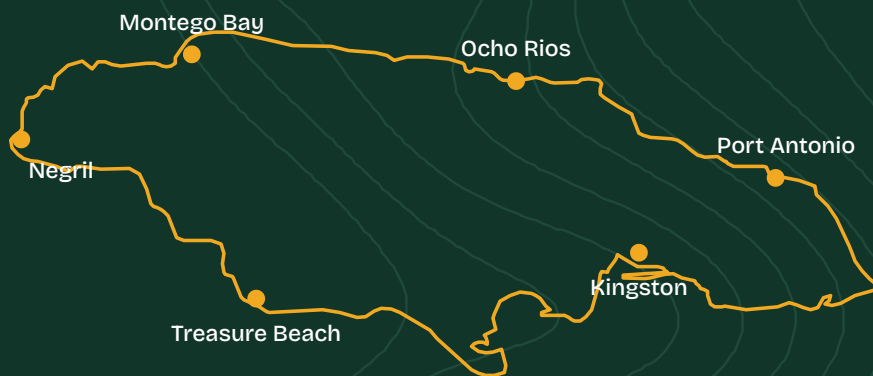


THE LOCAL'S GUIDE TO GETTING READY

The Jamaica Trip-Planning Checklist

Everything to sort before you fly,
in the order to do it.



By Michael Rainford · Born and raised in Jamaica

jamaicahotelreview.com

Hi, I'm Michael.



I was born and raised in Jamaica, and I've watched a lot of visitors make the same first-trip mistakes: the wrong coast for the trip they wanted, no plan for the airport, the wrong money in their pocket. This checklist puts everything in the order to do it, so nothing gets left to the last minute.

My trip snapshot

Travel dates

Where I'm staying

Flight out

Flight back

Arriving at (MBJ / KIN)

Transfer booked with

Travel insurance policy #

Contents

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Last week

1 · Work top to bottom

Sections run in the order you'll need them.

2 · Tick as you go

Tap the boxes on screen, or print and use a pen.

3 · Tap for more

Every section links to a full guide on the site.

YOUR COUNTDOWN



Before you book

Pick the right coast first. It matters more than picking the hotel.

Region	Best for	Feels like
Montego Bay	First-timers, short trips	Closest to the main airport; the Rose Hall resort strip
Negril	Beach days, sunsets	Seven Mile Beach by day, West End cliffs at sunset
Ocho Rios & Runaway Bay	Families, all-inclusives	Waterfalls, rivers and big resorts on the north coast
Kingston & Blue Mountains	Culture, food, music	Galleries and nightlife in town; coffee country above it
Portland	Nature, quiet	Rainforest, Reach Falls and quiet coves
South Coast	Slow travel	Little Ochie, Treasure Beach, Appleton Estate

- ☐ Choose your region using the table above
The coast matters more than the hotel.
- ☐ Decide: all-inclusive, hotel or villa, and set a nightly budget
- ☐ Check your dates against the seasons
Dry season, mid-December to mid-April, is the busiest and priciest. Atlantic hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30.
- ☐ Check your passport's expiry date now
Renewals take time. Entry rules are on page 4.
- ☐ Book flights into the airport closest to your stay
Sangster (MBJ) for the north and west; Norman Manley (KIN) for Kingston and the east.
- ☐ Compare travel insurance with cancellation and medical cover
- ☐ Read the hotel's own site for resort fees and room types
- ☒ Join the list for region guides
Done. You're reading this.

LOCAL TIP

Look at a map before you book. Negril to Kingston is a long drive, so choose one or two bases instead of trying to see the whole island from one hotel.

Notes

More on the site: jamaicahotelreview.com/where-to-stay/ • compare all six regions

Documents & entry

Get the paperwork right and the airport is easy.

- ☐ **Check your passport is valid for your whole stay**
UK government advice also asks for 2 blank pages. US and Canadian travelers: confirm on your government's Jamaica page.
- ☐ **Check whether your nationality needs a visa**
British visitors don't need one for stays of up to 90 days (GOV.UK).
- ☐ **Fill in the Immigration & Customs C5 form online before you fly**
Official form: enterjamaica.com
- ☐ **Carrying US\$10,000 or more in cash? Declare it on the C5**
- ☐ **Have your hotel's full address and phone number ready**
You'll need it for your forms.
- ☐ **Read your government's travel advice for Jamaica**
travel.state.gov · gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/jamaica · travel.gc.ca
- ☐ **Check routine and travel vaccines**
CDC Travelers' Health (US) or NHS fitfortravel (UK), Jamaica page.
- ☐ **Pack prescription medicines in their original packaging**
Bring a copy of the prescription.
- ☐ **Make copies of your passport, insurance and bookings**
The Jamaica Tourist Board suggests a second photo ID and photocopies too.

My confirmation numbers

C5 form reference

Insurance policy & 24/7 number

Notes

More on the site: jamaicahotelreview.com/jamaica-entry-requirements/ · entry requirements explained

Getting from the airport

Decide how you're getting to your hotel before you land, not in the arrivals hall.

Option	Good for	What to know
Pre-booked transfer	First-timers, late arrivals	Through your hotel or an approved operator. Hotel-assigned drivers carry photo ID and show a blue Jamaica Tourist Board sticker.
Knutsford Express	Budget travel between towns	Scheduled, air-conditioned coaches serving 20+ locations, including the international airports. Book on the official site.
Rental car	Confident drivers	Jamaica drives on the left. Check license rules with your rental company. (A UK license is valid for up to 6 months.)
Licensed taxi	Short hops	Licensed vehicles show red PPV plates and drivers carry a Transport Authority ID. Agree the fare first. Ride-hailing apps work in some areas.

- ☐ Book your transfer and save the driver or company number
- ☐ Know your airport and its code
Sangster International (MBJ), Montego Bay · Norman Manley International (KIN), Kingston.
- ☐ Driving? Remember to keep left
Jamaica drives on the left side of the road.
- ☐ Use licensed transport only, and agree the fare before you set off
- ☐ Screenshot your hotel's address and directions for offline use

LOCAL TIP

Don't plan anything big for arrival day. Between immigration, the drive and check-in, the day goes fast. Get in the pool and start fresh tomorrow.

Notes

More on the site: jamaicahotelreview.com/getting-around-jamaica/ · transfers, buses and driving

Money & phone

A little planning here saves a lot of fees.

- ☐ **Tell your bank you're traveling and check foreign transaction fees**
A no-fee card saves a little on every purchase.
- ☐ **Know the currency: the Jamaican dollar (JMD)**
When a price is quoted, ask whether it's in JMD or US dollars.
- ☐ **Use ATMs inside banks or malls**
Most ATMs in Jamaica accept international bank cards.
- ☐ **Changing cash? Compare rates at banks and licensed cambios**
Rates change daily.
- ☐ **Carry small bills for tips and small purchases**
- ☐ **Keep a backup card somewhere separate from your wallet**
- ☐ **Check your phone plan's international roaming costs**
- ☐ **Or plan a local SIM (Digicel or Flow) or a travel eSIM**
Check your phone is unlocked before you go.
- ☐ **Download offline maps for the areas you'll visit**

My money plan

Daily spending budget

Backup card kept in

Notes

More on the site: jamaicahotelreview.com/plan-your-trip/ · more planning guides

Packing for the weather

It's hot all year. What changes is the rain.

Every trip

- ☐ Reef-safe sunscreen
- ☐ Hat and sunglasses
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Light, breathable clothes
- ☐ Two swimsuits
- ☐ Water shoes
For waterfalls, rivers and rocky beaches.
- ☐ A light cover-up for restaurants
Some have dress codes in the evening.
- ☐ Reusable water bottle
- ☐ Plug check
Jamaica uses 110 volts with flat two-pin plugs. UK and EU travelers need an adapter; check your device's voltage.

Dry season mid-Dec – mid-Apr

- ☐ A light layer for breezy evenings
And for air-conditioned rooms.
- ☐ A warmer layer if heading to the Blue Mountains
It's much cooler up there.

Rainy months incl. hurricane season, Jun – Nov

- ☐ Compact rain jacket
- ☐ Quick-dry clothes
- ☐ Waterproof phone pouch
- ☐ Insurance that covers weather disruption
Hurricane season runs June 1 to November 30.

LOCAL TIP

Leave room in your bag for the trip home. Blue Mountain coffee, rum and jerk seasoning make the best gifts, and they weigh more than you think.

Notes

More on the site: jamaicahotelreview.com/jamaica-weather-month-by-month/ · weather month by month

Local know-how

A few things locals wish every visitor knew.

- ☐ **Check your resort's tipping policy**
Some all-inclusives include gratuities and some don't. Outside resorts, tip guides, drivers and servers.
- ☐ **Agree prices before tours, taxis and market purchases**
- ☐ **Greet people first: "good morning", "good afternoon"**
Greetings matter here.
- ☐ **Ask before you photograph people**
- ☐ **Cover up away from the beach and pool**
- ☐ **Beach vendors: a polite, firm "no thanks" is fine**
- ☐ **Book excursions with licensed guides and operators**
- ☐ **Water: the Jamaica Tourist Board says tap water is safe to drink**
Bottled Jamaican spring water is everywhere if you prefer it.

Words you'll hear

Wah gwaan?

What's going on? / Hi, how are you?

Irie

All good, nice, at ease

Respect

A greeting, or a thank-you

Likkle more

See you later

Soon come

On the way (don't expect "soon" to mean soon)

Nuh problem

No problem

LOCAL TIP

A simple "good morning" goes a long way. Jamaicans greet before they get down to business, and you'll get a warmer welcome if you do too.

Notes

More on the site: jamaicahotelreview.com/jamaican-food-guide/ · what to eat first

Final week & travel day

Nearly there. Run through these and you're ready.

Last week

- ☐ Reconfirm flights and your transfer
- ☐ Check in online
- ☐ Download boarding passes and your hotel confirmation
- ☐ Fill in the C5 form at enterjamaica.com if you haven't yet
- ☐ Charge your power bank
- ☐ Print this checklist

Travel day

- ☐ Passport, cards and some cash
- ☐ C5 confirmation (screenshot or print)
- ☐ A pen for any forms
- ☐ Medicines in your carry-on
- ☐ Swimsuit in your carry-on
Rooms often aren't ready until the afternoon.
- ☐ Transfer contact saved in your phone

Flight & transfer

Airline & flight #

Transfer company

Arrival time

Pickup point

Arriving at (MBJ / KIN)

Phone

Notes

More on the site: jamaicahotelreview.com/plan-your-trip/ · all planning guides

WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR MORE

Keep planning with a local.

Region guides · which coast suits your trip

Hotel guides · what to know before you book

Things to do · hours and prices, checked and dated



jamaicahotelreview.com

Useful numbers & links

Police	119
Ambulance & fire	110
Immigration & customs (C5) form	enterjamaica.com
Jamaica Tourist Board	visitjamaica.com
My embassy / high commission in Kingston	
My travel insurer's 24/7 line	

Facts checked October 2026 against GOV.UK travel advice and the Jamaica Tourist Board. Rules and prices change: always confirm with the official source before you travel.

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