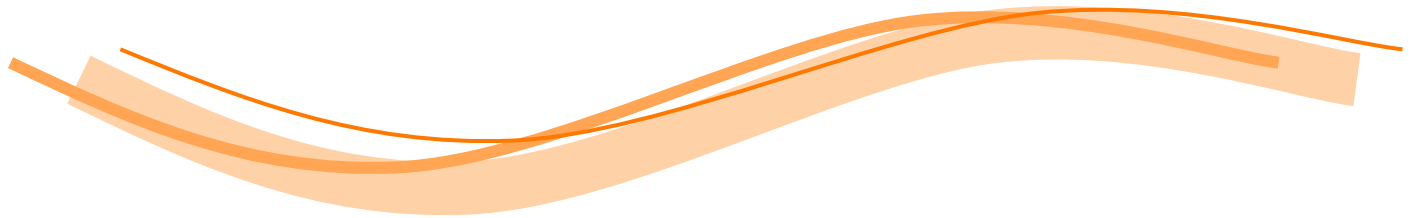




# BARBADOS





## BARBADOS

The gorgeous sun-drenched island of Barbados boasts over **one hundred kilometers of beaches** surrounding lush countryside. On the Caribbean side, turquoise waters bathe silky sand and coral reefs. While on the Atlantic coast, high waves and strong winds attract surfers from around the world.

There's so much to **see and experience** on this lively island! Brace yourself for thrills of a lifetime, accented with moments of serenity. From hot night-spots to chilling on the beach. From the oldest working windmill in the Western Hemisphere to indulging in gourmet cuisine. From visiting magnificent limestone caves to spotting exotic wildlife.....

In Barbados, **history** is everywhere - from the Concorde Museum, celebrating the famous supersonic airliner, to the George Washington House, a restored mid-18th century plantation residence.

Bajan **cuisine** brings together African, Caribbean, West Indian and European influences for a unique, authentic gastronomic experience. Sea food is the mainstay, including flying fish – the national symbol of Barbados. For a fun atmosphere of music and food, and to rub shoulders with the locals, there's the famous Oistin's fish fry every week.

### **2018 is the Year of Culinary Experiences in Barbados.**

Keeping with tourism trends and targeting the ever-growing movement of foodie travellers, Barbados will be focused on tantalizing the taste buds with the diverse assortment of unique Bajan flavours.

The calendar for the Year of Culinary Experiences aptly reflects the breadth of gastronomic fare available in Barbados. It comprises opportunities to partake of everything from the most famous ham cutters to the best seafood on island, but even beyond the food are festivals and other cultural events that one simply cannot separate from the true Bajan experience.

### **Kick off with the Barbados Sugar and Rum Season**

Officially launched last year, the Barbados Sugar and Rum Season was inspired by the time-honoured tradition of the King and Queen of the crop. From January through March, this season will provide a memorable tribute to Barbados' world-renowned indigenous spirit and its rich history built on centuries of sugar production, through a series of events steeped in Bajan history. Tours of well-known distilleries and Great Houses, mixology road shows, dinners and educational lectures, are only some of the many events to look forward to in this homage to

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Barbados' yesteryears.

### **Oistins Fish Festival**

Over the years, Oistins has become a culinary and cultural fusion of flavours enjoyed by visitors and locals alike. The annual fish festival, held over Easter weekend, will be one of the highlights of Barbados' culinary calendar. Fresh fish and other delicacies, grilled and drizzled with the unique tastes of Barbados are a must for any food-lover. Plus, this year's new and improved festival promises to bring even more zest to the open-air spectacle.

### **The Barbados Food and Rum Festival**

It's the Year of Culinary Experiences and the BTMI's signature event, the Barbados Food and Rum Festival, is the perfect anchor. Once again, they will bring together some of the best local, regional and international chef and mixology talent for a unique festival of flavour. Local foods and the island's famous spirit – rum, will be the highlight of this period of festivities, coupled with beach parties and other exciting cultural experiences that mark the annual festival.

### **Authentic eats**

At the heart of the Year of Culinary Experiences is highlighting the delectable gems found in this gastronomical wonderland. Traditional dishes such as flying fish and cou cou, roasted breadfruit bowls and Saturday morning pudding and souse will all be on display. Internationally acclaimed local eateries such as Cuz's Fish Shack on Pebbles Beach are the authentic Bajan experiences everyone comes to enjoy that inspired the Year of Culinary Experiences.

### **Dine around**

In addition to the matchless authentic eats found across the island, what makes Barbados' culinary landscape so special is the diversity of gastronomic fare found in its 166 square miles. From the West Coast to the South Coast, from Italian to American, there is something for every palate. To help diners manoeuvre the vast terrain, the re-DISCOVER programme offers attractive specials at participating restaurants throughout the year.

### **New dining experiences**

What does an island with numerous savoury dining experiences love? More. New additions to the culinary landscape are widely celebrated, and of note are two new restaurants, both located in the quaint historic village of Speightstown. Hugo's Barbados opened its doors in late 2017. The contemporary turquoise-themed, beach inspired restaurant offers

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	<p>spectacular views and international cuisine. Not far away, The Top Deck by acclaimed local chef Jason Howard, is scheduled to open on Valentine's night. Overlooking the calm West Coast waters, The Top Deck promises fresh, authentic Caribbean cuisine, featuring the best in local produce.</p> <p><b>Eat of the best</b> It goes without saying that an island abundant in illustrious watering holes would be brimming with talented culinary artists. Barbadian chefs and mixologists such as Dameain Williams, Jamaal Bowen, Willis Griffith and Damian Leach have travelled around the world, amassing awards and accolades for their flair and finesse in the kitchen or behind the bar. Several of these artisans will be featured at the Barbados Food and Rum Festival, and the Art of Cuisine, but can also be found plying their trade at establishments across the island.</p> <p><b>Beach and Wellness Festival</b> Under the umbrella of the foodie movement, the BTMI will also cater to those health food enthusiasts with the second installation of the Barbados Beach and Wellness Festival. After a successful inaugural festival in 2017, this year's event will be even bigger and more diverse. The food stalls will feature a variety of authentic and interesting delicacies perfect for those discerning foodies.</p>
<b>Location</b>	Barbados is in the Southeastern Caribbean and is the most easterly of all the Caribbean islands.
<b>Geography</b>	This island is 34 kms long and 22kms wide. It is divided into 11 parishes and is quite flat, the highest point being Mount Hillaby at 1,116 ft above sea level.
<b>Name</b>	From "los barbudos" – Portuguese for "the bearded ones", referring to Banyan tree shoots
<b>Population</b>	Almost 300,000, which makes Barbados one of the most densely populated countries in the world.
<b>Language</b>	English – with a Bajan accent!
<b>Currency</b>	Canadian Dollar = 1.58 Barbados Dollar (at March 2018) You can also use Canadian Dollars in many places on the island
<b>Tipping</b>	Usually 10%–15% is acceptable when tipping—many restaurants automatically add a 110% service charge to your bill, so you'd be wise to check before tipping additionally
<b>Government</b>	Parliamentary democracy
<b>Documentation</b>	<b>Canadians need a valid passport to visit.</b>
<b>Time zone</b>	One hour ahead of EST
<b>Health</b>	Barbados has a pure water supply. It's pumped from underground sources in the coral rock that covers most of the island, and it's safe to drink

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<b>Safety tips</b>	Barbados is still a relatively safe destination. The difference between the haves and the have-nots doesn't result in the violence seen elsewhere. Bajans have a long history of welcoming foreign visitors, and that tradition of hospitality is still ingrained in most locals.
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<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	With over 3000 hours of sunshine yearly, the weather is almost always sunny and warm, cooled by the constant north-east trade winds. The average daytime temperature ranges between 29-31 degrees Celsius. <b>Hurricanes</b> – over 50 years since last direct hit: 1831, 1898, 1955; 12 hurricanes since 1625...so 1 in 12,000 chance! Cooling trade wind breezes are a bonus!
<b>Today's weather</b>	28 degrees Centigrade and sun & showers (3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2018)
<b>Best time to visit</b>	The weather is fine all year long, but Festival time is wonderful!

<b>GETTING AROUND</b>	
<b>Flying time</b>	<b>Flight time:</b> 6 hours There's a <b>departure tax</b> of BD\$55 or US\$27.50, payable in either U.S. dollars or Barbadian currency for all guests aged 2 or more. (March 2018)
<b>Towns</b>	<b>Bridgetown</b> Bridgetown, the capital, is celebrating over 380 years of English Settlement. Begin your tour of Bridgetown at the waterfront, called the <b>Carenage</b> (French for "turning vessels on their side for cleaning"). This was a haven for clipper ships, and even though today it doesn't have the colour of yesteryear, it's still worth exploring. At <b>Trafalgar Square (now called Heroes Square)</b> , the long tradition of British colonization is immortalized. The monument here, honoring Lord Nelson, was executed by Sir Richard Westmacott and erected in 1813. The great gray Victorian/Gothic Public Buildings on the square look like ones you might find in London. The east wing contains the meeting halls of the Senate and the House of Assembly, with some stained-glass windows representing the sovereigns of England. Look for the "Great Protector" himself, Oliver Cromwell. Behind the Financial Building, <b>St. Michael's Cathedral</b> , is the symbol of the Church of England. This Anglican church was built in 1655 but was completely destroyed in a 1780 hurricane. Reconstructed in 1789, it was again damaged by a hurricane in 1831. George Washington supposedly worshipped here on his visit to Barbados. <b>The Synagogue</b> , Synagogue Lane, is one of the oldest synagogues in the Western Hemisphere and is surrounded by a burial ground of early Jewish settlers. The present building dates from 1833. It was constructed on the site of an even older synagogue, erected by Jews from Brazil in 1654. It's now part of the National Trust of Barbados - and a synagogue

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once again. It's open Monday to Friday from 8am to 4:30pm; a donation is requested for admission.

### **Oistins Town**

Oistins Town was formerly known as Austen's town. It was here that the Charter of Barbados was signed on 11th January, 1652 at "ye Mermaid Tavern". This treaty brought to an end, twenty-five years of squabbling between the Barbadian Royalists who were loyal to the English Crown and the Protectorates, who supported the Puritan, Oliver Cromwell. The charter, known as the Treaty of Austen's, became the model after which the Declaration of Independence was later framed. Imbedded in the USA's 1776 document are several articles of the Oistins Document. Oistins now is a fishing town and is known for its excellent outdoor nightly Fish-Fry and local cuisine. It is an attractive and inexpensive place to meet and mix with local people, their food and their music.

### **Holetown**

Holetown reserves its charming ambience, evident from the first footfall by an English mariner, Henry Powell, in 1625 when he was blown off course to Barbados. Powell came back shortly afterwards to settle - the first English Settlement in Barbados at Holetown, where the first Royal Standard was raised, the first five plantations established, and the first gun-powder fortifications erected. The remains of the placements of most of these artifacts are known and visible, and several of the old infrastructure - though not the original - still exists in the quaint town which is bordered on either side, north and south, by world rated golf courses. Holetown has now become the hospitality centre of Barbados, with several of its major hotels and restaurants and golf courses either in or near the old town. Pay it a leisurely visit and see its old historic church, the oldest in the island, the old Militia Fort, now the Police Station, and other places of interest.

### **Speightstown**

Speightstown, the northern commercial centre, took its name from an English Family which owned property in the area. It is also known as "Little Bristol" because several of the old sailing ships traded - since 1630 - directly with the English port, Bristol where resides a museum and artefacts of Barbadian and African trade and Slavery. Old Speightstown is no longer an important international trading centre but the old streets retain a certain old-world charm with a very old Parish Church, a Barbadian Single House, Arlington which has been tastefully restored, and parts of at least two old Forts. In spite of the newer by-pass road, it remains a bustling shopping centre with vendors vying for space with the more established business houses, and fish market and pub rubbing

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	shoulders on a most gorgeous beach.
<b>Distances</b>	Everywhere is close by on this island, which only measures 34 by 22 kms and you are almost always within sight of the sea.
<b>Cruises</b>	Catamaran lunch cruises are offered by Tall Ships (tel. 246/430-0900), located at Shallow Draught near Bridgetown Harbour. The 4-hour-long catamaran lunch cruises are offered daily from 10am. Part cruise ship, part nightclub, the MV Harbour Master Blockbuster is a 30m, three-story vessel with theme decks, a modern galley, and two bars. It boasts a dance floor, and also offers formal buffets on its Calypso Deck. On the Harbour Master Deck, there's a bank of TVs for sports buffs. The showpiece of the vessel is an onboard semisubmersible, which is lowered hydraulically to 2m beneath the ship. This is, in effect, a "boat in a boat," with 30 seats.
<b>Car Rental</b>	If you don't mind driving on the left, you may find a rental car ideal on Barbados. You'll need a temporary permit if you don't have an international driver's license. The rental agencies listed below can all issue this visitor's permit, or you can go to the police desk upon your arrival at the airport. You must have a license from home and pay a registration fee of BD\$10. None of the major Canadian and US-based car-rental agencies operates on Barbados, but a host of local companies rent vehicles. Except in the peak midwinter season, cars are usually readily available without prior reservations
<b>Buses</b>	Transit services are provided by the government-run Transport Board and private owners who operate route taxis (ZR's) and minibuses. Fare to any part of the island is \$2 (Barbados dollars) per ride. (2018)
<b>Taxis</b>	Taxis aren't metered, but rates are fixed by the government; one cab can carry up to four passengers for the same fare. Taxis are plentiful and easily identifiable by the letter Z on their license plates. Drivers will produce a list of standard rates based on \$25-\$30 per hour

<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	Barbados caters for all tastes and budgets from luxury hotels and all-inclusive resorts to rooms in small hotels and self-catering apartments. One of the defining attractions here is that there are many non all-inclusive options for those who want to spend more time exploring the island and eating out.
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<b>LIFESTYLES</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	Beaches, kid's clubs in the resorts, snorkeling, glass-bottom boat tours, swimming with the turtles...there's no end to the fun for kids in Barbados.
<b>Teens</b>	Submarine, caves, sports, jeep safari, diving, parasailing, mountain biking trips, horseback riding, helicopter tours...just to mention a few!
<b>Romance</b>	Featured in National Geographic Traveller Magazine as the headliner romantic getaway destination in the most romantic region in the world –

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	the Caribbean
<b>Honeymoons &amp; Weddings</b>	Weddings in Barbados are easy to arrange. There are no residence requirements and the ceremony can be performed within 24 hours of arrival. Non-residents pay a licence fee to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The actual marriage ceremony can be performed by a minister of religion or a magistrate of the courts.
<b>Zoomers</b>	This island has long been favoured by Zoomers as a favourite Caribbean isle. There are long-stay opportunities in high quality apartments to escape the drudgeries of a Canadian winter.

<b>UNIQUES</b>	<p><b>Submerged Sightseeing</b>          You no longer have to be an experienced diver to see what lives 45m below the surface of the sea; you can simply sail aboard one of the vessels operated by <b>Atlantis Submarines</b>, Shallow Draught, Bridgetown <a href="http://barbados.atlantissubmarines.com">http://barbados.atlantissubmarines.com</a> The air-conditioned sightseeing submarines seat 28 to 48 passengers and make several dives daily from 9am to 1pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and 9am to 4pm on Wednesday. Passengers are transported aboard a ferryboat from the Carenage in downtown Bridgetown to the submarine site, about 2km from the west coast of Barbados. The ride offers a view of the west coast of the island. The submarine, Atlantic III, features viewing ports that allow you to see a rainbow of colors, tropical fish, plants, and even a shipwreck that lies upright and intact below the surface.</p>
<b>Surprising</b>	<p><b>The “Seven Wonders of Barbados” are:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Harrison’s Cave</b> – electric wagons – streams, waterfalls, pools, stalagmites – get married down there!</li> <li>2. <b>The Baobab Tree</b> – brought from Africa 1700’s – 50 feet around</li> <li>3. <b>Historic Jacobean Mansions</b> – 1650’s – Drax Hall, St George – St Nicholas Abbey, St Peter</li> <li>4. <b>Morgan Lewis Mill</b> – one of only two intact sugar mills in Caribbean</li> <li>5. <b>Jewish Synagogue</b> – built 1654 in Bridgetown – Barbados National Trust</li> <li>6. <b>Cannons Galore</b> – 400 17<sup>th</sup> century English iron cannons, Main Guard House, Garrison Savannah</li> <li>7. <b>Grapefruit tree</b> – citrus paradise – 18<sup>th</sup> century cross shaddock &amp; sweet orange</li> </ol>
<b>History</b>	<p>It is believed that the island’s first inhabitants were the Amerindians, who reached its shores around 1623 BC by open canoe from the Orinoco area of South America, known today as Venezuela. The next 3,000 years brought the settlement of several tribes, including the peaceful <b>Arawaks</b> and the cannibalistic <b>Caribs</b>. At the whim of prevailing northeast trade winds, the Spanish and Portuguese followed in 1537, calling the island “Los Barbados”— perhaps a nod to their fascination with the hanging,</p>

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	<p>aerial roots of the Bearded Fig Tree.</p> <p>By the time the <b>first settlers</b>—the British—chanced upon the island by virtue of navigational miscalculations in 1627, the Indians had all but disappeared. For the English, Barbados represented a golden opportunity to acquire a colony with good potential for agriculture: favorable climate, rich soils and generally flat land. These early pioneers set about the task of cultivating the land and instigated a long period of English rule that was to last some 339 years.</p> <p>The booming <b>sugar industry</b> and slave trade fueled the establishment of an excellent infrastructure and Barbados' own Parliament in 1639, making it the third oldest in the British Commonwealth. Later becoming the first country to abolish the slave trade in 1834, Bajan social advancement also included the establishment of a free Public Library in 1847.</p> <p>Following the 1930s world depression that hit Barbados hard with unemployment, a new group of highly educated black leaders were determined to win equality for their people. They formed the Barbados Labour Party (B.L.P.) and finally gained their just reward when they won the 1947 General Election. Three years later, universal suffrage was at last a reality and the long and hard fight had been won after a battle of some 117 years.</p> <p>Barbados gained <b>independence</b> from Britain on the 30th November 1966 and has since enjoyed over 50 years as a proudly independent nation.</p> <p>It is the only island in the Caribbean never to have changed hands during the bitter British/European battles for colonies</p>
<b>Books</b>	<p>Lonely Planet's "Discover Caribbean Islands" is my go-to guide. This full-colour guide showcases the very best of the Caribbean Islands, with a plethora of itineraries and tips.</p> <p><a href="http://www.lonelyplanet.com">www.lonelyplanet.com</a></p>
<b>1000 Places to see before you die</b>	<p>Sandy Lane Hotel – luxury in paradise!</p> <p><a href="http://www.sandylane.com">http://www.sandylane.com</a></p>
<b>Must Sees</b>	<p><b>The Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison, Barbados</b>, has been included as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Bridgetown and its Garrison are considered 'an outstanding example of British colonial architecture.</p> <p>Here is how UNESCO describes its importance:</p> <p>As one of the earliest established towns with a fortified port in the Caribbean network of military and maritime-mercantile outposts of the British Atlantic, Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison was the focus of trade-based English expansion in the Americas.</p> <p>By the 17th century, the fortified port town was able to establish its importance in the British Atlantic trade and became an entrepôt for goods, especially sugar, and enslaved persons destined for Barbados</p>

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	<p>and the rest of the Americas.</p> <p>Historic Bridgetown's irregular settlement patterns and 17th Century street layout of an English medieval type, in particular the organic serpentine streets, supported the development and transformation of creolized forms of architecture, including Caribbean Georgian.</p> <p>Historic Bridgetown's fortified port spaces were linked along the Bay Street corridor from the historic town's centre to St. Ann's Garrison. The property's natural harbour, Carlisle Bay, was the first port of call on the trans-Atlantic crossing and was perfectly positioned as the launching point for the projection of British imperial power, to defend and expand Britain's trade interests in the region and the Atlantic World. Used as a base for amphibious command and control, the garrison housed the Eastern Caribbean headquarters of the British Army and Navy.</p> <p>Historic Bridgetown and its Garrison participated not only in the international trade of goods and enslaved persons but also in the transmission of ideas and cultures that characterized the developing colonial enterprise in the Atlantic World.</p>
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<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	Cricket, squash, polo, horse racing, field hockey, soccer, golf... Barbados is a nation of sports people.
<b>Golf</b>	<p>The Tom Fazio 18-hole championship golf course of <b>Sandy Lane Hotel</b>, St. James (tel. 246/444-2000), on the west coast, is open to all.</p> <p><b>The Royal Westmoreland Golf and Country Club</b>, Westmoreland, St. James (tel. 246/422-4653), is the island's premier golf course. Designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., this 18-hole course is spread across 200 hectares (494 acres) overlooking the Gold Coast. It is part of a private residential community, but it's open for use by any nonmember.</p> <p><b>Barbados Golf Club</b>, Durants, Christ Church (tel. 246/428-8463; fax 256/420-8205; <a href="http://www.barbadosgolfclub.com">www.barbadosgolfclub.com</a>), on the south coast, opened as Barbados's first public championship golf course in 2000. The 6,800-yard, par-72 course, designed by Ron Kirby has hosted the PGA Seniors Tournament.</p>
<b>Fishing</b>	Charter companies offer deep-sea fishing excursions to capture prized catches from barracuda to kingfish; and Barbados Game Fishing's annual competition attracts regional boats and anglers from Europe, U.K., Canada, North & South America.
<b>Horse riding</b>	A different view of Barbados is provided by <b>Caribbean International Riding Centre</b> , St. Andrew, Sarely Hill (tel. 246/422-7433). With nearly 40 horses, it offers a variety of trail rides for all levels of experience, ranging from a 1 1/2-hour jaunt to a 2 1/2-hour trek. You'll ride through

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	<p>the hilly terrain of the Scotland district; along the way, you can see wild ducks and water lilies, with the rhythm of the Atlantic as background music.</p> <p>There is also horseracing at the Garrison Savannah racecourse with the big event being the Cockspur Gold Cup held in March each year.</p>
<p><b>Hiking</b></p>	<p><b>The Barbados National Trust</b> (tel. 246/426-2421) offers popular Sunday-morning hikes throughout the year. Led by young Bajans and members of the National Trust, the hikes cover a different area of the island each week. The guides give brief talks on subjects such as geography, history, geology, and agriculture. The hikes, free and open to participants of all ages, are divided into fast, medium, and slow categories, with groups of no more than 10. Hikes leave promptly at 6am, and take about 3 hours to complete. There are also hikes at 3:30 and 5:30pm, the latter conducted only on moonlit nights. For more information, contact the Barbados National Trust.</p> <p>In 1998, Barbados created a trail that explores the natural history and heritage of Speightstown, once a major sugar port and even today a fishing town with old houses and a bustling waterfront. The <b>Arbib Nature &amp; Heritage Trail</b> takes you through town, the mysterious gully known as "the Whim," and the surrounding districts. The first marked trail is a 8km trek which begins outside St. Peter's Church in Speightstown, traverses the Whim, crosses one of the last working plantations in Barbados (Warleight), and leads to historic 18th-century Dover Fort, following along white-sand beaches at Heywoods before ending up back in town. For information and reservations, call the Barbados National Trust, and ask for a trail map at the tourist office.</p> <p>The rugged, dramatic east coast stretches about 26km from the lighthouse at Ragged Point, the easternmost point of Barbados, north along the Atlantic coast to Bathsheba and Pico Teneriffe. This is the island's most panoramic hiking area. Some hardy souls do the entire coast; if your time is limited, try our favorite walk, the 6km stretch from Ragged Point to Consett Bay, along a rough, stony trail that requires only moderate endurance. Allow at least 2 1/2 hours. A small picnic facility just north of Bathsheba is a popular spot for Bajan families, especially on Sundays.</p>
<p><b>Run Barbados</b></p>	<p>The <b>Run Barbados</b> Series takes place on the first Sunday in December and includes a full marathon, half-marathon, 10k run, 5k run and toddlers' walk. It is a weekend-long sporting event accredited by the International Association of Marathons and is surrounded by much entertainment and festivities.</p> <p><b>This year Run Barbados is 7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2018</b></p> <p>Determination and self-discipline are strong qualities in the long</p>

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	<p>distance runner, but you'll also find support, courage and compassion here as the runners who have finished their race line the track to hand out refreshments and shout encouragement. The running community is full of good will and the love of life. Many of the runners participate as part of a club and spirit and camaraderie are high at all of the events. The professional runners are motivated by their standings in the field, but fun and entertainment are a big part of the festivities as well. Steelpan bands amuse the crowd at the finish line. Later in the day, people are often charmed by DJ XRAY, a longtime racing participant who only takes to the stage after his own event has been run. As the slogan of the event declares—"Come For The Run, Stay For The Fun!" <a href="http://www.runbarbados.org">http://www.runbarbados.org</a></p> <p><b>I have run the Barbados Marathon on two occasions; here is my blog:</b> <a href="http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2008/01/barbados.html">http://christalkstravel.blogspot.com/2008/01/barbados.html</a></p>
<p><b>Diving</b></p>	<p>The clear waters off Barbados have a visibility of more than 30m most of the year. More than 50 varieties of fish are found on the shallow inside reefs, and there's an unusually high concentration of hawksbill turtles. On night dives, you can spot sleeping fish, night anemones, lobsters, moray eels, and octopuses. Diving is concentrated on the leeward west and south coasts, where hard corals grow thick along the crest of the reef, and orange elephant ear, barrel sponge, and rope sponge cascade down the drop-off of the outer reef.</p> <p>On a 2km-long coral reef 2 minutes by boat from <b>Sandy Beach</b>, sea fans, corals, gorgonians, and reef fish are plentiful. J.R., a dredge barge sunk as an artificial reef in 1983, is popular with beginners for its coral, fish life, and 6m depth. The Berwyn, a coral-encrusted tugboat that sank in Carlisle Bay in 1916, attracts photographers for its variety of reef fish, shallow depth, good light, and visibility.</p> <p><b>Asta Reef</b>, with a drop of 24m, has coral, sea fans, and reef fish in abundance. It's the site of a Barbados wreck that was sunk in 1986 as an artificial reef. Dottins, the most beautiful reef on the west coast, stretches 8km from Holetown to Bridgetown and has numerous dive sites at an average depth of 12m and drop-offs of 30m. The <b>SS Stavronikita</b>, a Greek freighter, is a popular site for advanced divers. Crippled by fire in 1976, the 108m freighter was sunk .4km off the west coast to become an artificial reef in Folkestone Underwater Park, north of Holetown. The mast is at 12m, the deck at 24m, and the keel at 36m. While you explore the site, you might spot barracuda, moray eels, and a vibrant coat of bright yellow tube sponge, delicate pink rope sponge, and crimson encrusting sponge. The park has an underwater snorkel</p>

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	<p>trail, plus glass-bottom boat rides, making it a family favorite.</p> <p><b>The Dive Shop</b>, Pebbles Beach, Aquatic Gap, St. Michael (tel. 246/426-9947), offers some of the best scuba diving on Barbados. Every day, three dive trips go out to the nearby reefs and wrecks; snorkeling trips and equipment rentals are also available. Visitors with reasonable swimming skills who have never dived before can sign up for a resort course. These include pool training, safety instructions, and a one-tank open-water dive. The establishment is NAUI- and PADI-certified, and is open Sunday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm. Other dive shops in Barbados that rent or sell snorkeling equipment include Hazel's Water World, Bridgetown, St. Michael (tel. 246/426-4043), and Explore Sub, Christ Church, near Bridgetown.</p> <p>Several companies also operate snorkeling cruises that take you to particularly picturesque areas.</p>
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<b>CULTURE</b>	
<b>Arts</b>	<p><b>The Barbados Arts Council</b> was created by the government to serve a national role by preserving, collecting, exhibiting, and fostering the understanding of works of art, at the highest possible cultural, educational and scholarly standards. Fine art is also available with large selection of limited editions, lithographs, and cards.</p> <p>#20 Pelican Craft Centre, Harbour Road, Bridgetown, St. Michael  <a href="http://www.thebarbadosartscouncil.com/">http://www.thebarbadosartscouncil.com/</a></p>
<b>Music</b>	<p>To get a flavour of local music try <b>The Ship Inn</b>, St. Lawrence Gap, Christ Church, near Oistins (tel. 246/435-6961), which is among the leading drinking, dining, and entertainment centres on the south coast. The pub is the hot spot: Top local bands perform three nights a week, offering reggae, calypso, and pop music. Otherwise, there's a live DJ. The entrance fee ranges from free (if you're eating dinner) to between \$5 and \$10.</p>
<b>Museums</b>	<p><b>Barbados Museum</b>, St. Ann's Garrison, St. Michael (tel. 246/427-0201), is in a former military prison. Extensive collections show the island's development from prehistoric to modern times and give fascinating glimpses into the natural environment and fine examples of West Indian maps. The museum sells a variety of quality publications, reproductions, and handicrafts.</p>
<b>Festivals</b>	<p><b>FEBRUARY: The Hometown Festival</b></p> <p>A family attraction commemorating the first landing and settlement in Barbados on February 17, 1627, the Hometown Festival combines folk, gospel and medieval music with a street parade and fair and a torch-lit evening exhibition by the Royal and Mounted Police forces as they perform the floodlit Tattoo. Other activities include poetry, drama,</p>

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	<p>sidewalk art shows, sports, games, local handicrafts markets and the popular Queen of the Festival Pageant.</p> <p><b>MARCH: Holders Season</b>          This most sophisticated festival offers an exciting season of opera, classical, jazz, Latin and Caribbean music and takes place at the historic Holders Plantation House, situated on a ridge overlooking what were once extensive sugar and tobacco fields. The event, which is internationally recognized and has attracted such musical luminaries as Luciano Pavarotti, is currently focused on the development and exhibition of local talent.</p> <p><b>APRIL: Oistins Fish Festival</b>          A two-day event, the Oistins Fish Festival celebrates the livelihood of the namesake fishing village, paying tribute to the skills of local fisherman and challenging them with competitions in fishing, crab racing, fish boning and boat racing. Dance to steel bands or mingle on the beach or in the marketplace and rum shops that line the roadside. Food stalls, arts and crafts and demonstrations by the Coast Guard are also part of the activities.</p> <p><b>Crop Over Festival:</b> a five-week summer festival is Barbados' most popular and colourful festival. Its origins can be traced back to the 1780's a time when Barbados was the world's largest producer of sugar. At the end of the sugar season, there was always a huge celebration to mark the culmination of another successful sugar cane harvest – folk festival, calypso, carnivals, Cohoblotpot carnival like show, Kiddies Kadooment costumes and parade</p>
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<p><b>ATTRACTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>Nine Premier Attractions of Barbados:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Atlantis Submarines</b> -19.5m sub diving to 45m; Atlantis SeaTrek – reef observation, wrecks, reef</li> <li>2. <b>Bajan Roots and Rhythms</b> – premier cultural show including steel bands</li> <li>3. <b>Barbados Golf Club</b> - The 6,805 yard par 72 golf course has been approved and sanctioned by the PGA European Tour to host a PGA Seniors Tournament and has hosted the Barbados Open.</li> <li>4. <b>The Harbour Master</b> –‘the best cruise in the Caribbean’, semi-submersible, slides, rope swinging, snorkel</li> <li>5. <b>Harrison’s Cave</b> - visitor centre, tram tour, waterfalls, stalagmites, streams...</li> <li>6. <b>Island Safari</b> - 4x4 Land Rovers – adventure and exploration – Edge Cliff, Bathsheba, Joe’s River Forest, canefields, great for kids, great driver/guides – some feature kayaking, snorkelling, catamarans,</li> </ol>
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	<p>swimming;</p> <p>7. <b>Jolly Roger</b> - authentic pirate themed wooden schooner is ideal for a family outing or a group party. Known for their rum punch, rope swinging and walking the plank</p> <p>8. <b>Mount Gay Rum Tour</b> – 45 minutes tour, one of world's oldest rum distilleries</p> <p>9. <b>Tiami Cruises</b> - luxury "Cats" skim you comfortably over the Caribbean sea with the wind in your face and a drink in your hand. Swim with friendly sea turtles, savour the tempting buffet</p>
<p><b>Beaches</b></p>	<p><b>This is what vacationers come to Barbados for: its incredible variety of beaches!</b></p> <p>The island's beaches are all open to the public - even those in front of the big resort hotels and private homes - and the government requires that there be access to all beaches, via roads along the property line or through hotel entrances. The beaches on the west coast, the Gold Coast, are the most popular.</p> <p><b>On the West Coast</b> - The waters are calm here. Major beaches include Paynes Bay, which is accessed from the Coach House, south of Holetown, and has a parking area. This is a good choice for watersports, especially snorkeling. The beach can get rather crowded, but the beautiful bay is worth the effort. Directly south of Payne's Bay, at Fresh Water Bay, are three of the best west-coast beaches: Brighton Beach, Brandon's Beach, and Paradise Beach.</p> <p>Also recommended is <b>Mullins Beach</b>, where the glassy-blue waters attract snorkelers. There's parking on the main road and some shady areas. At the <b>Mullins Beach Bar</b>, you can order that rum drink you've been craving. This was my first experience of a Caribbean beach bar and it remains a personal favourite.</p> <p><b>On the South Coast</b> - Casuarina Beach is accessed from Maxwell Coast Road, going across the property of the Casuarina Beach Hotel. This is one of Barbados' wider beaches, and it's cooled by trade winds even on the hottest August days. Windsurfers are especially fond of this one. Food and drinks can be ordered at the hotel.</p> <p>Silver Sands Beach, to the east of Oistins, is near the southernmost point of Barbados, directly east of South Point Lighthouse and near the Silver Rock Hotel. This white-sand beach is a favorite with many Bajans (who probably want to keep it a secret from tourists as much as possible). The Silver Rock Bar sells drinks.</p> <p>Sandy Beach, accessible via the parking lot on the Worthing main road,</p>

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	<p>has tranquil waters opening onto a lagoon. It's a family favourite, and especially boisterous on weekends. Food and drinks are available.</p> <p><b>On the Southeast Coast</b> - The southeast coast is the site of big waves, especially at Crane Beach, the white-sand strip set against a backdrop of palms that you've probably seen in travel magazines. The beach is spectacular, and Prince Andrew, who has a house overlooking it, might agree. It offers excellent bodysurfing, but at times the waters may be too rough for all but the strongest swimmers; take appropriate precautions. The beach is set against cliffs, and Crane Beach Hotel towers above. Bottom Bay, north of Sam Lord's Castle Resort, is a real Bajan favourite. Park on the top of a cliff, then walk down the steps to this much-photographed tropical beach with its grove of coconut palms; there's even a cave. The sand is brilliantly white against the aquamarine sea, a picture-postcard perfect beach paradise.</p> <p><b>On the East (Atlantic) Coast</b> - The miles and miles of un-crowded beaches on the rougher Atlantic side are ideal for strolling, but swimming can be dangerous. Waves are extremely high, and the bottom tends to be rocky. The currents are also unpredictable. Many travellers enjoy the rugged grandeur of these beaches, especially those in the Bathsheba/Cattlewash areas.</p>
<p><b>Wildlife</b></p>	<p><b>Turtles</b> are nesting and hatching on some beaches in April to December, including hawksbill and leatherbacks. I have swum amidst the turtles in December and it was a magical experience! You can sometimes see <b>monkeys</b> playing in the trees along the west coast woods.</p>
<p><b>Plantations</b></p>	<p>A fine family home, the <b>Francia Plantation</b> stands on a wooded hillside overlooking the St. George Valley and is still owned and occupied by descendants of the original owner. Built in 1913, the house blends West Indian and European architectural influences. You can explore several rooms, including the dining room with its family silver and an 18th-century James McCabe bracket clock. On the walls are antique maps and prints, including a map of the West Indies printed in 1522.</p>
<p><b>Gardens</b></p>	<p><b>Andromeda Botanic Gardens:</b> On a cliff overlooking the town of Bathsheba on the rugged east coast, limestone boulders make for a natural 3-hectare (7 1/2-acre) rock-garden setting. Thousands of orchids, hundreds of hibiscuses and heliconia, and many varieties of ferns, begonias, palms, and other species grow here in splendid profusion. You'll occasionally see toads, frogs, herons, lizards, hummingbirds, and sometimes a mongoose or a monkey.</p> <p><b>Flower Forest:</b> This former sugar plantation stands 255m above sea level near the western edge of the Scotland district, 2km from Harrison's Cave. Set in one of the most scenic parts of Barbados, it's more than</p>

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	<p>just a botanical garden; it's where people and nature unite to create something beautiful. After viewing the grounds, visitors can purchase handicrafts at Best of Barbados</p> <p><b>Animal Flower Cave</b> – great for tidal pools, sea-life and shells</p> <p><b>Flower:</b> The Pride of Barbados is a shrub 10 to 15 feet high with red flowers year round.</p>
<b>Castles/Forts</b>	<p>The russet-red <b>St. Ann's Fort</b>, on the fringe of the savanna, garrisoned British soldiers in 1694. The fort wasn't completed until 1703.</p> <p>Barbados has the world's rarest collection of <b>17th century English iron cannon</b>. Not too long ago it was decided to create a National Ordnance Collection of all the old guns on the island and to date more than 400 have been unearthed. The island is littered with old cannon – they have been found in gardens, cellars, on beaches, embedded in the sides of buildings and buried under fortifications.</p>

<b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Shopping</b>	<p>You may find duty-free merchandise here at prices 20% to 40% lower than in the United States and Canada - but you've got to be a smart shopper to spot bargains, and you should be familiar with prices back in your hometown. Duty-free shops have two prices listed on items of merchandise: the local retail price and the local retail price less the government-imposed tax.</p> <p>Some of the best duty-free buys include cameras, watches, crystal, gold jewelry, bone china, cosmetics and perfumes, and liquor (including locally produced Barbados rum and liqueurs), along with tobacco products and cashmere sweaters, tweeds, and sportswear from Britain. If you purchase items made on Barbados, you don't have to pay duty.</p> <p>The quintessential Barbados handicrafts are coral jewelry and clay pottery. The latter originates at Highland Pottery, Inc. (tel. 246/422-9818), which is worth a visit. Potters turn out different products, some based on designs that are centuries old. The potteries (which are signposted) are north of Bathsheba on the east coast, in St. Joseph Parish near Barclay's Park. In shops across the island, you'll also find a selection of locally made vases, pots, pottery mugs, glazed plates, and ornaments.</p> <p>Island craftspeople weave wall hangings from local grasses and dried flowers, and also turn out straw mats, baskets, and bags with raffia embroidery. Leatherwork, particularly handbags, belts, and sandals, is also found on Barbados.</p> <p><b>Cave Shepherd</b>, Broad Street (tel. 246/431-2121), is the largest department store on the island and the best place for duty-free merchandise. There are branches at Sunset Crest in Holetown, Da Costas Mall, Grantley Adams Airport, and the Bridgetown cruise-ship terminal, but if your time is limited, try this outlet, as it has the widest</p>

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	<p>selection. The store sells perfumes, cosmetics, fine crystal and bone china, cameras, jewelry, swimwear, leather goods, men's designer clothing, handcrafts, liquor, and souvenirs. You can take a break in the cool comfort of the Balcony, overlooking Broad Street, which serves vegetarian dishes and has a salad bar and beer garden.</p>
<b>Markets</b>	<p><b>Tyrol Cot Heritage Village</b>, Codrington Hill, St. Michael (tel. 246/424-2074) is the former home of the Bajan national hero, Sir Grantley Adams. On the grounds of the former prime minister's estate is a colony of artisans, who turn out an array of articles for sale ranging from paintings to pottery, from baskets to handmade figurines.</p>
<b>Nightlife</b>	<p>The green-and-white <b>Coach House</b>, Paynes Bay, St. James (on the main Bridgetown-Holetown road, just south of Sandy Lane, about 10km north of Bridgetown; tel. 246/432-1163), is 200 years old. Attracting mostly visitors, this is a Bajan version of an English pub, with an outdoor garden bar. From 6 to 10pm you can order bar meals, including flying-fish burgers, priced at \$6 and up.</p> <p>For the most authentic Bajan evening possible, head for <b>Baxters Road</b> in Bridgetown, where there's always something cooking Friday and Saturday nights after 11pm. In fact, if you stick around until dawn, you'll find the party's still going strong. Some old-time visitors have compared Baxters Road to the back streets of New Orleans in the 1930s. If you fall in love with the place, you can "caf crawl" up and down the street, where nearly every bar is run by a Bajan mama.</p> <p>The most popular "caf" on Baxters Road is Enid's, a little ramshackle establishment where Bajans come to devour fried chicken at 3 in the morning. This place is open daily from 8:30pm to 8:30am, when the last satisfied customer departs into the blazing morning sun and the employees go home to get some sleep. Stop in for a Banks beer.</p> <p><b>Plantation Restaurant and Garden Theatre</b>, Main Road (Hwy. 7), St. Lawrence, Christ Church (tel. 246/428-5048), is the island's main showcase for evening dinner theater and Caribbean cabaret. It's completely touristy, but enjoyable nonetheless. Every Wednesday and Friday, dinner is served at 6:30pm, followed by a show, Bajan Roots and Rhythm, at 8pm. Expect elaborate costumes and lots of reggae, calypso, and limbo. For BD\$155, you get dinner, the show, and transportation to and from your hotel; the show alone costs BD\$90.</p>
<b>Caves</b>	<p><b>Harrison's Cave</b></p> <p>The underground world here, the number-one tourist attraction of Barbados, is viewed from aboard an electric tram and trailer. You'll see bubbling streams, tumbling cascades, and subtly lit deep pools, while all around stalactites hang overhead like icicles, and stalagmites rise from the floor. Visitors may disembark and get a closer look at this natural</p>

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	phenomenon at the Rotunda Room and the Cascade Pool.
<b>Jeep Safaris</b>	<p><b>Island Safari</b> is the pioneer in Jeep Safari 4x4 Island Tours in Barbados. Their comfortable safari rigged Land Rovers take you to some of the most beautiful places on the island, places inaccessible to others but no problem to 4 x 4 Safari Land Rovers.</p> <p>Their <b>Adventure Safari</b> is a non-stop-fun expedition taking you to the Eastern and Northeastern side of the island. Relax as their entertaining drivers skillfully navigate you on and off-road to some of the least-seen but most magnificent locations in Barbados. On this safari 4x4 tour they visit Edge Cliff, Bathsheba, Joe's River Forest and much more - including two stops by the beach and an opportunity to experience some of the best photo opportunities of Barbados' magical coastline. Lunch is a traditional island style meal served with a drink and of course, the famous Jungle Juice (Rum Punch), juice, diet drinks and snacks are served along the way.</p> <p>It includes round trip transportation from your hotel, buffet lunch and dessert and drinks and snacks along the way. It takes approximately 5 1/2 hours from 8am.</p> <p><a href="http://www.islandsafari.bb">http://www.islandsafari.bb</a></p>

<b>CUISINE</b>	
<b>Food</b>	<p>Local dishes: jug-jug: Guinea corn and green peas; Bajan pepperpot stew: fine meats and seasonings</p> <p>Savvy locals can guide you to the <b>Oistins Fish Market</b>, a historic fish market southeast of Bridgetown and past the settlements of Hastings and Worthing. This is where Bajan fishermen unload their daily catch and sell it directly to the customer - ideal if you have accommodations with a kitchen. If not, you'll find nearly a dozen shacks selling fresh-cooked fish: Flying fish is in the fryer and fish steaks like wahoo are on the grill. On Friday night, the local vendors sponsor live bands and a medley of food stalls from 6 to 10:30pm.</p>
<b>Drinks</b>	<p><b>Drinks:</b> Mount Gay rum; fruit punches; Banks Beer; and you have a 40 oz duty free allowance!</p> <p><b>The Mount Gay Rum Tour:</b> On the northern edge of Bridgetown, you learn the story of island rum, produced here virtually since the British first settled on the island in 1627. By 1655 Barbados was producing some 900,000 gallons of rum annually. The actual distillery is in St. Lucy Parish to the north, but at this center you can see both old and contemporary equipment used in rum making, along with rows and rows of barrels. First you view a video about Mount Gay's history, followed by a 15-minute crash course in rum making. The tour concludes with a rum tasting. Rum, along with gift items, is for sale in the on-site shop. You can also make a reservation for an admission-free tour of the actual Mount Gay refinery by calling tel. 246/439-8812.</p>

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<b>Restaurants</b>	<p>Chateau Creole – drunken chicken; Carambola – kingfish; Brown Sugar – pepper-pot stew, sea eggs (roe of sea urchins), flying fish; Pisces: wave lapped dining terrace serving shrimp-stuffed red snapper</p> <p><b>The Cliff:</b> Built atop a 3m coral cliff, this open-air restaurant features a three-level dining room crafted with terra-cotta tiles and coral stone. Though it's not exclusive or even particularly formal, it has attracted Prince Andrew and other titled and bejeweled guests from nearby upscale hotels. The culinary technique is impeccably sharp, and the chefs select only the finest cuts of beef, the freshest seafood, and the choicest vegetables. The best items are grilled snapper drizzled with three types of coriander sauce (cream-based, oil-based, and vinaigrette style), accompanied with garlic mashed potatoes and Thai-style curried shrimp. For sheer innovation, dishes such as this put The Cliff near the top. Also try the fresh sushi when available. As you dine, watch for stingrays, which glide through the illuminated waters below.</p> <p><b>The Fish Pot:</b> Just minutes north of the port of St. Charles, this restaurant lies in a little fishing community called Shermans. The restaurant is in a family-run oceanfront hotel but is so special that even non-guests should visit. The complex was constructed on the site of a fort from the 17th century that later was used to store sugar. The food is intensely flavored and produced with finesse. The appetizers are among the most imaginative on the coast, everything from Canadian scallops seared with chutney spices and cilantro oil to baked king prawns with a garnish of tomato. Other delights include cracker-crusting tuna and grilled swordfish along with a seafood platter for two and raised lamb shanks.</p>
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<b>MORE INFO</b>	
<b>Brochures</b>	Phone 1888-BARBADOS to request brochures
<b>Websites</b>	Website: <a href="http://www.visitbarbados.org">http://www.visitbarbados.org</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/VisitBarbados">https://www.facebook.com/VisitBarbados</a> Twitter: <a href="https://twitter.com/barbados">https://twitter.com/barbados</a> Pinterest: <a href="https://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/barbados/">https://www.pinterest.com/TravelShow/barbados/</a>

<b>PERSONAL EXPERIENCES</b>	<p>The Savannah and the Southern Palms Beach Club; Jeep trip with Island Safari (Scotland Bethsheba, sugar cane plantations); Bridgetown 2006 Run Barbados Marathon; Island Jeep Safari; Catamaran 2007 Run Barbados Marathon; swimming with the turtles</p> <p>Travel Blog:  <a href="http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Blog/tabid/400/EntryId/16/Barbados.aspx">http://www.chrisrobinsontravelshow.ca/Blog/tabid/400/EntryId/16/Barbados.aspx</a></p>
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