

JAMAICA[®]



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Summertime festivals that bring the heat

Jamaica's beloved art, music and food festivals bring a unique energy to the island during the summer months. Check out these four sizzling summertime events that are worth travelling for:

- **[Mochafest](#) (May 25-30):** Thousands of partygoers will flock to the sandy shores of Negril this May to take party in five days of free-spirited festivities. With eight thematic events on offer over the long weekend, this year's party lineup includes a retro 90's-themed throw-back, a sultry lingerie party, and a 'bare-as-you-dare' bikini booze cruise. Rapper 2Chainz and R&B superstar Mario are also slated to perform.
- **[Calabash Literary Festival](#) (May 26-28):** Hosted every two years, Jamaica's signature island-style literary festival spotlights BIPOC authors during a weekend of readings, panel discussions, film screenings and musical performances designed to foster a spirit of community among book lovers. The Calabash Literary Festival is hosted at [Jake's Hotel](#), a picturesque jumping-off point from which to explore Jamaica's rugged South Coast. This year's author lineup features dozens of literary stars from the Caribbean and beyond, including Joyce Carol Oates, Kei Miller, Jeremy Poynting, Kwame Dawes and Padma Lakshmi.
- **[Reggae Sumfest](#) (July 16-22):** First launched in 1993, the Caribbean's largest summer music festival attracts music fans from across the globe. Damian Marley, Ziggy Marley, Chris Brown, Rihanna, Kanye West, Usher, Sean Paul and Nicki

Minaj are just some of the big-name artists who have graced the Sumfest stage over the years. Reggae and dancehall performances, nightly parties, and a high-energy spirit make this iconic Montego Bay festival a can't-miss annual event.

- **[Dream Wknd](#) (July 28-August 1):** Youthful crowds descend upon the sleepy resort town of Negril each summer for a five-day VIP experience with partygoers enjoying all-inclusive food and drink throughout the four-day weekend. The festival lineup includes top international artists and DJs performing a wide variety of musical genres ranging from dancehall, pop and house to hip hop, rap and soca.

Photo credit: Reggae Sumfest / Jamaica Tourist Board

Montego Bay airport unveils infrastructure upgrades, new dining and retail

Significant expansion and modernization plans are underway at [Sangster International Airport](#) in Montego Bay this year in order to provide a more seamless arrival and departure experience for airline passengers. Infrastructure upgrades at Jamaica's leading gateway include a runway extension to accommodate larger planes, and the expansion of the Immigration Hall to increase processing capacity.

A new upgraded departure lounge at the airport features the world's first restaurant inspired by Jamaica's King of Reggae. The Bob Marley – One Love dining experience invites passengers to pull up a seat in a modern palm tree-inspired circular bar appointed with hanging guitars and wrap-around LED screens. The redesigned retail space is anchored by a new duty-free shopping area and dozens of local outlets where travellers can purchase keepsakes inspired by Jamaica's vibrant culture, food, music and spirit.

Photo Credit: Sangster International Airport



Unforgettable dining experiences on Jamaica's riverbanks

In the Land of Wood and Water, Jamaica's scenic riverbanks are a picturesque spot for adventurous diners looking to tuck into authentic Caribbean cuisine. At these outdoor eateries, traditional Jamaican dishes are prepared in woodfire ovens and atop coal stoves. Heaping plates of meat, seafood and fresh vegetable dishes are served on the riverside while the sound of rushing waters providing a soothing mealtime soundtrack.

- [**Pretty Close 876**](#): Located on the Flora River in Gordon Town, St. Andrew, this 60-seat riverside restaurant is indeed pretty close to Kingston's urban centre, but feels a world away thanks to its tranquil outdoor setting. Owner and chef Omar 'Ramo' Edwards specializes in an *ital* style of cooking, showcasing seasonal ingredients sourced from his own organic farm. The eco-conscious menu includes steamed fish, rice and peas, ackee, roasted breadfruit and plantain served in calabash bowls with bamboo utensils. After the meal, visitors can hike along the nearby trails to uncover hidden waterfalls, take a dip in the rushing waters, or simply stretch out in a hammock.
- [**Belinda's Riverside Restaurant**](#): Perched on the banks of Jamaica's Rio Grande in Port Antonio, this waterfront eatery has been in operation for decades. Owner Belinda Gray is following in her mother's footsteps, preparing homecooked meals of curried crayfish, spicy stewed pork, crispy fried chicken and other flavourful Jamaican staples. Belinda's is the perfect pit-stop during a [bamboo rafting excursion](#) on the Rio Grande, though reservations are recommended. The scenic cookshop is a favourite destination for in-the-know

visitors and VIP celebrities like Beyoncé and Johnny Depp.

- **Street Food Saturdays**: Hosted on select Saturdays each month, this riverside picnic is a true local secret. Tucked away in the hills of Mount James in St. Andrew Parish, the pop-up restaurant is helmed by Chef Walker-Barrett. Seated at picnic tables with their feet submerged underwater, patrons can sample an ever-changing seasonal menu of meat and seafood dishes like jerked shrimp, charcoal pork tenderloin and escovitch lobster tails.

Photo credit: Pretty Close 876



Major tourism development plans underway in Negril and Lucea

Jamaica's western resort towns of Negril and Lucea (the capital of Hanover parish) have been earmarked for significant investment and development in the coming years in an effort to expand the region's tourism offerings. Infrastructure improvements include landscaping work and upgrades of pathways along Norman Manley Boulevard, and a new bypass road from Hopewell and Lucea designed to ease traffic congestion and reduce travel time to Montego Bay.

The historic Fort Charlotte heritage site in Lucea will be reimagined as a maritime-themed tourism attraction, while additional investment plans include the restoration of Negril's Royal Palm Preserve, a new artisan craft market, and the construction of an international airport. Jamaica's Tourism Enhancement Fund has also announced plans for a new public-access beach park in Negril — similar to Montego Bay's Harmony

Park — that will open later on this year.

Western Jamaica will also see an influx in accommodation options in the coming years thanks to the new 2,000-room Princess Hotel in Green Island, a 950-room expansion of the Grand Palladium Resort in Lucea, and the new 1,000-room Viva Wyndham Resort, which is slated to break ground in Hanover this year.

During a recent Sectorial Presentation on investment projects, Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Hon. Edmund Bartlett announced [approximately 20,000 new rooms](#) are set to come on stream across the island over the next five to 10 years.

Photo credit: Seven Mile Beach / Jamaica Tourist Board