

Caribbean Insider Snapshot

Your Guide to Six Islands Worth Knowing

Jamaica	Dominican Republic	Turks & Caicos	ABC Islands (Aruba, Bonaire, Curaçao)
Vibe: Reggae heartbeat, laid-back island soul, genuine warmth	Vibe: Merengue energy, colonial history, adventure-ready	Vibe: Pristine, exclusive, barefoot luxury	Vibe: Dutch colonial charm, excellent diving, consistent sunshine
Must-Experience: Dunn's River Falls, Blue Hole (also known as Blue Lagoon), YS Falls	Must-Experience: Punta Cana beaches, Santo Domingo's Zona Colonial, Saona Island, Damajagua waterfalls	Must-Experience: Grace Bay Beach, Smith's Reef for snorkeling, Iguana Island, Thursday Fish Fry (local life); Secret Beach (Middle Caicos)	Must-Experience: Aruba's Eagle Beach, Curaçao's Willemstad architecture, Bonaire's house reef diving
Flavor Profile: Jerk chicken, ackee & saltfish, fresh tropical fruits	Flavor Profile: Mofongo, sancocho, fresh seafood, local cacao, mamajuana (Dominican rum)	Flavor Profile: Conch, fresh grouper, Caribbean spices, tropical cocktails	Flavor Profile: Keshi yena (stuffed cheese), fresh seafood, Dutch pastries, local Arak liqueur
Best Window: Mid-November through mid-April (hurricane season ends October)	Best Window: Mid-November through March (dry season)	Best Window: November through April (dry, calm seas)	Best Window: Year-round; outside traditional hurricane belt (May–October still warm & dry)
Weather: 75–85°F year-round; afternoon showers common	Weather: 75–88°F; September–October sees most rain	Weather: 75–85°F; brief showers possible May–October	Weather: 78–88°F; minimal rainfall, consistent trade winds
Insider Tip: Greet locals with genuine curiosity – it opens doors	Insider Tip: Venture beyond the all-inclusive for authentic local experiences	Insider Tip: Pricier than neighbors, but the beaches hands down justify it – plan accordingly	Insider Tip: Less crowded than other Caribbean islands – perfect for those seeking calm; <i>surprising fact</i> – <i>native cacti are often found near the ocean</i>
Time Zone: Central (same as Chicago)	Time Zone: Atlantic (1 hour ahead of Chicago)	Time Zone: Atlantic (1 hour ahead of Chicago)	Time Zone: Atlantic (1 hour ahead of Chicago)
Flight Time: ~4 hours	Flight Time: ~4 hours	Flight Time: ~4.5 hours	Flight Time: ~5.5 hours
Currency: Jamaican Dollar (JMD); ~150 JMD = \$1 USD	Currency: Dominican Peso (DOP); ~58 DOP = \$1 USD	Currency: US Dollar	Currency: Aruban Florin (AWG), Curaçao Guilder (ANG), Bonaire Dollar (USD); varies by island

Next Steps?

Ready to Go Deeper...Let's Talk

This snapshot gives you the flavor of each island, literally and figuratively. But choosing the right Caribbean destination for your travel style, budget, and dreams? That's where the real magic happens. If this snapshot helped you see the possibilities, imagine what we'll uncover when we plan your perfect Caribbean escape together. Each island has stories the guidebooks don't tell, and I know them all.

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