

JAMAICA

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SOUTH COAST

With a rugged coastline, rambling hills, a river cutting through jungle wetlands, and a seaport defined by elegant Georgian architecture, the area known as South Coast is intriguingly diverse. Travelers in search of privacy and solitude will enjoy isolated beaches in this area, where the only footprints are their own.

Architectural Elegance

The Georgian architecture that distinguishes the High Street in the town of Black River is elegantly charming, and the 19th-century sugar plantations around the seaport town of Savanna-La-Mar are a must-see for history buffs.

Tours and Activities

On the way to Mandeville, Bamboo Avenue is well worth a stop. Nearby, the town of Christiana is always a riot of color from lushly planted gardens set 2,750 feet (838 meters) above sea level. To the north, Quashie's River Caves in Trelawny stretch 12 miles (19 kilometers) underground with a river running through them.

Boat tours offered by Black River Safari and Irie Safari take visitors down the Black River, Jamaica's longest navigable river, to YS Falls, a 120-foot (36-meter) cascading waterfall amid 2,000 acres of pasture.

Motor launch rides along the Black River are fascinating. Wildlife flourishes in the surrounding protected wetlands, and includes lizards, frogs and crocodiles.

For those who prefer to keep their feet on terra firma the choice of activities is equally appealing. The Pickapeppa factory offers insight into the making of its

celebrated spicy sauce, shipped all over the world, and the process of making rum can be experienced at the Appleton Estate rum distillery. Coffee addicts will enjoy a tour of the High Mountain coffee factory.

For a great game of golf, the Manchester Golf Club is an ideal choice. As the oldest in the Caribbean region, this golf club offers old-world charm in a scenic setting.

A drive out of Mandeville can lead to several interesting spots. At Lover's Leap, the view from the 1,600-foot (488-meter) cliff top is breathtaking; and a guide will relate the sad story of the two star-crossed lovers whose fate inspired the name. Cashoo Ostrich Park welcomes visitors to its 100 acres of working farm. Further afield, the town of Accompong is home still to the Maroons, descendants of slaves who fled captivity during Spanish and British rule.

When Evening Falls

Sightseeing can build an appetite, and local fare is delicious along the South Coast region, with a special focus on seafood. Border is known for its escoveitched fish, and Middle Quarters for spicy peppered shrimp. The lobster at Jake's is irresistible, and a short walk along the beach can lead to a nightcap and a chat with the locals at Jack Spratt, where a roaring bonfire sets a dramatic scene beside the dark waters.

Accommodations

Along the South Coast are several charming small hotels and one or two resort properties with distinctive décor and scenic oceanside locations.

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