

 NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC

Driving Abroad  
What You Should Know

# TRAVELER

All Travel, All the Time  
October 2008 \$4.99

THE  
LURE  
OF

# SPAIN & MOROCCO

Two Families Caravan into Two Worlds

THE  
WORLD'S  
MOST  
HAUNTED  
CITY

WALK INTO  
AMERICA,  
PART 3

(Montana, California,  
Washington State)



PURE  
JAMAICA

PLUS: 50 GREEN  
TRAVEL TIPS

\$4.99US \$6.99CAN



ON OUR WEBSITE

New Features Go Live September 11

## Jump Into Our Jamaica Photo Gallery

Michael Melford captured inviting scenes from this popular island destination, including this one from Jake's resort in the little community of Calabash Bay. The beachside swimming pool is filled with salt water—not fresh—making chlorine treatment welcomingly unnecessary. See this and other photographs from Melford's assignment with writer Mel White on the ins and outs of taking a beach vacation while traveling sustainably.

▪ [nationalgeographic.com/traveler](http://nationalgeographic.com/traveler)



### Mumbai Photo Gallery

The traditional and trendy meet in this bustling Indian city. *Above:* CD player topped with a Hindu elephant god.

### Free Cape Town

A trip to this South African city needn't break the bank. Check out our list of free things to do.

### Intelligent Travel Blog

Find out what's new in authentic and sustainable travel. Log on to IT, updated several times daily.

#### PHOTO SEMINARS

#### Learn from TRAVELER PROS

Focus on your photography at an info-packed, one-day workshop.

**Nature and Outdoor Photography**  
New Haven, CT • September 28, 2008

**Versatile Travel Photographer**  
Portland, OR • September 28, 2008

**Travel Photos That Tell a Story**  
Boston, MA • December 7, 2008

For more: [www.NGTravelerSeminars.com](http://www.NGTravelerSeminars.com).

### Photos of the Week

Download a new photo to your desktop each Thursday—free. Featured locations from the October issue include Seattle (below), Morocco, Jamaica, and Mumbai.



## Take Our Worldwide Quiz

**How well do you know the world?** Thorntons, a British chocolatier, created an 860-pound wall of chocolate for an Easter 2007 event. Dubbed the "World's First Edible Billboard" (and devoured in three hours), the wall graced which London shopping area? Log on to our website for the answer to this and eight other "chocolate" questions.



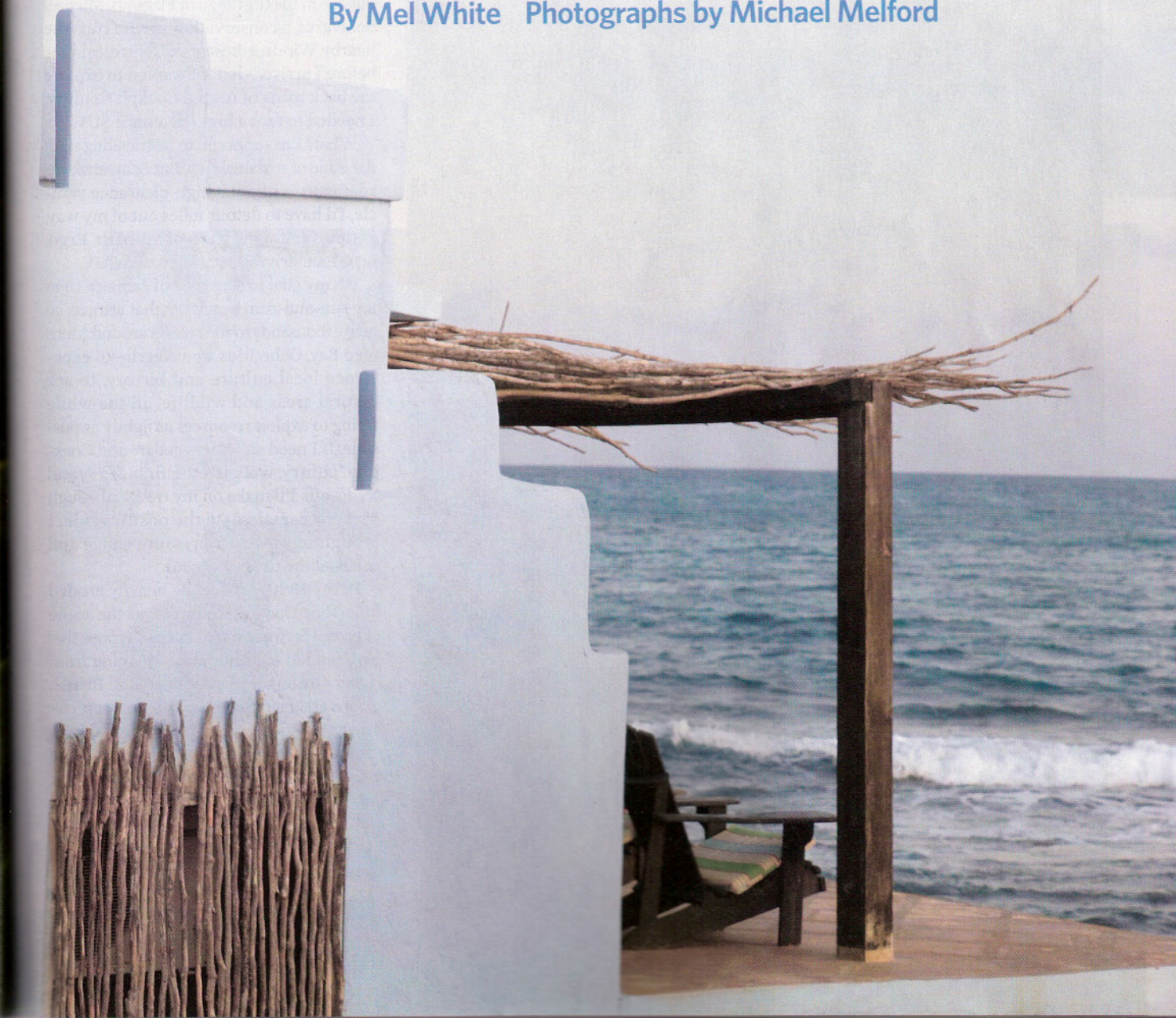
## Travel Sustainably—And Still Have Fun

**50 real ways to journey responsibly.** Check out the expanded online version of our "Ultimate Guide to Sustainable Travel" with tips and advice from experts on planning a trip, accommodations, packing, shopping, touring, eating, traveling by air and land, and taking the next step to share the wealth of your discoveries as a thoughtful traveler.

# JAMAICA, GENTLY

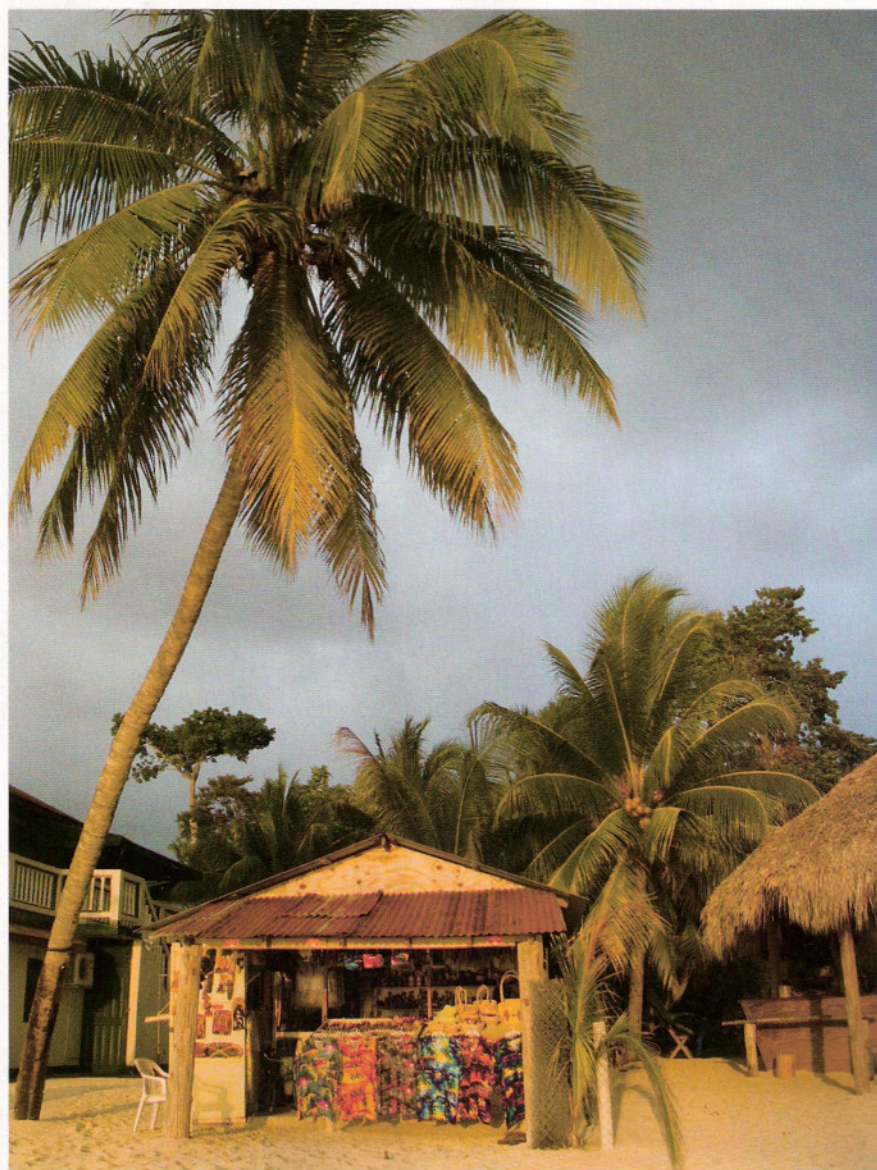
A dedicated environmentalist attempts to walk the walk on responsible tourism by following the 50 tips in *Traveler's "Ultimate Guide to Sustainable Travel."* Happily, he found that having an angel on your shoulder doesn't cut down the fun.

By Mel White Photographs by Michael Melford



# DARN IT!

I lose concentration for five lousy seconds, and I break one of *Traveler's* 50 tips for environmentally sustainable travel.\*



Here I am enjoying my lunch of curried goat with rice and beans in Auntie V's restaurant, in the mountains of Jamaica's Cockpit Country, and when I'm asked what I want to drink, I unthinkingly point to the bottled water and say, "Oh, just hand me one of those." The curry has made me, shall we say, eager to get something cool on my tongue as soon as possible.

Trust me, I brought my own water bottle (Tip #15), but now I'm to blame for another half ounce of plastic potentially being dumped into the environment. All this because I thought it was too early in the day to have a Red Stripe beer, which comes in a recyclable glass bottle and is locally produced (Tip #44) to boot. What a fool I was. Too early for a beer? It's Jamaica.

When it comes to being a responsible traveler, sometimes it's easy and sometimes it ain't. Take, for example, my vehicle, parked outside in the tiny town of Flagstaff. Michael Schwartz, a conservationist who runs the nearby Windsor Research Centre, told me before I arrived that if I wanted to explore the back roads of rugged Cockpit Country, I needed to rent a high-clearance SUV.

What? I'm supposed to be traveling with the ethic of sustainability. But Schwartz was adamant: Without a high-clearance vehicle, I'd have to detour miles out of my way, at times retracing parts of my path. Ergo, here I am driving a small Suzuki SUV.

It's my goal to see more of Jamaica than the sun-and-rum beach life that attracts so many thousands to the resorts around Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, and Negril—to experience local culture and history, to see natural areas and wildlife, all the while trying to exploit resources as lightly as possible. If I need an SUV to get around Cockpit Country, well, it's the first of several trade-offs I'll make on my travels through western Jamaica. On the positive side, I brought my own air pressure gauge and checked the tires (Tip #36).

In the 18th century, the heavily eroded limestone Cockpit Country was the scene of battles between the Maroons—groups that had banded together after escaping from slavery on sugar plantations—and British troops assigned to capture them. Deep, circular valleys hemmed in by conical hills reminded the soldiers of cockfighting pits in London, hence their colorful name.

"Can you imagine soldiers in bright-red

*Clockwise, from left: At seven-mile-long Negril Beach, souvenirs and fresh fish are the rule. "It feels laid-back, despite lots of development," says White. Nature beckons at the Royal Palm Reserve. A Bluefields Bay fisherman cleans up.*



## “THEY CAN CALL ME ARROGANT,” Wolde asserts, “but I say it’s the most beautiful place on Earth.”

uniforms trying to fight a guerrilla war here against people who knew these mountains like the backs of their hands?” Mike Grizzle asks me. We’re standing on a hillside looking out across forested hills bunched together like a tray of giant green eggs. It’s easy to see why the British, despite their superior firepower, signed a peace treaty with the Maroons in 1738 giving them their freedom and 1,500 acres in the Cockpit Country.

Grizzle, a descendant of those Maroon fighters, is part of a local group that’s begun conducting tours of the Flagstaff area, where

several battles were fought and the peace treaty was signed at a British military post. “Beyond that ridge, the British had a hospital,” he says, “and in the creek just below us they built a swimming pool.” As we hike through the forest, Grizzle stops to point out herbs and medicinal plants, giving their folk names and traditional uses. The Flagstaff team offers walking tours and has opened a bed-and-breakfast inn. They hope also to have a museum and to produce a documentary video about the region.

I spend my first night in Jamaica at

Michael Schwartz’s Windsor Research Centre, in a 1795 house (Tip #12) once occupied by an overseer on a huge cattle estate. That was the height of the slavery days, the colonial era when a common expression in England was “rich as a West Indian planter.” Riches built on slave labor had its price, though. My room has the original embrasure gunport windows, allowing a wide range of fire with maximum protection.

My resource usage here is just about as minimal as possible (Tip #11): Electricity comes from a generator only as needed, and



the showers are strictly cold water. It's spartan for lodging (which Schwartz offers mostly as a convenience for travelers in an area with few options), but pretty normal for a scientific research center. The reward for a bit of deprivation is to awake in the lush Jamaican countryside to the sound of parrots and bananaquits, and to eat a dinner of indescribably good stewed pork, courtesy of the Windsor cook, Sugarbelly.

Nineteenth-century English naturalist Philip Henry Gosse described traveling in these "wildest parts of the mountain regions of Jamaica, where the perilous path winds round a towering cone on the one hand, and on the other looks down into a deep and precipitous gully." Road conditions aren't much different today. Schwartz is working

with Mike Grizzle and others to try to bring some tourist infrastructure to Cockpit Country, with the idea of creating alternative income for the residents through environmentally sustainable, culturally sensitive development.

For now, though, the Cockpit Country attracts mostly adventurous types, like a young French couple I meet, Agathe Bellenguez and Julien Vogel. They quickly tired of the beach scene and headed for the island's interior to try to meet local folks and experience true Jamaican culture.

"You see, we are traveling with little budget," Bellenguez says, adding that they're happily camping in the yard of a resident in the village of Coxheath and walking the back roads, talking to locals and enjoying the striking scenery. "This is the best place we have seen so far," Vogel says.

I'd be perfectly content to hang out here, too, but there's more of Jamaica I want to see and more people I want to get to know.

"OVER THERE IS A BREADFRUIT TREE planted in 1793," Wolde Kristos says. "There was another one over by the great house, but we lost that one in Hurricane Ivan in 2004."

The trees were brought here to Bluefields Bay, on Jamaica's southwestern coast, by Captain William Bligh. Four years after surviving the *Bounty* mutiny, Bligh stayed for a time at the two-story great house (as the main house of a Jamaican plantation is called) while he was "involved," as Kristos says, with the niece of a local planter. Kristos can speak at length, enthusiastically and

entertainingly, about Bligh, Philip Henry Gosse, the pirate Henry Morgan, and countless other people and events in Bluefields' history. Kristos believes in Jamaica, and specifically in Bluefields, the way Bill Gates believes in Microsoft.

"They can call me arrogant, I don't care," he says. "I'm going to say it's the most beautiful place on Earth."

Growing up, Kristos spent a year as a street kid and was passed from family to family in central Jamaica. "I came down here and went through some challenging situations," he says, "until this woman with a heart rescued me." He started referring to her as "Granny," though they weren't related. "She inculcated in me that you're going to get what you want if you're willing to work hard for it."

And work Kristos did. With help from his community, he's become an expert on ecology and related subjects. He went into the field with experts to learn about birds, reptiles, and amphibians—plants, too, though he had a head start there thanks to Granny, a traditional herbalist.

Today Kristos runs his own company, Reliable Adventures Jamaica, and has trained a dozen local men and women to assist him in offering tours focusing on culture, natural history, and Jamaican ecology. In other words, he's exactly the kind of local enterprise that responsible travelers ought to seek out and support (Tip #43)—which I'm only too happy to do, taking a walking tour near the coast and a van tour through the Bluefields Mountains.



A great egret skims the surface of the Black River on Jamaica's southern coast. Opposite: The saltwater swimming pool at Jake's Place resort is just steps from a beachside dining area and bar.

# I WALK THE BEACH looking at pretty girls, which is environmentally friendly but politically incorrect.

We drive narrow, tortuously winding roads past decrepit great houses, 18th-century churches, and old sugar mills. We pass a woman carrying a pan of pig intestines on her head, walking to the market to sell them. We pass the Moravian Church, which gave land to former slaves to bypass laws forbidding them to vote without owning property. We round a corner and come upon kids playing cricket—whatever version of the sport can be played with a cliff on one side and a sheer drop on the other.

We pass compact market gardens tucked into the little valleys and wherever the landscape flattens enough to allow planting.

“There are some small businesses here,” Kristos says. “People grow yams, cabbage, plantains, cassava, carrots, and pumpkins. And, of course,” he adds with a little laugh, “some people plant a more lucrative crop.” No prizes shall be awarded for guessing what Jamaican herb that might be.

We stop near the 2,629-foot summit for a panoramic view of broad Bluefields Bay. From here, it is easy to share Kristos’s enthusiasm for the beauty of the blue dream stretching out before us, sky and sea joined along a tenuous seam.

“I want to show off the community in its natural form,” Kristos says. “If I can share my knowledge and share my hospitality,

and at the same time I can walk home with some money in my pocket, what better job could you have?”

I DON’T HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST LYING on the sand and drinking rum, and in fact remaining stationary in a beach chair all day has a very low carbon footprint. That’s not why I’m in Jamaica this time, so I don’t stay long at the laid-back beach-party town of Negril. I do spend part of an afternoon walking a stretch of the seven-mile-long beach and looking at the pretty girls. This is environmentally friendly but politically incorrect, and so karmically may be kind of a wash.

There is, however, a sustainable-tourism destination near Negril well worth a stop if you have even the slightest interest in Jamaican flora and fauna (Tip #41). The Royal Palm Preserve protects a swampy forest of graceful palms and various endangered animals. The half-mile boardwalk is an easy way to see birds, butterflies, and flowers. I encourage you to see it first thing in the morning when the air is cool, the orioles are singing, and the party people are still sleeping off their Red Stripes.

IT’S NOT NECESSARILY TRUE THAT staying at a small inn rather than a big

resort is always more environmentally conscious. I fortuitously run into a woman who’s worked on energy-conservation issues with the Jamaican lodging industry, and she tells me that—contrary to her original thoughts—she’s had a much easier time convincing big hotels to change their ways than small ones. This has little to do with environmental consciousness and everything to do with the bottom line. By instituting conservation measures, big resorts see immediate and significant financial benefits (e.g., 2,000 fluorescent bulbs make more of a difference than do a dozen). And many of Jamaica’s big resorts are new (Tip #10), having incorporated modern ideas on energy conservation and recycling into their design.

One notable destination that follows sustainability practices is the sprawling, ultra-luxurious Half Moon resort east of Montego Bay, hideaway for royalty, celebrities, and lots of people who look like they own town houses on New York’s Upper East Side and estates in Fairfield County, Connecticut. Here you can live like a prince with minimum guilt, because Half Moon, for all its ritzy (renowned golf course, equestrian center, 54 swimming pools, fancy spa, multiple restaurants, and on and on), has long had a reputation for environmental awareness and is working toward its Green Globe certification (Tip #9). “They’re the standard we all aspire to,” a rival hotel director tells me. Recycling, wastewater treatment, use of nontoxic cleaning supplies, an on-site furniture fabrication shop, and community involvement have won awards for Half Moon, but perhaps the greatest encouragement to environmental awareness is its very size: With two miles of beach, it would be polluting itself, not a neighbor, if it used the Caribbean for a drainpipe.

Parenthetically, I must admit here to yet another sin: After conscientiously using only ceiling fans (Tip #23) on this trip, one sultry night at Half Moon I break down and turn on the air conditioner. I think it happens because, traveling in shoulder season (Tip #4), I have a swimming pool all to myself for two days and spend an inordinate amount of time floating, reptile brained, and getting too much tropical sun.

MAYBE YOU WANT A BEACH VACATION, and you want a very clear conscience about traveling responsibly, and you want a certain amount of posh, and you want no part



Clockwise from above: Scotchies, a few miles west of Montego Bay on the north coast, is famous for its jerk dishes. “It’s popular with tourists and locals both,” says White. “You meet all kinds there.” American lotus flowers, laden with seeds, are easy to propagate. John the rasta man greets visitors to Bluefields Bay. The sea-surrounded pavilion at Half Moon resort is often reached by moonlit stroll.

of a resort with multi-hundred rooms, set inside hundreds of acres isolated from anything like the real Jamaica. In that case, head for the little community of Calabash Bay, on the southern coast, and look for an unobtrusive gate marked “Jake’s resort.”

You will not meet Jake, because he was a pet parrot who disappeared some years ago. You might, however, meet Sally Henzell. She owns the place and runs it with a love that dates back to her childhood. In 1941 her father built a cottage on the beach nearby, and she spent countless happy days playing in the sand and exploring the surrounding hills. Jake’s resort wasn’t sited and planned and designed by computer-assisted tourism consultants for some international corporation: It grew organically, like the works of Henzell’s favorite artist, the Spaniard Antonio Gaudí, and that shows in the offbeat yet charming mix of styles, shapes, and colors.

“Fifty years after my father built our cottage, I came back here, saw this land for sale, and bought it,” Henzell says. “This was the one house on the property, and I thought I was just going to have my little cottage with these four rooms.” (We’re sitting in that little house, now the reception area for Jake’s.) But friends came and asked to stay, and then their friends came to visit, too.

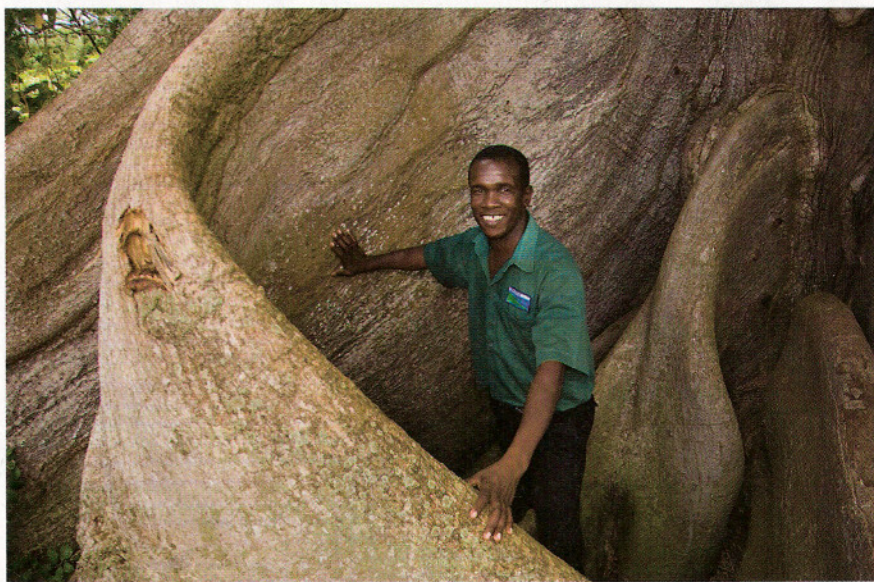
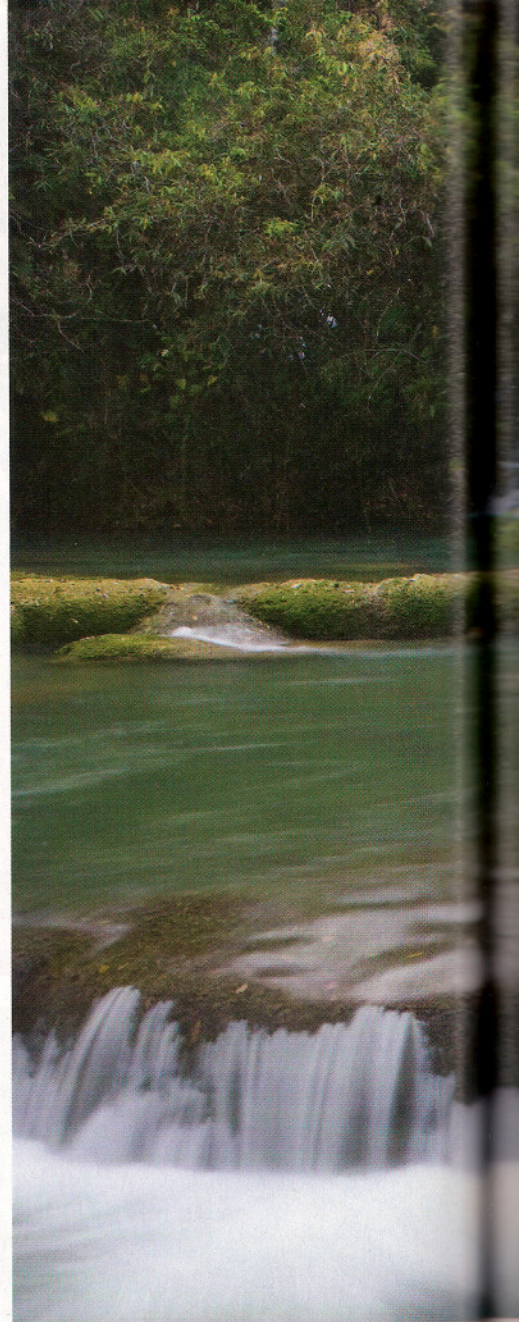
“And so we decided to build two rooms over there and a restaurant. And then more people came, so we built another room. And then my son, with his brain for business—I’m more artistic than business—saw the potential and bought land on either side of us, and now we have 36 rooms.”

Henzell and son Jason, art and business, have brought to Jake’s an almost cultlike reputation as Jamaica’s ultimate low-key, high-class, edge-of-the-world getaway—a characterization I can happily confirm as accurate. Staying at Jake’s is like having a really rich uncle, smart and friendly and more than a little eccentric, who doesn’t mind having dogs and cats and kids wandering around his beautiful seaside estate—which itself is a little eccentric, but in a “Hey, look at that! That’s cool!” kind of way.

And, by the way, your rich uncle is a certified tree hugger.

“Here at Jake’s we’re doing our best to be eco-friendly,” Henzell says. “That’s our image, and that’s what we aspire to. We buy as much produce as we can within a ten-mile limit—organic whenever possible. Our swimming pool is salt water so we don’t have to use chemicals. Most of the rooms just have fans, although I grudgingly installed air-conditioning in some rooms.” (Author’s note: I didn’t use mine, and I washed my clothes in the sink—Tip #25.)

Jake’s uses gray water for irrigation, heats water only with the sun, refuses to buy conch or lobster out of season (Tip #46), and provides fresh water to refill guests’ bottles to cut down on plastic use. The hotel encourages guests to participate in low-impact activities such as snorkeling (there’s abundant sea life around the rocks just steps from the outdoor restaurant), kayaking, hiking, stargazing, and yoga. Jason Henzell started a nonprofit foundation called Breds, which has aided the village school, started building recreational facilities, and trained



Tour guide Wolde Kristos is almost swallowed by the buttress roots of a towering ceiba tree near Bluefields Bay. Right: Waterfalls and inviting pools draw swimmers to the family-owned Y.S. Estate.

a lifesaving team for sea rescues (Tip #8). All in all, you could hardly ask for a more conscience-soothing spot to be decadent in.

While you’re in the Calabash Bay area, you’ve really got to make it to two very Jamaican restaurants, about a half hour away in opposite directions. Little Ochi’s, in the town of Alligator Pond east of Jake’s, is locally famous for seafood whose time out of the Caribbean is counted in scant hours. The ordering process is a little complicated for a first-timer—you pick your own fish, tell them how you want it prepared, and pay by the pound. With the help of June Gay Pringle, Sally Henzell’s sister, I order jerk fish (cooked with Jamaican spices) and a festival (a giant hush puppy, more or less),





## WITH A SWIMMING POOL all to myself, I spend an inordinate amount of time floating, reptile-brained.

and eat a memorable lunch in a thatch-roofed shelter on the beach while frigatebirds hover nearby, waiting for scraps.

In the village of Parottee, west of Calabash Bay, the rustic bar-restaurant called Basil's is also locally renowned. Here, a few yards from the fishermen who hauled my meal out of the water, I get the specialty, its aroma so enticing that it's like some kind of culinary foreplay. Escoveitch fish is another icon of Jamaican cuisine, cooked with onion, pepper, vinegar, and—in Basil's case—a blend of spices that sets it apart from the

varieties you can get at dozens of roadside stands and even at the fast-foot restaurant in the Montego Bay airport. Oh my, it's good, though I still don't understand the appeal of the ubiquitous *bammy*, a flatbread-like side dish made from cassava flour.

I end both my days at Jake's the same way, with a shower in my cottage's outdoor bath, one wall nothing but that blue-on-blue sea-sky panorama. Then feet up, on the seaside porch, watching a gaudy sunset somewhere out in the direction of Belize. And then a stroll down to the bar for

a glass of wine before dinner. No, on second thought, cancel that—I'll have something made with rum, a spirit that's been distilled in Jamaica for 300 years or so. I'm here to buy local wherever I can, and Jake's might be the perfect place to do it.

---

*Arkansas-based freelancer Mel White has written stories for Traveler on destinations as wide-ranging as the Ozarks and County Mayo, Ireland. Contributing editor Michael Melford photographed Portugal's Douro Valley for our May/June 50 Tours of a Lifetime issue.*

## CULTURE

# A Sustainable High

Take a Dolphin Head Trust tour to support local Jamaicans.



Sergeant major fish, Long Bay.

Now there's a way to support sustainable tourism in Jamaica without venturing far from a resort. Dolphin Head Trust works to protect 3,000 acres of the biologically diverse Dolphin Head Mountains, less than an hour from popular Montego Bay in northwestern Jamaica. As part of a planned tourism program, guides (some of them former ganja growers) will lead tours into limestone hills rich in orchids, ferns, bromeliads, and birdlife. Walks will focus on traditional medicinal plants, including those in a trailside botanical garden, as well as area history and culture. When I visited Dolphin Head this spring, the project was a work in progress, with new interpretive signs erected along a just-completed 1.5-mile nature trail. Visitors can now buy furniture made by local artisans. "Poverty is the biggest threat to Jamaica's environment," Dolphin Head director Paula Hurlock says. "We're integrating local people into our plan, creating alternative livelihoods along with providing environmental education. The locals know it's their project, and they're going to be the beneficiaries when it's completed." You could hardly find a better spot than Dolphin Head to discover the "real" Jamaica, from the nearby villages of Glasgow and Kingsvale to the mahogany, fruit, and cedar trees (and screeching parrots) of the mountain forests, nor a better way to contribute to the local economy at a grassroots level. For more information visit [www.dolphinhead.org](http://www.dolphinhead.org) or call 876-352-1806. —Mel White

## SOURCEBOOK

## Jamaica Essentials

## THE BASICS

**Entry requirements** U.S. citizens don't need a passport to visit Jamaica but do need one to re-enter the U.S. **Time** Jamaica's is the same as U.S. eastern standard time but does not observe daylight savings time. **Currency** The Jamaican dollar (JMD); for conversion rates, visit [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com). **Phone calls** To call Jamaica from the U.S., dial 1, area code 876, and the number.

## PLACES MENTIONED

**Half Moon Resort** Montego Bay; 953-2211; [www.halfmoon.com](http://www.halfmoon.com).  
**Jake's resort** Treasure Beach; 965-3000; [www.islandoutpost.com/jakes](http://www.islandoutpost.com/jakes).  
**Little Ochie Restaurant** Manchester; 965-4449; [www.littleochie.com](http://www.littleochie.com).

**Reliable Adventures Jamaica** Westmoreland; 955-8834.

**Royal Palm Preserve** Negril, Westmoreland; 364-7407.

**Scotchies Restaurant** On Hwy. A1 west of Montego Bay; 953-3301.

**Windsor Research Centre** Trelawny; 997-3832.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Jamaica Tourism Board**, [www.visitjamaica.com](http://www.visitjamaica.com).

**Jamaican Government Information Service**, [www.jis.gov.jm](http://www.jis.gov.jm).

**Jamaican Cultural Development Commission**, [www.jcdc.org.jm](http://www.jcdc.org.jm).

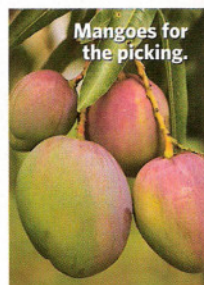


## NUTS &amp; BOLTS

## Things to Know Before You Go

■ **How bad is crime in Jamaica?** Violent crime is rare except in urban ghettos, where travelers seldom go. Lesser crimes, including theft, occur sporadically throughout the island. Exercise the usual cautions, avoiding poorly lit areas and keeping valuables out of sight. Marijuana use has its place in Jamaican culture but is illegal, with punishments for tourists caught with the drug often harsher than for residents. A simple "no thanks" is enough to turn away sellers who approach you on the street.

■ **What's the best way to get around the island?** The Jamaica Union of Travellers Association (JUTA) is an island-wide taxi service whose drivers operate safe, certified vehicles and have been trained in area history, flora, and fauna. Rides can be booked directly (876-957-9197; [www.juta-toursjamaica.net](http://www.juta-toursjamaica.net)) or through your hotel. JUTA also offers transfers from the island's two international airports (in Montego Bay and Kingston) to most of its major cities, and several road tours. A pricier but efficient option: International Air-link ([www.intlink.com](http://www.intlink.com)) flies among all of Jamaica's major cities, with most flights lasting less than 30 minutes.



Mangoes for the picking.

## ONLINE

## Best of Jamaica

- Learn about traditional food in Jamaica in *An Embarrassment of Mangoes: A Caribbean Interlude*, one of several great books about the Caribbean in our **Ultimate Travel Library**, [www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/extras/travellibrary/library5.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/extras/travellibrary/library5.html).
- Link to our favorite websites on Jamaica in **TripMarks**, [www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/extras/toolbox/tripmarks\\_caribbean.html#jamaica](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/extras/toolbox/tripmarks_caribbean.html#jamaica).
- Check out our **22 Insiders' Tips**, [www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/features/insidersjamaica0503/insidersjamaica.html](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/traveler/features/insidersjamaica0503/insidersjamaica.html).
- Jamaica has dramatically influenced world music. Check out **Nat Geo Music's** online Jamaican collection, <http://worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com>.
- Find facts, photos, and maps of Jamaica at **Travel and Cultures**, <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/places>.