

NORTH AMERICA · BEACHES · FOOD · CULTURE · HIKING · NIGHTLIFE

 Jamaica

Jamaica is more than its all-inclusive north coast: Kingston's reggae history and food scene, the cool coffee country of the Blue Mountains, Portland's rainforest rivers and the slow south coast around Treasure Beach. Negril's cliffs and Seven Mile Beach deliver the sunsets, and jerk smoke drifts from roadside drums across the island.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Jamaica and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 6 May 2026.

 CAPITAL Kingston	 CURRENCY Jamaican dollar (JMD) £1 ≈ JMD 211	 LANGUAGE English, Jamaican Patois	 BEST TIME Dec–Apr
 DAILY BUDGET £55–£330 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type A, B 110V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 10h 30m direct ~£550–£1,150 return	 TIME ZONE UTC-5 standard time

Jamaica is about half the size of Wales, yet its regions feel distinct. Most visitors land at Montego Bay and stay on the north coast between Negril and Ocho Rios, where resorts, Dunn's River Falls and bamboo rafting on the Martha Brae cluster. A more rounded first trip adds Kingston for the Bob Marley Museum and Devon House, a night or two in the Blue Mountains, Portland's Blue Lagoon and Reach Falls near Port Antonio, and the south coast's Treasure Beach, Black River and YS Falls.

Jamaica is not a cheap island: resort prices are high and imported goods cost more than in Britain, though guesthouses, local cookshops and route taxis keep costs down for independent travellers. Vendors and self-appointed guides can be persistent around resort towns; a firm, friendly 'no thanks' usually works. Away from the resorts the pace is slow and roads are winding and potholed, so journeys take longer than maps suggest. It suits music and food lovers, hikers, and travellers happy to mix beach days with road trips.

Top 5 highlights

1

NATURE

Blue Mountains

Hike overnight to Blue Mountain Peak (2,256 m) for a sunrise that, on clear mornings, reaches as far as Cuba. Lower down, tour coffee estates such as Craghton and stay among the cool pines of Holywell.

2

NATURE

Dunn's River Falls

Climb around 180 m of terraced limestone cascades from the beach upwards, hand in hand with a guide, near Ocho Rios. Go early or on a day with no cruise ships in port, and wear water shoes.

3

BEACH

Negril

Seven Mile Beach is a long arc of pale sand on the island's western tip, made for lazy days. The West End's limestone cliffs are where people leap into deep water and crowds gather at Rick's Café for sunset.

4

CULTURE

Bob Marley Museum

Marley's former home and Tuff Gong studio at 56 Hope Road, Kingston, still shows bullet holes from the 1976 attempt on his life. Guided tours cover his life and music; Nine Mile, his birthplace and resting place, is in St Ann.

5

NATURE

Port Antonio and Portland

Jamaica's lushest parish: swim in the spring-fed Blue Lagoon, wade up Reach Falls, drift down the Rio Grande on a bamboo raft, and eat jerk at Boston Bay, which claims to be its birthplace.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Kingston

≈ 1 million people

Loud, creative and underrated, the capital has the Bob Marley Museum, Devon House, the National Gallery and Trench Town, with Port Royal and Spanish Town's Georgian square close by.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Montego Bay

≈ 110,000 people

Jamaica's tourism hub and main airport, with resort strips, Doctor's Cave Beach and the 'Hip Strip' on Gloucester Avenue; Rose Hall great house and Martha Brae rafting are close.

3RD LARGEST CITY

May Pen

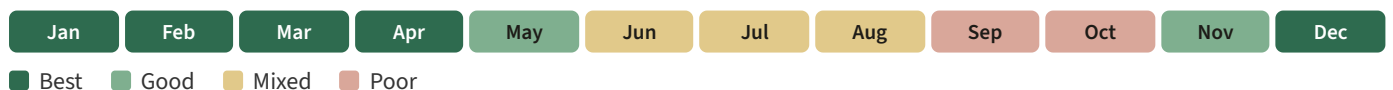
≈ 60,000 people

Clarendon's busy market town on the main road west from Kingston is a transit stop rather than a destination, though it is the turning for the Milk River mineral baths.

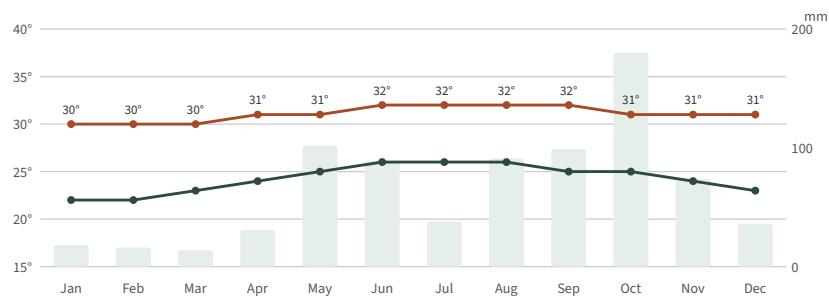
Kingston's figure includes the contiguous towns of Portmore and Spanish Town, which form one metropolitan area with the capital.

When to go to Jamaica

Best time: **Dec–Apr**.

**Average climate in Kingston**

— High °C — Low °C — Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jan	Accompong Maroon Festival Every 6 January the Maroon village of Accompong, in the Cockpit Country, celebrates Captain Cudjoe and the 1739 peace treaty with the British with drumming, abeng horns and feasting.
Apr	Jamaica Carnival Kingston's soca season builds through Lent to a costumed road march after Easter, with weekly fetes and J'ouvert paint parties; smaller and less frantic than Trinidad's.
Jul	Reggae Sumfest The Caribbean's biggest reggae and dancehall festival fills Montego Bay's Catherine Hall venue in mid-to-late July, with all-night shows from the island's biggest names.

How much does Jamaica cost?

SHOESTRING £55 per person / day ≈ JMD 11,610 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £140 per person / day ≈ JMD 29,554 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £330 per person / day ≈ JMD 69,663 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Ackee and saltfish Jamaica's national dish: ackee fruit, which cooks to a buttery, scrambled-egg texture, sautéed with salt cod, onion, peppers and tomato; a breakfast staple with fried dumplings.	Jerk chicken Chicken marinated in scotch bonnet, pimento (allspice) and thyme, then smoked over pimento wood in halved oil drums; eat it with hard dough bread or festival.	Curry goat Goat on the bone, slow-cooked with Jamaican curry powder, thyme and scotch bonnet and served with rice and peas at parties and Sunday dinners.
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Getting around

Most visitors use pre-booked transfers, tour drivers or hire cars, but Knutsford Express coaches link Kingston, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, Negril and other towns comfortably. The North-South toll highway cuts Kingston to Ocho Rios to well under two hours. Locals use cheap shared route taxis and minibuses. Licensed taxis carry red PP number plates; agree the fare first. Driving is on the left, on narrow, winding roads.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  A B 110V — bring a UK-to-A/B adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Ambulance: 110 Fire: 110 Police: 119 Source: FCDO “Getting help”
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DIALLING CODE

+1-876

TIME ZONE

UTC-5 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Varies — bottled or filtered is safer

DRIVING

On the left

TIPPING

Many all-inclusives include gratuities; elsewhere check the bill for a service charge, otherwise leave 10–15%. Tip guides, drivers and rafting captains directly.

ETIQUETTE

Greet people properly before asking for anything; a 'good morning' or 'good afternoon' goes a long way. Ask before photographing people, and cover up away from the beach.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Sangster International Airport (MBJ), Montego Bay; Norman Manley International Airport (KIN), Kingston

Visas & entry for Jamaica

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You do not need a visa to visit Jamaica. You will usually be granted entry for up to 90 days. The date you must leave Jamaica is stamped on your passport.

If you want to extend your stay, apply to the Jamaican Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency. If you overstay without authority, you could be fined or arrested.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Hepatitis A

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Chikungunya

Dengue

Hepatitis B

Bat Lyssavirus

Typhoid

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

A yellow fever certificate is only required if you arrive from (or transit through) a country with yellow fever risk — not if you fly direct from the UK.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Jamaica

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Boxing Day
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Wed 10 Feb 2027	Ash Wednesday
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sun 23 May 2027	National Labour Day
Mon 24 May 2027	National Labour Day (observed)
Sun 1 Aug 2027	Emancipation Day
Mon 2 Aug 2027	Emancipation Day (observed)
Fri 6 Aug 2027	Independence Day
Mon 18 Oct 2027	National Heroes Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Know before you go

- Check the FCDO travel advice before you go, use licensed taxis or hotel transfers after dark, and keep phones and valuables out of sight in Kingston and Montego Bay.
- US dollars are accepted in tourist areas, but paying in Jamaican dollars gets better prices at local shops, cookshops and route taxis; carry small notes.
- Hurricane season runs from June to November and peaks from August to October; buy travel insurance with storm cover and keep plans flexible if visiting then.