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# Antigua Destination Wedding

04/08/12 - 04/15/12

Especially Prepared for: Pat

[VIEW REPORT](#)

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## Antigua and Barbuda

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### Overview

#### Introduction

Antigua is still a popular vacation spot for travelers who could choose to vacation anywhere. So how does Antigua and Barbuda attract this well-heeled crowd? In the case of Antigua (pronounced *an-TEE-gah*), you start with what nature gave you: an abundance of sun and immaculate white sand. Then you add some of the most luxurious villas and exclusive resorts in the Caribbean, and you have a veritable magnet of attractions for any taste.

Antigua has smaller island dependencies, including Barbuda (pronounced *bar-byou-dah*), about 25 mi/40 km north of Antigua (more of a bird sanctuary than a lavish resort) and the uninhabited Redonda, 35 mi/56 km to the southwest.

Antigua, however, still has some vacation hotels for travelers who aren't as wealthy (more, actually, than its high-end neighbors, Anguilla and St. Barts). Antigua also has excellent golf courses, forested hills and beautiful offshore islands. It's a favorite destination for yachters.

Fort James has also become a popular historic site, in addition to Nelson's Dockyard, the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda, Fort Barrington and Betty's Hope Sugar Estate.

#### Highlights

**Sights**—The historic buildings of Nelson's Dockyard National Park; browsing at the Public Market; the steel-pan bands that play at Shirley Heights on Sunday afternoons; sunsets at Fort James; a tour of Betty's Hope Sugar Estate; the octagonal St. Peter's Church in Parham.

**Museums**—The portraits of King George III and Queen Caroline, as well as pre- and post-Columbian findings at the Museum of Antigua and Barbuda; the museum inside the former Admiral's House at Nelson's Dockyard.

**Memorable Meals**—Antiguan-inspired Italian dishes at La Bussola; fine dining at Il Palio; pizza overlooking the sea at Mama Pasta.

**Late Night**—Hang out with the locals at Trappa's in English Harbour; party at Shirley's Heights with a live band on Sundays; check out The Beach restaurant at Dickenson Bay on a Friday night; party with the best DJs at Abracadabra; take in a night of gambling at one of Antigua's casinos.

**Walks**—A short walk on the trail from English Harbour to Fort Berkeley for great views of the harbor; a visit to Barbuda's highest point in the Highlands at 143 ft/43 m above sea level.

**Especially for Kids**—Collecting shells along the shoreline at Nonsuch Bay; bird-watching at the Frigate Bird Sanctuary in Barbuda, at Great Bird Island or near the lagoon at Darkwood Beach; snorkeling off the beach at Dickenson Bay.

#### Geography

The Antiguan terrain rises gently from the water and consists of rolling hills that were cleared for sugarcane fields. They still turn emerald-green during the rainy season, but at other times the island, which covers 108 sq mi/280 sq km, looks rather scruffy.

The highest point on Antigua is Mount Obama (1,319 ft/402 m high). It will serve as the focal point of a new national park.

The vegetation on Antigua isn't boring, however. It consists of many different kinds of cacti, and along the beaches, you'll find coconut, tamarind and sea-grape trees. There are flowering plants, often in profusion—hibiscus, oleander, bougainvillea and the bright red poinciana tree, also known as the flamboyant. The vegetation provides cover for crested hummingbirds and the yellow-breasted bananaquit.

Barbuda, a flat coral island of 62 sq mi/100 sq km with a large lagoon on one side, has a tiny population and a slower pace. But it also has miles of beautiful pink- and white-sand beaches and excellent places for snorkeling.

## History

The Siboney Indians originally inhabited Antigua and Barbuda and were succeeded by the Arawak. The Arawak, in turn, were forced out by the aggressive (and possibly cannibalistic) Caribs. Christopher Columbus named Antigua in 1493, but attempts by the Spanish and French to colonize the islands failed. They remained unsettled by Europeans until the 1630s, when the British established a colony on Antigua. Soon, sugar plantations powered by African slaves covered Antigua, and Barbuda was largely used to grow food for the workforce.

Unlike many Caribbean islands, Antigua and Barbuda were not subjected to numerous changes of government in the colonial period. Except for a brief period of French rule, the English held control of the islands from the early 1600s until they achieved independence in 1981. With the decline of the sugar market and the abolition of slavery in 1834, the islands went into an economic decline. Though unproductive, the large plantations were not redistributed after slavery ended, as they were on many Caribbean islands. This helped create desperate conditions for the former slaves, which led to unrest in the early 1900s.

Today, descendants of the slaves are the primary inhabitants of the island nation, and tourism has helped ease the economic hardships of some of the residents. Antigua and Barbuda remain part of the British Commonwealth. For many years, the Bird family has dominated the country's politics. Vere Bird Sr. (known as "Papa Bird"), a powerful figure from the 1940s onward, was prime minister from 1981 until 1993, when his son, Lester Bird, succeeded him.

The Bird family dynasty came to an end with the election of Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer and his "Sunshine Government" in 2004. Since then, the government announced an era for Antigua and Barbuda called "Government in the Sunshine." Central to their mandate is the belief that the local populace must be trained in all levels of tourism.

## Snapshot

The islands' main attractions are relaxation, historical sights, deep-sea fishing, golf and tennis, sailing, scuba diving and snorkeling, windsurfing, beautiful beaches, bicycling, horseback riding, cricket, casinos and friendly people.

If you enjoy excellent beaches, food and watersports—and aren't on a strict budget—Antigua and Barbuda are for you. Don't go to these islands if you're looking for lush mountain scenery.

## Potpourri

Many of the streets outside the city in Antigua and Barbuda do not have names. Some villages have implemented a naming and numbering system, but this is still not the norm. The mail is delivered door-to-door by mail carriers who know exactly who lives where.

The legendary blues guitarist Eric Clapton has built an enormous home on Antigua and may be spotted in the English Harbour area hanging out. It is said that he once forgot his wallet, and a small store owner in the area refused to offer him credit because he didn't know who the celebrity was.

The traditional way to start the day in Antigua and Barbuda is a cup of bush tea. This consists of actual leaves steeped in a cup of hot water that is covered and allowed to "draw." Popular flavors are mint, lemongrass (locally called fever grass), and *noo-noo* balsam.

The Antiguan Racer snake, considered the rarest snake in the world, can only be found on Great Bird Island, a speck of land off the northeast coast of Antigua. The Antiguan Racer Conservation Project is attempting to preserve the species in this uninhabited spot.

Bananas are often called figs in Antigua. That's why the road through the rain forest, which is lined with banana trees, is called Fig Tree Drive. (However, there are far more coconut trees than banana trees there today.)

Although Barbudans have the right to own land in Antigua, Antiguanians cannot take possession of land in Barbuda. As a matter of fact, no one can own land in Barbuda: All the land there is Crown land, and only Barbudans have the right to occupy it, through the local authority.

A large number of Antiguanians have never been to the sister islands, and there are some Barbudans who never go over to Antigua, though it is just a few minutes away by plane.

There are more than 60 registered shipwrecks on and around Palaster Reef in Barbuda, reachable by a short boat ride.

The uninhabited island of Redonda (30 mi/48 km southwest of Antigua) is part of the nation of Antigua and Barbuda. A man who claimed to be the King of Redonda, King Bob the Bald, lived in Canada but died in 2009. His successor is King Michael the Grey.

The national game of warri involves moving beans around indentations on a wooden board in an attempt to capture your opponent's beans. It requires considerable strategy.

## See & Do

### Sightseeing

Historical sights and idyllic nature spots form the islands' major attractions, both on land and at sea. These are spread throughout the island and offer a taste of the ancient mixed with modern tranquility. The major historic attractions lie just outside the city at Fort James and on the opposite tip of Antigua at the restored Nelson's Dockyard. The Frigate Bird Sanctuary in Barbuda is also worth experiencing.

### Recreation

Whether you snuggle up to Southern stingrays or find off-road fun on a muddy quad adventure, you'll have lots of options for making your trip to Antigua as fast-paced or laid-back as you desire. You can zipline across a rain forest, or hail a helicopter for a bird's-eye view of neighboring Montserrat. There are plenty of fishing holes, deep-sea and fly, or you can spend some time connecting with Mother Nature on a tour narrated by some of her closest friends.

Self-indulgence is no sin while you're on vacation, so don't forget to book a soothing massage to ease away whatever tensions existed in your "other life." Explore secluded beaches on two or four legs, or put your scoring strength to the test with a game of golf or tennis. Save some strength for a Hash with the Harriers for a lively adventure.

### Beaches

As you'll be told over and over, Antigua is said to have 365 beaches, one for every day of the year. Unless you have that much time, you'll need to be choosy. Possibly the most beautiful beach is the semicircular Half Moon Bay, east of Falmouth. (The north end of the beach, where the water is calmer, is the best place to swim.) Nonsuch Bay on the eastern shoreline is best for collecting shells. (A taxi ride from St. John's will cost about US\$25.) If it's gorgeous sunsets you're after, head for Runaway Beach or Fort James on the northwestern shore, about a US\$10 taxi fare from St. John's. It's usually crowded with families, honeymooners and other vacationers.

The mile of beach at Dickenson Bay is also popular and crowded, largely because of its proximity to St. John's and the variety of watersports available. Along Dickenson Bay, you'll also find the superbly situated Halcyon Cove and Buccaneer Cove, two very pretty beaches, both with a wide variety of amenities. Hawksbill Beach is also within close proximity to St. John's and has the only resort with three of its own beaches, one of which is the only clothing-optional beach in Antigua.

If you want to get away from the crowds, head south, away from the hotels on the north side. One of the nicest of the secluded southern beaches is Doigs Beach at Rendezvous Bay. (You either need a boat to get there or a four-wheel-drive vehicle. It is possible to hike in, but you'll have to ask around to find your way. You can also take the trip on horseback from Spring Hill Riding Stables in Falmouth.) The water is calm, but there are no facilities for changing, and no food or drink is sold, so plan accordingly.

Darkwood Beach on Cades Bay, also on the southern coast, backs up to a lagoon that is a nesting area for many wild birds. There's also a rustic beach bar. Darkwood Beach is usually quiet and largely empty, except when cruise ships visit the island—it's a favorite destination for passengers on shore excursions.

If an idyllic, secluded spot is what you are after, try Turner's Beach. If beach volleyball is your game, try Jolly Beach. There is usually a game under way, and newcomers are always welcome. There is a restaurant nearby for refreshments after the match.

### Bird Watching

Off the northeast coast of Antigua, about 8 mi/13 km east of St. John's, Great Bird Island is a breeding ground for the beautiful Red-billed

Tropicbird. Day trips to the island for bird-watching (as well as snorkeling) are easily arranged in St. John's. The island is also home to the endangered Antiguan Racer snake.

The Frigate Bird Sanctuary on Barbuda is another great option, where there are hundreds of different kinds of birds to see in addition to the impressive frigate.

## Boating & Sailing

This is a popular boating destination, and Antigua hosts several major sailing events annually, including Sailing Week, the Antigua Classic Yacht Regatta and the RORC Caribbean 600. The Antigua Yacht Club organizes informal afternoon races during boating season, as well as a handful of other races with local appeal.

If you want to get out on the water yourself, you can pick from a wide variety of daily cruises. Spend the day in good company at Prickly Pear Island on a tour that continues to be a favorite. Contact Miguel's Desert Island Trips (US\$85; phone 772-3213). Book with Wadadli Watersports for snorkeling cruises to Cades Reef or Great Bird Island (US\$95-\$110, phone 462-4792). For sunset cruises, contact Kokomo Cats (phone 562-3626).

Adventure Antigua offers an informative ecotour of the offshore caves and islands, as well as trips to Stingray City, where visitors swim with southern rays. US\$100-\$170. Phone 726-6355.

If you'd rather not sail with the masses, smaller, more-private excursions have become quite popular. Though more expensive, they give you more control of your excursion. Contact Captain Nash to arrange bookings. Phone 560-0014.

In terms of windsurfing, Antigua is one of the Northern Hemisphere's best-kept secrets, according to Peter Hart, the British windsurfing maven. To see what he's talking about, visit Jabberwock Beach, the center of the sport in Antigua. Try Shorty's Glass Bottom Boat (phone 462-6326), H2O Antigua next to the Lord Nelson Hotel (phone 562-3933) or Windsurfing Antigua Watersports (phone 773-9463 or 461-9463). Annual windsurfing events are held in January and July. You can rent a sailboard starting at about US\$20 per hour or US\$60 for the entire day.

## Fishing

Try your hand at deep-sea fishing for some red snapper, barracuda or kingfish on a half-day or full-day fishing trip on the *Obsession* (phone 464-3174 or 462-3174). Expect to pay at least US\$900 for a full day's fishing for 12 people. If you're feeling competitive, cast your line at the Antigua and Barbuda Annual Sport Fishing Tournament held in May.

## Golf

Golfers will want to try out the island's prize courses. The highly touted Cedar Valley Golf Club is located about 6 mi/10 km northeast of St. John's. It's a par-70 championship course with views of the northern coast (phone 462-0161). Greens fees are about US\$48, and carts are US\$42. Another option is Jolly Harbour Golf & Country Club, part of the Jolly Harbour Resort (phone 462-7771, ext 9). Expect to pay about US\$50 in greens fees and US\$40 for a cart.

## Scuba & Snorkeling

There are a dozen dive sites off Antigua. The 80-year-old freighter *Andes* lies in just 20 ft/6 m of water in Deep Bay, near Royal Antiguan Hotel. Cades Reef (abundant colorful fish), off the southwest coast, and Stingray Bank (sea turtles, stingrays, coral), off the north coast, are home to a wide array of marine animals. You must be a certified diver and present your C card to rent equipment and go diving. Or you could take an introductory course with Dockyard Divers in Nelson's Dockyard (they rent equipment, too). Their half-day beginner's course is about US\$120 (phone 460-1178). Jolly Dive offers a full certification package for US\$499. Phone 462-8305.

The calm waters right off the beach at Dickenson Bay are ideal for snorkeling. Or sail to Green Island on a catamaran for the best snorkeling in Antigua (about US\$95 a person, through Wadadli Watersports, phone 462-4792).

In the event of a diving emergency, the Divers Alert Network (DAN) will provide treatment advice and, if necessary, arrange for evacuation. Phone 919-684-8111 or 919-684-4326. (Both lines connect to DAN's headquarters in the U.S. and accept collect calls.) DAN also answers health-related questions about diving. For more information, phone 919-684-2948 or toll-free 800-326-3822.

<http://www.diversalertnetwork.org>.

## Nightlife

Check the hotels—they usually have some form of entertainment, often a reggae, soca or steel band. Jazz musicians typically perform in local hotels and at Russell's at Fort James.

Rush Nightclub at Runaway Bay, which usually has a variety of themed parties, is popular with the university student crowd as well as locals. There is a casino and a restaurant downstairs, as well as live entertainment in the lounge on most weekends. The Beach Restaurant at Dickenson Bay is a Friday-night hotspot for locals and visitors. In Jolly Harbour, try Castaways, which features tapas, pub grub and popular international music. Mad Mongoose in Falmouth Harbor jumps with Rasta decor and a lively singles crowd and features a live band on Friday nights.

The Coast Restaurant and Disco at Heritage Quay offers a variety of live bands and a choice of discos. It's open every day and offers meals as well. King's Casino is a popular spot Friday-Sunday for its regular lineup of good local bands. It's usually quite a festive atmosphere throughout the weekend.

Abracadabra in English Harbour attracts an energetic crowd with its popular lineup of DJs November-May. It also features local artist showings. C&C Wine Bar in Redcliffe Quay is a lively spot for hanging out, singing karaoke on Saturday, and sampling a selection of South African wines. It is right beside a vegetarian restaurant and steps away from the Australian Homemade.

Adult entertainment is very popular in Antigua, at Diamond Ice on All Saints Road or a number of other spots that usually stay open late.

Barbuda has an interesting little club called Lime, located in the boat-dock area. Live music and a livelier crowd make this a happy place to chill out.

At last count, Antigua had a number of casinos, but they keep coming and going, so it's best to check before you go. Grand Bay Casino is located at Dickenson Bay, and there is King's Casino in Heritage Quay or Asot's Arcade in the city. There are smaller casinos near the public market area of the city, but these are not advisable after hours.

## Performing Arts

Performing arts are not highly cultivated in Antigua. Visiting dance companies and entertainers are sporadic. O'Grady's Pub on Redcliffe Street features local spoken-word artists, but most locals simply go to the movies.

## Spectator Sports

Cricket is a national obsession, and passionate spectators are always on hand to cheer the home team. Antiguan teams play against teams from most other Caribbean islands, as well as teams from around the world. The Antigua Recreation Ground is one of the best places in the region to watch the sport, but the massive Sir Viv Richards Stadium was built especially for World Cup. The cricket season runs January-July. Check with the tourist office for game times.

Soccer (known as football in the Caribbean) stirs just as much passion among fans. The season begins in August with matches in the outlying villages and culminates in February with major games played at the Antigua Recreation Ground, where fans turn up in their team colors. Passionate supporters can become quite animated.

Auto racing is another major draw on the fenced 0.25-mi/0.4-km track on All Saints Road. Although the facilities are largely undeveloped, regional competitions have drawn participants and fans from major racing territories such as Trinidad and Puerto Rico.

Horse racing is a popular pastime in Barbuda, with entertaining competitions held on most holidays. If you are a fan and plan to visit Barbuda, you may want to combine the two. Basketball and volleyball matches are played at the YMCA just outside the city or at the JSC Complex on Old Parham Road.

If tennis is your game, be sure to check out Tennis Week at Curtain Bluff Hotel, held in May and November. The annual events draw top international competitors. At other times, you can play at Temo Sports, a racquet club open to the public in English Harbour (phone 460-1781). It offers tennis and squash, as well as a restaurant.

## Shopping

St. John's has great shopping, including duty-free shops in Heritage Quay that offer English crystal, china and liqueurs, Antiguan rum, beautiful locally designed silk-screened material, local pottery, Haitian wood carvings and other handicrafts. Other popular souvenirs include local hot sauces and jam made from black pineapples and other fruits. Susie's Hot Sauce, the preferred local brand, has won several awards and been featured all over the world.

For a unique souvenir, you might want to visit the post office in St. John's to buy some of the nation's attractive stamps. Bargaining in stores is not an accepted practice (but street vendors are almost always willing to negotiate). Most vendors are also not keen on cash refunds for purchases returned after a change of heart.

Heritage Quay in St. John's is a popular waterfront complex with street vendors and duty-free shops carrying clothing, perfumes, jewelry, linens, china, local artworks, liqueurs and gift items. Be prepared to encounter huge crowds at Heritage Quay when the cruise ships are in port—which is often.

Nearby Redcliffe Quay has fewer tourists and a variety of shops and restaurants. The restored Georgian-era buildings were once storehouses for sugar and spices bound for England and the U.S. Goldsmitty is a great stop for unique, locally crafted fine jewelry. And if you love maps, a must-visit in Antigua is the Map Shop on St. Mary's Street in St. John's.

A favorite place to purchase artisan originals is the Antigua and Barbuda Craft Market on Market Street at the West Bus Station. They have a wide assortment of original paintings, Caribbean flags, beach apparel, woodcarvings, leather bags, straw hats and purses, as well as an array of locally made soaps. A center of the island's art community, Harmony Hall, on Brown's Bay (part of Nonsuch Bay), was once a sugar mill. It now houses galleries of local arts and crafts—and also offers a restaurant and bar with panoramic views.

The stores in Jolly Harbour offer some interesting finds, although they tend to be pricey. It's worth a look if you have some extra time and want something different. Made in Antigua, which only sells locally produced items, is worth a visit. There are also some stores in English Harbour worth browsing, if you have the time to take a drive out there. Unique jewelry can be found in Falmouth at Polish scrimshander Michael Strzalkowski's gallery. Both places offer options for lunch, so you can plan to spend a few hours.

Sidewalk vendors outside the city normally carry an array of local fruits, depending on what's in season, and mangoes can be found on just about every corner in the late summer months. Vendors can also be found on most of the popular beaches, with a variety of crafts and colorful sarongs, as well as an assortment of colorful jewelry.

At Coolidge, just north of the airport, you can watch local potters work in a ceramics workshop called New Pottery. The wares are inexpensive, with a variety of choices (phone 562-1264). Another excellent place to find handcrafted pottery is Sea View Farm Village, the center of Antigua's folk-pottery industry. The traditional designs produced there are modeled after ones that date back to the 1800s, when slaves began crafting vessels from local clay. Be sure to ask about getting a miniature coal pot as a souvenir. (This is a traditional Antiguan clay pot used for cooking.)

**Shopping Hours:** Generally Monday-Friday 8:30 or 9 am-5 or 5:30 pm and Saturday 8:30 am-1 or 3 pm. Many stores in Heritage Quay and a few of the surrounding businesses stay open later on Saturday and open again on Sunday when cruise ships are in port.

## Itinerary

### Local Tours

There are several reputable tour operators in Antigua. You can also arrange island tours and activities with local taxi drivers. Just be sure you know what you want to do and negotiate the price in advance. Taxi drivers must have a price list, so ask to see it if there is a dispute. The accepted rate as a tour guide for taxi drivers is roughly US\$30 per hour, but some drivers will charge only US\$25 per person for tours if there are more than seven people.

In St. John's, established tour operators include Alexander Parrish (phone 462-0638), Sun Tours at the corner of Long and Thames streets (phone 462-4788), Bo Tours (phone 462-6632) and Going Places Travel (phone 480-1230).

## Caribbean Helicopters

For the bird's-eye view, this company has a variety of air tours, including half- and full-island ones. On the full-island tour, you can see the volcano on neighboring Montserrat. Custom tours can be arranged.

US\$115 half-island tour, US\$165 full-island tour, US\$240 Montserrat volcano tour. Phone 460-5901.

## Classic Safari Jeep Tour

This company offers an insider's view of sugar plantations, artisan workshops and historic forts, as well as jaunts through the rain forest.

Phone 463-2061.

## Eli's Eco-Tour

Features caving, beachcombing and snorkeling trips in addition to reef, mangrove and wildlife explorations. It also offers "Xtreme Circumnavigation" on an offshore racer.

Phone 726-6355.

## Island Routes

This tour desk located inside the Sandals resort can arrange just about every type of excursion island-wide for visitors.

Phone 462-0267.

## Scenic Tours Antigua

Sean Beazer operates a professionally-run service that takes visitors on tours to selected locations or a general island route onboard air-conditioned buses. He also offers car service.

Phone 764-3060.

## Tropical Adventures

Offers four-wheel-drive tours of the island to various historic sites and attractions.

US\$95 per person. Phone 480-1225.

## Wadadli Travel & Tours

This St. John's business has a knowledgeable staff and offers a wide range of tour options in and around the island.

Phone 462-2227 or 462-2228.

# Dining

## Dining Overview

Most of the better restaurants are in the hotels, but many local spots have excellent food (generally a combination of Caribbean and Continental cuisine but usually more spicy and flavorful than either). West Indian dishes include pepper pot, a spicy, thick stew; *fungee*, a cornmeal and okra pudding; goat water (hot goat stew); and *ducana*, another pudding, made of grated sweet potatoes, raisins, coconut, sugar and spices, boiled in a banana leaf. Antigua also has excellent seafood restaurants that specialize in red snapper and spiny Caribbean lobster (sometimes called *langouste*).

Try local fruits and vegetables, including *pawpaw* (papaya), *christophine* (a large boiled squash), breadfruit (which is cooked and served as a vegetable), black pineapple (it's smaller and sweeter than Hawaiian pineapple) and green fig (unripe banana, which must be cooked

before eating). U.S. fast-food chains have infiltrated—Kentucky Fried Chicken, in particular, is well-represented in St. John's. But if you'd rather try some West Indian fast food, pick up a roti, a mixture of curried vegetables and sometimes chicken, wrapped in a type of flatbread. The local Sunshine ice cream is also delicious and available in most grocery stores. There is also locally made yogurt, in a variety of types, and different types of cheese. The Yao products can be found in most major supermarkets.

On Barbuda, the choices are limited: Expensive restaurants can be found in the island's upscale resorts, or you can choose from a few more moderately priced eateries that are independent of the hotels.

In general, breakfast is served in the early morning, about 7-8 am. Lunch is often the largest meal of the day, usually eaten around noon. Dinners, the most formal meal of the day, tend to be lighter and are usually served 7-9 pm. On Sunday, locals often eat one large afternoon meal that serves as both lunch and dinner.

Prices at most restaurants are comparable to those in major U.S. cities, and many menus give prices in both U.S. dollars and the local currency. Expect to pay within these guidelines for a meal for one, not including drinks, tax or tip: \$ = less than US\$10 (EC\$26); \$\$ = US\$10-\$20 (EC\$26-\$52); \$\$\$ = US\$21-\$50 (EC\$53-\$132); and \$\$\$\$ = more than US\$50 (EC\$132).

## Local & Regional

### Catherine's Cafe

Situated right on the water at Antigua Slipway in Nelson's Dockyard, this prized local haunt serves up much more than what is on its delectably short menu. Favorites include *moules marinara*, crepes, salads, quiches and good wines and espresso coffee. However, the atmosphere is what continues to attract the eclectic clientele.

Daily except Tuesday for lunch; Wednesday and Friday for dinner also. Closed in September. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Freeman's Bay, English Harbour  
Antigua and Barbuda

**Phone:** 460-5050

**Web:**

<http://www.antiguanice.com/v2/client.php?id=564>

### Home Restaurant

Chef Carl Thomas captivates locals and visitors alike with his own version of Caribbean haute cuisine. This local Antiguan, together with his German wife, Rita, have moved into Carl's boyhood house and are raising the bar for island diners. The Carib gumbo and grilled duck breast with ginger plum sauce are just a few of the recommended choices.

Tuesday-Saturday for dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Gambles Terrace, St. John's  
Antigua and Barbuda

### La Bussola

An elegant spot for exceptional fine dining beside the beach in Runaway Bay. The attractive setting and excellent service offer the ideal backdrop for unique menu creations that use Antiguan flavors, including fresh pastas and seafood, baby octopus and a tasty broccoli soup. The dark hot-chocolate cake is a standout for dessert.

Open daily for dinner, Wednesday-Sunday for lunch also. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Runaway Bay, St. John's  
Antigua and Barbuda

**Phone:** 562-1545

**Web:** <http://www.labussolarerestaurant.net>

### Shirley Heights Lookout

A restaurant in a restored 18th-century battery building set high on a hill with a commanding view of English Harbour, this is the place to be on Sunday afternoons: An outdoor barbecue and a steel-band concert are followed by a reggae band. It's also an elegant spot for dinner. Specialties include seafood and traditional West Indian dishes.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Shirley Heights  
Antigua and Barbuda

## Cuisines

### Fusion

#### Harmony Hall Restaurant and Sugar Mill Bar

Antigua's premier fine-dining destination overlooks Nonsuch Bay and serves Italian and Mediterranean fare with Caribbean accents. The bar is located in a historic sugar mill, adjacent to the upscale, terraced dining area. An excellent art gallery attracts legions of visitors on its own. Lunch guests may take a trip to Green Island for US\$10.

Open November-May only. Daily except Tuesday for lunch, Friday and Saturday for dinner also. Reservations strongly recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Brown's Bay  
Antigua and Barbuda

**Phone:** 460-4120

**Web:** <http://www.harmonyhallantigua.com>

### Italian

#### Abracadabra

This chic Italian dining room consistently serves up pasta and a variety of seafood dishes to perfection. Lunches are served next door to the dining room, and late-night dancing under the stars is popular.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Main Road, English Harbour  
Antigua and Barbuda

**Phone:** 460-2701 for dinner; 463-8083  
for lunch

**Web:** <http://www.theabracadabra.com>

#### Il Palio

For that special occasion, romantic interlude or just a fine-dining experience, this dining room in the Sandals Resort & Spa has an open kitchen and an antipasto bar. Sample the beef carpaccio, clams on linguini, or jumbo shrimp Provencale while gazing at the waterfront. Diners must first purchase an evening pass for the resort, which allows them to enjoy the resort's other facilities but does not include a room.

Daily for dinner. Reservations required. Evening attire. \$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards.

Dickenson Bay  
Antigua and Barbuda

#### Mama Pasta

Perhaps the best-kept secret is hidden on Long Bay at this charming little restaurant that serves a signature spicy Rasta Pasta along with a variety of other pasta creations and the best pizza on the island. The view of the beach adds to the serenity of this spot.

Daily except Tuesday. Closed the first two weeks of August. \$\$\$. Most major credit cards. Phone 722-5503.

## Steak Houses

#### Peter's BBQ Steakhouse

Dig in to your choice of cuts at this spot in Jolly Harbour. The best steaks are prepared by Peter, along with a selection of French-bread sandwiches. There is also a tasty Antiguan breakfast. Seafood is also a treat.

Monday-Saturday for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$. Most major credit cards. .

Antigua and Barbuda

**Phone:** 462-6026

**Web:**

<http://www.caribbeanhighlights.com/peters>

## Security

### Personal Safety

Generally, the most tourists have to worry about are petty theft and pickpocketing or purse snatching, particularly on busy cruise-ship days or at events such as Carnival and cricket. Unfortunately, however, violent crime involving tourists has been on the rise.

To counter this increase, additional police officers have been assigned to patrol beach areas frequented by tourists. Neighborhood Watch groups have also been vigilant, particularly in the Dockyard area. The police also are usually visible in the Redcliffe and Heritage Quay areas and waterfront shopping areas in St. John's on days when cruise ships are in port. Check with your hotel's front-desk personnel or concierge regarding what areas may be unsafe for visitors.

Visitors should always exercise common sense: Don't venture into deserted areas or beaches alone, especially at night; lock your car and stow valuables in either a room safe or with hotel security; and don't leave belongings unattended at the beach or in other public areas. Don't flash large sums of money in public or wear expensive watches and jewelry to the beach. Wrap an article of clothing around personal items to make them less conspicuous while you go swimming.

A few areas on the outskirts of the city are not recommended for visitors. These include Gray's Farm, Green Bay, Hatton, Point and Villa.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

### Health

The Mount St. John's Medical Centre is a 185-room facility in St. John's, Antigua, with modern equipment and trained specialists (phone 484-2700; <http://www.msjmc.org>). Most major U.S. insurance providers are accepted; check with yours before traveling to verify coverage. Medical Surgical Associates, a private facility just outside the Woods Mall in St. John's, was founded by a former chief surgeon with the government and has a number of private specialists (phone 481-5200).

Another private hospital, Adelin Clinic, also offers many services. If there isn't a doctor on hand, one can be paged for emergencies. It is wise to call ahead first (phone 462-0866). In addition, there are a number of competent private physicians and dentists who can handle emergencies.

There is one health-care center in Barbuda: Hanna Thomas Hospital. There is a doctor on duty during the day and on call at night for emergencies, as well as a nurse always on duty. Should serious illness occur that cannot be treated on the island, the patient is flown to Antigua for care.

The public water is processed and safe to drink, though many visitors prefer bottled water. There are no specific precautions to take regarding food—just use some discretion in choosing a place to eat. A hepatitis vaccination is recommended, and be sure to take along sunscreen and insect repellent. Don't forget a comfortable pair of walking shoes. In an emergency, phone 911 or 999.

Watch out for the poisonous manchineel tree. It bears small fruit that should never be eaten, and it is also advisable to not stand beneath the tree while it is raining. (The runoff can cause skin to itch terribly and to blister.)

In addition, while swimming, keep an eye out for the nearly transparent jellyfish, which can irritate skin, although the effects are seldom toxic. When swimming at less-frequented beaches, particularly those with a lot of stones underwater, watch for sea urchins. These are covered in barbs that you could step on.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

## Facts

### Dos & Don'ts

Do book far in advance if you're visiting during Carnival in late July or during Sailing Week in April.

Do ask whether a price is being quoted in U.S. or Eastern Caribbean dollars: Both are widely accepted, but they are not equal in value.

Do consider the hostels as an alternative to the expense of regular hotels, especially if you are younger or on a tight budget.

Do be aware that, at 17 degrees above the equator, the sun is very strong—even on cloudy days. Always wear sunscreen and a hat.

Do try to see a cricket match at the Recreation Grounds in St. John's or one of the fields outside of the city (games are often held on weekends, January-July). Cricket is big on Antigua: Viv Richards, a world-famous Antiguan player, even has a street named after him in St. John's and was named a national hero—not to mention a title: He is now Sir Vivian.

Do try Wadadli, the local beer (it's brewed under German guidelines). Also try the local light rum, Cavalier.

The best way to stay on track when driving from St. John's to English Harbour is to follow the hand-painted signs that advertise English Harbour restaurants.

Do hire a guide to go caving on Barbuda—the stalactites, stalagmites and fossils are exceptional.

Don't waste water. Antigua lacks groundwater, so drinking water is either collected from rainfall or processed through a desalination plant at Crabbs. Many hotels have desalination plants.

Do consider taking a catamaran all the way around Antigua.

Do dance to the ubiquitous soca music.

## Geostats

**Passport/Visa Requirements:** All U.S. citizens must have a passport when traveling by air to or from Bermuda, Canada, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Mexico. Citizens of Canada, Mexico and the British Overseas Territory of Bermuda also must have a passport or other designated secure document to enter the U.S.

Passports are required for land crossings at the Canadian and Mexican borders with the U.S. and for cruise passengers returning to the U.S. from Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada or Bermuda.

Return/onward ticket and sufficient funds are required. A departure tax of EC\$70 is payable at the airport. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

**Population:** 84,522.

**Languages:** English, often spoken with a Caribbean patois.

**Predominant Religions:** Christian (Anglican).

**Time Zone:** 4 hours behind Greenwich Mean Time (-4 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is not observed.

**Voltage Requirements:** 110 volts in some hotels and 220 volts everywhere else; 60 cycles. Ask when you book whether you'll need to take a converter.

**Telephone Codes:** 268, country code;

## Money

### Currency Exchange

ATMs are common in tourist areas but only dispense local currency. Credit cards are commonly accepted in stores, hotels and restaurants but not at smaller establishments; be sure to carry some cash with you. Both Eastern Caribbean dollars and U.S. dollars are accepted most everywhere.

You'll find banks in St. John's, Jolly Harbour, Woods Mall and at Nelson's Dockyard National Park, near the pier in English Harbour. St.

John's has many branches of international banks in addition to the local banks. Normal bank hours are Monday-Thursday 8 am-2 pm and Friday 8 am-4 pm. The Bank of Nova Scotia at Woods Mall and Bank of Antigua are open on Saturdays until noon.

## Taxes

The Antigua & Barbuda Sales Tax (ABST) replaced consumption tax, the hotel tax and the telecommunications tax. It is calculated at 15% and is already included in the displayed cost of goods.

## Tipping

A 10% service charge is normally included in the hotel bill. Tip taxi drivers 10%. Porters get EC\$1-\$2 (US\$0.50-\$1) per bag. Most hotels and restaurants include a 10% service charge in your bill; additional gratuities for outstanding service are appreciated but not required.

## Weather

Temperatures are usually warm in Antigua and Barbuda. Daytime readings range 75-80 F/25-30 C and nights about 10 degrees F/5 degrees C cooler. It's often sunny and arid with a pleasant breeze blowing. The island is the driest in the eastern Caribbean, with an average annual rainfall of about 45 in/114 cm. During the dry season (roughly January-April), brown is the predominant landscape color. Residents might suffer from the droughts, but for visitors, the low rainfall and constant easterly breezes create one of the most pleasant climates in the West Indies. An exception is hurricane season (July-November), when it's cloudier, hotter and more humid. However, unless there's actually a hurricane in the neighborhood, even that season can be pleasant, and prices are more reasonable then.

## What to Wear

Dress is mostly informal, but it's advisable to take some formal clothing if you intend to dine at some of the fancier restaurants, since some do have strict dress codes. If you plan to stay on the beach until sunset, it is advisable to have insect repellent and clothing that doesn't leave a lot of skin exposed. Short pants are acceptable for men and women for breakfast and lunch, but only in the more casual restaurants for dinner.

If you wish to attend a church service, most men wear long sleeved shirts and ties, while women traditionally wear dresses or skirts.

In December and January, the evenings can get a bit chilly, so you might want to take a light sweater. Business attire usually means a jacket and tie for men, and a business suit, pants or skirt for women.

Most residents wear sandals year-round. Sneakers are not popular, particularly with women. Barefoot is the usual way to go on the beach, but you may wish to protect your feet with appropriate rubber-soled shoes, particularly if you are venturing into the water at one of the less-frequented beaches.

## Communication

### Telephone

There are pay phones that use coins, calling cards and credit cards, but these are often not maintained, as mobile phones have become more prominent. Coin phones supplied by the local telephone authority, APUA, are limited to local calls. Private companies offer prepaid calling cards for other phone booths; credit-card booths, though not as numerous, are distinctively marked.

Local calls, including ones to Barbuda, do not require area codes. Most people rely heavily on cellular phones, and the signal is generally good, except in the most remote areas. Some of the cellular services allow for roaming, but if you prefer to have a local phone, this can be arranged.

### Internet Access

Internet access is available throughout the island, within hotels and in Internet cafes. You can also purchase prepaid Internet cards for use on Antigua Computer Technology's network. Some hotels offer Internet access as a free service, but others bill for it. The rate at cafes in the city

is usually quite low and generally is charged per hour. There are open Wi-Fi zones set up at certain locations, including the airport. The Coast and Island Beehive offers free access in Heritage Quay.

Internet access in Barbuda is available at the Internet cafe in Codrington Village.

## Mail & Package Services

The main post office in St. John's is on High Street, just opposite Heritage Quay. Monday-Friday 8 am-noon and 1-4 pm. Its service is generally reliable, and for important parcels, the postal service offers an express service. FedEx and DHL also have offices in the city. Finding parking in the city can be quite a challenge, though, particularly when there are cruise ships in port. There is a branch of the post office just outside the city at Woods Mall on Friars Hill Road.

## Newspapers & Magazines

There are two daily newspapers: *The Daily Observer* and *The Antigua Sun*. Both generally carry the same information, although politics have been known to color the content. Caribarena.com carries online news coverage.

Visitors' guides are available at all major ports, and *Life in Antigua*, the official tourist publication of the Antigua Hotel and Tourist Association, is available in most hotel rooms. *The Food & Drink* guide is an informative publication featuring eateries of every type. In addition, there is a locally produced, free magazine called *Business Focus*, which features Antiguan business personalities.

## Transportation

### Air

V.C. Bird International Airport (ANU) on Antigua is about 4 mi/6 km northeast of St. John's (about a 15-minute drive). Barbuda has Codrington Airport (BBQ) at the south end of the island, about 3 mi/5 km from Dulcina.

Both regional and international airlines can be found along one strip in the main VC Bird airport terminal. Standard security restrictions apply. You will be required to remove shoes and scan laptops and carry-on luggage. The lines for departure can be quite long when there are several international flights on the ground (particularly on the weekends), so it is advisable to get to the airport early.

Departure tax is not collected by the airlines at check-in, and must be paid at a small kiosk located just before the departure entrance.

There is an information desk at the airport operated by the Tourism Department. Phone 460-9398. Additional information and assistance can be obtained by calling Antigua Airport Services at 462-0528.

Because Antigua is the hub of LIAT's service throughout the Caribbean, there are numerous flights to other islands (phone 480-5601). Winair flies from Antigua to Codrington, Barbuda, twice daily for about US\$95 round-trip (phone 562-7686; toll-free 866-466-0410). Several companies offer air-and-land day-trip excursions from Antigua to Barbuda. The Coco Point Lodge on Barbuda has its own airport and air service.

### Bus

Privately owned buses (minivans) provide transportation around Antigua, but there is no set schedule, and few buses run after the evening rush hour or on Sunday unless there are festivals and events in the city. The buses are used far more by Antiguans than by visitors, so they provide a close-up view of island life.

From St. John's, buses to the eastern part of the island leave from the East Bus Station; the others leave from the West Bus Station, near the Public Market. Fees vary according to the length of your trip (EC\$2-\$8) but the driver can tell you what you owe if you tell him where you're going. Pay as you board.

There is no bus service on Barbuda.

### Car

Rental cars are plentiful on Antigua. Most agencies are located outside the city, near the airport and in English Harbour. Rates start at US\$55 per day. You must have a valid driver's license and pay about US\$20 for a temporary local license. The rental car agency can assist you in obtaining one.

Roads are generally good but filled with many potholes, and few of the smaller roads are marked outside the city, so be sure to get a detailed map from the rental agency. (It's easy to get lost.) Driving is on the left.

On Barbuda, rental cars are available, but be prepared for rougher, dustier roads and few directional signs.

## Ferry

There is a scheduled ferry service between Antigua and Barbuda called *The Barbuda Express* (phone 560-7989 or 764-2291). Round trip is US\$80. Those wishing to sail to Barbuda can charter a boat or join one of the excursion cruises offered by several operators on Antigua. Barbuda is about two hours away from Antigua by boat.

## Ship

Cruise ships call at Antigua: The larger ships dock at Heritage Quay (a large, duty-free shopping center) and Redcliffe Quay in St. John's. An information booth is located inside Heritage Quay, and the main office of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourist Board is one block away at the corner of Nevis Street and Friendly Alley. When there isn't sufficient space at the ports in the heart of the city, cruise ships dock at Deepwater Harbour. Smaller, windjammer-style boats visit English Harbour, docking a five-minute walk from Nelson's Dockyard National Park. Larger yachts dock at Falmouth and English harbors, as well as in Jolly Harbour.

## Taxi

Taxis are not metered, and drivers can be quite creative in their pricing, so agree on a price before getting in the cab. Drivers are required to carry a rate card—rates quoted are for up to four people in the taxi, and they tend to be high. (For example, the 7-mi/10-km ride from St. John's to English Harbour costs US\$25.) Rates are usually quoted in U.S. dollars, but be sure to confirm the currency before getting in the cab. Taxi drivers also serve as island guides (a four-hour tour for four people runs US\$70-\$80). For taxis in Barbuda, phone 562-7066 or phone the Barbuda Tourism Office at 460-0604 to arrange a car and driver.

## Other

Mountain bicycles can be rented for about US\$35 a day from H2O Antigua (phone 562-3933) or from Bike Plus for US\$17 per day (phone 462-2453). Mopeds and motorcycles are not generally available for rent, but a few small companies offer scooters. Quads are the latest craze, and these can also be rented.

Bicycles can also be rented in Barbuda from GMW Bikes.

## For More Information

### Tourist Offices

Antigua and Barbuda Department of Tourism, Nevis Street and Friendly Alley, St. John's, Antigua. Phone 462-0480. Fax 462-2483.

### Antigua and Barbuda Embassies

**Canada:** High Commission for the Countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States, 130 Albert St., Suite 700, Ottawa, ON, K1P 5G4. Phone 613-236-8952. Fax 613-236-3042.

**U.S.:** Embassy of Antigua and Barbuda, 3216 New Mexico Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20016. Phone 202-362-5122. Fax 202-362-5225.

**U.K.:** Antiguan Embassy, 15 Thayer St., London W1M 5 LD, England. Phone 44-207-486-7073. Fax 44-207-486-9970.

### Foreign Embassies Serving Antigua

**Canada:** Canada is represented by its High Commission in Barbados: Bishop's Court Hill, St. Michael, Bridgetown. Phone 246-429-3550. Fax 246-429-3780.

**U.S.:** U.S. Consular Agent, Suite 2, Jasmine Court, Friars Hill Road, Antigua. Phone 463-6531 or 726-6531. Fax 460-1569. Assistance is also available from the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados. Phone 246-227-4193 or 246-227-4000 after hours.

## Recommended Guidebooks

*The Caribbean & the Bahamas* by James Henderson (Cadogan Books).

*A Traveler's Guide to the Caribbean* by Don Dachner (Traveler's Press).

*The Antigua and Barbuda Companion*, by Melanie Etherington (Interlink Publishing Group).

*Shipwrecks of the Caribbean: A Diver's Guide* by Martha Watkins-Gilkes (McMillan Education).

## Additional Reading

Several books by Jamaica Kincaid are of particular interest. *Annie John* is a work of fiction based on the author's experiences growing up on Antigua. *A Small Place* is an indictment of Antiguan politics and society. *My Brother*, an account of her brother's battle against HIV/AIDS, provides a personal look at a growing health problem in the Caribbean.

*Dancing in the Dining Room* by Donna Goring (Authorhouse).

*Unburnable* by Marie-Elena John (Amistad).

*The Way We Talk and other Antiguan Folkways, Island Spice and Caribbean Creoles*, by Joy Lawrence (Antigua).

## Galley Bay Resort

Five Islands PO Box 305  
St John's, Antigua, Antigua and  
Barbuda

Phone: 1 268-462-0302  
Fax: 1 268-462-4551  
Toll Free: 800-858-4618  
E-mail: [reservations@eliteislands.com](mailto:reservations@eliteislands.com)

Year Renovated: 2010  
Check in Time: 3:00 PM  
Check out Time: 12:00 PM  
Number of Floors: 2  
Total Number of Rooms: 98  
General Manager: James Lane

Rates: \$690-\$895 (USD)

Web: <http://www.galleybayresort.com>

STAR Rating:  Amenity Rating: 



Secreted off an obscure dirt road on the western coast, 5 km from St. John's, this operation may sit in the shadow of Curtain Bluff and Carlisle Bay from their perch as the best high-end all-inclusive resorts on the island, but this place is much more casual, and the ongoing fashion contests and oft-pretentious atmosphere at the latter is missing here.

This picture-perfect Caribbean compound offers a dynamic seafront location, good food and spiffy accommodations. Anyone yearning for frenetic activities and wet T-shirt contests might want to consider Sandals (although even the audience there is skewing toward an older crowd most months of the year). Maintenance is excellent, and management is doing a good job of keeping up with current trends.

Situated amid natural tropical growth between a brackish lagoon and a silky kilometer-stretch of beach, this year-round resort looks Polynesian rather than

Caribbean, with pencil-thin palms, bamboo and terra-cotta accents, and a group of rotund thatch-roofed huts that would fool Gauguin. Guests arrive through a gated entrance and continue past impressive landscaping to the open-air main pavilion (formerly a sugar mill) for registration.

Wooden columns and peaked ceilings with whirling fans create an island feel in the nearby European-Caribbean fusion restaurant and bar. Diners enjoy unobstructed water views in both restaurants, including the thatched-cabana style Gauguin Restaurant. This venue serves from an updated menu dominated by fresh seafood, and the setting is undoubtedly upscale with a dress code in place. Predinner drinks are usually enjoyed in the seaside Tepee Bar, aptly named for its interesting conical shape. Live music makes appearances at the aforementioned venues to the delight of couples seeking a romantic setting.

The boardwalk, lit at night, connects to an elaborate freshwater pool with rocks, waterfalls, water views, and a thatched hut for drinks. Sailing, kayaking, sailboarding and snorkeling round out the wet and complimentary fun (although the rough sea at this edge of the water often precludes swimming). The single tennis court remains unlighted, but an on-site pro continues to aid guests with their game during the day.

The spa offers a long list of health and beauty treatments, as well as a dozen varieties of massage. The staff can arrange tours, and guests can browse through a boutique or work out in the fitness center.

Internet access is available in the cozy library lounge. A rental car desk, small boutique, limited business services and free parking are on-site. Pets are not permitted.

The roster of accommodations includes the 16 extravagantly priced beachfront suites set well away from each other. The well-crafted superior and deluxe units are in a series of one- and two-story buildings, two directly on the beach. All rooms show distinct island style, with ceiling fans, air conditioning, bamboo and rattan pieces, armoires, refrigerators, coffeemakers, safes, hair dryers, robes and king beds.





Baths feature stone-tile floors, two pedestal sinks, and gigantic stall showers. Each unit also has a large balcony or patio, and the deluxe units add more space, walk-in closets and dual showerheads. Extra touches like fresh flowers and exceptional housekeeping make a fine impression. Phones and cable TVs are in all rooms, and suites add sunken living rooms and wet bars.

The least expensive but most romantic choices are the 14 Gauguin Cottages, two-room plaster and thatch bungalows with terraces and plunge pools. Although only slightly larger than your average hot tub, these are private enough to make skinny-dipping an option.

In the cottages, one room is for sleeping; the other has the shower, the vanity and the shelving; and between the two is a small sitting area. Mosquito netting drapes the beds in methodical yet romantic fashion. Despite the name, some Beachfront Suites

are, in fact, glamorous studios with spacious layouts. Their large sitting areas open to sea-view balconies of terraces, and their tiled baths are among the most impressive on the island, offering the only tubs in the hotel. Room service is on call at breakfast only.

Children are only allowed during the holiday season to preserve a peaceful ambience. This unique resort is intimate and very romantic, but like its competitor, Curtain Bluff, it's no bargain.

## Basic Information

**Year Renovated:** 2010  
**Number of Floors:** 2  
**Number of Rooms:** 98

## Rates & Policies

*Rates are Daily in USD*  
**Standard:** \$690-\$840  
**Suite:** \$895  
**Meals:** Continental Plan  
**Deposit Policy:** 3 nights' deposit  
**Cancellation Policy:** 30 days prior notice in season; 30 days low season  
**Restrictions:** Children allowed only during holiday season

Credit Cards Are Accepted  
Reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card

## Location

4 mi from St John's. In secluded acres of beachfront & tropical gardens. Airport, Beach.

**Nearest Airports:**  
• V.C. Bird Intl- 8 mi, 30 min drive

**Nearby Points of Interest:**  
• St John's (capitol city)- 4 mi to the East  
• Fig Tree Drive (rain forest-agrc)- 9 mi to the South  
• English Harbour/Nelson Dockyard (Historic area)- 12 mi to the Southeast

## Restaurants On-Site

**Dining:** 3 restaurants and 4 bars On Site

- (European-Caribbean fusion)
- Gauguin (Fresh seafood)
- Tepee (Cocktails/Live music)

## Room Amenities

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(Amenities are in all rooms unless noted otherwise)

Air Conditioning  
Balcony/Terrace  
Coffeemaker  
Daily Maid Service  
Iron/Ironing Board (some)  
Mini-Bar  
Rooms for Non-smokers  
Telephone  
Voicemail  
Refrigerator  
Safe (In Room)  
Cable/Satellite Television  
Television

## Hotel Facilities

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### GENERAL SERVICES

Barber/Hair Stylist  
Car Rental  
Complimentary Coffee  
Currency Exchange  
Gift Shop  
Laundry/Dry Cleaning Service  
Multi-lingual Staff  
Free Onsite Parking  
Room Service  
Wheelchair Access to Common/Public Areas

## Recreation

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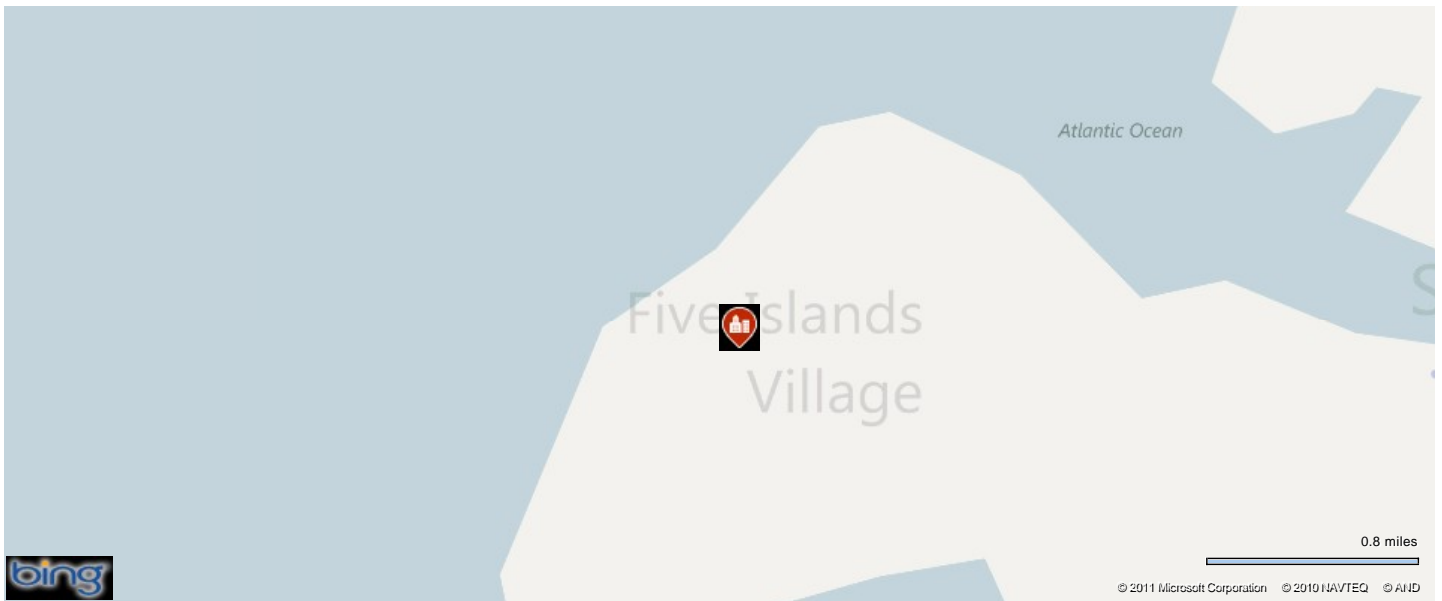
### NEARBY

Fishing  
Golf Course  
Horseback Riding  
Scuba Diving  
Shopping Mall/Area  
Water Skiing

### ON-SITE

Beach  
Bicycling  
Boating/Sailing  
Health Club  
Health Spa/Massage  
Jogging Trails  
Pool (Outdoor Pool)  
Snorkeling  
Tennis (Outdoor Tennis)

## Hotel Map & Neighborhood



## Hermitage Bay

Jennings Extension PO Box 60  
Jennings, Antigua, Antigua and  
Barbuda

Phone: 1 268-562-5500  
Fax: 1 268-562-5505  
E-mail: [info@hermitagebay.com](mailto:info@hermitagebay.com)

Check in Time: 3:00 PM  
Check out Time: 12:00 PM  
Total Number of Rooms: 25  
General Manager: Rachel Browne

Rates: \$830-\$1,910 (USD)

Web: <http://www.hermitagebay.com>

STAR Rating:  Amenity Rating: 



Located 20 minutes from the capital of St. John's, this all-inclusive, cottage-style resort opened in 2007.

Designed for couples, Hermitage Bay offers spacious cottages set apart from one another. The 17 hillside units have private plunge pools and wraparound open-air decks with a lounge area, a daybed and a dining area. The remaining eight cottages are set along the 1,250-ft-long beach fronting a calm bay.

Children age 8 and older are welcome in the beach suites in July and August.

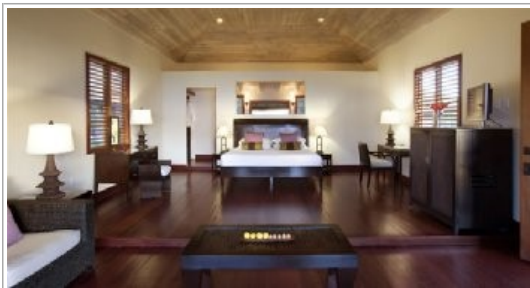
In the restaurant, Jamaican-born chef Dezi Banhan focuses on local, organic produce, fresh-caught seafood and ingredients indigenous to Antigua and the region. The beachfront restaurant is tiered at different levels, ensuring that each table has an unobstructed

sea view. Lunch is served around the patio and pool areas. All meals are a la carte.

Room service is available for all meals, and many guests do request it for breakfast. The all-inclusive rates cover all three meals, afternoon tea, hors d'oeuvres at cocktail time and a selection of house wines and premium branded drinks.

A full wine list and deluxe brands are available for an additional charge.

Resort facilities include a freestanding hillside spa with a range of treatments and therapies. A 30-minute massage is offered at no additional charge for guests staying three or more nights.



In-room amenities in the 1,100-sq-ft hillside suites include hardwood floors, an air-conditioned bedroom with a king bed, oversized tubs, a separate outdoor garden shower area, views of the sea and a contemporary decor.

The 900-sq-ft beach units feature a terraced veranda with a daybed and an air-conditioned bedroom and sitting area.

All units have flat-screen TVs, a DVD player, an iPod docking station, Wi-Fi, an in-room safe and a minibar.

## Basic Information

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**Number of Rooms:** 25

## Rates & Policies

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*Rates are Daily in USD*

**Suite:** \$830-\$1,910 - approx  
900 sq ft

**Meals:** All Inclusive Resort

**Deposit Policy:** 3 nights  
deposit required

**Cancellation Policy:** Payment  
in full if cancelled less than 21  
days before arriva

Credit Cards Are Accepted  
Reservations must be  
guaranteed with a credit card

## Location

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10 mi from St Johns. West  
coast of Antigua. Beach.

**Nearest Airports:**

- V.C. Bird Intl- 35 mins drive

**Nearby Points of Interest:**

- Nelson's Dockyard  
(Museum)- 9 mi to the  
Southeast

## Restaurants On- Site

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**Dining:** 1 restaurant and 1 bar  
On Site

- (Caribbean/European  
cuisine)

## Room Amenities

---

(Amenities are in all rooms unless noted otherwise)

Air Conditioning  
Balcony/Terrace  
Coffeemaker  
Daily Maid Service  
Iron/Ironing Board  
Mini-Bar  
Rooms for Non-smokers  
Telephone  
Voicemail  
Refrigerator  
Safe (In Room)  
Cable/Satellite Television  
Television  
DVD/VCR  
Whirlpool (some)

## Hotel Facilities

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### GENERAL SERVICES

Car Rental  
Complimentary Coffee  
Crib/Rollaway Bed  
Currency Exchange  
Gift Shop  
Laundry Room  
Laundry/Dry Cleaning Service  
Multi-lingual Staff  
Free Onsite Parking  
Room Service

### SECURITY

Parking Area Well Lit  
Smoke Alarm in Rooms  
Uniformed Security

## Recreation

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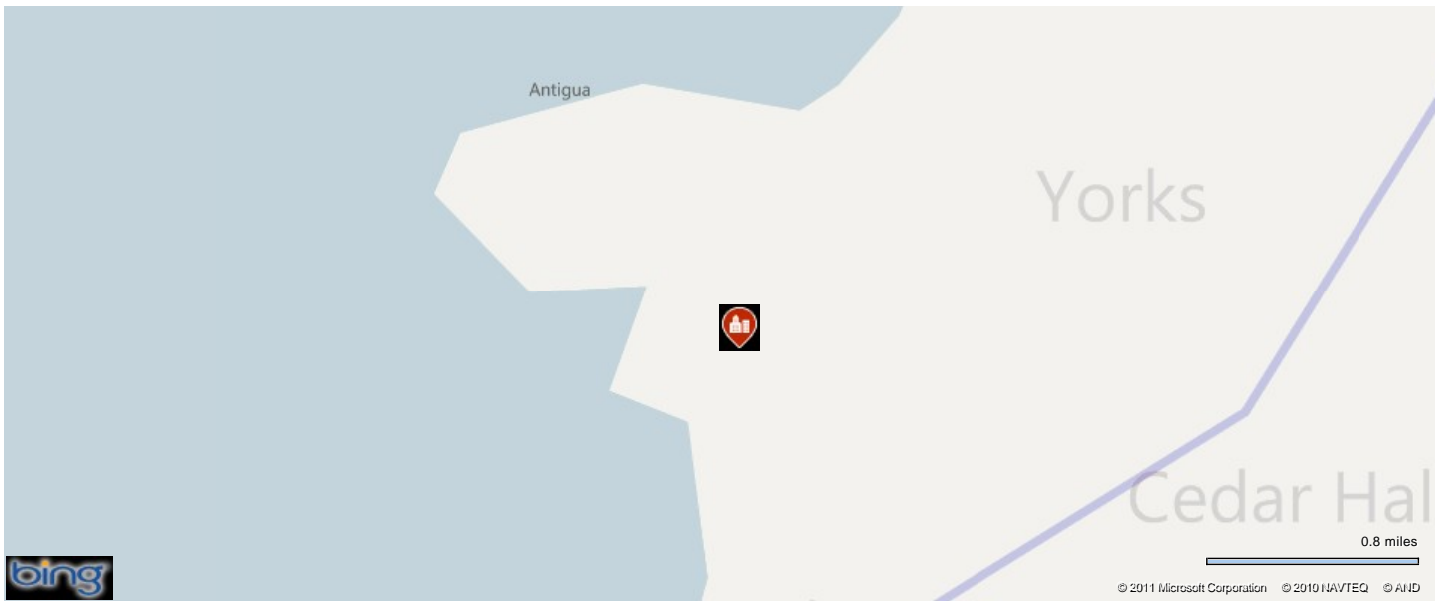
### NEARBY

Casino  
Fishing  
Golf Course  
Health Club  
Horseback Riding  
Scuba Diving  
Shopping Mall/Area  
Tennis (Outdoor Tennis)

### ON-SITE

Beach  
Boating/Sailing  
Health Spa/Massage  
Jogging Trails  
Pool (Outdoor Pool)  
Snorkeling

## Hotel Map & Neighborhood



## Sandals Grande Antigua Resort & Spa

Dickenson Bay Beach  
Dickenson Bay, Antigua, Antigua and Barbuda

Phone: 1 268-462-0267  
Fax: 1 268-462-4135  
Toll Free: 800-SANDALS  
E-mail: [info@sandals.com](mailto:info@sandals.com)

Year Renovated: 2000  
Check in Time: 3:00 PM  
Check out Time: 11:00 AM  
Number of Floors: 2  
Total Number of Rooms: 193  
General Manager: Franklyn Eaton

Rates: \$183-\$560 (USD)

Web:  
<http://www.sandals.com/main/antigua/antigua-home.cfm>

STAR Rating: ★★★★★ Amenity Rating: ██████████



Between Antigua Village and Rex Halcyon Cove, this property is one of the top all-inclusive resorts on the island for flirting couples. Blue Waters, Occidental Grand Pineapple Beach and, most notably, Galley Bay offer more style, but active guests who want to mix sports, hot-tubbing, beer guzzling, and sun and fun with overflowing buffets can do no better than this. While the hotel's mantra sounded suspiciously like Las Vegas'—What happens at Sandals, stays at Sandals—the age range of partying youthful types and retirees ebbs and flows with the season.

This tropical retreat shows some of the hallmarks of a theme-park resort, with pop music pervading from speakers disguised in trees and hidden under rocks, menus displaying cheeky food puns, activities rosters, and intentionally oversized furniture. Staffers smile constantly, even when it's clear they should not. Expect nonchalant and even cheeky service as employees are not compensated with gratuities based on attitude (management here has yet to learn how to motivate staffers to provide happiness-provoking service like at its Jamaican properties).

Two-story buildings and beachfront rondavels spread out across the grassy landscape. The lobby wraps around a huge ficus tree, and a sunny courtyard with a pair of caged macaws and a splashing fountain adjoins.

The bayside dining room features breakfast and luncheon buffets and either buffet or a la carte dinners. On selected evenings, specialty dining is by reservation at four dinner-only restaurants. One seafront room specializes in Italian food with decadent buffet fare and live cooking stations, and the Japanese restaurant features tableside preparation. A grill spices the options with a southwestern kick, and the delicatessen serves burgers and the like. Sushi lovers delight with freshly rolled delicacies and warm sake. All the restaurants are now smoke-free. Drinks at the swim-up bar, British pub, piano bar and water-view bar are unlimited (but don't expect too many name brands).

Local musicians perform nightly in the nightclub, with karaoke the warm-up act. A lively atmosphere prevails day and night, with talent shows and thrice-weekly theme nights. The weekly beach party, a contemporary Annette Funicello affair, gets racy away from the bonfire, and international buffet nights are popular. Other popular activities include yoga sessions and wine tastings.

Although the property is spread out, the small beach is packed with vendors and the public, and the roped-off swimming area is tiny. Watersports include snorkeling, sailboarding, diving (with certification) and sailing. The premises also contain five pools, five whirlpools, two lighted tennis courts and an outdoor exercise area cooled only by whirling fans and the gentle breeze. The same repetitive music often blares at the pools making relaxation a bit difficult at times, but guests can usually find a corner to tuck away into for solitude. Volleyball nets are strung over the sand, and the saunas and steam rooms are co-ed.



The Red Lane spa attracts the sun-scorched with health and beauty treatments and a luxury boutique. The expanded 32,000-sq-ft shopping area, an art gallery and 9,000 more sq ft of meetings space encourage plenty of nonaquatic activity. Honeymooners flock to book the wedding gazebo for nuptials. A small business center offers Internet-equipped computers for guest use.

Sea-foam-green wood accents, neon-bright tropical fabrics, polished tile floors, typical rattan furniture and dark-stained colonial-style four-poster king beds are typical. Most rooms are compact (read: small). All rooms are air-conditioned and provide phones, TVs, safes, dressers, hair dryers, functional combination baths, and patios or terraces. Coffeemakers and clock radios top limited counter space.

Rates are pegged mostly to location, with Anthurium among the most expensive sections. Try to avoid Ixora and Oleander, which hug the parking lot. The top six categories come with refrigerators, robes and amenities baskets, and the best of these scan the bay. Midrange rooms face the pool or gardens. The Seaside Rondavels are overpriced—only seven are waterfront; the remaining five espy the sea through hedges. They have smallish baths with tubs, hair dryers and large mirrors plus teeny furnished terraces. Eleven units in the -300 series have been upgraded with private plunge pools, a perk that is certain to lure top-end honeymooners. Of the tiny duplex cottages spread throughout the grounds, 406, 408, 409 and 410 are the best. These units are also the cheapest, and renovations are constant yet mild.



This resort's new 180-suite Mediterranean Village caps off a \$70 million expansion to the resort's existing 193-room Caribbean Village, which is a short walk away. It boasts architectural styles of the Mediterranean region, such as terra-cotta roof tiles, copper domes, Italianate statues, marble columns, hand-cut mosaic tiles set into fountains and stone walkways, ironwork lighting fixtures on the resort grounds, a separate lobby and vaulted entryways.

The Mediterranean Village features six room categories, a sixth freshwater pool, a swim-up bar and whirlpool poolside cabanas. Suites offer 42-inch plasma TVs, stocked complimentary mini-refrigerators, canopied beds, whirlpool tubs for two, and marble baths with separate walk-in showers with rainfall showerheads. A few come with open-plan baths meaning that the shower and tub provide no privacy from the main living quarters, making them only appropriate for close couples. Concierge-level rooms benefit from private reception service, evening turndown and additional en suite amenities. Butler service is also on offer, but the strength of this benefit varies wildly depending on the energy and enthusiasm of the assigned butler.

A three-night minimum is required. Airport transfers are included in the rates. Concierge rooms and suites enjoy room service available at all hours.

This resort has something for everyone and appeals largely to Europeans and Americans seeking a bargain. During certain times of the year, the clientele skews either younger or more diverse with a solid mix of Europeans year-round. Those with expectations of impeccable service standards and gourmet food should stick with Cap Juluca on nearby Anguilla or the Ritz-Carlton in San Juan as this place offers value-priced cuisine meaning plentiful, yet mass-produced. Management is hard to reach, and employees can be notoriously indifferent at times. The fact of whether tremendous value exists lies in the eyes of the beholder, but most guests leave happier, heavier and hotter than when they first arrived.

## Basic Information

**Year Renovated:** 2000  
**Number of Floors:** 2  
**Number of Rooms:** 193  
**Chain:** Sandals Resorts  
**Chain Website:**  
<http://www.sandals.com>

## Rates & Policies

*Rates are Daily in USD*  
**Standard:** \$183  
**Suite:** \$560  
**Meals:** All Inclusive Resort  
**Deposit Policy:** Full payment due at time of booking  
**Cancellation Policy:** Penalty apply if cancelled 45 days or less prior to arrival  
**Restrictions:** Couples only; no children; 2-night minimum stay

Credit Cards Are Accepted  
Reservations must be guaranteed with a credit card

## Location

Market St. Set on the beautiful white-sand beach of Dickenson Bay. Beach.

**Nearest Airports:**  
• V.C. Bird Intl- 7 mi, 15 min drive

**Nearby Points of Interest:**  
• Rainforest (Tour)  
• National Park (Historical Site)- 5 mi

## Restaurants On-Site

**Dining:** 9 restaurants and 7 bars On Site

- Bayside (International)
- Mario's (Italian)
- Kimono's (Teppanyaki)

## Room Amenities

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(Amenities are in all rooms unless noted otherwise)

Air Conditioning  
Balcony/Terrace  
Coffeemaker  
Daily Maid Service  
Iron/Ironing Board  
Mini-Bar (some)  
Free Newspaper (some)  
Rooms for Non-smokers  
Telephone  
Voicemail  
Refrigerator (some)  
Safe (In Room)  
Cable/Satellite Television  
Television  
DVD/VCR (some)

## Hotel Facilities

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### GENERAL SERVICES

Barber/Hair Stylist  
Car Rental  
Complimentary Coffee  
Complimentary Transportation  
Concierge Services  
Currency Exchange  
Gift Shop  
Laundry/Dry Cleaning Service  
Multi-lingual Staff  
Free Onsite Parking  
Room Service  
Wheelchair Access to Common/Public Areas

### SECURITY

Smoke Alarm in Rooms  
Sprinkler in Rooms

## Recreation

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### NEARBY

Casino  
Golf Course  
Horseback Riding  
Shopping Mall/Area

### ON-SITE

Beach  
Boating/Sailing  
Fishing  
Game Room  
Health Club  
Health Spa/Massage  
Hot Tub  
Pool (6 Outdoor Pools)  
Scuba Diving  
Snorkeling  
Tennis (Outdoor Tennis)  
Water Skiing

## Hotel Map & Neighborhood

