



Our Paper

Front and Back Pages, E-Edition and Back Issues...

Weather

15°C

London

Horoscope



MyEXPRESS

Your PROFILE
Your COMMENTS
Your SPACE

SIGN IN / UP

Monday 29th September 2008



Make us your HOME PAGE



What is RSS?

SEARCH:



This Site



Web



Thomson Local

SEARCH

CELEBRITY HAVEN'S RICH PAST

Saturday November 10, 2007

Ben Hall

AS WELL as being treated to a seductive blend of blazing sunshine, balmy seas and swaying palms, Caribbean first-timers will find Barbados reassuringly British.

Besides familiar place names, from Scotland to St James, there's cricket on the beach, afternoon tea in the smart hotels and even a statue of Nelson in the capital Bridgetown, erected 30 years before the one went up in London.

The old British colony is really three islands rolled into one.

The west is best, especially if you can afford to put up in one of its exclusive hotels where there's a fair chance of spotting a pop or soccer star – or maybe both if occasional visitors the Beckhams are in town – or even the odd lesser royal lying on the next sunbed.

On the south coast the hotels tend to lose a star or two but the beaches are broader and nightlife is many decibels livelier.

The east coast is as different again, wild and untamed by development with a sea too rough for all but experienced surfers. Here's a brief guide to the island's highlights:

Best beaches

The west is for waters as calm as a swimming pool, with areas buoyed off from jetskis. The beaches are soft and sandy but they are rather narrow.

Paynes Bay is one of the best, enjoyed by guests of Treasure Beach Hotel and Beachcomber but not exclusively. Mullins Bay, which has a popular beach bar, is also appealing. In fact, you could walk from one end of the west coast to the other until you find your ideal roost.

In the south the beaches are much wider, the sands whiter and even softer but the downside is a regular stiff breeze which makes the sea a tad friskier. Crane Beach in the south-east – just below the Crane Hotel – is one of the most spectacular in the Caribbean, although recent timeshare development in the area does detract from the natural perfection of pinkish sands and turquoise seas. Nearby is another beauty, Bottom Bay.

The beaches on the east coast are for looking at and walking on; both Bath and Bathsheba are among the most dramatic, although swim in natural rock pools rather than attempt to tackle the rollers.

Beyond the beach

Some say Columbus never came to Barbados because he couldn't even see it on the horizon. The coral island lacks vegetation and undulation. The scenic exception is Scotland, a district of hills in the north broken up by botanically rich cleavages in the limestone capping.

See it on a big day out, along with the east coast – Barbados is roughly the size of the Isle of Wight so quite manageable. Plan on lunch at the Atlantis hotel at Bathsheba, ideally on Sunday, for the blow-out Bajan buffet.

There are a few grand houses, some open to the public, some still lived in by the "high white" plantocracy, some still working sugar plantations.

St Nicholas Abbey is the best known, built to British plans right down to fireplaces and chimneys (the last thing you need in Barbados) as well as 18th-century furnishings and a Wedgewood collection.

The Andromeda Gardens belonging to the National Trust have the biggest range of plants in the West Indies, both local and imported; follow the trail around the various horticultural highlights. For a peek underwater without getting your feet wet consider the Atlantis submarine which dives 30-odd metres then cruises just above the seabed for 30 minutes to allow inspection of the fish and coral through the portholes.

Golfers will love Barbados with its four main courses, two owned by Sandy Lane Hotel, the others the Royal Westmorland and the Barbados Golf Club. Locals call the south coast "fast", meaning it's home to lots of bars and clubs. The action in Bridgetown takes place after dark in the string of one-room rum shops along Baxter's Road which look intimidating but are visitor friendly.

Where to stay

Top end: Relais & Chateaux Cobblers Cove, one of the string of des res retreats on the west coast, is intimate, peaceful and genteel. Once part of an old sugar mill, there are 40 rooms across two storeys, each opening on to a large terrace or balcony, plus one of the best restaurants on the island.

Sample package: One week in January with Caribtours (0207 751 0660/<http://www.caribtours.co.uk>) starts at £2,119pp including scheduled flights from Gatwick.

Mid range: A good choice for families is the Almond Beach Village, an all-inclusive whopper of 330 rooms but spread over 32 acres, with lots of amenities including kids club, a nursery for infants, water sports, 10 pools and two squash courts.

Sample package: One week in January with BA Holidays (0870 243 3406/<http://www.ba.com/caribbean>) starts at £1,453 pp (all inclusive) including flights from Gatwick.

Budget: Consider the three-star Tropical Escape, close to the west coast beach at Paynes Bay and 15mins from Bridgetown. One week in January from £620pp (all inclusive) with First Choice (0871 664 9014/ <http://www.firstchoice.co.uk>) including charter flights from Gatwick

Where to Eat

Among the top restaurants are the Fishpot at Little Good Harbour; Daphne's, the trendy Bajan sister of the one in Chelsea, serving contemporary Italian; the romantic Cliff on a balcony above the (floodlit) sea; and Brown Sugar in Bridgetown.

Barbados National Tourist Board: 0207 636 9448/ <http://www.visitbarbados.co.uk>



[Home](#) | [NEWS](#) | [SPORT](#) | [FEATURES](#) | [MONEY](#) | [HOROSCOPE](#) | [TRAVELOK! Magazine](#) | [The Daily Star](#) | [new! Magazine](#) | [Star Magazine](#)
[Sitemap](#) | [Contact](#) | [Advertise Here](#) | [Site Credits](#) Copyright ©2006 Northern and Shell Media Publications. "Daily Express" is a registered trademark.
All rights reserved. By viewing this site you agree to our [Terms and Conditions](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).