



The Villa Vacation

by Linda Smith

J A M A I C A

Location

Our villas are dotted along Jamaica's renowned north coast, dubbed "the Jamaican Riviera" by *Travel & Leisure*. Many villas are within a 12-mile span of Montego Bay and the international airport, enabling guests to reach "home" 20 minutes after clearing Customs. Twelve are beachfront on beautiful Discovery Bay and Runaway Bay. Five are oceanfront in colorful Ocho Rios. We also have a dreamy Eighteenth Century 16-bedroom plantation with stables and trails in Trelawny, legendary for its memorable weddings. While privately located and concealed from view, each villa is within easy driving distance of beaches, spas, fitness centers, shops, restaurants, golf and tennis, craft markets, deep-sea fishing, dive shops, snorkeling and other water sports. See hundreds of photographs on our web site www.jamaicavillas.com

Just a few minutes from our Montego Bay villas are Round Hill Hotel and beach; the Tryall Club with tennis, beach and one of the world's most beautiful golf courses; Half Moon Golf, Tennis & Beach Club; and the Ritz Carlton with outstanding White Witch golf course. Enjoy sunset sails, river rafting, horseback riding, bird sanctuaries, waterfalls, and swimming with dolphins. For more activities, see ENJOY JAMAICA <http://www.jamaicavillas.com/activities.html> and <http://www.jamaicavillas.com/enjoyocho.html> Also BEACHES http://www.jamaicavillas.com/faq_beach_clubs.html

Staff, Service and Groceries

Your cook will handle grocery shopping and meals. She will prestock your first few meals, then finish the week's shopping after meeting with you. A typical grocery budget is \$45 per adult per day and \$20 per day for preteens. This may vary up or down depending on market prices and menus. If you request shrimp, lobster, imported beef, this estimate will increase. (A few villas have higher food and beverage budgets.) Your cook will also prestock a small starter bar (Red Stripe, rum, and moderately-priced wines). Additional alcohol requests will increase your budget. If you wish to go to the various markets with her, you are welcome. Otherwise, simply review with her your tastes and distastes and she'll handle it all while you stay at the villa and relax. At week's end, she will present receipts and reconcile your account.

The day starts while guests are still asleep. The cook quietly places pots of steaming Jamaican coffee on the verandah or outside your bedroom door. Full breakfast is served when all guests are ready. A typical breakfast may include fresh-squeezed orange juice and fresh fruits, banana fritters or plantain, eggs, bacon, pancakes or cereal ~ or Jamaican ackee and salt fish. For lunches and dinners, she will prepare her own mix of Jamaican specialties ~ including delicious homemade soups, salads and desserts; grilled lobster, coconut shrimp, jerk chicken, ginger pork, fresh fish, curried goat and even lasagna ... or traditional American fare per your request. Warning: Jamaican cooks are excellent and portions are generous!

We welcome children! Every cook will prepare individual meals for children of all ages and serve them at times parents suggest. Often, this means parents can enjoy rare all-adult candlelight dinners.

Your chambermaid and laundress will care for every detail of your bedroom and bath ~ providing a daily supply of fresh towels and flowers, returning your neatly-folded laundry each afternoon, and turning down your bed each evening. Your gardener will maintain the pool and grounds each day. Most villas are staffed by a butler as well who serves, tends bar and generally facilitates. Available on request are drivers, nannies and masseuses. (Our masseuses will come to your villa to provide treatments right there so you don't even have to leave home for this luxury.)

Recommended staff gratuity at the end of your stay is 10% of the villa rental in High Season, 15% in Low Season, divided among your staff members in accordance with the Gratuity Guide you'll find in your Welcome Book. If you wish, you may prepay for your groceries and gratuities, or pay locally in cash. You may also set up a credit account in a local supermarket when you're there. However, cash will be required for gratuities and for small vendors of fruit, vegetables and fresh fish.

Weather

Jamaica enjoys typical Caribbean weather: 80's and 90's by day and 70's at night. Winter to summer variance is only 10 degrees. It is more like to rain in May/June and September/October than in other months. Dress is casual. Coats, ties and expensive jewelry are not appropriate except in holiday weeks. In winter months, you may need a cotton sweater after sunset. *Do take mosquito repellent!* We recommend Ben's 100, Cutters, Ultra Muskol and Avon Skin-So-Soft.

Currency

US dollars are accepted island-wide. If you choose to purchase Jamaican dollars (not necessary), exchange rates vary. Most commercial establishments including supermarkets, liquor stores and restaurants accept credit cards. Staff and driver gratuities, however, must be paid in cash locally unless you have prepaid for these items. (Most villas will accept prepayment through our office for groceries and gratuities if you prefer, enabling you to carry less cash with you.) To calculate an individual villa vacation budget, click on <http://www.jamaicavillas.com/budget.html>

Travel and Travel Documents

Tourism is Jamaica's leading industry, so reserve flights early. Your destination is Montego Bay (MBJ). Air Jamaica, Air Canada, American, Continental, Delta, British Air, Northwest, United, USAir and Virgin Atlantic are major carriers. Several charters operate from the East Coast, the Midwest and Europe. A new private plane terminal enables expedited Immigration and Customs clearance for our private plane passengers. Proof of citizenship will be required as follows:

U.S. CITIZENS

A US State Department-issued passport to ensure you will be permitted to board your flight

IMPORTANT! ALL U.S. PASSENGERS:

click on <http://www.passportexpress.com/default.aspx?page=news> to see current requirements!

CANADIAN CITIZENS

a valid passport

UK CITIZENS

a valid passport

Electricity

Essentially the same as US: 110 volts/50 cycles (US is 60 cycles). Converters are not needed for US-made appliances.

Telephone - Overseas Calls

We recommend local Digicel cell phones to expedite overseas calls. Many of our villas provide complimentary Digicel loaded with starter minutes. Your own cell may work in Jamaica depending on your plan. *Jamaica Telephone may not accept credit cards and other prepaid phone cards.*

Internet Access in Jamaica

Most of our villas now provide complimentary ADSL Internet access, many wireless, so do take your laptop. Check with your agent to learn the latest Internet access status in your villa.

Ground Transportation

We recommend employment of one of our registered insured driver/tour guides for either fulltime dedicated service or transfers only. Their spotless vans and buses offer options of seating 12, 16 or 25 passengers. We also offer vans with lifts for our guests with wheelchairs. See <http://www.jamaicavillas.com/getaround.html> for rates.

Check-in and Check-out Times

Check-in time is 1:00 p.m. Checkout time is 11:00 a.m. on departure day. In Tryall Club villas, check-in time is 3:00 p.m. Checkout time is 12:00 noon. However, if no other guests are scheduled on arrival and departure days, you are welcome to check in early and check out as late as you wish. Our office can advise you of the occupancy schedule.

Payment, Cancellation and Damage Deposit Policy

A refundable \$500 damage deposit is required (higher in some villas). A 25% deposit confirms a reservation. Balance is due 60 days before travel. No refunds for cancellations are made within 60 days prior to scheduled occupancy. For cancellations 61 or more days prior to scheduled occupancy, we will refund all deposits less a 10% cancellation fee. For Thanksgiving week, the no-refund policy applies 90 days prior to scheduled travel. For Christmas and New Year's weeks, the no-refund policy applies 120 days prior to scheduled travel.