

# Jamaica's finest

With visitor numbers nearing pre-Covid levels, **Yolanda Zappaterra** samples some of the best all-inclusive resorts alongside agents on a Virgin Atlantic VIP fam trip

**J**amaica's tourism industry is bouncing back faster than Usain Bolt – with visitor numbers expected to return to pre-pandemic levels this year. The country also attracted plenty of attention when it celebrated 60 years of independence last month, with Jamaica Day parties held across the island (and plenty in the UK too).

Add to that a hotel offering that's getting stronger and stronger – the country has been embracing all-inclusive resort culture since the 1970s – and Jamaica is proving to be a very strong sell indeed.

So here's where to book your clients' next Jamaican stays, from new additions to old favourites.

#### BEST FOR...FAMILY FUN

**Moon Palace Jamaica, Ocho Rios**  
With a prime oceanfront location, the 705-room all-inclusive hotel has it all, from a perfect ribbon of

white-sand beach with a jerk chicken shack to the island's only FlowRider surf simulator, by way of the teenage-focused Wired games lounge. The location is perfect for Jamaica's most popular attractions, with Dunn's River Falls, Mystic Mountain, Chukka Adventures and Green Grotto Caves all within easy reach. And downtown Ocho Rios is literally on the doorstep, for any essentials the hotel doesn't provide.

**Book it:** From £311 per room, per night, for two adults sharing on an all-inclusive basis.  
[jamaica.moonpalace.com](http://jamaica.moonpalace.com)

#### BEST FOR...NOSTALGIA BUFFS

**Jamaica Inn**  
Step onto the original tiled floors of this family-owned colonial-style hotel and you'll feel like you've stepped back to the 1950s, when Marilyn Monroe honeymooned here with Arthur Miller. What you see is exactly what Mr and Mrs Miller would have seen, ➤



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Moon Palace Jamaica; Bayside Restaurant, Couple Tower Isle; Lagoon Cottage, GoldenEye PICTURES: Palace Resorts; Island Outpost Images/Brie Williams

➤ from the 55 cottages and suites to the elegant lawns where croquet is still played. Two perfect Ocho Rios beaches, a dining terrace to die for and a new relaxed restaurant serving pizza on the beach make it nigh-on perfect. **Book it:** From \$469.50 per room, per night, room-only. [jamaicainn.com](http://jamaicainn.com)

### BEST FOR...MOVIE FANS

#### GoldenEye, Oracabessa

Ian Fleming wrote all 14 of his James Bond books at Goldeneye, the villa he built on the north coast of the island in 1946. It's available to rent at the kind of prices a Bond baddie wouldn't bat an eyelid at but, alongside it, and a little more affordable, the GoldenEye resort offers a beguiling mix of lofty-ceilinged and spacious beach villas designed by Jamaican architect Ann Hodges, lagoon cottages (each with their own kayak for exploring the lagoon and beyond) and beach huts that make you feel like you've landed in paradise.

**Book it:** From \$692 per room, per night, based on two adults sharing on a B&B basis. [goldeneye.com](http://goldeneye.com)

### BEST FOR...ROMANCE

#### Couples Tower Isle

Decor here has a mid-century modern vibe – not surprising given that it dates back to 1949, when Abe Issa opened it as Jamaica's first year-round resort. Nice eco touches include refillable water bottles in all 225 rooms, which span the gamut from balcony rooms

with brightly coloured art and bold accents to villas with plunge pools in walled gardens. The atmosphere is sophisticated and intimate, with a private island that allows nude sunbathing.

**Book it:** From £274 per room, per night, based on two adults sharing, room-only. [couplesresorts.co.uk](http://couplesresorts.co.uk)

### BEST FOR...HIKERS

#### Strawberry Hill, Blue Mountains

This estate was turned into a gorgeous hotel almost 30 years ago and comprises white wooden buildings that are in pleasing harmony with the lush surroundings, plus cottages filled with four-poster beds dressed in white linen accented with vivid African fabrics. Set 3,000 feet above sea level in the beautiful Blue Mountains, there are far-reaching views from the veranda, where afternoon tea with estate-grown strawberries is served. A pool, spa, glorious gardens and a restaurant serving classic Jamaican dishes complete a perfect picture.

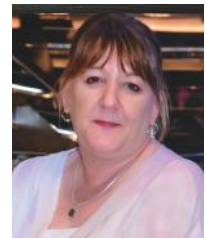
**Book it:** From \$395 per room, per night, based on two adults sharing on a B&B basis. [strawberryhillhotel.com](http://strawberryhillhotel.com)

### BEST FOR...MIXED GROUPS

#### H10 Ocean Eden Bay & Ocean Spray, Trelawny

Child-free family friends and grandparents who don't want to be left holding the baby, rejoice! H10's new 444-suite, adult-only Ocean Eden Bay gives child-free adults holidaying with friends and family who do have ➤

## ASK THE agents



Sheila Stamp,  
Travel Counsellors

"I love Couples Tower Isle, as it offers adult-only with a twist for naturists; the views from the hotel are stunning; and it has a prime beach location. I like Moon Palace too. As a specialist in packages for families with disabled children, it is unusual in offering accessible interconnecting family rooms, something that can be hard to find and double the cost for families if they have to pay for two rooms."



Vanda Cowley,  
Travel Counsellors

"The staff in Jamaican hotels are the best-ever, with an infectious sense of fun. And they go above and beyond to help make your holiday memorable. If I had to choose a favourite, I'd say Couples Negril; my heart lies there as I learnt to scuba dive in 2009 with a great instructor called Sugar, who still works there. Sandals, another Jamaican-owned brand, is also great for watersports, particularly scuba diving."

**GETTING THERE**

**Virgin Atlantic** flies direct between Heathrow and Montego Bay, Jamaica, up to four times a week throughout the year, with two routes via Nassau and an increased daily service for the winter season, beginning on December 12, 2022. Flights are operated by the airline's Boeing 787-9 aircraft. Return fares cost from £607 for Economy, £1,013 for Premium, and £2,051 for Upper Class. All fares include food, drinks and snacks, inflight entertainment, onboard Wi-Fi, 300-plus hours of TV and films, in-seat power for devices and kids' goodie packs. [virginatlantic.com](http://virginatlantic.com)


kids a stunning place to retreat to when they want some grown-up time, while being able to share the equally impressive range of facilities and amenities offered at the family-friendly Ocean Coral Spring adjoining it. As the latest development on the island for Spain-based Ocean by H10 Hotels, Eden Bay joins a burgeoning Greater Montego Bay scene in Trelawny, and ups the game considerably.

**Book it:** From \$596 per room, per night, based on two adults sharing on an all-inclusive basis. [oceanhotels.net](http://oceanhotels.net)

**BEST FOR...BUDGET STAYS**

**Holiday Inn Montego Bay**

Located less than 10 minutes away from Montego Bay airport, the 512 rooms of the all-inclusive Holiday Inn are keenly priced, and equally keenly recommended by guests. The appeal of the location and price is bolstered by a large pool, spa and plenty of activities for both kids and adults, from volleyball and a well-equipped fitness centre to a casino and live entertainment. Dining options are nicely varied, and the half mile of white-sand beach and boardwalk, plus the Tek it Easy Island, provide a great choice of water and beach activities.

**Book it:** From £151 per room, per night, all-inclusive. [ihg.com](http://ihg.com) 



TOP: H10 Ocean Eden Bay BOTTOM: Strawberry Hill  
PICTURE: Island Outpost Images/Nikolas Koenig

WE HAVE  
**GORGEOUS**  
WHITE SAND **BEACHES**

**AND**

WE ALSO HAVE  
**PINK SAND** BEACHES  
IF THAT'S MORE YOUR THING

 [visitantiguabarbuda.com](http://visitantiguabarbuda.com)