

Caribbean value

With high demand – and sometimes high prices – the Caribbean might not be the obvious destination for value, but you can still find an all-inclusive break for less than £1,500, says **Adam Shaw**

The Caribbean remains a top all-inclusive destination for Brits looking to soak up some sun, experience a vibrant culture and enjoy a host of activities in and out of the water. But with high demand, plus rising global prices, pushing up the cost of a holiday, clients may need some extra persuading on the region's value for money.

Thankfully, there are still many great deals out there. As Alistair Rowland, chief executive of Blue Bay Travel, notes: "The Caribbean has been in high demand and looks busy already for 2023. There is no doubt that demand will exceed capacity this year, and airfares are likely to increase significantly. To secure a deal, my recommendation would be to book as soon as you can and lock in your price."

Nicolas Bresch, Club Med's managing director for the UK & Nordics, agrees that booking in advance is a

good idea, especially given the poor exchange rate, with Caribbean currencies pegged to the US dollar.

He suggests booking an all-inclusive stay to make sure all costs are accounted for ahead of travel, adding: "We believe the all-inclusive holiday model will be more attractive than ever, with customers feeling safe in the knowledge that they are not going to be hit with lots of additional costs after booking."

So with this in mind, we've rounded up some of the best all-inclusive packages across the Caribbean for every type of client – all clocking in at less than £1,500 per person.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Active adventures at Club Med Punta Cana

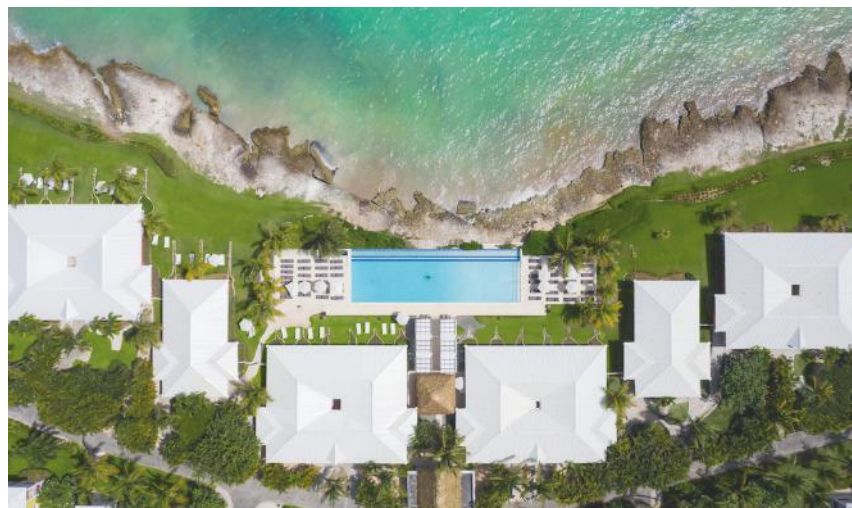
The resort: Club Med's Punta Cana resort offers plenty to keep active guests entertained, with ➤

Sunrise in Punta Cana,
Dominican Republic

PICTURE: Shutterstock/Wiler

DESTINATIONS

CARIBBEAN | ALL-INCLUSIVE HOLIDAYS



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Club Med Punta Cana, Dominican Republic; Bay Gardens Inn, Saint Lucia; Magdalena Grand Beach & Golf Resort, Tobago

archery, sailing and stand-up paddleboarding all on offer. Those looking for something a bit different can take dance lessons or even have a go at learning some circus or trapeze tricks.

There are playgrounds for kids, while adults can make the most of the Zen Oasis area, with its adult-only pool, spa and cocktail bar.

The package: Prices booked with Club Med start at £1,400.50 for seven nights, flying from Gatwick on September 28.

What's included? All food and drink and organised sports such as golf, basketball and beach volleyball. Many activities, including those mentioned, are also covered. clubmed.co.uk

TOBAGO

Tee up at Magdalena Grand Beach & Golf Resort

The resort: Steer golf fans to the Magdalena Grand Beach & Golf Resort in southwest Tobago. Its

top tip

Look out for extras: Sandals, for example, offers free rounds of golf and free diving for Padi-qualified guests

72-par, 18-hole golf course, built on the site of a former coconut plantation, has been designed to championship standard by the Professional Golfers' Association. With varying obstacles, it's suitable for players of all abilities, and sits alongside a driving range, putting green, pitching area and clubhouse.

The resort itself has three pools (including one just for adults), free bike hire, spa services, tennis courts for use by day and night, walking trails and daily activities for guests.

The package: A seven-night stay

at Magdalena Grand Beach & Golf Resort in Tobago, with Blue Bay Travel, starts at £1,249, including flights from Gatwick.

To secure this price, trips must be booked by March 31 for departure dates in April, May, June, August and October.

What's included? All food and drink is included, plus an upgrade to a Deluxe Oceanfront room, two rounds of golf and transfers.

bluebaytravel.co.uk

SAINT LUCIA

Make a splash with the kids at Bay Gardens Inn

The resort: Saint Lucia's Bay Gardens Inn is based in the picturesque Rodney Bay Village, and is just a stone's throw from Reduit Beach, one of the island's best.

With facilities including a pool, gym, spa and watersports such as sailing and paddle boating, it's a family affair at the resort. Packages also include free use of

the neighbouring Splash Island Water Park, which boasts an obstacle-style inflatable course, swings, slides, hurdles and monkey bars.

The package: A seven-night holiday with Blue Bay Travel starts at £1,099 with flights from Gatwick available in April, May, June and October. This price is only available for bookings made by January 31.

What's included? As well as entry to Splash Island Water Park and the all-inclusive food and drink package, guests will be treated to welcome drinks at the hotel (with adults given a complimentary bottle of rum), transfers, late checkout and an upgrade to a Deluxe Pool View room.

bluebaytravel.co.uk

Slow down at Bel Jou

The resort: Those who want total relaxation from their holiday will enjoy a stay at Bel Jou, an adult-only resort overlooking ➤



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The Club Barbados Resort & Spa, Barbados; kayaking at The Club Barbados; Bel Jou, Saint Lucia; The Fives Oceanfront, Mexico

Castries. Perched on the hillside, surrounded by tropical gardens and wildlife, it's the perfect place to unwind. There's a rooftop lounge, two pools and a buffet restaurant specialising in Creole cuisine that offers views of the island's vibrant capital. And if guests do fancy something more energetic, they can take part in daily activities such as Pilates or dance classes.

The package: Seven nights in a Garden Bungalow at Bel Jou can be booked through Kuoni, with prices starting at £1,499, including flights from Gatwick departing April 25.

What's included? Flights, food and drink are all covered, as are the exercise activities at the resort. There's also a complimentary shuttle bus into Castries that runs five days a week. Kuoni guests on this package can get a free 30-minute massage per person per stay if booked before February 13.

kuoni.co.uk

fast fact

New BA routes this year include Bermuda, Trinidad, Aruba via Antigua and Guyana via Saint Lucia

BARBADOS

Enjoy couples' time at The Club Barbados Resort & Spa

The resort: At this adult-only resort, couples can enjoy a number of experiences, including learning how to cook a classic Caribbean dish or becoming rum-tasting experts. They can also try dance classes, or relax in the elegant piano bar.

There's a soothing sauna and steam room, a swimming pool and the chance to go snorkelling and

kayaking. And when it comes to food, the Sunset Restaurant is the perfect place to enjoy international cuisine, complemented by the sounds of the ocean, while Enid's offers a range of Bajan classics.

The package: A seven-night stay at The Club Barbados Resort & Spa with Kenwood Travel costs from £1,449, flying from Heathrow on May 22.

What's included? Food and drink, and activities including tennis and paddleboarding.

kenwoodtravel.co.uk

MEXICO

See more local culture at The Fives Oceanfront

The resort: The Fives Oceanfront in Puerto Morelos champions local culture, offering Mexican specialities at its beachfront restaurant and a traditional Mayan sunset ceremony in the evenings.

The resort has an infinity pool and poolside bar, while activities

on offer include table tennis and karaoke nights.

What's more, Puerto Morelos has managed to retain much of its traditional fishing village feel and is just a 15-minute walk from the resort. Pay a visit to the unique 'leaning lighthouse' – a still active watch tower that looks bent out of shape – or enjoy local music and dancing on the streets during the weekend evenings.

The National Reef Park is accessible via private beaches attached to the resort and is perfect for snorkelling.

The package: A five-night stay with Kenwood Travel starts at £1,392, flying with British Airways from Gatwick on November 6.

What's included? All food and drink at the resort's bars and restaurants are included, but some activities like kitesurfing and horse riding might incur an extra charge.

kenwoodtravel.co.uk **TW**