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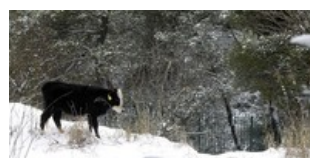


Do you hate Wes Anderson? Maybe this is why

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The best Caribbean hot spots

Definitive Caribbean.com offers its picks for everything from beaches to spas to music

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METRO WORLD NEWS

For the beach: Antigua and more
When you think of the Caribbean, we know what comes to mind: a gorgeous white sand beach. And rightly so. Many of the best hotels are on prime beach front, or better still, there are beaches that are still wild and remote. There tend to be two distinct coastlines to most islands: the calm Caribbean side and rougher Atlantic side. If you are looking for a lively Caribbean beach resort you'll need to aim for somewhere like Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica or the Dominican Republic. For somewhere more laid back, Anguilla's striking white beaches are hard to beat and many of the smaller islands have beach charm aplenty.

For a spa: Cap Juluca, Anguilla

Fancy a massage with a sea view, or some open-air reflexology? Many of the leading hotels in the Caribbean now have serious spas – not just a few treatment and beauty rooms, but full-service operations led by leading spa companies, including Shambhala, Aveda, Molton Brown and ESPA. You'll also find holistic activities such as meditation, yoga, Tai Chi and Pilates. Try the Cap Juluca, set on its own superb beach in the west of Anguilla. It's one of the Caribbean's most famous and best-loved hotels, has a Wellness Centre, and includes Moorish-style villas. Or the BodyHoliday at LeSPORT is an upbeat resort hotel tucked into its own attractive cove at the northern tip of St Lucia.



For romance: Hermitage Bay, Antigua

The Caribbean is a wonderfully romantic place to get married (As if you couldn't tell by the photos). And it's easier than ever; regulations have loosened up in the past few years. Now in many islands you only have to be resident for two or three days before you can get married. Many hotels offer a wedding service in their grounds with ceremonies under an arbour or on the beach.



Alternately, you might opt for the privacy of a tropical villa and garden. Our top pick is the Hermitage Bay Antigua, a low key and extremely elegant small hotel with a magnificent beachfront setting in a secluded west-facing bay. It has just 25 large and very private suites, ranged in leisurely fashion along a superb beach and across the hillside behind.

For music: Jamaica, St. Vincent, Grenadines, Tobago

The Caribbean people are uniquely inventive when it comes to music. There is almost a different rhythm for every island. Reggae, merengue, calypso, salsa (in different versions from Cuba and Puerto Rico), compas, zouk and soca. Some islands have more than one, but almost all are lively, fast and full of explosive joy.

Check out our website for a list of the year's top gigs, island by island. Among the highlights: February is Reggae Month in Jamaica, March brings the SVG Blues & Rhythms Festival to St. Vincent and the Grenadines and April finds the Tobago International Dance Festival in, yes, Tobago.