

BOKANA TRAVEL

JAMAICA · CARIBBEAN

TRAVEL GUIDE 2026

JAMAICA

Jamaica is more than beaches: waterfalls you climb, clifftop sunsets in Negril, high-grown Blue Mountain coffee and the story of reggae in Kingston.

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THE ESSENTIALS

WATERFALLS, REGGAE AND MOUNTAIN-GROWN COFFEE

Jamaica is the largest island in the English-speaking Caribbean, with a character all its own: English is the official language, but on the street patois (the local Creole) rules; music plays everywhere, and the food revolves around jerk and ackee. The north coast and the western tip hold most of the tourism, from Negril through Montego Bay to Ocho Rios, while Kingston, the capital, keeps the history of reggae and is the gateway to the Blue Mountains.

Hurricane Melissa, a Category 5 storm, made landfall on October 28, 2025, in Westmoreland in the southwest, hitting that parish, St. Elizabeth and Montego Bay hard. Tourism has bounced back fast: the airports are running normally, Dunn's River Falls reopened within two weeks and Negril recovered best of all. Still, at the end of September 2026 about 28% of hotels remained closed, so confirm each hotel before you book.

WHERE IT IS

Caribbean island south of Cuba; the main tourist hubs are Montego Bay, Negril, Ocho Rios and Kingston, the capital.

GETTING THERE

Nonstop with Wingo to Montego Bay: from Bogotá (Thursdays and Sundays, about 2 h 50 min) and from Medellín (Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays). To Kingston, connect in Panama City on Copa.

WEATHER

Tropical: in the lowlands, 23.5 to 30 °C (74 to 86 °F) most of the year; in Montego Bay, highs range from 29.8 °C (86 °F) in January to 33.4 °C (92 °F) in August. Most rain falls from May to October; December to April is drier.

DOCUMENTS

For Colombian passport holders: a valid passport, no visa for stays of up to 30 days, and the online C5 immigration and customs form, plus a yellow fever vaccination certificate.

MONEY

Jamaican dollar (JMD). US dollars are accepted almost everywhere tourists go, but your change may come back in JMD at the shop's own rate; carry JMD for markets, taxis and small purchases.

LANGUAGE

English (official), with Jamaican patois in everyday life.

TIME ZONE

UTC-5, no daylight saving time: same time as Colombia.

PLUGS

Types A and B, 110 V, 50 Hz. Colombian chargers work without an adapter.

DON'T MISS

HIGHLIGHTS

01
DUNN'S RIVER FALLS

A terraced travertine waterfall near Ocho Rios, about 55 m (180 ft) high and 180 m (590 ft) long, that spills into the sea. You climb it in a human chain with a guide, in 1 to 1.5 hours. It reopened in November 2025. Wear water shoes.

02
SEVEN MILE BEACH AND RICK'S CAFÉ

In Negril, about 11 km (7 mi) of beach runs between Bloody Bay and Long Bay. In the afternoon, head to the West End: from the cliffs at Rick's Café people jump more than 12 m (39 ft), and the sunset is the main event. Only jump if you're a strong swimmer.

03
THE BLUE MOUNTAINS AND THEIR COFFEE

A UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2015. The classic hike up Blue Mountain Peak (2,256 m / 7,402 ft) starts in the small hours so you reach the top at sunrise; on clear days you can see Cuba. Visit a coffee farm and buy coffee with the JACRA seal.

04
BOB MARLEY MUSEUM

Bob Marley's former home at 56 Hope Road, Kingston, is open for guided tours. Inside are a theater, a photo gallery and a record shop. If you're into music, pair it with a tour of Tuff Gong studio.

05
BLUE HOLE, OCHO RIOS

Blue pools set in tropical forest on the outskirts of Ocho Rios; the official name is Island Gully Falls. There are ledges and ropes for launching yourself into the water, and the rocks are slippery. Go with a local guide and skip days of heavy rain.

06
RAFTING THE MARTHA BRAE

A trip of about 5 km (3 mi) on a bamboo raft down the Martha Brae River near Falmouth, steered by licensed captains. It's a mellow outing of around an hour. The river had to be cleared after Melissa, so confirm it's operating.





PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHEN TO GO

The dry season, December to April, is the best time to go: more sunny days, less rain and calm seas. May and October are the wettest months, and the Atlantic hurricane season runs June 1 – November 30, peaking from mid-August to mid-October, according to NOAA. If you travel in those months, buy insurance with cancellation coverage and follow the National Hurricane Center's advisories.

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

BEST

DEC – APR

The best time to go.

GOOD

JUN – JUL · NOV

A good time, with a catch on weather or crowds.

RAINY

MAY · AUG · OCT

More rain: keep plans flexible.

AVOID

SEP

Peak of hurricane season.

WHAT YOU NEED TO TRAVEL

For Colombian passport holders: no visa is needed for Jamaica for tourism, business or cultural exchange trips of up to 30 days, a rule in place since March 16, 2012. Before you fly, you must complete the online C5 immigration and customs form. Traveling on another passport? Requirements differ, so message us and we'll check yours.

- Valid Colombian passport. PICA doesn't publish a minimum validity; to be safe, travel with at least 6 months left on it.
- International yellow fever vaccination certificate: Jamaica requires it from travelers arriving from countries with yellow fever risk, including Colombia. Get the shot at least 10 days before you fly.
- No visa for stays of up to 30 days for tourism, business or cultural exchange (PICA and Colombia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- C5 immigration and customs form, mandatory online since September 1, 2023, at enterjamaica.com. You can complete it up to 30 days before arrival, and you'll get a confirmation by email.
- Keep your return ticket, accommodation booking and proof of funds handy: the airline or the immigration officer may ask for them.

Checked in October 2026 with Passport, Immigration and Citizenship Agency (PICA): Entry Visa Requirements. Rules change, so confirm with the official source before you travel, or message us and we'll help.

WHAT WE'D TELL A FRIEND

BOKANA TIPS

1 Licensed transportation

Use taxis and transfers approved by the Jamaica Tourist Board, with a blue JTB sticker and an identified driver. Avoid informal transportation and night buses, and don't walk around at night outside tourist areas.

2 Sensible safety

The US lowered its travel advisory for Jamaica to Level 2 in January 2026. Violence is concentrated in parts of Kingston, Spanish Town and some areas of Montego Bay; in tourist zones the main risk is theft.

3 Tips and service charges

Many hotels and restaurants add a 10 to 15% service charge; if the bill doesn't include one, leave around 15%. Tip guides and drivers in Jamaican dollars, which they don't have to exchange.

4 Confirm your hotel after Melissa

Some hotels in Montego Bay and on the south coast are still reopening in phases, and several say they won't be back until 2027. Before you pay, confirm your hotel and tours are operating.

5 C5 form before the airport

Fill it out at enterjamaica.com with your hotel's address and save the confirmation email on your phone. Use only the official site and steer clear of pages that charge to process it.

6 Blue Mountain Peak at sunrise

The hike is about 11 km (7 mi) with 910 m (2,986 ft) of elevation gain and usually starts around 2 a.m. Bring a jacket, a headlamp and a guide: it gets properly cold at the top.

7 Basic patois

English is all you need, but you'll hear patois all the time. Say hello before you ask a question or buy something: in Jamaica, courtesy opens conversations and gets you better prices at the markets.

TRAVEL MINDFULLY

When you snorkel in Negril Marine Park, a protected area of about 160 km^2 (62 sq mi), wear mineral sunscreen and never touch or stand on the coral. And when you can, eat and shop at local businesses in the west and south of the island, which are still recovering from Hurricane Melissa.

WHERE TO EAT

OUR RESTAURANT PICKS

Chosen for their food, their track record and what past diners say. Price: $ budget · $$ mid-range · $$$ splurge.

SCOTCHIES $

Wood-fired Jamaican jerk · Montego Bay

★ **4.1** · 2,228 reviews on Google Maps

Montego Bay's benchmark for jerk: chicken and pork marinated and slow-cooked over pimento wood, in a casual open-air setting.

What diners love: Reviewers love the smoky jerk and the authentic feel; several warn that service can be slow and the spice level is serious.

Order: Jerk chicken or pork with festival (sweet fried dumpling)

It's close to the airport: a good stop when you land or before you fly out.

HOUSEBOAT GRILL $$$

Chef-driven Caribbean · Bogue Lagoon, Montego Bay

★ **4.4** · 1,071 reviews on Google Maps

Dinner on a houseboat in Bogue Lagoon, inside Montego Bay Marine Park. It was operating normally after Hurricane Melissa.

What diners love: Diners call it romantic and original, with good service and standout lobster; prices are high, and you'll want insect repellent.

Order: Grilled lobster or surf and turf

Book ahead, especially for a sunset table.

RICK'S CAFÉ $$

Bar and Jamaican kitchen · West End, Negril

★ **4.4** · 10,342 reviews on Google Maps

Negril's classic spot for sunset over the cliffs, with cliff divers and live music. It reopened in mid-December 2025.

What diners love: The sunset and the divers get the most praise; several mention high prices, big crowds and uneven service.

Order: A Red Stripe at sunset

Arrive before 5 p.m. to get a good spot.

PUSHCART JERK CENTER & RUM BAR $

Jamaican street food · West End, Negril

★ **4.6** · 876 reviews on Google Maps

Jerk and Jamaican street dishes facing the West End cliffs, in a relaxed setting at fair prices.

What diners love: Many rank it among the best meals of their trip: Jamaican flavors, live music and a view of the sea.

Order: Jerk platter or peppa shrimp (spicy pepper shrimp)

MISS T'S KITCHEN $$

Home-style Jamaican cooking · Ocho Rios

★ **4.2** · 1,770 reviews on Google Maps

Traditional Jamaican cooking in Ocho Rios, a good way to try home-style dishes away from the resorts.

What diners love: Reviewers highlight the generous portions, home-cooked flavor and atmosphere; at peak hours the wait gets long.

Order: Oxtail pasta or curried goat

Ideal for lunch after Dunn's River Falls.

DEVON HOUSE BAKERY $

Jamaican bakery · Devon House, Kingston

★ **4.4** · 3,236 reviews on Google Maps

On the grounds of Devon House, Kingston's historic mansion. Its patties are a local classic, and the I-Scream ice cream shop is right next door.

What diners love: Fans praise the curry goat and ackee-and-saltfish patties; many follow them with ice cream from I-Scream next door.

Order: Curry goat patty

Pair it with the Bob Marley Museum, a few minutes away.

Ratings and review counts checked in October 2026; they change over time. Review summaries are our own. Hours and prices vary, so check before you go.

LOCAL FLAVORS

WHAT TO EAT

ACKEE AND SALTFISH

The national dish: ackee, a fruit with soft yellow flesh, sautéed with salt cod, onion and hot pepper. It's eaten at breakfast.

BEEF PATTY

A golden, flaky pastry filled with spicy ground beef. It's the go-to quick lunch all over the island.

JERK

Chicken or pork marinated with allspice and scotch bonnet pepper, then slow-cooked over coals. Ask for the sauce on the side.

BLUE MOUNTAIN COFFEE

High-grown coffee from the island's eastern mountain range. Buy bags labeled 100% Jamaica Blue Mountain with the JACRA seal.



BOKANA TRAVEL

PICTURE YOURSELF IN JAMAICA? LET'S PLAN IT TOGETHER.

Join one of our groups on your own, or bring your people on a private trip. Scan the code or message us.

Chat with us on WhatsApp

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SOURCES

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PICA: Travel Documents Required
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