

Advice for Great Caribbean Travel

People have been taking Caribbean travel vacations since the colonial era. Today, millions of U.S. and Canadian citizens visit the islands every year to experience the tropical experience that a Caribbean vacation usually has in store for all its visitors.

Below are some Caribbean travel tips to help you get the most out of your tropical expedition:

Plan Ahead

If there's anything you absolutely must do when you go on a Caribbean vacation it is to plan ahead. There are a lot of things you have to take care of. Trip planning can be a challenge. Often, a passport may be required before you can enter the country you are planning to visit. One Caribbean travel tip you ought to consider is to prepare all your travel documents as soon as possible.

Select an Island

Culture shock is bound to happen if you don't conduct your research beforehand. One fact you should remember about the Caribbean is that it has a culture that is as widely diverse as its people. And there are plenty of differences amongst Caribbean islands. So heed this Caribbean travel tip: Read up on the culture and people for the places you will visit.

Another thing, as you travel, stay abreast of local news coverage. If you are in an area experiencing civil unrest or a natural disaster, or if you are going to a place where communications is substandard, register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for your own safety. Registration at the State Department's TravelRegistration.state.gov website takes only a few moments, and is certainly helpful in case of emergency. Additionally, you can also get current Caribbean travel tips and information on any country in the world by obtaining the Department of State's Consular Information Sheet.

Customs

Every island in the Caribbean has its own set of rules for entry. That is why your first Caribbean travel tip is to organize all your documents before you leave home. If you can show proof that you are a U.S. citizen and a return or onward ticket, most countries would permit you to visit for up to two or three months.

Take this as both a Caribbean travel tip and warning: There are countries in the Caribbean with areas affected by yellow fever. If you come from any of these areas, you may be obligated to have a certificate of vaccination against yellow fever.

Also, some airports may charge departure tax of up to \$25.

Coming Home

There are some Caribbean countries that call for only your birth certificate as an entry requirement. Nevertheless, this should be no reason for you to slack off on your travel documents. Remember that United States immigration requires that you document both your U.S. citizenship and identification. Remember this Caribbean travel tip and make sure you can return to the United States with both these documents.

But what is the best document that can establish your American citizenship? The best evidence is a valid U.S. passport. However, other travelers list these Caribbean travel tips as documents you can use besides a current passport to prove U.S. citizenship:

- * Certified copy of birth certificate
- * Certificate of Naturalization
- * Certificate of Citizenship
- * Report of Birth Abroad of a U.S. Citizen
- * Expired U.S. passport