

destination focus...

Essential BARBADOS

Destination summary

Barbados is the most easterly of the Caribbean islands covering an area of 166 square miles. Barbados lies 400 kilometres north-east of Venezuela and 168 kilometres east of the islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Almost completely surrounded by coral reefs, with a tropical climate and gently sloping limestone plains, the island is a fertile growing ground for sugar cane which covers approximately 80% of the island. Rum is believed to be the oldest distilled spirit in the world; it was first made from sugar cane found growing on the island in the 1640's. Approximately 80,000 people live in the capital, Bridgetown. Main industries are tourism, banking, insurance and rum.

Brief history

The first indigenous peoples are thought to be the Amerindians who arrived from Venezuela between 350 and 400 BC. The Arawaks settled in about 800 and then Caribs from South America during the 13th century. The Portuguese claimed Barbados in the mid 1500's up until the British arrived in 1625. By the time the British landed, the Caribs had long since vanished. The British set up sugar cane plantations which later resulted in a flourishing trade for sugar, rum and molasses. This in turn made Barbados a common destination for slaves, continuing long after the abolition of slavery in 1834. Barbados retains a strong English culture despite having gained its independence in 1966. The influence of the English on Barbados is more noticeable than on other islands in the West Indies – a good example of this is the island's national sport, cricket.

Climate/when to go

The dry season runs from December through until May with the wet season from June to November. Average daily temperatures are between 29°C and 31°C all year round and rarely rise above 32°C. Barbados lies beyond the principal Atlantic hurricane belt.

Population/language/currency

The population of approximately 290,000 is made up of 80% African-Caribbean, 4% European and 16% mixed race. The religious make up is Protestant 36%, Catholic 3%, Muslim 1%. English is spoken everywhere although the Bajan dialect can be heard all around the island.

Currency is the Barbados dollar.

Barbados with Hosmark

Hosmark represent five 4*Elegant Hotels in Barbados. The House, Colony Club, Tamarind and Crystal Cove resorts on the West Coast; Turtle Beach is located on the South Coast. All offer breakfast, beach, pool, Ambassador service, complimentary water sports and a host more.

Colony Club: A sophisticated beach front resort set within 7 acres of lush, tropical gardens. With 96 rooms and theatre capacity for 75, it offers healthy dining options, spa and fitness classes.

Tamarind: Situated in an idyllic 750 foot crescent of white sand beach. With 104 rooms and theatre capacity for 100, it provides a fusion of contemporary and modern interior design with serene outdoor spaces.

The House: adults only, 34 suite retreat – blending minimalist South Beach style with Caribbean spirit and sophistication. Meetings can be accommodated at the adjacent property, Tamarind

Crystal Cove: a relaxed style, Premium all-inclusive resort with a cliff side setting offering 88 rooms and outdoor spaces for cocktails up to 120 guests.

Turtle Beach: with 161 rooms and theatre capacity for 55 and outdoor spaces for up to 150 guests this is an elegant, all-inclusive enclave on the island's lively South Coast.

Top Essential things to do

Barbados Museum: depicts the evolution and history of the island since the 16th century

Grenade Hall and Gun Hill Signal Stations: built in the early 1800's to relay messages around the island – excellent views

George Washington House: elegant Georgian house used by George Washington for 6 weeks on the only international trip he ever made.

Cherry Tree Hill: at 850 feet, the area offers wonderful views over the 'Scotland district'

Morgan Lewis Sugar Mill: 250 year old crushing mill, the largest remaining windmill in Barbados

Sir Frank Hutson Sugar Museum

Andromeda Botanical Gardens

Folkestone Underwater Park & Marine Reserve

Harrison's Cave: an amazing gallery of stalactites and stalagmites with streams of crystal clear water dropping down through waterfalls into deep emerald green pools

St John's Parish Church: a classic Gothic church built in 1836 offering spectacular views of the East Coast

St Nicholas Abbey: built in 1658 and one of only three genuine Jacobean mansions in the Western Hemisphere. A steam mill and rum distillery are in full operation and produce St Nicolas Abbey Rum

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Passports/visas/health

A valid passport is required by all visitors.
No visas are required from the UK and there are no compulsory vaccinations.
Barbados has one of the best healthcare facilities in the Caribbean.

Time zone

Barbados is 4 hours behind GMT.

Flight access

British Airways and Virgin both fly direct from the UK to Barbados.

The average flight time from the UK is 8/9 hours. Clearing customs at the Grantley Adams International Airport is a swift 40 minutes.

Hotel transfer times

From Grantley Adams International Airport:

- The House – 35 minutes
- Colony Club – 40 minutes
- Tamarind – 35 minutes
- Crystal Cove – 30 minutes
- Turtle Beach – 20 minutes



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Barbados with Hosmark

Popular group activities

- Jeep safari, fun fari, island tours
- Catamaran cruise, Jolly Roger trips
- Atlantis submarine, zip wire
- Swimming with turtles, surfing, stand-up paddling
- Oistins fish fry, carnival, night clubs, rum distilleries
- Cricket, polo, horse racing, golfing

F & B tips/info

Most popular themed evenings

- Bajan beach bbq
- Rum shack / steel pan or jazz evening

Team events:

- Lobster and Jazz
- Gourmet Safari
- Bajan seaside grill and authentic beach bbq

Must try:

- *Coucou*: a traditional dish of cornmeal and oil paste
- Flying fish, red snapper, mahi mahi grouper

Souvenirs/shopping

Barbados is a tax free and duty free haven with high end retail shops selling designer fashion, jewellery, crystal, fragrances, electronics and leather goods etc.

- Local produce includes rum, traditional preserves, sugar
- Paintings by a large number of local artists
- Jewellery including emeralds and diamonds
- Local crafts including pottery and tableware

Famous Bajans

Sir Garry Sobers: cricketer

Obadele Thompson and Ryan Braithwaite: athletes

George Lamming: writer

Rihanna: international pop singer