

Jamaica

Beach bums and workout warriors alike will be tempted by this tropical island's attractions.

FOR ALL THE BEAUTY THAT YOU'LL FIND ON THE island nation of Jamaica, perhaps the most beautiful is the serene passage of time. Whether you're walking along the shore, lying poolside or kayaking in the Caribbean Sea, the days casually linger on. And no one seems to mind if you're a few minutes late to dinner. No rat race. No schedules. No worries.

But one place time still does matter is in athletic competitions. Home to track stars and Olympic gold medalists Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell, Jamaica is working to become a health and fitness hub, not just a beach-bum tourist destination. So, whether you're a beginning triathlete looking to compete in your first race or a full-on fitness buff, Jamaica just might be that perfect combination of mellow vacation and workout high.

About Jamaica

Located nearly 600 miles south of Miami, Jamaica is home to more than 4,440 square miles of mountains, forests, rivers and sandy beaches. And while it's certainly known for its reggae music, jerk chicken, Blue Mountain coffee and Appleton rum, perhaps its biggest draw is the weather.

This island nation enjoys year-round high temperatures and humidity. After all, it's a tropical island. If you're trying to decide when to go, remember this: The rainy seasons are May to June and September to November, plus hurricane season runs from June to September. The high tourist season runs from early December to mid-April.

Once a British colony, Jamaica has been an independent nation since 1962. It did, however, opt to become part of the British Commonwealth after gaining its independence. Still, the British influence lingers today, especially in the names of its three counties: Cornwall, Middlesex and Surrey.

Where to Stay

Depending on which part of the island you wish to stay, there are various resorts to fit your needs. Here are a just a few:

Jamaica Inn. Located in Ocho Rios, the Jamaica Inn offers a 700-foot private beach and views of the Caribbean Sea from every suite. Relaxed yet elegant, the Inn once hosted Marilyn Monroe and Arthur Miller, Noël Coward and Errol Flynn.

Couples Resorts. Couples boasts romantic destinations throughout Jamaica, including four luxury all-inclusive, couples-only resorts – Tower Isle, Sans Souci, Swept Away and Negril.

Half Moon. This Rose Hall resort spans 400 acres along a private white-sand beach. An 18-hole championship golf course, golf academy, tennis courts and 51 swimming pools welcome guests.

Swim, Bike, Run

For the past two years, hard bodies from the Caribbean, the U.S., Europe and beyond have come together to make the rest of us look just plain lazy. And they'll do it again this year on October 23.

The ideal way to wind down your triathlon season – or a great first race for beginners – is the annual Rose Hall Triathlon in Montego Bay, which features both an international distance and a sprint race. International distance competitors are in it for the long haul – a 1,500-meter swim, 40K bike ride and a 10K run, while sprinters race half

Great Escapes Jamaica



Clockwise from top: Half Moon resort in Rose Hall; inside the Royal Villa at Half Moon resort; Rose Hall Triathlon; Cinnamon Hill Golf Course and Aqueduct

the distance. Duathletes also can compete in the bike and the run at the sprint distances.

While the course includes a daunting climb in the bike leg and concludes with "The Witch," which organizers brag is the steepest final 200 meters of any triathlon, it remains an idyllic location. After all, the swim launches from a white-sand beach into the Caribbean Sea, and the run takes you through the picturesque Cinnamon Hill championship golf course.

When it's all done, participants and spectators can catch some rays on the lawn in front of The Great House – an impressive plantation home built in 1770 where you

just might catch a glimpse of the ghost of its infamous owner, Annie Palmer, also known as "The White Witch of Rose Hall."

Plus, the Rose Hall Wellness Festival boasts vendors from all over the island that complement a triathlete's – or anyone's – healthy lifestyle.

When the Race Is Done

Like other tropical beach locales, part of the joy of Jamaica is that you really don't have to *do* anything to enjoy it. Find a chaise lounge or a hammock, and consider that the hard part of your day. And hey, if you've just completed a triathlon, your body will have earned the rest.

But if you're more of a go-see-do vacationer, or you want your family to stay occupied while you train, there's plenty to go, see and do.

Ride the Jamaican Bobsled. OK, it's not really a bobsled, but the one-man ride at Mystic Mountain will give you a bit of the thrill of the icy plunge. On a 3,280-foot twisty track, you control the speed of your car (up to 40 miles an hour). Mystic Mountain also offers guests an easygoing chairlift ride through the tropical canopy and a zip-line canopy tour.

Strengthen Bonds. The brainchild of Jamaican-born Derrick Evans (known as Mr. Motivator to his fans in the UK), H'Evans Scent is an ecotourism experience designed to bring teams together and entertain groups with exhilarating activities. In the hills of St. Ann, H'Evans Scent offers a unique zip-lining experience – try climbing 30 feet up to the platform and then zipping 440 feet over a green valley. Try out other thrill rides, rest in a hammock and enjoy a light lunch.

GUIDEBOOK



Getting There

Traveling to Jamaica just got easier, thanks to US Airways' new nonstop flights from Phoenix to Montego Bay, which operate during the high tourist season. Visit usairways.com for reservations.



Weather

Tourist season: early December to mid-April

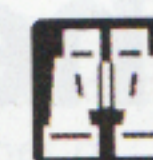
Rainy season: May to June and September to November

Hurricane season: June to September



Sleep & Stay

- **Couples Resorts:** Check Website for pricing; 800-268-7537, couples.com
- **Half Moon:** \$355-\$1,800 per night, mid-December through mid-April; \$205-\$1,250 mid-April through mid-December; 888-830-5974, halfmoon.com
- **Jamaica Inn:** \$590-\$1,660 per night, mid-December through mid-April; \$300-\$750 per night mid-April through mid-December; 800-837-4608, jamaicainn.com



Activities

- **Bob Marley Mausoleum:** 876-995-1763, visitjamaica.com/attractions/bob-marley-mausoleum.aspx
- **Cinnamon Hill Golf Club:** 876-953-2984 or 3981, cinnamonhilljamaica.com
- **Dunns River Falls:** dunnsriverja.com
- **H'Evans Scent:** 876-857-5592, hevansscent.com
- **Mystic Mountain:** 866-SKY-TRAM (8726), rainforestbobsled-jamaica.com
- **Rose Hall Triathlon:** October 23, 2010; 888-910-ROSE (7673), rosehalltriathlon.com



Information

Jamaica Tourist Board:

800-233-4582, visitjamaica.com



Fresh coconuts are one way to enjoy a fruity drink seaside in Jamaica.

Experience Bob Marley. Get into the spirit of reggae at the Bob Marley Experience at Nine Mile, Marley's birthplace and final resting place. Visit his boyhood home, which today is a museum and photo gallery, stand on Mt. Zion Rock and walk through the mausoleum.

Hit the Links. If you haven't played a round of golf with the Caribbean breeze in your face, Jamaica's 12 courses await. If you're staying near Montego Bay, try out Cinnamon Hill Golf Club at Rose Hall Resort & Country Club. Catch views of the Rose Hall Great House; tee off adjacent to ancient aqueducts; and sneak a peak at Johnny Cash's former vacation home.

Climb the Falls. Jamaica's most photographed attraction, the majestic Dunns River Falls marks the Dunns River's entrance into the Caribbean Sea. The 600-foot-long cascade is more than just a photo op. Climb

the falls, and guides can help show you the way. Explore the caves, wade in the pools and savor a picnic lunch in the garden. Not interested in the climb? No worries. Simply take in the scenery and indulge in a fruity cocktail beachside.

For travelers wanting to take a week off and do nothing but drink umbrella-adorned rum cocktails, Jamaica fits the bill. But it's also an idyllic retreat for golf enthusiasts, action-adventure vacationers and athletes alike. And once you step out of the airport and take in your first tropical breath, you'll be inspired to stash away your laptop and power down your smartphone. After all, Jamaica is a destination with no worries, mon.

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