

Top 10 Travel Tips To Make Jamaica Your Home Away From Home

The best way to get to know Jamaica is to meet the warm, friendly people.

Whether it is in Kingston, Montego Bay, Negril, Ocho Rios, the South Coast or Port Antonio, the best way to meet the people is to immerse oneself in the island's daily life. From going to an all-night beach party, to volunteering at a local school, Jamaica's people encourage visitors to get involved and learn about the vibrant Jamaican culture. Here are the top 10 ways to make Jamaica feel like home:

- Stay at a Boutique Hotel** Rockhouse is a bohemian hotel on the cliffs of Negril. It's not only beautiful, but also budget-friendly; rates start at \$95 in the fall. The property boasts beautiful sunset views and hidden caverns worth exploring. It's within walking distance of the downtown area of Negril and a host of off-the-beaten-path restaurants.
- Eat Local** Stush in the Bush in Ocho Rios is a local farm run by a Jamaican couple. They produce farm-to-table dinners in the Rastafarian (Ital) diet of fresh fruits, vegetables and spices. It's a great way to learn about the flora and fauna of Jamaica, and have a home cooked meal while taking in the beauty of Jamaica's landscape.
- Learn about the island's world class rum** If learning means taste-testing classic Jamaican rum, then everyone should be well-educated. The Appleton Rum factory is set in the South Coast of Jamaica in an untapped landscape. Visitors can taste test new and classic rum blends, tour the facilities and get a lay of the land – the sugarcane itself is in the vicinity.
- Check something off the bucket list** Swim in the Luminous Lagoon. Also called Glistening Waters, this phenomenon is truly a bucket list item. Microorganisms thrive in the waters where salt and fresh water combine, and emit a bluish glow. Visitors can jump into these waters off of the coast of Falmouth at night, and experience an otherworldly marvel.
- Party** Negril is home to many of Jamaica's all night parties, and Bourbon Beach has the music to fuel the partygoers. Visitors can experience Dancehall on Thursday, Reggae on Saturday and Old School Hip-hop on Sunday, all starting at 9:30 p.m. on the Beach.
- Chill Out** Seven-mile beach in Negril is Jamaica's pride and joy. The miles of white sands against the azure waters of the Caribbean Sea is every vacationer's dream. Beach time with a rum punch is a must for any traveler to Jamaica.
- Volunteer** Teach at a local school, help build a house or care for dogs and cats at a local animal rescue shelter. Here are just some of the ways that visitors can make their vacation more purposeful by lending a hand at any of these wonderful organizations: <http://www.visitjamaica.com/Volunteer>
- Explore** Take a hike to YS Falls, a combination of seven waterfalls cascading into natural spring pools. Located in the South Coast, tourists up for the adventure are encouraged to climb up the waterfalls, and jump at their own risk.
- Attend a major event** From August 5-9, the streets of Negril become one big party. Jamaica Dream Weekend is sponsored by local rum brand, Appleton Estate, and the theme is "Rum Rules Paradise." Jamaican reggae and dancehall musicians will keep the party going for five days straight.
- Meet the People** For visitors looking for a coordinated meet-up experience, the Jamaica Tourist Board has a "Meet the People" option. While planning a trip to Jamaica, travelers can request to meet a Jamaican with similar interests and learn about the Jamaican lifestyle. Meetings can occur in the workplace, at an event or a local restaurant. The program is no cost to the visitor.