

# Caribbean holidays: These islands are open for business after last year's hurricanes

CARIBBEAN update: Following a horrific hurricane season last year, Express.co.uk looks at which islands have recovered, and where is currently open for business.

By ELLY BLAKE

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Many Caribbean islands were devastated last year including Anguilla and Barbuda

Last year, the 2017 hurricane season caused unrivalled levels of carnage across the Caribbean leaving communities battered and devastated - causing close to £210 billion worth of damage, according to the Red Cross.

Among the worst was Hurricane Irma, a category five storm which was the most powerful one to ever be recorded across the Atlantic Ocean. This was rapidly replaced with Hurricane Jose, which wreaked havoc on Antigua and Barbuda.

Days later, Maria, a category three hurricane, devastated the islands of Dominica and Puerto Rico - with winds of up to 160 mph recorded.

The islands of St. Kitts, the Dominican Republic and Antigua all miraculously managed to remain unscathed.

However, over six months on, the Caribbean islands are making major progress on the road to recovery. According to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation's (CTO) hurricane update, some of the worst affected destinations - including Dominica, Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Anguilla and Puerto Rico - "continue to make progress", it was reported by TTG.



The whole region saw brutal natural disasters in 2017

## Anguilla

A tourist board update for the island of Anguilla has stated that the "post-Irma recovery has exceeded our expectations" and is now back open for business.

The website also lists all of the hotels, restaurants, transport and activity services which are open - of which there are many.

The island has also welcomed a number of new luxury hotels since January 2018, such as Zemi Beach House.



The British Virgin Islands were hit repeatedly as this aerial photograph shows

## British Virgin Islands

At the time, the top wind speed to hit the British Virgin Islands was a staggering 215mph, devastating everything in its path.

However, tourism to this idyllic archipelago seems undeterred. Restaurants, hotels and charter boat companies are back in business, and nautical tourism continues to boom.

Parts of Sir Richard Branson's Necker Island, which was left devastated, are due to reopen in October 2018.



Prince Charles saw the destruction in Barbuda first-hand

## Barbuda

In Barbuda, 95 per cent of the island's buildings were destroyed by Hurricane Irma, the Red Cross revealed.

The ferocious hurricane left the island "uninhabitable" and Ronald Sanders, the Antigua and Barbuda ambassador to the US, branded it a "humanitarian disaster", CNN reported.

As a result, 97 per cent of the island's 1,700 population, were evacuated to neighbouring Antigua.

According to TTG, the tiny island of Barbuda only has 100 hotel rooms - with Barbuda Belle due to reopen to the public in November 2018.

Meanwhile, the Red Cross is working to rebuild homes, re-establish clean water supplies and instal hygiene sanitation and healthcare.

## Hurricane Maria: Damage in the Caribbean

Wed, September 27, 2017

Latest pictures as Hurricane Maria left a trail of destruction across the Caribbean

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1 of 62 REUTERS

Cars make their way under a partially-collapsed utility pole one week after Hurricane Maria raked the island, in Frederiksted, St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands

## Dominica

Following Maria, Dominica has made "major progress," the CTO reported. This includes routes to and from the island, essential services and amenities and transport links around the island, which is slightly smaller than New York City.

"Nothing is better for our recovering... than visitors to our island," commented Colin Piper, chief executive of the Discover Dominica Authority.

"We have made significant progress in getting the island ready for guests. Whether it's for a relaxing getaway, special event or meaningful travel, visitors will see the same vibrant spirit of our people and beautiful scenery and features that make Dominica the Nature Island of the Caribbean," Piper added.



Cuba was also struck by Hurricane Irma

## Cuba

100,000 Cuban homes were slammed by Hurricane Irma, and Havana was one of the worst hit by flood damage.

However, much of Havana was cleaned up within weeks and tourism facilities re-opened in time for the winter season.

The Red Cross has been working in Cuba to restore access to clean water, improve sanitation and rebuild damaged homes.

## Tsunami warning after earthquake strikes Caribbean

EXPECTED AFTERSHOCKS	
ORIGINAL 7.6 M	AVG
MAGNITUDE 6.6+	10
5.6+	100
4.6+	1,000
3.6+	

EARTHQUAKE OFF HONDURAS, TSUNAMI WAVES POSSIBLE

LIVE 4:30 AM GMT

## Puerto Rico

According to TTG, there were more than 120 Puerto Rico Tourism Company-endorsed hotels open as of mid-February, with more set to re-open during the year.

Over the Easter Break, many hotels operated at or near 100 per cent occupancy, showing promising signs that the island is back open for business.

All airports to the country are now also open, and the capital San Juan has even been tipped as one of Lonely Planet's best cities to visit in 2018.