



## CARIBBEAN ISLANDS

Look to the Caribbean's lesser-known islands for an authentic stay with fewer visitors, says **Lina Molloholl**

From the rhythms of reggae in Jamaica to rainforested reserves in Saint Lucia, the Caribbean promises an escape where time slows down, fusing palm-fringed beaches with green landscapes and exceptional food with a diverse mix of cultures.

But while it's a hotspot for holidaying, only a fraction of the Caribbean's 7,000 islands garner the spotlight; for example, seven million visitors flocked to the Dominican Republic in 2022, according to the country's ministry of tourism, while just 549,000

visited the Turks and Caicos Islands that same year, according to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation.

Go a little off the beaten track and you'll be rewarded with the same brilliant beaches, without the crowds, untouched coral reefs and a chance to dive into island culture.

So what can you sell to clients in search of somewhere different? Whether they're a second-time visitor looking for something new, or they simply want somewhere quieter, we've highlighted three lesser-visited Caribbean destinations to put on your clients' radar.



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### THE BAHAMAS

For rich history, picturesque beaches and a portfolio of dynamic resorts, many clients look to the Bahamas. Pastel-hued buildings, colonial architecture and vibrant markets abound in Nassau, while Cable Beach is a true stretch of paradise. Junkanoo Beach offers a livelier, more local atmosphere, while a short boat trip from Nassau is Blue Lagoon Island, a private island known for its dolphin encounters.

### TURKS AND CAICOS

The arrival of direct, non-stop flights with Virgin Atlantic to Providenciales in November is likely to draw more attention to this archipelago to the southeast of the Bahamas, offering visitors a laid-back, authentic Caribbean escape with plenty of action. At Grace Bay Beach, there's kayaking and paddleboarding, while adventure-seekers will find solace underwater at Columbus Landfall National Park, where wall diving sites, vibrant coral formations and abundant marine life draw snorkellers and divers.

Beyond the beaches, visitors can explore attractions ranging from the mesmerising limestone cliffs and labyrinthine caves of Middle Caicos – the archipelago's largest island – to the historic Cheshire Hall Plantation on Providenciales. The protected wetlands of Princess Alexandra National Park meanwhile offer opportunities to spot native wildlife and bird species.

**BOOK IT:** Caribtours offers seven nights' bed and breakfast at Grace Bay Club, from £2,925, based on two sharing a Junior Suite, including flights and private transfers. [caribtours.co.uk](http://caribtours.co.uk)

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# DESTINATIONS

## CARIBBEAN | LESSER-VISITED ISLANDS



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### CUBA

Cuba's best-known beach resort, Varadero charms with its pristine shores – among them Varadero Beach, which stretches along the Hicacos Peninsula and boasts miles of soft, white sand and gentle turquoise waters. History buffs can explore nearby Matanzas, known as the 'City of Bridges' and the 'Venice of Cuba', visit nearby caves or tee off on a world-class golf course with the ocean for a backdrop.

### PUERTO RICO

For untouched beauty and enchanting beaches, direct clients to the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico. Flamenco Beach is consistently ranked one of the best in the world, providing a stunning backdrop for sunbathing or getting active in the water. Playa La Chiva and Playa Caracas (also known as 'blue beach' and 'red beach') meanwhile offer hidden coves and secluded shores. Visitors can also glimpse majestic Paso Fino horses roaming freely along the beaches, in the fields or even by the roadside. Vieques' biggest attraction, though, is Mosquito Bay, which has been recognised by Guinness World Records as having the brightest bioluminescence in the world. The island's history can be seen in its abandoned sugar mills and in the remnants of the Fortín Conde de Mirasol, a 19th-century coastal fort.

**BOOK IT:** Purely Travel offers two nights room-only at Candado Ocean Club in San Juan and five nights room-only at the adult-only El Blok Hotel from £1,849, based on two sharing, with flights from Heathrow in November.  
[purelytravel.co.uk](http://purelytravel.co.uk)



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### SAINT LUCIA

Saint Lucia's emerald landscapes offer plenty of appeal. At its heart is the laid-back town of Soufrière, where the picturesque charm is enhanced by the iconic Pitons. Nearby, Toraille Waterfall is a refreshing oasis amid the tropical heat, while Anse Chastanet and Jalousie Beach offer azure waters lapped by sugar-white sand.

### ST KITTS AND NEVIS

From colourful capital Basseterre to the untouched beaches of Cockleshell and Pinney's, the islands of St Kitts and Nevis offer an exciting range of experiences. On St Kitts, clients can learn about local history at the Brimstone Hill Fortress National Park, hike and zipline in the rainforest or unwind at one on the island's luxury beachfront resorts.

Nevis, meanwhile, lures with its unspoilt beaches and historic capital, Charlestown – home of the Museum of Nevis History, built where US Founding Father Alexander Hamilton was born.

Dive enthusiasts will find abundant marine life around both islands, while golfers can tee off on world-class courses. Venture into the rainforests that drape the slopes of dormant volcanoes and don't miss the St Kitts Scenic Railway, a nostalgic journey through the islands' past and present.

**BOOK IT:** Elegant Resorts offers seven nights in an Ocean View Room at the Four Seasons Resort Nevis from £5,265 per person, based on two sharing, including flights from Gatwick, UK lounge passes and private transfers, for travel January 23 to April 30, 2024.  
[elegantresorts.co.uk](http://elegantresorts.co.uk)



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