

JAMAICA

Jamaica is an island in the West Indies. It is the third largest island in the Caribbean Sea located 90 miles south of Cuba and 100 miles west of Haiti. By way of comparison, it is a little smaller than Connecticut. The island is made up of Coastal lowlands, a limestone plateau, and the Blue Mountains, a group of volcanic hills, in the east. The Blue Mountains are well known for the coffee produced there.

Facts at a Glance

Official Name:	Jamaica
Area:	4,244 square miles
Capital City:	Kingston
Government:	Constitutional Parliamentary Democracy
Prime Minister:	Bruce Golding
Population:	1,780,132 (2007)
Languages:	English; Creole, (Patois)
Religions:	61% Protestant 4% Catholic 35% Other (including cults)
Currency:	Jamaican dollar

The Country

In the island of Jamaica the average temperature is 72 and the island is made up of coastal lowlands, a limestone plateau and Blue Mountains. Rainfall is heavy in the Blue Mountains. A narrow plain along the northern coast and several larger plains near the south shore are Jamaica's major agricultural zones. The north coast also has fine beaches and is the focus of the tourist industry.

The People and Way of Life

The motto of Jamaica is "Out of Many One People." The country is a rich blend of African European, Chinese, Indian and some middle-eastern cultures. The Taino settlers called the island "Xaymaca" meaning land of wood and water. The people are a friendly people willing to have a conversation with you. The official Language is English but most Jamaicans speak Creole English. Their thick Patois accent can also be intriguing. Their flag is made up of Black, Green and Gold. The Black stands for the hardships of the people. Green is for the lush vegetation of the island and Gold is for the unlimited sunshine.



Climate

Jamaica has a tropical climate at sea-level and temperate climate towards the highlands of the interior. There are four seasons, two rainy seasons from May to June and September to November as well as two dry seasons from July to August and December to April. The hurricane season is from May to August or September. The average annual precipitation is 7 inches and average temperature ranges in Kingston are from 66 Fahrenheit to 99 Fahrenheit all year.

Did You Know That:

- Jamaica became an independent country on August 6, 1962?
- Jamaica is the largest English speaking island in the Caribbean?
- Jamaica has 550 miles of coastline?
- one-half of Jamaica is over 1,000 feet above sea level?
- the National Bird is the Hummingbird?
- Jamaica has more multiple (two or more) live births in the world?
- the Doctor Bird (*Trochilus polytmus*) a national symbol of the country lives only in Jamaica?
- Jamaica was the first tropical country to enter the IOC Winter Olympics?
- the Bobsled team's efforts inspired the film "Cool Runnings"?
- the Giant Swallowtail (second largest butterfly in the world) is in Jamaica?
- Blue Mountain coffee of Jamaica is one of the world's premier coffees with Japan importing the most?
- there are more churches per square mile in Jamaica than any community area in the world

Famous Jamaicans

- Bob Marley – musician
- Patrick Ewing – NBA star
- Asafa Powell – World's fastest man (2006-2007)
- Sherone Simpson – World's fastest woman (2006-2007)

Jamaican Sayings (with translation)

- "Mi old, but mi nuh cold" (Do not underestimate the value of the elderly)
- "Every mikkle mek a mukkule" (Every little bit counts)
- "De olda de moon, de brighter it shines" (The older a person is, the wiser)
- "Talk and taste your tongue" (Think before you speak)

