Summer on sale in the Caribbean: Stay at luxurious resorts at a huge discount

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More often adored for cold weather lures rather than hot weather tours, a summer vacation in the Caribbean is easy on the wallet and a great way to audition an island before spending the big bucks for a winter vacation.

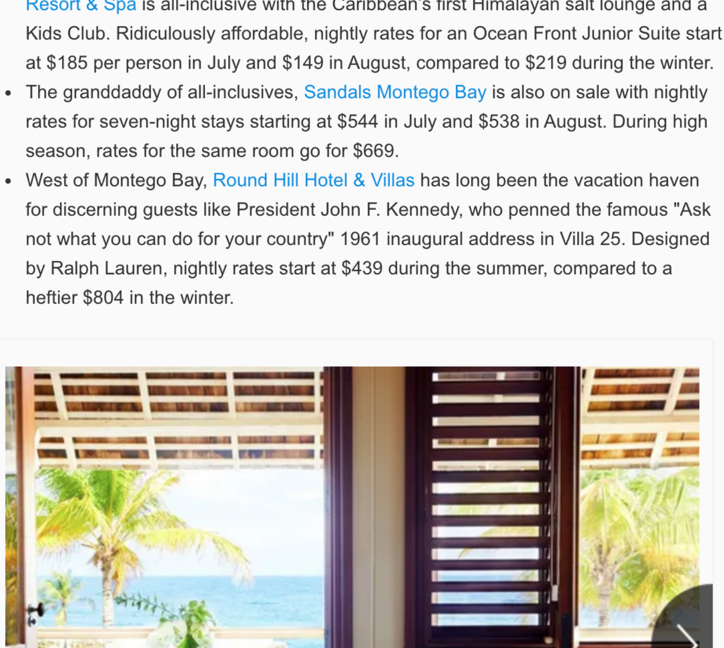
There's no shortage of beach chairs, flights are plenty and hotels are dishing up perks galore.

Shake it up this summer and swap those backyard barbecues and buggy city nights for breezy trade winds and bargains on the beach.

Jamaica

Jamaica is red hot during the summer with affordable beds for heads and Sumfest; Caribbean's biggest reggae blowout from July 14-20.

- For music fans, hotels are discounting rates like at the oh-so-hip S Hotel Jamaica on the Hip Strip in Montego Bay, where a nightly stay starts at $179 and Half Moon Resort, where luxury is on sale with nightly rates, including airport transfers, starting at $222.30 for four-night stays.
- Island cool in Negril, Sunset at the Palms is a treehouse-style adults-only resort with all-inclusive rates starting at $152 per person, compared to $215 during high season. Fun all summer, the funky hotel hosts Jamaica-Rama, chockablock with mixology classes with the bartenders and lunch with the affable goats who call the hotel home.
- More all-inclusive beach bargains can be found at Jewel Dunn's River Beach Resort nearby the waterfalls in Ocho Rios, where nightly rates start at $137 per person, compared to $196 during peak season. Perks include unlimited play at Runaway Bay Golf Club.
- Also in Ocho Rios, Moon Palace is a 704-room all-inclusive playground on the beach with summer nightly rates starting at $264 per person with gratis play and stay for kids. The same room goes for $376 in high season. Families staying five to eight nights get a generous $1,500 resort credit that buys spa treatments, catamaran sails and swims with the dolphins. Extras include 24-hour room service and free phone calls to the U.S.
- Fifteen minutes from Sangster International Airport, Jewel Grande Montego Bay Resort & Spa is all-inclusive with the Caribbean's first Himalayan salt lounge and a Kids Club. Ridiculously affordable, nightly rates for an Ocean Front Junior Suite start at $185 per person in July and $149 in August, compared to $219 during the winter.
- The granddaddy of all-inclusives, Sandals Montego Bay is also on sale with nightly rates for seven-night stays starting at $544 in July and $538 in August. During high season, rates for the same room go for $669.
- West of Montego Bay, Round Hill Hotel & Villas has long been the vacation haven for discerning guests like President John F. Kennedy, who penned the famous "Ask not what you can do for your country" 1961 inaugural address in Villa 25. Designed by Ralph Lauren, nightly rates start at $439 during the summer, compared to a heftier $804 in the winter.

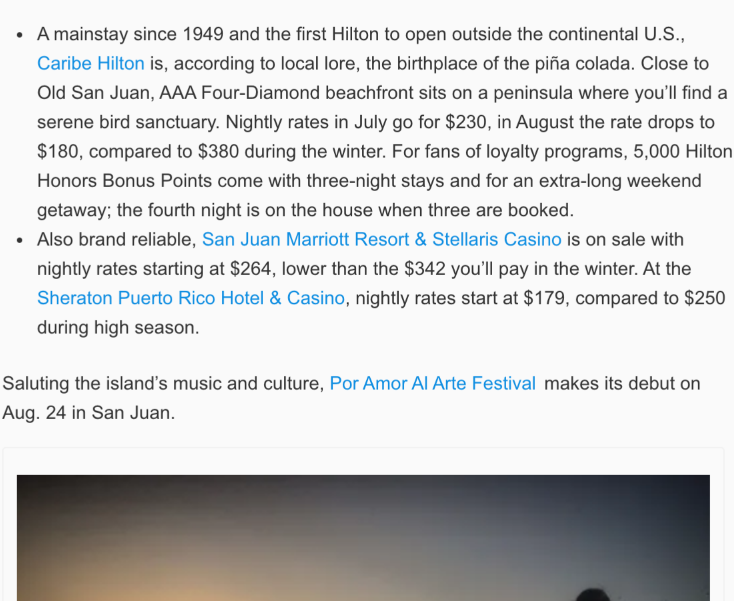


Puerto Rico

With no passport needed and a bevy of flights from the mainland, the sunny island is gearing up for a busy summer season.

- A mainstay since 1949 and the first Hilton to open outside the continental U.S., Caribe Hilton is, according to local lore, the birthplace of the piña colada. Close to Old San Juan, AAA Four-Diamond beachfront sits on a peninsula where you'll find a serene bird sanctuary. Nightly rates in July go for $230, in August the rate drops to $180, compared to $380 during the winter. For fans of loyalty programs, 5,000 Hilton Honors Bonus Points come with three-night stays and for an extra-long weekend getaway; the fourth night is on the house when three are booked.
- Also retail reliable, San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino is on sale with nightly rates starting at $264, lower than the $342 you'll pay in the winter. At the Sheraton Puerto Rico Hotel & Casino, nightly rates start at $179, compared to $250 during high season.

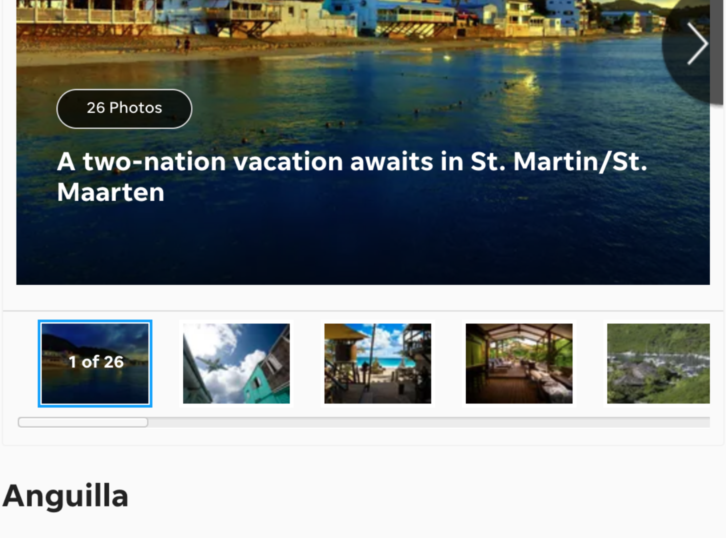
Saluting the island's music and culture, Por Amor Al Arte Festival makes its debut on Aug. 24 in San Juan.



St. Maarten

- A seashell away from the Princess Juliana International Airport, Sonesta Ocean Point Resort and Sonesta Maho Beach Resort are the perennially popular all-inclusives on the Dutch side of the dual-nation island. For families, Sonesta Maho Beach Resort invites with nightly rates as low as $135 per person, compared to $205 during the winter. At the adjacent adults-only, all-suite Sonesta Ocean Point Resort, rates start at $228 in the summer, $309 in high season.
- On the south coast, Divi Little Bay Beach hits the bullseye with all-inclusive rates, going for $209 per person; winter stays start at $250.
- The suites at the Simpson Bay Resort are, indeed, sweet on Kim Sha Beach. Nightly rates in the summer start at $139, a big savings from the $289 the same suite gets in February. A few minutes from the main drag where for $2 (U.S.) you can catch a public bus to anywhere on the island, catamarans sail at sunset from Aqua Mania from the resorts marina, Hollywood Casino is across the street and for night owls; there are plenty of restaurants, bars, cafes and clubs within walking distance.
- It's a natural high at Rainforest Adventures at Rockland Estate with a steep zip line, 360-degree island views and Emilio's for a nosh and a nibble. Tours booked online get a 20% discount.

For good summer deals on condos and villas, Everything SXM, named for the airport code SXM, is the go-to for bargain hunters.



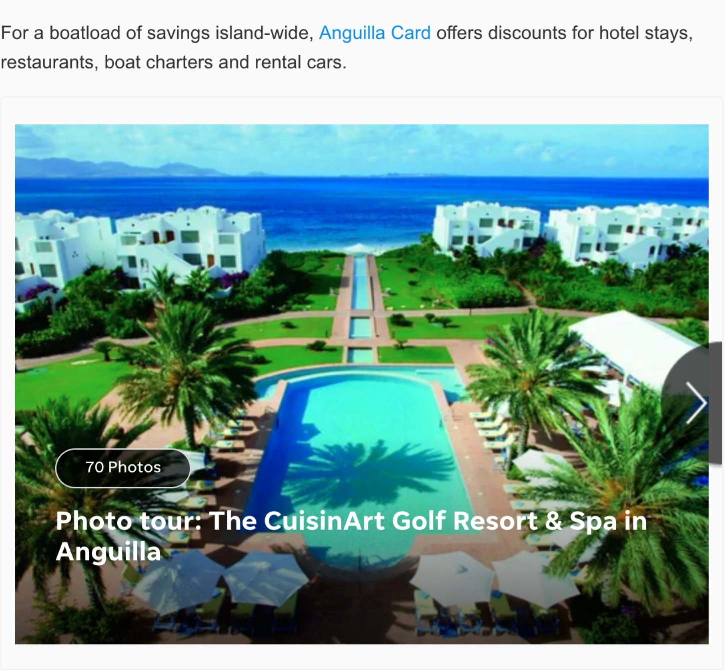
Anguilla

Test-driving luxury is delightfully affordable during the summer on the British isle across the sea from St. Maarten.

The Summer Festival from Aug. 1-11 is a 10-day party with pageants, parades and boat racing.

- On Shoal Bay East next to the Fountain Cavern National Park, you'll pay more than a pretty penny during the winter for a room with a view at Zemi Beach House, elegant with a rum bar, spa and seaside dining. Nightly rates start at $495 compared to the $730 the same room fetches during the winter.
- There's plenty of luxe for less at The Reef by CuisinArt on Merrywing Bay. Through Aug. 24, nightly rates for a Junior Suite start at $475 compared to $750 in the high season. With a five-night stay, breakfast at The Yacht Club and unlimited rounds of golf are on the house.
- The star attraction on Rendezvous Bay, CuisinArt Golf Resort & Spa is also a good deal: a Seaview Junior Suite is available for $550 per night; the same room is nearly double that rate during high season.
- At the posh Quintessence or simply the Q as locals call it, nightly rates through the end of July go for $650, $1,000 less than what you'd pay in December. More like a grand mansion than a hotel, the hotel's fan favorites include the 1,600 bottle wine cellar and butler service.

For a boatload of savings island-wide, Anguilla Card offers discounts for hotel stays, restaurants, boat charters and rental cars.



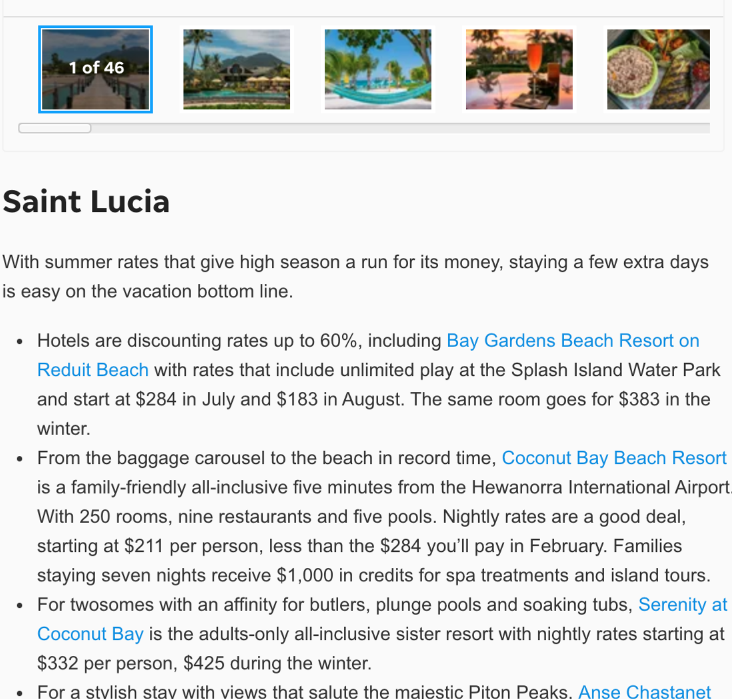
Nevis

For foodies, or at least those who like mangoes, the summer is a fine time to visit the petite isle across the channel from Saint Kitts.

From July 4-7, the Mango and Food Festival celebrates the juicy fruit with cooking lessons and deals at a slew of resorts.

- High above the Caribbean Sea in the foothills of Nevis Peak, Montpelier Plantation is offering nightly rates for mango lovers starting at $186, including breakfast.
- The only beachfront plantation-turned-resort in the Caribbean, Nisbet Plantation Beach Club is dishing up nightly rates for Mango Festival fans starting at $185. Stays throughout the summer start at $238, compared to $455 during the winter, and include breakfast and transfers from the airport in St. Kitts or the smaller airport in Nevis.

For the party hearty, Culturama from July 25 to Aug. 6 is the biggest festival of the year.

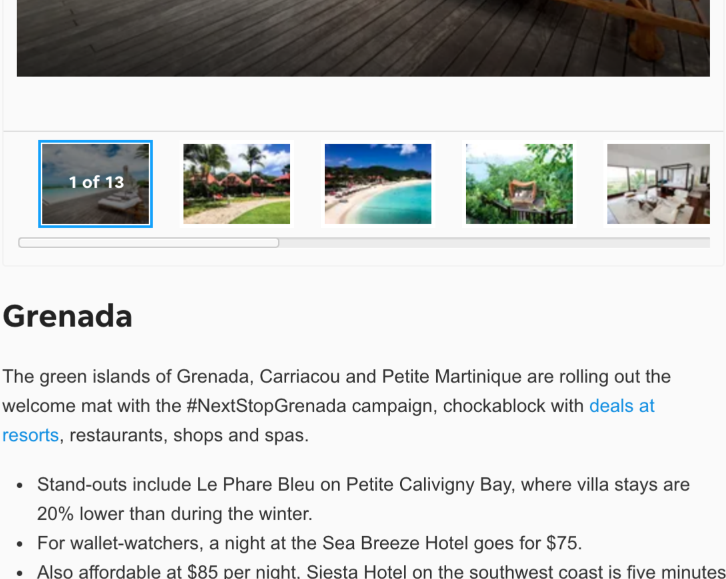


Saint Lucia

With summer rates that give high season a run for its money, staying a few extra days is easy on the vacation bottom line.

- Hotels are discounting rates up to 60%, including Bay Gardens Beach Resort on Reduit Beach with rates that include unlimited play at the Splash Island Water Park and start at $284 in July and $183 in August. The same room goes for $383 in the winter.
- From the baggage carousel to the beach in record time, Coconut Bay Beach Resort is a family-friendly all-inclusive five minutes from the Hewanorra International Airport. With 250 rooms, nine restaurants and five pools. Nightly rates are a good deal, starting at $211 per person, less than the $284 you'll pay in February. Families staying seven nights receive $1,000 in credits for spa treatments and island tours.
- For twosomes with an affinity for butlers, plunge pools and soaking tubs, Serenity at Coconut Bay is the adults-only all-inclusive sister resort with nightly rates starting at $332 per person, $425 during the winter.
- For a stylish stay with views that salute the majestic Piton Peaks, Anse Chastanet tempts with nightly rates that start at $730, a big saving from $1,050 for the same suite in January.
- Next door at the knock-your-socks-off-gorgeous Jade Mountain, nightly rates in the swanky suites with infinity pools start at $1,165.00 per couple. During the winter, those same suites fetch $1,555.

Stick around for the Carnival in July, and for music fans, Roots & Soul is on the calendar from Aug. 23-25.

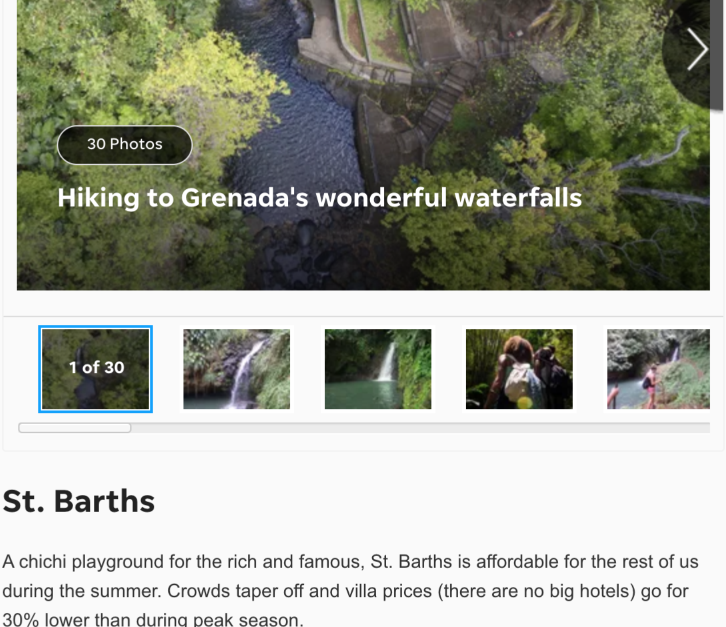


Grenada

The green islands of Grenada, Carriacou and Petite Martinique are rolling out the welcome mat with the #NextStopGrenada campaign, chockablock with deals at resorts, restaurants, shops and spas.

- Stand-outs include Le Phare Bleu on Petite Calivigny Bay, where villa stays are 20% lower than during the winter.
- For wallet-watchers, a night at the Sea Breeze Hotel goes for $75.
- Also affordable at $85 per night, Siesta Hotel on the southwest coast is five minutes from the beach.
- For an upscale stay, gratis nights with longer stays are offered at the swanky Spice Island Beach Resort fronting Grande Anse beach.

Festivals include the Carriacou Regatta from Aug. 2-5 and Spice Mas Carnival Aug. 11-12.



St. Barths

A chichi playground for the rich and famous, St. Barths is affordable for the rest of us during the summer. Crowds taper off and villa prices (there are no big hotels) go for 30% lower than during peak season.

Villa Java impresses with views of Marigot Bay, where sea turtles swim close to the shoreline and weekly rates that start at $15,000, $10,000 less than during high season.

Ooh-la-la fabulous with a big window that frames St. Jean Bay, a week at Villa Gertrude that includes morning delivery of French pastries goes for $4,000, compared to $8,000 during high season.

Keeping the French theme, fireworks on Bastille Day light up the night sky on July 14, and for celebrity-spotters, St. Barth Tennis Open is a hot ticket from Aug. 1-14.

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