



Best Dives of Jamaica

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Jamaica's first tourists arrived in the late 1800s by banana boat, the result of a brainstorm by New England sea captain Lorenzo Down Baker, who fell in love with this mountainous island of delights. By the turn of the century banana exports had grown and Jamaica had become one of the trendiest vacation spots in the world.

Today most tourists arrive by jet and cruise ship. In all, 1.3 million tourists arrive each year to experience Jamaica's watersports, mountain vistas, night life and duty-free shopping.

At 4,411 square miles, it is the third-largest island in the Caribbean after Cuba and Hispaniola. Geographically, it is a cornucopia of scenic wonders. Miles of soft sand beaches and lush greenery line the coasts, and high mountains loom inland. Overall, the terrain is very mountainous, with half of the land rising above 1,000 feet. The highest point, Blue Mountain Peak, soars to 7,402 feet. - higher than any other peak in the eastern half of North America. Hundreds of wild rivers and plunging waterfalls crisscross the mountains and moisten the fertile valleys, which produce some of the world's best coffee, fruits, flowers and vegetables. The flatter southern coast can look like the African savanna or the Indian plains and has alternating black and white sand beaches as well as mineral springs.

Offshore reef tracts provide a bounty of dive and snorkeling sites. Many are a short swim from the beach. Wall dives predominate as Jamaica's north stretch of reef edges the Great Cayman Trench. A ledge of shallow reefs stretches around the island's perimeter. Depths range from extreme shallows to awesome depths.

Based on the classic, *Best Dives of the Caribbean*, this guide zeroes in on the best dives of Jamaica. It includes the latest and best dive and snorkel sites, each rated for visual excellence and marine life. The author's knowledge of the Caribbean sites is unparalleled. From sunken planes and snorkel trails to blue holes, the best destinations beneath the waves are covered.

Also included are places to stay and eat, activities and practical information for visitors.

"I have bought both editions of this book, mostly because the first edition got so dog-eared that I wanted a clean one for vacation last year. The book is a marvelous source of information for both the snorkeler and the diver. The authors divide the book into chapters on individual islands, starting out with a brief but interesting history of the island, a topographical description, relative location map, best time to go, weather, and proximity to other islands. They then rate the island's diving locations, awarding from 1 to 5 stars, and provide another larger map visually locating the sites. Each site is described in detail, with info on depth, sea life, currents, visibility, photo ops and difficulty level. As if that weren't enough, they include some (but not enough!) beautiful photos, and end each chapter with yet more info on dive operators (detailed), beaches, other activities, dining, accommodations (with rates, addresses and phone numbers), medical facilities, documentation requirements, currency, driving, local customs, departure taxes, etc. I've been exploring the Caribbean for almost a decade now; I take this compact book with me everywhere. My only complaint: I wish they covered more islands!" -- (Suziekew)

"Best Dives of the Caribbean is packed full of dive-vacation planning information. It tells what time of year

to go, the most popular dive sites with details on what to expect, depths, average sea conditions-- I get seasick if it's rough and prefer diving where the sites are ten minutes or less by boat, or better yet accessible from the beach. Indeed, some of the other one-destination guides are more suitable for the coffee table, but they don't tell me anything about the dive resorts, the \$\$ cost. I would not consider planning a dive-vacation to the Caribbean without consulting this gem of a travel guide." -- Amazon reviewer

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