



Barbados

Includes »

Bridgetown	199
Hastings & Rockley	204
Oistins	207
Crane Beach	209
Paynes Bay	210
Speightstown	212
Bathsheba	215
Understand Barbados	217
Survival Guide	219

Best Beaches

- » Crane Beach (p209)
- » Paynes Bay (p210)
- » Accra Beach (p204)
- » Miami Beach (p207)
- » Bath Beach (p216)

Best Places to Stay

- » Little Arches Hotel (p208)
- » Surfer's Point Guest House (p208)
- » Sea-U! Guest House (p215)
- » Coral Reef Club (p211)

Why Go?

Barbados is ringed by azure water and white-sand visions that fuel the fantasies of those stuck in chilly winter climes.

No matter your budget or style, you'll find a place to stay, especially on the popular south and west coasts. Elsewhere, however, is where you'll find what makes the island special. Barbados has lush scenery among rolling hills dotted with fascinating survivors of the colonial past. Vast plantation homes show the wealth of European settlers, while several botanical gardens exploit the beauty possible from the perfect growing conditions.

The wild Atlantic-battered east coast is a legend with surfers; those looking for action will also find windsurfing, hiking, diving and more. Away from the glitz, it's still a civilized place (with a 98% literacy rate) of classic calypso rhythms, an island-time vibe and world-famous rums.

When to Go

The climate in Barbados tends to be nice year-round: in January, the average daily high temperature is 28°C (83°F), while the low average is 21°C (70°F). In July, the average daily high is 30°C (86°F), while the average low is 23°C (74°F). April averages only seven days of rain, while July is the wettest month, with some 18 days of rain. The tourist high season runs from mid-December through mid-April. June through October is the hurricane season – although many years see none.

Itineraries

FOUR DAYS

Depending on your budget, stay on the mid-priced south coast or the fancier west coast, go diving or snorkeling (maybe surfing in the south) and spend an afternoon wandering the island's heart: Bridgetown.

ONE WEEK

As above, but spend a couple of days exploring the interior and the east coast. Or stay in the wet and wild east and make trips west. Or try it all and split your time between the south or west and east. This will give you time away from crowds plus time partying with crowds.

TWO WEEKS

The same as for one week but with more time to utterly chill out. Get lost! Head into the hills of central Barbados and take roads at random. It's green, beautiful and full of sights and surprises. Plus you're on an island, so you can't get lost for long.

GETTING TO NEIGHBORING ISLANDS

Short of sailing your own boat – or hitching a ride – the only way to and from Barbados is by air. Every so often there is talk of a ferry service to neighboring islands like St Lucia or St Vincent but it never materializes. Air links are comprehensive and frequent.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Flying fish** Served fried in delicious sandwiches all over the country. It's a mild white fish that is great sautéed or deep-fried.
- » **Conkies** A mixture of cornmeal, coconut, pumpkin, sweet potato, raisins and spices, steamed in a plantain leaf.
- » **Fish cakes** There are myriad Bajan recipes, made from salt cod and deep-fried.
- » **Cou-cou** A creamy cornmeal and okra mash.
- » **Cutters** Meat or fish sandwiches in a salt-bread roll.
- » **Jug-jug** A mixture of cornmeal, green peas and salted meat.
- » **Roti** A curry filling rolled inside flat bread.
- » **Bananas** Local varieties are green even when ripe (look for them in markets).
- » **Barbadian rum** Considered some of the finest in the Caribbean, with Mount Gay being the best-known label.
- » **Banks** The island's crisp lager is refreshing after a day in the hot sun.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Barbadian dollar (B\$)
- » **Language** English
- » **Money** ATMs all over; some dispense Barbadian and US dollars
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the US, Canada and most European and Commonwealth countries

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 432 sq km
- » **Population** 286,000
- » **Capital** Bridgetown
- » **Telephone country code** 21
- » **Telephone area code** 246
- » **Emergency** Fire 311, police 211, ambulance 511

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** B\$100
- » **Two-course evening meal** B\$30
- » **Beer** B\$5
- » **Flying-fish sandwich** B\$10
- » **Bus** B\$1.50

Resources

- » **Barbados Tourism Authority** (www.visitbarbados.org)
- » **Barbados Hotel & Tourism Association** (www.bhta.org)
- » **Barbados National Trust** (<http://trust.funbarbados.com>)
- » **National News** (www.nationnews.com)