

# **FIVE STEPS TO PLANNING A PERFECT CARIBBEAN VACATION©**

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There are five things to consider when planning a Caribbean vacation.

1. What kind of vacation will it be? A family vacation? A romantic getaway? Adventure-oriented? A cruise or resort stay? Active or pure relaxation? Does the resort have what you want, such as nightlife, casino, first class dining options, and spa? Or would you prefer to pay less and skip these amenities?
2. How long do you want to vacation? Most people like one-week, one-destination Caribbean vacations. If you take a cruise to the Southern Caribbean, the duration will probably be 10 – 14 days.
3. What is your budget? All-inclusive resorts and cruises are the best values. Be sure to research all the options because there are different kinds of resorts, such as for honeymooners or singles or families. The same is true for cruises. They range from a three-day Bahamas cruise for \$299 to a two-week luxurious cruise that can cost a few thousand dollars. No matter what kind of vacation, you need to have a handle on what it will cost including activities, souvenirs, meals, etc. The beauty of the Caribbean is that you can do just about anything, such as scuba diving, golf, gambling, spa treatments, swimming with dolphins, exploring old forts and ancient ruins, and taking a canopy tour of a rainforest. Or you can sit on the beach or by the pool with an umbrella drink and a good book.
4. Where do you want to go? Do some research to determine what is best for your needs. The following is a list of the most popular destinations:

Antigua – Anguilla – Aruba – Bahamas – Honduras – Bermuda Belize, Costa Rica, Barbados — Grenadines – Curacao – Grand Cayman – Cancun – Cozumel- Martinique – Jamaica– Puerto Rico– Grenada – St. Vincent – Tobago – Dominican Republic – St. Martin/St. Maarten – St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands – St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands – St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands -, British Virgin Islands – St. Lucia – St. Kitts – Tobago – Turks & Caicos

\*Some islands, such as Cozumel, Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, and Cancun, will cost less than Bermuda, St. Marteen, Martinique, and Tobago.

5. When do you want to go? Keep in mind that winter is the most expensive time (mid-December – mid-April). Low or shoulder seasons mid-April to mid-December. The reason summer and fall are cheaper is because it is also hurricane season (June 1 – November 30).

## RESOURCES

For more information, visit [www.caribbeantravel.com](http://www.caribbeantravel.com),  
[www.gocaribbeanabout.com](http://www.gocaribbeanabout.com), [www.onecaribbean.org](http://www.onecaribbean.org),  
<http://gocaribbean.about.com/od/beforeyougo/u/tripplanning.htm>.

For all-inclusive resort stays, visit [www.sandals.com](http://www.sandals.com) and [www.beaches.com](http://www.beaches.com),  
<http://www.cheapcruises.com/promotion/caribbean-cruises.do>, and for best hotel  
room deals, [www.tingo.com](http://www.tingo.com)

For learn more about the islands of the Caribbean, visit  
[www.destination360.com/caribbean](http://www.destination360.com/caribbean)

Renting a villa is an affordable alternative to a pricey resort. Check out  
[www.hideaways.com](http://www.hideaways.com) and [www.wimco.com](http://www.wimco.com)

One of the most affordable ways to experience the Caribbean is on a cheap  
Caribbean cruise. Everything is included and the cost often breaks down to about  
\$30pp per day! [www.cruisesonly.com](http://www.cruisesonly.com),  
<http://www.cheapcruises.com/promotion/caribbean-cruises.do> and  
[http://www.cruisedeals.com/places/caribbean\\_cruise\\_deals.asp](http://www.cruisedeals.com/places/caribbean_cruise_deals.asp)

**Summary: Decide what kind of experience you want to have so that you can  
figure out where you want to go and where you want to stay. Do some  
research to discover the best island for you.**

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