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Nigel Tisdall

The 10 best hotels in Jamaica

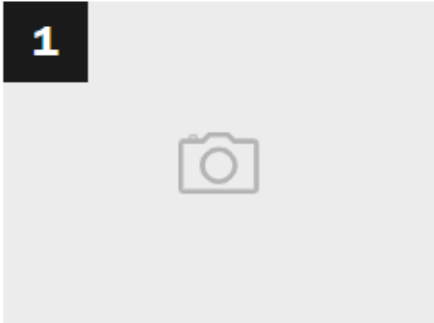
Check out our picks of the very best hotels in Jamaica, from all-inclusive resorts to romantic beach bungalows



Photograph: Jamaica Inn

Jamaica's got a rhythm and style like nowhere else, and while everyone's heard about the rum, reggae and Rastafarianism, it's the scenic beauty of this huge and charismatic island that surprises. If you like the sound of dramatic drives through saw-tooth mountains rising to over 7,000ft, jerk chicken barbecues on the beach and outdoor adventures from horse riding to floating downriver on a bamboo raft, this is your kind of island, with plenty of great **things to do**. Some of the most stylish places to stay here have grown out of the music industry, and the island also gave birth to the concept of large all-inclusive beach resorts. Here are ten of our favourite stops around the island.

The best hotels in Jamaica



Jamaica Inn

Marilyn Monroe honeymooned at Jamaica Inn, one of many stars that have graced the elegant lawns and terraces of this sanctuary-like seaside hotel in Ocho Rios. Opened in 1968 and family-run, it has successfully kept its colonial charm – magnificent trees, croquet, afternoon tea and an affable black Labrador – yet is far from stuffy. There’s a small and perfect beach, everything’s painted a harmonious white and blue, all 48 suites and four cottages come with roomy balconies or verandas, and the cocktails – administered by long-serving staff – are definitive.

Check prices



Booking.com

Strawberry Hill

Chris Blackwell, the Jamaican music producer who discovered Bob Marley and founded Island Records, opened this splendid ensemble of white wooden buildings as a hotel in 1994. Set 3,100ft high in the Blue Mountains near Irish Town, its 13 cottages come with massive four-poster beds and a veranda with views over Kingston (especially magical at night) or the surrounding valleys. There’s a pool, spa, boutique, glorious gardens and walking trails, while the restaurant serves classic Jamaican dishes and – naturally – sublime Blue Mountain coffee.

Check prices

3



Michael Condran

Skylark Negril Beach Resort

This new 28-room resort right beside Negril's Seven Mile Beach has a bright white, 'tropical mid-century' style with cheery staff, Jamaican beats and a pop-up restaurant featuring a jerk smokehouse and grill – tempting dishes include curried goat, steamed fish with okra and coconut cake. DJs play at night and a serious spa offers treatments ranging from a float away massage to rejuvenating facials and reflexology. Guests can also join yoga classes, activities and tours offered at sister hotel The Rockhouse, linked by a complimentary shuttle.

[Check prices](#)

4



Booking.com

Jewel Grande Montego Bay Resort & Spa

Opened in January 2018, this 206-room all-inclusive luxury beach resort in Montego Bay is just 15 minutes from the airport (with complimentary transfers). Accommodation options stretch from junior suites to four-bedroom penthouses, all with an ocean-view balcony, and amenities are impressive, taking in a 30,000 square foot spa with 14 treatment suites, daily exercise classes, two outdoor pools, a kids' club and fitness centre. The 16 food and beverage outlets include Ackee's, offerings authentic Jamaican dishes, and a swim-up bar specialising in, oh my, rums.

[Check prices](#)

5



Booking.com

Mockingbird Hill

Set on a hill near Port Antonio, this ten-room hotel has a long-standing commitment to ecotourism and comes wrapped in six acres of delightful tropical gardens. The style is bright, light and laidback, with white tile floors, bamboo furniture and breezes providing the A/C. The Mille Fleurs restaurant offers a daily à la carte menu that often features local fish and produce, with vegetarians well looked after, and amenities include a pool and 'Garden of Wellness' with spa treatments. The owners are expert in suggesting the places to explore that will suit you best.

[Check prices](#)

6



Booking.com

GoldenEye

Author Ian Fleming wrote all 14 James Bond books at Goldeneye, the clifftop villa he built on the north coast at Oracabessa in 1946. It's still there, now sporting an upper-case mid-word 'E', five bedrooms and an eye-watering rental price, while alongside stands a hip resort where you can stay in beach villas, lagoon cottages or (less pricey) beach huts. Safe and family-friendly with gently shelving sands, a snorkelling cove and swim-up spa, it's a superb spot for some romantic downtime mixing a spot of paddleboarding with dinner under the stars.

[Check prices](#)

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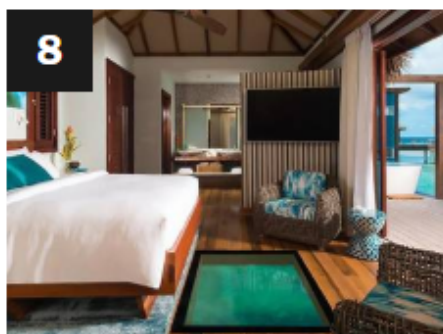
Booking.com

Marblue Villa Suites

Treasure Beach is Jamaica minus the holiday razzmatazz, a quiet and creative corner of the south coast where it's best to have a car. This small, ocean-view hotel by Calabash Bay has just six suites, including one with two bedrooms, all simply styled in white with splashes of colour. Marblue's German owners have long been committed to the area, and will happily direct you to the best places to eat as well as help you book boat trips along the Black River and to the famous Pelican Bar, set on stilts in the sea.

[Check prices](#)

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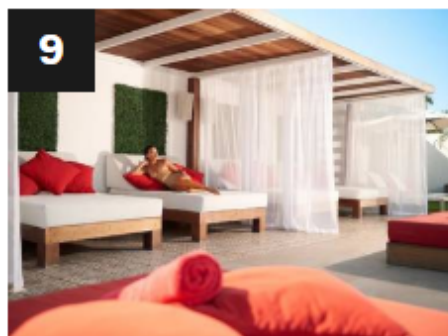
Booking.com

Sandals South Coast

This 360-room adults-only all-inclusive resort in White House is refreshingly distant from the main tourist hubs – transfers from Montego Bay airport take 90 minutes – but the distance ensures you'll get a blissfully peaceful and unspoilt ambience. Everything you want for a sunshine holiday is here – watersports, diving, tennis, a spa, hammocks, beach cabanas, nightly entertainment, not to mention seven bars and nine restaurants. As if this wasn't enough, in December 2017 12 over-water bungalows with 'sea-through' glass floors for ocean viewing, private infinity pool and personalised butler service were added.

[Check prices](#)

9



Booking.com

Spanish Court Hotel

A 45-minute drive from Kingston airport, this well-appointed modern hotel in Uptown makes a good base for exploring the Jamaican capital. Devon House, which is as famous for its patties and ice creams as the grand 1881 residence you can tour, is close by. Decorated with photography and furniture created by Jamaicans, it's a hotel that's popular with business travellers (the 125 rooms have an executive feel, as well as minibars and coffee machine) but with plenty of space to relax in, while amenities include a spa, 50ft rooftop pool, gym, cafe and both a Caribbean and international menu at the Rojo restaurant.

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10



Booking.com

Sunset at the Palms

If you like the idea of an all-inclusive resort but not the large-scale properties that are their norm, this modestly sized adults-only property in Negril could be the answer. Set just across the road from Bloody Bay beach, its 28 rooms come in a tree-house style, with dark woods and plenty of surrounding foliage. There's a small, deck-ringed pool, a well-equipped gym and a spa, tennis courts and a beach club with watersports and diving. The three dining venues include the à la carte Lotus Leaf restaurant serving Caribbean fusion dishes... special occasion? Splash out on the 'Chef's Showcase Under the Stars' dinner.

[Check prices](#)