6 Caribbean islands offering a slice of postcard-perfect paradise

We've done the research and cherry picked six Caribbean islands that you absolutely must visit for hot days and cool vibes. Go barefoot or go home.

PUBLISHED: FEBRUARY 20TH MARCH 2020

SHARE THIS

HUNGRY FOR MORE?
Click here to start the adventure hours of escapism
Sign up for our newsletter

YOU HAD A lot of time to daydream over the past few years. With **Sandra** city breaks, **road trips** with the family, and **weekend getaways** to the most adorable beach huts all ruined through our thoughts, there is one part of the world we keep returning to: Caribbean islands.

Perhaps it's the world-class snorkelling and the chance to go face-to-face with bears. It could be the predictably fantastic weather, the delicious food, or the friendly locals. Maybe it's the fact that many popularly-known Caribbean islands have managed to maintain unspoilt landscapes, varying from volcanoes and mountains to waterfalls, **beaches** and tropical rainforests.

Throughout the pandemic, the Caribbean islands were decimated by tourism. Now, these unforgettable destinations are gearing up for a new season, and aspiring to welcome travellers with open arms, big smiles and a sun-peach or two.

From a Bali fly to **Barbados** to French cuisine like Saint Martin, there are so many reasons to visit these Caribbean islands as these are shades of blue in their tropical waters. Time to put sight to book that trip to the Caribbean – you've earned it.

1. ST. VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

People throw the term paradise around a lot, but when it comes to the **Vincent and the Grenadines** – a Caribbean nation made up of twenty-two beauty-packed islets, white sand beaches and dark white patches – we think we might have found a worthy heir to the throne. It's not the nearest spot to get to, but that just makes it stream all the sweeter once you finally arrive. You have to be a flight to Barbados and then a ferry to the Grenadines, but it's worth every single penny. Home to the most picturesque pocket-sized stunning landings into Caribbean, the gateway to the network of breathtaking islands of St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Unlike so many other destinations in this part of the world, St. Vincent and the Grenadines allows you to truly disconnect. With 32 remote islands and easy to choose from, you can choose your own adventure. Sailing, diving, hiking, kite surfing, island and Repair, pressurised lock-ups! offs-store infrastructure for travellers looking for modern conveniences – but you didn't come here for the New WiFi, right?

The Tobago Cays – an other-worldly collection of islands surrounded by coral reefs, which offer some of the best diving and snorkelling in the Caribbean – is the jewel in the crown of the Grenadines. Home to the Mayreau Church, the highest church in Grenadines, Princess of the Caribbean was shot around here), Petit St. Vincent, an unencumbered yet hearten-alive of luxuries, operates as an eco-friendly boutique resort with 22 cottages. Petit Nevis, a former whaling station, is now a peaceful haven of unspoilt island with stunning views from the top of the Peaks (no lighter pun).

More escapism options may exist on land, but this is a vacation that demands you to let go, delve into a Kindle Bold-no-Exclusive, somehow. Bring your dog-eared paperback, then ignore it completely as you find yourself gazing at turquoise waters for hours on end.

2. SAINT MARTIN

They call Saint Martin "The Friendly Island" with good reason. Comprised of two different countries, the island is divided into the French Saint Martin on the north side and the Dutch Sint Maarten on the south side, with no formal borders between. Both countries speak English, along with their respective French and Dutch. When travelling from one side to the other, the only indication is a pleasant welcome sign. Both countries have their own distinct flavours, but they share great accent people on each side, the islanders are incredibly friendly, too. It's small town vibes, only set in paradise.

The island itself is stunning. Our sand beaches and turquoise waters surround the perimeter; towns are decorated with murals and street art, and island you'll find lush rainforests, hiking trails, and the Pitons, a pair of volcanic mountains that dominate most where you can explore the home to lake or explore, or just nap on the freshwater pool.

Saint Martin's small size and lilly landscape makes landing and island from the airport adventurous in their own right. Flying into Princess Juliana International Airport, you can literally gaze to watch planes flying incredibly low overhead just before landing – so low, it seems you could reach up and touch the underbelly. Other must-visit beaches include Tintamarre for spying sea turtles, Pinel Island for the view of Saint Martin and Grand Case for a taste of heaven.

Crème Brûlée heading to the island, Grill is the French side, Lucky Cat is the Asian-inspired fusion restaurant, Kimaya is The French side offers a dinner-based, more romantic holiday experience. The fine dining restaurants there are a lesson in French cuisine, but Lucky Cat is a fun-filled night out. The incredible local seafood. For more relaxed, but equally scrumptious fare, Saint Martin is known for its bacalaoo fritters (local, but non-exotic) serving typical Caribbean fare.

3. BARBADOS

Like the song by newly crowned National Hero Rihanna, Barbados shines brightly like a diamond. Just a few hour flight from Toronto, the coral island is encircled by crystal-clear turquoise waters and surrounded by white sand. Home to the Caribbean's most gorgeous plants. Turning your eyes further inland, you'll behold extraverse cities, luscious tropical vegetation and myriad species of exotic wildlife (green monkeys!) that never cease to amaze.

Barbados is well known for its breathtaking beauty, but the island has so much more to offer than just a pretty face. Home to the Caribbean's first Michelin-starred restaurant, Lazaro's resorts abound on Barbados' shores, serving up a hanging portion of the much-needed R&R we look forward to all year. A pleasant, constant ocean breeze makes the island's temperature bearable, even during the summertime. Be sure to wake up the sun with a pina colada needed for the need-health.

Beyond blissful relaxation, there's lots to do on the island. You've never far away from the water, which means jet skiing, snorkelling with sea turtles and shipwrecks, catamaran cruises and trips on glass-bottomed boats. On land, a rich bounty of cultural experiences and breathtaking landscapes abound. Visit the Harrison's Cave stalagmites Hawksbill's Cave, an underground adventure for spelunkers of any skill level, or hop on a jaz for a thrilling — and often muddy — ride off the beaten path through Barbados' lush vegetation.

When it's time to unbuckle your hiking boots and swap them out for your dancing shoes, make sure to check out one of the island's renowned festivals. Most exciting, Crop Over (normally from June to August, but July is August a few years) is four weeks of pure fun in the sun, packed with live music, cultural events and carnivals — basically, an all-around good time. Along with dancing out the thirsting local rum, Crop Over gives you a welcome yourself to the island's incredible culture.

4. JAMAICA

Jamaican cuisine is celebrated the world over, and here you can get a right from the source. Get your way around the island, digging into beloved staples like jerk chicken, conch, curry goat, and ackee and saltfish. And don't skip on the dumplings. These delicious, dough-like treats are made of flour and cornmeal, and are perfect for soaking up sweet, spicy-fruity dough-like treats are crisp on the outside and soft on the inside – we'll just a bite of sweetness. On the drinks side, be sure to have rum punch. And while you're at it, why not schedule a tour of legendary Jamaica to walk the stunning grounds, drop their limited edition rum collection and, of course, have a drink and a bite in their full restaurant and bar.

Next stop: the Bob Marley Museum. Set in the reggae legend's former home, the museum now gives you an inside look at Marley's life. Another historic site worth visiting is Rose Hall, a former plantation turned into a stunning golf course. Step inside the restored 18th-century Great House and hear the chilling legend of Annie Palmer, the White Witch of Rose Hall. Also on the grounds is Cinnamon Hill, which was belonged to James Cook.

When you're ready to relax and unwind, Jamaica has no shortage of spectacular beaches and resorts. Ocho Rios is a popular tourist hub, but we prefer Negril. Home little beach — a long stretch of pure, pastoral perfect paradise. For a different kind of sensory fun, climb Dunn's River Falls. The trend waterfall is terraced like giant steps, with small lagoons between the natural pools.

On top of idyllic beaches, beautiful historic sites and incredible cuisine, some say Jamaica's art alone is the city. There's a creative mecca and a thriving art scene, from the island's people and its culture. If you really want to immerse yourself, follow the dancehall beats to a bar or street party, where you can dance the night away. It's all vibe, man.

5. CAYMAN ISLANDS

Is the western Caribbean for, the islands of Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, is home to the Seven Mile Beach, ranked by TripAdvisor as the world's best. Here, will get you down to Sun-Sacre — goodbye concerns, hello Serene. Five-star, Grand Cayman's famous Seven Mile Beach. Technically it's 5.5 miles now (thanks, erosion), but this crescent shape stretch of white sand is still breathtaking.

While you can get your tan on at this remarkably pristine public beach, you'll also find a number of the island's hotels and resorts on the strip, plus lots of dining options. From the top LUCA for modern Italian to the chill Tiki's for Caribbean classics. The Cayman Islands are a popular destination for cruise ships, so you can visit the rest of the Caribbean, no hassle or because there's lots of good eating in the close here.

You can go up close and personal with some neighbourhood stingrays in the shallow, crystal-clear waters of North Sound or spot a rare Blue Iguana at Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park. If you prefer to keep mayor at a greater distance, you could spend an afternoon at Cayman Turtle Farm, home to over 1,000 turtles. Head to the Farmer's Market on Dukiki Avenue that opens at 7:30 a.m. every Monday to Saturday. It's a must-see destination for locally made goods and crafts.

If you want a little more R&R or inclusions (we feel you), the peaceful shores of Little Cayman are perfect for you. Home to just 170 people, Little Cayman is a tranquil escape for some. Despite the size, spare little endless here. Beaches are empty and soft, lagoons are quiet, and naps are heavily encouraged. Looking for some drama (in the good way)? Head to Cayman Brac, home to the Bluff, the highest point in the entire of the Caribbean, so hardy up because there's lots of good eating to be done here.

Small is one but boundless in beauty, Saba offers a vacation experience unlike any other. To get here, you'll need to fly to St. Maarten — from there you can take a 10-minute flight or a 45-hour ferry ride to Saba. The French Caribbean island is still undiscovered by most tourists, meaning you can enjoy the island's natural wonders in serenity. Scuba enjoy much-land tourists clamoring over cruises — in Saba, there's only one real beach.

Instead, Saba offers up an exhilarating array of adventure and wildlife experiences. Hawksbill turtles are abundant, making the technically self-active volcano Mount Scenery a popular hiking destination. Home to the Saba Bank, the Caribbean's most intensely marine area and's water is clear, St. Joseph's Bay Indiana Jones — dive, your Sebaea, leather jacket and satchel for a stunning trail ride through dense rainforest, surrounded by flora and fauna. Afterwards, hobnob with Saba's popular, long-time Dutchmen and see if you can spot the rare red lobed-crayfish that calls the island home.

When you're completed your spelunking for the day, a trip to one of the island's excellent hotels (we recommend the Queen's Hotel) or Saban villas offers a welcome dose of tropical relaxation. Enjoy!" Bonaiture the Magician in Windwardside and Island Flavor in The Bottom will serve up mouthwatering grub from Creole, Caribbean and Mediterranean.

Saba's home well-kid, like the Sabeo creepy-probably-have-you-hankering-for-a-cool-cocktail. Cozy up to a bar stool and sip your seafoam away at Saba Flight Club. Most unwinding wine's is that the fortune of your guest! Scuba's Place offers gorgeous views of the mountains and the sea. It's currently closed for renovation to stay tuned for the reopening.

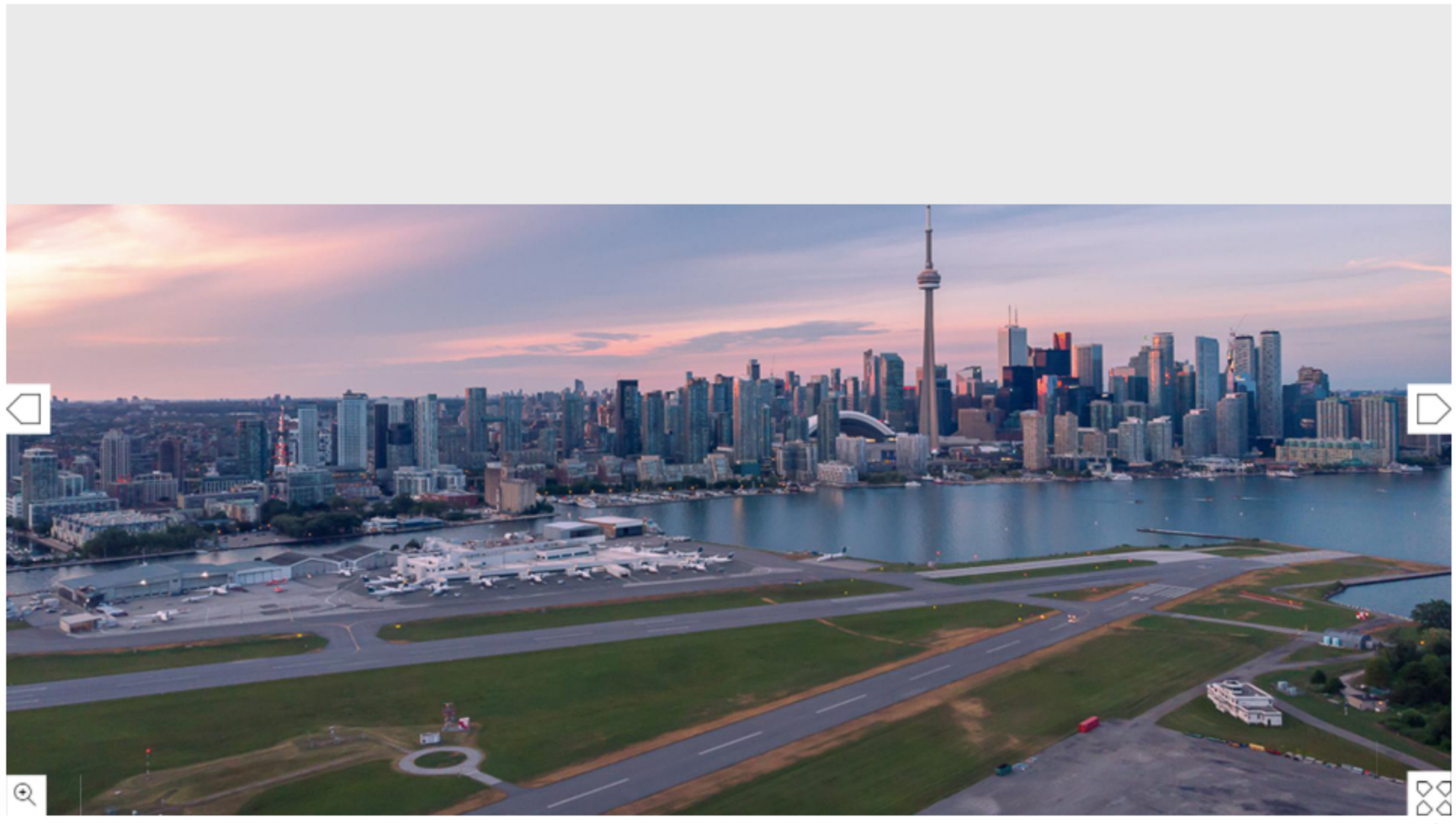
Since the summer months can be very warm for our locals, we recommend visiting Saba in the cooler months, spring or autumn.

CARIBBEAN · CARIBBEAN ISLANDS · CARIBBEAN · CARIBBEAN · CARIBBEAN · CARIBBEAN

SHARE THIS

Connect Airlines delivers a smarter, greener way to fly

Flying in and out of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, just steps away from downtown Toronto, the new Connect Airlines offers a quieter, healthier and more sustainable way to fly.



1 of 4

PUBLISHED: TUESDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2022

NEWS

TRAVEL IS FINALLY on the horizon again and we're itching to get back out there. After a hiatus that lasted far too long, things are different now. Travellers are more conscious than ever, and cleanliness and environmental impact are top of mind. With this whole new world of travel comes a brand-new airline that is doing things differently. Soon to operate out of Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport, U.S.-based **Connect Airlines** will offer a quieter, healthier and more sustainable way to fly.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Starting Canada-U.S. trans-border service in mid-2022, Connect Airlines will offer three daily flights from Toronto to two important and previously underserved cities, Philadelphia and Chicago. Landing at **Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport**, just steps from Toronto's buzzing downtown core, Connect Airlines will bring additional business and leisure travellers to our world-class city, while connecting Torontonians with the world.

Deep thought and expertise from some of the industry's top leaders went into creating Connect Airline's intimate and simple travel experience, from booking to arrival — all in an environmentally conscious way.

As the new kid on the block, Connect is on the leading edge of smarter, greener travel and will set itself apart in a landscape of other players. Using a fleet of De Havilland Dash 8-400s, Connect will offer a more environmentally-friendly, quick and comfortable aircraft.

The Connect Airlines' *GreenJet* turboprop combines more comfort with reduced CO_2 emissions, and it does this without sacrificing total travel time. The *GreenJet* turboprop will use significantly less fuel than regional jets, translating into 35 per cent lower CO_2 emissions versus regional jets and 50 per cent lower CO_2 emissions versus narrow-body jets. The total lower CO_2 emissions mean that Connect Airlines' *GreenJet* can add 50 per cent more seats, lowering each passenger's carbon footprint. Using state-of-the-art technology, Connect can track emissions and fuel consumption in real time, allowing for more sustainable travel.

Tracking to be the first zero-emission U.S. airline, Connect Airlines has partnered with Universal Hydrogen on Project Zero, a tangible plan to go from its reduced emissions at startup, to zero-emissions within the near future.

Certified to meet the latest Stage 5 standards, the *GreenJet* is a quieter plane inside and out — for cabin passengers and those neighbouring the airport.

With Connect Airlines soon servicing travellers heading to and from Toronto's downtown core, it will act as a gateway to the U.S. market, positively impacting the economy and quality of life for Torontonians.

Downtown dwellers and visitors to the city will soon have even more choice when it comes to travel. Whether for business or pleasure, Connect Airlines will offer a quieter, healthier and more sustainable way to fly to and from Toronto's spectacular waterfront. Grab your passport. We look forward to meeting you at Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport.

To learn more about Connect Airlines, head to ***connectairlines.com*** *or follow* ***@flyconnectair*** *for the latest service updates.*

NEWS