

# The high life

Feel on top of the world with the best elevated experiences, writes Jo Cooke

**T**here's nothing wrong with spending a week lying flat on your back, or on your stomach for that matter, turning at intervals to ensure you brown evenly on your sunlounger.

The Caribbean encourages your inner sloth, plus there are countless distractions just steps away from the ocean or pool, such as beach bars, sunset cruises, duty-free shopping or dining with the sand between your toes.

That golden coastline is what the West Indies is famous for, but head for higher ground and some lesser-known treasures and unexpected adventures – from flying through the jungle on a zip wire to speeding down a terrifyingly tall water slide – await.

## ► CLOSER TO HEAVEN

**Where:** Cable Car, Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic

**Tell me more:** The all-inclusive hotels of Puerto Plata offer a slice of seaside paradise with all your needs met right there on property. The grounds are surrounded by lush vegetation, but that's just a fraction of the natural beauty that cloaks the north coast of this Caribbean nation. See more from the town's contemporary cable car. A gentle, diagonal ride up the slopes of Mount Isabel reveals a swathe of tropical greenery stretching for miles behind the azure waters and white-sand beaches, plus you can see the charming, pastel-coloured buildings of the old town, too.

At the top of the mountain, a statue of Christ stands with arms outstretched to greet you, Rio de Janeiro-style, and there's an enchanting botanical garden to wander around.

**Book it:** Do Something Different has a Puerto Plata City Tour and Cable Car from £39 for adults, and £20 for children.

[dosomethingdifferent.com](http://dosomethingdifferent.com) ➔

## FAST FACT

BodyHoliday in Saint Lucia has added waterfall abseiling and yacht racing to its new adventure programme



## ▶ MAKING A SPLASH

**Where:** Aquaventure, Atlantis Paradise Island, the Bahamas

**Tell me more:** Theme parks in the West Indies tend to be of the watery variety, and for those with a head for heights, it's hard to top Aquaventure at the Atlantis Paradise Island resort. This Mayan-inspired playground includes the Power Tower, a 120ft-tall slide that gives you a bird's-eye view of the resort and surrounding ocean before you plunge, at increasing speed, into the pool. If that isn't enough to get your pulse racing, there's the Leap of Faith; a 60ft near-vertical drop that propels you through a transparent tunnel that cuts through a lagoon filled with sharks.

**Book it:** Entry is free for guests of Atlantis Paradise Island. A limited number of day passes are available to guests of partner cruise lines and hotels, from \$89 (aged four to 12), and from \$135 for guests over 13 years old. [atlantisbahamas.com](http://atlantisbahamas.com)

## ▶ THREE FOR ONE

**Where:** Mystic Mountain, Ocho Rios, Jamaica

**Tell me more:** Zip-lines have become a Caribbean staple, and from Antigua to Haiti, you can feel free as a bird as you whizz from the lofty heights of rainforest canopies back down to earth. At Mystic Mountain in Jamaica, your zip-line glide combines with two other high-flying adventures; first, an open-sided chairlift transports you above the treetops for a view of Ocho

**RIGHT:** Mystic Mountain, Jamaica

**BELOW:** Aquaventure, Atlantis Paradise Island, the Bahamas



PICTURES: HUGH WRIGHT; LAWSON WOOD; ORLANDO ROWAIN; MICHAEL STAVARDIS



**From Antigua to Haiti, you can feel free as a bird as you whizz through rainforest canopies back to earth**

Rios and the headland, then at the hilltop, you'll climb aboard a bobsleigh that takes you on a fast-paced circuit around the summit. It's inspired by Jamaica's Olympic winter sports team and their incongruous success in the sport. A final stomach-lurching 700ft descent is made courtesy of five zip-lines. The only thing you'll need after that is a nerve-calming rum punch. ▶



**Funway Holidays** offers seven nights' B&B at Time Out Hotel, St Lawrence Gap in Barbados, from £890 per person for departures on January 24, 2018. The price includes flights from London with Virgin Atlantic, and is based on two adults sharing. [funwayagents.co.uk](http://funwayagents.co.uk)

**Caribtours** features a week all-inclusive at Sandals LaSource, Grenada, from £2,699 per person, based on two adults sharing a Pink Gin Grande Luxe Room. The price includes flights with Virgin Atlantic, lounge access and transfers, and is based on a January 2018 departure, for bookings by December 12. [caribtours.co.uk](http://caribtours.co.uk)





RIGHT:  
Brimstone  
Hill Fortress,  
St Kitts

BELOW:  
The Pitons,  
Saint Lucia



➔ **Book it:** Tui's Mystic Mountain and Zip-line option starts at £105. [excursion.tui.co.uk](http://excursion.tui.co.uk)

► **KING OF THE CASTLES**

**Where:** Brimstone Hill Fortress, St Kitts

**Tell me more:** Sitting 800ft above the ocean, the 17th-century fortress is one of the most intact and extensive strongholds in the Caribbean. Built to guard the island of St Kitts, and British colonial trade routes in general, Brimstone Hill Fortress once had



**Brimstone Hill Fortress once had enough fire power to sink enemy ships three miles away**

enough fire power to sink enemy ships three miles away. It's a masterpiece of engineering, and

a history or military buff's dream come true. But you don't have to be either to enjoy wandering the ramparts, admiring the views across to St Eustatius or delving into the past of those who were stationed here, thanks to the introductory video and extensive exhibition.

**Book it:** Entry to Brimstone Hill Fortress costs \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. [brimstonehillfortress.org](http://brimstonehillfortress.org)

► **SOCIAL CLIMBING**

**Where:** Piton peaks, Saint Lucia  
**Tell me more:** Saint Lucia's dazzling twins are probably



**Fly Air Europa and enjoy some of the most beautiful beaches in the Caribbean.**

*All flight are via Madrid.*

**AirEuropa**



For more information call: 0871 423 0717, email : [uksales@air-europa.com](mailto:uksales@air-europa.com) or visit us at: [www.aireuropaexperts.com](http://www.aireuropaexperts.com)



**Sandals**  
the Luxury Included holiday

*All I want for Christmas is...*



**A JO MALONE CANDLE**



**NEW TRAVEL AGENT INCENTIVE**



## CARIBBEAN HIGH FLYERS DESTINATIONS



**LEFT:**  
Cayman  
Islands

**RIGHT:**  
Adelphi  
Waterfall,  
Grenada



→ the most-photographed landmark in the West Indies. You could never tire of looking at the Pitons, whether from your hotel room balcony, or from the deck of a sunset catamaran cruise, but nothing compares to taking them on with a hike. One is slightly bigger than the other, but the taller of the two, Gros Piton, is easier to climb. That said, it's hard work even for the moderately fit, so hiring a guide helps. They keep you motivated and on the sturdiest path, and you learn about the flora and fauna en route. The four-hour round trip is time well spent, with the views from the top without a doubt the money shot.

**Book it:** Sandals' excursion provider Island Routes offers a half-day Hiking the Pitons trip, from \$145.

**islandroutes.co.uk**

### ▶ TURNING LEFT

**Where:** Concorde Experience, Barbados

**Tell me more:** Who said Barbados was a long-haul destination? Back in the days of Concorde, royalty and rock



**A sheer cliff gives way to deeper, darker waters and a whole new set of marine residents**

stars could depart London and arrive at Grantley Adams airport in fewer than four hours. Check out one of the decommissioned supersonic jets that got them there, which can be admired in a hangar close to the island's international terminal.

Climb the fabled steps to the elegant cabin, have a peek in the cockpit, then sink into one of the sumptuous, all-leather seats, handcrafted by Rolls-Royce, while a guide hands out the in-flight menu – caviar, lobster and champagne OK for you?

There really was no bigger holiday high. With these aircraft travelling up to 20,000ft above regular planes, passengers could even see the curvature of the earth from the cabin windows. Such fascinating facts and more are revealed in a movie projected onto the side of the plane, which recreates a take-off and gives you the feeling that you are on a flight.

**Book it:** Prices start at about £16 for adults and £10 for children.

**barbadosconcorde.com**

### ▶ DROP BY

**Where:** Wall dives, Grand Cayman

**Tell me more:** If you love living life on the edge, then plunge into the waters around Grand Cayman. Wall dives on the North Shore offer some of the most spectacular drop-offs in the Caribbean. The reef bed suddenly disappears from under you to reveal a sheer cliff giving way to deeper, darker

waters and a whole new set of marine residents. It can be an exhilarating and eerie sensation.

**Book it:** Viator offers a two-tank dive with one 20-minute wall dive to 100ft and a second reef or wreck dive for 40 minutes, starting from £92.

**viator.com**

### ▶ THE FALL PICTURE

**Where:** Waterfalls, Grenada

**Tell me more:** Leaving the popular beaches of the west coast behind you, travel up the winding mountain roads to experience the other side of Grenada. The hilly interior is speckled with sleepy villages and the region's abundant rainfall fuels the cascades of a network of must-see waterfalls. Seven Sisters is the most spectacular and Annandale the most tranquil, with their frothy rock pools urging you to take a dip. Both are framed by a ream of exotic foliage that thrives in the moist, volcanic soil.

**Book it:** Island Routes offers a Grenada Rainforest and Waterfall Dune Buggy Tour from \$130.

**islandroutes.co.uk**



**KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED –  
MORE DETAILS WILL BE REVEALED TOMORROW**