



Caribbean Islands



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HAVANA P287, CUBA

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CRUZ BAY P829, US VIRGIN ISLANDS

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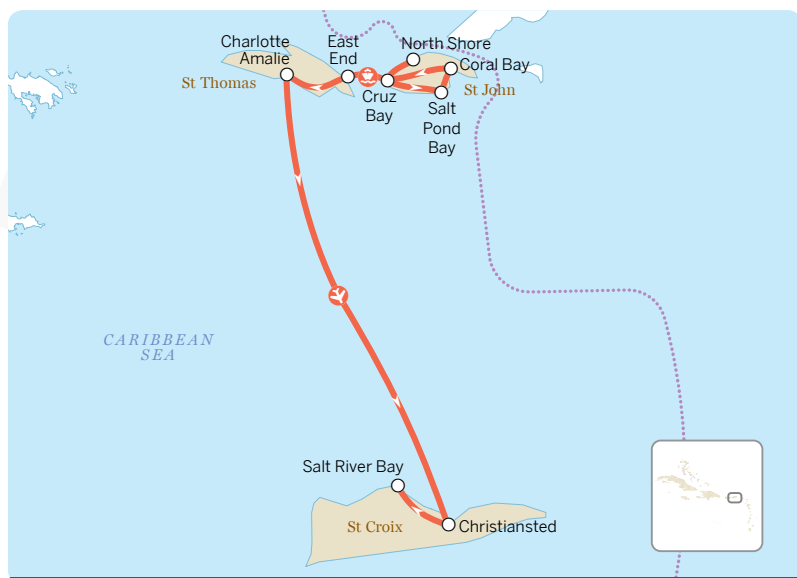
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Itineraries



Easy-to-Access Virgin Islands

Scads of nonstop flights put the US Virgin Islands in easy reach of the US and Canada. One week gives the ideal overview of this small but perfectly formed cluster of islands.

Start on **St John**. Spend day one at the **North Shore** beaches: Cinnamon Bay, with windsurfing and trails through mill ruins; Maho Bay, where sea turtles swim; or Leinster Bay/Waterlemon Cay, where snorkelers can jump in amid rays and barracuda. Raise a toast to your beach in rollicking **Cruz Bay**.

Spend day two at **Salt Pond Bay**, where cool hikes and turtle snorkeling await. Drink, dance and dine with the colorful characters in **Coral Bay** afterward.

Devote day three to the Reef Bay Hike, kayaking along coastal reefs or another favorite activity. Hop on a ferry on day four to check out **St Thomas' East End**, with its resorts and marine park.

Spend part of day five in the popular cruise-ship stop of **Charlotte Amalie** on St Thomas, then take the seaplane to **Christiansted, St Croix**. Over the next two days drink at old windmills turned gin mills, dive its barrier reef and paddle through the glowing waters of **Salt River Bay**.



Cuba & the Cayman Islands

The contrasts of this itinerary make it appealing – enjoy a bastion of socialism and a citadel of capitalism. Grand Cayman is a major transit point for people visiting Cuba and there are daily flights between the two, although Havana is served increasingly well by direct flights from the USA.

Begin your trip in **Havana**, Cuba's extraordinary capital city, and stay at one of the venerable old luxury hotels for prices that haven't changed in years but are anticipated to rise in a post-Fidel tourism boom. Marvel at block after block of gloriously dissolving buildings, listen to some music and drink with locals. Just wander around: every block holds a surprise and the seawall is world-famous. Head to **Santa Clara** and the venerable monument to Ernesto Che Guevara, the city's adopted son, then plunge into the city's youth-oriented culture. Push on from here to **Trinidad**, a Unesco World Heritage site. You can easily spend a week in this perfectly preserved Spanish-colonial town, hiking in Topes de Collantes or lazing at Playa Ancón. Head east to **Santiago de Cuba** and its many attractions, including the Castillo de San Pedro del Morro, the Cuartel Moncada and, of course, the vibrant music scene.

Return to Havana and fly on to **Grand Cayman**. Head straight to **Seven Mile Beach** and do purely fun things such as snorkeling at Stingray City. Grand Cayman is known for its commercialism, but you can see another side to the islands if you carry on with an excursion to **Little Cayman**, where the 120 or so residents will be happy to see you. Laze on its deserted beaches and consider a world-class wall dive at **Bloody Bay Marine Park**. Choose from its several excellent yet low-key resorts, and have the best ice cream of the trip at the National Trust Visitors Center. There's great birdwatching, and if you're feeling energetic you can cycle around the whole island in a single day.

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Top: Stingray Sandbar,
Grand Cayman
Bottom: Statue
of Che Guevara,
Conjunto Escultórico
Comandante Ernesto
Che Guevara (p315),
Santa Clara, Cuba

ANTHONY COLLINS / GETTY IMAGES ©





Aruba, Bonaire & Curaçao

The small size of all three islands, Aruba, Bonaire & Curaçao, mean that even the most peripatetic vacationer will require little time for complete explorations, meaning there'll be plenty of time to simply plop down and relax.

Most places to stay, eat and even play on **Aruba** are in the north. Stay on relaxed **Eagle Beach**, Aruba's best. Assuming you're here for the sand – that's Aruba's real charm – then besides a day to explore the wet and wild northeast coast, **Arikok National Wildlife Park**, which has some nice hiking trails, and interesting **Oranjestad** (which hops when the cruise ships are in port), you should just play on the beach. And given the vast stretches of sand on the island, it won't be too hard to find the ideal plot for your beach blanket.

From Aruba, it's quick hop over to **Curaçao**. This is an island to take your time exploring. Stay in colonial **Willemstad**, which is one of the region's most interesting towns, then wander the coasts to the north, where national parks, restored plantations and a bevy of hidden beaches await. Count on three days at least to enjoy it all at a leisurely pace, including climbing Christoffel Mountain and exploring **Shete Boka National Park**. You might even want to try some snorkeling or head to **Spaanse Water**, where the windsurfing will blow you away.

Fly from Curaçao to **Bonaire**. Once you're there, you may not see much of the island above sea level as you'll be underwater much of the time. One of the world's great diving locations, Bonaire's underwater splendor and 90 named dive sites will keep you busy. Exploring the island, which has stark beauty and flamingo-spotting, and learning about an easily accessed past will take about a day. The island's second city – a village really – **Rincon**, has a slow and inviting pace, while at the horizon-spanning salt flats in the south you can still see evidence of slavery and colonial trade. In the middle of it all, cute little **Kralendijk** combines eating, sleeping and fun.

1
WEEK

Sint Maarten & Neighboring Islands

Once off the plane in **St-Martin/Sint-Maarten**, you can hop your way around some of the Caribbean's cutest islands by ferry and never see another plane until it's time to go home.

Head to the French side of the island and hang out in **Grand Case**, where your dining choices range from beach-shack casual to fine-French bistro. For beach time try the local favorite **Friar's Bay**, then from Marigot, make the 25-minute ferry run to **Anguilla**. Once there, choose between two beaches: popular **Shoal Bay East** or the quieter, wind-swept **Junk's Hole**.

Back on St-Martin/Sint Maarten, head down to **Philipsburg** for some retail therapy. Get a ferry to **Saba**, and enjoy views of its splendid volcano. Explore the small town of **Windwardside**, then head out for a hike up **Mt Scenery**. Rent some diving gear – waters here teem with nurse sharks.

Back in Philipsburg, take the ferry to **St-Barthélemy**. Have lunch at the gorgeous French capital of **Gustavia**, and then sun yourself on white-sand **Anse de Colombier**. Although St-Barth is fabled as a playground of the rich and famous, the beauty of the island is that this matters little once everybody's in T-shirts and shorts.



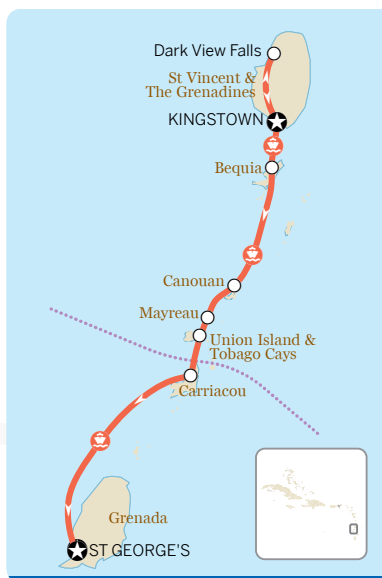
1 WEEK Dominica to St Lucia

Hopscotch your way south through some of the least visited, least developed Caribbean islands.

Begin in **Dominica**, which many consider the wildest and most natural of the bunch. Start by getting on local time at the comfy properties of **Calibishie** near the airport, then lose yourself in the rainforest at **Morne Trois Pitons National Park**, a Unesco World Heritage site. On an island laced with waterfalls, the half-day walk in the park to Middleham Falls is splendid. Celebrate with a glass of bubbly – or at least the natural bubbles that tickle you while snorkeling at **Champagne Reef**.

It's a quick hop to **Martinique**, where you should hit the beaches and restaurants of **Les Anses d'Arlet**, followed by diving and drinking in the lively fishing village of **Ste-Luce**.

Take the scenic ferry to **St Lucia** and stay in **Soufrière**, on a bay that's shadowed by the iconic peaks of the Pitons. You can hike these in the morning and dive in the afternoon. For a jaunt, head over to Marigot Bay, with its small beach and beautiful surrounds.



1 WEEK St Vincent to Grenada

You can join these two itineraries for a real island-hopping adventure. Just get a connecting flight from St Lucia to St Vincent and the Grenadines.

St Vincent is an island of boundless energy. Market days in **Kingstown** are joyfully chaotic as the streets teem with people. Explore some of the island's unexplored lush countryside and enjoy panoramic vistas on a hike to **Dark View Falls**.

Catch a ferry for the one-hour ride to **Bequia**, the center of beach fun and nightlife in the Grenadines and quite possibly the best all-around little island in the Caribbean. Choose between fast and slow ferries and head down the Grenadines, stopping at one of the pretty islands of **Canouan**, **Mayreau** and **Union Island**. Take a day trip to snorkel amazing **Tobago Cays**. Catch a mail boat or hire a fishing boat and cross the aquatic border to **Carriacou**, the pint-sized sister island to **Grenada**, which you will reach by ferry. Once there, immerse yourself in **St George's**, one of the Caribbean's most charming capital cities.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- Subway station
- Taxi
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



Carolyn McCarthy

Cuba Carolyn specializes in travel, culture and adventure in the Americas. She has written for *National Geographic*, *Outside*, *BBC Magazine*, *Boston Globe* and other publications. A former Fulbright fellow and Banff Mountain Grant recipient, she has documented life in the most remote corners of Latin America. Carolyn gained her expertise by researching guidebooks in diverse destinations. She has contributed to more than 30 guidebooks for Lonely Planet, including *Colorado*, *USA*,

Argentina, *Chile*, *Trekking in the Patagonian Andes*, *Panama*, *Peru* and *USA's National Parks*. For more information, visit www.carolynmccarthy.org or follow her Instagram travels at @masmerquen



Hugh McNaughtan

Bahamas, Turks & Caicos A former English lecturer, Hugh swapped grant applications for visa applications, and turned his love of travel into a full-time thing. Having done a bit of restaurant-reviewing in his home town (Melbourne), he's now eaten his way across four continents. He's never happier than when on the road with his two daughters. Except perhaps on the cricket field.



Kevin Raub

Dominican Republic Writer, Punta Cana & the Southeast, Península de Samaná, The Southwest & Península de Pedernales. Kevin Raub grew up in Atlanta and started his career as a music journalist in New York, working for *Men's Journal* and *Rolling Stone* magazines. He almost didn't accept this assignment, his third through the region, until he found out the road to Sabana de la Mar was finished – he just couldn't bear another go on the formerly tortuous, pothole-ridden road.

Follow him on Twitter and Instagram (@RaubOnTheRoad).



Andrea Schulte-Peevers

Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Montserrat, St Kitts & Nevis Born and raised in Germany and educated in London and at UCLA, Andrea has traveled the distance to the moon and back in her visits to some 75 countries. She has earned her living as a professional travel writer for over two decades and authored or contributed to nearly 100 Lonely Planet titles as well as to newspapers, magazines and websites around the world. She also works as a travel consultant, translator and

editor. Andrea's destination expertise is especially strong when it comes to Germany, Dubai and the UAE, Crete and the Caribbean Islands. She makes her home in Berlin.



Polly Thomas

Trinidad & Tobago Polly has been writing about the Caribbean for 20 years, authoring guide books to Jamaica, Antigua & Barbuda, St Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago. Having lived for five years in Port of Spain, Trinidad, she's now back in her hometown, London, seeking out good roti and doubles whenever she can.



Luke Waterson

Puerto Rico Raised in the remote Somerset countryside in Southwest England, Luke quickly became addicted to exploring out-of-the-way places. While completing a Creative Writing degree at the University of East Anglia, he shouldered his backpack and vowed to see as much of the world as possible. Fast-forward a few years and he has traveled the Americas from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego and developed an obsession for Soviet architecture and pre-Columbian ruins in equal

measure. He divides his time between Wales and Slovakia, on which he keeps the world's leading English-language content site on Slovak travel and culture, www.englishmaninslovakia.co.uk.



Karla Zimmerman

British Virgin Islands, US Virgin Islands Karla lives in Chicago, where she eats doughnuts, yells at the Cubs, and writes stuff for books, magazines, and websites when she's not doing the first two things. She has contributed to 40-plus guidebooks and travel anthologies covering destinations in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and the Caribbean – all of which are a long way from the early days, when she wrote about gravel for a construction magazine and got to trek to places like

Fredonia, Kansas. To learn more, follow her on Instagram and Twitter (@karlazimmerman).



Brendan Sainsbury

Cuba Born and raised in the UK in a town that never merits a mention in any guidebook (Andover, Hampshire), Brendan spent the holidays of his youth caravanning in the English Lake District and didn't leave Blighty until he was nineteen. Making up for lost time, he's since squeezed 70 countries into a sometimes precarious existence as a writer and professional vagabond. His rocking chair memories will probably include staging a performance of 'A Comedy of Errors'

at a school in war-torn Angola, running 150 miles across the Sahara Desert in the Marathon des Sables, and hitchhiking from Cape Town to Kilimanjaro with an early, dog-eared copy of LP's *Africa on a Shoestring*. In the last 11 years he has written over 40 books for Lonely Planet, from Castro's Cuba to the canyons of Peru. When not scribbling research notes, Brendan likes partaking in ridiculous 'endurance' races, strumming old Clash songs on the guitar, and experiencing the pain and occasional pleasures of following Southampton Football Club.



Alex Egerton

Barbados, Grenada, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines A news journalist by trade, Alex has worked for magazines, newspapers and media outlets on five continents. Having had his fill of musty newsrooms and the insatiable corporate appetite for superficial news, Alex decided to leap into travel writing in order to escape the mundane. He spends most of his time on the road checking under mattresses, sampling suspicious street food and chatting with locals as part of

the research process for travel articles and guidebooks. A keen adventurer, Alex has hiked through remote jungles in Colombia, explored isolated tributaries of the mighty Mekong and taken part in the first kayak descent of a number of remote waterways in Nicaragua. When not on the road, you'll find him at home amongst the colonial splendor of Popayán in southern Colombia.



Anna Kaminski

Jamaica Having majored in Caribbean and Latin American history at university and having lived in Kingston and worked in Jamaica's prisons and ghettos in 2006, Anna was thrilled to research Jamaica for Lonely Planet a second time. On this occasion, she drove the scenic and often gnarly back roads of west Jamaica, visited numerous plantation houses, hiked through rugged Cockpit Country, attended the Maroon Festival, attended the country's second-largest reggae

gig and went to Boston Bay in search of Jamaica's best jerk pork. When not on the road for Lonely Planet, Anna calls London home.



Catherine Le Nevez

Anguilla, Saba, Sint Eustatius, St-Barthélemy, St-Martin/Sint Maarten

Catherine's wanderlust kicked in when she roadtripped across Europe from her Parisian base aged four, and she's been hitting the road at every opportunity since, travelling to around 60 countries and completing her Doctorate of Creative Arts in Writing, Masters in Professional Writing, and postgrad qualifications in Editing and Publishing along the way. Over the past dozen-plus years she's written scores of Lonely Planet guides and articles covering Paris, France, Europe and far beyond. Her work has also appeared in numerous online and print publications. Topping Catherine's list of travel

tips is to travel without any expectations.



Tom Masters

Guadeloupe, Martinique Dreaming since he could walk of going to the most obscure places on earth, Tom has always had a taste for the unknown. This has led to a writing career that has taken him all over the world, including North Korea, the Arctic, Congo and Siberia. Despite a brief spell living in the English countryside, Tom has always called London, Paris and Berlin home.

After graduating with a degree in Russian literature from the University of London, Tom went to work in Russia as a journalist at the *St Petersburg Times*. This first writing job took him on to work at the BBC World Service in London, and as a freelance contributor to newspapers and magazines around the world, as well as working in documentary production for UK and US television companies. Tom indulges his love of communist architecture by living on Karl-Marx-Allee in Berlin's Friedrichshain, but still returns regularly to the former Soviet Union for work. His most recent projects include guides to China, Central America and Venezuela. He can be found online at www.tommasters.net.



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Dublin, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Mara Vorhees

Aruba, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Curaçao Mara Vorhees writes about food, travel and family fun around the world. Her work has been published by *BBC Travel*, *Boston Globe*, *Delta Sky*, *Vancouver Sun* and more. For Lonely Planet, she regularly writes about destinations in Central America and Eastern Europe, as well as New England, where she lives. She often travels with her twin boys in tow, earning her an expertise in family travel. Follow their adventures and misadventures at www.havetwinswilltravel.com.



Paul Clammer

Jamaica Paul Clammer has worked as a molecular biologist, tour leader and travel writer. Since 2003 he has worked as a guidebook author for Lonely Planet, contributing to over 25 LP titles, covering swathes of South and Central Asia, West and North Africa and the Caribbean. In recent years he's lived in Morocco, Jordan, Haiti and Fiji, as well as his native England. Find him online at paulclammer.com or on Twitter as [@paulclammer](https://twitter.com/paulclammer). Paul also wrote the Plan and Survival

Guide sections of this guidebook.



Ashley Harrell

Dominican Republic, Haiti After a brief stint selling day-spa coupons door-to-door in South Florida, Ashley decided she'd rather be a writer. She went to journalism grad school, convinced a newspaper to hire her, and starting covering wildlife, crime and tourism, sometimes all in the same story. She traveled widely and moved often, from a tiny NYC apartment to a vast California ranch to a jungle cabin in Costa Rica, where she started writing for Lonely Planet. From there her travels became more exotic and farther flung, and she still laughs when paychecks arrive.



Liza Prado

Puerto Rico Liza Prado has been a travel writer since 2003, when she made a move from corporate lawyering to travel writing (and never looked back). She's written dozens of guidebooks and articles as well as apps and blogs to destinations throughout the Americas. She takes decent photos too. Liza is a graduate of Brown University and Stanford Law School. She lives in Denver, Colorado, with her husband and fellow LP writer, Gary Chandler, and their two kids.

OVER MORE
PAGE WRITERS

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