

## Be a Jamaican for a Week

So, yuh coming to Jamaica and yuh wonda what Jamaicans do with dem time. Well if you have one week and would like to "be" a Jamaican, here's what we suggest:

Well, given the complexities of Jamaican society, one can spend forever learning about our people and culture.

Attend a religious service.

Jamaica is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as having more churches per square mile than any other country. There are traditional Christian services in historic parishes, and non-traditional services that take place anywhere from under huge circus-style tents, riverbanks and small one-room chapels to large modern worship halls, while Rastafarians sometimes hold large meetings to "chant". Be sure to inquire about etiquette, and be prepared to meet some of the most welcoming Jamaicans.

Share Sunday dinner with a Jamaican family.

Sunday dinner is one of the most time-honoured traditions of the typical Jamaican family. Rice and peas, chicken and a salad are practically staples, but often meals include a second meat, baked sweet potato, and cooked garden vegetables. Of course, no meal is complete without fresh juice of whichever fruit is in season, and baked pastry served with ice cream or fresh fruit for dessert. Be prepared to eat all the food on your plate! Apart from delectable dishes, a big feature of Sunday dinner is the community of people, relatives and friends alike that come together for it.

Watch or play a cricket match, or "run some ball".

Jamaicans are passionate about sports, and every week whole communities come out to support their local teams, or to play in spirited, highly competitive rounds. The two most popular sports in Jamaica are cricket and football (called "soccer" in the United States, and simply "ball" in Jamaica). Most games and matches take place in the early evening or on weekends, and many matches are spontaneous, and teams grow as players arrive. It's fun to play on a team for one game or so, but being a spectator is an amusing experience too.

"Reason" or have some "Veranda Talk".

Jamaicans have never been afraid to hold and defend an opinion. We express ourselves - clearly and eloquently - through music, art and literature, but most of all through discussion. "Reasoning", the act of debating or discussing a point or idea to exhaustion, can take place anywhere, anytime. "Veranda talk" follows the same idea, but is usually reserved for verandas, front porches, or drawing rooms, supplemented by tea or lemonade and appropriate snacks. However formal or informal the setting, Jamaicans love to exchange thoughts.

"Go 'a dance".

Whatever town you're in, there will be at least one night in the week when everyone will know the name of the DJs playing the music, and the date, occasion and location as well as the entry fee. The rules are the same as those around the world. Women should be cautious when handling their drinks, and we suggest going in a group, preferably with a

Jamaican to accompany your party. Certainly, the most important rule for attending any event in Jamaica is also the easiest to adhere to: Be sure to "forget your troubles &hellip;and dance!"

"Lick two domino".

Jamaica's unofficial national pastime is, without a doubt, playing dominoes. The energetically loud crash of "cards" onto makeshift tables is a familiar sound throughout the country, heard everywhere from the fishermen's huts in seaside villages to the luxurious patios of palatial mountain homes. What makes this game so popular? We're not sure. But Jamaicans have domino playing down to a science, and are always eager to take on challengers, either as individuals or as members of two-person teams.

"Go 'a Market".

The most famous produce market, Coronation Market in downtown Kingston, is the island's largest. All over the island, however, each town and village has its own local market, such as the Linstead Market in St Catherine, the Brown's Town Market in St Ann, The Savanna-La-Mar Market in Westmoreland and the Albert George Market in Falmouth. In most markets, just about any natural produce that grows in Jamaica is available, but also a variety of healing herbs, spices and homemade soap. A Jamaican market scene is a masterful potpourri of tropical scents and sounds: vendors hawking wares, children laughing and hundreds of transactions taking place. [visitjamaica.com](http://visitjamaica.com)