



# This Is the Caribbean

Rocked by music, rolled by change, lapped by turquoise waters, blown by hurricanes – the Caribbean is not a place anyone could call static. It's a lively and intoxicating profusion of people and places spread over 7000 islands (fewer than 10% are inhabited). But, for all they share, there's also much that makes them different. Forming a huge swath around the Caribbean Sea, the namesake islands contradict in ways big and small. Can there be a greater contrast than between bustling Barbados and its neighbor, the seemingly unchanged-since-colonial-times Saint Vincent? Or between booming British-oriented St Kitts and its sleepy, Dutch-affiliated neighbor Sint Eustatius, just across a narrow channel?

**You'll soon discover there is no typical Caribbean.** Azure seas, white beaches, green forests so vivid they actually hurt the eyes – there is nothing subtle about the bold colors of the Caribbean. Swim below the waters for a color chart of darting fish and corals. Wander along the sand and stop at the paint-factory explosion that is a beach bar, from the garish decor to the rum punch in your glass. Hike into emerald wilderness and spot the accents of red orchids and yellow parrots.

**All the colors are infectious.** Like birds shedding dull adolescent plumage, visitors leave their wardrobes of gray and black behind when they step off the plane and don the Caribbean palette. Even the food is colorful, with rainbows of produce brightening up the local markets. You'll also see every color but dull at intense, costume-filled festivities like Carnival, celebrated throughout the region.

**You can find any kind of island adventure here.** With so many islands, beaches, cultures, flavors and waves to choose from you are bound to have a fabulous time. Doing nothing on the sand, partying at a resort, exploring a new port of call, hopping between islands, discovering wonders under the water or catching a perfect wave above, reveling in a centuries-old culture, and finding your inner pirate are all possible.

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