

Welcome back to the Caribbean's best destination

Having established an extensive safe bubble for visitors, Jamaican tourism is already bouncing back

While travel to many other countries remains restricted, Jamaica continues to offer a much-needed vibrant burst of sunshine to the world's tourists. Since reopening its borders in June, the island that consistently ranks as the top Caribbean destination at the World Travel Awards has safely welcomed back 264,152 guests between June 15 and December 31 2020, who have rushed to embrace its famous and uniquely diverse culture, seek adventure in its lush tropical lands, mist-covered mountains and turquoise sea, or just relax on its peerless sandy beaches.



Edmund Bartlett
Minister of Tourism

"In June 2020, we became only the third country to receive the World Travel and Tourism Council's Seal of Safe Travel Approval," notes Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett. "By establishing resilience corridors to create a safe bubble for tourists we have been able to limit the spread of the virus. These corridors contain about 85 percent of all our tourism assets for visitors to fully enjoy."

The incredible variety of those assets makes Jamaica the ideal vacation destination for anybody. If you are yearning for an upbeat

resort experience and the chance to dance your cares away on the beach, for example, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios are obvious highlights. On the other hand, Negril, Port Antonio and the island's little-visited south coast offer more relaxed and secluded seaside pleasures. But there is so much more to Jamaica than just sun, sea and sand.

One of the things that make it such a special and memorable place is its warm and engaging people, who seem to have an innate ability to bring smiles to the faces of everyone. Then there is the rhythm of reggae and its



The boutique Rockhouse hotel and spa overlooks Negril's awe-inspiring cliffs

musical offshoots that provide the country with an unmistakable pulse that radiates out from the cosmopolitan capital, Kingston. Another distinction is the island's fabulously flavorful gastronomy, which utilizes freshly grown and caught delicacies to tantalize your tastebuds.

The uniqueness of Jamaica's topography also allows visitors to engage in a much wider range of activities in comparison with other Caribbean destinations, with everything from hiking, mountain biking, sea sports, cliff diving, river rafting and even bobsledding being available.

Easily accessible

Voted the region's leading airport at the World Travel Awards 2020, Jamaica's Sangster International Airport is currently go-

ing through a major expansion to make the country's unparalleled hospitality even more accessible, while investor optimism will see over 10,000 new hotel rooms built in the next couple of years.

Right now, however, the island stands ready to welcome all guests, says Bartlett. "We offer you an experience that is unmatched; we offer you an experience that is unforgettable; come to Jamaica, let us pamper you and keep you safe. Jamaica cares."

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Relax on a river raft and immerse yourself in Jamaica's natural beauty

Jamaica takes a leading role in global tourism resilience and crisis management

2020 proved the resilience in Jamaican tourism, an issue close to Minister of Tourism Edmund Bartlett's heart. "Tourism is a central pillar for many economies. It creates jobs, revenue and development; builds people, knowledge and capacity. Tourism is an industry that must survive the shocks of our time. We needed to build out support mechanisms to ensure that the sector's vulnerabilities don't overtake its capacity to manage, recover and thrive after crises. That's why Jamaica established the Global Tourism Resilience and Crisis Management Centre in 2018," he explains.

"It provides data that countries can access to prepare themselves to withstand contingencies like hurricanes, terrorism, economic or health crises. The center has also been measuring the resilience of countries to offer guidance for investors or travelers. Creating more resilience in communities is important as well: small- and medium-sized firms process about 80% of tourism but only get about 20% of the returns. We need to help build their capacity."

Jamaica will remain at the top of travel bucket lists

The Caribbean idyll is working hard to ensure it continues to offer tourists a larger-than-life vacation experience of their dreams

According to Donovan White, director of tourism at the Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB), "2019 was a record year, with 4.3 million visitors and tourism earnings of \$3.6 billion. Tourism directly contributed some 9.5% of our gross domestic product and about 34% when you add induced earnings."

Those figures took a hit in 2020, but the JTB took the opportunity of a quieter year to reevaluate the sector. "We have worked hard to enable tourism

to be rebuilt progressively for the future," he states. "Because of our powerful USPs, 42% of visitors are return guests but we have to continue our quest to be excellent in every possible way."

To maintain Jamaica's allure, the JTB is encouraging investments that develop tourism by expanding attractions and boosting the number of hotel rooms. It is also working to create more economic opportunities for the local product and service provid-



Donovan White
Director of Tourism, Jamaica Tourist Board

ers that gravitate around tourism and employ about 40% of the country's workforce, says White.

"We are supporting the development of human capital as well, so we can we service this expansion and make the product better in terms of service delivery. The Ministry of Tourism has financed the training of over 30,000 tour-

ism workers, for example." The JTB is also building new and deeper relationships with international partners like airlines, tour operators and travel agents. "We operate various offices around the world and spend a lot of time making sure we are connected, and that we understand and find solutions to our partners' needs," he notes.

Just 2-4 hours away, the U.S. generates about 65% of Jamaica's visitors, but the JTB aims to increase the island's accessibility for leisure and business tourists from places like Latin and South America, Japan and India, where there is growing demand. However, he points out, "Jamaica should be on the bucket list of anyone considering travel in 2021. You will be amazed at the larger-than-life experience you will have here, and will truly understand why we say Jamaica is the heartbeat of the world."



Jamaica welcomed nearly 500,000 cruise passengers in 2020

Top 5 things to do in the tropical paradise

- 1 Visit Bob Marley's home and recording studio
- 2 Eat freshly barbecued jerk lobster on the beach
- 3 Shop for diverse artisan-made local crafts
- 4 Get married in the world's top wedding destination
- 5 Swim with dolphins off the coast of Ocho Rios

JAMAICA
HEARTBEAT OF THE WORLD

Sun, Sea and Everything In Between

Let's go!

Safe travels

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