



Antigua & Barbuda

Includes »

Antigua	107
St John's	107
Fort James	112
Dickenson Bay	113
Jolly Harbour to Cades Bay	115
Fig Tree Drive	116
English Harbour	116
Half Moon Bay	119
Barbuda	120
Codrington	122
Frigate Bird Sanctuary	122
West & South Coasts	123

Why Go?

On Antigua, life is a beach. It may seem like a cliché, but this improbably shaped splotch of land is ringed with beaches of the finest white sand, made all the more dramatic by the azure waters, which are so clear they'll bring a tear to your eye or a giggle to your holiday-hungry throat.

If life on Antigua is a beach, its isolated neighbor Barbuda *is* a beach: one smooth, sandy low-rise amid the reef-filled waters. Birds, especially the huffing and puffing frigates, greatly outnumber people.

Back on Antigua, there are lots of people, many famous. Guitar-picker Eric Clapton, rag-trader Giorgio Armani and tastemaker for the masses Oprah all have winter homes here. Some of the Caribbean's most exclusive resorts shelter in the myriad bays and inlets. But don't worry, mere mortals thrive here as well. No matter your budget, you will find a beach with your name on it.

When to Go

In January and February, the coolest months, the daily high temperature averages 81°F (27°C), while the nightly low temperature averages 72°F (22°C). In July and August, the hottest months, the high averages 86°F (30°C) and the low 77°F (25°C). Antigua averages about 45in of rain annually. The wettest months are September to November, when measurable precipitation occurs, on average, eight days each month. February to April is the driest period, with an average of three rainy days each month.

Antigua hosts a couple of major annual events. Antigua Sailing Week in April is the largest regatta in the Caribbean, while Antigua's 10-day Carnival culminates in a parade on the first Tuesday in August.

Best Beaches

- » Rendezvous Bay (p117)
- » Half Moon Bay (p119)
- » Valley Church Beach (p115)
- » Any beach in Barbuda (p120)

Best Places to Stay

- » Ocean Inn (p118)
- » Lighthouse Bay (p123)
- » Sugar Ridge Resort (p115)
- » Inn at English Harbour (p118)

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Eastern Caribbean dollar (EC\$)
- » **Language** English
- » **Money** ATMs can be found at the airport, Nelson's Dockyard and around St John's; they dispense EC dollars
- » **Visas** Not required for US, EU or Commonwealth visitors

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 108 sq miles (Antigua), 62 sq miles (Barbuda)
- » **Population** 86,500 (Antigua), 1250 (Barbuda)
- » **Capital** St John's (Antigua), Codrington (Barbuda)
- » **Telephone country code** 268
- » **Emergency** 911 or 999

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** US\$75
- » **Two-course evening meal** EC\$80
- » **Museum entrance** EC\$8 to EC\$18
- » **Beer** EC\$5
- » **City transport ticket** EC\$1.50 to EC\$5

Resources

- » **Department of Tourism** (www.antigua-barbuda.org)
- » **Antigua Nice** (www.antiguanice.com)
- » **Barbudaful** (www.barbudaful.net)
- » **Food & Drink Guide** (www.foodanddrink-caribbean.com)

Itineraries

THREE OR FOUR DAYS

Spend the morning wandering St John's, taking in the museum, cathedral and market, then take a couple of hours in the afternoon to relax on the beach and have sunset drinks in Dickenson Bay. The following day head south along the coast, sampling beaches and then cutting across Fig Tree Dr to English Harbour and Nelson's Dockyard. Spend the next day or two roaming the rugged east coast, stopping at Devil's Bridge, and taking a dip on the crisp-crumble beaches at Half Moon and Long Bays. Consider a kayak nature trip.

ONE WEEK

Do everything above and then force yourself to spend another day searching out your favorite beach. After that, make a two-day trip to Barbuda to relax on isolated sandy shores and for some incredible bird-watching.

GETTING TO NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

At the time of writing, flight operations to Barbuda had ceased, so the ferry is your only option. Montserrat is served by air and by ferry, although the latter does not operate on a reliable schedule. Antigua is the hub of regional airline LIAT, and has frequent flights to St Kitts, Nevis, St-Martin/Sint Maarten and other islands. Winair flies to Dominica.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Pepperpot** Antigua's national dish is a hearty stew blending meat and vegetables, such as okra, spinach, eggplant, squash and potatoes. It's often served with fungi, which are not mushrooms but cornmeal patties or dumplings.
- » **Black pineapple** The local pineapple was first introduced by the Arawaks and is smaller than your garden variety. It's known as 'black' because it's at its sweetest when kind of dark green. It grows primarily on the southwest coast, near Cades Bay.
- » **Rock lobster** This hulking crustacean has a succulent tail but no claws and is best served grilled. (And you'll be forgiven if after a few rum punches you're humming a tune by the B-52s while digging in.)
- » **Wadadli** Antigua Brewery makes this local brew, a fresh pale lager, with desalinated seawater.
- » **Cavalier** and **English Harbour** are the locally produced rums and best mixed with fruit juice for a refreshing – if potentially lethal – punch.