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Montego Bay

Photo: CO Leong/Shutterstock.com



thomas carr/Shutterstock.com

MoBay, the nickname Montego Bay goes by locally, rose to prominence once a certain Sir Herbert Barker deemed swimming in a particular spot along its coastline to have exceptional health benefits. And while the curative effects of Doctor's Cave waters remain up for debate, its striking aesthetic and promise of frolic certainly do not – MoBay remains a potent crowd-pleaser, accepting incomers on the daily, by the shipload.



Dasha Petrenko/Shutterstock.com



CO Leong/Shutterstock.com

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Colonial Rose Hall offers a glimpse of what life was like for the white elit...

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The Luminous Lagoon, just a short drive east of Montego Bay, is one of the f...



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Some 30 kilometres east of Montego Bay is the Martha Brae Rafting Village, w...



Rastafari Indigenous Village
Now here's an experience hard to come by elsewhere: the Rastafari Indigenous...

THE CITY



Dean Fikar/Shutterstock.com

To outsiders, Montego Bay presents a glitzy facade of Ironshore (the suburb containing the city's largest share of upscale resorts), expansive golfing grounds, white sand beaches and cerulean waters. There is, however, a much less glamorous side to the place, one that often escapes the touristic eye – downtown Montego Bay, with all the bustle and grit that comes along with a living city of over 100,000 residents.

Head to the Hip Strip, as Gloucester Ave is known to tourists, and you'll find MoBay's famous Margaritaville, frequented by international revelers, along with multiple souvenir shops and eateries serving up jerk meats straight off the grill, Jamaican style. Venture outside of upscale resorts and you'll have no trouble mingling with locals, who exude an enigmatic joie de vivre.

DO & SEE



Stephen VanHorn/Shutterstock.com

White sand beaches and crystal-clear waters are an excellent attraction in and of themselves, but there are plenty of excursions available to those who wish to explore the surrounding areas.

Doctor’s Cave Beach



The divine white-sand beach was once believed to be washed over by waters with strong curative properties. Today, over a century later, the possible medicinal effect has been eclipsed by its popularity with leisure vacationers, either idling in the sun or engaging in water sports (equipment available for hire).

Photo: CO Leong/Shutterstock.com
Address: Saint James Parish, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Tickets: Entry fee applies (3 or 6 Jamaican Dollars)

Montego Bay Marine Park

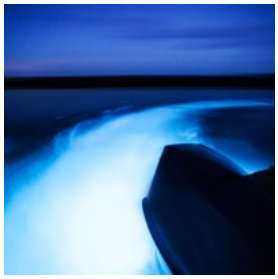


The Montego Bay Marine Park emerged as part of the effort to protect and preserve the fragile flora and fauna of the area, damaged by human activity and pollution. Guides can be hired a few days in advance, to accompany visitors on

activities like snorkelling and canoeing.

Photo: Dudarev Mikhail/Shutterstock.com
Address: Montego Bay, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 952 5619
Tickets: Visits are free of charge, but donations are welcome
Internet: www.mbmpt.org

Luminous Lagoon



The Luminous Lagoon, just a short drive east of Montego Bay, is one of the few places in the world where the so-called "glistening waters" can be observed. At night, the waters of the lagoon light up with shining cerulean lights, forged by movement of rare microorganisms inhabiting its floor. Guided tours with a stop for bathing depart from the Glistening Waters Marina.

Photo: Photo Spirit/Shutterstock.com
Address: Falmouth, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 11am-10pm
Phone: +1 876 954 3229
Internet: www.glisteningwaters.com

Martha Brae River Rafting



Some 30 kilometres east of Montego Bay is the Martha Brae Rafting Village, where one can embark on an unmissable journey along the lush banks of Martha Brae on board a bamboo raft steered by an experienced local captain. Tours may include stops for bathing, picking up refreshments from floating bars, and a visit to the Herb Garden.

Photo: Ramunas Bruzas/Shutterstock.com
Address: Martha Brae Rafting Village, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 940-6398
Internet: www.jamaicarafting.com

Rastafari Indigenous Village



Now here's an experience hard to come by elsewhere: the Rastafari Indigenous Village, just outside city limits, is a neat introduction to Jamaica's indigenous religious movement that has gained followers worldwide since its emergence in the 1930s. A guided tour is good way to learn more about Rastafarianism and its central tenants, as well as witness the daily and cultural life of its Jamaican adepts.

Photo: Jeanette Dietl/Shutterstock.com
Address: Montego River Gardens, Porto Bello, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 285 4750
Internet: www.rastavillage.com

Rose Hall



Colonial Rose Hall offers a glimpse of what life was like for the white elites of Jamaica, and one of its arguably most notorious representatives: fabled, semi-fictionalized Annie Palmer, also known as the "White Witch" for her disturbing and devious deeds. Take the day tour of the house and surrounding gardens, or the spooky evening tour.

Photo: Studio Sarah Lou/cc by 2.0/Flickr(image cropped)
Address: Rose Hall Rd, Rose Hall, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 953 2323
Internet: www.rosehall.com

RESTAURANTS



Craig F Scott/Shutterstock.com

Being a known destination for swanky resorts, Montego Bay has no shortage of restaurants, serving both elevated Jamaican fare and international specialties. The ackee plant prominently features as a dish ingredient, along with seafood offerings from local waters: saltfish (cod), snapper, and even lobster. Meat, naturally, rules them all, with the staples of chicken and pork complemented by goat and oxtail.

Houseboat Grill



Arguably the finest dining the city has to offer can be enjoyed at the floating Houseboat Grill in the Bogue Lagoon. Select a lobster of your choice from the display and have it cooked right then and there, or choose from the appetizing menu featuring a lobster & beef surf 'n' turf, pork and beef tenderloins, Jamaican smoked chicken, and more.

Photo: ralick/Shutterstock.com
Address: Alice Eldemire Dr, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 6am-11pm
Phone: +1 876 979 8845
Internet: www.thehouseboatgrill.com
Email: houseboat@cwjamaica.com

The Pelican Grill



The well-liked Hip Strip institution is the place to be for varied Jamaican, and international, specialties, with typical finds like oxtail stew and escovitch fish (fried fish) featured on the menu alongside classics like jerked meats and (seasonal) lobster.

Photo: Alphonsine Sabine/Shutterstock.com
Address: Gloucester Ave, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: 7-22.30
Phone: +1 876 952 3171
Internet: www.pelicangrillja.com
More Info: The Resort At Pelican Hill

The Sugar Mill



One of the finest dining establishments on the island prides itself on telling the story of Jamaican cuisine from shore to shore, seafood to oxtail. It is an upscale affair located on premises of the (in)famous Rose Hall. A wide selection of rum is served, including a rare 50-year aged variety (Appleton Estate).

Photo: Andrey Bayda/Shutterstock.com
Address: Spring Farm Dr, Rose Hall, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 6pm-10pm
Phone: +1 876 953 2211
Internet: www.halfmoon.com/dining/restaurant/sugar-mill

Marguerite's



It's a real treat to have yourself a seafood dinner at the splendid Marguerite's, one that a very special night calls for. Start with drinks at

sunset at the on-site bar, and continue on to the sea-front dining area, where fresh catch is served polished to perfection, cooked "creative Caribbean" style.

Photo: Wyatt k Jenkins/Shutterstock.com
Address: Gloucester Ave, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Thurs-Tues 6-10.30pm, Wed 6-10pm
Phone: +1 876 952 4777
Internet: www.margueritesjamaica.com

Nyam and Jam Sport Bar & Pool Lounge



This no-frills eatery at the edge of the Craft Market serves up delicious, uncomplicated fare, some items listed on the menu as simply "fish", with no further detailing - trust the chef (who also takes the orders while hard at work) to deliver. Food is consistently good and significantly cheaper than at some tourist hot spots.

Photo: DavidVy/Shutterstock.com
Address: 17 Harbour St, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 8am–11pm
More Info: A further 24/7 location at City Center Mall

Round Hill



Led by an award-winning head chef, Round Hill's excellent team crafts some of the island's finest dishes, inspired by regional produce sourced locally wherever possible, with an emphasis on sustainability. Pay particular attention to the daily catch, which often includes mahi-mahi, grouper, snapper, and lobster. Seating available on a breezy waterfront terrace.

Photo: vsl/Shutterstock.com
Address: John Pringle Dr, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 956 7050
Internet: www.roundhill.com/restaurant-bars-en.html

CAFES



DavidVy/Shutterstock.com

Jerked meat is ubiquitous in Montego Bay as much as the rest of Jamaica, deliciously juicy chunks of chicken and pork (and on occasion, shrimp and fish) served up at street-side stands and at "jerk centres" - casual eateries with jerked meats as their speciality. Side orders often include deep-fried bammy (flatbread), festival fritters, rice and peas.

Scotchies



The popular Scotchies is a casual affair with ample outdoor seating, an excellent pit stop for famed Jamaican jerk chicken, meat, or fish. Order the "festival" fritters to accompany the meal and go easy on the jerk sauce, which may be a little too spicty to the unprepared palate.

Photo: Craig F Scott/Shutterstock.com
Address: Coral Gardens Ave, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 11am-11pm
Phone: +1 876 953 8041

Pork Pit



This unassuming shack isn't to be overlooked - that magnetic aroma you might have sensed walking down Hip Strip is most likely coming straight from here. The choices are plain but fabulous jerked chicken, pork, or shrimp, with the typical sides of "festival", rice and peas, and a further few.

Photo: nuu_jeed/Shutterstock.com
Address: 27 Gloucester Ave, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Sun-Thurs 10am-11pm, Fri-Sat 11am-12am
Phone: +1 876 940 3008

Juici Patties



Juici Patties seem to have become a hit with both locals and visitors, and for good reason - a patty this juicy is truly hard to come by. The hot pocket types include ones with beef, chicken, lobster, and a veggie variation.

Photo: Fotokon/Shutterstock.com
Address: St James St, Montego Bay
Opening hours: Mon–Fri 7am–6pm
Phone: +1 876 979 3733
Internet: https://juicipatties.com
Email: info@juicipatties.com

Nyam and Jam Sport Bar & Pool Lounge

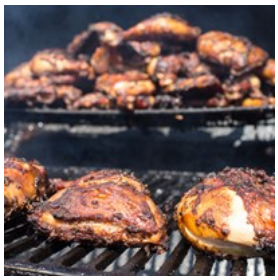


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Photo: DavidVy/Shutterstock.com
Address: 17 Harbour St, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 8am-11pm
More Info: A further 24/7 location at City Center Mall

BARS & NIGHTLIFE



nd3000/Shutterstock.com

Montego Bay's best-known nightlife destination is the Margaritaville complex (complete with a water slide leading out onto the sea and a catamaran seen as a floating extension of the bar), beloved especially by international revellers.

There are a few other spots worth checking out, such as the attractive Pier One, as well as multiple waterfront restaurants that double as bars come sundown. Look out for special event announcements around town.

Nyam and Jam Sport Bar & Pool Lounge

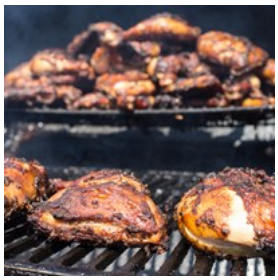

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Photo: DavidVy/Shutterstock.com
Address: 17 Harbour St, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 8am-11pm
More Info: A further 24/7 location at City Center Mall

Pier One



Pier One is Jamaica's hippest open-air seafood restaurant, bar, and entertainment centre – a favourite with visitors and locals alike. Pier One offers great Caribbean sunsets and tropical panoramic views of the bay. At night, the space is transformed into a lively dance party venue.

Photo: Nemanja Novakovic/Shutterstock.com
Address: Howard Cooke Blvd, Montego Bay
Opening hours: Mon–Fri 11am–5pm, Sat 11am–4pm, Sun 11am–6pm
Phone: +1 876 952 2452
Internet: https://pier1jamaica.com
Email: info@pier1jamaica.com

Margaritaville Montego Bay



The world's best-known lyrical escapist runs three locations of his worldwide chain in Jamaica, this particular one being the one known for its after-hour entertainment. There is an actual tube water slide leading out from the restaurant onto the ocean water, which revellers often take advantage of. At night, it's a popular dancing venue.

Photo: Rawpixel/Shutterstock.com
Address: Gloucester Ave, Montego Bay
Opening hours: Daily 11am–8pm
Phone: +1 876 952 4777
Internet: www.margaritavillecaribbean.com/montego-bay/
Email: info@margaritavillecaribbean.com

Blue Beat Ultra Lounge



This Hip Strip location's strong suit is the music: unlike elsewhere in town, tunes played here are mostly jazz and blues, with regularly held themed music nights and even comedy evenings. The set-up may appear kitschy, but do not let that deter you.

Photo: Geoff Goldswain/Shutterstock.com
Address: Gloucester Ave, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Mon-Sat 6pm-5am, Sun 6pm-12am
Phone: +1 876 952 4774

MoBay Proper Bar & Grill



Proper has a few strong suits, among which its close proximity to the Hip Strip, a very laid-back vibe, a pool table, and even dominoes, if that's more your thing. There is a decent selection of Jamaican specialties on the menu, as well as a fully stocked bar.

Photo: LightField Studios/Shutterstock.com
Address: Fort St, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 11.30am-1am
Phone: +1 876 940 1233

Sky Beach Bar and Seafood Grill



Located in Hopewell (a few minutes' drive outside of MoBay proper), Sky Beach Bar and Seafood Grill is the perfect spot for a low-key date night. The beach setting creates a romantic ambiance, and the drink menu is complemented

by a comparably extensive dining one.

Photo: nuu_jeed/Shutterstock.com
Address: Sandy Bay, Hopewell, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 12-11pm
Phone: +1 876 956 5006

SHOPPING



Ritu Manoj Jethani/Shutterstock.com

Duty free shopping is one of Montego Bay's primary attractions; deals can be had all across town, from boutiques on upscale resort grounds to shopping complexes in town, such as the reasonably priced City Centre Building (do check for hidden taxes prior to making a purchase). Jamaican art and crafts are sold throughout, and vary in quality greatly. At markets, haggling is a must.

Harbour Street Craft Market



The Harbour Street Craft Market is a collection of local vendors peddling all manner of Jamaican crafts and souvenirs, from hand-woven baskets and intricate wood carvings to borderline tacky Rastafari souvenirs and items of clothing in red, yellow, black, and green.

Photo: Nevenizam/Shutterstock.com
Address: Harbour St, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 7am-7pm

Fort Montego Craft Market



Another one of MoBay's craft markets can be found at the Old Fort. Items sold here can be hit and miss, creative originals mixing in with lower quality imports from elsewhere. Haggling is well-expected – if you happen to lay eyes on a particular piece, do not agree to a deal until the price it brought down by at least a third.

Photo: Horus2017/Shutterstock.com
Address: Old Fort, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 8am-7pm

Gallery of West Indian Art



Exhibiting a fascinating collection of Jamaican, Cuban and Haitian hand-made (and painted) originals, the Gallery of West Indian Art contains MoBay's finest pieces, whose authenticity is guaranteed. Prices are, understandably, on the higher end.

Photo: Ritu Manoj Jethani/Shutterstock.com
Address: 11 Fairfield Rd, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 952 4547
Internet: www.galleryofwestindianart.com

Half Moon Shopping Village



This collection of upscale boutiques selling quality crafts is most often visited by vacationers staying at Half Moon and other luxury resorts in the area. The showpiece here is "The Reggae Experience", entirely dedicated to the legendary Jamaican native Bob Marley. A short

documentary dedicated to him is played on loop through the day, and pieces from his own clothing line, Tuff Gong Collection, are also on sale here.

Photo: RomanStrela/Shutterstock.com
Address: Half Moon Resort, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 953 3838

City Centre Building



If going out to do some bargain duty free shopping is in your plans, start with City Centre Building, housing a collection of boutiques selling cosmetics, perfumes, jewelry, fine ceramics, and more. One shop worth dropping into for brand-name goods is Taj Mahal's.

Photo: Rawpixel/Shutterstock.com
Address: Fort St, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Daily 9.30am-10pm
Phone: +1 876 993 2616

TOURIST INFORMATION



lilyling1982/Shutterstock.com

Sangster International Airport (MBJ)



Montego Bay is served by Sangster International Airport (MBJ), located just a short drive away from town. Car rental is available at the airport, with several companies represented in the arrivals hall. There are two authorized taxi companies that serve the airport: JUTA and JCAL. To arrange a private transfer to Montego Bay or other locations across the island, contact one of the many local companies that provide the service, some of which are also represented at arrivals (transfers may be arranged then and there).

Photo: Juan Garces
Phone: +1 876 952 3124
Internet: www.mbjairport.com

Passport / Visa



Nationals of most countries do not require a visa to enter Jamaica if their planned time of stay does not exceed 3 months (6 months in many cases). This applies to citizens of the USA, all of the EU, Mexico, Japan, Israel, and countries of the Commonwealth. If you do require a visa, it can, in most cases, be obtained upon arrival, but do consult an official source in advance. To receive a visa, you will most likely need to produce proof of onward travel (tickets) and sufficient funds for the duration of the stay.

Photo: TukTuk Design/Shutterstock.com

Boat



Cruise ships dock at Montego Freeport, 3 kilometers away from Montego Bay proper. Taxis may be hired directly at the Montego Bay Cruise Ship Terminal, or hailed off the side of the road just outside the port area; a shuttle bus is also available.

Those arriving by a personal yacht or other sea vessel can get clearance at the Montego Bay entry port. Upon customs control, the quarantine flag can be lowered, and disembarking allowed. Montego Bay Yacht Club is a popular docking spot that also provides assistance with entry formalities.

Photo: Pham Thi Dieu Linh

Best Time to Visit Montego Bay



The best months to visit Jamaica are either March and April, or November through December, when temperatures are just as comfortable but visitor numbers significantly lower. Summer has come to be known as "hurricane season", and temperatures can get uncomfortably hot in July and August, which means a trip is best planed outside of the summer months.

Photo: VectorA/Shutterstock.com

Public Transport



The most reliable option for long-distance travel are the Knutsford Express Buses, which operate on a fixed schedule with daily departures to destinations across Jamaica such as Falmouth, Ocho Rios, Negril, Kingston, and more (the station in Montego Bay is next to Pier One). Tickets may be booked in advance, and should be validated prior to boarding.

The Montego Bay transportation center is located at the southern end of St James Street, just off Barnett Street; shared taxis, buses and minibuses depart from here to multiple destinations across the island. There is a special bus for the Montego Bay Metro Line, which connects the city with the suburbs.

Photo: Pierre-Luc Auclair
Internet: www.knutsfordexpress.com

Taxi



Official taxis in Jamaica run with red plates. Despite being "official" carriers, these taxis often do not have fixed rates, which means these should be negotiated and firmly agreed upon prior to departure. There are several locations across town with official taxi stands, some of which include Gloucester Ave, by the Doctor’s Cave Beach Hotel, at the bus station, and the crossing of Strand and Market Streets.

Private taxi drivers will also offer lifts, but these are advised against due to being unregulated.

Inquire about approximate fares at your estimated time of travel. Alternatively, multiple local tour companies also offer adequately priced private transfers.

JTL Jamaica Tours:

Photo: ArrivalGuides
Address: Providence Drive, Ironshore, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Phone: +1 876 953 8100
Internet: www.jamaicatoursltd.com

Pharmacy



Emergency health services are provided by the Cornwall Regional Hospital. The best pharmacy in town is Fontana:

Photo: Gemma Garner
Address: Alice Eldemire Dr, Montego Bay, Jamaica
Opening hours: Mon-Wed 9am-9pm, Thurs-Sat 9am-10pm, Sun 10am-9pm
Phone: +1 876 952 3866
Internet: www.fontanapharmacy.com

Post



There are two post offices in central Montego Bay, one in St James Street and another in Barnett Street.

Photo: Andy Fuchs
Opening hours: Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Phone: +1 876 857 9235
Internet: www.jamaicapost.gov.jm

Telephone



country code: +1 area code: 876

Photo: Jardson Almeida

Electricity



110 V, 50 Hz Most electric outlets are type "A" (flat two-pin plugs), but some are type "B" (these sockets also work for type "A" plugs)

Photo: Stirling Tschan

Time Zone

Montego Bay is located in the Eastern Standard time zone, and all times are reflected in Eastern time (EST).

Population
110,000

Currency
Jamaican dollar

Opening hours
Business hours vary, but most stores operate from around 8.30 and 9am to 4:30 and 5pm Monday through Friday, with a shortened day on Saturday.

Newspapers
Daily Star
Jamaica Gleaner
Jamaica Herald
Jamaica Observer

Emergency numbers
Ambulance & Firemen: 110
Police: 119

Tourist information
Tourism Centre
Montego Bay Convention Center
Rose Hall, St. James
Jamaica, West Indies
Tel: +1 876 952 4425
Email: information@visitjamaica.com