Showcasing more than 70 million items collected over the last 400 years, this is considered one of the oldest museums in Jamaica. A favorite of famous historians and renowned history scholars, it follows the history of the Jamaican people, showcasing it in print materials, articles

and books, as well as historical artifacts. The vast collection housed within this museum is utilized as a means of educating persons regarding the historical journey of Jamaica and Jamaicans.

ix. National Gallery of Art (876- 922-1561)

The National Gallery showcases Jamaica's artistic heritage, tracing it as far back as the Taino Indians (the first known inhabitants of the island), through the Spanish and English colonialism to modern contemporary works by Jamaican as well as some international artists.

x. Old Tavern Coffee Estate (876- 924-2785)

Nestled high on the cool northern slopes of the Blue Mountains is a small, private family-owned farm named Old Tavern Coffee Estate. This Estate produces Jamaica's signature Blue Mountain coffee, which is considered to be the best in the world. Every aspect of the coffee processing is done on site, from the sowing of the berries to the selection and roasting of the beans.

xi. Port Royal

During the 17th century, Port Royal was the capital of Jamaica and the main business and commerce centre. Due to its location, it was also the main base for the pirates who used to loot and plunder the Spanish vessels passing through Jamaica, and became known as the "richest and most vile" town in the Caribbean. A massive earthquake in 1692 devastated Port Royal, and it is believed that two-thirds of the town was "swallowed up" into the earth.

xii. Royal Botanical Gardens & Hope Zoo (876-927-1085)

Situated on 230 acres of land, the property comprises of both a Botanic Garden and a Zoo, featuring Caribbean wildlife, including Jamaica's most popular collection of exotic, native and endemic flora and fauna.

## b) St. Catherine

### i. Sligoville Community Museum

Bought in 1835 by a Baptist minister who was an abolitionist, Sligoville is Jamaica's first free village. It used to also be a haven for runaway slaves and is a laid-back, simple village, where the residents rely on the land for nourishment.

The Museum catalogues the history of the village, beginning with its formation by Reverend James Murcell Phillippo, along with the ex-slaves he sold lots to and continuing to modern-day Sligoville.

### ii. Two Sister's Cave

Formerly a single cave, the Two Sisters Cave resulted from the roof of the cave collapsing during the great 1692 earthquake, leaving two smaller caves linked by a single stream. There are two theories surrounding the name the two sisters Cave. The first one suggests that two runaway slave sisters leapt to their death in the water of the cave to avoid recapture.

The other theory relates to the fact that both caves look similar like twins. Whichever theory you choose, one thing is certain, the caves are both underwater and lined with large pools of crystal clear blue water. Within the caves there are carvings and drawings on the wall, suggesting that they were once inhabited by the Tainos (Jamaica's first known inhabitants), and it is believed that the streams were used by them as a source of water.

### iii. White Marl Taino Midden and Museum

Built in the shape of a Taino hut, the site gives valuable insight into the life of Jamaica's first inhabitants. The Taino or Arawak Indians were wiped out as a race, because their immune system could not withstand the introduction of European diseases. Their legend lives on, however, through the relics they left behind and these are showcased in the museum. These

include their hunting and agricultural implements, jewelry and carvings.

c) Clarendon

i. Halse Hall Great House (876-986-2561)

Originally named Hato de Buena Vista (Ranch with a Nice View) under the Spanish regime, the property was given to Major Thomas Halse as a land grant after the British gained control of the island. He fortified the structure to protect it against Spanish reprisals and it was added to buy his future heirs. Today, it is owned and operated by Alcoa Minerals of Jamaica Company and is a historical site.

ii. Denbigh Agricultural Show (876-922-0610)

Held every year in the month of August; during the week of Independence celebration; the show highlights Jamaica's finest home-grown livestock, agricultural produce and horticultural exhibits. There are activities for children, booths showcasing cultural delicacies, as well as artwork and other cultural amenities.

iii. Mason River Game Sanctuary

A protected habitat for local and regionally restricted species of horticulture and wildlife, as well as a refuge for endangered species, this reserve was opened to protect regenerating forestry and botanical vegetation from human interference and degradation. It also provides education concerning wildlife conservation and management.

iv. Monymusk Sugar Estate

One of the oldest plantations in Jamaica, Monymusk Estate still manufactures rum and sugar. It has been operational since the 18th century and utilizes molasses; fermented from the sugar cane fields surrounding the distillery; to produce rum.

v. Monymusk Library

Located inside a brick windmill, the library was formed to keep the sugar factory workers occupied during the long winter nights. It is the only brick windmill in Jamaica, made of imported bricks from England. All other windmills were made from locally-quarried limestone.

vi. St Peter's Anglican Church at Alley

Built in 1671, this is one of the oldest churches in Jamaica. The church bell, which was brought to Jamaica from London in 1857 and is made of solid cast iron, weighs three-quarters of a ton and was crafted by the same company that created London's "Big Ben". The pipe organ within the church is one of the oldest in the Caribbean and still plays in tune.

d) Manchester

i. Canoe Valley National Nature Reserve

The Park occupies 3000 acres and is made up of mangrove swamps, limestone forests and herbaceous forests. The name Canoe Valley is said to have originated from the time of the Tainos, as the area used to be populated with cotton trees used by the Amerindians to carve canoes and other small craft. At last count, the reserve contained 4 amphibian species, 7 bat species, 23 reptile species and 93 bird species.

e) St Elizabeth

i. Accompong Town

This maroon village operates under its own system of government and regime, based on the Peace Treaty signed between the British and the first maroon runaway slaves in 1739. Named after the Maroon leader Accompong of the Ashanti tribe, it was formed when his brother Cudjoe united the Maroons to fight for their freedom and autonomy. The villagers still practice the customs of their African heritage, and every January 6 (Cudjoe's birthday) a festival is held to

commemorate the signing of the treaty.

ii. Appleton Estate (876- 963-9215)

Known for producing some of the best rums in the world, Appleton Estate sits on 11,000 acres of cane fields. The over two hundred year old distillery utilizes its own base to produce the world-renown liquor: Appleton Estate Rum. A tour of the location gives insight into the history of rum making in Jamaica, as well as the various stages in the process. There is even a demonstration of the "donkey-powered" way of operating the sugar cane crushers, which was the original procedure.

iii. Jamaica Zoo

The Jamaica Zoo is home to approximately 23 different animals, including lions, llama, zebras, monkeys, snakes and crocodiles - just to name a few. It also has beautiful, sprawling, landscaped lawns, offers donkey rides (along with other attractions) and is an interactive and educational site.

iv. Waterloo (876- 965-2278)

The first building in Jamaica to be powered by electricity, it was built in 1875 by John Leyden at a time when the town of Black River was a successful port and primary economic centre in Jamaica. It is believed that the house was electrically wired to provide air conditioning for Mr Leyden's horse stable. Today, the elegant townhouse is a historical landmark.

f) Westmoreland

i. Frome Sugar Estate

Built on the Frome Estate; which was originally owned by Colonial Christopher Morris in the 1600s; the factory is one of the largest surviving sugar estates in Jamaica. It was the most modern sugar factory in the Caribbean when it opened in 1939, and the first 'central' factory

built in Jamaica. When it was built in 1938 there were huge riots by unemployed persons who were denied work, as the smaller factories had been closed down. Buildings and cane fields were destroyed, and several persons lost their lives. These riots led to the formation of the Jamaican Sugar Industry Trade Union, and the site is now a historic attraction.

ii. Negril Point Lighthouse

One of the earliest concrete lighthouses, it was built in 1894 by the French company Bubbler & Bernard. The foundation is a 14 foot deep tank filled with water to keep the tower balanced and secure in the event of an earthquake. An automatic white light flashes every two seconds at 100 feet above sea level, This light was originally operated by gas, but was later converted to acetylene in 1956, then to solar energy in 1985.

iii. The Seaford Town Museum

Jamaica's first German settlement, Seaford Town emerged during the 1800s due to the importing of European indentured labourers after the abolition of slavery. Many of the settlers died in the early years, due to their inability to adapt to the climate or by succumbing to tropical diseases and malnutrition. For many years, those who survived did not integrate with the black community, and – even though this has changed somewhat over the years – many of the residents still have noticeable German features. The language is still spoken by the older generation and traditional German cottages still exist. The Museum catalogues the history of these Europeans and their introduction to the island in the sun.

g) Hanover

i. Animal Farm 876- 899-0040)

The farm features exotic birds from all around the world, as well as other farm animals, such as: hamsters, turtles, goats, pigs and sheep, to name a few. There is also a herb garden, which showcases all of the herbs found in Jamaica. Of interest is the fact that the manure from the

pigs is converted, on site, to bio fuel, which – along with solar panels – provide all of the electricity needed for operation.

ii. Fort Charlotte

Named in honour of King George III's marriage to Queen Charlotte, the fort was built in 1746 to protect the North Western region of Jamaica from attacks by the navy. Said to be one of the best kept forts in Jamaica, Fort Charlotte was constructed from rectangular cut stones, with a capacity of 50, and built to hold 23 guns – 20 of which were mounted. A circular base was constructed for the rotation of guns which were placed there to allow them to be shot from every possible angle, the remains of which are still standing. The cut stone Artillery store is also still standing.

iii. Hanover Museum

The old police barracks and jail which now houses the Hanover Museum dates back to the late 18th century. It contains artifacts from as early as the Arawak era, through to the days of Captain Bligh and Henry Morgan to modern times, and catalogues the history of the town of Lucea.

iv. Lucea Clock Tower

Sitting atop the Lucea courthouse, this 1817 clock tower was delivered to Lucea in error – it was originally intended for St Lucia. The residents fell in love with the clock tower and refused to send it to St Lucia, choosing instead to raise the funds to purchase it. The clock tower was meant as a gift from a wealthy German landowner, and was designed to resemble the helmet worn by the Royal guards of Germany.

v. Rhodes Hall Plantation (876-957-6422)

Prior to becoming a sugar and rum plantation in the 8th century, the location was a popular lookout point for pirates; including the first female pirate Anne Bonny; due to its high elevation

and close proximity to Bloody Bay (where whales used to be slaughtered). It was the perfect hide-out, as it came complete with caves to live in, a ready supply of fresh mineral spring water and abundant fruits and vegetables. It is also the location where the infamous pirate "Calico Jack" was captured by the British. Today it is a protected nature reserve, containing endangered bird and insect species, a crocodile nursery, a tropical forest with a wide variety of indigenous plant life, as well as many different fruit trees.

vi. Ruins at Kenilworth

The remains of an old sugar factory and distillery formerly, called Maggotty Estate, the ruins testify to early Jamaican design and architecture, while highlighting the history of Jamaica's first income earner.

h) St. James

i. Bellefield Great House (1794-1832)

Built in 1794, the Bellefield Great House is a historical joining of two families (the Scottish Kerr and the British Jarrett) under colonialism. It is rumoured that Major-General David Kerr fought on the side of the Americas during the War of independence in 1776, prior to marrying Sarah Newton Jarret, and to this day, the Kerr-Jarret family continues to actively support nation building and community development across Jamaica.

Located on a 3000-acre property, the great house outlines the historical significance of this prominent family, as well as gives insight into colonial times, with an active sugar mill, antique furnishings and captivating tropical gardens.

ii. Greenwood Great House (1800-1877)

The greatest of the Great Houses in Jamaica, this property houses the largest and rarest collection of musical instruments and books on the island. Built in 1800, it is known as the finest antique museum in the Caribbean and still has much of its original furniture.

iii. Rose Hall Great House (876-953-9982/2323)

The most famous of all the great houses in Jamaica, this estate was once home to the feared “White Witch” Annie Palmer. Born in England, Annie spent most of her growing years in Haiti, where she learned witchcraft from her adopted mother (she was adopted by her nanny after her parents’ death from yellow fever).

She was suspected of killing her two husbands; as well as several slave lovers; and was said to terrorize her slaves through witchcraft and scare tactics. Built in the 1700’s, the Estate was named after the first owner George Ash’ wife Rosa and is a majestic property, both in proportion as well as cost - it reportedly cost £30000 to build.

i) Trelawny

i. Cockpit Country Interpretive Center (876-844-1940/381-8012)

The Cockpit Country is Jamaica’s largest remaining rainforest, portions of which are located in three adjoining parishes (the heart of the forest is located in Trelawny). Filled with “cockpits” (conical hills and deep depressions), as well as underground limestone caves, and surrounded by thick, lush forestry, the area provided a natural defense for the Maroons during slavery.

Due to its diversity of plant and wildlife, as well as its rich history, The Interpretive Centre was constructed to increase awareness and understanding of the environment and encourage protection and enhancement of the region.

ii. Hampden Estates (876-912-9113-4)

One of the oldest sugar estates in Jamaica, Hamden operates a working plantation, rum distillery and sugar factory. It started out as a sugar plantation in 1753, and branched into rum distillery in 1779 when the great house was built. Today, it still brews rum with such intense flavour that it considered to be the “heavy pot rum” of choice throughout Europe and other parts of the

world.

iii. Good Hope Great House (876- 469-3444)

Built in the 1700's by one of the largest planters in Jamaica – John Tharpe – a tour of the 2000 acre estate is a historic and scenic experience. Travelling in a horse and buggy ride – the vehicle of choice for the planters of old – the three hour tour will take you through the captivating plantation, beside the ruins of what used to be majestic buildings, toward the water wheel and kiln and across to the pottery, giving you a peek into the history surrounding Jamaica's plantation years.

iv. Outameni Experience (954-4035/617-0948-9)

Located on five acres of land, the experience follows the culture and history of the Jamaican people, beginning with the Taino Indians, through to the plantation years and ending with modern-day Jamaica. A "time traveler" guide brings you through each era, and the "journey" is made interactive through the use of authentically dressed actors in architecturally designed villages, who give an illustration of their livelihood and the era in which they lived.

j) St Ann

i. Coyaba River Garden and Museum

The Arawak word Coyaba means paradise, and this name aptly describes the spectacular tropical garden which surrounds a colonial-style home. The lush vegetation is interspersed with pools of fish and turtles. The museum on the grounds holds a collection exploring aspects of the Jamaican history, beginning with the Tainos and paying special attention to Marcus Garvey and Bob Marley who were born within the parish.

ii. Craighton House Estate (876- 944-8224)

Built in 1805, at 2600 feet above sea level, is the historical Craighton Estate Coffee Farm and Great House. Sitting on 80 acres of prime land, the estate commands an excellent view of its surroundings. A producer of coffee since the 1800s, the Estate is owned and operated by UCC, the largest coffee company in Japan, since 1981.

iii. Green Grotto Caves (876-973-3217)

The green algae that covers its walls gave rise to the name Green Grotto Caves. Originally inhabited by the Arawak Indians, the caves have been used by different groups for different purposes over the years. During the war with the British for ownership of the island, the Spanish used them as a hide-away. During slavery, escaped slaves used them for safety and cover. During the two world wars, smugglers supplying arms to Cuba used them as storage points, while the Government of Jamaica used the entrance of the cave as a storeroom for rum in barrels during the later years of World War II.

iv. Seville Heritage Park (876-972-2191/0665)

Archaeological research has proven that Seville was at one time or the other occupied by the various cultures that led to modern-day Jamaica. The Heritage Park traces the emergence of the Tainos, the Spanish, the British and later, the Africans. The Park spans 300 acres and is designated as a cultural and educational facility, with some of the original structures still preserved and on display, including the Spanish sugar mill, an artisan workshop, a Spanish settlement and church, and the Seville Great House (of British origin)

k) St Mary

i. Castleton Botanical Gardens

Located on 15 acres of land, the Castleton Botanical Gardens were established in 1862 as a relocation project for the Bath Botanical Gardens. The gardens host a wide collection of some of the most exotic trees, fruits and plants in Jamaica. Separated on one side by the Junction main

road, it is adjacent to a rocky seasonal river bed.

ii. Prospect Plantation (876- 974-5335)

Seated on 1000 acres, Prospect Plantation boasts a Camel Trekking Safari, open-air carriages and ostrich Farm and Butterfly Aviary, among others.

Built in the 1800's, this working plantation houses a wealth of history, including Jamaica's first hydro-electric power stations, fortified loopholes (to protect against raids by pirates and buccaneers), among others. The vegetation, combined with the view and wildlife make it an unforgettable experience.

l) Portland

i. Charlestown Maroon Museum and Safu Yard (876- 445-2861)

The first of its kind in Jamaica, the museum displays the rich heritage of the Maroon way of life, with artifacts such as the abeng (cow horn used to communicate over long distances, using a series of coded sounds), the calabash (used as a utensil or bowl), the jungs (a hunting spear), among others on display. The Safu Yard is a traditional dancing ground which is said to be the site at which the warriors prepared for war.

ii. Folly Ruins

Built in 1901 by American millionaire Alfred Mitchell, the two-storey, 60 room mansion was built as a family home. However, a few years later, it began to crumble and today lays in ruins. There are several theories regarding the fall of the mansion, but the most credible one is the use of inferior material which could not stand the full brunt of the ocean breeze – to which the house was exposed.

iii. Folly Point Lighthouse

Set atop honeycombed limestone, overlooking the Caribbean Sea on the shoreline of the East Harbour, the red and white striped lighthouse has been operational since 1885. At 40 feet high, it is a beauty to behold, with one of the best views on the island.

iv. The Honey Bar

Located in Buff Bay Valley, the Honey Bar allows you to taste fresh honey (harvested from nearby bee farms), while learning about the bee rearing and honey making process. You can also interact with the bee farmers who operate the apiary across from the site.

m) St. Thomas

i. Bath Botanical Gardens

Established by the government in 1779, this is the second oldest botanical garden in the western hemisphere. Many of the exotic plants and trees that were introduced to Jamaica were first planted here. There are also ruins; covered with vines; of what used to be majestic buildings (over 100 years old), which help to tell the history of what used to be one of Jamaica's most fashionable towns – Bath, St Thomas.

ii. Morant Bay Courthouse

The scene of one of the biggest, most violent and historical riot in Jamaica's history – the Morant Bay Rebellion of 1865 – the courthouse was destroyed but later rebuilt with limestone and red brick. The rebellion marked a turning point in Jamaica's history, as it led to economic and social reforms in the country. Today, a statue of National hero Paul Bogle (the Baptist minister who led the rebellion), as well as a memorial plaque commemorate that fateful day and the massacre that resulted.

### iii. Morant Point Lighthouse

Standing on a 300 ton concrete foundation, spanning 18 feet in width and 115 feet in height, and seven stories tall is Jamaica's oldest lighthouse. Erected in 1842 by George Grove, it was fitted in England, scrapped and shipped to Jamaica in 1840, where it was rebuilt. Believed to be the only cast iron lighthouse in the world, it was designed by Alex Gordon, a civil engineer in London.

### iv. Stokes Hall Ruins

Believed to be one of the oldest structure in Jamaica, the house was built in 1710 by Luke Stokes, former Governor of Nevis who settled in Jamaica shortly after it was captured from the Spaniards. Built in a strategic location, it was a majestic building and was securely fortified. It was destroyed by an earthquake in 1907 and lies in ruins today.

### v. Stony Gut

The birthplace of Paul Bogle, it was also the site of his church as well as the location from which he led his followers to the Morant Bay Rebellion. The entire village was destroyed by soldiers after the rebellion, as a reprisal for the riot. Today, the site is maintained as a memorial to the National hero and his followers.

### vi. Three Finger Jack's Cave

The first infamous fugitive to have a bounty placed on his head, "Three Fingered Jack" was a feared runaway slave during the 1700s. Born Jack Mansong, he got his name after he lost two fingers in a fight with fellow slave Quashie, and his notoriety from preying on white plantation owners and government officials. The cave high in the Blue Mountains was the "base" from which he carried out his robberies, kidnappings and murders. It is said that the very mention of his name drove fear into the hearts of the British, and he supposedly set free a number of slaves during his reign of terror. Many plays and books have been written about his exploits.

## 14. **Jamaica's Best Parks & Gardens**

'Jamaica is not just about the scintillating beaches, majestic falls, and the alluring reggae music, there are a whole lot more!'. If you have been around [www.my-island-jamaica.com](http://www.my-island-jamaica.com), you'd recognize that slogan ☺ - I use it a lot. But truly, there are a whole lot more, and our flora is yet another slice.

Thanks to my researchers, I now present you the best parks and gardens in Jamaica. If you are looking for a vacation with a difference, be sure to stop by and experience a few of these. We have attempted to provide contact numbers for as much as we could, but some were more difficult to ascertain, as usual, we suggest that you ask of your tour desk or tour guide for guidance.

### 1. St Thomas

#### a. **Bath Botanical Gardens**

Established by the government in 1779, this is the second oldest botanical garden in the western hemisphere. Many of the exotic plants and trees that were introduced to Jamaica were first planted here.

### 2. Portland

#### a. **Athenry Gardens Tel 993-3740/779-7144**

Athenry Gardens is a lush 3 acre botanical garden that features coconut palms as well as other plants and flowers. The gardens also include the Nonsuch Caves, which are underground caverns believed to be 1½ million years old. These caves are full of stalactites, rare fossils and remains of the Arawak Indian civilization.

### 3. Kingston & St Andrew

#### a. **Blue Mountains and John Crow Mountains National Park**

This Park houses a wide range of animal and plant species, consisting of resident as well as migratory birds. The rare species of birds are found in this Park, along with indigenous plants and trees. The Park was established in 1990 to protect forest reserves and covers

196,000 acres in the Blue Mountains.

b. **Cinchona Botanical Gardens Tel: 929-9200 /927-1257**

Originally a plantation, the Cinchona Botanical Gardens was so named after the cinchona tree from which quinine (the first treatment for malaria) was acquired. It was established in 1868 and is the only garden of its type in the Caribbean and is situated at an altitude of between 4,500 and 5,500 ft above sea level.

The garden contains global varieties of temperate and semi-tropical flowers and trees, including: eucalyptus trees, rubber trees, cork oak trees, lilies and Asian tea trees, complete with a panoramic view of the capital city of Kingston, as well as the Blue Mountains and Strawberry Hill.

c. **Clydesdale National Forest Park**

Clydesdale National Forest Park is located in the hills of the Blue Mountain range. Located on what used to be a coffee estate, the park is the ideal location for nature lovers who either want to find a secluded place to relax or take a lovely stroll under the branches of the various trees which form an overhead canopy. There is also a river pool nearby for bathing.

d. **Holywell National Park Tel: 922-1287**

The Holywell National Park/Nature Reserve is a part of the Blue Mountains and John Crow Mountains National Park (about 4000 feet above sea level) and features beautiful nature trails, with indigenous species of flora, fauna, birds and terrestrial mammals being viewed along the way.

e. **Independence Park**

Independence Park, otherwise known as the National Stadium, is Jamaica's premier sports and cultural complex. Originally built to accommodate the 1966 British Empire and

Commonwealth Games, it houses a variety of sports facilities, as well as the National Arena and National Indoor Arenas (the two largest indoor arenas in the Caribbean with capacities of 3,000 and 6,000 respectively).

f. **Irish Town Botanical Gardens**

The Irish Town Botanical Gardens contain over 300 different species of flowers, in a Blue Mountain setting 3,100 feet above sea level. It also includes a 60 foot pool spa that utilizes flower and plant ingredients.

g. **National Heroes Park**

Originally a horse race track, this 20 hectare park is a botanical garden featuring numerous monuments of leading players of Jamaican history and independence. It is also the burial site of many of Jamaica's National Heroes, Prime Ministers, and cultural leaders.

h. **Royal Botanical Gardens of Hope Tel: 927-1085**

Situated on 200 acres of land, it was founded in 1881 as an experimental garden dedicated to growing new varieties of sugar cane, teak, coffee, cocoa and pineapples.

i. **St William Grant Park**

In order to commemorate the Year of the Worker in 1988, the Queen Victoria Park was refurbished and renamed in honor of one of the icons of the workers' struggle in Jamaica - St William Grant. The 1938 labour leader had given regular United Negro Improvement Association speeches on the grounds, and was an associate of the Rt. Excellent Sir Alexander Bustamante, National Hero and former Prime Minister. Inside the park are several monuments, as well as the shackles of slavery which lay buried in a long, unmarked tomb next to the now-famous banyan tree.

4. Clarendon

- a. **Mason River Wetlands and Game Sanctuary**  
A protected habitat for local and regionally restricted species of horticulture and wildlife, as well as a refuge for endangered species, this reserve was opened to protect regenerating forestry and botanical vegetation from human interference and degradation. It also provides education concerning wildlife conservation and management.
5. Manchester
    - a. **Canoe Valley National Nature Reserve**  
The Park occupies 3000 acres and is made up of mangrove swamps, limestone forests and herbaceous forests. It is also home to Alligator Hole, which is a small river known for its inhabitants: three manatees and several alligators. At last count, the reserve contained 4 amphibian species, 7 bat species, 23 reptile species and 93 bird species.
  6. St Elizabeth
    - a. **Lovers' Leap Tel 965-6634**  
Lovers Leap is a 1700 ft cliff which derives its name from two slave lovers who, in an attempt to escape their master who wanted the girl for himself, leapt hand-in-hand to their death in the crashing waves below. The lookout provides a vantage view point to look for miles out to the Caribbean Sea. There is also a small museum with Indian and more recent artifacts, as well as a beautiful garden with a Cactus farm.
  7. Westmoreland
    - a. **Roaring River Park Tel: 995-2094**  
Roaring River Park is a heritage and nature park, situated on the Roaring River Estate. The Roaring River is so named because of the gushing waters of the river and runs underground. Nearby is the Roaring River Cave, which is a series of limestone caverns with a small mineral spring inside. Located outside of the cave is a fresh water sinkhole as well as a landscaped private garden.

b. **Royal Palm Reserve Tel 364-7407/957-3736**

Spread across over 300 acres, the Royal Palm Reserve houses approximately 300 species of animals, (including the endangered West Indian Whistling Ducks), reptiles, birds and butterflies and over 114 species of flowers (including the Royal Palm; from which the reserve derives its name). It boasts many beautiful nature trails, as well as a museum with books, natural exhibits, a model of the wetlands and posters of the natural environment.

8. St James

a. **Montego Bay Marine Park Tel 952-5619**

The Montego Bay Marine Park is Jamaica's first national park, and was developed to protect the beauty of the Montego Bay area (which reaches all the way to the Cayman Trench) and the many species of tropical creatures that live there. The 15 square kilometer park is an educational adventure with programs and tours available to learn about the ocean and its inhabitants. There is also a research center, reference material, slide shows and books about this valuable ecosystem.

b. **Old Hospital Park**

The Old Hospital Park is a spacious, yet glamorous outdoor ambiance facing the beautiful Caribbean sea. It faces the sea atop cliffs with impeccable glistening waters, offering a scenic location for leisure or relaxation. The new park boasts a number of gazebos within a garden setting, and adds to the physical and aesthetic beauty of Montego Bay.

c. **Rocklands Bird Feeding Sanctuary Tel. 952-2009**

The Rocklands Bird Sanctuary was established in 1962 by one of Jamaica's first environmentalists, Lisa Salmon, (known as "the bird lady") who loved to write about, paint and feed birds. It is believed that many of the over 200 species of birds in Jamaica can be seen at the Rocklands Bird Feeding Sanctuary. The highlight of Rocklands is the chance to hand feed different birds, especially the humming birds from the patio.

9. St Ann

a. **Coyaba River Garden and Museum Tel: 974-6235**

The lush 3 acre water garden is fed by the streams that flow on the Shaw Park Estate property, and

offers scenic views of the Bay of Ocho Rios, as well as an introduction to the flora and fauna of Jamaica. The on site museum covers the history of Jamaica from the pre-Columbian time of the Arawak Indians up to the present day of the island's development. It also exhibits the many cultural influences that led to the creation of Jamaica's Motto: "Out of Many, One People".

**b. Cranbrook Flower Forest Tel: 610-6509/770-8071**

The Flower Forest sits on 130 acres, and is a scenic nursery interspersed with swimming pools and a river, which houses many varieties of orchids, ginger, bird of paradise, croton and ferns. At the entrance to the gardens is the restored remains of an old sugar mill (believed to be over 200 years old), which houses a museum. There is also a recreated Arawak village within the garden, which showcases the type of housing used by the Tainos prior to Spanish colonization.

**c. Seville Heritage Park Tel: 972-2191/0665**

Seville was at one time or the other occupied by the various cultures that led to modern-day Jamaica. The Heritage Park traces the emergence of the Tainos, the Spanish, the British and later, the Africans. The 300 acre Park is designated as a cultural and educational facility, with some of the original structures still preserved and on display, including the Spanish sugar mill, an artisan workshop, a Spanish settlement and church, and the Seville Great House, which is of British origin.

**d. Shaw Park Botanical Gardens Tel: 974-2552/974-2723**

Situated 550ft above sea level, the Shaw Park Botanical Gardens offer spectacular aerial views of the Jamaican landscape. The 25 acre garden is filled with several species of unusual tropical flowers, plants and trees – including a huge banyan – set amidst grassy lawns, with a cascading waterfall as a centre piece.

10. St Mary

**a. Castleton Botanical Gardens Tel 927-1257**

Located on 15 acres of land, the Castleton Botanical Gardens were established in 1862 as a relocation project for the Bath Botanical Gardens. The garden is home to a wide collection of some of the most exotic trees, fruits and plants in Jamaica and is adjacent to a rocky seasonal river bed.

**b. Claude Stuart Park**

In 1977 the Victoria Park was renamed the Claude Stuart Park, in honour of former Minister of Health and Member of Parliament for St. Mary Claude Stuart. Within the Park is a Cenotaph commemorating the victims of World Wars I and II 1 & 2, as well as a monument in honour of Tacky (the rebel slave who led the Slave Rebellion of 1760) and one of Sir Charles Price (former Member and Speaker of the Jamaica House of Assembly).

## 12. **Happenings & Events**

Yes, there are some months that do get a bit more busy than others, July, August and December are some of the months that seems carries a lot of buzz, but rest assured that regardless of the time you are here, there's always something exciting happening in Jamaica.

### a. Calendar of Events

In my quest to keep this publication as lean as possible, I'm going to direct you to the full annual events guide on my website. Please visit the page at:

<http://www.my-island-jamaica.com/annual-events-in-jamaica-calendar-of-events.html>

### b. Latest News & Happenings

I have a page on the website that captures the [very latest](#) news from Jamaica, but I'm going to do even better and point you to source, the two major newspapers that has it all!

i. The Jamaica Gleaner : <http://jamaica-gleaner.com/>

ii. The Jamaica Observer: <http://www.jamaicaobserver.com/news/>

By the way, have you already read the [free events in Jamaica](#) listing?  
Be sure to take a look, if not yet done.

### 13. **Top Jamaica Tours Guides and Tour Companies**

So by now, you would have learnt about all the great historic, educational and entertaining options in Jamaica, the next, and obvious question is, not just how to get there, but who can you trust to get you there and back.

I've done some digging and found these, the best tours, or rather, best tour companies in the island. These are purely based on online visitors' reviews; from people who have actually experienced them!

I've included their address (city) but don't be put off, most of them will traverse (and in fact is very knowledgeable) of most of the best in the island. Hint: Use this guide to impress them though, let them know you are in the 'know' 😊.

Antsman Private Tour, Negril (876-837-2690)  
Barrett Adventures, Montego Bay (876-382-6384)  
Big Ship Private Day Tours, Negril (772-8759 or 386-9510)  
Chester Tours, Montego Bay (876-587-3584/ 876-995-5553)  
ExplorerJamaica Transportation & Tours, Montego Bay (877-610-6996)  
Jamaica Cultural Enterprises, Kingston ()  
Jamaica Zipline Adventure Tours, Montego Bay (876-940-7394)  
Jamisland Day Tours, Montego Bay (876-381-6987)  
Joe Cool Taxi and Tours (876-390-1614)  
JuJu Tours, Negril (876-789-4309)  
KnowJamaica Tours, Ocho Rios (876-859-4739)  
Marks Tours, Ocho Rios (876) 432-1177)  
Peat Taylor Tours, Ocho Rios (876-975-0028)  
Phil Lafayette Tours, Ocho Rios (876-427-5829)  
PPP Tran Tours Jamaica, Montego Bay (876-397-6277)  
Real Tours Jamaica - Day Tours, Montego Bay (876-335-7922)  
Reggae Tours, Montego Bay (876-570-2983)  
Rocky's Taxi and Tour Services, Negril (876-370-7915)  
Shorty Private Tours, Negril (876-372-3360)

Thriller Tours Jamaica, Negril (876-481-3609)  
Uton Tours (876-815-7666)  
Wilderness ATV Tours, Ocho Rios (876-382-4029)  
Yardie Tours, Ocho Rios (876-567-5619)

A quick point of note: Most of them typically have preset itineraries, but don't be afraid to ask about some of the unusuals I mentioned here, OK. Enjoy the excursions!

## 14. **Helpful Links & Resources**

The following are some excellent links I'd like to share with you. I've specially included them as I figure that they'll become useful to you sooner than later.

a. Local Phone Directory

There's bound to be a company or institution that you'll need to lookup right? Of course, now it's easy, Just visit <http://jamaicayp.com/> and do your search for any local business, agency or entity in Jamaica. I use it very often these days.

b. Booking Your Jamaican Vacation Online:

I've personally constructed these links for you . There are my personal affiliate links but by now you know me right? I only recommend what I personally used or would use. These are all great companies. Go ahead and try them.

i. Hotels Combined

[www.HotelsCombined.ReviewYourJamaicanVacation.com](http://www.HotelsCombined.ReviewYourJamaicanVacation.com)

ii. OneTravel.com

[www.OneTravel.ReviewYourJamaicanVacation.com](http://www.OneTravel.ReviewYourJamaicanVacation.com)

iii. TripAdvisor.com

[www.TripAdvisor.ReviewYourJamaicanVacation.com](http://www.TripAdvisor.ReviewYourJamaicanVacation.com)

c. How To Arrange A Trip To Jamaica

This is a great little article. It is also on the website but I'm highlighting it here for you. It has some excellent suggestions and recommendations in it. Here's the direct link to it.  
<http://www.my-island-jamaica.com/how-to-arrange-a-trip-to-jamaica.html>

d. Jamaican Travel Stories

How about hearing from those who have been here before?

Visit this link below and 'hear' for yourself:

[http://www.my-island-jamaica.com/jamaican\\_travel.html](http://www.my-island-jamaica.com/jamaican_travel.html)

15. **Free Bonuses!!!**

For your convenience, I've included the links to your free bonuses right here!

**Bonus #1** – A [Pre-Travel Checklist](#) – A must have!

**Bonus #2** – My special '[Jamaica Vacation Checklist](#)'

**Bonus #3** – [Top Jamaican Wedding Choices](#) - The favorites! (Courtesy of the Wedding Planner Plus)

**Bonus #4** – A [Weekly Jamaica Vacation Activity Planner](#)

**Bonus #5** – A [Printable Jamaica Map](#)

Just click on the links above, they will take you **directly to them** on my website for your *immediate print or download* !

Note: They are all pdf files so you might need pdf viewer (eg. Adobe Acrobat) to view them.

You might also get a security caution warning you about viruses on links etc. - rest assured, these are perfectly clean my friend.

## **Special Mentions**

I must state my appreciation for the guidance and support of a few of my friends, family members and partners that helped to make this a success.

Jane from The Catcha Falling Star Gardens in Negril, Michelle and her team from The Wedding Planner Plus in Ocho Rios, and Errol from The Tapioca Village Retreat in Devon Penn St. Mary, all for their dedicated and committed partnership.

Special thanks to Arriel, Holly, Dainty, Cheryl and my wife Omeil for their articles and contributions. I also bank on them dearly for their critical insights and ideas too.

To Chester Fowles, Peter Sudlow, Mr. Ward and all other my tour guide friends - one love!

It's partners and friends like you that make Jamaicans the special people we are.  
Love and thanks my friends.

## Final Words

Thanks to you again for purchasing this guide.

We have done some rather extensive work on this guide; hours and hours of research, long travels and late nights, but by no means is it exhaustive, it still couldn't be, there are many other great options here in Jamaica.

That said I am confident we captured the essence of Jamaica and brought it right to you saving you both time and money.

Finally, it would be very helpful to me and future visitors to [www.my-island-jamaica.com](http://www.my-island-jamaica.com) if you could leave your feedback about this guide. So if it's not a bother, please take a moment to share your [feedback here](#) my friend.

Good luck and happy vacationing!

Regards,  
*Wellesley*

P.S. I've answered close to 300 questions directly related to Jamaica and vacationing in Jamaica. If you have a question, please stop by my Q&A forum on the website and post it.

P.P.S. I'll be waiting to hear about your trip or vacation, so please [share it with us](#) later, OK

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