

An Island Vacation in the Caribbean

Ever since colonial times, American visitors have loved to visit the Caribbean. These islands have been the favorite destination for many dream vacations. Over the past 50 years, tourism to the area has increased greatly, and today millions of U.S. citizens visit the islands every year to enjoy all that the islands have to offer # beaches, fun in the sun, thrilling water adventure, and communing with nature.

But just what is it that makes the Caribbean so dramatically different from all other vacation destinations out there? And how could you increase your fun during your Caribbean dream vacation?

In the Old 'West Indies'

The first sets of explorers who came to the shores of the Caribbean were Europeans. At the time, they were seeking a sea route to India and when they found this tiny group of islands in the middle of the vast sea, they referred to it simply as the "West Indies." They thought that they had landed in the Indies (then meaning all of south and east Asia) when in fact they had reached the Americas. Later on, it was changed to the Caribbean, after the Caribs who were one of the dominant Amerindian groups in the area at the time of European contact.

The Caribbean is actually a series of tropical islands in the Caribbean Sea. It is located between North and South America and east of Central America. Its more than 7,000 islands extend for nearly 1,700 miles from Cuba in the west to Barbados in the east and are bordered by many islets, reefs, and cays. There are a total of 25 territories, consisting of sovereign states, overseas departments, and dependencies.

Each one of the islands of the Caribbean has its own personal flair and style. No two islands are the same and you experience something different as you hop from one island to another. The Caribbean has a wealth of cultures, languages, natural environments, scenery, activities, and entertainment all worth checking out. Whether you want the adrenaline rush of extreme sports, being at one with nature up a hiking trail, total relaxation under the sun, or an evening of dancing at a rave party # the Caribbean has it all.