

A to Z

CARIBBEAN BEYOND THE BEACH

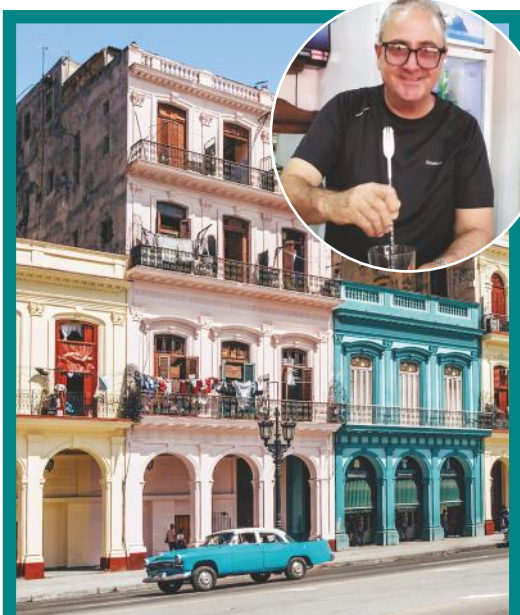
Sun and sand aren't the only selling points of a Caribbean getaway – encourage clients to swap the sunlounger for culture, nature and active escapes that offer a richer experience of the region, write **Alice Barnes-Brown** and **Katie McGonagle**

26 ways to sell Caribbean • What's new for 2025-26 • Selling tips for agents

Independent editorial supported by

Sandals

A to Z



A is for Adventure

Adventure comes in all forms across these diverse destinations – from hacienda tours by Land Rover and flamingo-filled nature parks in Mexico’s Yucatán Peninsula, featured on Exodus Adventure Travels and Titan Travel tours, to rainforest hikes and rafting trips. But for small-group tours, Cuba offers the greatest variety, with hiking, cycling, family and even salsa-themed adventures from the likes of Intrepid Travel, G Adventures, Explore, Cox & Kings and Mercury Holidays, which has just extended its Classic Cuba tour to allow more time in Havana (pictured) and Trinidad.

Havana-based guide Enio Armando González (pictured), who has been leading Ramble Worldwide tours for 25 years and now helms its Cuba with the Locals itinerary, says: “Cuba is a safe country with wonderful nature, friendly people, great history and culture, as well as endemic species of birds and plants. There are two principal wild areas: the west for Viñales and Sierra del Rosario, and the Escambray Mountains in central Cuba. We combine those places with some time spent in cities to enjoy architecture, music, culture and Cuban cuisine.”



B is for Birdwatching

Straddling the northern and southern hemispheres, the Caribbean attracts many species of migratory birds, as well as its own unusual varieties. A third of its birds can’t be found anywhere else. Trinidad and Tobago is a habitat for the vivid blue-capped motmot, while Cuba is home to the world’s smallest bird, the bee hummingbird.

Bertrand Jno Baptiste (pictured) – aka Dr Birdy, a Dominican birding expert – says: “Dominica is a showcase of biodiversity and natural wonder. With 38% of its land protected as national

parks and 41% of its original forest still intact, Dominica has become a model for sustainable tourism. Home to 186 species of birds and two endemic parrots, it offers wildlife enthusiasts an authentic and rewarding experience.”

The Caribbean Birding Trail is a great resource for turning a trip into a twitcher’s heaven. The organisation has a database of local operators, eco-hotels and guides, plus it pinpoints the best places to bring binoculars. Find out more at caribbeanbirdingtrail.org.



C is for Cities

The colourful cities of the Caribbean make for an interactive-yet-informative introduction to each country’s history and culture. In Oranjestad (pictured), Aruba’s Dutch colonial past is visible in its rainbow of gabled buildings, while in Martinique’s Fort-de-France, clients can tuck into tasty pastries and plantain gratin at the vast Spice Market. Nassau in the Bahamas has a fascinating pirating past too, where clients can explore historic sites such as Fort Fincastle.

One of the region’s oldest cities, with a Unesco-listed cobblestone centre and the Americas’ first Christian cathedral, is Santo Domingo. Suzanna Barrow (pictured), Travelpack operations and product director, says: “The Dominican Republic has seen a surge in bookings, with our full-day Santo Domingo City Tour proving a highlight for travellers looking to immerse themselves in the country’s cultural heritage.”





D is for Diving

Clients could spend a lifetime delving into the Caribbean's underwater world. Bonaire is known for its shore dives, playing host to shipwrecks and reefs close to land, while divers also flock to the wreck of the *USS Kittiwake*, just off Grand Cayman's popular Seven Mile Beach. Anguilla, meanwhile, features wall diving for more-experienced divers and has recently announced a policy to transform the British Overseas Territory into a leading sustainable diving destination.

Matthew Billington (pictured), owner of local diving operator Scuba Shack, says: "Anguilla is home to more than 20 vibrant reefs and seven remarkable wrecks, making it one of the Caribbean's best-kept diving secrets. Calm seas, excellent visibility and minimal currents make it perfect for beginners, while the variety of sites keeps experienced divers coming back. Popular sites include Sandy Deep Reef, No Name Reef and Anguillita – all around 18 metres deep. Wreck divers will enjoy the *Oosterdiep* (25m) and *Kathlee H* (18m). Expect turtles, stingrays, reef sharks and more in Anguilla's pristine marine environment."

PICTURES: Discover Dominica Authority; Aruba Tourism Authority/cadodbla; Valerie Gagliardi; Louise Leonty; Anguilla Tourism Authority



F is for Festivals

Caribbean carnivals frequently steal the limelight, but they're not the only annual fixtures. The events calendar is packed during high season, from foodie festivals – such as the Anegada Lobster Festival in the British Virgin Islands, St Barthélemy's Gourmet Festival each November and even Tobago's Blue Food Festival in October – to sporting events such as Run Barbados in December and the Fat Tyre Mountain Biking festival in Jamaica each February. Families will love the Cayman Islands' Pirate Fest every November too.

Festivals can also make a low-season trip more appealing. The Tour des Yoles Rondes sailing regatta in Martinique in late July and early August attracts tens of thousands of visitors, while Jounen Kwéyòl day – celebrated in Saint Lucia (pictured) and Dominica each October – is a fantastic way for clients to learn about the mix of Caribbean, African and European heritage.



E is for Excursions

Many cruise clients will get their first taste of the Caribbean through the array of shore excursions – from Azamara's introduction to Creole culture on one of its AZAmazing Evenings in Martinique to creating your own batik fabric with P&O Cruises in St Kitts.

Venture Ashore, which offers excursions for both cruise and land-based guests across the region, reports that its top destinations are Sint Maarten, Barbados, Antigua, Saint Lucia and St Kitts, with recent additions including conch and culture tours of Bimini in the Bahamas and a tuk-tuk trip in Antigua (pictured).

Kirsty Bachelor (inset), director of sales for Venture Ashore, says: "Culinary experiences are growing for us, along with adventurous tours like kayaking, paddleboarding or birdwatching. It's about expanding a client's knowledge of what the destination offers, be it eco-adventure parks, rainforests or culturally rich experiences specific to that location."





G is for Golf

Cricket may be the region's sport of choice but golf is the big draw for holidaymakers, with resorts featuring world-class courses and views good enough to make up for any bogeys. Carrier has added Apes Hill in Barbados to its portfolio, home to a par-71 course that recently hosted The Legends Tour led by former Masters champion Ian Woosnam. However, the Dominican Republic is number one on golfers' wish lists, with the Teeth of the Dog course (pictured) – which is being updated and regrassed this year – offering the ultimate test of skill for would-be Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroys.

Robert Birtel (pictured), golf director at Casa de Campo Resort & Villas, says: "The Caribbean remains a top winter-sun destination for golfers seeking a few rounds in the sun. Punta Cana, where we are based, is a hotspot due to the outstanding courses. The highlight is Teeth of the Dog, the top-rated course in the Caribbean and one of three Pete Dye-designed championship courses at Casa. Excitement for the reopening is building and we're seeing increased demand for winter 2025-26. This offers agents a fantastic opportunity to invite golf lovers to be among the first to play on the pristine new fairways."

H is for Hiking

Trails that cling to steep hillsides, muddy paths through mountains and gravelly walks that fall away into sand: hiking trails reveal the Caribbean's rugged side. Dominica has the region's only long-distance hike – the 115-mile Waitukubuli National Trail, split into sections that visitors can tackle on day hikes – while Saint Lucia (pictured) has the Gros Piton trail, which ascends 800 metres in just three miles.

Sutanya McKenzie, a guide at the Soufriere Foundation, which promotes sustainable development in Saint Lucia, says: "Hiking Gros Piton is an incredible experience. It's a tough climb up and down, but offers stunning panoramic views of the Caribbean Sea and the lush landscape of Saint Lucia. The hike takes you through dense tropical forest and you'll spot a variety of plants, endemic birds and other wildlife."



PICTURES: Casa de Campo Resort & Villas; Jamaica Tourist Board; Puerto Rico Tourism Company

I is for Indigenous experiences

Events and tours led by the Caribbean's Indigenous population – descendants of the Carib and Arawak tribes – can offer a new perspective. In Dominica, the Kalinago Territory is the only designated Indigenous area in the Caribbean, and local provider Kalinago Tours has day trips, craft sessions and homestays led by Kalinago people.

In Puerto Rico, Taíno culture is experiencing a revival. Norymar Maldonado, a guide at Soraya Tours, says: "Clients can enjoy the oldest and biggest Indigenous Ceremonial Park in the Caribbean, Tibes, in the northern part of Ponce. There is a museum filled with artefacts, plus a forest leading to a ceremonial site that dates from 300BC. Puerto Rico has other spaces and festivals that honour and preserve our Indigenous roots, such as the Jayuya Indigenous Festival, celebrated each November in the Central Mountain Range."



J is for Jerk

The Caribbean's food scene differs with each island, from Asian-influenced curries in Trinidad to Oistins Fish Fry that brings Barbados to life on Friday nights. Jerk, a Jamaican cooking technique, enjoys international renown. It uses a seasoning with aromatic allspice and spicy Scotch bonnet chillies plus smoky oil barrel barbecues to flavour meat, best enjoyed at street stalls and family restaurants.

Don't eat meat? No problem. To taste plant-based ita! cuisine, a tenet of Rastafarianism, suggest Stush in the Bush, a farm-to-table experience bookable through operators such as Elegant Resorts, If Only and Azure. Clients tour a farm in Jamaica's mountainous interior, discovering how crops are used for medicinal and culinary purposes, then sit down to a delicious vegan meal.



K is for Kayaking

One of the best ways to explore the region's marine ecosystems is by kayak, from beginner-friendly excursions to spot turtles or rays in shallow, sun-warmed waters, up to more challenging multi-day routes that will put clients' muscles to the test. At the gentler end, the Turks & Caicos islands' Princess Alexandra Nature Reserve is home to red and black mangroves where eagle-eyed kayakers might see turtles or lemon sharks weaving their way through the water, plus endangered rock iguanas on Little Water Cay (four hours, from \$259 with Island Routes). Or clients can get a new perspective on the impressive rock formations of The Baths and Devil's Bay in Virgin Gorda when viewed from the water. If experienced kayakers are up for a bigger adventure, look to Exuma Cays in the Bahamas – they can paddle from one tiny, uninhabited cay to another, exploring tucked-away caves, blue holes and deserted beaches.



M is for Music

The release of Bob Marley: *One Love* last year put Nine Mile, the village where the world's most famous reggae star was born and laid to rest, on the map. The film gave culture-focused tours in Jamaica a boost, according to Travelpack, while Tui Musement says Nine Mile is one of its most popular places in Jamaica – paired with Dunn's River Falls for a full-day tour, costing £110. Other spots such as the Bob Marley Museum in Kingston, where Audley Travel has a private tour as part of its relaunched Jamaica programme, also draw visitors keen to explore his life and legacy.

Reggae isn't the Caribbean's only musical tradition – from salsa in Cuba (*pictured*) and merengue in the Dominican Republic, to reggaeton in Puerto Rico and soca and calypso in Trinidad, this region pulses with rhythm. One of the best spots to soak up the sounds along with an incredible sunset view is at Shirley Heights Lookout in Antigua, where visitors will find reggae every Thursday and local steel pan bands at its famous Sunday Night Party, making it one of Azure's bestselling experiences.

Claire Metharam, head of product, says: "For those seeking connection and authenticity, Caribbean hospitality and the rhythm of local life create unforgettable memories. The hilltop party at Shirley Heights delivers panoramic views, live music and sunset vibes that are pure Caribbean magic."

New and improved

🌴 **Beaches Turks & Caicos** is adding a new area, Treasure Beach Village, for spring 2026, featuring 101 new rooms, a 1,400sq m pool, food hall and 32-seat cinema.

🌴 Adult-only **Royalton Chic Barbados** is set to open in spring 2026, with 220 suites, nine restaurants and three bars.

🌴 The 25-room **Nobu Beach Inn** in Barbuda is due to open in November 2026, with direct access to Princess Diana Beach.

🌴 **Four Seasons** is opening two Caribbean properties next year: Tropicalia in the Dominican Republic and Caye Chapel in Belize.

🌴 **Marriott** has been renovating its seven properties in Barbados, with Tamarind reopening as an Autograph Collection hotel in October and Crystal Cove and Turtle Beach relaunching as Tribute Portfolio, All-Inclusive Resorts in February.

🌴 **Windjammer Landing** in Saint Lucia has opened a Presidential Manor – the resort's largest villa spanning 4,200sq m.

🌴 **Caribtours** has expanded its Barbados programme to its biggest ever for 2026, along with an expanded Mexico portfolio making use of new flights with Virgin Atlantic from Heathrow and Aer Lingus from Manchester.

🌴 **Classic Collection** has added the Bahamas, Tobago, Grenada and Jamaica to its Caribbean programme, including family-run and boutique hotels, and has introduced excursions focusing on sustainable experiences.

🌴 **Audley Travel** has restarted trips to Jamaica, with luxurious itineraries including stays at Jamaica Inn or GoldenEye in Ocho Rios and Round Hill or Half Moon in Montego Bay.

🌴 **Tui** is adding extra capacity on flights to Jamaica and its Gatwick to La Romana (Dominican Republic) route, which launched last year and is returning for winter 2025-26.

L is for Lakes

The Caribbean Sea is an enticing shade of blue, but clients can also find impressive pools of water inland. The Dominican Republic's Lake Enriquillo (*pictured*) – the driest and lowest place in the Caribbean at 40 metres below sea level – is a habitat for two types of endangered iguana, an endemic snake and bright pink American flamingos.

Dominica, meanwhile, has the steaming Boiling Lake. This Unesco World Heritage Site is a flooded fumarole and the world's second-largest hot lake; to reach it, clients will need to hike eight miles through wild rainforest and desolate volcanic valleys, making it a worthy reward for their exertions.

For a more relaxed day out, the Great Salt Pond in St Kitts makes for an interesting excursion. In the past, the lake's high salinity gave rise to a successful salt industry, but its location far away from major towns also meant smugglers used it as a hideout.



N is for Noctourism

Night-time experiences, also known as 'noctourism', are soaring in popularity. The Caribbean's lack of light pollution makes stargazing a breeze, while night snorkels and dives in bioluminescent bays join sunset boat tours and a buzzing after-dark culture to enable clients to keep exploring even after the sun goes down.

Some resorts feature their own stargazing experiences: the O2 Beach Club and Spa in Barbados introduced sessions with a Bajan astronomer in March, while Sandals has just extended its popular 'stargazing concierge' service to a second property. Guided stargazing is now available to those staying in Coyaba Sky Rondoal Villas (pictured) at Sandals Dunn's River in Jamaica and the new Rondoal Butler Sky Villa with Private Pool at Sandals Regency La Toc in Saint Lucia.

Shawn Shaw (pictured), stargazing concierge at Sandals Dunn's River, says: "Guests can enjoy stargazing using the telescopes on their private roof terrace. Noctourism is one of the hottest trends of 2025, due to travellers' increasing desire for one-of-a-kind, immersive experiences that go beyond daytime sightseeing."

PICTURES: Shutterstock/George Wirt, Rostsedlcek, Darryl Brooks, Evija



O is for Off-road adventures

The wealth of off-road experiences available – whether by 4x4, bike, quad bike (pictured) or even on horseback – offers a chance to explore challenging terrain, spot elusive wildlife species and see deserted beaches that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Caroline Beckett, senior product manager at Elegant Resorts, says: "Clients can get a totally different perspective off-road – in fact, destinations like Dominica are not about the beach at all, but adventure and exploring." Aruba's arid landscape is ideal for self-driving adrenaline seekers; Saint Lucia has off-road Segway tours through the rainforest; and Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic is a popular spot for ATV excursions with cruise lines including Royal Caribbean International and Norwegian Cruise Line.



SUN, SALE, SANDALS



Opening its first property in Jamaica more than 40 years ago, Sandals is the Caribbean's original resort brand, so you can rest assured your clients are in experienced hands.

The all-inclusive specialist now operates properties across nine dreamy islands, spanning 17 exclusively adult-only resorts plus two family-friendly Beaches resorts.

Clients can unwind on the picturesque beaches of Antigua, dive into the brilliant blue waters of Barbados or sip cocktails by the pool at Sandals' newest resort in Saint Vincent, filling their days with unforgettable adventures or simply kicking back in paradise.

Everything is included, from diverse dining at up to 16 restaurants and 13 bars per resort, to land and water activities such as pickleball, snorkelling, paddleboarding and more.

All of which means guests enjoy maximum choice and minimal stress from the moment they check in.

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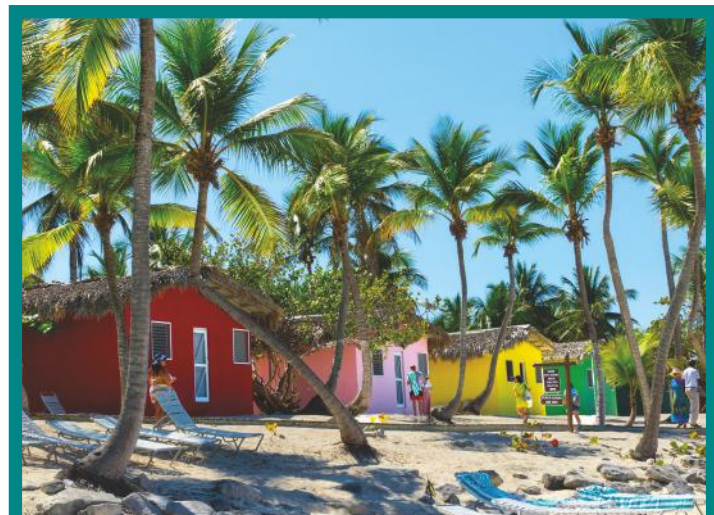
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P is for Ports

The cruise ports of the Caribbean provide an introduction to island life, whether wandering through the spice and craft markets of Grenada's capital St George's or enjoying the colourful quarters of Dutch-influenced Willemstad in Curaçao.

Marella Cruises has announced two new ports for its Tropical Isles itinerary this winter: Ponce in Puerto Rico and Isla Catalina in the Dominican Republic (pictured), where visitors can snorkel among coral reefs or take a catamaran cruise along the shore.

Emerald Cruises also starts calls at Ponce as well as Nevis capital Charlestown for the 2027-28 season, while SeaDream Yacht Cruises has announced more overnights in St Barths. Ambassador Cruise Line's 44-night Caribbean sailing, Tropical Treasures, has added opportunities to learn about biodiversity monitoring as part of the line's renewed partnership with marine conservation charity Orca.

Among the new ships debuting in the Caribbean this winter are Princess Cruises' *Star Princess*, Celebrity Cruises' *Celebrity Xcel*, Windstar Cruises' *Star Seeker* and Royal Caribbean's *Star of the Seas*, with NCL's *Norwegian Luna* to follow in 2026.

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Dennis MacDonald, Sean Pavone, Reeko Lynch



R is for Rum

"In Barbados, rum is not just something we make – it's who we are," says Rhea Cox (pictured) of Mount Gay Rum Distillery, culinary ambassador and educator for the Wine & Spirit Education Trust.

As the birthplace of rum in the 17th century, the sugarcane spirit is intertwined with the history and culture of Barbados, which remains Gold Medal's top-selling Caribbean destination and a popular spot for B&B, self-catering and villa stays, according to Exsus Travel and Carrier, as clients like to explore the local restaurant scene. Tui Musement also says its Harrison's Cave Nature Walk & Mount Gay Rum Experience (from £104) is one of its most popular Caribbean tours.

Cox adds: "If you really want to experience Barbados, you must go beyond sipping rum punch on the beach. Start with a visit to Mount Gay – the tour and tasting experiences are built on 300 years of craftsmanship, with the rum and chocolate pairing a standout. Then make your way to St Nicholas Abbey, a boutique distillery nestled in one of three Jacobean mansions left in the western hemisphere. During harvest, you can watch sugarcane being crushed on-site.

"But the real heartbeat of rum culture is in the rum shops – try local favourites such as Judy's Watering Hole, Mustor's Restaurant or hit Little Bristol for live music and rum under the stars. Rum isn't a souvenir here, it's a way of life."

Q is for Quiet islands

The Caribbean comprises 7,000 islands, islets and cays, and while those with buzzing nightlife, large resorts and a host of family attractions are popular for a reason, clients keen on a Crusoe-esque sense of seclusion can easily find it. According to operators including Kuoni, Audley Travel and Inspiring Travel, clients are increasingly combining larger gateway islands like Barbados with smaller islands such as Bequia or St Vincent and the Grenadines, for two distinct experiences within the same trip.

Ashley Pilkington (pictured), Caribbean and Mexico destination manager for

Gold Medal, says: "A twin-centre is the best option for seeing multiple islands in one trip. When booking flights to the Caribbean, many airlines touch down in other destinations – for example, when flying to St Kitts, the flight stops in Antigua on the way, so why not stay a few days to break up your travel? There is also a flight to St Vincent that stops in Barbados en route."

Pairing up sister islands also offers a quieter escape: take Nevis, a two-mile ferry journey from St Kitts. It's home to a luxury Four Seasons resort, hiking trails up Nevis Peak (pictured) and rainforests replete with waterfalls and hot springs.





S is for Sailing

If your clients love sailing adventures, the Caribbean offers plenty of launch points. Jenny Basham, beach product manager at Carrier, says: "Yachts and boat excursions are favourites with our clients. The British Virgin Islands are best explored at sea, so we pair this with stays at some of the most exclusive resorts in the archipelago."

Antigua is arguably the best-known Caribbean sailing spot, with the annual Sailing Week (pictured) plus an inaugural

Racing Cup taking place in April next year. Diana Watt (pictured), an Antigua-based destination manager at Inspiring Travel, says: "While the races are on, there are many fun daytime activities for all. At night, come out and experience the after-parties with performances, steel pans and dancers along with the nightly racing prize ceremony. Not a sea lover? Enjoy lunch in the heart of Nelson's Dockyard, where you can relax and cheer the boats as they cross the finish lines."



T is for TV and film

BBC hit *Death in Paradise*, filmed in Guadeloupe (pictured), will return in early 2026 – a perfect time to shine a spotlight on this laid-back French island. Clients can experience so-called Saint Marie for themselves, from the police station to beachside Catherine's Bar. Operators including Inspiring Travel and Marella Cruises report a spike in searches for their themed Guadeloupe tours while the series is aired.

Amanda Springer, head of product at Exsus Travel, says: "At Exsus, we've seen a 30% increase year on year from 2024 to 2025 for Guadeloupe. Series 14 aired in early 2025, and we saw quite an uplift. The Langley Resort Fort Royal features in the series and is our top-selling hotel. Guadeloupe has definitely been put on the map for British visitors following the series. The product is not high-end luxury, but offers an authentic Caribbean experience."

PICTURES: Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority; Grenada Tourism Authority; Saint Lucia Tourism Authority; Ollie Jones; Shutterstock/Matej Kastelic



U is for Underwater

The underwater world is a key draw, but you don't need PADI diving qualifications to spot fish, turtles and plant life. Shanai St Bernard (pictured), nautical development manager at the Grenada Tourism Authority, says: "Whether gliding over coral reefs on a glass-bottom boat or snorkelling through one of our two Underwater Sculpture Parks (pictured), you don't have to be a certified diver to enjoy the vibrant marine world. With calm bays and exceptional visibility, Grenada's waters are easy to explore." Another option is via Snuba, when swimmers go underwater while attached to a floating air tank. Many lines, including P&O Cruises, Royal Caribbean, Holland America Line and Princess Cruises, offer Snuba excursions, as does Island Routes, the activity provider for guests staying at Sandals resorts.



V is for Volcanoes

Though the region is known for its white-sand beaches, the Caribbean's black-sand coves, distinctive landscapes and fertile soil are telling signs of its explosive past. Today, there are 21 active volcanoes, concentrated in the Lesser Antilles from the British Virgin Islands to the ABC islands – and visiting a volcano adds an interesting geology lesson to any getaway. For instance, Saint Lucia's landmark Pitons are actually two volcanic plugs, made from hardened lava. A half-hour drive away is the world's only drive-in volcano, Sulphur Springs (pictured), where clients can drive up to a viewpoint to overlook steaming vents, then take a dip in geothermally heated pools. Other volcanoes prime for exhilarating hikes include St Vincent's La Soufriere, where clients will traverse gorges, waterfalls and rope bridges in the jungle to reach a vast grey crater. Diminutive Quill on lesser-known Sint Eustatius rises to 600 metres and offers beginner-friendly hikes.





W is for Wildlife

The Caribbean is awash with marine biodiversity but there are many species to enjoy on land too, from hard-to-spot agoutis in the lush landscapes of St Vincent and protected blue iguanas in the Cayman Islands, to the mona monkeys of Grenada's Grand Etang National Park – one of Kuoni's top nature-focused excursions – and the so-called 'accidental Eden' of Cuba's highlands.

Aruba, just 15 miles off the coast of Venezuela, has an array of endemic species best seen in Arikok National Park (pictured). Vivian Eckmeyer, nature experience ranger, says: "Arikok's rugged terrain protects a mix of desert landscapes and wild coastlines. It's home to 34 endemic species like the endangered Aruba rattlesnake (cascabel), the Aruba burrowing owl (shoco) and the Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo).

"My advice is go slow – in Africa you look for the big five, and in Aruba it's the tiny 100s. Start early to catch birdsong, hike trails such as Cunucu Arikok or Miralamar, and don't miss Fontein Cave, where ancient Arawak drawings show you the island's deep history."

PICTURES: Shutterstock/Serge Yatinin, Pandora Pictures, Solarisys

Y is for Yoga

Wellness activities are often high on the list of priorities for clients, and the Caribbean offers the perfect environment in which to unwind, with secluded coves, remote jungles, castaway-style resorts and an off-grid vibe. Some hotels, such as BodyHoliday in Saint Lucia and Meliá Punta Cana Beach Resort in the Dominican Republic, include spa treatments and mindful exercise classes in the room cost.

In Tobago, trade-friendly wellness resorts include

Castara Retreats and the Kariwak Wellness Village Hotel. Zahra Duncombe (pictured), wellness services director at the latter, says: "Tobago's slower pace, unspoiled nature and rich traditions create the perfect setting for true restoration. From forest bathing in ancient rainforests to stargazing by the sea, Tobago is where true wellbeing begins."



X is for X-Parks

X really does mark the spot for this series of theme parks on Mexico's Riviera Maya, offering eco-adventures aplenty for both families and fun-loving adults. Xcaret Park (pictured), four miles south of Playa del Carmen, is the best known, bringing together underground rivers, archaeological sites, traditional folklore performances and wildlife that includes a butterfly pavilion.

Its fellow theme parks – including Xplor, Xel-Ha, Xenses and Xoximilco – offer ziplines, watersports, cliff diving, cenotes, caves and jungle trails, all with a Mexican cultural twist.



Z is for Ziplining

Nothing busts the perception of the Caribbean as purely a fly-and-flop destination better than its array of adrenaline-pumping ziplines. These aerial adventures can be found in many popular spots, from Antigua and Saint Lucia to Sint Maarten – home of the Flying Dutchman, the steepest zipline in the world – and Puerto Rico, where thrill-seekers can take on a challenge while enjoying unforgettable views of El Yunque National Forest. Cruise visitors don't miss out either, with ziplines forming a key attraction of some lines' private islands, including Perfect Day at CocoCay for Royal Caribbean and Celebrity Cruises guests and Great Stirrup Cay for NCL passengers. **TW**

How to sell



Jorge Quibell, head of trade distribution, Classic Collection
"Don't just sell the hotel – sell the experience."

Even on a single-centre stay, well-chosen excursions can be the highlight of the holiday and often the reason clients rebook the same destination."



Steven Heath, senior trade relations manager, Marella Cruises
"When I was an agent,

I found clients interested in all-inclusive Caribbean resorts were often ideal candidates for cruise holidays. Framing the ship as a floating resort – with all the same amenities and often more – helped open their eyes to cruising. Plus, waking up in a new destination each day adds a layer of excitement and value."



Vishal Patel, director, Travelpack
"By highlighting the islands as a

playground for culture, nature and adventure, agents can inspire clients to see the Caribbean in a new light – and benefit from the added value of selling immersive experiences alongside the holiday. We expect the trend towards active and experience-rich Caribbean holidays to continue – travellers are increasingly pre-booking excursions to secure availability and return home with memories that go far beyond the beach."



Jim Robertson, senior regional product manager, Kuoni
"The Caribbean is an amalgamation of

music, soul, history, people and beauty, with each island offering a diverse mix of landscapes, rich culture and ultra-friendly people. [There's] a treasure trove of 'wow' experiences, so customers can get under the skin of this iconic destination whichever island they head for."