

Paradise found



Navigate the confusing array of rules for travel to the Caribbean with Laura French's easy-to-follow guide

for clients dreaming of an escape to paradise, the Caribbean should be on their radar.

But with some borders still closed to international tourists, testing regimes in place on several of the islands and various pre-arrival requirements to stay on top of, knowing which islands to send clients to right now might feel like a bit of a minefield.

To help simplify things, we've picked out some of the easiest destinations to travel to post-lockdown. Many are quarantine-free, accessible with direct flights and have straightforward entry requirements. The islands that follow are currently on the UK's travel corridors list, unless otherwise stated, but please check the latest government advice before booking.

ANTIGUA

Why go: If Antigua's 365 beaches aren't enough to sway your clients, its plethora of heritage sites, scenic hikes and wildlife encounters might be. Add in the quaint cobbled lanes of Nelson's Dockyard, snorkelling at Stingray City and dramatic dives around English Harbour and it's hard to find a reason not to sell this colourful paradise island.

Need to know: Colin James, chief executive of the Antigua and Barbuda Tourism Authority, says: "Passengers arriving into Antigua and Barbuda by air will need to show a negative PCR test taken within seven days of their flight, complete a Health Declaration Form and have a screening and ➤

DESTINATIONS

CARIBBEAN | ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Shirley Heights, Antigua; Jumby Bay, Antigua; Sandpiper Bay, Barbados; Gros Piton, Saint Lucia



top tip

Get a taste of Tobago with Travel Weekly's Take Me To Tobago week from December 14-18. Send a question for the panel and see how you could receive a box of Tobago treats at go.travelweekly.co.uk/TakeMeToTobago



PICTURES: Shutterstock; Jonathan Cole Photography; Sietano Candito

temperature check. All visitors will be monitored for Covid for up to 14 days and may be required to undergo testing on arrival or at their place of lodging.

"Most hotels have reopened and visitors are free to move around the island at leisure, but some attractions on the island are closed. There is currently also a curfew in place from 11pm-5am."

Getting there: British Airways and Virgin Atlantic are due to resume direct flights from Gatwick and Heathrow respectively from mid-December.

SAINT LUCIA

Why go: Whether it's climbing the towering heights of Gros Piton, diving the striking reefs at Anse Chastanet or bathing in Soufriere's volcanic mud pools, Saint Lucia offers plenty to lure, with a plethora of boutique beachfront resorts for those looking to kick back in the kind of setting that belongs on a postcard.

Need to know: Patricia Charlery-Leon, UK director of the Saint Lucia Tourism Authority, says: "Visitors need to show a negative PCR test taken up to seven days before travel and complete an online Pre-Arrival Registration Form. They'll be screened on arrival at the airport and then escorted to their accommodation by certified taxis."

"International visitors must stay at a Covid-certified property. At this time, visitors are not permitted to travel around Saint Lucia unless in a certified taxi and travelling



JENNY BASHAM Caribbean product manager, Carrier

"We are seeing lots of enquiries from couples for last-minute travel as well as festive and February half-term trips for families. In terms of destinations, Antigua, Saint Lucia, Grenada and St Barts are proving especially popular at the moment due to the ease and clarity of entry requirements."

"Antigua and Saint Lucia have been managing tourism exceptionally well since they opened in June. Both have opened with a phased approach, and it is working – infection levels remain extremely low."

"Grenada and St Kitts and Nevis opened in October, and more will be opening up cautiously over the coming months."

"We are seeing strong interest in private islands such as Jumby Bay, Petit Saint Vincent and Mustique, as well as demand for isolated resorts on larger islands, such as Hotel Le Toiny in St Barts and Amanara in Turks and Caicos. Demand for private villa rental is also on the rise."



to one of the approved sites or their hotel, and car hire is not yet available. But guests can take part in various water-based activities such as scuba diving and sailing, and there's a good range of excursions that are now approved, including the Gros Piton hike and visits to Pigeon Island Park and the Sulphur Springs."

Getting there: British Airways is resuming direct flights from Gatwick from mid-December, while Tui has confirmed it will offer a weekly Tuesday flight from Gatwick and a weekly Thursday flight from Manchester until April 2021.

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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: Sabrina Cambiaso, director at the Dominican Republic Tourism Board, says: "Travellers no longer need to provide a negative Covid test on arrival. Instead, airports will administer a quick breath test for randomly selected passengers. All arrivals will be given a temperature check. Free medical insurance is also being offered to all travellers until December 31 to cover the cost of Covid tests." Direct flights are yet to resume, but Air France, KLM and United Airlines operate indirect services from London, with a requirement to self-isolate on return.

JAMAICA: UK travellers aren't required to get a Covid test but will need to obtain travel authorisation by filling in a form at visitjamaica.com. Visitors need to stay at one of the approved properties listed on the website within the island's 'resilient corridors', specific areas on the island whose operators have been inspected and certified. Although it is a popular destination for British travellers, Jamaica isn't currently on the UK's travel corridors list.

ST KITTS & NEVIS: Visitors need to take a PCR test within three days of travel and book into one of two approved resorts – Four Seasons Resort or Paradise Beach. If they wish to take part in non-motorised watersports such as diving and snorkelling they will need to take a second test on day eight. British Airways is due to restart direct weekly flights from Gatwick to St Kitts in December.

THE BAHAMAS: Visitors need to have a negative PCR test result within five days of departure, uploaded onto their Bahamas Health Visa application. Travellers staying five days or more must then take an antigen test either at the hotel or at a hospital, with results delivered within 60 minutes (cost included in the visa).

ST BARTS: All travellers need to have a PCR test taken within 72 hours before departure. If their stay is longer than seven nights, they will need to have a second test at the island's testing lab.

TURKS & CAICOS: These islands were added to the list of UK travel corridors on November 14. Travellers need to have a test no more than five days before arrival and upload the result alongside proof of Covid travel insurance on the Turks and Caicos Islands Assured Portal (travelauthorisation.turksandcaicostourism.com).



ABOVE: Annandale Falls, Grenada PICTURE: Shutterstock

GRENADA

Why go: Dubbed the 'Spice Isle' for its plethora of produce – think nutmeg, cinnamon, vanilla and cocoa growing everywhere you look – Grenada is a hit with foodies as much as it is nature lovers, with lush, waterfall-studded hinterlands meeting heritage-filled rum distilleries and idyllic palm-lined beaches.

Need to know: Patricia Maher, chief executive of the Grenada Tourism Authority, says: "UK travellers need to have a negative PCR test taken up to seven days prior to arrival, upload relevant documents online and download a contact tracing app."

"On arrival visitors will be taken from the airport to one of the approved accommodations – we have a list of more than 70 – where they are free to use the facilities. If travellers then wish to leave the accommodation and explore the island, they will be required to take a second test on day four."

Getting there: Both British Airways and Virgin Atlantic anticipate restarting twice-weekly direct flights in December, from Gatwick and Heathrow respectively.

BARBADOS

Why go: From the soft-powder beaches of Carlisle Bay to the colourful buildings of Bridgetown, Barbados knows how to turn on the charm for glitzy fly-and-floppers.

Need to know: Cheryl Carter, UK director for Barbados Tourism Marketing, says:

"Three days before UK travellers come out to Barbados, they need to take a PCR test at an accredited facility and upload the negative results when completing our online Immigration and Customs form. Upon arrival, travellers will be transported from the airport to one of the designated hotels, villas or apartments; most of the island's major hotels have been authorised, along with many independent properties. On day two, visitors need to take a second PCR test, either at the property, at a government facility or privately. Guests must stay at their approved accommodation until a negative result is received. They are then free to enjoy and explore all that Barbados has to offer."

Getting there: British Airways flies direct from Gatwick and has added a service from Heathrow; Virgin Atlantic also flies direct from Heathrow. Services will be increased post-lockdown, with schedules to be confirmed. **TW**