



# Port Antonio & Northeast Coast

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## Best Places to Eat

- » Blueberry Hill Jerk Centre (p112)
- » Dickie's Best Kept Secret (p99)
- » Mikey's (p106)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Gee Jam (p102)
- » River Lodge (p113)
- » Kanopi House (p102)
- » Ambassabeth Cabins (p111)

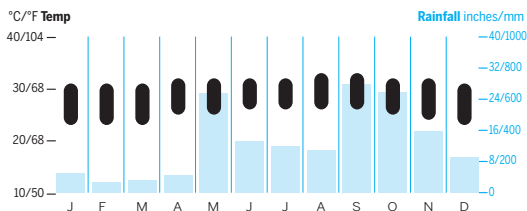
## Why Go?

Sleepy Portland parish is by far the least developed resort area in Jamaica, yet also the most rugged and scenic. Forested mountains with deep gorges and rushing rivers spread their fingers towards fringes of white sand and cool-blue surf that rolls into beach-lined coves. The folks are friendly, the hustle comparatively small. The only drawback is the constant rain but, hey, that's what keeps the parish green and gorgeous.

The only town of any size, colonial Port Antonio, hugs a half-moon bay that seems to be in a permanent state of mildewed – but romantic – entropy. Inland are lush expanses of tropical rain forest and the Rio Grande Valley, one of Jamaica's best territories for hiking and bird-watching. Along the coast you'll find a string of fishing villages and beach communities that possess two notable features: they're utterly charming, and oddly untouristed. Break some vacation frontiers, traveler.

## When to Go

### Port Antinio



**Feb** The weather will be (relatively) dry and you'll have a chance to see the Fi Wi Sinting festival (p19).

**Aug-Oct** Although the rains are vicious, you'll also likely get good wind for serious adventure surfing.

**Dec-Mar** Even in the high season this region doesn't see nearly as many crowds as the rest of Jamaica.

## History

The last of Jamaica's lands to be officially settled, Portland parish was the final great stronghold of the Windward Maroons, who survive to this day in the Rio Grande Valley with many African-based traditions intact. In the late 19th century Portland's economy enjoyed a precipitous spike thanks to the United States' newfound appetite for the banana. The fruit cargo ships that sailed to and from Port Antonio served double duty as transportation for some of Jamaica's first tourists, making 'Portie' the island's first destination resort. In recent years, Portland parish has led the nation in establishing 'green' tourism practices.

## Climate

Port Antonio enjoys a tropical climate with relatively high rainfall. The temperature hits an average of 33°C in summer and 28°C in winter. The evenings are cooled by wonderful breezes floating in off the mountains.

It rains most May to June and October to November.

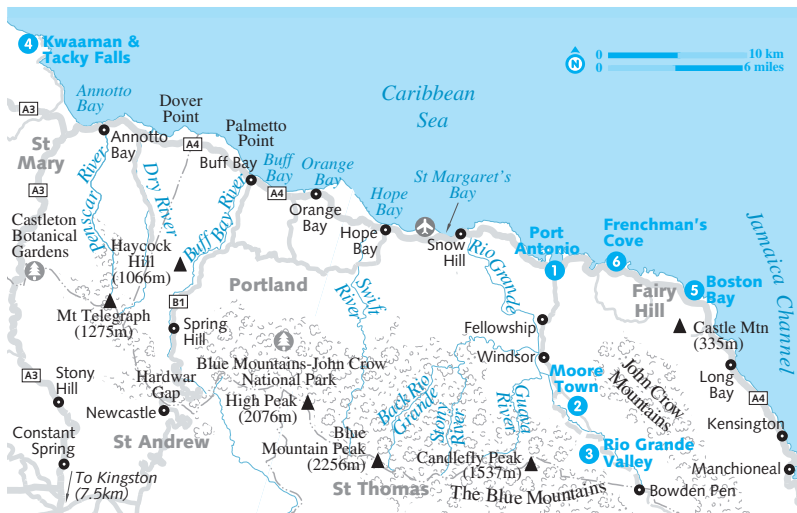
## Getting There & Away

Minibus and route-taxi traffic is high in and out of Port Antonio, where it's a simple matter to find local transportation to Ocho Rios, Kingston and beyond. Lots of yacht traffic goes in and out of Errol Flynn Marina. Ken Jones Aerodrome, near Port Antonio, was not receiving flights at the time of our visit; there was some talk of resurcting service, but the operative word is 'talk.'

## PORT ANTONIO

POP 14,400

If you took an ice-cream scoop out of the rainy northeast coast and surrounded it with a mess of markets, higglers and Georgian architecture slipping into various states of disrepair, you'd get Port Antonio, the laid-back yet endearingly real capital of laid-back, endearingly real Portland. There's definitely



## Port Antonio & Northeast Coast Highlights

- 1 Wandering the streets of picturesque, crumbling **Port Antonio** (p94)
- 2 Listening to the stories of the elders of the Windward Maroons at **Moore Town** (p110)
- 3 Drifting merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily on a raft down the Rio Grande past the former banana plantations in the verdant **Rio Grande Valley** (p108)
- 4 Contemplating the wonderful primordial **Kwaaman & Tacky Waterfalls** (p113) from the pools below
- 5 Stuffing your face with fine Jamaican jerk and shredding some waves with local surfers at **Boston Bay** (p106)
- 6 Enjoying **Frenchman's Cove** (p101), the pretty white-sand beach that hugs a blue estuary